

Nurturing Service-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior Through Inclusive Leadership: The Mediating Role Of Employee Work Engagement Among Zillennial Employees In Public Sector Institutions

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Abstract

The increasing dominance of Millennials and Generation Z in the public-sector workforce highlights the need to understand the behavioral dynamics of Zillennials, a micro-generation that blends characteristics of both cohorts. This study examines the influence of inclusive leadership on Service-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior (SO-OCB) and assesses the mediating role of employee work engagement among Zillennial civil servants in Indonesia. Using a quantitative explanatory design, data were collected from 294 respondents through a cross-sectional online survey and analyzed using PLS-SEM (SmartPLS 4). The results show that inclusive leadership positively affects both employee work engagement and SO-OCB, with employee work engagement acting as a significant mediator. The indirect effect of inclusive leadership on SO-OCB via employee work engagement is stronger than the direct effect, underscoring engagement as a central psychological mechanism shaping service-oriented extra-role behavior. These findings align with Social Exchange Theory, suggesting that supportive and participatory leadership fosters reciprocal contributions that enhance public service quality. The study contributes to a growing body of literature on younger public servants and offers practical insights for strengthening leadership practices and engagement strategies in Indonesia's public institutions.

Keywords: inclusive leadership, zillennials, employee work engagement, service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior, public sector

Abstrak

Meningkatnya dominasi Milenial dan Generasi Z dalam tenaga kerja di sektor publik menyoroti perlunya memahami dinamika perilaku Zillennial, yakni sebuah generasi mikro yang memadukan karakteristik dari kedua kohort tersebut. Penelitian ini menguji pengaruh kepemimpinan inklusif terhadap Perilaku Kewargaan Organisasi Berorientasi Pelayanan (*Service-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior/SO-OCB*) dan menilai peran mediasi dari keterikatan kerja pegawai (*employee work engagement*) di kalangan aparatur sipil negara (ASN) Zillennial di Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan desain eksplanatori kuantitatif, data dikumpulkan dari 294 responden melalui survei daring potong lintang (*cross-sectional*) dan dianalisis menggunakan PLS-SEM (SmartPLS 4). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan inklusif berpengaruh positif terhadap keterikatan kerja pegawai maupun SO-OCB, di mana keterikatan kerja pegawai berperan sebagai mediator yang signifikan. Efek tidak langsung dari kepemimpinan inklusif

terhadap SO-OCB melalui keterikatan kerja pegawai lebih kuat dibandingkan efek langsungnya, yang menegaskan bahwa keterikatan merupakan mekanisme psikologis utama dalam membentuk perilaku peran-extra (*extra-role behavior*) yang berorientasi pada pelayanan. Temuan ini sejalan dengan *Social Exchange Theory*, yang mengindikasikan bahwa kepemimpinan yang mendukung dan partisipatif akan mendorong kontribusi timbal balik yang dapat meningkatkan kualitas pelayanan publik. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada literatur yang terus berkembang mengenai aparatur sipil negara berusia muda dan menawarkan wawasan praktis untuk memperkuat praktik kepemimpinan serta strategi keterikatan pegawai di berbagai institusi publik di Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: kepemimpinan inklusif, zillennial, keterikatan kerja pegawai, perilaku kewarganegaraan organisasi berorientasi pelayanan, sektor publik.

INTRODUCTION

Global workforce dynamics are shifting rapidly, with Millennials and Generation Z projected to constitute 74% of the global labor force by 2030 (Leba, 2025). In Indonesia, these generations already dominate the labor market, accounting for 59.69% of employed individuals aged 15–44 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2025) forming a critical foundation for the country's demographic bonus toward Indonesia Emas 2045 (Muzakki, 2024). Within this broader demographic landscape, a micro-generation known as Zillennials those born between the late Millennial and early Gen Z cohorts represents an increasingly strategic segment in public-sector organizations. Although positioned as an intergenerational bridge with strong digital orientation and collaborative tendencies, research examining their work attitudes and behavioral tendencies remains limited (Bodrick et al., 2025).

Younger public-sector employees demonstrate distinct expectations compared to prior generations, prioritizing meaningful work, fairness, transparency, flexible work arrangements, and opportunities for continuous growth (Chaudhry, 2024; Deloitte, 2025). This aligns with the intrinsic purpose of public service, which offers avenues for broader societal contribution (Phan & Bae, 2021). However, emerging concerns such as declining job satisfaction (Bhuiyan, 2023), lower employee work engagement among younger cohorts (Šakyatė-Statnickė et al., 2023) and increasing expressions of dissatisfaction on social media (Nindita & Umasugi, 2022) risks to organizational performance. These patterns are frequently

linked to reduced commitment and weaker discretionary contributions at work (Han et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2024). Additional challenges arise from financial insecurity, which drives many young civil servants to pursue secondary jobs, potentially diminishing focus and productivity (Rohmah, 2022; Sharma & Rautela, 2024).

Such conditions underscore the urgent need to strengthen antecedents of positive extra-role behavior in the public sector. Organizational performance today increasingly relies on employees' willingness to engage in discretionary, service-enhancing actions known as Service-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior (SO-OCB) (Shang et al., 2024; Tsai et al., 2022). Yet many public organizations fall short in cultivating these behaviors due to limited understanding of the factors that shape them (de Geus et al., 2020; Obedgiu et al., 2020). Prior studies identify employee work engagement (EWE) as a central psychological mechanism driving SO-OCB, where employees who feel energized, dedicated, and absorbed in their roles are more likely to deliver proactive, citizen-focused service (Alqhaiwi & Luu, 2024; Karim et al., 2024). EWE itself is influenced strongly by leadership practices that provide support, recognition, and empowerment qualities increasingly demanded by Millennials and Zillennials (Li & Id, 2023). Inclusive leadership, characterized by openness, accessibility, and appreciation of diverse contributions, has gained prominence as a leadership style capable of enhancing engagement and fostering positive service behaviors in modern public institutions (Li et al.,

2024; Wang et al., 2024). As younger employees expect participatory and supportive leadership, inclusive leaders can create the psychological safety and involvement needed to elevate engagement and strengthen SO-OCB.

The phenomenon of inclusive leadership among civil servants (ASN), as observed by the researchers, indicates that leaders are not always able to create an inclusive work environment. In such situations, ASN in Indonesia may feel underappreciated and less motivated to contribute actively to the organization. Non-inclusive leadership may also trigger polarization within work teams, particularly when leaders fail to facilitate open dialogue and inclusive decision-making, resulting in conflicts that undermine overall team performance (Rahman et al., 2023).

Work engagement among Indonesian civil servants (ASN) has become an important issue in recent years, as several findings indicate that engagement levels in public institutions remain relatively low. Low work engagement is reflected in limited responsibility toward work, weak enthusiasm, low concentration, and reduced dedication, which may appear in behaviors such as lack of discipline, absenteeism, and limited initiative in carrying out organizational duties. This condition suggests that work engagement is not merely about physical presence at work, but also about employees' psychological connection, energy, involvement, and commitment to their roles. Therefore, strengthening ASN work engagement is essential to encourage more proactive, adaptive, and service-oriented behavior in the context of bureaucratic transformation (Wiguna et al., 2024).

Given the demographic significance of Zillennials and their unique expectations in the workplace, empirical research examining how leadership and engagement shape their service-oriented behaviors remains limited but urgently needed. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of inclusive leadership on Service-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior through the mediating role of employee work engagement among Zillennial civil servants in Indonesia's public sector. This research contributes to a deeper

understanding of behavioral dynamics within a transforming bureaucracy and provides evidence-based insights to advance public-sector HR reforms aligned with Indonesia's long-term governance agenda.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative explanatory design using a cross-sectional online survey targeting Zillennial civil servants (born 1992–2002) in a central public institution. A probability-purposive sampling strategy was applied, and all variables were measured on a seven-point Likert scale. Inclusive leadership was assessed using the nine-item scale of (Carmeli et al., 2010), modeled unidimensionally following (Akgerman et al., 2025). Employee work engagement was measured with the Utrecht Employee work engagement Scale (W. B. Schaufeli et al., 2006), and SO-OCB with items adapted from (Bettencourt et al., 2001). Data were analyzed using PLS-SEM (SmartPLS 4). Convergent and discriminant validity were confirmed through loadings, AVE, CR, Cronbach's Alpha, and HTMT (Hair et al., 2019). Structural evaluation included VIF checks (all < 5) and bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples to test path significance.

This study draws its population from Civil Servants (PNS) employed at the Trade Management Institution—an Indonesian ministry responsible for domestic and international trade, consumer protection, and commercial order enforcement—using a probability sampling method with a purposive sampling approach (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The sample criteria require respondents to belong to the Zillennial generation (born 1992–2002) with a minimum of one year of service, as employees with less than one year remain in probationary status as Civil Servant Candidates (CPNS) under Government Regulation No. 11 of 2017 in conjunction with Government Regulation No. 17 of 2020, and are still undergoing organizational socialization to acquire the attitudes, skills, and knowledge necessary to adapt to their new environment (Fröhlich et al., 2025). The study further focuses on employees with fewer than ten years of service, as shorter-tenured employees tend to exhibit greater cognitive flexibility and are more

active in exploring new work approaches and creative processes compared to longer-serving counterparts (Yang et al., 2022) making them more receptive to new ideas and innovations, including those related to improving public service quality (Bodrick et al., 2025; Moffett et al., 2023). Geographically, the sample is limited to civil servants working in Jakarta and its surrounding areas to ensure a homogeneous level of perception regarding administrative and governance challenges (Fadlifah & Kurnia, 2024), while also reflecting the unique complexity of public service delivery in a metropolitan context characterized by extreme population density, diverse service users, and high public expectations (Aulia & Andhini, 2025). In sum, the population of this study consists of Zillennial-generation civil servants (born 1992–2002) at the Trade Management Institution who have served for at least one year, are not employed under fixed-term contracts, and are stationed in the Jakarta metropolitan area.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Definition

Inclusive leadership describes leaders' openness, availability, and accessibility in valuing employees' contributions (Carmeli et al., 2010). Employee work engagement, defined as a positive state of vigor, dedication, and focus, reflects employees' psychological connection to their roles and is associated with stronger performance outcomes (Kahn, 1990; W. Schaufeli, 2021). Service-Oriented OCB (SO-OCB) refers to voluntary behaviors that enhance public service quality through enthusiasm, responsibility, and proactive service delivery (Bettencourt et al., 2001; Tsai et al., 2022), emphasizing loyalty and service improvement rather than individual customer satisfaction (Podsakoff et al., 2016). Zillennials are a micro-generation positioned between Millennials and Generation Z (Moffett et al., 2023), typically born between 1992 and 2002 (Ward, 2023). They blend Millennial characteristics with Gen Z traits, functioning as a bridging cohort in modern workplaces (Moffett et al., 2023). Zillennials tend to prefer leadership styles that are transparent, supportive, and participatory aligning with the expectations of Millennials and Gen Z for fairness, openness, and

collaborative decision-making (Chaudhry, 2024; Fuchs et al., 2024). Compared to older generations, they show stronger expectations for leaders who communicate openly, provide guidance, and validate employee contributions (Chillakuri, 2020; Lallukka, 2024).

Hyphoteses Development

1. Inclusive Leadership and Service-Oriented OCB

Inclusive leadership refers to leaders who demonstrate openness, accessibility, and availability, enabling employees to feel respected, heard, and valued (Carmeli et al., 2010). Through the lens of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), employees tend to reciprocate such supportive leadership through behaviors that benefit the organization, including extra-role contributions. Prior studies show that inclusive leaders foster trust, psychological safety, and a sense of belonging, which in turn enhance employees' willingness to go beyond prescribed duties, particularly in service settings (Z. Li et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024). In public service organizations, these positive leader–employee exchanges are associated with higher levels of service-oriented citizenship behaviors, such as proactive service delivery, loyalty to service users, and active participation in improving service processes (Li et al., 2024).

H1: Inclusive leadership positively influences Service-Oriented OCB.

2. Inclusive Leadership and Employee Work Engagement

Inclusive leadership has also been identified as a key antecedent of employee work engagement, as leaders who show openness, appreciation, and accessibility fulfill employees' needs for support, recognition, and meaningful involvement at work (Bao et al., 2022; Ly, 2024). By fostering psychological safety and empowering employees to express ideas and participate in decision-making, inclusive leaders enhance employees' emotional and cognitive investment in their roles (Carmeli et al., 2010). Empirical evidence demonstrates that such leadership behaviors strengthen employees' vigor, dedication, and absorption core dimensions of employee work engagement (Akgerman et al., 2025). This suggests that

employees who perceive their leaders as inclusive are more motivated to contribute fully and persistently to their work.

H2: Inclusive leadership positively influences employee work engagement.

3. Employee Work Engagement and Service-Oriented OCB

Employee work engagement, characterized by energy, enthusiasm, and deep involvement in one's work (W. Schaufeli, 2021), has been widely linked to positive discretionary behaviors, including OCB. Engaged employees are more willing to exert additional effort, assist others, and contribute to organizational effectiveness beyond formal job requirements. In service-oriented contexts, high engagement is particularly important, as it promotes proactive service behaviors, creativity in solving user problems, and stronger commitment to service excellence (Ma et al., 2023; Mostafa, 2022). Research consistently shows that engaged employees are more likely to display SO-OCB because they feel emotionally connected to their work and motivated to enhance service quality.

H3: Employee work engagement positively influences Service-Oriented OCB.

Respondent Profile

The respondent profile shows 294 Zillennial civil servants born between 1992 and 2002. Most participants are female (60.2%), have 2–5 years of tenure (76.2%), and hold a bachelor's degree (68.7%). The majority occupy functional positions (65.3%) with rank classifications of Penata Muda (III/a) and Penata Muda Tingkat I (III/b), each representing around 40%. Birth-year distribution is dominated by cohorts from 1993 to 1997, reflecting the core Zillennial group targeted in this study. Overall, the sample provides a representative demographic overview of young civil servants in Indonesia's public sector.

Measurement Model

This study employed the PLS-SEM method using SmartPLS 4 to assess both the measurement and structural models. The method was chosen for its ability to handle complex models combining reflective and formative constructs. Convergent validity was tested using factor

loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR), all meeting recommended thresholds (Hair et al., 2019). Reliability was supported by acceptable Cronbach's Alpha and CR values. Discriminant validity was examined using the HTMT ratio (Hair et al., 2021), with all values below 0.85 confirming that the constructs were empirically distinct. These results indicate that the measurement model demonstrates satisfactory validity and reliability. The summary of reliability and validity indicators is presented in Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4 below.

Table 1. Internal Consistency Reliability and Convergent Validity

Measurement Items	Outer Loadings	CA	Rho_A	CR	AVE
Inclusive Leadership		0,959	0,963	0,965	0,755
IL01	0,891				
IL02	0,875				
IL03	0,881				
IL04	0,874				
IL05	0,877				
IL06	0,900				
IL07	0,852				
IL08	0,905				
IL09	0,754				
Employee Work Engagement		0,912	0,920	0,928	0,592
EWE01	0,821				
EWE02	0,748				
EWE03	0,74				
EWE04	0,856				
EWE05	0,87				
EWE06	0,74				
EWE07	0,785				
EWE08	0,662				
EWE09	0,673				
Service-oriented OCB		0,765	0,765	0,865	0,681
Loyalty		0,835	0,834	0,883	0,603
LOY01	0,800				
LOY02	0,833				
LOY03	0,754				
LOY04	0,748				
LOY05	0,744				
Service Delivery		0,830	0,842	0,876	0,542
SDEL01	0,806				
SDEL02	0,792				
SDEL03	0,735				
SDEL04	0,613				
SDEL05	0,687				
SDEL06	0,767				
Participation		0,860	0,868	0,901	0,647
PAR01	0,733				
PAR02	0,905				
PAR03	0,873				
PAR04	0,804				
PAR05	0,684				

Source: Authors

We measure correlation in this study was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker (F–L) criterion and the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) to evaluate discriminant validity among the constructs in the model.

Table 2. Correlations among the construct using Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Construct	1	2	3	4	5
Inclusive Leadership	0.869				
Employee Work Engagement	0.474	0.769			
LOY	0.299	0.448	0.776		
SDEL	0.316	0.446	0.442	0.736	
PAR	0.272	0.458	0.561	0.563	0.804

Source: Authors

Table 3. Correlations among the construct using HTMT

Construct	1	2	3	4	5
Inclusive Leadership	—				
Employee Work Engagement	0.498	—			
LOY	0.334	0.508	—		
SDEL	0.341	0.507	0.839	—	
PAR	0.297	0.514	0.66	0.661	—

Source: Authors

Structural Model

The assessment of the structural model indicates acceptable explanatory and predictive power. Inclusive leadership accounts for 22.4% of the variance in employee work engagement ($R^2 = 0.224$), while employee work engagement together with inclusive leadership explains 31.3% of the variance in Service-Oriented OCB ($R^2 = 0.313$). Both endogenous constructs show positive Q^2 values (WE $Q^2 = 0.212$; SO-OCB $Q^2 = 0.119$), confirming satisfactory predictive relevance of the model.

In terms of effect size (f^2), inclusive leadership exerts a medium effect on employee work engagement ($f^2 = 0.289$), whereas its direct effect on SO-OCB is small ($f^2 = 0.019$). By contrast, employee work engagement has a medium effect on SO-OCB ($f^2 = 0.267$), reinforcing the earlier finding that the indirect pathway $IL \rightarrow WE \rightarrow SO-OCB$ is more substantial than the direct $IL \rightarrow SO-OCB$ relationship. Taken together, these results highlight employee work engagement as a key mechanism through

which inclusive leadership enhances service-oriented citizenship behavior among Zillennial civil servants.

Table 4. The Result of Structural Model

H	Relation	Std. Beta	T Val.	P Val.	BCI	VIF
1	IL -> EWE	0,474	9,089	0,000	0,379-0,550	1,000
2	IL -> SO-OCB	0,129	2,040	0,021	0,019-0,230	1,289
3	EWE -> SO-OCB	0,486	10,774	0,000	0,005-0,406	1,289
4	IL -> EWE -> SO-OCB	0,230	6,494	0,000	0,174-0,289	

Source: Authors

Table 5. The Result of R², Q², F²

Construct	(R ²)	(Q ²)	Effect Size (F ²)
Inclusive Leadership			WE 0,289 (medium effect)
Employee Work Engagement	0,224	0,212	SO-OCB 0,019 (small effect)
Service Oriented OCB	0,313	0,119	0,267 (medium effect)

Source: Authors

The findings of this study reinforce Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which posits that employees reciprocate positive treatment from leaders with meaningful contributions to the organization. Inclusive leadership characterized by openness, accessibility, and appreciation of employee input emerges as a key driver of both employee work engagement and service-oriented extra-role behavior. When leaders invite participation, value contributions, and create psychologically safe environments, employees perceive high relational quality and respond with greater willingness to exceed formal job requirements (Akgerman et al., 2025). This pattern aligns with prior studies showing that inclusive leaders foster trust, respect, and a sense of belonging, which translate into enhanced service-focused OCB such as proactive problem solving and improved interaction with service users (Ma et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2024).

The results also show that inclusive leadership significantly enhances employee work engagement, consistent with research indicating that inclusive leaders meet employees' socioemotional needs and strengthen psychological safety (Bao et al., 2022; Ly, 2024). By demonstrating openness,

accessibility, and supportive communication, leaders create a collaborative climate in which employees feel valued and empowered, thereby increasing their vigor, dedication, and absorption in work. This finding is aligned with studies showing that inclusive leadership boosts employees' commitment and energy by providing emotional and instrumental support, recognizing ideas, and facilitating growth opportunities (Abdou et al., 2023; Akgerman et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the study confirms that employee work engagement plays a substantial role in strengthening service-oriented OCB. Employees who exhibit higher energy, enthusiasm, and cognitive involvement are more likely to engage in voluntary service behaviors that enhance organizational functioning and public service quality (Park & Kim, 2024; A. Rahman & Karim, 2022). Consistent with earlier findings, engaged public-sector employees are more willing to assist colleagues, take initiative, and deliver superior service beyond formal expectations (Ma et al., 2023; Mostafa, 2022). Taken together, these results highlight the importance of fostering inclusive leadership practices and strong engagement mechanisms to activate service-oriented citizenship behaviors essential to high-quality public service delivery.

CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that inclusive leadership is a significant driver of employee work engagement and Service-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior (SO-OCB) among Zillennial civil servants in Indonesia's public sector. The findings confirm that inclusive leaders those who are open, accessible, and appreciative of employee contribution directly foster SO-OCB, while exerting an even stronger influence through the mediating role of employee work engagement. This indirect pathway indicates that Zillennial employees are more likely to display proactive, service-enhancing behaviors when they feel energized, dedicated, and psychologically connected to their work. The structural model results further highlight that employee work engagement serves as the central mechanism linking leadership practices to discretionary service

behavior. These insights reinforce Social Exchange Theory, suggesting that positive leader–employee relationships encourage reciprocal contributions that extend beyond formal job duties. Practically, the findings underscore the importance of cultivating inclusive leadership capabilities and strengthening engagement-supportive work environments to enhance public service performance and meet the evolving expectations of younger generations in government institutions.

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