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Organizational culture, agile leadership, and employee performance: The moderating role of employee engagement

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Abstract

Employee Engagement (EE) has recently become necessary because of its role in organizations that are strategic business partners. Employee engagement is also a mediating factor for other factors that affect Employee Performance (EP). This research examines the influence of Organizational Culture (OCL) and Agile Leadership (AGL) on Employee Performance (EPF) and Employee Engagement (EEN). It explores the mediating role of EEN in these relationships. A quantitative approach is applied in this study to examine how these factors improve employee performance in the organization. The analysis method uses structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the relationship between variables. The analysis showed that OCL positively and significantly influenced EPF (coefficient 0.158; $P = 0.009$) and EEN (coefficient 0.158; $P = 0.000$). Similarly, AGL contributes positively to EPF (coefficient 0.258; $P = 0.000$) and EEN (coefficient 0.366; $P = 0.000$). In addition, EEN acts as a significant mediator in the relationship between OCL and EPF, as well as between AGL and EPF. These findings highlight that employee engagement is essential in improving performance in public organizations. HRM strategies that focus on strengthening an organizational culture that supports trust and fairness and implementing flexible and adaptive leadership are critical to improving organizational performance and effectiveness. Management should use the results of this study to formulate an integrated strategy involving OC, AGL, EPF, and EE. Using EE as a mediator, management can develop policies to improve performance more effectively.

Keywords: Agile Leadership, Employee Engagement, Employee Performance, Organizational Culture, Public Sector.

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1. Introduction

The performance of the State Civil Apparatus (*Aparatur Sipil Negara, ASN*) in Indonesia is assessed based on aspects of the Employee Work Target (*Sasaran Kerja Pegawai, SKP*), which is an element in the ASN Work Performance Assessment and has been regulated in a Government Regulation. Data from the SKP of employees of the Ministry of Religion in North Kalimantan Province from 2020 to 2024 show that there is still room for improvement in the results of ASN performance assessments from year to year. By looking at the varying appraisal ranges, leaders of organizations are trying to narrow these ranges and increase the minimum delay earned by each employee.

The central government, through the Minister of Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation Number 6 of 2022 concerning Performance Management of State Civil Apparatus Employees, states that 'Employee behavior in achieving work results is expected to align with the fundamental values of the *BerAKHLAK* state civil apparatus (Service-Oriented, Accountable, Competent, Harmonious, Loyal, Adaptive, and Collaborative). North Kalimantan Province, to realize good and open governance, also requires a work culture that meets the values of: (1) Service-oriented, (2) Accountable, (3) Competent, (4) Harmonious, (5) Loyal, (6) Adaptive, and (7) Collaborative.

The development of human resource management (HRM) theory has long been concerned with how human resource management can improve performance outcomes. Decades of interest in research on the relationship between employee engagement and performance suggest that employee engagement can impact individual and organizational performance [1, 2]. Agile leadership has become an increasingly important topic in management and leadership literature in the last five years. As organizations are dynamically changing, leaders can adapt to their environment. Employee engagement has become increasingly discussed in human resource management and organizational literature. The concept describes how employees feel emotionally engaged, committed, and motivated to perform at their best.

2. Literature Review

Performance is the goal that an organization wants to achieve through a collection of actions. It can also be interpreted as demonstrating work or behavior in the workplace. The word "performance" originates from the verb "to perform," which means to display or carry out, and the noun "performance," which refers to the act of showing or executing an activity. Performance evaluation is closely related to employee performance appraisal. Employee performance is an employee's ability to effectively perform specific tasks or skills [3, 4]. The performance of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) is evaluated based on the Employee Work Target (SKP) by government regulations. At the Ministry of Religious Affairs in North Kalimantan (Kaltara), this assessment includes the following dimensions: Service Orientation, Integrity, Commitment, Discipline, Cooperation, and Leadership. In this study, employee performance is measured using the following dimensions: (A) Integrity Dimension Triyanti, et al. [5] and Suryatni, et al. [6]: (1) Honest, Sincere, and Trustworthy Attitude; (2) Transparent and Consistent Attitude; (3) Dignified Attitude; (4) Objective Attitude. (B) Commitment Dimension Triguero-Sánchez, et al. [7]: (1) Commitment to the Organization; (2) Emotional Attachment; (3) Identification with the Organization; (4) Sense of Indebtedness to the Organization; (5) Loyalty to the Organization; (6) Understanding of the Organization; (7) Success-Based Compensation; (8) Professional Development Opportunities; (9) Investment of Time and Effort.

Organizational culture is a system of values, beliefs, and behavioral patterns that unconsciously encourage members of the organization to make every choice and decision [8]. Employee behavior in achieving work results is expected to align with the core values of the state civil apparatus (ASN), which are *BerAKHLAK* (Service-Oriented, Accountable, Competent, Harmonious, Loyal, Adaptive, and Collaborative) [9]. These core values have been in effect since they were launched by the President of the Republic of Indonesia in July 2021 and remain in place today. The dimensions used in this study are: (A) Service-Oriented Dimension: (1) Understanding and meeting the needs of the public; (2) Friendly, efficient, solution-oriented, and reliable; (3) Continuously making improvements. (B) Accountable Dimension: (1) Performing duties with honesty, responsibility, accuracy, discipline, and high integrity; (2) Using state assets and resources responsibly, effectively, and efficiently; (3) Not abusing authority. (C) Competent Dimension: (1) Enhancing personal competence to address ever-changing challenges; (2) Assisting others in learning; (3) Performing tasks with the best quality; (4) Serving with friendliness. (D) Harmonious Dimension: (1) Valuing everyone regardless of their background; (2) Willingness to help others; (3) Creating a conducive work environment.

Leadership is one of the most observed management phenomena [10]. Agile Leadership has garnered significant attention from previous researchers, including the use of dimensions [1]. The dimensions of Agile Leadership used in this study are as follows: Abdulla, et al. [11]: (A) Humility Dimension: (1) A good leader; (2) The leader is approachable; (3) The leader agrees with the staff's tasks; (4) The leader helps achieve results; (5) The leader engages in dialogue with the staff. (B) Trust Dimension: (1) Appreciation of staff opinions; (2) Trust and motivation; (3) Shared responsibility; (4) Involvement in decision-making; (5) Leadership by example. (C) Objective Dimension: (1) The leader provides feedback; (2) The leader addresses problems; (3) The leader acts effectively; (4) The leader contributes to the organization's reputation; (5) The leader is sensitive to time and place.

The Employee Engagement variable in this study is measured using the following dimensions [12]: (A) Cognitive Engagement: (1) I am truly focused on my work when I am working; (2) I concentrate on my tasks when I am working; (3) When working, I think a lot about how I can give my best; (4) While working, I focus on the tasks at hand. (B) Emotional Engagement: (1) Working at the current organization has significant personal meaning for me; (2) I feel a strong sense of ownership towards my work; (3) I am proud to tell others that I work at the current organization; (4) I believe in the company's mission and goals; (5) I care about the organization's future.

Organizational culture plays a crucial role in shaping an organization's behavior, attitudes, and overall work environment. A positive and supportive organizational culture can foster a sense of ownership, motivation, and alignment with the

organization's goals, encouraging employees to perform at their best. Conversely, a hostile or misaligned culture can lead to apathy, decreased productivity, and high employee turnover. By building a culture that values collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement, organizations are believed to create an environment where employees are more likely to be committed, motivated, and able to achieve high-performance levels. Previous researchers have examined the relationship between organizational culture and employee performance across various organizational settings. It has been revealed that organizational culture positively and significantly impacts performance [13-15]. Thus, the author proposes the following hypothesis:

H₁: Organizational Culture has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance

An inclusive, open, and supportive culture can create an environment where employees feel valued and heard and have meaningful contributions. When employees perceive that the values and goals of the Organization align with their values, they are more likely to be engaged, show higher loyalty, and actively participate in achieving organizational objectives. On the other hand, an organizational culture that is less supportive or misaligned with the needs and expectations of employees can lead to a decline in engagement, resulting in decreased motivation and potentially increasing absenteeism and turnover rates. Therefore, a strong and positive organizational culture is key to enhancing employee engagement and ensuring optimal contributions to organizational success. Thus, organizational culture is suspected to impact employee engagement significantly. Previous researchers have observed the relationship between organizational culture and employee engagement and have stated that these two variables have a strong influence [16-19]. Thus, the author proposes the following hypothesis:

H₂: Organizational Culture has a positive and significant effect on Employee Engagement

Previous researchers have studied the relationship between Agile Leadership and Employee Engagement variables. Agile Leadership statistically impacts Employee Engagement [20, 21]. Therefore, the author proposes the following hypothesis: H3 Agile leadership positively and significantly impacts Employee Engagement. Previous researchers have studied the relationship between Agile Leadership and Employee Performance variables. Agile Leadership has a statistically significant impact on company performance and management innovation and influences management innovation company performance is statistically significant [22, 23]. Therefore, the author proposes the following hypothesis:

H₄: Agile Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance

Employees who are actively engaged tend to have a higher commitment to their work, show enthusiasm, and strive to achieve the best results. High levels of engagement make employees more motivated, productive, and creative in carrying out their tasks. Engaged employees feel they play an essential role in the organization, which drives them to work with greater dedication and responsibility. Therefore, improving employee engagement is crucial to drive optimal performance and achieve organizational goals. Previous researchers have studied the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance [24-28]. Thus, the author proposes the following hypothesis:

H₅: Employee Engagement has a positive and significant impact on Employee Performance

A positive and supportive organizational culture creates an environment that facilitates employee engagement, such as providing support, recognition, and opportunities for active contribution. Employees who feel engaged and connected to the organization's goals and values are more motivated to perform at their best. A good organizational culture can enhance employee engagement, and high engagement, in turn, positively impacts employee performance. Employee engagement is suspected to serve as an essential mediating variable in the relationship between organizational culture and employee performance. The mediating role of employee engagement has been proven in previous research [29-33]. Thus, the author proposes the following hypothesis:

H₆: Employee Engagement serves as a mediator in the relationship between Organizational Culture and Employee Performance

Agile leadership has become one of the most relevant leadership styles in the modern business era, especially in dynamic and constantly changing environments. This leadership style emphasizes flexibility, collaboration, and the ability to adapt quickly. On the other hand, employee engagement plays a crucial role in ensuring optimal performance. Engaged employees tend to have higher motivation, better productivity, and a strong commitment to the organization. Therefore, exploring how employee engagement can mediate the relationship between agile leadership and employee performance is essential. The role of employee engagement as a mediating or intervening variable has been studied by several researchers [34-36]. Thus, the author proposes the following hypothesis:

H₇: Employee Engagement is a mediator in the effect of Agile Leadership on Employee Performance

This study involves three variables consisting of the following types: (A) Independent variable or predictor variable: (1) Organizational culture (2) Agile leadership (B) Dependent variable or criterion variable: Employee performance (C) Mediating variable or intervening variable: Employee engagement. The direct effects and indirect effects, as outlined in the previous section, are structured based on previous research studies and are presented in Figure 1.

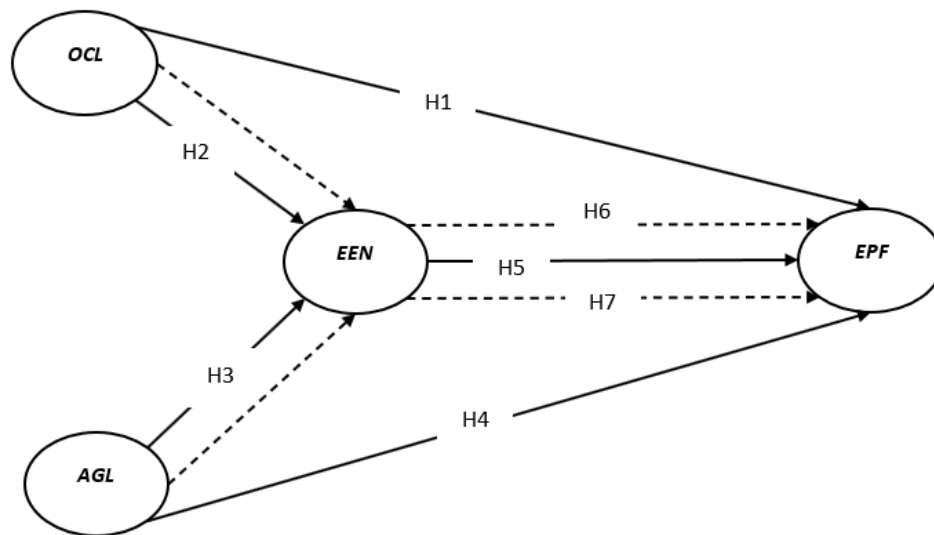


Figure 1.
Research Framework

3. Research Methods

This study is a causal associative quantitative research study using a survey. The population of this research consists of all State Civil Apparatus (ASN) employees at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in North Kalimantan. In this study, all ASN employees at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in North Kalimantan are involved as respondents, as the researcher can easily reach all of these elements without significant difficulty. The population in this study consists of all employees at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in North Kalimantan Province, totaling 631 employees, categorized into the following age groups in Table 1.

Table 1.
The number of employees at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in North Kalimantan.

Age	< 30	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 -57	> 57	Total
Total	66	91	224	238	12	631

Using the Yamane formula with a population of 631 employees, the sample was determined with a margin of error of 5%, resulting in a minimum sample size of 245 respondents. In this study, the number of respondents used was 391 employees out of 631 employees. The primary data for this research was collected directly from the respondents using questionnaires and interviews with stakeholders in the organization. The questionnaire used a 1-5 Likert scale [37]. Inferential statistics are used to establish relationships between variables, draw conclusions, and analyze relationships between variables. Inferential statistics can help make inferences about a population based on a sample. Inferential analysis uses path coefficients generated by SEM-PLS with the assistance of SmartPLS version 4 software.

4. Results and Discussion

The measurement model (outer model) defines how each indicator block relates to its latent variable. The design of the measurement model determines the characteristics of the indicators for each latent variable. The testing of Convergent Validity for each construct's indicator has validity criteria for the indicators as follows: The validity is good if the loading factor is greater than 0.70; valid enough if the loading factor is between 0.50 and 0.60; not valid if the loading factor is below 0.50, in which case the indicator will be dropped from the model. The practical and commonly used outer loading is the standardized outer loading with a value of 0.7 or higher. The statistical significance calculated by the Smart PLS software is shown in the image below.

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The second criterion that is evaluated is internal consistency reliability. The traditional criterion for measuring internal consistency reliability is Cronbach's alpha. This Cronbach's alpha criterion provides an estimate of reliability based on the correlations between the observed indicator variables. Composite reliability (ρ_C) ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating better reliability. All obtained ρ_A values indicate a high level of reliability in this study.

Table 2.

Construct Reliability and Validity.

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
X1-OC	0.969	0.969	0.968	0.583
X2-AGL	0.979	0.980	0.979	0.613
X3-EDC	0.978	0.979	0.978	0.617
Y1-EE	0.956	0.957	0.956	0.608
Y2-EP	0.978	0.978	0.978	0.606

AVE: Average Variance Extracted

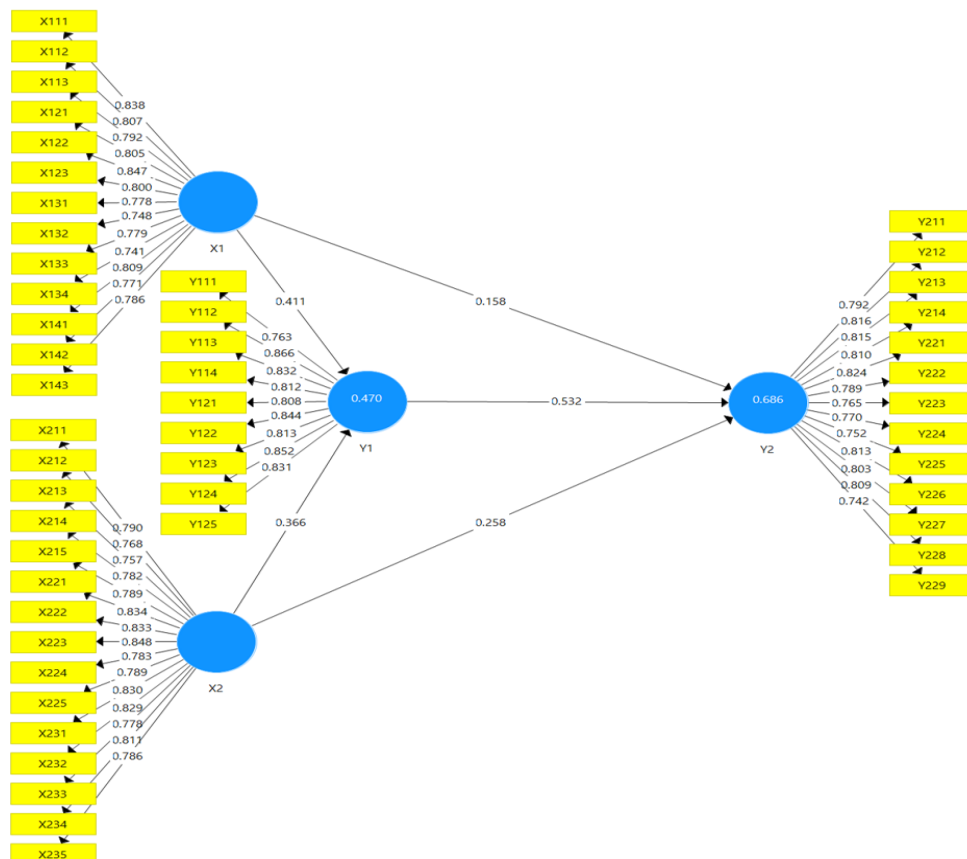
Table 2 presents that all variables have relatively high Cronbach's Alpha values (above 0.9), indicating that each variable has good internal reliability. The composite reliability values for all variables are also relatively high (above 0.9), which supports the results of Cronbach's Alpha. The Convergent Validity (Average Variance Extracted - AVE) for all variables is above 0.5, meaning that the corresponding variables can explain more than 50% of the variance of the indicators. Discriminant validity assesses the extent to which a construct is genuinely distinct from other constructs based on empirical standards. This means that a construct should show that it is not overly correlated or sharing the same variance with other constructs, ensuring that each construct remains unique in measuring the intended concept. The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations can be used to assess discriminant validity accurately. HTMT is the ratio of between-trait correlations to within-trait correlations, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	X1-OC	X2-AGL	X3-EDC	Y1-EE	Y2-EP
X1-OC					
X2-AGL	0.603				
X3-EDC	0.656	0.702			
Y1-EE	0.688	0.651	0.757		
Y2-EP	0.716	0.690	0.802	0.846	

Although the exact threshold for HTMT remains debatable, we recommend a threshold of 0.90. When constructs in the path model are conceptually more distinct, a lower and more conservative threshold value of 0.85 is considered more appropriate.

**Figure 2.**
Outer Loadings.

The p-value represents the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis. With a significance level of 5%, the p-value must be less than 0.05 to conclude that the relationship being considered is significant at the 5% level.

Table 4.
Hypothesis Testing.

	(O)	(M)	(STDEV)	T Stat	P Values
H1: $X1 \rightarrow Y2$	0.158	0.159	0.060	2.625	0.009
H2: $X1 \rightarrow Y1$	0.411	0.415	0.049	8.414	0.000
H3: $X2 \rightarrow Y2$	0.258	0.261	0.054	4.747	0.000
H4: $X2 \rightarrow Y1$	0.366	0.368	0.049	7.480	0.000
H5: $Y1 \rightarrow Y2$	0.532	0.530	0.068	7.820	0.000
H6: $X1 \rightarrow Y1 \rightarrow Y2$	0.219	0.221	0.044	4.983	0.000
H7: $X2 \rightarrow Y1 \rightarrow Y2$	0.195	0.194	0.032	6.110	0.000

Original sample (O); sample mean (M); standard deviation (STDEV); T statistics ($|O/STDEV|$); X1 (OCL) Organization Culture; X2 (AGL) Agile Leadership; Y1 (EEN) Employee Engagement; Y2 (EPF) Employee Performance

The results presented in the table above can be summarized as follows. Organizational Culture (OCL) has a proven positive and significant impact on Employee Performance (EPF), with a coefficient of 0.158 and a p-value of 0.009. The contribution of organizational culture to employee performance is relatively small compared to other factors. In the context of this research, specifically at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in North Kalimantan, this finding emphasizes the importance of building a culture that fosters trust and fairness to promote autonomy and better performance. The fairness perceived by employees regarding their trust in the organization enhances autonomy in carrying out their duties. A strong organizational culture can be a foundation for creating a work environment that improves employee performance. Leaders in public organizations should pay more attention to efforts to enhance perceived trust and fairness and provide autonomy to employees to drive optimal performance. This approach could increase job satisfaction and lead to better public service.

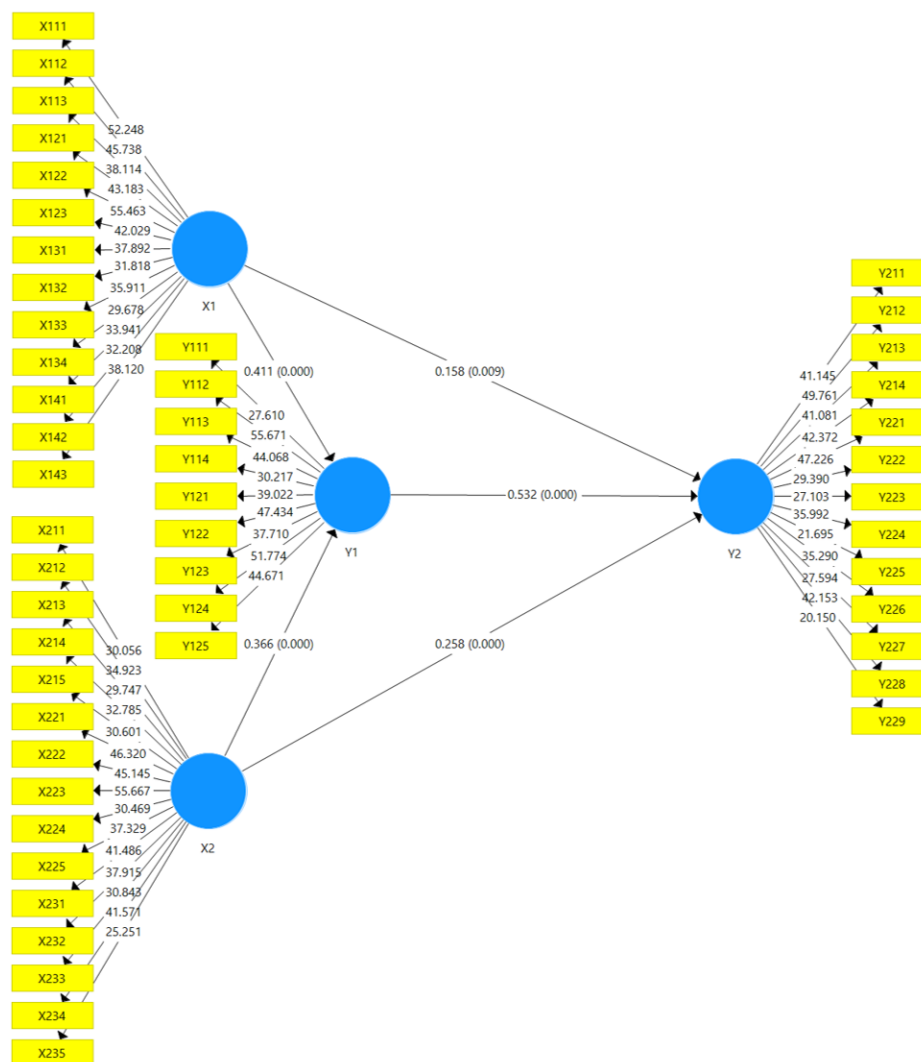


Figure 1.
Path Coefficient & P value.

Organizational Culture (OCL) has been shown to positively and significantly impact Employee Engagement (EEN), with a coefficient of 0.158 and a p-value of 0.000. This finding reinforces that a good Organizational Culture (OCL) supports Employee Engagement (EEN), which can drive work effectiveness while fostering a more harmonious and collaborative work environment. In the Ministry of Religious Affairs context in North Kalimantan, a supportive OCL, such as improving trust between leadership and employees and recognizing individual contributions, can enhance EEN in carrying out employees' duties. With higher EEN, employees are more motivated to complete tasks effectively and feel more committed to the organization's goals. A supportive OCL also enables employees to feel more valued and committed, which ultimately positively impacts productivity and the quality of service provided.

The results of this study indicate that Agile Leadership (AGL) has a positive and significant impact on Employee Performance (EP), with a path coefficient of 0.258 and a p-value of 0.000. This finding in the Ministry of Religious Affairs context in North Kalimantan suggests that implementing Agile Leadership can improve Employee Performance. However, its contribution is not the dominant factor. This may be due to the bureaucratic environment that emphasizes structure and hierarchy, which often slows the implementation of agility characteristics in leadership.

Agile Leadership (AGL) has a significant, though small, impact on Employee Engagement (EEN), with a coefficient of 0.366 and a p-value of 0.000. This finding suggests that Agile Leadership positively impacts EEN, which includes the leader's ability to act flexibly, adapt to changes, and respond quickly to dynamic situations. In the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the North Kalimantan context, leaders who can quickly adapt to changes in the work environment play an essential role in driving employee engagement and active participation. Turan and Cinnioğlu [38] emphasize that organizational success heavily depends on an appropriate leadership style in a VUCA world characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. Agile Leadership (AGL) stands out as a practical approach in this research context, as it supports improvements in performance and Employee Engagement, which are crucial in uncertain contexts. Agile Leadership (AGL) encourages employees to be more proactive and engaged in their tasks, improving responsiveness to dynamic changes within the organization.

Employee Engagement (EEN) significantly impacts Employee Performance (EPF), with a coefficient of 0.532 and a p-value of 0.000. In the context of the research locus at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in North Kalimantan, the mediating role of Employee Engagement (EEN) on Employee Performance (EPF) is closely relevant. High engagement is crucial for maintaining organizational stability and productivity. The leadership at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in North Kalimantan can continue to develop and strengthen a positive Organizational Culture (OCL), which will enhance Employee Engagement (EE) and ultimately improve Employee Performance (EP). This approach can significantly support the ministry's efforts to achieve better service goals and outcomes in the North Kalimantan region.

Employee Engagement (EEN) in the relationship between Organizational Culture (OCL) and Employee Performance (EPF) demonstrates that employee engagement acts as a significant mediator that strengthens the impact of organizational culture on performance improvement. In the research locus of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in North Kalimantan, where public and religious services are the primary focus, having a positive OCL is crucial. This not only enhances EPF but also reinforces overall EEN. When employees feel engaged and have a sense of ownership over the organizational culture, they are more likely to give their best in serving the public. The importance of EEN as a mediator in this relationship highlights the need for the Ministry of Religious Affairs to develop strategies that strengthen OCL, which will, in turn, support EEN. These strategies may include training, recognition programs, and open communication to ensure employees feel heard and valued. In this way, a positive OCL can continue to improve, leading to better employee performance and overall organizational effectiveness.

The mediation of Employee Engagement (EEN) in the effect of Agile Leadership (AGL) on Employee Performance (EPF) shows that EEN plays an essential role in strengthening the impact of AGL on EPF. With a coefficient of 0.195 and a P-value of 0.000, the research locus at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in North Kalimantan reveals that employee engagement mediates the relationship between AGL and EPF. Agile Leadership (AGL), characterized by leaders' ability to quickly adapt, promote collaboration, and create a responsive work environment, is highly relevant in a ministry focused on public service. This type of leadership can accelerate decision-making processes and improve innovation in religious service programs. The impact of AGL on EPF becomes significant when employees are also actively engaged in their work. Employees who feel involved and contribute to decision-making and work processes are likely to perform better. Therefore, the Ministry of Religious Affairs in North Kalimantan should focus on strategies that involve applying AGL principles and building EEN among employees. With increased employee engagement (EEN), the ministry can maximize the positive effects of AGL on EPF.

5. Conclusions

Organizational Culture (OCL) has been proven to positively affect employee performance (EPF) and employee engagement (EEN), although its contribution to EPF is relatively small compared to other factors. A strong OCL fosters trust and fairness, enhancing autonomy and employee performance. In the Ministry of Religious Affairs of North Kalimantan, strengthening OCL can create a more conducive work environment and improve the effectiveness of public service delivery. Agile Leadership (AGL) has a significant impact on Employee Performance (EPF) and Employee Engagement (EEN). Flexible and responsive leadership to change can enhance employee engagement, positively affecting performance. However, AGL is relevant in a bureaucratic environment like the Ministry of Religious Affairs of North Kalimantan because it can accelerate decision-making, improve collaboration, and create a more adaptive work environment in the face of change.

Employee Engagement (EEN) plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between Organizational Culture (OCL) and Employee Performance (EPF), as well as between Agile Leadership (AGL) and EPF. Employees with high

engagement levels are more motivated, committed, and productive. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of North Kalimantan needs to strengthen OCL and implement leadership strategies to enhance EEN, such as reward programs, transparent communication, and professional development initiatives. The findings of this study emphasize that the Ministry of Religious Affairs of North Kalimantan, as a public sector organization, needs to build a supportive Organizational Culture (OCL) and apply Agile Leadership (AGL) principles to enhance employee engagement and performance. This will contribute to the improvement of public service quality and the achievement of organizational goals more effectively. To maximize the benefits of OCL and AGL, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of North Kalimantan can develop Human Resource Management strategies that strengthen employee engagement. These strategies may include leadership training, performance-based incentives, and employee empowerment programs.

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