

## Perceptions of the Implementation of Talent Management and Workforce Agility with Employee Engagement as a Mediating Variable in Employees

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**ABSTRACT:** The rapid advancement of digital technology and the dynamic VUCA environment require state-owned enterprises such as PT PLN (Persero) to continuously adapt through effective human resource strategies. This study aims to examine the relationship between perceptions of Talent Management implementation and Workforce Agility, with Employee Engagement as a mediating variable, among employees of PT PLN (Persero) East Java and Bali Main Transmission Unit Headquarters. Utilizing a quantitative approach, data were collected from 125 employees using validated perception scales and analyzed with regression and mediation tests. The findings indicate that Employee Engagement significantly mediates the relationship between perceptions of Talent Management and Workforce Agility, and that both Talent Management and Employee Engagement independently have a positive effect on Workforce Agility. These results suggest that integrated Talent Management and Employee Engagement initiatives are crucial in fostering agile and adaptive workforces, enabling organizations to respond effectively to industry transformations. The study recommends that PT PLN (Persero) and similar organizations prioritize strategic talent development and employee engagement to sustain competitiveness in an increasingly dynamic business landscape.

**Keywords:** Talent Management, Workforce Agility, Employee Engagement, Organizational Performance, State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs).



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## INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology and the complexity of today's business environment, characterized by the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) era, are pushing organizations to continuously transform quickly and adaptively. This challenge is further exacerbated

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by the advent of Industry 5.0, which demands a harmonious collaboration between advanced technology and human capabilities. In this context, workforce agility is a crucial capability for organizations to survive and thrive sustainably (Ziatdinov et al., 2024). All sectors are required to adopt an adaptive mindset, adjusting swiftly to develop human resources in line with the Society 5.0 concept (Berawi, 2019). Technological advancement is inevitable. Organizations must proactively prepare and devise strategic actions to adapt and remain competitive. Selecting the right technologies will enhance organizational efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity, thereby ensuring long-term sustainability in the industry. However, technological adoption must be accompanied by continuous improvement in the quality of human resources. As new technologies are implemented, companies must also invest in developing their employees' competencies, ensuring they are capable of adapting to technological changes within the organization (Rijwani et al., 2025). Moreover, digital skills, technological literacy, adaptability, and mental readiness are essential attributes for facing the challenges of Industry 5.0 (Piacentini et al., 2021).

PT PLN (Persero), as one of Indonesia's largest state-owned enterprises, is confronted with substantial challenges arising from the rapid advancements of Industry 4.0, the dynamics of the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) environment, and the anticipated transition to Industry 5.0. To remain competitive and relevant, the company must respond swiftly, proactively, and systematically by seeking and developing changes in its organizational foundation, structure, individual preferences, and technological capabilities all aimed at enhancing profitability and customer satisfaction. Over the past three years, PT PLN (Persero) has undergone a significant digital transformation, marking a major turning point in its efforts to deliver superior services to its customers. Through this transformation, the company has simplified and digitized its business processes, allowing all operations to be monitored in real time. Consequently, the company is able to address challenges and obstacles promptly, leading to faster and more responsive service delivery.

The organizational transformation at PT PLN (Persero) was formalized during the General Meeting of Shareholders (GMS) through the issuance of the Minister of State-Owned Enterprises Decrees No. SK-212/MBU/09/2022 and No. SK-213/MBU/09/2022 dated September 21, 2022, which enacted changes to the organizational nomenclature, as well as appointments and dismissals of members of the Board of Directors and Board of Commissioners. This transformation extends beyond top management, encompassing all operational units within PT PLN (Persero) with the objective of enhancing the reliability and effectiveness of its business operations.

The transformation program is closely tied to the contribution of human resources (HR), who play an active role in its implementation. In line with the AKHLAK cultural values program, which has been implemented since 2021, PLN personnel are expected to uphold and embody the AKHLAK values in their daily work. AKHLAK is an acronym for Amanah (Trustworthy), Kompeten (Competent), Harmonis (Harmonious), Loyal (Loyal), Adaptif (Adaptive), and Kolaboratif (Collaborative). The Critical Few Behaviors (CFB) are selected key behaviors derived from the 18 behavioral guidelines of AKHLAK that have been promoted as PLN's flagship cultural program in 2023. These include: fulfilling promises and commitments (Amanah value), mobilizing the use of various resources to

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achieve common goals (Collaborative value), completing tasks with the highest quality (*Competent* value), and continuously improving in line with technological advancements and acting proactively (*Adaptive* value) (Andresen et al., 2020).

Workforce agility refers to employees' capacity to respond swiftly and effectively to continuous and dynamic changes, while also capitalizing on those changes to create optimal value and advantage (Alviani et al., 2024). Workforce agility is essential for organizations to effectively navigate the rapid transformations characterizing today's industrial environment. It has been demonstrated to have a significant positive impact on employee performance (Yusuf et al., 2023). In addition, the two main aspects of workforce agility the ability to respond effectively to change and the ability to leverage change as an opportunity are highly relevant in the current era of continuous industrial development and transformation (Petermann & Zacher, 2022). Other studies also suggest that workforce agility significantly contributes to organizational growth (Abrishamkar et al., 2021). Research on workforce agility in the public sector indicates that a more agile workforce can lead to enhanced adaptive performance among government employees (Saptarini & Mustika, 2023; Saxena, 2019).

The development of agility within an organization is influenced by several factors, which can be categorized into three main groups (Petermann & Zacher, 2020). The first category is individual factors, which include personality traits, individual needs, trust and attitudes, cognitive abilities, and resilience. The second category relates to job and coworker factors, including job autonomy, task variety, collaboration, and leadership. The third category is organizational factors, which encompass organizational culture, goals, and structure. Workforce agility, in particular, focuses on the individual dimension of agility, emphasizing the quality of human resources that support the organization. One effective way to enhance the quality of human resources is through the provision of appropriate training (Adiatma, 2023; Pandia & Meilani, 2024; Saptarini & Mustika, 2023). An integrated training program can function as a key element of talent management. Talent management itself is a strategic approach in human resource management aimed at identifying, developing, managing, and retaining high-performing employees who are being groomed for future leadership roles, thereby supporting the long-term realization of the organization's vision, mission, and strategic objectives (Kaliannan et al., 2023; Setiti & Paramarta, 2023). Talent management can also be defined as a series of organizational processes designed to identify, develop, retain, and position the right individuals in the most suitable roles. In principle, effective talent management fosters the development of highly competent human resources aligned with the specific needs and goals of the organization (Faqihi & Miah, 2023; Guerra et al., 2023; Maley et al., 2024).

The implementation of talent management enables appropriate adaptation to change, aligning with the company's strategic policies and enhancing the organization's or company's productive performance (Rofi'ah et al., 2022; Soedarto & Hardi, 2023). Talent management within an organization can be structured according to its specific needs. If the organization requires employees who are agile, adaptive, proactive, and resilient, talent management can be designed accordingly to prepare candidates who possess these agile characteristics in line with organizational demands. A study by (Azmy et al., 2022) demonstrated that talent management has a significant impact on workforce agility

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among hospital employees. Similarly, another study found that talent management significantly influences workforce agility among educational personnel (Yulian & Ekhsan, 2023).

One way to evaluate talent management is by measuring the extent to which employees perceive the implementation of talent management within their organization. The formation of perceptions regarding a program is inherently tied to an individual's subjective interpretation (Kwon & Jang, 2022). Perception is one of the psychological factors that play a role in shaping a person's behavior. When an individual perceives an object, event, or phenomenon, it will influence the actions they decide to take in response to that perception (Boonbumroongsuk & Rungruang, 2022; Ishiyama, 2022; Malik & Singh, 2022).

The implementation of talent management is one of the company's strategies to ensure the availability of talent when needed for succession planning. The alignment of this strategic objective must be supported by employees' attitudes toward the organization (Akingbola et al., 2022; Dries, 2022; Pessima & Dietz, 2019). One such aspect is employee engagement, which refers to the company's efforts to understand the relationship between the organization and its employees, both qualitatively and quantitatively. From the organizational perspective, employee engagement reflects how loyal an employee is in performing their work (Muzaki et al., 2023; Rosid et al., 2024). It is not only about completing assigned tasks, but also completing them on time, with high quality, and taking pride in their work. The ultimate goal expected by the organization when employee engagement is strong is that employees will demonstrate their agility in facing change (Saptarini & Mustika, 2023). Another benefit is the ability to retain talent and reduce turnover rates (Bešić et al., 2024; Elnakib & Gallego-Roquelaure, 2025). Engaged employees are more likely to exhibit proactive, adaptive, and generative behaviors core traits that represent workforce agility. Talent management, employee engagement, and workforce agility are interrelated and influence one another both directly and indirectly. The implementation of talent management has been shown to enhance employee engagement (Azmy, 2021; Prasetiawan et al., 2025; Srimulyani, 2020; Yulian & Ekhsan, 2023). Furthermore, employee engagement significantly contributes to the development of workforce agility (Alsakarneh et al., 2024; Ardian et al., 2023; Natapoera & Mangundjaya, 2020). The implementation of talent management from attracting, developing, to retaining talent affects employee attitudes, which can be seen through behaviors such as vigor (high energy and mental resilience), dedication, and absorption, or being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work, where time passes quickly and detachment from work becomes difficult. These are key dimensions of employee engagement (Zhang & Stewart, 2017). Employees who feel attached to their work and responsibilities are more likely to increase their engagement with the organization. When an organization successfully fosters emotional bonds with its employees by providing supportive facilities and a comfortable environment, employee engagement can be cultivated and in turn influence workforce agility (Cyfert et al., 2022). Studies have shown a significant relationship between employee engagement and workforce agility among hospital employees (Muduli & Pandya, 2018). One of the key benefits of employee engagement is improved employee performance which ultimately supports enhanced organizational performance (Al Zeer et al., 2023; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2023; Putri & Mangundjaya, 2020; Wicaksono & Rahmawati, 2020).

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## METHOD

To address the research problem in this study, a quantitative approach was employed. This research is an associative quantitative study, in which workforce agility serves as the dependent variable (Y), perception of talent management implementation is the independent variable (X), and employee engagement functions as the mediating variable (Z). The subjects of this study are employees of PT PLN (Persero) East Java and Bali Main Transmission Unit Headquarters, totaling 146 employees. This study employs accidental sampling, a sampling technique based on chance, in which any employee of PT PLN at Unit X who is willing to complete the research instrument provided by the researcher is included. The determination of the number of samples in this study used the Slovin formula and obtained a minimum sample size of 107 employees.

The data collection method used in this study is a questionnaire. The measurement instrument for the workforce agility variable was developed based on the theory, dimensions, and indicators proposed by (Petermann & Zacher, 2021). The instrument for the perception of talent management implementation variable was developed based on the theory, dimensions, and indicators formulated by (Gurbuz et al., 2017). The instrument for the employee engagement variable is an adapted version of the employee engagement scale developed by (Shuck et al., 2016), which was translated by the researcher. To analyze the mediating variable, this study applies the causal steps approach developed by (Baron & Kenny, 1986) and the Product of Coefficients method developed by Sobel, using the Sobel calculator.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1.** Distribution of Respondent Characteristics

	<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Age	< 30 years	28	22.4
	31 – 40 years	76	60.8
	41 – 50 years	16	12.8
	> 50 years	5	4.0
Gender	Male	70	56.0
	Famale	55	44.0
Years of Service	< 5 years	10	8.0
	5 - 10 years	39	31.2
	11 - 20 years	68	54.4
	> 20 years	8	6.4

The majority of respondents are within the productive age range, particularly between 31 and 40 years old. This indicates that most employees are in a well-established phase of their careers and are highly potential candidates for inclusion in talent management programs and the development of workforce agility. This age group is typically associated with mature cognitive capacity and readiness to embrace

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change, which are highly relevant factors for assessing perceptions of agility and employee engagement. The relatively balanced gender composition between male and female respondents suggests that perceptions of the implementation of talent management and agility are not significantly influenced by gender, allowing for a diverse range of perspectives within the research sample. In terms of years of service, the majority of respondents have between 11 and 20 years of work experience. This implies that most participants have been with the organization for a substantial period and are therefore likely to possess a strong understanding of the human resource management systems in place, including talent management initiatives. Furthermore, longer work experience is generally associated with more stable levels of employee engagement and a higher capacity to adapt to organizational changes, which is pertinent to measuring workforce agility. Overall, these respondent characteristics provide a solid foundation for the study to explore employee perceptions of the implementation of talent management and workforce agility, as well as the mediating role of employee engagement. This profile also reflects an organizational environment conducive to developing resilient, adaptive, and forward-looking human resources.

By processing the data using regression analysis in SPSS version 26, followed by the use of the Sobel calculator, the following regression results were obtained:

**Table 2.** Calculation of Mediating Variable Regression Results

Mediation Regression (Sobel Test)	t	Sig	Decision
Employee Engagement (X2) as a Mediating Variable between Perception of Talent Management Implementation (X1) - Workforce Agility (Y)	5,0164	0,000	t count > t table (1.979) Sig < 0.05 there is a mediation effect

The results of the Sobel test in the mediation model indicate that employee engagement (X2) serves as a significant mediating variable in the relationship between the perception of talent management implementation (X1) and workforce agility (Y). This is evidenced by a t-value of 5.0164, which far exceeds the critical t-table value of 1.979, and a significance level (Sig) of 0.000, which is below the threshold of 0.05. These findings suggest that employee engagement significantly mediates the effect of perceived talent management implementation on enhancing workforce agility. In other words, the more positively employees perceive the talent management programs, the higher their level of engagement, which in turn contributes to increased agility in the workplace. This implies that creating an agile workforce requires more than just implementing talent management initiatives it also necessitates fostering employees' emotional involvement and commitment to their work.

**Table 3.** Calculation of the results of the regression between variables

Linear Regression	T	Sig	Decision
Perception of Talent Management Implementation (X1) - Employee Engagement (X2)	7,242	0,000	t count > t table (1.979) Sig < 0.05, there is an influence in a positive direction

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Linear Regression	T	Sig	Decision
Perception of Talent Management Implementation (X1) - Workforce Agility (Y)	6,992	0,000	t count > t table (1.979) Sig < 0.005, there is an influence in a positive direction
Employee Engagement (X2) - Workforce Agility (Y)	6,964	0,000	t count > t table (1.979) Sig < 0.005, there is an influence in a positive direction

Based on the table above, it is evident that the Perception of Talent Management Implementation (X1) has a positive relationship and influence on Employee Engagement (X2). In addition, the Perception of Talent Management Implementation (X1) also shows a positive relationship and influence on Workforce Agility (Y). On the other hand, Employee Engagement (X2) likewise demonstrates a positive relationship and influence on Workforce Agility (Y).

Based on the results of the Sobel test or mediation regression analysis, it was found that the influence of perceptions of talent management implementation on workforce agility, mediated by employee engagement, demonstrates a significant mediation effect. Therefore, the first hypothesis (H1) is accepted, indicating that employee engagement mediates the relationship between perceptions of talent management implementation and workforce agility at PT PLN (Persero) Unit X. The implementation of talent management has been shown to enhance employee engagement (Azmy, 2021; Prasetyawan et al., 2025; Srimulyani, 2020; Yulian & Ekhsan, 2023). Furthermore, employee engagement significantly contributes to improving workforce agility (Alsakarneh et al., 2024; Ardian et al., 2023; Natapoera & Mangundjaya, 2020). Talent management implementation beginning from how the organization attracts, develops, and retains talent has an impact on employee attitudes, reflected in enthusiastic behavior, dedication, and deep concentration and absorption in their work. This is characterized by a perception that time passes quickly and difficulty disengaging from tasks, which are key indicators of employee engagement. An increase in employee engagement, therefore, contributes to the enhancement of workforce agility.

Another finding of this study is the existence of a positive relationship between perceptions of Talent Management Implementation and Employee Engagement. This indicates that the higher the perception of talent management implementation, the higher the level of employee engagement within the company. Talent management implementation is one of the company's strategies to ensure the availability of qualified talent when needed, particularly for succession planning. The alignment of this strategic goal must be supported by employees' attitudes toward the organization. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by (Hariyanto & Ferdian, 2019), which found that talent management significantly influences employee engagement. Similarly, a study by (Srimulyani, 2020) showed that employees' responses to talent management practices such as managerial support, career development opportunities, and rewards & recognition were positively associated with high levels of employee engagement. These findings suggest that when organizations implement talent management effectively, employee engagement tends to increase. Talent management can serve as a key driver in enhancing employees' commitment and emotional connection to the company.

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Another hypothesis that is also supported by this study is the direct influence of perceptions of Talent Management Implementation on Workforce Agility. This means that the higher the perception of talent management implementation, the higher the level of Workforce Agility within PLN Unit X. This finding aligns with the Critical Few Behaviors (CFB) that must continuously be reinforced. A well-executed talent management strategy fosters a sense of being valued among employees, which in turn encourages them to demonstrate their best abilities, especially in the face of organizational change. Also found that talent management significantly influences workforce agility within an organization. Talent management begins with implementing a fair remuneration system that aligns with increases in the minimum wage, providing recognition and rewards for outstanding performance, offering training to enhance current job skills, and introducing new skill sets. It also includes leadership training that instills agile thinking principles to promote workforce agility across all organizational levels (Azmy, 2021). In essence, the implementation of talent management is designed to enhance workforce agility by fostering positive employee attitudes and instilling confidence in their competencies—competencies that are essential for supporting the implementation of the AKHLAK cultural program promoted by Indonesia's Ministry of State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN) at PLN.

The next analysis pertains to the positive influence of employee engagement on workforce agility. This indicates that the higher a company's Employee Engagement index, the higher its Workforce Agility index is likely to be. This finding is consistent with the study by (Ekhsan & Taopik, 2020), which revealed that employee engagement has a positive and significant impact on workforce agility. Organizations must recognize that employee engagement can be cultivated when the company adequately fulfills various key factors that support employees in their roles. When this occurs, employees are more likely to deliver performance that exceeds expectations. Found that employees who are emotionally and behaviorally engaged with their work or responsibilities are more likely to develop agility in the workplace. High levels of engagement lead employees to become more alert, respond to problems swiftly, complete tasks effectively, and adapt quickly in the face of organizational changes.

The results of this study suggest several practical steps that PT PLN (Persero) can take to strengthen workforce agility through effective talent management. First, the company should consistently implement comprehensive talent management practices such as talent identification, employee development programs, career path planning, and retention strategies to foster a positive perception among employees. These initiatives should be visible, measurable, and communicated effectively to create a sense of trust and transparency. Second, since employee engagement serves as a mediating factor, organizations should enhance engagement by focusing on recognition, providing growth opportunities, and encouraging active employee involvement in decision-making. Cultivating a high level of engagement will enable employees to adapt more quickly to change, be more innovative, and respond proactively to organizational challenges, thus enhancing overall workforce agility. Furthermore, integrating talent management strategies into the broader goals of organizational agility will ensure that talent readiness aligns with the company's transformation and cultural values, such as AKHLAK.



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Despite its contributions, this research is subject to several limitations. The study was limited to a single unit within PT PLN (Persero), which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other organizational units or industries with different structures and cultural dynamics. Additionally, the use of a cross-sectional research design means that the data only capture a snapshot in time, making it difficult to establish causality or assess long-term trends in employee engagement or agility. The reliance on self-reported survey data also poses a risk of bias, as respondents may provide socially desirable answers rather than accurate reflections of their experiences. Moreover, the study focused primarily on employees' perceptions of talent management implementation without evaluating the actual effectiveness or consistency of these practices in real-world settings. Lastly, external factors such as leadership style, technological change, or organizational structure were not included in the model, though they could also influence workforce agility. Future research should consider a longitudinal approach and a broader range of variables to build a more comprehensive understanding.

## CONCLUSION

The perception of talent management implementation, as an independent factor, has a positive impact on enhancing a company's workforce agility. Based on the research findings conducted at PT PLN (Persero) Unit X, it can be concluded that employee engagement acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between the perception of talent management implementation and workforce agility. The perception of effective talent management significantly influences employee engagement, which in turn has a substantial effect on improving workforce agility. Furthermore, the study reveals a direct positive influence between the perception of talent management implementation and employee engagement, as well as between the perception of talent management implementation and workforce agility. Additionally, employee engagement itself positively affects workforce agility within the organization. These findings underscore the critical role of both talent management and employee engagement in building a more agile and responsive workforce.

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