



Digital Leadership and Employee Engagement: The Mediating Role of Job Crafting

Dimas Firmansyah*, Rima Rahmayanti

Widyatama University, Indonesia

Email : rima.rahmayanti@widyatama.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

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*Corresponding Author

Digital transformation has changed organizational work processes and increased the need for leadership approaches that can maintain employee engagement while encouraging proactive work behaviors. Digital leadership and job crafting are therefore important factors in helping employees adapt to technological change and sustain their involvement in work. This study aims to examine the effects of digital leadership on employee engagement and job crafting, as well as the mediating role of job crafting in the relationship between digital leadership and employee engagement. A quantitative explanatory design was employed, involving 70 employees selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. The results indicate that digital leadership positively and significantly affects employee engagement ($\beta = 0.483$) and job crafting ($\beta = 0.716$), while job crafting positively and significantly affects employee engagement ($\beta = 0.394$). Job crafting also partially mediates the relationship between digital leadership and employee engagement, with an indirect effect of 0.282. These findings extend the application of the Job Demands–Resources model by demonstrating the direct and indirect pathways through which leadership resources foster engagement. Practically, organizations should strengthen digital leadership competencies, encourage job crafting, and create meaningful work experiences to sustain employee engagement during digital transformation.

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INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation of communication and commercial transactions has reshaped the postal industry, creating significant implications for employment, organizational sustainability, and public service delivery (Hooi & Chan, 2023; Li et al., 2024). The declining use of conventional mail and the growing demand for parcel delivery and digital financial services require postal

organizations to develop new capabilities while maintaining service quality. This transition is important to society because postal companies continue to connect communities, support business activities, and facilitate access to essential services (Safitri et al., 2026; Tiong et al., 2025). However, technological change cannot be managed through infrastructure investment alone; employees must also adapt to evolving responsibilities and working practices. Research on digital leadership emphasizes the importance of leadership capabilities in navigating technology-driven organizational change. Therefore, understanding how leadership and employee behavior contribute to engagement is essential for sustainable organizational transformation.

Digital leadership, job crafting, and employee engagement represent interconnected organizational concepts that can help explain employees' responses to technological change (Abdullah & Sukriyah, 2026; Christina & Indra, 2025). Digital leadership concerns leaders' capabilities to guide organizations through digital transformation, coordinate technology-related initiatives, and encourage adaptation to emerging work requirements (Hossain et al., 2025; Pandey et al., 2023). Job crafting refers to employees' proactive efforts to modify aspects of their tasks and working relationships to improve the fit between their work and available resources. Employee engagement reflects employees' positive involvement in their work, expressed through energy, dedication, and concentration. Previous research has linked job crafting with job engagement and identified meaningful work as an important explanatory mechanism (Violinda et al., 2023; Nuraini, 2025). These concepts provide a basis for examining whether digital leadership encourages employees to reshape their work proactively and whether such behavior subsequently strengthens their engagement during organizational transformation.

Despite the opportunities associated with digitalization, postal employees may experience uncertainty when traditional responsibilities decline and new operational requirements emerge. Employees must learn unfamiliar systems, develop digital competencies, and respond to changing customer expectations while maintaining routine service delivery. These pressures may become particularly challenging in large organizations with established procedures and hierarchical structures (Zulfaida, 2026; Akhmadi, 2025). At PT Pos Indonesia (Persero), the Bandung Post Office provides a relevant setting for examining these challenges. According to the internal figures supplied for this study, conventional mail volume declined from approximately 45.2 million units in 2020 to 28.4 million in 2024, whereas parcel volume increased from 8.7 million to 24.5 million units. Digital financial transactions also rose from 5.2 million to 14.1 million. These contrasting trends illustrate the operational demands of transformation and highlight the importance of employee adaptability and sustained work engagement.

Previous research has examined employee engagement through organizational and individual factors, including employee experience, leadership capabilities, and work-related behavior. Basar (2024), for example, investigated the relationship between employee experience and engagement while considering positive affect as a moderating factor in the financial sector. Kaur (2023) examined drivers of employee engagement in relation to employee performance, highlighting the relevance of engagement to organizational outcomes. Meanwhile, research on digital leadership has increasingly emphasized leaders' capabilities to support innovation and respond to technology-driven change (Wahyudin et al., 2023; Zahroh & Furqon, 2025). These studies provide useful insights into leadership, digital transformation, and engagement. However, their different research focuses do not fully explain how digital leadership may influence engagement through employees' proactive efforts to redesign their work (Anantha et al., 2025; Anapah et al., 2026). Consequently, the relationship among these constructs requires further investigation within a unified analytical framework.

Research on job crafting provides an additional perspective for understanding how employees respond proactively to changing work environments. Violinda et al. (2023) examined the effect of job crafting on job engagement, with meaningfulness of work serving as a mediating variable. Their findings offer a relevant basis for investigating job crafting as a potential mechanism connecting organizational conditions with employee engagement. Nevertheless, the relationship between digital leadership and job crafting remains insufficiently integrated with the leadership–engagement relationship in the specific context considered here. Moreover, findings from financial-sector research and studies of digital innovation cannot automatically be generalized to state-owned postal enterprises, where established work routines and organizational hierarchies may shape employees' responses to change (Candra, 2025; Gaffar, 2026). This limitation creates a need to investigate the relationships simultaneously rather than treating leadership, job crafting, and engagement as separate research topics, thereby providing a more context-sensitive explanation of employee adaptation.

The present study addresses this gap by integrating digital leadership, job crafting, and employee engagement into a single mediation model among employees of a state-owned postal enterprise undergoing substantial operational transformation. Its contribution lies in examining whether job crafting provides a behavioral pathway through which digital leadership relates to employee engagement. The study also distinguishes between the direct relationship of digital leadership with engagement and its indirect relationship through job crafting. This approach extends the contextual application of existing research by

examining the interrelationships among these three constructs within an organizational setting characterized by digital transformation. Practically, the findings may inform leadership development, employee empowerment, and human resource management strategies intended to support workforce adaptation. The study's novelty therefore rests on the integration of the proposed model and its organizational context, rather than on claiming that these individual relationships have never been examined.

Against this background, the central research problem concerns how digital leadership and job crafting relate to employee engagement during organizational transformation. Four research objectives are established: describing the levels of digital leadership, job crafting, and employee engagement; examining the effect of digital leadership on employee engagement; assessing the effects of digital leadership on job crafting and job crafting on employee engagement; and testing the mediating role of job crafting. Based on the conceptual relationships among the three constructs, the study proposes four hypotheses. H1 states that digital leadership positively affects employee engagement. H2 proposes that digital leadership positively affects job crafting. H3 proposes that job crafting positively affects employee engagement. H4 proposes that job crafting mediates the relationship between digital leadership and employee engagement. These hypotheses are evaluated empirically using data collected from employees.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to examine the relationships among digital leadership, job crafting, and employee engagement. This design was selected because the study aimed to test hypothesized relationships between latent variables and assess the mediating role of job crafting. The research was conducted at PT Pos Indonesia Bandung Post Office, Indonesia, because the organization is undergoing digital transformation that requires employees to adapt to changing work processes, technological systems, and service demands. The research model was conceptually informed by the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework, which provides a basis for examining the relationships between workplace resources, proactive employee behavior, and engagement. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was selected as the analytical approach because it supports the simultaneous assessment of measurement models and structural relationships involving multiple latent constructs (Hair et al., 2019).

The research population consisted of 230 employees of PT Pos Indonesia Bandung Post Office. Using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, the minimum sample size was calculated as approximately 70 respondents.

Participants were selected through probability sampling using simple random sampling, which gives each population member an equal probability of selection. This procedure was intended to reduce selection bias and obtain a sample representing the defined employee population. The research examined three variables: digital leadership as the independent variable (X), job crafting as the mediating variable (Z), and employee engagement as the dependent variable (Y). Digital leadership was measured using 15 items across five dimensions, job crafting using 12 items across four dimensions, and employee engagement using nine items across three dimensions. All indicators were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires distributed directly to employees and online through Google Forms. The questionnaire was administered in Indonesian to facilitate comprehension and minimize language-related measurement bias. Before full distribution, the instrument was reviewed by academic experts for content validity and tested with a small group of respondents to assess statement clarity. Respondents were informed about the research objectives and confidentiality arrangements, and participation was conducted with attention to voluntary consent and anonymity. The measurement items were adapted from established instruments, including Tims et al. (2013) for job crafting and Schaufeli et al. (2002) for employee engagement, while digital leadership items were adapted to the organizational context. Table 1 presents the operationalization of the research variables, including their dimensions, item counts, and measurement scale.

Table 1. Operationalization of Research Variables

Variable	Dimensions	No. of Items	Scale
Digital Leadership (X)	Digital vision; digital competence; innovation orientation; digital collaboration; adaptability to digital change	15 (DL1- DL15)	Likert 1-5
Job Crafting (Z)	Increasing structural job resources; increasing social job resources; increasing challenging job demands; decreasing hindering job demands	12 (JC1- JC12)	Likert 1-5
Employee Engagement (Y)	Vigor; dedication; absorption	9 (EE1- EE9)	Likert 1-5

Source: Researcher's operationalization based on adapted measurement instruments (2026).

Data analysis consisted of descriptive and inferential analyses. Descriptive analysis used mean scores and a continuum-line approach to summarize respondents' assessments of each variable. Inferential analysis employed PLS-SEM using SmartPLS software. The measurement model was evaluated through

indicator loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), discriminant validity using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT), and internal consistency reliability using Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability. The structural model was assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance, and bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. Hypotheses were evaluated using path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. Indirect effects were examined to assess job crafting’s mediating role. Because all variables were measured using the same questionnaire, procedural precautions and collinearity diagnostics were considered when assessing potential common method bias, following relevant PLS-SEM guidance (Hair et al., 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Respondent Profile

A total of 70 completed questionnaires were collected from respondents who met the research criteria. In terms of gender, 42 respondents (60.00%) were men and 28 (40.00%) were women. Regarding age, the largest group was aged 41–50 years, comprising 47.14% of respondents, followed by those aged 31–40 years (32.86%), over 50 years (11.43%), and 25–30 years (8.57%). Educational attainment was dominated by Bachelor's degree holders (S1), representing 67.14% of the sample, while Diploma holders (D3) accounted for 25.71% and Master's degree holders (S2) for 7.14%. Regarding tenure, the largest group had worked for 11–20 years (45.71%). Staff or operational implementers constituted the largest occupational group, accounting for 65.71% of respondents. Overall, the sample was predominantly male, aged 41–50, held a Bachelor's degree, and had substantial organizational experience.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis was conducted using a continuum-line approach with an interval width of 0.80. The Good category was defined as a mean score ranging from 3.40 to 4.19. Table 2 presents the mean scores and descriptive classifications of digital leadership, job crafting, and employee engagement.

Table 2. Results of the Descriptive Analysis of Variables

Variable	Mean	Category
Digital Leadership	3.91	Good
Job Crafting	3.75	Good
Employee Engagement	3.85	Good

Source: Processed primary data (2026).

Table 2 shows that all three variables were classified as Good, although their mean scores differed. Digital leadership recorded the highest mean (3.91), followed by employee engagement (3.85) and job crafting (3.75). The difference between digital leadership and job crafting was 0.16 points, while employee engagement exceeded job crafting by 0.10 points. These results indicate that respondents provided relatively favorable assessments across all three variables, with job crafting receiving the comparatively lowest evaluation. At the indicator level, supervisor support for digital change (DL14 = 4.03) was the highest-rated digital leadership indicator, whereas encouragement of employees' new ideas (DL7 = 3.83) was the lowest. For job crafting, managing work pressure (JC12 = 3.84) recorded the highest score, while preventing excessive workload (JC10 = 3.66) recorded the lowest. For employee engagement, meaningful work (EE5 = 3.89) scored highest, whereas enjoyment of work (EE9 = 3.77) scored lowest.

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The measurement model was evaluated in terms of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability. The reported AVE values were 0.679 for digital leadership, 0.555 for job crafting, and 0.635 for employee engagement. All three values exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.50. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT). The square roots of AVE were 0.824 for digital leadership, 0.745 for job crafting, and 0.797 for employee engagement. The reported HTMT values for the construct pairs were 0.801, 0.749, and 0.789, respectively. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Table 3 summarizes the AVE, Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability values for the three constructs.

Table 3. AVE, Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability Values

Variable	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Digital Leadership	0.679	0.966	0.969
Job Crafting	0.555	0.927	0.937
Employee Engagement	0.635	0.928	0.940

Source: SmartPLS output (2026).

Table 3 indicates that all constructs met the reported convergent validity and reliability thresholds. Digital leadership had the highest AVE (0.679), followed by employee engagement (0.635) and job crafting (0.555), indicating differences in the proportion of indicator variance captured by each construct. Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.927 to 0.966, while composite reliability ranged from 0.937 to 0.969. All values exceeded 0.70, indicating high internal consistency across the three constructs. Job crafting had the lowest AVE, whereas digital

leadership had the highest reliability coefficients. Taken together with the reported Fornell–Larcker and HTMT results, the measurement assessment indicates that the constructs satisfy the stated evaluation criteria. However, the individual outer loadings and complete Fornell–Larcker matrix are not presented here, so those specific results cannot be independently inspected from the summary tables alone.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The structural model was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2). Employee engagement had an R^2 value of 0.662, while job crafting had an R^2 value of 0.513. The reported f^2 values were 1.052 for digital leadership on job crafting, 0.337 for digital leadership on employee engagement, and 0.224 for job crafting on employee engagement. The Q^2 values were 0.403 for employee engagement and 0.272 for job crafting. Table 4 presents the hypothesis testing results, including the path coefficients and t-statistics for the direct and indirect relationships in the structural model.

Table 4. Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

H	Relationship Path	Coef.	t-Stat.	Conclusion
H1	Digital Leadership → Employee Engagement	0.483	4.090	Accepted
H2	Digital Leadership → Job Crafting	0.716	12.151	Accepted
H3	Job Crafting → Employee Engagement	0.394	2.800	Accepted
H4	Digital Leadership → Job Crafting → Employee Engagement	0.282	2.759	Accepted

Source: SmartPLS output (2026). All reported p -values ≤ 0.05 .

Table 4 shows that all four hypothesized relationships had positive coefficients and were statistically significant according to the reported results. Digital leadership had a positive relationship with employee engagement ($\beta = 0.483$) and job crafting ($\beta = 0.716$). The coefficient for digital leadership → job crafting was the largest direct path coefficient in the model. Job crafting also had a positive relationship with employee engagement ($\beta = 0.394$). The indirect effect of digital leadership on employee engagement through job crafting was 0.282, indicating a positive mediated relationship. The t-statistics ranged from 2.759 to 12.151, with digital leadership → job crafting producing the highest value. The reported results support the acceptance of H1, H2, H3, and H4. Because the direct relationship between digital leadership and employee engagement remained positive and significant alongside the significant indirect effect, the reported pattern is consistent with partial mediation.

The R^2 value of 0.662 indicates that digital leadership and job crafting jointly accounted for 66.2% of the variance in employee engagement, leaving 33.8% unaccounted for by the predictors included in the model. For job crafting, the R^2 value of 0.513 indicates that digital leadership accounted for 51.3% of its variance, with the remaining 48.7% attributable to factors outside the model and unexplained variation. The f^2 value of 1.052 indicates a very large effect size for digital leadership on job crafting. The f^2 values of 0.337 for digital leadership and 0.224 for job crafting on employee engagement indicate substantial contributions to the engagement model. The positive Q^2 values of 0.403 for employee engagement and 0.272 for job crafting indicate predictive relevance under the reported assessment. Overall, the structural results show that the model accounts for a considerable proportion of variance in both endogenous constructs.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was performed using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. The analysis evaluated the significance of the direct paths from digital leadership to employee engagement, from digital leadership to job crafting, and from job crafting to employee engagement, as well as the indirect effect of digital leadership on employee engagement through job crafting. The coefficients and t-statistics are reported in Table 5.

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H4	Digital Leadership -> Job Crafting -> Employee Engagement	0.282	2.759	Accepted

Source: SmartPLS output (2026). All reported p -values ≤ 0.05 .

Table 5 confirms that all four hypotheses were accepted based on the reported coefficients, t-statistics, and significance results. H1 showed a positive direct relationship between digital leadership and employee engagement ($\beta = 0.483$; $t = 4.090$; reported $p = 0.000$). H2 showed a positive relationship between digital leadership and job crafting ($\beta = 0.716$; $t = 12.151$; reported $p = 0.000$). H3 indicated a positive relationship between job crafting and employee engagement ($\beta = 0.394$; $t = 2.800$; reported $p = 0.003$). H4 demonstrated a positive indirect relationship through job crafting ($\beta = 0.282$; $t = 2.759$; reported $p = 0.003$). The reported direct effect remained significant when the indirect effect was also significant, indicating partial mediation. The total effect of digital leadership on employee engagement was reported as 0.766.

Discussion

The findings indicate that digital leadership and job crafting are positively associated with employee engagement, with job crafting partially mediating the relationship between digital leadership and engagement. The direct effect of digital leadership on employee engagement is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.483$), consistent with research emphasizing the importance of leadership capabilities in technology-driven organizational change (Hossain et al., 2025; Pandey et al., 2023). Digital leadership may help employees understand organizational priorities, navigate technological changes, and maintain involvement in their work. The finding also complements Basar's (2024) examination of employee engagement in the financial sector, although the organizational contexts differ. In the present study, the result suggests that digital leadership is relevant not only to technological adaptation but also to employees' work-related psychological experiences. Theoretically, it extends the application of digital leadership research to a state-owned postal enterprise undergoing organizational transformation.

Digital leadership also demonstrates a strong positive relationship with job crafting ($\beta = 0.716$), representing the largest direct path coefficient in the model. This finding indicates that employees who perceive stronger digital leadership tend to report greater proactive adjustment of their work. It is consistent with research on digital leadership capabilities and innovation, which emphasizes the importance of digital competence, collaboration, and adaptability in organizational change. The result also complements Kanya et al. (2025), whose work highlights employee empowerment and competence development as relevant organizational strategies. In practical terms, supervisors may encourage job crafting by involving employees in problem-solving, allowing flexibility in work methods, and supporting the development of digital skills. For PT Pos Indonesia, these practices could help employees adjust their tasks and resources while responding to evolving service requirements.

The positive relationship between job crafting and employee engagement ($\beta = 0.394$) indicates that employees who actively adjust their work tend to report stronger engagement. This result is consistent with Violinda et al. (2023), who examined job crafting in relation to job engagement and the mediating role of meaningfulness of work. It also aligns with the broader perspective of the Job Demands–Resources framework, which emphasizes the relevance of job resources and employee responses to work demands (Bakker et al., 2023). The finding suggests that employees' proactive behavior is associated with their engagement rather than engagement being determined exclusively by organizational conditions. Practically, managers can support job crafting through

opportunities to develop skills, strengthen workplace relationships, and identify manageable challenges. Such initiatives may be particularly relevant when employees must balance established responsibilities with new digital processes and changing customer expectations.

The mediation analysis reveals a significant indirect effect of digital leadership on employee engagement through job crafting ($\beta = 0.282$). Because the direct effect remains positive and significant ($\beta = 0.483$), the results indicate partial mediation. The reported total effect is 0.766, comprising the direct and indirect pathways. This pattern suggests that digital leadership is associated with engagement both directly and through employees' proactive adjustment of their work. The result extends the relevance of digital leadership research (Hossain et al., 2025; Pandey et al., 2023) by identifying job crafting as a potential behavioral mechanism linking leadership with engagement. Its theoretical contribution lies in integrating these relationships within a single explanatory model in an Indonesian state-owned enterprise. Nevertheless, the coefficients represent relationships within the observed sample and should not be interpreted as definitive causal effects without stronger longitudinal or experimental evidence.

The descriptive findings provide additional practical direction for management. Although all three variables were classified as Good, job crafting recorded the lowest mean (3.75), compared with employee engagement (3.85) and digital leadership (3.91). At the indicator level, encouragement of employees' new ideas (DL7 = 3.83), management of excessive workload (JC10 = 3.66), and enjoyment of work (EE9 = 3.77) received the lowest scores within their respective constructs. These results identify specific areas for improvement without implying that the indicators are objectively deficient. Management could establish structured employee idea forums, provide greater flexibility in work methods, review workload allocation, and strengthen feedback on the value of employees' contributions. Such initiatives are consistent with the relevance of employee empowerment and competence development emphasized by Kanya et al. (2025). Their implementation should be evaluated through subsequent employee surveys and operational indicators to determine whether perceived leadership, job crafting, and engagement improve.

Overall, this study contributes by demonstrating how digital leadership, job crafting, and employee engagement operate together in the context of a state-owned postal enterprise undergoing digital transformation. The positive direct relationships and significant indirect pathway provide evidence that job crafting is a relevant component of the association between leadership and engagement. This integrated perspective complements research on digital leadership capabilities (Li et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2024) and job crafting-related engagement (Safitri et al., 2026; Tiong et al., 2025), while extending their application to a regional Indonesian postal organization. The practical implication is that

leadership development should combine digital competence with participative practices that enable employees to reshape their work constructively. However, the study is limited by its sample of 70 employees from one regional office and its cross-sectional design. Future research involving multiple organizations, larger samples, and longitudinal data could assess the generalizability and temporal stability of these relationships.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights that digital leadership is an important organizational resource for strengthening employee engagement, both directly and indirectly by encouraging employees to proactively shape their work through job crafting. The findings show that digital leadership, job crafting, and employee engagement are in the good category, while the significant direct and indirect effects confirm that job crafting partially mediates the relationship between digital leadership and employee engagement. Theoretically, this study contributes to the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model by demonstrating how digital leadership can function as a job resource that fosters engagement through both a direct pathway and a proactive behavioral mechanism, extending its empirical application to an Indonesian state-owned enterprise. However, the study is limited by its relatively small sample of 70 employees from the Bandung area and its cross-sectional design, which restricts causal interpretation and generalizability. Future research should involve larger samples across regional and national offices, adopt longitudinal or mixed-methods designs, and examine additional factors such as technology readiness and innovation culture. Practically, PT Pos Indonesia should strengthen digital leadership competencies through structured training, create organizational conditions that support job crafting, encourage employees to contribute new ideas and manage their workloads effectively, and foster meaningful and enjoyable work experiences to sustain engagement throughout digital transformation.

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