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The Influence of Meaningful Work on Work Engagement among Employees of the Regional Office of Ministry X, West Sumatra

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Abstract

Low levels of work engagement in the government sector may reduce the quality of public services, making it important to identify factors that can strengthen employee engagement. Meaningful work is one factor assumed to influence work engagement. This study aims to determine the effect of meaningful work on work engagement among employees of the Regional Office of Ministry X in West Sumatra Province. A quantitative causal approach was employed using simple linear regression analysis. The sample consisted of 106 employees selected through probability sampling. Data were collected using the Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI) and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). The findings indicate that meaningful work has a significant effect on work engagement ($p < .05$), with a regression coefficient of 0.817. The R value of 0.455 indicates a moderate relationship, while the R^2 value of 0.207 shows that meaningful work contributes 20.7% to work engagement. These findings suggest that higher levels of meaningful work are associated with higher levels of employee work engagement. This study contributes to the literature on organizational behavior in the public sector by providing empirical evidence of the role of meaningful work in strengthening

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work engagement. Practically, the findings imply that bureaucratic institutions should strengthen employees' sense of meaning in their work to enhance engagement and support the improvement of public service quality.

Keywords: Meaningful Work; Work Engagement; Public Sector Employees; Organizational Behavior; Public Service Quality

INTRODUCTION

Human resources are a key factor in determining the success of an organization, including in the government sector, which bears significant responsibility for the provision of public services. Civil servants are expected to perform at their best, supported by high levels of work engagement. However, various findings indicate that work engagement levels in the government sector are not yet fully optimal. Work engagement is a positive psychological state characterized by enthusiasm, dedication, and absorption, reflecting an individual's full commitment to their work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Low work engagement can lead to reduced service quality, low productivity, and a lack of commitment to the organization (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). This phenomenon is also evident among employees at the Regional Office of Ministry X in West Sumatra Province, where there is a variation in levels of work engagement, ranging from employees who demonstrate high enthusiasm to those who perform their duties routinely without strong emotional involvement.

Thus, researchers believe it is important to identify factors that can enhance work engagement, particularly internal psychological factors originating from the individual themselves. One factor believed to play a significant role is meaningful work that is, an individual's perception that their work holds meaning, value, and contributes to both themselves and others (Steger et al., 2012) Individuals who view their work as meaningful tend to have higher intrinsic motivation, leading to greater emotional and cognitive engagement in their work. Therefore, meaningful work is a relevant variable to investigate in the context of enhancing work engagement, particularly within the government bureaucracy sector (Lysova et al., 2019).

Previous research has demonstrated a positive relationship between meaningful work and work engagement. A study by Steger et al., (2012) found that meaningful work is closely associated with work engagement and individuals' psychological well-being.

Additionally, Allan et al., (2019) through their meta-analysis, concluded that meaningful work has a significant impact on various work outcomes, including work engagement. Other studies also indicate that psychological resources such as meaningful work can enhance work engagement through intrinsic motivation mechanisms (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). However, most of these studies were conducted in the private sector or non-governmental organizations, leaving a research gap within the context of government bureaucracy, particularly regarding civil servants whose job characteristics tend to be administrative, structured, and routine.

Given this research gap, this study makes a new contribution by examining the influence of meaningful work on job engagement among civil servants at the Regional Office of Ministry X in West Sumatra Province. Theoretically, this study is grounded in the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model, which posits that job resources and personal resources, such as meaningful work, can enhance individual motivation and work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Furthermore, the concept of meaningful work as a source of intrinsic motivation serves as a crucial foundation for explaining how individuals can find meaning even in routine work (Steger et al., 2012). Thus, this study not only reinforces previous findings but also expands the scope of research to the government sector.

The focus of this study is to examine the relationship between meaningful work and work engagement among employees at the Regional Office of Ministry X in West Sumatra Province. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to determine the level of meaningful work, to determine the level of work engagement, and to test the effect of meaningful work on work engagement. The results of this study are expected to contribute both theoretically to the development of industrial and organizational psychology and practically as a basis for enhancing employee work engagement through the strengthening of meaningful work.

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach with the aim of testing the causal relationship between meaningful work as the independent variable and work engagement as the dependent variable. The quantitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to measure variables objectively and analyze relationships between variables using statistical techniques (Azwar, 2017; Sugiyono, 2017). The research design used is a causal design with

simple linear regression analysis. This design is used to determine the extent of the influence of meaningful work on work engagement among employees. The study was conducted as a cross-sectional study, meaning data were collected only once without any specific treatment of the research subjects.

The research sample was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in a sample size of 106 respondents. The sampling technique employed was probability sampling using the simple random sampling method, ensuring that every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected for the study (Sugiyono, 2017). The instruments used in this study consisted of two psychological scales: the Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI), developed by Steger et al., (2012) to measure the level of meaningful work, and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), developed by (Schaufeli et al., 2002) to measure work engagement. Both instruments use a Likert scale and have been proven to have good validity and reliability in various previous studies. Data collection was conducted by distributing questionnaires directly to respondents who met the study criteria.

This study was conducted from February 2025 to April 2026, with phases including instrument preparation, pilot testing, data collection, and data processing and analysis. The main data collection process took approximately one month. Data analysis in this study was conducted in several stages, namely descriptive analysis to describe data characteristics, assumption tests including normality and linearity tests, and simple linear regression analysis to test the research hypotheses. Data processing was performed using statistical software, with decision-making criteria based on significance levels ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant effect of the meaningful work variable on work engagement(Azwar, 2017).

RESULTS

Descriptive test

Table 1. Description of Research Subjects Based on Gender

Gender	Amount	Presentase
Man	67	63.2%
Woman	39	36.8%
Amount	106	100%

Based on table 1. Description of Research Subjects Based on Gender, it can be seen that the majority of the research subjects were male employees, amounting to 67 people (63.2%), while the research subjects were female, amounting to 39 people (36.8%).

Table 2. Description of Research Subjects Based on Employment Status

Employee Status	Amount	Presentase
Permanent Civil Servant	86	81.1%
Contractual Government Employee	20	18.9%
Amount	106	100%

Based on table 2. Description of Research Subjects Based on Employment Status, it can be seen that the number of subjects with Permanent Civil Servant employee status is 86 people (81.1%), while the number of subjects with Contractual Government Employee status is 20 people (18.9%).

Classical Assumption Test

1. Normality Test

Table 3. Normality Test

Variable	SD	Mean	K-SZ	P	Description
Work Engagement	4.756	55.74	0.743	0.639	Normal
Meaningful Work	2.648	32.87	1.252	0.087	Normal

Based on table 3. Normality Test , work engagement has a p value = 0.639 (>0.05) and meaningful work is p = 0.087 (>0.05), meaning that both data from these two variables are normally distributed and meet the requirements for parametric analysis.

2. Linearity test

Table 4. Linearity Test

		F	p
Linearity		171.524	0 .000
Deviation from linearity		1.821	0.056

Based on table 4. Linearity Test , the analysis results showed a linearity value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) and a deviation from linearity of 0.056 ($p > 0.05$). Thus, the relationship between meaningful work and work engagement is linear, thus meeting the assumptions for simple linear regression analysis.

3. Hypothesis Testing for Simple Linear Regression

Table 5. R Square Test

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.455	0.207	0.199	4.256

Based on table 5. Square Test, the R value is 0.455, indicating a positive relationship with moderate strength between meaningful work and work engagement. The R Square value of 0.207 indicates that meaningful work contributes 20.7% to work engagement,

while the remaining 79.3% is influenced by other factors outside the study. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.199 indicates that after model adjustment, the effective contribution of meaningful work to work engagement is 19.9%. The Std. Error of the Estimate value of 4.256 indicates the level of error in the regression model's predictions.

Table 6. F Test

Model	F	Sig.
Regression	27.121	0.000

Based on table 6. F test, an F-value of 37.121 was obtained with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This result indicates that the regression model used is significant, meaning that the independent variables simultaneously influence the dependent variable.

Table 7. Regression Equation Test

Model	B	T	Sig.
(Constant)	28.889	5.586	0.000
Meaningful Work	0.817	5.208	0.000

Based on table 7. Regression Equation Test, the results of a simple linear regression test, the meaningful work variable has a regression coefficient of 0.817 with a t value of 5.208 and a significance of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). These results indicate that meaningful work has a significant effect on the dependent variable. A positive regression coefficient indicates that the higher the meaningfulness of work, the higher the dependent variable. Each one-unit increase in meaningful work will increase the dependent variable by 0.817 units. The constant value of 28.889 indicates that when meaningful work is zero, the predicted value of the dependent variable is 28.889.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of meaningful work on work engagement among employees at the Regional Office of Ministry X, West Sumatra. This study involved 106 research subjects, all employees of the Regional Office of Ministry X, West Sumatra, with varying backgrounds, employment status, age, length of service, and positions. The results of this research hypothesis testing using simple linear regression analysis obtained a significance value of 0.000 <0.05, concluding that meaningful work significantly influences work engagement among employees at the Regional Office of Ministry X, West Sumatra. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis was accepted and the initial hypothesis was rejected. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient (R) was 0.455,

indicating a moderate relationship. This finding indicates that the higher an employee's perception of the meaning of their work, the higher their level of engagement with it.

These results align with research by Muchtadin (2023) which shows that meaningful work is a psychological factor that plays a role in increasing work engagement among workers. Although the study also included other variables such as job satisfaction and resilience, these findings still reinforce the importance of meaningful work in building individual engagement with their work. In the context of this study, despite using only one independent variable, the results still show a significant effect. The coefficient of determination (R Square) obtained was 0.207, indicating that meaningful work contributed 20.7% to work engagement, while the remaining 79.3% was influenced by other factors outside the study. Based on this, although considered weak, this study still strengthens previous research which showed that work engagement has a significant effect on work engagement. This is in line with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model proposed by (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) which states that work engagement is influenced by various factors such as job resources, organizational support, and individual characteristics. Thus, meaningful work is an important factor, but not the only one that determines the level of work engagement.

Based on descriptive analysis, it was found that the majority of respondents were in the high category for both meaningful work and work engagement. This indicates that employees at the Regional Office of Ministry X in West Sumatra have a positive perception of the meaning of their work and demonstrate high levels of work engagement (Albrecht et al., 2021) This may be influenced by the characteristics of government sector work, which often involves public service, fostering a sense of contribution to the wider community. Regarding aspects of work engagement, the results indicate that vigor and absorption are in the high category, while dedication tends to be in the medium category (Sari & Yuniawan Ahyar, 2021) This indicates that employees have high energy and involvement in their work, but their level of emotional dedication can still be improved. According to (Schaufeli et al., 2002) work engagement consists of three main dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption, all of which play a role in creating optimal work engagement.

When examining aspects of meaningful work, the majority of respondents were in the high category, particularly in the "greater good motivations" aspect. This indicates that employees are driven to benefit others through their work. This finding is consistent with research by (Allan et al., 2019) which states that individuals who view their work as a means

to positively impact others tend to have higher levels of engagement. These results are also supported by research by (Amalina et al., 2024) which showed that meaningful work influences work engagement in caregivers in social care institutions. These findings reinforce the idea that individuals who view their work as meaningful tend to be more emotionally and psychologically engaged. In this study, despite the different work context, namely a government bureaucracy, the results remained consistent, indicating that the role of meaningful work is universal across various types of jobs (Chen et al., 2022) This is supported by previous research showing that meaningful work is a strong predictor of work engagement across occupational sectors and cultural contexts (Martela & Pessi, 2018). Furthermore, recent studies confirm that the relationship between meaningful work and engagement remains significant even in structured and formal work environments such as public sector organizations (Lips-Wiersma et al., 2020).

The findings of this study are also consistent with those Jenderal & Yani (2025) who stated that meaningful work acts as a motivational factor in increasing work engagement. In the military context, characterized by discipline and command, meaningful work has been shown to increase work engagement. This demonstrates that the role of work meaning is not limited to one particular type of organization but can be applied across various contexts, including government bureaucratic environments, as in this study. Furthermore, research by Rahmi et al., (2021) indicates that meaningful work can act as a mediator in the relationship between work stress and work engagement. This means that work meaning can be a factor that strengthens work engagement even under conditions of work pressure. Although this study did not examine stress as a variable, the results still indicate that meaningful work has a direct, significant influence on work engagement (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). This is supported by recent findings that meaningful work acts as an internal motivational resource that helps employees maintain engagement despite high job demands (De Clercq et al., 2019) Overall, these results reinforce the idea that meaningful work plays a significant role in increasing work engagement. When employees perceive their work as valuable and purposeful, they are more actively engaged, have more energy, and demonstrate a higher level of commitment to their work. Empirical studies also confirm that meaningful work is positively associated with higher levels of energy, persistence, and commitment, which are essential components of work engagement (Fletcher L & Schofield, 2021)

This study has several limitations that should be noted. First, the research model, which includes only meaningful work as the sole predictor variable, demonstrates relatively limited explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.207$), and thus cannot fully capture the complexity of the factors determining work engagement. Furthermore, the research context, which is limited to a single government agency, restricts the generalization of the findings to other organizational contexts with different characteristics. Therefore, future research is advised to include additional variables and expand the scope of the study to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing work engagement.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that meaningful work has a positive and significant influence on work engagement among employees at the Regional Office of Ministry X in West Sumatra Province. The higher the perceived meaningfulness of work, the higher the employees' work engagement. This study contributes to the development of industrial and organizational psychology, particularly regarding the role of meaningful work as a psychological resource in enhancing work engagement. Future research is recommended to expand the sample and research context, as well as to include additional variables such as work stress, job satisfaction, or organizational commitment, including testing the role of mediation or moderation to yield more comprehensive results.

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