

# THE EFFECT OF WORKPLACE COUNSELING ON ASN PERFORMANCE THROUGH WORK ENGAGEMENT AS A MEDIATING VARIABLE

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## Abstract

This study takes State Civil Servants (ASN) of the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia as its research subjects and aims to verify the impact of workplace counseling on ASN's job performance, as well as the mediating role of work engagement. It adopts a quantitative explanatory research design, using 50 ASN who participated in the 2025 Counseling Week program as the study sample. Data was collected via Likert-scale questionnaires and analyzed using the partial least squares structural equation modeling tool available in SmartPLS software. The  $\beta$  values and p-values of all four tested effects all met the required standards, confirming that work engagement functions as a partial mediating variable. Based on these results, this study recommends that all types of institutions institutionalize workplace counseling programs and integrate them into their civil service capacity development strategies.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There has been a significant increase in research on workplace counseling, and research findings to date suggest that psychological intervention in the workplace can promote employees' well-being and job performance. Moralo and Graupner (2022) identified that workplace counselling is conducive to employees' adaptation to an evolving world of work, especially the challenges posed by digitalisation and today's jobs. Such intervention, in their view, is of twofold value, both yielding to the individual ways of managing stress and building his or her ability to adapt to the environment when the organisation in which he or she works is in a change process (Moralo & Graupner, 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic, which radically changed the organization of work, including the public sector, has given rise to an increased focus on the attention paid to mental health at work. Research shows that counseling in the workplace can help to reduce stress, burnout, and that these decreases are seen in improved employee performance. Psychological support seems to help restore the emotional state, increase employee motivation and enhance coping mechanisms under working stress (Giorgi et al., 2020). There are reports in the literature of correlation between counselling programmes at the workplace and improved working relationships between colleagues, lower absenteeism and higher productivity (Paterson et al., 2021).

Employee performance in the context of the Civil Servant (Aparatur Sipil Negara, ASN) is not only determined by technical abilities, but also psychological conditions and work engagement. Based on Government Regulation No. 30 of 2019, the Minister of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation No. 6 of 2022, periodic performance appraisal for ASN is required which is based on work results and work behavior (Kementerian PANRB, 2022; Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 2019). At the national level, the overall performance in 2025 was classified in the Outstanding (Istimewa) category with 70% of staff classified in the Very Good category while the remaining 30% were found in the Good, Fair, Poor, and Very Poor categories (Biro SDM Kemendagri, 2026). This type of distribution indicates that additional intervention is required if all employees are to maintain and enhance their performance rating

This has consequently led to work engagement being an important perspective in human resource management research. It is described as a good feeling, a positive psychology, when working, it is a feeling of vitality and strength (vigor), a sense of belonging and enthusiasm (dedication) and a high absorption of the work (Schaufeli, 2021). High

engagement employees show better performance, working more efficiently and are more likely to hold on to their jobs. In the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework, work engagement is a primary pathway which connects job demands, resources and individual performance outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Yet, studies largely consider workplace counselling as an exogenous factor that directly influences the performance of employees, disregarding the psychological process that leads to such effect. Although performance increases are hardly visible from a single day to the next, they are more likely to happen through psychological means like increased motivation, wellbeing, and work engagement (Van Zyl & Rothmann, 2022). Even then, research with the samples of ASN, who have participated in a counseling program using a structured approach in a government institution, is still very limited and needs to be studied.

Although from this gap, the present study aims to examine the effect of workplace counseling on the performance of ASN with the mediation variables being work engagement in the ministry of home affairs of the republic of Indonesia and target the number of people especially ASN who are the subject of counseling in 2025. The results are expected to give theoretical and practical input for the mental health programming and performance of ASN.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The relationships among workplace counseling, work engagement and ASN performance are linked within a constellation of organizational behaviour and human resource theories that are brought together in this section. With increasing awareness that employee wellbeing is now integrated into the organization's ability to achieve its goals, counseling is now seen as a useful approach for supporting staff to manage work and/or personal challenges. The review below links these theories to recent empirical findings and sets up the hypotheses and conceptual framework of the study.

### **2.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Background**

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan states positive attitudes and behavior is, for example, the fulfilment of the basic needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci et al., 2017). Those that feel able to do their work, those that have meaningful relationships at work and those that have some control over their work tend to be more intrinsically motivated, have better psychological wellbeing. More recent research supports that meeting these needs is associated with various workplace outcomes (McAnally & Hagger, 2024).

Counselling at work may be able to address these needs by providing a safe environment where employees can discuss issues, seek solutions, and prepare coping mechanisms. During counselling employees are made aware of their own problems and can acquire confidence and enhance their ability to cope with problems at home and work. The more their psychology and sense of competence increase, the more employees become motivated and engaged in their jobs.

Also in the context of the research, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory is used, which is concerned with the relationship between working conditions and wellbeing and performance. As Bakker and Demerouti (2017) point out, all jobs have their own demands and resources. Job demands are physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects of the job that require a sustained effort; job resources are those aspects that facilitate employees' goal attainment, reduce job strain and provide possibilities for growth.

From this perspective, work place counseling is one of the resources in the workplace, helping the employees to cope with work demand and psychological stress. Counselling can provide emotional support, a way to work through issues and also strengthen employees' resilience. If employees believe there is support available, they will be more likely to be involved with their work and it will relate to enhanced employee performance. Based on JD-R theory, it is therefore logical to expect that work engagement can be a mediator between workplace counseling and employee performance.

The latter way to counselling is also based on positive psychology which stresses not only on problem but also on strengths, wellbeing and good functioning of individuals. Positive psychological interventions enable individuals to acquire wellbeing, optimism, self-awareness and personal resources that facilitate resilience and performance (Van Zyl & Rothmann, 2022).

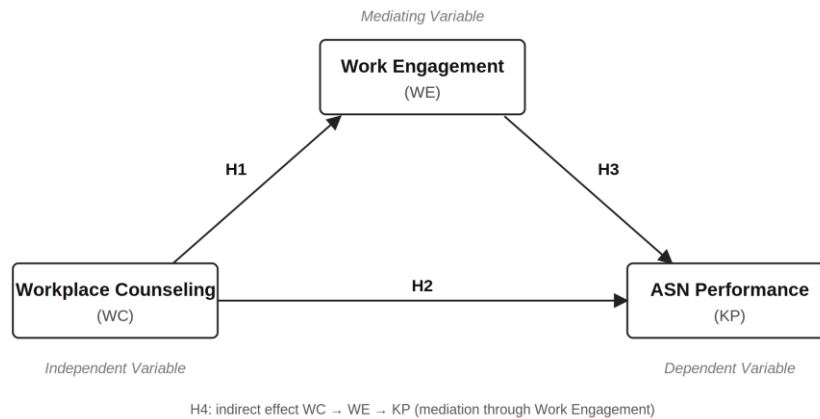
Many organizations now use counseling as a proactive development tool as opposed to a reactive one to be used as a remedy when something goes wrong. It can help employees to identify their strengths, develop positive coping mechanisms, and maintain a positive attitude during challenging times at work. Those conditions tend to increase motivation and commitment, as well as the performance.

Workplace counselling is a structured support service that is offered to employees in the workplace to assist them in addressing personal, social and work-related issues which may impact on their wellbeing and performance. According to Moralo and Graupner (2022), it is a strategic intervention that allows residents to develop their competencies and skills to face the changing work environment, particularly with technological change, increased workload and organizational restructuring.

In the public sector, where staff are expected to maintain high standards of professionalism and service, counselling can contribute to staff wellbeing, as well as to organisational effectiveness. Counselling can help

employees to feel less stressed, cope more effectively, manage emotions better and feel more confident to manage issues at work. There are recent reviews on workplace and digital mental health programs that suggest as much (Stratton et al., 2025).

Work engagement is it: a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind defined by vigor, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli, 2021). An energised employee is an enthusiastic and persistent employee who is committed to the organisation's goals. One of the best psychological motivators to performance is engagement; employees who are engaged are willing to put in more, take more initiative, and go the extra mile beyond what your job description entails. Engagement has become a focal point of research in the field of public administration as a path to improve service outcomes (Borst et al., 2020; Santosa et al., 2025).



**Figure 1.** Job Demands-Resources framework in the context of workplace counseling

**Source:** Adapted from Bakker and Demerouti (2017).

In JD-R framework, work engagement refers to the motivational process by which the utilization of job resources leads to beneficial outcomes for the organization. From this, it is expected that the mediation of engagement is important in the role of workplace counseling in increasing employee performance.

ASN performance is an indicator of achieving expected work results and demonstrate proper work behavior in executing his/her duties. Through the Government of the Republic of Indonesia (2019) has set the ASN performance in Indonesia based on work products and work behavior (Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 2019; Kementerian PANRB, 2022).

Performance in the public sector is more than productivity and hitting targets. Also included are topics of service quality, accountability, collaboration and contribution to the goals of the organization. Supportive interventions to employees' psychological wellbeing and engagement are therefore likely to improve the performance of ASN

## 2.2 Empirical Review and Hypothesis

This research demonstrates that counselling in the workplace strengthens employee wellbeing and company effectiveness, and it is an increasing body of research. Recent research found counseling can help diminish stress, enhance emotional health and wellness, reinforce coping, and increase productivity (Moralo & Graupner, 2022; Paterson et al., 2021). With increasingly complex work environments, counselling has emerged as one of the important aspects in the adaptation and performance of employees.

Both Self-Determination Theory and JD-R theory predict the relationship between workplace counseling and work engagement. Counselling provides employees with psychological assistance and personal resources to support them in addressing workplace challenges and consequently, being more motivated, dedicated and involved at work. Psychological-support interventions have been shown in studies to lead to gains in engagement (Moralo & Graupner, 2022).

### **H1: Workplace counseling positively affects work engagement.**

Performance may also be directly impacted by workplace counselling. Staff who have counselling typically know how to reduce stress at work, how to resolve problems, how to concentrate on their goals and how to make decisions, enabling them to be on the job in an effective manner. Paterson et al., (2021) concluded that counselling contributes to increased productivity, quality of work and effectiveness and Motsomotso (2025) noted that counselling has a direct impact on employee performance.

### **H2: Workplace counseling positively affects ASN performance.**

Performance can also be directly impacted in the workplace with counseling. Counsellés employees tend to be more effective in handling work stress, conflict situations, focus on work objectives, and making sound decision making that enables them to work more effectively. Paterson et al, (2021) stated that counselling has a direct impact

on productivity, work quality and overall effectiveness while Motsomotso, (2025) established that counselling has direct impact on employee performance.

### H3: Work engagement positively affects ASN performance.

Organizational interventions can have indirect impacts on performance, via psychological mechanisms. The positive interventions in the workplace can enhance an employee's personal resources, boost engagement and therefore improve performance (Van Zyl & Rothmann, 2022). On this basis, the work engagement should be an important mechanism by which workplace counselling will be helpful in enhancing ASN performance.

### H4: Work engagement mediates the relationship between workplace counseling and ASN performance.

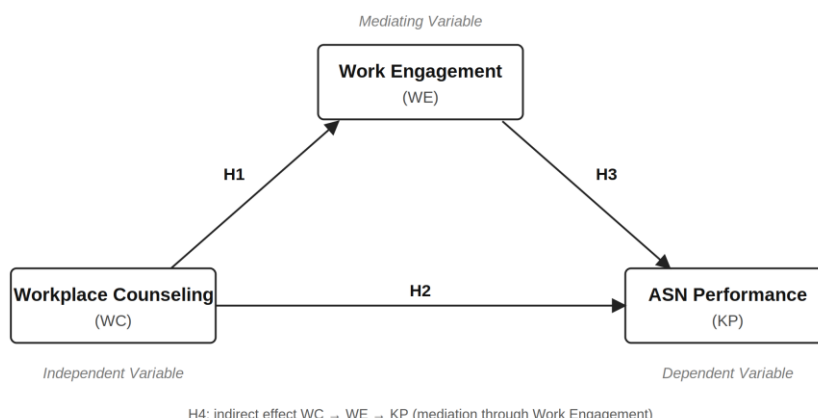
## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employed quantitative, explanatory research design in identifying relationship between workplace counseling, work engagement and ASN performance. It was carried out at the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, with ASN who took part in the 2025 Counseling Week program.

The population comprised of 50 ASN who took part in the programme of Bureau of Human Resources under the Ministry of Home Affairs. This study was performed by using the total sampling technique, where the number of respondents was the same as the number of the population, which was 50. Total sampling was used in this study because it provided a complete picture of the study group and minimized sampling bias, and it provided the experiences of each participant.

The Counseling Week program is a component of the Ministry's employee wellbeing initiative, titled Coaching, Mentoring, and Counseling (CMC). It offered participants access to professional counseling on work, personal, stress management and career development issues and it afforded an empirical context in which to explore the relationship between work place counselling and engagement and performance.

Data was collected using questionnaires that focused on workplace counseling, work engagement and ASN performance using a 5-point Likert Scale. Data analysis was done by applying the partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) method with the SmartPLS software as suggested by Hair et al. (2021). Measurement model indicator outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability were scrutinized and structural model R-square values and bootstrapped path coefficients were scrutinized. To test the mediating role of work engagement, the significance of the indirect effects was examined.



**Figure 2.** Conceptual Model of the Study

**Source:** Authors (2026)

## 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Result

The number of participants in this study consisted of 50 ASN staff participated in Counseling Week program in 2025 held in the Ministry of Home Affairs. The scores for the three key variables (workplace counseling, work engagement, and ASN performance) were consistently high. Descriptive statistics and the basis for the analyses presented below are reported in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1** Descriptive Statistics

| Variable             | Mean | Category  |
|----------------------|------|-----------|
| Workplace Counseling | 4.45 | Very High |
| Work Engagement      | 4.32 | Very High |
| ASN Performance      | 4.40 | Very High |

**Source:** Authors (2026)

Overall, respondents perceived the counselling program positively as all the means were higher than 4.00, which indicate that the counselling program was effective in increasing the work engagement and job performance.

**Table 4.2** Outer Loading Values (Convergent Validity)

| Indicator  | Loading Factor |
|------------|----------------|
| WC1 to WC6 | 0.72 to 0.89   |
| WE1 to WE5 | 0.75 to 0.88   |
| KP1 to KP5 | 0.78 to 0.91   |

**Source:** Authors (2026)

All indicators have a loading greater than 0.70, indicating convergent validity.

**Table 4.3** Reliability Values

| Variable             | Cronbach's alpha | Composite Reliability |
|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Workplace Counseling | 0.91             | 0.93                  |
| Work Engagement      | 0.89             | 0.92                  |
| ASN Performance      | 0.92             | 0.94                  |

**Source:** Authors (2026)

Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability of each variable were  $\geq 0.70$  and regarded as reliable for use.

**Table 4.4** R-Square Values

| Variable        | R <sup>2</sup> | Category    |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------|
| Work Engagement | 0.62           | Strong      |
| ASN Performance | 0.71           | Very Strong |

**Source:** Authors (2026)

The workplace counseling contributes 62% of the variance in work engagement and the total model 71% of the variance in ASN performance.

**Table 4.5** Hypothesis Testing Results (Path Coefficients)

| Hypothesis | Path                | Coefficient | T-Statistic | P-Value | Result    |
|------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|---------|-----------|
| H1         | WC $\rightarrow$ WE | 0.79        | 9.12        | 0.000   | Supported |
| H2         | WC $\rightarrow$ KP | 0.42        | 3.45        | 0.001   | Supported |
| H3         | WE $\rightarrow$ KP | 0.51        | 4.87        | 0.000   | Supported |

**Source:** Authors (2026)

Each of these direct links is positive and statistically significant.

**Table 4.6** Mediation Test Results

| Path                                 | Coefficient | P-Value | Result    |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|---------|-----------|
| WC $\rightarrow$ WE $\rightarrow$ KP | 0.40        | 0.000   | Supported |

**Source:** Authors (2026)

As seen in Table 4.6, the effect of workplace counseling on ASN performance is significant with work engagement as a significant portion of the effect.

## 4.2 Discussion

### 4.2.1 Effect of Workplace Counseling on Work Engagement

The results are in favour of H1. The direct path of workplace counseling to work engagement has a significant positive relationship with a coefficient of ( $\beta = 0.79$ ;  $t = 9.12$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The impact seems to come about in a number of ways in which the employees interact with their work. Counselling enables them to maintain greater emotional stability, thereby increasing consistency in meeting service standards and the effectiveness when they communicate with the public they serve. The results align with Moralo and Graupner (2022), which conclude that workplace counselling contributes to the engagement of employees.

### 4.2.2 Effect of Workplace Counseling on ASN Performance

Results further reveal the direct path from workplace counseling to ASN performance ( $\beta = 0.42$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) indicating that H2 is supported. Counselling therefore not only enhances psychological health but directly impacts on effective employee performance. Effectively counseled staff persons are more likely to focus and prioritize, and to deal with personal and working issues that would otherwise affect their work productivity. This helps them to work more efficiently and maintain the quality of their work. The results are similar to the results of Paterson et al. (2021) in their systematic review of workplace counselling programs which found that there was evidence that workplace counselling programs reduced absenteeism and improved employees' performance and a study carried out by Motsomotso (2025) which found a direct effect of counselling on employee performance.

### 4.2.3 Effect of Work Engagement on ASN Performance

In addition, the effect of work engagement on ASN performance is positive and significant ( $\beta = 0.51$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), thus supporting H3. Invested employees convert their passion, proactivity and loyalty into better work. This aligns with Schaufeli (2021), who considers work engagement as the key factor determining the individual's performance, with Montano et al. (2021), who view work engagement as the mechanism through which organizational interventions translate into performance, and with the meta-analysis evidence provided by Neuber et al. (2022).

#### 4.2.4 Mediating Role of Work Engagement

Finally, the result shows that mediation analysis of the relationship between workplace counseling and ASN performance through work engagement is confirmed ( $\beta = 0.40$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), thus confirming H4. The direct and indirect effects are both important; so this is a partial mediation. Counselling can benefit workers who have personal and/or performance issues, as well as having an indirect effect on performance by enhancing commitment, energy, and engagement in work. The pattern corresponds to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model proposed by Bakker and Demerouti (2017): counseling is a resource that addresses the immediate difficulties while also crafting the longer-term psychological factors that maintain performance.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study used an analysis model that was descriptive and an observation model that was study and its exam were tested by using this model: Workplace counseling affects work performance, mediated by work engagement. The sample consisted of 50 ASN who was part of the Counseling Week organized by the Ministry of Home affairs in 2025. In all four hypotheses was fulfilled. The main mechanism that this would work is the strong positive effect of workplace counselling on work engagement. Counselling has a direct path and an indirect path that is related to psychological empowerment in improving work performance and also has a partial mediation effect through work engagement as a mediator. Such counselling programmes should be rethought as a strategic performance management instrument, the study claims on this basis. The findings of this study guide future research that can cover more participants, take the form of longitudinal studies, and also involve other mediators such as Organizational commitment, psychological capital.

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