



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Influence of Leadership Style, Training and Competence on Non-ASN Employee Engagement Through Work Discipline as a Mediating Variable in the Housing and Residential Areas Service of Binjai City

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ABSTRACT

Using work discipline as a mediating variable, this study investigates how competency, training, and leadership style affect employee engagement at Dinas Perumahan dan Kawasan Permukiman Kota Binjai. PLS-SEM, or partial least squares structural equation modeling, was the quantitative method employed in the study. Non-civil servant (non-ASN) employees who actively participate in the day-to-day activities of the department were among the respondents. According to the study, employee engagement was significantly impacted by competency, training, and leadership style. The relationship between these three distinct elements and employee engagement is strengthened by work discipline, which serves as a mediator. These findings suggest that improving employee engagement can be achieved through effective leadership, relevant training programs, enhanced employee competence, and the reinforcement of work discipline. The practical implication of this study is that organizations should implement integrated managerial strategies to create a productive, disciplined, and highly committed workforce.

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Introduction

The ability of public sector firms to provide high-quality public services depends on the caliber of its human resources (HR), who must be motivated and involved in their work in addition to being technically skilled. Employee engagement is an essential indicator of HR management, reflecting the extent to which individuals are emotionally, cognitively, and physically involved in their jobs and the organization's goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). High levels of employee engagement are directly associated with loyalty, enthusiasm, and contributions to organizational performance (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Strengthening employee engagement needs to become a key focus in public sector human resource management strategies, taking into account factors such as transformational leadership, role clarity, organizational culture, and opportunities for self-development. This effort is expected to create public servants who are not only competent but also possess a strong spirit of contribution for the greater good of society (Mawuntu and Indrawan, 2024).

However, a survey indicates that employee engagement in the public sector is still poor, especially among Non-Civil Servants (Non-ASN) at Dinas Perumahan and Kawasan Permukiman Kota Binjai. They tend to work merely to fulfill formal obligations, showing limited initiative and declining motivation due to perceived inequities between workload and compensation. Such symptoms of low engagement may hinder organizational performance and reduce the quality of public services. This condition suggests the presence of underlying issues related to the factors influencing Non-ASN employee engagement.

Leadership style is a key aspect that influences employee motivation and behavior (Yukl, 2013). Managing conflicting expectations and preserving a pleasant work environment are greatly impacted by leadership style. Additionally, it encourages workers to achieve the organization's declared objectives (Darmilisani et al., 2025). The leadership style applied by leaders has been proven to motivate and guide employees to achieve organizational objectives more effectively. Authoritarian leadership tends to suppress creativity, while democratic and transformational leadership can enhance employee engagement and innovation (Darmilisani et al., 2025).

Leaders who have a clear vision, communicate well, and provide support and guidance to subordinates tend to produce more optimal employee performance (Nasution and Rizky, 2024). One-way leadership that lacks recognition of the contributions of non-civil servants (Non-ASN) leads to a low sense of belonging toward the organization. On the other hand, when training is only a formality and not supported by a comprehensive assessment of job expectations, employee confidence in fulfilling their responsibilities declines (Noe et al., 2020). Selian et al. (2025) claim that workplace discipline and organizational commitment are impacted by leadership styles.

Thus, in addition to leadership factors, the aspect of human resource development through training programs is also an important element in improving employee performance and engagement. In addition to increasing technical proficiency, tailored training that supports organizational objectives increases employees' self-assurance and drive to contribute more significantly to the company (Rizky & Gunawan, 2024). The effectiveness of training is reflected in the improvement of individual competencies, including knowledge, skills, and work attitudes that support the achievement of organizational goals. Strong competence becomes the main foundation for employees to adapt to the dynamics of the work environment and to make optimal contributions to the organization (Sitepu & Rizky, 2025). Furthermore, effective training produces greater competence, which has a direct impact on employee motivation. When employees believe they have the opportunity to advance, they become more emotionally committed in their jobs and firms. This is characterized by increased enthusiasm, dedication, and a stronger desire to contribute actively to achieving organizational goals (Darmilisani et al., 2025).

These conditions reveal a gap between the demands of professionalism and the actual capacity of Non-ASN human resources, which ultimately diminishes employee engagement levels. Therefore, it is necessary to examine how leadership style, training, and competence influence employee engagement, particularly within the context of the public sector. Moreover, the effect of these three elements on engagement is believed to be mediated by work discipline. Discipline reflects adherence to rules, punctuality, and responsibility at work (Hasibuan, 2016). In reality, many Non-ASN employees still exhibit irregular attendance, low compliance with organizational rules, and minimal initiative. Weak leadership role modeling and the absence of firm sanctions further exacerbate disciplinary issues. Thus, discipline may function as a psychological and behavioral mechanism that strengthens the relationship among leadership, training, competence, and employee engagement.

This study, which previously concentrated on civil servants (ASN) and private organizations, attempts to close an empirical research gap in the public sector's human resource management literature by examining the effects of leadership style, training, competence, and work discipline on non-ASN employee engagement. Additionally, the goal of the research is to give local governments practical advice on developing HR management practices that will boost the productivity, discipline, and passion of non-ASN employees.

Method

This study investigated the relationships between leadership style, training, competency, work discipline, and employee engagement using a quantitative research technique and a causal-associative strategy. 42 non-ASN Dinas Perumahan and Kawasan Permukiman Kota Binjai personnel completed a structured questionnaire to provide primary data. A Likert scale, which is frequently used to gauge respondents' ideas and opinions, was employed to evaluate each variable (Siregar, 2016). Because

SmartPLS was used to evaluate the data, researchers were able to look at the connections between latent variables and the structural model.

Results and Discussion

Determining the validity and reliability of the indicators used to evaluate the pertinent latent components is the goal of the measurement model evaluation.

Convergent Validity Test

All indicators have outer loading values more than 0.70, and each construct's average variance extracted (AVE) values are greater than 0.50, according to SmartPLS data processing. This indicates that all indicators meet the requirements of convergent validity (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 1. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Construct	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Work Discipline	0.664
Leadership Style	0.653
Employee Engagement	0.643
Competence	0.669
Training	0.658

Work discipline, leadership style, employee participation, competency, and training all had AVEs greater than 0.50. As a consequence, each notion meets the convergent validity criteria. This shows that the indicators' guiding concepts are constantly conveyed, and the measurement model can be further analyzed for discriminant validity or structural analysis.

Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha and Composite dependability (CR) were the two main measures used to evaluate concept dependability. The internal consistency of indicator values inside a construct is measured by Cronbach's Alpha while Composite dependability is calculated by adding the loading values of each indicator.

According to Hair et al. (2019):

1. Cronbach's Alpha ≥ 0.70 indicates good reliability.
2. Composite Reliability ≥ 0.70 indicates strong internal consistency and reliability.

Table 2. Reliability Test

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Description
Work Discipline	0.954	0.959	Reliable
Leadership Style	0.951	0.957	Reliable
Employee Engagement	0.944	0.952	Reliable
Competence	0.961	0.966	Reliable
Training	0.959	0.964	Reliable

The variables in the model are considered reliable if their Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha scores are more than 0.70. This means that each indicator consistently measures the intended concept, and the measurement results are dependable for further analysis.

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

The degree to which the independent variables in the model account for the variation in the dependent variable is indicated by the coefficient of determination (R²). The following are the R² values produced by SmartPLS 3.0:

Table 3. coefficient of determination (R²)

Variable	R Square
Work Discipline	0.943
Employee Engagement	0.969

How well the independent factors explain variance in the dependent variable is indicated by the R^2 value. As a result, a larger R^2 signifies greater explanatory capability of the model, indicating that the predictors provide a stronger contribution in describing changes in the dependent variable.

1. Competence, training, and leadership style account for 94.3% of the variation in work discipline ($R^2 = 0.943$), while factors outside the model affect the remaining 5.7%. Thus, this demonstrates that the model has strong explanatory power and a substantial relationship between variables.
2. Employee Engagement has an R^2 value of 0.969, indicating that 96.9% of its variation is explained by independent variables (leadership style, training, competence, and work discipline), with only 3.1% influenced by external factors. This demonstrates that the model has a strong explanatory power and fits the data rather well.

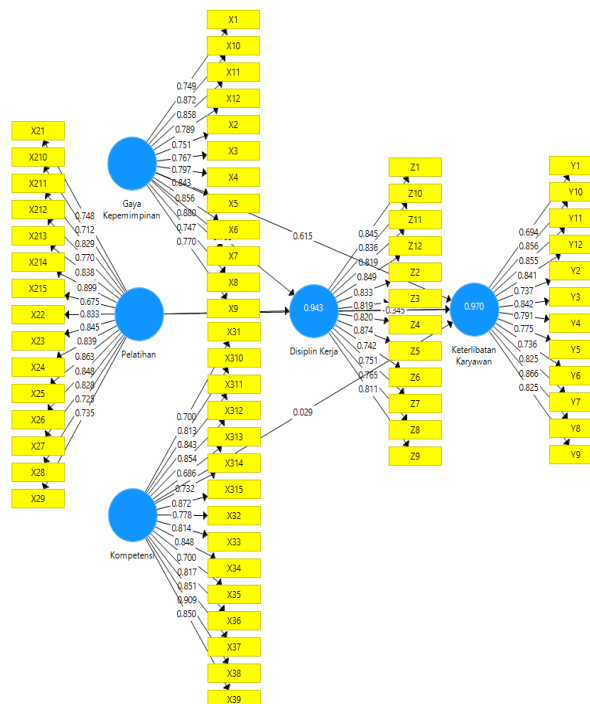
SEM-PLS Analysis

The latent variables in this study consist of five constructs. Each latent variable, as defined in the operational framework, has unique manifest indicators. To identify the relationships between the variables, the SEM-PLS analysis employs both the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model).

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

Ghozali (2015) uses the outer model to assess validity and dependability. Cross-loading is used to evaluate discriminant validity; loading factors and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) are used to assess convergent reliability; and Composite Reliability is used to measure reliability. During the outer model evaluation, the validity and reliability of the data for each latent variable were assessed using SmartPLS software. The results, based on SmartPLS data processing, are summarized and illustrated in Figure 1, which presents the initial outer model analysis.

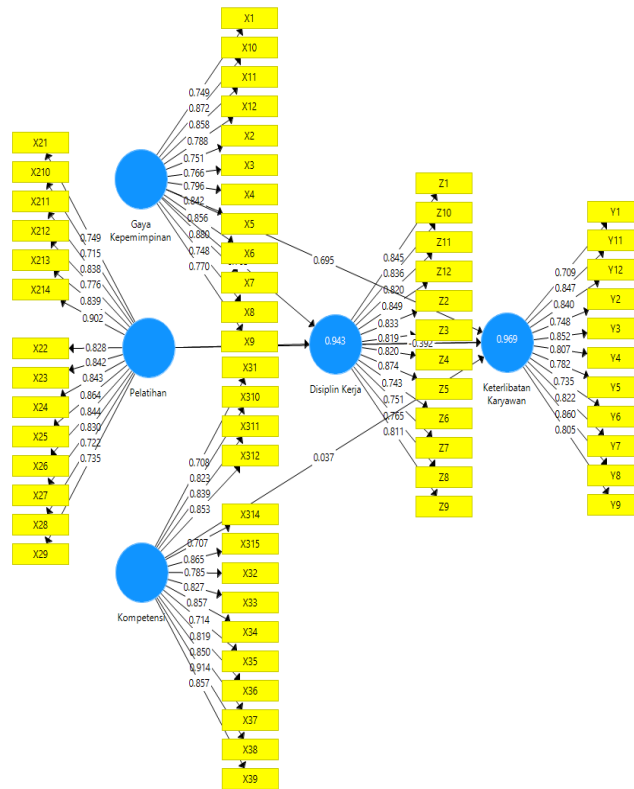
Figure 1. Outer Model



Based on the initial outer loading model shown in the figure above, three indicators—X215, X313, and Y10—were removed because their loading factor values were below the required threshold, typically less than 0.70. This indicates that these indicators did not contribute strongly enough to reflect their respective constructs. Specifically, indicator X215 originated from the Training variable, X313 from Work Discipline, and Y10 from Employee Engagement. These indicators were considered invalid because they were not consistent with other indicators in measuring the same construct. Therefore, eliminating these signals was intended to improve the measurement model's overall validity and

reliability. After their removal, The measurement model has attained the highest degree of validity and reliability, as evidenced by the final outer model's increased goodness of fit.

Figure 2. Fixed Model



Evaluation of the Assessment in the Structural Model Test (Inner Model) Hypothesis Testing

There are five latent variables in the inner model, and the assessment of the inner model is used to determine how these variables are related to one another. The bootstrapping method of SmartPLS was used to compute path coefficients and T-statistic values. Model variables have a significant beneficial influence when T-statistics > T-table = 1.66 and P-value < 0.05. The table below displays the bootstrap results for SmartPLS.

Table 4. Bootstrapping Results Table

	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	
Leadership Style → Employee Engagement	12,316	0,00	H1 Accepted
Training → Employee Engagement	14,518	0,00	H2 Accepted
Competence → Employee Engagement	5,091	0,00	H3 Accepted
Leadership Style → Work Discipline → Employee Engagement	5,230	0,00	H4 Accepted

Training → Work Discipline → Employee Engagement	3,348	0,0 01	H5 Accepted
Competence → Work Discipline → Employee Engagement	3,337	0,0 01	H6 Accepted

T statistics and P values are used in the structural model's significance test to assess how significant the link between the variables is. Generally, According to Hair et al. (2021), a significant connection is one that has P values less than 0.05 and T statistics more than 1.96.

1. Leadership Style → The T-statistics value is 12.316 and the P value is 0.000 for employee engagement. H1 is supported by T statistics > 1.96 and P values < 0.05, which show a significant connection. This illustrates how the chosen leadership approach encourages employee engagement inside the company.
2. Training → The T-statistics value of 14.518 and P-value of 0.000 show that employee participation has a significant impact. Therefore, H2 is accepted, meaning that the more effective the training program provided, the greater the employees' engagement with their work.
3. Competence → Employee Engagement has a T Statistics value of 5.091 and a P Value of 0.000. Since it meets the significance criteria, H3 is accepted. This shows that employee involvement in a company is enhanced by increased individual capabilities.
4. Leadership Style → Work Discipline → the T-statistic for employee involvement is 5.230, and the p-value is 0.000. Thus, The adoption of H4 implies that work discipline acts as a useful intermediary between employee engagement and leadership style.
5. Training → Work Discipline → For employee participation, the P-value is 0.001 and the T-statistic is 3.348. Since the value meets the significance threshold, H5 is accepted. This means that training indirectly affects employee engagement through improved work discipline.

Competence → Work Discipline → Employee Engagement. The T-statistic of 3.337 > 1.96 indicates a substantial mediating influence, with a P-value of 0.001 < 0.05. The relationship between competences and employee engagement is influenced by work discipline. This illustrates how increased staff competency raises employee engagement by improving job discipline. H6 accepted

Conclusions and Recommendations

Employee engagement is greatly impacted by competency, training, and leadership style, both directly and indirectly through work discipline. These findings imply that organizations should enhance leadership quality, provide relevant training programs, and continuously develop employee competence. Additionally, to maximize the beneficial effects of these traits on employee engagement, work discipline must be strengthened. Such integrated efforts are expected to create a productive, committed, and sustainable work environment. The implications of these results indicate that organizations need to prioritize strengthening managerial aspects and human resource development to enhance employee engagement. First, effective leadership is a key factor in building engagement; therefore, leaders should adopt participatory, communicative approaches and provide emotional support to foster a positive and productive work environment. Second, training programs that are continuous and relevant to job needs can improve employees capabilities and discipline in performing their tasks, ultimately contributing to higher engagement. Third, although competence has a direct influence on engagement, this study shows that competence improvement must be accompanied by the cultivation of discipline and responsibility to maximize its impact on engagement. Hence, organizations should design HR development policies that focus not only on technical skills but also on nurturing values of discipline and work commitment.

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