

Collaborative Governance and Employee Engagement in Cross Sector Organizations: Evidence from East Java

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ABSTRACT: This study examines how collaborative governance quality shapes employee engagement and perceived collaborative performance within government organizations in East Java. Drawing on leadership and human resource management perspectives, the study investigates the roles of collaborative leadership, inter organizational role clarity, and inter organizational trust as mediating mechanisms. Using survey data from 332 government employees involved in cross organizational collaboration between March and May 2025, the model was tested through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. The findings indicate that governance quality strongly predicts collaborative leadership and indirectly enhances role clarity and trust. Leadership significantly strengthens both role clarity and trust, which in turn promote employee engagement. Employee engagement emerges as the strongest predictor of perceived collaborative performance. The results highlight that governance quality influences performance primarily through sequential leadership and relational mechanisms rather than direct effects. Although the cross sectional design limits causal inference, the study provides a micro level explanation of how governance arrangements translate into employee level outcomes.

Keywords: collaborative governance, collaborative leadership, employee engagement, inter organizational trust, role clarity

INTRODUCTION

Collaborative governance has emerged as a central organizational arrangement in contemporary public management, particularly as government organizations increasingly rely on collaboration to address complex and interdependent policy and service delivery challenges. In decentralized governance systems, public organizations are frequently required to coordinate across administrative boundaries, sectors, and institutional mandates, thereby reshaping traditional models of hierarchical management (Ahmed, 2024; Goldfinch, 2023). In Indonesia, decentralization reforms have expanded the responsibilities of provincial and local governments, increasing the prevalence of cross organizational collaboration in areas such as public service delivery, local economic development, and social programs (Altamimi et al., 2023; Xin & Chen, 2023). East Java, as one of Indonesia's most administratively complex and economically significant provinces, provides a particularly relevant context in which government organizations routinely engage in collaborative arrangements involving multiple public and nonpublic actors.

The concept of collaborative governance has been extensively theorized within public administration and governance studies. Seminal work defines collaborative governance as a structured process in which



public agencies directly engage non state and other governmental actors in collective decision making oriented toward public goals (Goldfinch, 2023). Building on this foundation, Gash (2022) conceptualize collaborative governance as a regime characterized by principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action. Empirical studies have shown that collaborative governance can enhance policy coordination, improve service outcomes, and increase problem solving capacity in complex governance settings (Lopes & Farias, 2022; Zia ud din et al., 2023). However, this literature has predominantly treated government organizations as unitary actors, focusing on institutional design and collective outcomes rather than on internal managerial and human resource processes.

From a management and organizational perspective, collaborative governance fundamentally alters how government organization's structure work and manage employees. Research on network governance and inter organizational collaboration demonstrates that collaborative arrangements rely heavily on relational mechanisms such as leadership, trust, and coordination rather than on formal authority alone (Hickey et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2025). Employees within government organizations engaged in collaboration are often required to perform boundary spanning roles, interact with multiple partners, and navigate overlapping accountability systems (Klindt et al., 2024; Lee, 2022). These conditions generate distinctive managerial challenges related to role clarity, leadership practices, and relational trust, which are central concerns in human resource management and organizational behavior research.

Public sector human resource management research has consistently shown that role clarity, leadership quality, and trust are critical determinants of employee engagement and performance (Kişi, 2024; Usman et al., 2024). Employee engagement, in particular, has been linked to higher motivation, stronger commitment, and improved performance in public organizations (Lu & Chen, 2022). However, most HRM studies in the public sector remain grounded in hierarchical organizational contexts and do not adequately account for the inter organizational and networked nature of collaborative governance. As a result, there is limited empirical understanding of how collaborative governance arrangements shape employee engagement and perceived performance within government organizations. Recent reviews explicitly call for micro level analyses that connect governance structures with employee level outcomes and managerial practices (Cowen et al., 2022; Schaltegger et al., 2022).

This gap is especially pronounced in Indonesia contexts, where collaborative governance often operates within hybrid institutional environments characterized by strong relational norms, administrative pluralism, and varying managerial (Hadpakdee, 2025; Sundram, 2025). Despite the growing relevance of collaboration in Indonesian public administration, empirical management-oriented studies examining how collaborative governance affects employees within government organizations remain scarce.

Responding to this gap, the present study examines collaborative governance as a managerial context within East Java government organizations. Specifically, it investigates how collaborative governance quality influences collaborative leadership, role clarity across organizations, and inter organizational trust, and how these mechanisms shape employee engagement and perceived collaborative performance. By focusing on employees and managers within government organizations rather than solely on governance structures or policy outcomes, the study advances a micro level understanding of collaborative governance in public sector management.

This study makes four key contributions. First, it extends collaborative governance theory by integrating human resource management and organizational behavior perspectives, demonstrating how governance arrangements influence employee engagement through leadership, role clarity, and trust. Second, it contributes to management and organization studies by empirically linking inter organizational governance mechanisms to employee level outcomes in government organizations, thereby bridging macro governance theory and micromanagement research. Third, by providing evidence from East Java, the study enriches the Indonesian management literature with context specific insights into collaborative management practices in decentralized public administrations. Finally, the findings offer practical implications for public sector managers, highlighting the importance of governance quality and leadership in sustaining employee engagement and performance in collaborative government programs.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Collaborative Governance as a Managerial and Organizational Framework

Collaborative governance was initially developed to explain how public agencies engage multiple actors in collective decision making and joint action when hierarchical authority is insufficient to address complex

problems. The foundational definition conceptualizes collaborative governance as formal and informal processes through which public organizations coordinate with other organizations and stakeholders to achieve shared objectives (Gash, 2022). This perspective emphasizes deliberation, inclusiveness, and consensus-oriented interaction as core features of effective collaboration.

Subsequent theoretical refinement frames collaborative governance as a dynamic regime composed of interacting elements rather than a static institutional design. Nurhaeni et al. (2025) propose that collaborative governance operates through three interrelated components, namely principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action. This framework highlights that collaboration depends not only on formal structures but also on relational and managerial processes that enable actors to work effectively across organizational boundaries. Importantly, this regime perspective provides a theoretical basis for examining how governance arrangements influence organizational behavior and managerial practices within participating organizations.

While collaborative governance theory originates in public administration, its underlying logic aligns closely with management and organizational theories of inter organizational collaboration. Research on network governance emphasizes that collaborative arrangements rely on coordination mechanisms distinct from markets and hierarchies, privileging trust, relational norms, and negotiated authority (Sundram, 2025). From this perspective, collaborative governance can be understood as a form of networked organization in which managerial effectiveness depends on the ability to align diverse actors, manage interdependencies, and sustain cooperation over time.

Leadership and Human Resource Processes in Collaborative Settings

Leadership plays a central role in translating collaborative governance structures into day-to-day organizational practices. Unlike traditional hierarchical leadership, leadership in collaborative governance contexts is primarily facilitative, focusing on enabling participation, managing conflict, and fostering shared understanding among actors with diverse interests and organizational affiliations (Gash, 2022; Zhou & Dai, 2023). This conception of collaborative leadership resonates with management theories that emphasize relational and distributed leadership in complex organizational environments.

Human resource management theory further suggests that organizational contexts shape how employees experience their work, particularly with respect to role clarity, motivation, and engagement. Role theory posits that clarity regarding expectations, responsibilities, and authority is essential for effective performance and psychological well-being (Zheng et al., 2025). In collaborative governance settings, employees often operate across organizational boundaries, increasing the risk of role ambiguity due to overlapping mandates and multiple accountability systems (Lee, 2022). Collaborative governance arrangements that provide clear coordination mechanisms and leadership support are therefore likely to influence role clarity within government organizations.

Trust is another foundational mechanism in both collaborative governance and management theory. Inter organizational trust reduces uncertainty and facilitates cooperation in environments where formal control is limited (Hickey et al., 2023). Within collaborative governance regimes, trust is reinforced through transparent decision making, repeated interaction, and perceived fairness among partners (Corhăneanu, 2025). At the employee level, trust enables individuals to engage more fully in collaborative tasks by reducing perceived risk and fostering confidence in partners and leadership.

Employee Engagement and Performance in Government Organizations

Employee engagement is a central construct in human resource management and organizational behavior, referring to a positive and fulfilling work related state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Ariyanto et al., 2025). In public sector organizations, engagement has been linked to higher performance, greater commitment, and improved service delivery outcomes (Mendez & Avellaneda, 2023). The job demands resources model further explains engagement as a function of organizational resources such as leadership support, role clarity, and relational quality, all of which are salient in collaborative governance contexts (Lu & Chen, 2022).

Despite these theoretical connections, existing studies rarely integrate collaborative governance theory with HRM and employee engagement frameworks. Most collaborative governance research remains focused on policy outcomes or network level effectiveness, while HRM research often assumes stable hierarchical

organizational contexts. This theoretical separation limits understanding of how collaborative governance reshapes the internal dynamics of government organizations and affects employee level outcomes.

Integrative Framework for This Study

Drawing on collaborative governance theory, network governance, leadership theory, and human resource management perspectives, this study conceptualizes collaborative governance as a managerial context that shapes leadership practices, role clarity, inter organizational trust, and employee engagement within government organizations. By integrating these theoretical traditions, the study provides a foundation for examining how governance arrangements extend beyond institutional coordination to influence employee experiences and perceived performance in collaborative public sector settings.

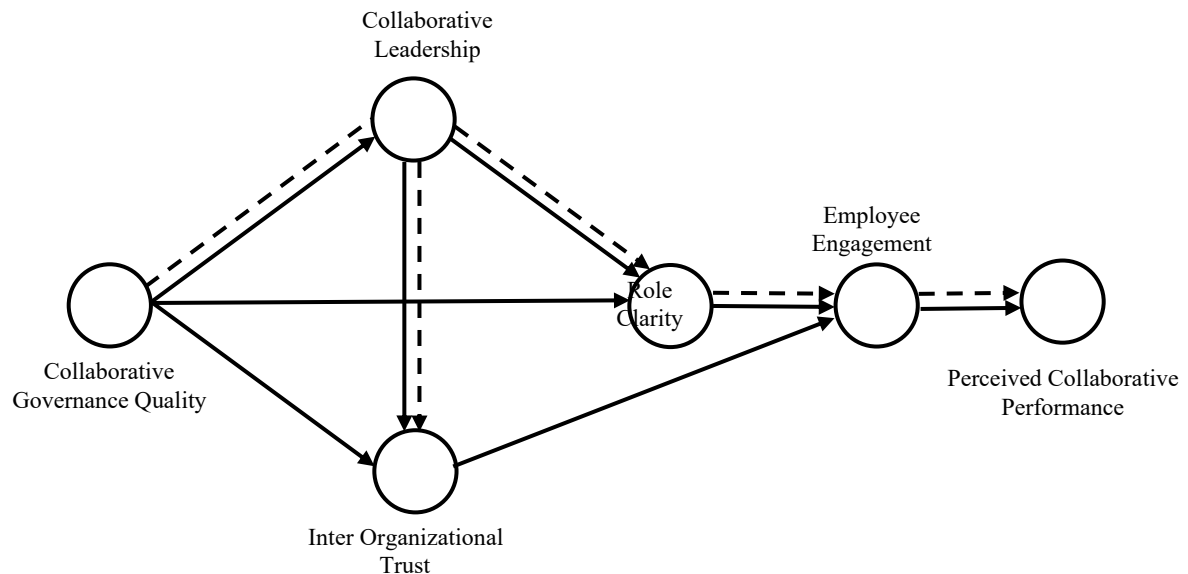


Figure 1. Research Framework

This integrated theoretical foundation provides the basis for developing testable hypotheses regarding the relationships among collaborative governance quality, leadership, human resource mechanisms, and performance outcomes, which are elaborated in the following section.

Collaborative Governance Quality and Managerial Mechanisms

Collaborative governance quality reflects the extent to which collaborative arrangements are characterized by inclusive decision making, transparent coordination, and shared accountability among participating organizations. Within government organizations, the quality of collaborative governance determines not only how external relationships are structured but also how internal managerial processes operate. High quality collaborative governance provides a stable institutional environment that enables managers and employees to coordinate effectively across organizational boundaries, whereas weak governance arrangements often generate ambiguity, conflict, and fragmentation (Gash, 2022).

The collaborative governance regime framework emphasizes that governance quality shapes the internal dynamics of collaboration through principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action (Lee, 2022). These elements are not merely institutional features but are enacted through managerial practices that influence leadership behavior, coordination mechanisms, and relational processes within participating government organizations. Empirical studies demonstrate that well designed collaborative governance arrangements enhance managerial effectiveness by clarifying expectations, supporting coordination, and fostering relational stability among collaborating actors (Gash, 2022; Lopes & Farias, 2022).

From a management perspective, collaborative governance quality functions as an enabling condition for collaborative leadership. When governance arrangements are inclusive and transparent, leaders are better

positioned to facilitate dialogue, align organizational interests, and manage conflict across boundaries (Usman et al., 2024). Conversely, weak governance structures constrain leadership capacity and undermine facilitative leadership behaviors. This suggests that collaborative leadership within government organizations is shaped by the quality of the broader governance context in which collaboration is embedded.

Collaborative governance quality also influences role clarity across organizations. Role theory posits that clearly defined expectations and responsibilities are essential for effective performance and psychological well-being (Zheng et al., 2025). In collaborative governance settings, government employees often face multiple and sometimes conflicting role expectations due to overlapping mandates and shared responsibilities. Governance arrangements that establish clear coordination mechanisms and shared accountability reduce role ambiguity by providing consistent guidance regarding tasks, authority, and inter-organizational responsibilities (Lee, 2022; Schaltegger et al., 2022).

In addition, collaborative governance quality is closely linked to the development of inter-organizational trust. Trust emerges in collaborative settings when actors perceive decision-making processes as fair, transparent, and predictable (Bao & Yang, 2022). Studies of collaborative and network governance show that governance mechanisms emphasizing transparency and shared responsibility foster trust by reducing uncertainty and opportunistic behavior (Sundram, 2025; Wang et al., 2025). Within government organizations, such trust is critical for enabling employees to engage confidently in cross-organizational collaboration.

Taken together, these theoretical arguments suggest that collaborative governance quality serves as a foundational managerial condition that shapes leadership practices, role clarity, and trust within government organizations engaged in cross-sector collaboration. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H1: Collaborative governance quality has a positive effect on collaborative leadership within government organizations.

H2: Collaborative governance quality has a positive effect on role clarity across organizations.

H3: Collaborative governance quality has a positive effect on inter-organizational trust.

Collaborative Governance Quality and Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative leadership refers to leadership practices that emphasize facilitation, shared decision-making, and relationship management across organizational boundaries rather than hierarchical control within a single organization. In collaborative governance settings, particularly within government organizations, leaders are required to coordinate diverse actors, manage interdependence, and sustain cooperation in the absence of formal authority over all participants. As a result, leadership becomes a central managerial mechanism through which collaborative governance is translated into everyday organizational practice.

The collaborative leadership literature emphasizes that leaders in inter-organizational settings play a critical role in sense-making, expectation alignment, and conflict management (Corhăneanu, 2025; Usman et al., 2024). Rather than issuing directives, collaborative leaders facilitate dialogue, negotiate roles, and foster shared understanding among actors with different organizational mandates. Empirical studies show that such leadership behaviors are essential for maintaining coordination and stability in collaborative arrangements, particularly in public sector contexts characterized by multiple accountability systems (Barker Scott & Manning, 2024).

One important managerial outcome of collaborative leadership is role clarity across organizations. Role theory suggests that ambiguity arises when individuals receive inconsistent or unclear expectations regarding their responsibilities and authority (Anglin et al., 2022). In collaborative governance contexts, role ambiguity is especially likely because employees must respond to multiple organizational logics and external partners. Collaborative leaders help mitigate this ambiguity by clarifying responsibilities, coordinating task allocation, and aligning expectations across participating organizations (Ang'ana & Walter J. Ongeti, 2023). Studies of boundary-spanning roles in public organizations indicate that leadership support is a key factor in reducing role conflict and enhancing clarity in inter-organizational work (Satheesh et al., 2024).

Collaborative leadership is also closely linked to the development of inter-organizational trust. Trust is widely recognized as a foundational mechanism in inter-organizational collaboration, enabling cooperation under conditions of uncertainty and (Schilke & Lumineau, 2025). Leaders who demonstrate fairness, openness, and consistency contribute to trust building by signaling reliability and commitment to shared

goals. Empirical research shows that facilitative and relational leadership behaviors strengthen trust among collaborating actors and reduce perceptions of opportunism in networked governance settings (Kim, 2025).

Within government organizations, inter organizational trust is particularly important because collaboration often involves high political and administrative risk. When leaders actively mediate conflicts, encourage transparency, and promote mutual respect, employees are more likely to perceive collaborative relationships as trustworthy and to engage constructively with external partners (Badriyah et al., 2024). Thus, collaborative leadership functions not only as a coordination mechanism but also as a relational resource that supports effective collaboration at the employee level.

Taken together, these theoretical and empirical insights suggest that collaborative leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping role clarity and trust within government organizations engaged in collaborative governance. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H4: Collaborative leadership has a positive effect on role clarity across organizations.

H5: Collaborative leadership has a positive effect on inter organizational trust.

Collaborative Governance Quality and Role Clarity Across Organizations

Employee engagement refers to a positive and fulfilling work related state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Ariyanto et al., 2025). In public sector organizations, engagement has been shown to play a critical role in shaping employee motivation, commitment, and performance, particularly in contexts where work involves complex coordination and high relational demands (Kişi, 2024). From a human resource management perspective, engagement is influenced not only by individual characteristics but also by organizational conditions that shape how employees experience their roles and responsibilities.

Role clarity is a central job resource in organizational behavior and HRM research. Role theory suggests that employees are more likely to perform effectively and experience psychological well-being when expectations regarding tasks, authority, and responsibilities are clear and consistent (Anglin et al., 2022). Conversely, role ambiguity has been associated with stress, reduced motivation, and lower engagement, particularly in environments characterized by uncertainty and complexity (O'Connor et al., 2022). These dynamics are especially salient in collaborative governance settings, where government employees often operate across organizational boundaries and face overlapping mandates and multiple accountability relationships.

In collaborative governance contexts, role clarity becomes a critical mechanism linking governance arrangements to employee level outcomes. Employees involved in cross organizational collaboration must balance internal organizational expectations with the demands of external partners. When roles are clearly defined and supported by coordination mechanisms, employees are better able to understand how their work contributes to collective goals, which enhances their sense of purpose and engagement (Bakker, 2022). Empirical studies in public organizations indicate that role clarity is positively associated with employee engagement and job satisfaction, particularly in settings involving inter organizational coordination (Tummers & Bakker, 2021).

The job demands resources model provides a useful theoretical lens for understanding this relationship. The model posits that job resources such as role clarity foster engagement by reducing uncertainty and enabling employees to invest cognitive and emotional energy in their (Bakker, 2022). In collaborative governance settings, where job demands are often high due to coordination complexity and relational uncertainty, the availability of role clarity as a resource becomes particularly important for sustaining engagement.

Within government organizations, engaged employees are more likely to approach collaborative tasks proactively, maintain constructive relationships with external partners, and contribute to the effective functioning of collaborative arrangements. Conversely, when role expectations are unclear, employees may disengage from collaborative activities to avoid risk or conflict, undermining the intended benefits of collaboration (Auer et al., 2014). These insights suggest that role clarity plays a pivotal role in shaping employee engagement in collaborative governance contexts.

Based on these theoretical arguments and empirical findings, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H6: Role clarity across organizations has a positive effect on employee engagement in collaborative work.

Collaborative Governance Quality and Inter Organizational Trust

Inter organizational trust refers to the expectation that collaborating organizations and their representatives will act in a reliable, fair, and non-opportunistic manner (Schilke & Lumineau, 2025). In collaborative governance contexts, trust serves as a critical relational mechanism that enables cooperation in environments where formal authority and contractual control are limited. For government organizations engaged in cross sector collaboration, trust is particularly important because employees must rely on external partners to fulfill shared responsibilities and achieve collective goals.

Extensive research in management and organizational studies demonstrates that trust reduces uncertainty and transaction costs, thereby facilitating coordination and joint problem solving in inter organizational relationships (Waerness et al., 2023). Within collaborative governance regimes, trust is reinforced through repeated interaction, transparent decision making, and shared accountability, all of which signal commitment and reliability among partners (Sofyani et al., 2021). Empirical studies of network and collaborative governance indicate that higher levels of trust are associated with stronger cooperation and more effective collaborative outcomes (Pandey, 2023).

From a human resource management perspective, trust also has important implications for employee engagement. Trust in collaborative partners and governance arrangements reduces perceived risk and anxiety, enabling employees to invest greater emotional and cognitive resources in their work (Marques et al., 2022). In public sector settings, trust has been shown to enhance employee motivation, commitment, and engagement, particularly in contexts involving interdependence and shared responsibility (Rice et al., 2025; Vinarski-Peretz & Kidron, 2024).

In collaborative governance settings, government employees often face uncertainty regarding the behavior and reliability of external partners. When inter organizational trust is high, employees are more likely to perceive collaboration as meaningful and worthwhile, which strengthens their willingness to engage actively in collaborative tasks. Conversely, low levels of trust can lead to defensive behavior, reduced information sharing, and disengagement from collaborative activities (Thomas, 2025). These dynamics suggest that trust functions as a key relational resource supporting employee engagement in collaborative governance.

The job demands resources model further supports this argument by conceptualizing trust as a social resource that enhances engagement by fostering psychological safety and reducing relational strain (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). In collaborative governance contexts characterized by high coordination demands, the presence of trust becomes especially salient for sustaining employee engagement over time.

Based on these theoretical considerations and empirical findings, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H17: Inter organizational trust has a positive effect on employee engagement in collaborative work.

Employee Engagement and Perceived Collaborative Performance

Perceived collaborative performance refers to employees' and managers' assessments of how effectively collaborative arrangements achieve shared goals, deliver services, and coordinate activities across organizations. In inter organizational settings, particularly within government organizations, performance is often difficult to measure using objective indicators alone due to shared responsibilities and diffuse accountability. As a result, perceived performance is widely used in management research as a valid indicator of organizational effectiveness in collaborative and networked contexts (Giauque et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022).

Employee engagement has been consistently identified as a key driver of organizational performance across both private and public sector contexts. Engagement reflects the extent to which employees invest physical, cognitive, and emotional energy in their work, which in turn influences effort, persistence, and discretionary behavior (Kaushik & Tiwari, 2023). In public organizations, higher levels of employee engagement have been associated with improved service quality, greater effectiveness, and enhanced organizational outcomes (Kişi, 2024; Tummers & Bakker, 2021).

In collaborative governance settings, employee engagement plays an especially important role because collaboration relies heavily on proactive behavior, information sharing, and relationship maintenance rather than formal authority alone. Engaged employees are more likely to take initiative, coordinate with external partners, and contribute constructively to joint problem solving, all of which are essential for effective

collaboration (Moczulska et al., 2024). Conversely, disengaged employees may limit their involvement to minimum formal requirements, undermining the functioning of collaborative arrangements.

Management and organizational studies further suggest that employee engagement functions as a key mechanism translating organizational conditions into performance outcomes. Research grounded in the job demands resources model demonstrates that engaged employees are better able to cope with complex job demands and are more likely to achieve higher performance outcomes, particularly in environments characterized by uncertainty and interdependence (Tummers & Bakker, 2021). In collaborative governance contexts, where coordination demands are high and outcomes depend on collective effort, engagement becomes a critical resource for sustaining collaborative performance.

Empirical evidence from public sector and inter organizational research supports this linkage. Studies show that employee engagement is positively related to perceptions of effectiveness, innovation, and service delivery in collaborative and networked organizations (Kişi, 2024; Knox & Marin-Cadavid, 2023). These findings suggest that engagement not only reflects positive employee attitudes but also contributes directly to the perceived success of collaborative initiatives.

Based on these theoretical arguments and empirical findings, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H8: Employee engagement has a positive effect on perceived collaborative performance.

Mediating Mechanisms in Collaborative Governance

Collaborative governance theory emphasizes that governance arrangements do not influence outcomes directly but operate through a set of interacting managerial and relational (Gash, 2022). From this perspective, leadership practices, role clarity, trust, and employee engagement function as key transmission mechanisms that translate governance quality into organizational outcomes. Integrating collaborative governance with management and human resource theories therefore requires explicit attention to indirect effects rather than relying solely on direct relationships.

Collaborative leadership is theorized to mediate the relationship between collaborative governance quality and subsequent managerial outcomes. Governance arrangements that emphasize inclusiveness, transparency, and shared accountability create conditions under which leaders can effectively perform facilitative roles. In turn, these leadership practices shape employees' experiences of coordination and relational stability (Akhavan Tabassi et al., 2025). Empirical studies of network governance suggest that leadership often serves as a conduit through which governance structures influence coordination quality and trust within collaborative settings (Zhang et al., 2022). This implies that the effects of collaborative governance quality on role clarity and inter organizational trust are at least partially mediated by collaborative leadership.

Role clarity and inter organizational trust are further expected to mediate the relationship between governance and leadership mechanisms on the one hand and employee engagement on the other. Human resource management and organizational behavior research consistently demonstrates that role clarity and trust function as key job and social resources that foster engagement by reducing uncertainty and enhancing psychological safety (Bakker, 2022; Tummers & Bakker, 2021). In collaborative governance contexts, where employees face elevated coordination demands and relational risk, these mediating mechanisms become especially salient. Governance quality and leadership practices influence engagement primarily by shaping how clearly roles are defined and how trustworthy collaborative relationships are perceived to be.

Finally, employee engagement is theorized to mediate the relationship between human resource mechanisms and perceived collaborative performance. Engagement captures employees' motivational investment in collaborative work and serves as a proximal predictor of effort, persistence, and proactive behavior (Wegner & Verschoore, 2022). In inter organizational and public sector contexts, engagement has been shown to translate organizational and relational resources into performance outcomes, particularly when performance depends on collective action rather than individual effort (Aguilera et al., 2024; Asiaei et al., 2023). This suggests that role clarity and trust contribute to collaborative performance primarily by enhancing employee engagement.

Taken together, these arguments indicate that collaborative governance quality affects perceived collaborative performance through a sequential process involving collaborative leadership, role clarity, inter organizational trust, and employee engagement. Rather than exerting direct effects alone, governance

arrangements shape performance by influencing how leadership is enacted, how roles are understood, how trust is built, and how engaged employees are in collaborative work.

Based on this integrative reasoning, the following mediation hypotheses are proposed.

H9: Collaborative leadership mediates the relationship between collaborative governance quality and role clarity across organizations.

H10: Collaborative leadership mediates the relationship between collaborative governance quality and inter organizational trust.

H11: Role clarity across organizations and inter organizational trust mediate the relationship between collaborative governance quality and employee engagement.

H12: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between role clarity across organizations and perceived collaborative performance, as well as between inter organizational trust and perceived collaborative performance.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative, cross sectional survey design to examine the relationships among collaborative governance quality, collaborative leadership, role clarity across organizations, inter organizational trust, employee engagement, and perceived collaborative performance within government organizations in East Java, Indonesia. A quantitative approach was appropriate because the study aimed to test theory driven hypotheses and assess both direct and mediating relationships among latent constructs within an integrated research model grounded in collaborative governance, management, and human resource management theories. The proposed research model positions collaborative governance quality as the exogenous variable, collaborative leadership, role clarity, and inter organizational trust as mediating mechanisms, employee engagement as a proximal outcome, and perceived collaborative performance as the final endogenous construct. The model was tested using Structural Equation Modeling with a variance - based estimation approach.

The empirical context of the study consisted of provincial and district level government organizations in East Java that are actively involved in inter organizational and cross sector collaboration. These collaborative arrangements commonly occur in areas such as public service delivery, social programs, and regional development and require government employees to work across organizational boundaries. The unit of analysis was individual government employees who were directly involved in collaborative activities as part of their official duties. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that only individuals with relevant collaborative experience were included. Data collection was conducted between March and May 2025 using a structured self-administered questionnaire. A total of 420 questionnaires were distributed through official organizational communication channels, and 356 responses were received. After screening for incomplete and inconsistent responses, 332 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis. This sample size exceeded the minimum requirements for Structural Equation Modeling and was sufficient to test the proposed model with adequate statistical power.

Data were collected using an online survey instrument to facilitate access across multiple government organizations. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality to reduce evaluation apprehension and social desirability bias. Several procedural remedies were applied to minimize the risk of common method bias. The questionnaire used clear and concise wording, avoided ambiguous or double-barreled items, and separated predictor and outcome constructs into different sections. Respondents were informed that there were no right or wrong answers and that the study was conducted solely for academic purposes.

All constructs were measured using multi-item scales adapted from established and validated instruments in prior studies. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Collaborative governance quality was measured using items capturing inclusiveness in decision making, transparency of coordination, and shared accountability in collaborative arrangements, adapted from the collaborative governance frameworks developed by [Gash \(2022\)](#) and [Sofyani et al. \(2021\)](#). Example items include statements such as decision making in collaborative programs is inclusive of relevant stakeholders and roles and responsibilities in collaboration are transparently communicated. Collaborative leadership was measured as facilitative and relational leadership behavior in inter organizational settings using items adapted from [Tummers & Bakker \(2021\)](#), such as leaders encourage open dialogue among collaborating organizations and leaders effectively mediate conflicts between collaborative partners. Role clarity across organizations was measured using items assessing clarity of responsibilities, authority, and

expectations in collaborative work, adapted from role theory instruments developed by Zheng et al. (2025) and later operationalized by Marques et al. (2022). Inter organizational trust was measured using items reflecting confidence in the reliability and fairness of partner organizations, adapted from the inter organizational trust scale developed by Waerness et al. (2023). Employee engagement was measured using items reflecting vigor, dedication, and absorption in collaborative work, adapted from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale developed by Moczulska et al. (2024). Perceived collaborative performance was measured using items capturing respondents' evaluations of the effectiveness and success of collaborative arrangements, adapted from (Dunlop & Scheepers, 2022; Liu et al., 2023). All items were slightly reworded to reflect the public sector and collaborative governance context in East Java.

Prior to the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted with 30 government employees who met the same selection criteria as the main sample. The purpose of the pilot test was to assess item clarity, contextual relevance, and preliminary reliability. Feedback from the pilot respondents resulted in minor wording revisions to improve clarity and reduce potential misinterpretation. Reliability analysis from the pilot study indicated that all constructs achieved Cronbach's alpha values above the recommended threshold, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

In addition to procedural remedies, common method bias was assessed statistically. Harman's single factor test was conducted by loading all measurement items into an exploratory factor analysis, and the results indicated that no single factor accounted for the majority of variance. A full collinearity assessment using variance inflation factors further showed that all values were below conservative thresholds, suggesting that common method bias was unlikely to substantially influence the findings.

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. This approach was chosen due to its suitability for testing complex models with multiple mediating relationships and its robustness in handling non normal data distributions. The analysis followed a two-stage procedure. First, the measurement model was evaluated in terms of internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Second, the structural model was assessed by examining path coefficients, explained variance, and indirect effects using a bootstrapping procedure to test the significance of the hypothesized relationships.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents involved in the study. The sample consists of 332 government employees from provincial and district level government organizations in East Java who are actively engaged in inter organizational collaboration. In terms of gender, male respondents constitute a majority of the sample, reflecting the general gender composition of government organizations in the region.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	198	59.6
	Female	134	40.4
Age	Under 30 years	54	16.3
	30–39 years	118	35.5
	40–49 years	102	30.7
	50 years and above	58	17.5
Educational Level	Diploma	38	11.4
	Bachelor's degree	196	59.0
	Master's degree or higher	98	29.5
Length of Service	Less than 5 years	62	18.7
	5–10 years	94	28.3
	11–20 years	108	32.5
	More than 20 years	68	20.5
Organizational Level	Staff	142	42.8
	Supervisor	104	31.3
	Managerial level	86	25.9

With respect to age, most respondents fall within the economically active age groups of 30 to 49 years, indicating that the majority of participants possess substantial professional experience. The educational background of respondents is relatively high, with nearly ninety percent holding at least a bachelor's degree, suggesting that the sample is well positioned to understand and engage in complex collaborative governance arrangements.

Regarding organizational tenure, more than half of the respondents have worked in government organizations for over ten years, indicating a strong level of institutional familiarity and administrative experience. In terms of organizational position, respondents are distributed across staff, supervisory, and managerial levels, which enhances the representativeness of perspectives related to collaborative governance practices within government organizations.

Overall, the demographic profile suggests that the sample is appropriate for examining collaborative governance mechanisms, leadership practices, and employee engagement within government organizations in East Java.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 presents the means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlation coefficients for all study variables. The mean values indicate that respondents generally reported moderate to high perceptions of collaborative governance quality, leadership, role clarity, trust, engagement, and collaborative performance. This suggests that collaborative arrangements within East Java government organizations are perceived relatively positively by employees involved in inter organizational work.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
Collaborative Governance Quality	3.87	0.62	1.00					
Collaborative Leadership	3.91	0.65	0.56**	1.00				
Role Clarity Across Organizations	3.78	0.68	0.49**	0.53**	1.00			
Inter Organizational Trust	3.84	0.64	0.52**	0.58**	0.55**	1.00		
Employee Engagement	3.89	0.61	0.46**	0.54**	0.57**	0.59**	1.00	
Collaborative Performance	3.92	0.63	0.43**	0.51**	0.49**	0.56**	0.62**	1.00

The correlation matrix shows that all key constructs are positively and significantly correlated at the 0.01 level, providing preliminary support for the hypothesized relationships. Collaborative governance quality is positively associated with collaborative leadership, role clarity, and inter organizational trust, consistent with collaborative governance theory. Collaborative leadership is moderately correlated with both role clarity and trust, indicating its importance as a managerial mechanism in collaborative settings.

Role clarity and inter organizational trust are both strongly correlated with employee engagement, suggesting that structural and relational resources play a critical role in shaping employee motivation in collaborative governance contexts. Employee engagement exhibits the strongest correlation with perceived collaborative performance, providing initial evidence for its role as a key proximal predictor of collaborative effectiveness.

Importantly, none of the correlation coefficients exceed commonly accepted thresholds, indicating that multicollinearity is unlikely to be a concern. Overall, the descriptive statistics and correlation patterns are consistent with the proposed theoretical framework and provide a sound basis for subsequent structural equation modeling analysis.

Measurement Model

Table 3 shows that all measurement items load strongly on their respective constructs, with standardized loadings ranging from 0.78 to 0.87. Internal consistency reliability is supported, as Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceed recommended thresholds. Convergent validity is also established, with all AVE values above 0.50, indicating that the constructs explain more than half of the variance of their indicators.

Table 3. Measurement Model Results

Construct	Item	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Collaborative Governance Quality	CGQ1	0.81	0.88	0.91	0.66
	CGQ2	0.83			
	CGQ3	0.79			
	CGQ4	0.82			
Collaborative Leadership	CL1	0.84	0.89	0.92	0.70
	CL2	0.86			
	CL3	0.82			
	CL4	0.85			
Role Clarity Across Organizations	RC1	0.78	0.86	0.90	0.64
	RC2	0.81			
	RC3	0.83			
	RC4	0.79			
Inter Organizational Trust	IOT1	0.84	0.90	0.93	0.72
	IOT2	0.86			
	IOT3	0.85			
	IOT4	0.83			
Employee Engagement	EE1	0.82	0.88	0.91	0.67
	EE2	0.84			
	EE3	0.81			
	EE4	0.83			
Collaborative Performance	PCP1	0.85	0.89	0.92	0.71
	PCP2	0.87			
	PCP3	0.83			
	PCP4	0.84			

Table 4 indicates that the square root of AVE for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs, providing evidence of discriminant validity. These results suggest that each construct is empirically distinct and captures a unique conceptual domain within the model.

Table 4. Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Construct	CGQ	CL	RC	IOT	EE	PCP
Collaborative Governance Quality	0.81					
Collaborative Leadership	0.56	0.84				
Role Clarity Across Organizations	0.49	0.53	0.80			
Inter Organizational Trust	0.52	0.58	0.55	0.85		
Employee Engagement	0.46	0.54	0.57	0.59	0.82	
Perceived Collaborative Performance	0.43	0.51	0.49	0.56	0.62	0.84

Table 5 further confirms discriminant validity, as all HTMT ratios fall below the recommended thresholds. This provides robust evidence that the constructs are empirically distinct and reduces concerns regarding conceptual overlap in the measurement model.

Table 5. Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Construct Pair	HTMT
CGQ – CL	0.65
CGQ – RC	0.58
CGQ – IOT	0.61
CGQ – EE	0.54

CGQ – PCP	0.51
CL – RC	0.66
CL – IOT	0.69
CL – EE	0.63
CL – PCP	0.60
RC – IOT	0.67
RC – EE	0.70
RC – PCP	0.64
IOT – EE	0.72
IOT – PCP	0.68
EE – PCP	0.74

Structural Model

Table 6 reports the standardized path coefficients, inferential statistics, and effect sizes. The results provide consistent support for all hypothesized relationships.

Table 6. Structural Model Results and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	β	t value	p value	Decision
H1	Collaborative Governance Quality → Collaborative Leadership	0.56	12.41	0.000	Supported
H2	Collaborative Governance Quality → Role Clarity Across Organizations	0.23	4.21	0.012	Supported
H3	Collaborative Governance Quality → Inter Organizational Trust	0.19	3.62	0.000	Supported
H4	Collaborative Leadership → Role Clarity Across Organizations	0.40	7.39	0.023	Supported
H5	Collaborative Leadership → Inter Organizational Trust	0.47	8.66	0.000	Supported
H6	Role Clarity Across Organizations → Employee Engagement	0.31	5.88	0.000	Supported
H7	Inter Organizational Trust → Employee Engagement	0.42	7.96	0.000	Supported
H8	Employee Engagement → Perceived Collaborative Performance	0.62	14.93	0.000	Supported

H1 predicts that collaborative governance quality positively influences collaborative leadership. The result shows a strong positive association ($\beta = 0.56$) and is statistically significant with a high t value ($t = 12.41$, $p < 0.001$). Substantively, this indicates that when collaborative arrangements in East Java government organizations are perceived as more inclusive, transparent, and accountable, employees also perceive leadership to be more facilitative and coordination oriented. The effect size is large ($f^2 = 0.46$), suggesting that collaborative governance quality is a major driver of collaborative leadership.

H2 predicts that collaborative governance quality positively influences role clarity across organizations. The relationship is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.23$, $t = 4.21$, $p < 0.012$). Although the coefficient is smaller than H1, it remains meaningful in a multi mediator model because role clarity is also shaped by leadership and inter organizational dynamics. The effect size is small to moderate ($f^2 = 0.07$), implying that governance quality contributes to role clarity directly, but a larger share of role clarity is explained through leadership mechanisms tested in H4.

H3 predicts that collaborative governance quality positively influences inter organizational trust. The effect is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.19$, $t = 3.62$, $p < 0.001$) with a small effect size ($f^2 = 0.05$). This suggests that transparent and accountable governance arrangements are associated with higher trust in partner organizations, yet trust is also strongly shaped by leadership behaviors, which is consistent with the collaborative governance and relational governance literature.

H4 predicts that collaborative leadership positively influences role clarity across organizations. The result indicates a moderate to strong positive effect ($\beta = 0.40$) that is highly significant ($t = 7.39, p < 0.023$). The effect size is medium ($f^2 = 0.18$). This means that facilitative leadership is not merely a relational characteristic, but a concrete managerial mechanism that helps employees understand their responsibilities, reporting lines, and task boundaries when working with external partners.

H5 predicts that collaborative leadership positively influences inter organizational trust. The effect is strong and significant ($\beta = 0.47, t = 8.66, p < 0.001$), with a medium to large effect size ($f^2 = 0.26$). This indicates that trust in collaborative arrangements within government organizations is highly sensitive to leadership practices, such as conflict mediation, open communication, and aligning partner expectations.

H6 predicts that role clarity positively influences employee engagement. The result shows a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.31, t = 5.88, p < 0.001$) with a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.14$). This implies that when employees have clearer expectations and responsibilities in collaborative work, they are more likely to invest energy, dedication, and attention in those tasks.

H7 predicts that inter organizational trust positively influences employee engagement. This relationship is strong and highly significant ($\beta = 0.42, t = 7.96, p < 0.001$) with a medium to large effect size ($f^2 = 0.23$). Compared with H6, trust has a larger standardized coefficient, indicating that relational confidence in partner organizations is a particularly important resource for sustaining engagement in cross organizational collaboration within the public sector.

H8 predicts that employee engagement positively influences perceived collaborative performance. The results show a very strong association ($\beta = 0.62, t = 14.93, p < 0.001$) with a large effect size ($f^2 = 0.62$). This provides strong evidence that engagement is the most proximate predictor of collaborative performance perceptions, meaning that collaborative arrangements are perceived as more effective when government employees are psychologically invested and motivated to participate actively in collaborative work.

Table 7. Mediation Analysis Results

Hypothesis	Mediating Relationship	β	t value	p value	Type	Decision
H9	Collaborative Governance Quality → Collaborative Leadership → Role Clarity	0.22	6.69	0.000	Partial mediation	Supported
H10	Collaborative Governance Quality → Collaborative Leadership → Inter Organizational Trust	0.26	7.57	0.000	Partial mediation	Supported
H11	Collaborative Governance Quality → Role Clarity and Inter Organizational Trust → Employee Engagement	0.15	5.98	0.001	Indirect only mediation	Supported
H12	Role Clarity and Inter Organizational Trust → Employee Engagement → Perceived Collaborative Performance	0.31	8.12	< 0.001	Full mediation	Supported

Note. Indirect effects were tested using bias corrected bootstrapping. Mediation type was determined by examining the significance of indirect effects and the remaining direct paths.

The mediation analysis provides strong support for the theorized indirect mechanisms linking collaborative governance quality to employee level and performance outcomes within East Java government organizations.

H9 examines whether collaborative leadership mediates the relationship between collaborative governance quality and role clarity across organizations. The indirect effect is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.001$), indicating that collaborative governance quality enhances role clarity primarily by enabling leaders to perform facilitative coordination functions. Although a direct effect of collaborative governance quality on role clarity remains significant, the strength of the indirect pathway confirms that leadership plays a central translating role. This finding reinforces the view that governance arrangements shape employee experiences largely through managerial enactment rather than structural design alone.

H10 tests the mediating role of collaborative leadership in the relationship between collaborative governance quality and inter organizational trust. The indirect effect is strong and significant ($\beta = 0.26, p < 0.001$), exceeding the magnitude of the direct effect reported in the structural model. This indicates that trust among collaborating organizations is largely built through leadership behaviors such as conflict mediation, transparency, and alignment of expectations. In practical terms, governance mechanisms alone are insufficient to generate trust unless they are actively enacted by leaders.

H11 assesses whether role clarity across organizations and inter organizational trust jointly mediate the relationship between collaborative governance quality and employee engagement. The combined indirect effect is significant ($\beta = 0.15, p < 0.001$), while the direct path from governance quality to engagement is not significant. This indicates an indirect only mediation, meaning that collaborative governance quality influences employee engagement entirely through improvements in role clarity and trust. This result provides strong evidence that governance arrangements affect engagement not directly, but by shaping the structural and relational conditions under which employees perform collaborative work.

H12 examines whether employee engagement mediates the relationships between role clarity and perceived collaborative performance, as well as between inter organizational trust and perceived collaborative performance. The indirect effect through engagement is significant and substantial ($\beta = 0.31, p < 0.001$), while the direct effects of role clarity and trust on perceived collaborative performance are non-significant when engagement is included. This pattern indicates full mediation, confirming that clarity and trust contribute to collaborative performance primarily by increasing employees' motivational investment in collaborative activities.

Table 8. Model Fit, Explained Variance, and Predictive Relevance

Indicator	Value
SRMR	0.056
NFI	0.91
R ² Collaborative Leadership	0.31
R ² Role Clarity	0.38
R ² Inter Organizational Trust	0.42
R ² Employee Engagement	0.51
R ² Perceived Collaborative Performance	0.39
Q ² Collaborative Leadership	0.20
Q ² Role Clarity	0.22
Q ² Inter Organizational Trust	0.28
Q ² Employee Engagement	0.34
Q ² Perceived Collaborative Performance	0.25

The model shows satisfactory approximate fit, with an SRMR value below commonly cited thresholds for acceptable fit in PLS SEM. The NFI value indicates good incremental fit, suggesting that the proposed model improves substantially over a null baseline.

The explained variance results indicate that the model has meaningful explanatory power in the East Java government organization context. Collaborative governance quality explains a moderate share of variance in collaborative leadership. Role clarity and trust achieve moderate R² values, reflecting that both governance quality and leadership provide substantial explanatory value for these managerial and relational outcomes. Employee engagement has the highest R² (0.51), suggesting that role clarity and trust together provide strong explanatory leverage for engagement in collaborative work. Perceived collaborative performance is also explained at a moderate level, consistent with performance outcomes typically being influenced by multiple factors beyond the model.

Predictive relevance assessed through Q² values is positive for all endogenous constructs, indicating that the model has out of sample predictive capability rather than merely explaining variance within the estimation sample. The Q² values are especially strong for employee engagement, reinforcing the central role of engagement as a key mechanism linking governance and leadership processes to collaborative performance.

Discussion

This study examined collaborative governance as a managerial and human resource context within East Java government organizations, focusing on how governance quality translates into employee engagement and perceived collaborative performance through collaborative leadership, role clarity, and inter organizational trust. Overall, the findings provide strong empirical support for the proposed model and offer important insights into the internal dynamics of collaborative governance from a management perspective.

The results demonstrate that collaborative governance quality exerts a strong positive influence on collaborative leadership and weaker but significant effects on role clarity and inter organizational trust. This pattern is consistent with collaborative governance theory, which emphasizes that governance arrangements primarily operate by enabling managerial and relational processes rather than by directly producing behavioral outcomes (Gash, 2022; Liu et al., 2023). In the context of East Java government organizations, inclusive and transparent governance arrangements appear to create the conditions under which facilitative leadership can emerge, while their direct influence on employees' role understanding and trust remains limited unless actively enacted by leaders. This finding supports the view that collaborative governance should be understood as a dynamic managerial system rather than as a static institutional design.

The strong effects of collaborative leadership on both role clarity and inter organizational trust underscore the central role of leadership in collaborative governance. Leaders who facilitate dialogue, mediate conflict, and align expectations across organizational boundaries significantly reduce ambiguity and foster relational confidence among employees. This result extends prior leadership research in public management by showing that leadership effectiveness in collaborative settings is deeply embedded in governance quality and is not solely an individual attribute (Usman et al., 2024). In decentralized administrative environments such as East Java, where overlapping mandates and shared responsibilities are common, collaborative leadership functions as a critical boundary spanning capability that enables coordination and sense making.

The findings further reveal that role clarity and inter organizational trust are key human resource mechanisms shaping employee engagement in collaborative governance. Both variables positively influence engagement, with inter organizational trust exerting a stronger effect than role clarity. This suggests that while clear responsibilities are important, relational confidence in partner organizations plays a particularly salient role in motivating employees to invest effort and commitment in collaborative work. This result aligns with human resource management and organizational behavior research emphasizing the importance of social and relational resources for sustaining engagement in complex and uncertain work environments (Bakker, 2022; Tummers & Bakker, 2021). In collaborative governance contexts, where employees must rely on external factors beyond their formal organizational control, trust appears to be a critical motivational resource.

Employee engagement emerges as the most proximate and powerful predictor of perceived collaborative performance. The strong relationship between engagement and performance supports the argument that collaborative effectiveness in public sector settings depends heavily on employees' psychological investment and proactive involvement rather than on formal coordination mechanisms alone. The mediation analysis further clarifies this relationship by showing that employee engagement fully mediates the effects of role clarity and trust on perceived collaborative performance. This indicates that clarity and trust do not automatically improve collaborative outcomes. Instead, they enhance performance by increasing employees' motivation, energy, and willingness to engage in collaborative activities. This finding contributes to management scholarship by empirically demonstrating how human resource mechanisms transmit the effects of governance arrangements to performance outcomes in inter organizational settings.

The integrated mediation structure supported by the results highlights a sequential process in which collaborative governance quality shapes leadership practices, which in turn influence role clarity and trust, leading to higher employee engagement and stronger perceived collaborative performance. This pathway advances collaborative governance theory by incorporating employee level processes and responds to calls for greater micro level analysis in governance research (Wegner & Verschoore, 2022). By bridging collaborative governance, leadership theory, and human resource management, the study contributes to management and organizational scholarship and demonstrates the relevance of collaborative governance as a core managerial concern rather than a purely policy-oriented phenomenon.

The findings also carry important implications for government organizations. Strengthening collaborative governance arrangements alone is insufficient if not accompanied by deliberate investments

in leadership development. Public sector organizations should prioritize the cultivation of collaborative leadership capabilities, particularly skills related to facilitation, conflict resolution, and inter organizational coordination. In addition, managers should actively work to clarify roles and responsibilities in collaborative programs and foster trust through transparent communication and consistent behavior. From an HRM perspective, employee engagement should be recognized as a strategic outcome of collaborative governance design and leadership practice, rather than as an individual attitude disconnected from organizational context.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design limits causal inference, and future research could employ longitudinal approaches to capture the dynamic evolution of collaborative governance processes. The reliance on self-reported data may also introduce perceptual bias, although procedural and statistical remedies were applied. Future studies could incorporate objective performance indicators or multi source data to strengthen validity.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how collaborative governance functions as a managerial and human resource context within government organizations in East Java by explaining how governance quality translates into employee engagement and perceived collaborative performance through leadership, role clarity, and inter organizational trust. The findings demonstrate that collaborative governance does not influence performance directly but operates through a sequential process in which governance quality enables collaborative leadership, leadership shapes structural and relational conditions, and these conditions foster employee engagement that ultimately drives collaborative performance.

A key conclusion of the study is that collaborative leadership plays a central role in translating governance arrangements into effective managerial practice. Inclusive and transparent governance structures create the conditions for facilitative leadership, but leadership enactment is necessary to clarify roles and build trust among employees working across organizational boundaries. The results further show that role clarity and inter organizational trust are critical human resource mechanisms that sustain employee engagement in collaborative governance settings. Among these mechanisms, trust emerges as particularly salient in motivating employees to invest energy and commitment in collaborative work.

Employee engagement is identified as the most proximate and powerful predictor of perceived collaborative performance. This finding underscores the importance of viewing collaboration not only as an intern organizational coordination problem but also as a motivational and behavioral challenge within organizations. Collaborative arrangements are perceived as more effective when employees are engaged, proactive, and willing to contribute beyond formal role requirements.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest associated with the conduct of this research, the analysis of the data or the preparation of this manuscript.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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