

Training, Coaching, Feedback: Trust-Based Engagement, Public Value in Public Organizations: Integrative Review

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Abstract

Purpose: This integrative review synthesizes evidence on how multi-component leadership development (training, coaching/mentoring, and structured feedback/action learning) shapes leader micro-behaviors that build employee engagement in public organizations and how engagement contributes to employee performance and public value.

Methodology: We reviewed 30 peer-reviewed journal articles (2016–2025) retrieved from Scopus, Web of Science, ProQuest, Google Scholar, and publisher platforms. Studies were screened for public and quasi-public settings and retained only when a variable Digital Object Identifier (DOI) was available for them.

Results: Four patterns emerged. First, bundled interventions are more likely to produce sustained behavioral transfer than stand-alone training. Second, micro-behavior's goal clarification, coaching conversations, empowering delegation, inclusive voice, and ethical transparency create job resources, psychological safety, and trust that activate engagement. Third, engaged employees exhibit higher task and adaptive performance, thereby enhancing service quality, innovation, and reform implementation. Fourth, digital governance and transparency initiatives amplify the engagement–public value link when accountability routines and performance information are credible, but severe resource constraints weaken this translation.

Conclusions: Leadership development should be designed as a continuous system embedded in work routines and evaluated using multilevel indicators from leader behavior change to engagement, performance, and public value.

Limitations: This review was limited to English-language journal articles with DOI links and did not estimate pooled effect sizes.

Contributions: This review proposes the Leadership Development-Engagement-Public Value (LDEP-V) model and research propositions to guide future testing in resource-constrained public organizations.

Keywords: *Digital Governance, Employee Engagement, Leadership Development, Public Organizations, Public Value*

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1. Introduction

Public organizations operate under persistent pressure to deliver reliable services, manage scarce resources, and maintain citizens' trust. In decentralized settings, these pressures often coexist with capability gaps, fragmented coordination, and high expectations of transparency. A growing managerial response is to invest in leadership development through training, coaching, and structured feedback to strengthen the capacity of supervisors and middle managers who translate policy into day-to-day practices. Simultaneously, employee engagement has become a central construct in organizational behavior and human resource development because it captures a positive, work-related state of mind reflected in

vigor, dedication, and absorption. Engagement matters in the public sector because service outcomes frequently depend on discretionary effort, collaboration, and frontline problem-solving rather than on formal incentives alone. Prior research suggests that leadership behaviors particularly transformational, servant, inclusive, and ethical leadership are associated with higher engagement, commitment, and performance in public and quasi-public organizations ([Andersen, Bjørnholt, Bro, & Holm-Petersen, 2018](#); [Fan, Feng, Robin, & Huang, 2023](#); [Gyensare, Kumedzro, Sanda, & Boso, 2017](#); [Sihombing, Astuti, Al Musadieq, Hamied, & Rahardjo, 2018](#)). Experimental evidence further indicates that leadership development interventions can change leader behaviors and, under certain conditions, improve organizational effectiveness ([Jacobsen, Andersen, Bøllingtoft, & Eriksen, 2022](#); [Jensen, 2018](#); [Lacerenza, Reyes, Marlow, Joseph, & Salas, 2017](#)).

However, the evidence base for this remains fragmented across disciplines. Public administration studies often focus on values, motivation, and governance outcomes, whereas HRD and management studies emphasize interventions and psychological mechanisms. Consequently, practitioners lack a clear synthesis of how leadership development programs translate into engagement and how engagement contributes to public value, including service performance and governance quality. Fragmentation is also visible in the growing digital governance agenda, where transparency reforms can change the way engagement is turned into trust and legitimacy ([Matheus & Janssen, 2020](#); [Ripamonti, 2024](#)). For example, digital transparency initiatives and fiscal transparency policies may require engaged employees to act as stewards of data quality, responsiveness, and accountability; however, these links are not consistently theorized.

Despite the growth of both literatures, at least four gaps remain. First, leadership development research in the public sector often emphasizes leadership styles, yet rarely specifies which intervention components (e.g., training versus coaching versus feedback) are necessary for sustained behavioral transfer. Second, engagement studies frequently treat leadership as a static antecedent and under-theorize the micro-behaviors and psychological mechanisms (e.g., trust and psychological safety) through which leaders convert development investments into engagement. Third, the engagement–public value link is often assumed rather than modelled; few studies connect engagement to concrete public value outcomes such as citizen trust, transparency, or legitimacy, especially in digital governance settings. Fourth, the context remains underexplored: resource constraints and red tape may limit whether leadership behaviors can create job resources and whether engagement translates into measurable performance improvements.

This study bridges these gaps by integrating public administration, HRD, and management evidence and proposing a novel Leadership Development–Engagement–Public Value (LDEP-V) model. The model specifies (i) multi-component leadership development interventions, (ii) leadership micro-behaviors most relevant to public-sector constraints (goal clarification, coaching and feedback, inclusive voice, and ethical transparency), (iii) engagement mechanisms (job resources, psychological safety, and trust), and (iv) downstream outcomes employee performance and public value indicators such as service quality, innovation, and transparency-driven citizen trust. This review culminates in refined research propositions and actionable guidance for resource-constrained public organizations.

These issues are particularly salient in emerging and decentralized administrative contexts, where reforms are implemented with limited managerial bandwidth. Leadership development is often pursued through short courses or compliance-based training, yet the transfer of learning to day-to-day supervision is uneven. Moreover, public organizations face distinctive motivational structures: employees may be driven by public service motivation and professional norms [Borst, Kruijen, and Lako \(2019\)](#); [Cooke, Brant, and Woods \(2019\)](#) but also operate within bureaucratic rules, political oversight, and resource constraints. In such environments, engagement cannot be assumed; it depends on whether leaders create enabling conditions, such as clarifying priorities, protecting staff from unnecessary red tape, and reinforcing integrity and fairness. Finally, the expansion of e-government, open data, and participatory budgeting has increased public performance visibility. Therefore, engagement matters not only for in-

ternal productivity but also for the credibility of transparency and accountability reforms, because front-line staff must maintain data quality, respond to citizen feedback, and sustain service improvements over time.

This integrative review addresses these gaps by answering three questions: (1) What forms of leadership development are most commonly linked to leadership behavior change in public organizations? (2) Through which mechanisms do leader behaviors foster employee engagement? (3) Under what conditions does engagement translate into public value outcomes, such as service performance, transparency, and citizen trust?

This study makes three contributions. First, the review organizes fragmented evidence into a coherent set of themes spanning leadership development interventions, leader micro-behaviors, engagement mechanisms, and public value outcomes. Second, it introduces the Leadership Development–Engagement–Public Value (LDEP-V) model, which specifies how training–coaching–feedback bundles translate into engagement through trust, psychological safety, and job resources, ultimately improving employee performance and citizen-facing results. Third, it develops refined research propositions and actionable guidance for decentralized, resource-constrained settings navigating digital governance and transparency reforms. Although employee engagement has been widely reviewed across sectors ([Bailey, Madden, Alfes, and Fletcher \(2017\)](#); [Kim et al. \(2017\)](#)), public organizations raise distinctive questions about how engagement is built under bureaucratic constraints and how it contributes to public value ([Abenoja, Blase, & Almagro, 2025](#)).

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Leadership Development in Public Organizations

Leadership development in the public sector includes formal classroom-based training, coaching, action-learning projects, mentoring, and structured feedback systems. Evidence from experimental and quasi-experimental studies suggests that leadership training can change leader behaviors and, under certain conditions, improve organizational effectiveness ([Jacobsen et al., 2022](#); [Jensen, 2018](#); [Lacerenza et al., 2017](#)). Systematic reviews in sectoral contexts, such as healthcare and higher education, highlight that leadership development is most effective when it is continuous and embedded in work systems rather than delivered as one-off events ([Alessa, 2021](#); [Sfantou et al., 2017](#)). Concrete public-sector examples include (i) field-experimental leadership training for municipal managers that teaches goal-setting, performance dialogues, and feedback routines and evaluates behavioral transfer over time; (ii) blended leadership development for public higher-education leaders that combines workshops with coaching and mentoring to strengthen supervisory support and communication ([Alessa, 2021](#)) and (iii) clinical leadership development programs in public hospitals that emphasize team communication, ethical decision-making, and service improvement projects ([Sfantou et al., 2017](#)).

In resource-constrained public institutions, recent evidence from Indonesian Sinta-indexed outlets also illustrates that training initiatives can be evaluated through simple pre–post designs and linked to performance indicators, providing feasible templates for leadership development evaluation when budgets and analytic capacity are limited for example ([Aliasuddin, Rahmi, Tabrani, Nashrillah, & Fachrurrozi, 2022](#); [Ngaliman, Catrayasa, & Khairil, 2024](#)). Public organizations often implement leadership programs as compliance or capacity-building initiatives; however, their outcomes are rarely traced to employees' psychological states. This is an important omission because the public sector relies heavily on behavioral consistency, service orientation, and ethical conduct to deliver public value. A key question is whether leadership development changes leader behaviors that are salient for employees' daily experience (e.g., support, clarity, fairness) and therefore likely to affect engagement.

2.2 Employee Engagement as a Strategic Resource

Employee engagement refers to a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2017](#); [Mazzetti et al., 2023](#)). Reviews of the engagement literature show that engagement is linked to performance, well-being, and retention, but measurement and causal inference remain uneven across studies ([Bailey et al., 2017](#); [Kim et al., 2017](#)). In public organizations, engagement is especially relevant because employee behavior directly shapes service

encounters and the implementation of reforms. Recent evidence from the *Annals of Management and Organization Research* indicates that organizational climate and employer–employee relations are important antecedents of employee engagement ([Arimie, 2019](#); [Phina, Ogechukwuand, & Shallom, 2021](#)). For the purposes of this review, engagement is treated as a strategic capability: a relatively stable organizational resource that can be developed through leadership systems, work design, and human resource practices. This view is consistent with the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory by [Bakker and Demerouti \(2017\)](#) and complements public administration scholarship on capacity and governance because it recognizes that public value depends not only on formal rules but also on the quality of everyday effort and problem solving.

2.3 From Leadership Development to Leader Behaviours

Leadership development is expected to influence employee outcomes, primarily through leader behaviours. For example, transformational leadership emphasizes vision, inspiration, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Evidence from public personnel contexts indicates that transformational leadership can support perceived professional quality and service performance ([Andersen et al., 2018](#); [Fan et al., 2023](#)). Beyond transformational leadership, ethical leadership is critical for public organizations because it connects leadership conduct to integrity, equity, and inclusion. Recent work highlights ethical leadership as a lever for realizing diversity, equity, and inclusion in public organizations [Moon and Christensen \(2022\)](#), and as a concept requiring clearer boundaries and measurement ([Banks, Fischer, Gooty, & Stock, 2021](#)). Leadership development programs may also encourage servant leadership behaviors that prioritize employee needs and ethical service, which have been associated with rewards, culture, and performance outcomes ([Sihombing et al., 2018](#)). This implies that leadership development should be assessed not only by participant satisfaction but also by observable behavior change.

2.4 Mechanisms Linking Leader Behaviours and Engagement

The reviewed studies suggest two broad sets of engagement mechanisms. First, psychological mechanisms concern the conditions under which employees experience their work as meaningful, safe, and enabling (e.g., psychological safety and Self-Efficacy (S-E)). Second, relational mechanisms emphasize trust, support, and clarity in leader–employee relationships. Empirical studies in public organizations have shown that trust can mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and service performance, as well as engagement-related outcomes ([Fan et al., 2023](#)). Goal clarity and trust in management foster work engagement and intentions to stay ([Bao & Ge, 2019](#); [Bellamkonda, Santhanam, & Pattusamy, 2021](#)). In addition, self-efficacy and leader support shape the extent to which transformational leadership translates into job performance ([Sürücü, Maslakçı, & Sesen, 2022](#)). Supportive leadership can also strengthen relational resources such as leader–member exchange, which in turn predicts positive employee outcomes, including creativity ([Prinhandaka, Rohman, & Wijaya, 2023](#)).

The literature also highlights the organizational culture and commitment as complementary mechanisms. Culture can influence commitment and performance, and may strengthen or weaken leadership effects ([Nikpour, 2017](#)). Structural models suggest that engagement mediates relationships between transformational leadership, affective commitment, and job performance ([Jiwon Park, Han, Kim, & Kim, 2022](#)). Consistent with this system perspective, evidence indicates that organizational culture and work engagement jointly predict work performance ([Maryati, Panjaitan, & Sukmawati, 2022](#)). Evidence from local government units also suggests a positive association between organizational culture and leadership style ([Abenoja et al., 2025](#)).

2.5 From Engagement to Public Value Outcomes

While engagement is frequently studied as an internal HR outcome, public organizations ultimately aim to deliver public value in terms of service performance, innovation, transparency, legitimacy, and fiscal sustainability. Studies on public service performance link transformational leadership and engagement-related climates to quality outcomes ([Andersen et al., 2018](#); [Borst, Kruijen, Lako, & de Vries, 2020](#); [Dung, 2024](#); [Gyensare et al., 2017](#); [Mazzetti et al., 2023](#)). Digital governance and transparency reforms create new pathways through which engagement can be translated into broader governance outcomes.

Open government data can enable transparency, but its effectiveness depends on organizational capabilities and processes that are often maintained by engaged staff ([Matheus & Janssen, 2020](#)).

Policy tools aimed at transparency may also increase citizen trust when citizens are informed, and public organizations respond credibly ([Ripamonti, 2024](#)). Budget transparency has also been discussed as a factor related to financial sustainability in the public sector ([Cuadrado-Ballesteros & Bisogno, 2022](#); [Jin & Wang, 2025](#)). Public participation can influence spending priorities and accountability, and may require engaged employees who facilitate participatory processes ([Jinsol Park, Butler, & Petrovsky, 2023](#)). In decentralized settings, transparency and trust can strengthen citizen participation, [Arkorful, Lugu, Hammond, and Basiru \(2021\)](#) suggest that engagement can indirectly support governance outcomes through improved responsiveness and implementation.

2.6 Research Propositions

- P*₁: Multi-component leadership development interventions (training + coaching/mentoring + structured feedback/action learning) are positively associated with specific leader micro-behavior's goal clarification, coaching and developmental feedback, empowering delegation, inclusive voice, and ethical transparency in public organizations.
- P*₂: Multi-component leadership development interventions (training + coaching/mentoring + structured feedback/action learning) are positively associated with specific leader micro-behavior's goal clarification, coaching and developmental feedback, empowering delegation, inclusive voice, and ethical transparency in public organizations.
- P*₃: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between leaders' micro-behaviors and employee performance (task and adaptive performance), which in turn contributes to public value outcomes such as service quality, innovation, and reform implementation.
- P*₄: The engagement–performance–public value pathway is strengthened when digital governance and transparency reforms provide credible channels for responsiveness and accountability (e.g., reliable performance data, open feedback loops, and learning-oriented accountability routines).
- P*₅: Public service motivation strengthens the positive effect of leaders' micro-behaviors on engagement, whereas resource constraints and red tape weaken (a) the translation of leadership development into sustained leader behavior change and (b) the conversion of engagement into performance and public value outcomes.

3. Methodology

This study uses an integrative literature review approach to synthesize evidence across public administration, HRD, and management. Integrative reviews are suitable when the literature is conceptually fragmented, and the aim is to generate a coherent framework and agenda for research.

Search strategy: The literature search was conducted between July and August 2025 using Scopus, Web of Science Core Collection, ProQuest, and Google Scholar, complemented by publisher platforms (Emerald Insight, SAGE Journals, Taylor & Francis Online, ScienceDirect, and SpringerLink) to retrieve full texts. The search was limited to 2016–2025, English-language journal articles, and the title/abstract/keywords fields, where available.

Search strings: Two Boolean strings guided the retrieval. For example: (“leadership development” OR “leadership training” OR coaching OR mentoring OR “action learning”) AND (“employee engagement” OR “work engagement”) AND (“public sector” OR “public organization” OR “civil service” OR “local government”). The second string focused on leader-behavior pathways: (“transformational leadership” OR “ethical leadership” OR “inclusive leadership” OR “servant leadership”) AND engagement AND public.

Inclusion criteria: Studies were eligible if they (1) were peer-reviewed journal articles written in English; (2) were published between 2016 and 2025; (3) examined leadership development interventions (training, coaching, mentoring, feedback) and/or leader behaviors in public or quasi-public settings (e.g., government agencies, public universities, public hospitals); and (4) reported outcomes related to

employee engagement or theoretically adjacent constructs that inform engagement mechanisms (e.g., trust, empowerment, goal clarity, commitment, job performance). To facilitate verification by the editors, only sources with active DOI links were retained.

Rationale and potential bias: English-language and DOI restrictions were applied to enhance search replicability, enable editors to verify sources, and capture widely disseminated evidence on leadership development and engagement. Nevertheless, these criteria may introduce language and publication bias by under-representing relevant findings published in non-English outlets and local, public-sector contexts. To mitigate this risk, we complemented database searches with backward/forward citation chasing and a contextual scan of recent Sinta-indexed Indonesian journals (e.g., SEKP and JPU) for practice-based insights. These contextual sources were used to triangulate the discussion and implications, but were not coded as part of the core 30-article dataset.

Exclusion criteria: Dissertations, books, conference papers, and purely conceptual essays without an empirical basis were excluded, as were studies focused exclusively on private-sector firms or general leadership without an explicit development component or a behavioral mechanism. Screening and synthesis: Records were exported to a reference manager for deduplication and screened in two stages (title/abstract and full text). The authors discussed the screening decisions to ensure the consistent application of the criteria. In total, 30 articles met the eligibility criteria and were included in the final synthesis of the results. Data extraction captured the study context, design, sample, leadership development modality, leader behavior constructs, engagement measures, mediating mechanisms, boundary conditions, and public value outcomes.

Thematic coding proceeded through open coding (identifying recurring intervention features and mechanisms), axial coding (linking codes into pathways from leadership development to engagement and outcomes), and selective coding (consolidating the higher-order themes). For example, findings in which leaders clarified goals and provided supportive feedback were coded as job resource behaviors (clarity/support) and mapped to engagement via psychological safety and empowerment. A basic quality appraisal was also conducted using the criteria for design clarity, measurement validity, and analytical transparency so that stronger evidence received greater weight during synthesis.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Themes Emerging from the Literature

Table 1. Summary of themes on leadership development and engagement in public organizations

Theme	Core focus	Mechanisms	Typical designs	Representative studies
Leadership development interventions	Training, coaching, feedback systems	Behaviour change; role modelling	Field experiments; quasi-experiments; reviews	(Alessa, 2021); (Jacobsen et al., 2022); (Jensen, 2018); (Lacerenza et al., 2017)
Leader behaviours	Transformational, servant, ethical and inclusive leadership	Vision, support, fairness, inclusion	Multi-level qualitative/quantitative studies	(Andersen et al., 2018); (Moon & Christensen, 2022); (Sihombing et al., 2018)
Engagement mechanisms	Psychological and relational processes	Trust; goal clarity; self-efficacy; commitment	Surveys; SEM; mediation models	(Bao & Ge, 2019); (Bellamkonda et al., 2021); (Fan et al., 2023); (Sürücü et al., 2022)
Context and boundary conditions	Conditions that strengthen or weaken links	Public service motivation; societal impact;	Experiments; cross-sectional public-sector surveys	(Bao & Ge, 2019); (Borst et al., 2019); (Cooke et al.,

		resource constraints		2019); (Gyensare et al., 2017); (Jensen, 2018)
Public value outcomes	Service performance, innovation, transparency, trust	Discretionary effort; change implementation; accountability	Performance studies; governance and transparency research	(Borst et al., 2020); (Cuadrado-Ballesteros & Bisogno, 2022); (Jin & Wang, 2025); (Matheus & Janssen, 2020); (Mazzetti et al. (2023)); (Ripamonti, 2024)

The Table 1 above provides a summary of key themes related to leadership development and engagement in public organizations. It outlines the core focus areas, mechanisms, and typical research designs associated with each theme, along with representative studies in the field. The themes include leadership development interventions, leader behaviors, engagement mechanisms, and context and boundary conditions, each contributing to a comprehensive understanding of leadership and engagement in public sector settings.

4.1.1 Leadership Development Interventions

The evidence emphasizes that leadership development in public organizations is most effective when delivered as a bundle of mutually reinforcing practices rather than as a one-off workshop. Across experiments and applied program evaluations, interventions that combine classroom input with coaching, mentoring, and structured feedback are more likely to translate into observable supervisory behaviors. Action-learning projects are especially relevant for public agencies because they connect leadership competencies to real service problems (e.g., queue management, complaint handling, budget execution) and create a clear performance narrative for participants and senior sponsors to follow. However, the literature also notes a common transfer gap: even well-designed training can fade when participants return to high workloads, rigid procedures, and limited discretion. Programs, therefore, show stronger effects when supported by senior leadership (clear expectations, follow-up), peer learning communities, and HR systems that reward behavior change (e.g., recognition for coaching or inclusive decision-making). Overall, leadership development should be treated as an organizational system that aligns training content, on-the-job opportunities for practice, and feedback loops.

4.1.2 Leader Behaviours that Build Engagement

Studies converge that what matters for engagement is less the leadership label and more the day-to-day behaviors that employees experience. Transformational behaviors (communicating purpose, inspiring, and providing individualized consideration) can increase vigor and dedication by helping employees interpret bureaucratic demands as meaningful services. Ethical and inclusive leadership adds a public-sector lens: employees expect procedural fairness, integrity, and respectful treatment because their work is tied to legitimacy. Behaviors such as transparent decision rationales, equitable task allocation, and voice encouragement are repeatedly associated with engagement-supportive climates. Servant leadership is often discussed as being compatible with public service motivation because it signals that leaders prioritize citizen-oriented goals and employee growth. Importantly, several studies warn that inspiration without structural support may not sustain engagement; employees also need clarity, resources, and consistent follow-through to stay engaged. This implies that leadership development should target micro-behavior goal setting, coaching conversations, recognition, and conflict handling rather than abstract competencies alone.

4.1.3 Engagement Mechanisms and Mediators

Engagement is built through psychological and relational pathways that reflect both job design and social exchange relationships with supervisors. Across surveys and multilevel models, trust is a central mediator: when employees perceive leaders as competent and fair, they reciprocate with a discretionary

effort. Goal clarity and role clarity also operate as job resources; they reduce uncertainty and help employees prioritize tasks in environments where tasks are politically visible and time-sensitive. Psychological safety and empowerment further explain why inclusive leadership affects engagement: when staff feel safe to raise problems and propose improvements, they invest more energy and attention in their work. The reviewed studies also highlighted contextual moderators. Public service motivation can strengthen the leadership engagement link because value-driven employees respond strongly to leaders who frame work as a service. Conversely, severe resource constraints and red tape can weaken this link by limiting employees' capacity to translate motivation into action and increasing the risk that engagement turns into strain. These mechanisms suggest that leadership development and HR policies should jointly manage demands (workload, role conflict) while strengthening resources (support, autonomy, competence).

4.1.4 From Engagement to Public Value Outcomes

Engagement is often treated as an internal HR outcome; however, public-sector research increasingly links engagement to employee performance and, through performance, to service quality, innovation, and reform implementation. Engaged employees tend to show higher task performance (reliability and accuracy), adaptive performance (learning and problem solving), and discretionary effort capacities that are critical when frontline staff handle citizen requests, coordinate across units and implement decentralization reforms. In digital governance settings, engagement becomes even more consequential because transparency reforms require continuous operational discipline, such as maintaining accurate data, responding to online feedback, and complying with reporting standards.

When engaged staff are supported by clear procedures and digital skills, transparency initiatives can improve responsiveness and strengthen citizens' trust. However, transparency can also intensify scrutiny and perceived risk, which may discourage initiatives if leaders do not protect psychological safety. Therefore, the engagement-to-public-value pathway depends on governance conditions, including credible accountability mechanisms, data quality infrastructure, and leaders who balance control with learning-oriented improvements. This theme underscores why leadership development should be aligned with broader reform agendas rather than being treated as a stand-alone HR program.

To strengthen the evidence base beyond thematic synthesis, we summarized selected quantitative findings from recent meta-analyses. A meta-analysis of leadership training reports positive effects on participant reactions ($\delta = .63$), learning ($\delta = .73$), transfer to the job ($\delta = .82$), and organizational results ($\delta = .72$), indicating that well-designed development interventions can yield meaningful behavioral and performance improvements (Lacerenza et al., 2017). Complementing this, a meta-analysis using the JD-R model showed that resources are moderately correlated with work engagement (development resources $r = .45$; personal resources $r = .48$; social resources $r = .36$; job resources $r = .37$) and that engagement is strongly associated with job satisfaction ($r = .60$) and organizational commitment ($r = .63$), supporting the proposed mechanism that resource-rich, supportive leadership environments foster engagement and downstream performance-related attitudes (Mazzetti et al., 2023).

Table 2. Selected quantitative evidence supporting the leadership development–engagement–public value pathways

Source	Design/context	Key quantitative result	Relevance to LDEP-V pathway
Lacerenza et al. (2017)	Meta-analysis of leadership training across sectors	Training effectiveness: reactions $\delta=.63$; learning $\delta=.73$; transfer $\delta=.82$; results $\delta=.72$.	Supports that multi-component development interventions can produce behavioral transfer and performance gains.

Mazzetti et al. (2023)	Meta-analysis of work engagement (JD-R model)	Resources–engagement correlations: development $r=.45$; personal $r=.48$; social $r=.36$; job $r=.37$. Engagement was linked to job satisfaction ($r=.60$) and commitment ($r=.63$).	This supports the mechanism that leader-created resources and supportive climates foster engagement and performance-related attitudes.
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The Table 2 above presents selected quantitative evidence supporting the leadership Development–Engagement–Public Value (LDEP-V) pathways. It summarizes key findings from meta-analyses on leadership training and work engagement. The table highlights how leadership development interventions can lead to improvements in behavior and performance, as well as the role of leader-created resources and supportive climates in enhancing work engagement.

4.2 Integrating Evidence into a Framework

Across themes, the literature indicates that leadership development is most effective when it is treated as a system rather than an isolated event. Programs that combine conceptual training with opportunities to practice behaviors, receive feedback, and reflect are more likely to produce observable changes in leader behavior. These behavioral changes matter because leaders shape job resources, such as social support, autonomy, and clarity, that underpin engagement. In many public organizations, employees face high demands and constraints; engaged responses often depend on whether leaders help staff make sense of their work, feel safe to contribute, and perceive fairness.

The Leadership Development–Engagement–Public Value (LDEP-V) model proposed in Figure 1 connects these elements and makes the causal chain explicit as follows: multicomponent leadership development contributes to specific leader micro-behaviors (goal clarification, coaching and feedback, an inclusive voice, and ethical transparency). These behaviors shape engagement mechanisms job resources, psychological safety, and relational trust which in turn foster employee engagement (vigor, dedication, absorption). Engagement improves employee performance (task and adaptive performance) and supports public value outcomes such as service quality, innovation, reform implementation, and under digital governance conditions transparency and citizen trust. The model also incorporates boundary conditions: public service motivation and professional norms can strengthen the leadership–engagement link, whereas resource constraints and red tape can weaken both behavioral transfer and the conversion of engagement into performance and public value.

Two implications follow for the evaluation and research design. First, leadership development should be assessed at multiple levels (participant, team, and organization) and over time to examine whether micro-behavior changes are sustained beyond the training period and whether they shift engagement mechanisms (trust, psychological safety, and job resources). Second, public value outcomes are shaped by organizational processes (service routines, data governance, and coordination) and moderated by institutional constraints. For example, severe resource scarcity may limit the extent to which engaged employees can translate effort into service improvements, whereas transparency reforms can amplify both accountability pressures and performance visibility. These boundary conditions are represented as moderators in the LDEP-V model and indicate that leadership development investments should be aligned with governance reforms and operational support rather than being treated as isolated HR activities.

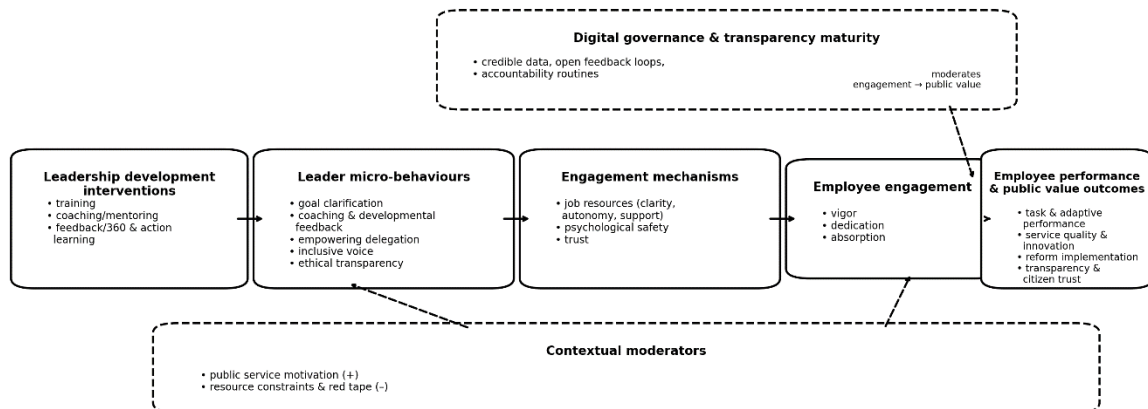


Figure 1. Integrative framework linking leadership development to engagement and public value outcomes

Figure 1 shows for practitioners, the framework implies that leadership development should be evaluated not only by participant satisfaction or competency assessments but also by downstream indicators, such as team engagement, turnover intentions, service performance, and implementation quality of transparency reforms. For researchers, it highlights opportunities for multilevel designs that connect leadership-development investments to behavioral and governance outcomes. A notable gap is the limited number of longitudinal and experimental studies that track engagement over time and connect it to governance outcomes, such as transparency and trust. Bridging these streams will require collaboration between HRD and public administration.

4.3 Implications for Practice and Policy

4.3.1 Implications for Practice

For practitioners, the review suggests that leadership development should be implemented as a continuous cycle rather than as a stand-alone training event. A practical sequence is as follows: (1) diagnose priority leader behaviors linked to the organization’s service goals (e.g., goal clarification, coaching, inclusion, integrity); (2) deliver blended learning that combines short conceptual inputs with coaching, peer learning groups, and action-learning projects; and (3) institutionalize feedback loops through routine reflection, supervisor observation, and periodic 360-degree feedback. Program content should focus on micro-behaviors that create job resources for employees, clarifying priorities, providing timely feedback, ensuring fair workload distribution, encouraging voice, and removing unnecessary barriers, because these behaviors are repeatedly linked to trust, psychological safety, and empowerment.

The evaluation should also extend beyond participant satisfaction. Public organizations can triangulate indicators at three levels: (a) leader behavior change (e.g., frequency of coaching conversations, quality of performance dialogues, and inclusive meeting routines), (b) employee experience (engagement, trust in supervisors, and perceived goal clarity), and (c) operational outcomes that reflect public value (service timeliness, complaint resolution, and implementation quality of reforms). In digital governance contexts, an additional set of indicators is relevant, such as data quality, responsiveness to citizen feedback, and adherence to transparency and reporting standards. Aligning these measures helps managers determine whether leadership development builds capabilities that matter for both internal functioning and external legitimacy.

Application in resource-constrained organizations: When budgets, staffing, and training time are limited, public organizations can adopt a “minimum viable” leadership development approach by embedding micro-practices into existing routines, rather than relying on costly off-site programs. Practical options include (1) short, structured weekly check-ins that focus on goal clarification and barrier removal; (2) peer coaching circles and mentoring pairs across units; (3) low-cost feedback mechanisms

(e.g., brief anonymous pulse surveys) to reinforce coaching and fairness behaviors; and (4) action learning projects that target real service bottlenecks and generate quick, visible improvements. Digital tools can further reduce costs by providing microlearning modules, shared repositories of standard operating procedures, and simple performance dashboards. In such contexts, prioritizing a small set of high-leverage behaviors fair workload allocation, integrity and transparency in decision-making, recognition, and an inclusive voice can build trust and psychological safety even when material resources are constrained, thereby sustaining engagement and performance gains.

4.3.2 Implications for Policy and Governance

For policymakers, the findings imply that leadership development investments are most productive when integrated with broader governance reforms. If agencies pursue transparency, service digitalization, or participatory budgeting, leadership programs should explicitly build the capabilities needed to deliver those reforms (e.g., managing cross-unit coordination, communicating decision rationales, and using data for continuous improvement). Civil service regulations and performance management systems can reinforce transfer by recognizing coaching and inclusive leadership behaviors in appraisal and promotion criteria and by protecting time for supervisors to develop staff.

The review also highlights a risk: under severe resource constraints, engagement can shift from a positive state to strain when employees are expected to compensate for structural deficits. Therefore, governance reforms need accompanying operational support, adequate staffing, simplified procedures, and reliable digital infrastructure so that engaged employees can translate motivation into service improvements. Transparency initiatives deserve special attention because they may intensify scrutiny and blame. Leaders and policymakers can mitigate this by promoting learning-oriented accountability by treating reporting errors as signals for process improvement, safeguarding psychological safety, and communicating how transparency contributes to citizen trust. When these conditions are met, engagement becomes a strategic capability that strengthens both service performance and legitimacy.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

This integrative review synthesizes evidence on how leadership development shapes employee engagement and how it contributes to public value outcomes in public organizations. The literature indicates that leadership development is most effective when embedded in work systems and produces observable leader behaviors that build trust, clarity, and psychological safety. Engagement operates as a mechanism linking internal capacity building to service performance and, increasingly, to governance outcomes, such as transparency and citizen trust in digital settings.

5.2 Research Limitations

This review is integrative rather than fully systematic; although explicit search strings and eligibility criteria were applied, it may not have captured all relevant studies across databases and practitioner outlets. The restriction to English-language journal articles with active DOI links improves replicability and source verification, but it also introduces potential language, indexing, and publication bias by excluding non-English evidence, some local Sinta-indexed outlets without DOI, and grey literature (e.g., agency evaluations) from the analysis.

The synthesis was primarily thematic and did not estimate pooled effect sizes; therefore, it could not formally test heterogeneity or publication bias in a meta-analytic sense. Moreover, the included studies used diverse measures of leadership development, leadership behaviors, engagement (employee versus work engagement), and public value outcomes (service performance, innovation, transparency, trust), limiting direct comparability. Finally, most studies are cross-sectional, which constrains causal inference, and public-sector contexts differ widely by administrative tradition and resource endowment; accordingly, generalization to highly resource-constrained organizations should be made with caution.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Future research can strengthen the evidence by conducting longitudinal evaluations of leadership development programs and employing randomized or quasi-experimental designs in public organizations. Multilevel studies can test the propositions advanced here, especially the mediating role of engagement and the moderating role of digital transparency reforms. Researchers in decentralized and resource-constrained contexts can examine how leadership development and engagement interact with integrity systems, fiscal transparency initiatives, and citizen participation programs.

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Author Contributions

AR contributed to the conceptualization, methodology, data curation, formal analysis, and writing of the original draft. MH was responsible for validation, supervision, and the writing review and editing process. Both authors were involved in the investigation, resources, and approval of the final manuscript.

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