

Presenting a Model for Maximizing Decision Implementation in Governmental Organizations Based on the Development of the Zone of Indifference

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Article Info

Article type:

Original Research

How to cite this article:

Vakili Ghaserian, S., Salavati, A., & Sahabi, J. (2027). Presenting a Model for Maximizing Decision Implementation in Governmental Organizations Based on the Development of the Zone of Indifference. *Journal of Resource Management and Decision Engineering*, 6(3), 1-14.

<https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.jrmde.317>



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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to develop a model for maximizing decision implementation in governmental organizations based on the development of the zone of indifference. In terms of purpose, this research was applied, and in terms of nature, it was categorized as a mixed-methods study with a sequential exploratory design grounded in the pragmatism paradigm. In the qualitative phase, which was conducted using an inductive approach and interpretivist philosophy, the statistical population consisted of academic experts and senior managers of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran. Sampling was conducted through purposive (judgmental) and snowball methods, and theoretical saturation was achieved after 15 semi-structured interviews. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis strategies (descriptive, interpretive, and overarching coding) with the aid of MAXQDA software, leading to the development of the conceptual model. In the quantitative phase, the model was validated through an expert panel using the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) and Content Validity Index (CVI), based on the opinions of five subject-matter specialists and experts. Quantitative data analysis was conducted using SPSS software. The findings indicated that four principal drivers, including “professional legitimacy,” “value congruence,” “economic exchange,” and “organizational trust,” play a key role in expanding the zone of indifference. The core of the model explained the transition process from “cognitive resistance” to “intelligent compliance,” in which replacing bureaucratic supervision with trust reduces friction costs. The results also demonstrated that individual factors such as “risk aversion” and organizational factors such as “directive conflicts” and “managerial instability” function as constraining barriers to the zone of indifference. Ultimately, the proposed model demonstrated that the expansion of the zone of indifference leads to positive outcomes at three levels: individual (revitalization of psychological capital), organizational (enhanced productivity), and national (facilitation of foreign trade).

Keywords: Maximizing decision implementation, zone of indifference, employees, Trade Promotion Organization of Iran.

1. Introduction

Decision-making and decision implementation constitute two interconnected yet fundamentally distinct dimensions of organizational management. In contemporary public organizations, managerial success is not determined merely by the quality of decisions formulated at the strategic level, but more importantly by the effectiveness with which those decisions are translated into operational action. A considerable proportion of organizational failures emerge not from weak strategic planning, but from the inability of organizations to ensure coherent and committed execution among employees and administrative units. Public sector organizations are particularly vulnerable to this challenge because they operate within highly bureaucratic structures characterized by legal complexity, multiple stakeholders, political pressures, rigid administrative procedures, and overlapping accountability systems (Adnan, Saputra, et al., 2022; Elbanna et al., 2016). Consequently, the implementation gap between managerial intention and employee action has become one of the most critical concerns in contemporary administrative and organizational studies.

The issue of ineffective implementation has gained increasing scholarly attention in recent years due to the growing recognition that public sector reforms frequently fail during the execution stage. Studies on strategy implementation in governmental organizations indicate that resistance to change, organizational silence, ambiguity in authority structures, lack of trust, and procedural inconsistency significantly reduce the probability of successful policy execution (Bellander et al., 2025; Clark et al., 2024). Similarly, research on public administration systems has demonstrated that employees often comply selectively with managerial directives depending on their perceptions of legitimacy, fairness, organizational justice, and professional competence of decision-makers (Adnan, Ahmad, et al., 2022; Alsuhaime, 2025). This indicates that implementation success is deeply embedded within the psychological and behavioral responses of organizational members rather than being solely dependent on formal administrative authority.

The foundations of this perspective can be traced back to the classical theories of organizational behavior proposed by Barnard and Simon. Barnard argued that organizational authority becomes effective only when subordinates voluntarily accept directives within what he conceptualized as the “zone of indifference,” meaning the range of orders

employees are willing to execute without conscious questioning or resistance (Barnard, 1938). Simon later expanded this idea by emphasizing that organizational behavior is shaped by bounded rationality and administrative decision processes in which employees continuously evaluate the legitimacy and practicality of managerial instructions (Simon, 1947). According to Simon, compliance is not automatic; rather, it depends on whether employees perceive directives as acceptable within their cognitive and organizational frameworks. These classical perspectives established the theoretical basis for understanding why some managerial decisions are implemented effectively while others encounter passive resistance, delay, or symbolic compliance.

The concept of the zone of indifference remains highly relevant in modern organizational environments because public organizations increasingly rely on knowledge workers whose compliance cannot be ensured solely through bureaucratic control mechanisms. Contemporary studies have shown that employee acceptance of managerial authority is influenced by multiple organizational and psychological variables, including trust, professional legitimacy, organizational commitment, ethical alignment, and distributive justice (Hagen et al., 2023; Pitts, 2010). Pitts demonstrated that employees are more likely to comply with administrative authority when they perceive decision-makers as competent and procedurally fair, whereas distrust and ambiguity significantly narrow the zone of indifference (Pitts, 2010). Likewise, Hagen and colleagues emphasized that organizational acceptance emerges from complex interactions among stakeholder coalitions, organizational legitimacy, and perceived alignment of interests (Hagen et al., 2023). These findings suggest that implementation effectiveness is fundamentally linked to employees’ psychological willingness to internalize organizational directives.

In governmental organizations, the implementation gap becomes more pronounced because employees often operate under conditions of administrative uncertainty, legal risk, and political sensitivity. Public sector personnel may avoid rapid execution of directives due to fear of accountability institutions, contradictory regulations, unstable managerial systems, and politicized organizational environments (Adnan, Saputra, et al., 2022; Bellander et al., 2025). Such conditions generate defensive organizational behaviors, including delay, excessive consultation, procedural rigidity, and passive resistance. Danaeefard and Eslami identified organizational silence as one of the major consequences of

dysfunctional administrative climates in which employees avoid expressing concerns or engaging actively in implementation processes due to fear of negative repercussions (Danaeefard & Eslami, 2010). Similarly, Jahanshahi demonstrated that organizational indifference emerges when employees perceive inequity, instability, or lack of meaningful participation in organizational decision-making (Jahanshahi, 2010). These phenomena reduce employee motivation and weaken organizational responsiveness.

Another important dimension of implementation effectiveness concerns the role of managerial legitimacy and organizational trust. Research consistently demonstrates that employees are more willing to execute managerial directives when they perceive leaders as technically competent, ethically consistent, and procedurally fair (Clark et al., 2024; Taheri Lari et al., 2016). Professional legitimacy strengthens employees' confidence in organizational decisions and reduces the cognitive costs associated with evaluating and questioning directives. In contrast, unstable leadership, inconsistent managerial behavior, and politically motivated appointments reduce trust and encourage resistance. Taheri Lari and colleagues found that management style and decision-making quality directly influence employee productivity through psychological and motivational mechanisms (Taheri Lari et al., 2016). These findings highlight that implementation success depends not only on structural mechanisms but also on employees' subjective perceptions of managerial credibility.

Recent developments in evidence-informed governance and data-driven administration have further intensified the need for effective implementation systems in public organizations. Governments increasingly rely on strategic decisions supported by technological systems, analytical tools, and organizational intelligence; however, the success of these systems ultimately depends on employee cooperation and execution capacity (Alsuhaimi, 2025). Clark and colleagues argued that organizational-level strategies for implementing evidence-informed decision-making require cultures of trust, transparency, and collaborative engagement among employees (Clark et al., 2024). Without these psychological and organizational foundations, even technically sound decisions may fail during implementation. Thus, the challenge of maximizing decision execution is not merely technical or procedural but fundamentally behavioral and organizational.

The concept of the zone of indifference has also evolved beyond classical organizational theory into broader

analytical and computational contexts. Studies in operational research and decision sciences have used the concept to model tolerance thresholds, acceptable ranges of variation, and decision stability under uncertainty (Teng et al., 2010; Yu et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2025). Teng and colleagues integrated indifference-zone concepts into computational budget allocation systems to improve decision efficiency under competing objectives (Teng et al., 2010). Yu and associates applied the concept to manufacturing systems and group decision-making environments in order to optimize collective responses under uncertainty (Yu et al., 2020). More recently, Zhou and colleagues proposed indifference-zone relaxation procedures to improve feasibility identification in complex systems characterized by uncertainty and constraints (Zhou et al., 2025). Although these studies emerge from technical and quantitative disciplines, they collectively reinforce the broader theoretical insight that decision systems function more effectively when actors operate within psychologically or operationally acceptable boundaries. This interdisciplinary relevance suggests that the zone of indifference can serve as a powerful conceptual framework for understanding implementation dynamics in organizational contexts.

Behavioral theories of organizations further support this perspective by emphasizing that organizations are coalitions of actors with varying interests, motivations, and perceptions (Cyert & March, 1964). Cyert and March argued that organizational decisions are rarely implemented through purely rational processes; rather, they emerge from negotiated compromises, bounded rationality, and adaptive behaviors (Cyert & March, 1964). This implies that implementation success depends on the extent to which organizational members perceive decisions as aligned with their interests, values, and expectations. Maio and colleagues similarly emphasized the importance of unbiased and balanced decision environments in reducing uncertainty and increasing collective cooperation (Maio et al., 2022). In public organizations, where employees are simultaneously accountable to legal frameworks, political authorities, and professional norms, the creation of an expanded zone of indifference may reduce implementation friction and facilitate coordinated action.

The organizational biological perspective proposed by Papsiene provides another useful framework for understanding implementation behavior. According to this perspective, organizations operate similarly to adaptive living systems in which reflexive responses emerge through interactions among organizational structures, environmental

conditions, and human behaviors (Papsiene, 2024). From this viewpoint, implementation failures can be interpreted as dysfunctional reflexes generated by mistrust, organizational rigidity, and fragmented communication systems. Conversely, environments characterized by fairness, participation, transparency, and stability encourage adaptive and cooperative organizational behaviors. Such perspectives are highly relevant for governmental organizations where bureaucratic fragmentation often disrupts coherent implementation processes.

Public sector implementation challenges are particularly visible in strategic and policy-oriented organizations that mediate interactions between the state and economic actors. In such organizations, delays, contradictory directives, excessive bureaucracy, and weak coordination not only reduce organizational efficiency but also undermine public trust and economic performance (Abdi et al., 2022; Vyas & Luk, 2010). Vyas and Luk emphasized that fragmented implementation processes often emerge because employees and administrative units interpret directives differently depending on their individual and institutional zones of acceptance (Vyas & Luk, 2010). As a result, formal compliance may coexist with operational stagnation, symbolic execution, or selective implementation. This creates a critical gap between official policy objectives and actual organizational outcomes.

Despite the extensive literature on organizational behavior, public administration, and strategy implementation, limited research has specifically examined how the expansion of employees' zone of indifference can contribute to maximizing decision implementation within governmental organizations. Existing studies have primarily focused on isolated variables such as leadership style, organizational justice, resistance to change, or administrative efficiency, while relatively little attention has been paid to the integrated mechanisms through which psychological acceptance, organizational trust, professional legitimacy, and contextual conditions collectively shape implementation behavior (Birken et al., 2017; Robert & Carl, 2015). Furthermore, the majority of existing models have been developed in Western organizational contexts and may not adequately capture the structural and cultural complexities of public organizations in developing administrative systems.

In the context of Iranian governmental organizations, these challenges become even more significant due to bureaucratic centralization, regulatory inconsistency, managerial instability, and high levels of environmental

uncertainty. Organizations responsible for trade and economic coordination frequently operate under conditions where employees face conflicting directives, legal ambiguity, and political pressure while simultaneously being expected to implement strategic national objectives efficiently. Such environments create fertile conditions for organizational hesitation, procedural delays, and implementation resistance. Therefore, developing a localized and context-sensitive model capable of explaining how the zone of indifference can be expanded and operationalized within governmental organizations represents both a theoretical and practical necessity.

Accordingly, the present study seeks to develop a model for maximizing decision implementation in governmental organizations based on the development of employees' zone of indifference.

2. Methods and Materials

The present study was applied in terms of purpose and employed a mixed-methods approach with a sequential exploratory design in terms of methodology. The selection of this design was based on the conceptual complexity of the "zone of indifference" and the necessity of contextualizing its dimensions within Iranian governmental organizations. In the sequential exploratory design, qualitative data are first collected and analyzed to develop the conceptual framework and measurement instrument, after which the proposed model is quantitatively evaluated and validated within a broader context. The philosophical foundation of the study was grounded in the pragmatism paradigm, which enabled the researcher to integrate interpretivist perspectives in the qualitative phase with positivist approaches in the quantitative phase in order to address the research objectives comprehensively.

The field of the study was the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, which, as a bureaucratic center responsible for managing the country's trade interactions, provides a suitable environment for examining the gap between decision-making and implementation as well as analyzing employee responses to managerial directives. The qualitative participants consisted of two groups of experts. The first group included academic scholars specializing in public administration and organizational behavior who possessed extensive knowledge of decision-making theories and classical management perspectives, particularly the theories of Barnard and Simon. The second group consisted of senior and experienced managers of the Trade Promotion

Organization of Iran who had direct professional experience in strategy communication, managerial decision implementation, and dealing with operational resistance within governmental structures.

Sampling in the qualitative phase was conducted using purposive (judgmental) sampling followed by snowball sampling. Interviews continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, meaning that no new concepts or codes emerged from the final interviews. Based on this criterion, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 experts. In the quantitative phase, the proposed model was validated through an expert panel consisting of five specialists and subject-matter experts who evaluated the content validity of the measurement instrument.

Given the mixed-methods nature of the study, data collection was conducted in two consecutive phases using instruments appropriate to each stage. In the qualitative phase, the primary data collection instrument was a semi-structured interview protocol. The interview guide included open-ended and exploratory questions regarding the “drivers of acceptance of managerial directives” and the “factors influencing the expansion or limitation of employees’ zone of indifference.” The use of semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to maintain the overall structure of the inquiry while simultaneously benefiting from sufficient flexibility to explore the deeper layers of participants’ experiences, perceptions, and organizational interpretations.

The interview protocol was designed based on the theoretical foundations of organizational behavior, decision implementation, and the concept of the zone of indifference. Interviews were conducted individually and in-depth, enabling participants to elaborate on their lived experiences regarding organizational compliance, trust mechanisms, managerial legitimacy, bureaucratic control systems, and resistance to organizational directives. All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis.

In the quantitative phase, a researcher-developed questionnaire derived from the qualitative findings was designed in order to evaluate the conceptual model and validate the identified dimensions. To ensure that the measurement instrument accurately assessed the intended constructs, including the “zone of indifference” and the “drivers of decision implementation,” content validity was evaluated using expert judgments through the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) and Content Validity Index (CVI). Five specialists and subject-matter experts participated in this evaluation process. Based on Lawshe’s method, the

experts were asked to assess each item using a three-point scale consisting of “essential,” “useful but not essential,” and “not necessary.” Considering the size of the expert panel, item acceptance was determined according to expert consensus.

Following the assessment of item necessity, the Content Validity Index was evaluated in terms of relevance, simplicity, and clarity. At this stage, the experts examined the degree of correspondence between each item and its intended construct, as well as the comprehensibility of the questionnaire items for potential respondents. This process ensured both the conceptual adequacy and technical quality of the developed instrument.

Data analysis in the present study was conducted in two complementary phases in accordance with the sequential exploratory design. In the qualitative phase, thematic analysis based on the thematic network approach proposed by King and Horrocks (2010) was employed. The process of data organization, coding, and interpretation was conducted using MAXQDA software. The analytical procedure was implemented through three interconnected stages.

In the first stage, descriptive coding was performed. During this phase, the interview transcripts were carefully reviewed, and key statements, meaningful expressions, and significant textual segments were identified and initially labeled. The objective of this stage was to capture the explicit meanings embedded within participants’ narratives and experiences.

In the second stage, interpretive coding was conducted. At this level, descriptive codes sharing conceptual similarities were grouped into broader abstract categories. This process facilitated the interpretation of the latent meanings underlying expert perspectives and enabled the researcher to identify conceptual relationships among the emerging categories.

In the final stage, overarching themes were identified through the integration of interpretive codes and categories. These overarching themes constituted the principal dimensions of the proposed model for maximizing decision implementation through the development of employees’ zone of indifference. The qualitative findings ultimately formed the conceptual foundation for the development of the quantitative measurement instrument and the final research model.

The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS software. Statistical procedures were applied to evaluate the validity of the developed model and to examine the

adequacy of the identified constructs and dimensions derived from the qualitative phase.

3. Findings and Results

The findings of the study demonstrated that the final model of maximizing decision implementation based on the

development of employees' zone of indifference consists of four interconnected dimensions, including causal drivers, the core of the model, contextual and intervening variables, and the consequences of maximal implementation. The integrated results extracted from thematic analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Results of Qualitative Analysis

| Main Dimensions | Organizing Themes | Basic Themes |
|--|---|--|
| Causal Drivers and Antecedents | Professional and Specialized Legitimacy | Technical knowledge of managers; meritocracy in appointments; referent power |
| | Value and Normative Congruence | Alignment with national interests; preservation of the country's commercial reputation; ethical and religious values |
| | Economic and Welfare Exchange | Equity in compensation; job security; performance-based reward systems |
| | Organizational Trust and Justice | Information transparency; procedural justice and impartiality; managerial consistency |
| Core of the Model | Cognitive Transition | Transformation of employees' mindset from "Why was this decision made?" to "How should I implement it?" |
| | Intelligent Compliance | Acceptance of managerial directives as a default assumption, provided that they are not explicitly illegal |
| | Friction Reduction | Elimination of psychological and cognitive resistance toward change and new responsibilities |
| Contextual and Intervening Variables | Individual-Level Facilitators | Technical competence and professional skills; public service motivation; sense of ownership toward decisions |
| | Individual-Level Barriers | Severe risk aversion; fear of supervisory institutions; learned helplessness |
| | Organizational-Level Facilitators | Delegation of authority; managerial stability; information technology infrastructure |
| | Organizational-Level Barriers | Bureaucracy and excessive authorization procedures; contradictory directives; politicization |
| Consequences of Maximal Implementation | Individual Consequences | Restoration of psychological capital and employee vitality; reduction of job burnout |
| | Organizational Consequences | Prevention of accumulation of unfinished projects; improvement of resource productivity; enhancement of internal cohesion and reduction of conflict |
| | National and Environmental Consequences | Facilitation of trade and reduction of customs clearance time; restoration of private sector trust in government; achievement of macro-level export objectives |

The findings related to causal drivers and antecedent factors indicated that the expansion of employees' zone of indifference is strongly dependent on managerial legitimacy, organizational trust, and perceived fairness within governmental structures. The interview data demonstrated that employees are more willing to implement managerial directives with minimal resistance when they perceive managers as technically competent and professionally qualified. Merit-based appointments and managerial expertise were identified as critical mechanisms for strengthening compliance and reducing cognitive resistance. In addition, value congruence emerged as an influential factor in decision implementation, particularly when employees perceived directives as aligned with national interests, ethical principles, and the broader commercial reputation of the country. Economic and welfare

considerations also played a central role in shaping employee acceptance of directives. The results revealed that employees evaluate organizational instructions through a cost-benefit perspective in which fair compensation, job security, and performance-based rewards significantly increase the likelihood of voluntary compliance. Furthermore, organizational trust and procedural justice reduced suspicion and defensive behavior among employees, thereby facilitating smoother implementation processes and minimizing bureaucratic friction.

The findings concerning the core of the model demonstrated that the concept of the zone of indifference should not be interpreted as passivity or organizational apathy. Rather, it represents a professional and psychologically active state in which employees redirect their cognitive energy from questioning managerial

authority toward implementing organizational decisions effectively. The first core component, cognitive transition, reflected the movement from resistance-oriented thinking to action-oriented problem solving. Employees operating within an expanded zone of indifference no longer focus on questioning the legitimacy of directives but instead concentrate on identifying effective implementation strategies. The second component, intelligent compliance, illustrated that employees do not engage in blind obedience; rather, they accept directives conditionally, provided that those directives do not violate legal boundaries or national interests. The third component, friction reduction, emphasized the decline of psychological resistance, excessive supervision, repetitive correspondence, and bureaucratic monitoring mechanisms. The interviews revealed that high organizational trust enables verbal coordination and informal communication to replace rigid bureaucratic procedures, thereby reducing implementation costs and accelerating organizational responsiveness.

The contextual and intervening variables demonstrated that the successful transformation of cognitive acceptance into effective implementation depends on both individual and organizational conditions. At the individual level, technical competence, public service motivation, and a sense of ownership toward decisions functioned as facilitating mechanisms. Employees possessing strong professional expertise and intrinsic motivation were more capable of translating directives into operational outcomes. Similarly, participation in the decision-making process increased employees' psychological commitment to implementation success. In contrast, severe risk aversion, fear of supervisory and legal institutions, and learned helplessness acted as inhibiting factors. Employees frequently delayed

implementation in order to avoid accountability risks or because they believed that organizational decisions would ultimately fail. At the organizational level, delegation of authority, managerial stability, and adequate technological infrastructure supported efficient implementation processes. However, excessive bureaucracy, contradictory directives, and politicization emerged as major barriers. The findings showed that lengthy administrative procedures, inconsistent policies, and factional conflicts significantly weakened implementation capacity and undermined organizational trust.

The findings related to the consequences of maximal implementation demonstrated that the expansion of the zone of indifference produces positive outcomes at individual, organizational, and national levels. At the individual level, employees experienced restoration of psychological capital, increased vitality, and reduced occupational burnout because their cognitive resources were redirected from defensive resistance toward constructive action. At the organizational level, maximal implementation reduced the accumulation of unfinished projects, improved resource productivity, and strengthened internal cohesion by minimizing conflict and distrust among employees. The reduction of bureaucratic friction and redundant supervision also contributed to greater operational efficiency. At the national and environmental level, the findings indicated that faster and more coordinated implementation processes facilitate foreign trade, reduce customs clearance delays, and improve the credibility of governmental institutions among private sector actors. The model further demonstrated that stable and trust-based implementation systems increase the likelihood of achieving macro-level export objectives and strengthening economic interactions at the national level.

Table 2

Results of the Content Validity Ratio (CVR)

| Row | Main Dimensions and Variables | Number of Experts Agreeing on Necessity | CVR Value | Status |
|-----|---|---|-----------|------------------------|
| 1 | Manager's technical knowledge | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 2 | Meritocracy in appointments | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 3 | Referent power | 4 | 0.80 | Approved with revision |
| 4 | Alignment with national interests | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 5 | Preservation of the country's commercial reputation | 4 | 0.80 | Approved with revision |
| 6 | Ethical and religious values | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 7 | Equity in compensation | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 8 | Job security | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 9 | Performance-based reward system | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 10 | Information transparency | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 11 | Procedural justice and impartiality | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 12 | Stability in managerial behavior | 4 | 0.80 | Approved with revision |
| 13 | Cognitive transition | 4 | 0.80 | Approved |

| | | | | |
|----|--|---|------|------------------------|
| 14 | Intelligent compliance | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 15 | Friction reduction | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 16 | Technical competence and skills (individual) | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 17 | Public service motivation (individual) | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 18 | Sense of ownership toward decisions (individual) | 4 | 0.80 | Approved with revision |
| 19 | Severe risk aversion (individual barrier) | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 20 | Fear of supervisory institutions (individual barrier) | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 21 | Learned helplessness (individual barrier) | 4 | 0.80 | Approved with revision |
| 22 | Delegation of authority (organizational) | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 23 | Managerial stability (organizational) | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 24 | Information technology infrastructure (organizational) | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 25 | Bureaucracy and golden signatures (barrier) | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 26 | Contradictory directives (barrier) | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |
| 27 | Politicization (barrier) | 4 | 0.80 | Approved with revision |
| 28 | All eight consequence subcategories | 5 | 1.00 | Fully approved |

Figure 1

Reliability Results of the Proposed Model (Cronbach's Alpha)



The results presented in Table 2 indicate that the majority of the extracted dimensions and indicators achieved a Content Validity Ratio (CVR) of 1.00, demonstrating complete agreement among the expert panel regarding the necessity of these variables within the proposed model. Variables such as managerial technical knowledge,

meritocracy in appointments, equity in compensation, organizational transparency, intelligent compliance, delegation of authority, and organizational consequences received unanimous approval from all five experts. Several variables, including referent power, preservation of the country's commercial reputation, stability in managerial

behavior, sense of ownership toward decisions, learned helplessness, and politicization, obtained a CVR value of 0.80 and were approved following minor revisions. Overall, the findings confirm that the conceptual dimensions

extracted from the qualitative phase possess strong content necessity and are considered essential components of the proposed model for maximizing decision implementation based on the development of the zone of indifference.

Table 3

Results of the Content Validity Index (CVI)

| Main Model Dimensions | Sample Subcategory / Section Mean | CVI (Relevance) | CVI (Simplicity and Clarity) | Final Mean | Interpretation |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------|------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| Causal Drivers | Professional legitimacy | 1.00 | 0.90 | 0.95 | Excellent |
| | Value and normative congruence | 0.90 | 0.80 | 0.85 | Good |
| | Economic exchange | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | Excellent |
| | Organizational trust and justice | 1.00 | 0.90 | 0.95 | Excellent |
| Core of the Model | Cognitive transition | 0.80 | 0.75 | 0.77 | Acceptable (borderline) |
| Contextual Variables | Intelligent compliance | 1.00 | 0.85 | 0.92 | Excellent |
| | Individual barriers (e.g., learned helplessness) | 0.90 | 0.80 | 0.85 | Good |
| | Organizational barriers (e.g., politicization) | 1.00 | 0.80 | 0.90 | Excellent |
| Consequences | Facilitators | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | Excellent |
| | National and environmental consequences | 1.00 | 0.95 | 0.97 | Excellent |
| Total Model Mean | – | 0.96 | 0.87 | 0.91 | Final approval |

The findings reported in Table 3 demonstrate that the proposed model achieved a high level of content validity across all principal dimensions. The highest CVI scores were observed for economic exchange and facilitating variables, both of which obtained perfect mean scores of 1.00, indicating complete expert agreement regarding their relevance, clarity, and simplicity. Professional legitimacy, organizational trust and justice, intelligent compliance, organizational barriers, and national consequences also

demonstrated excellent validity levels, with mean scores ranging from 0.90 to 0.97. The cognitive transition dimension recorded the lowest mean value (0.77), although it remained within the acceptable threshold for retention in the model. The overall mean CVI of the model was 0.91, confirming the strong conceptual adequacy, comprehensibility, and relevance of the developed measurement instrument and supporting the final approval of the proposed framework.

Table 4

Reliability Results of the Proposed Model (Cronbach's Alpha)

| Model Dimensions | Number of Items | Cronbach's Alpha | Reliability Interpretation |
|--|-----------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Causal Drivers and Antecedents | 12 | 0.865 | Very good |
| – Professional legitimacy | 3 | 0.841 | Good |
| – Value congruence | 3 | 0.785 | Acceptable |
| – Economic exchange | 3 | 0.892 | Very good |
| – Organizational trust | 3 | 0.823 | Good |
| Core of the Model (Zone of Indifference) | 3 | 0.742 | Acceptable |
| Contextual and Intervening Variables | 12 | 0.789 | Acceptable |
| – Individual level | 6 | 0.765 | Acceptable |
| – Organizational level | 6 | 0.810 | Good |
| Consequences of Implementation | 8 | 0.904 | Excellent |
| Total Proposed Model | 35 | 0.931 | Excellent |

The reliability analysis presented in Table 4 indicates that the proposed model possesses strong internal consistency across all dimensions. The total model achieved a

Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.931, reflecting excellent overall reliability. Among the major dimensions, the consequences of implementation demonstrated the highest

reliability coefficient (0.904), indicating a highly stable measurement structure. The causal drivers and antecedents dimension also showed very good reliability (0.865), particularly in relation to economic exchange (0.892) and professional legitimacy (0.841). The contextual and intervening variables dimension achieved an acceptable reliability level (0.789), while the organizational-level subdimension demonstrated stronger consistency compared to the individual-level subdimension. The core construct of the model, namely the zone of indifference, obtained an alpha coefficient of 0.742, which remains within the acceptable range for exploratory and conceptual studies. Overall, the findings confirm that the developed instrument demonstrates satisfactory reliability and can be considered a stable and dependable measure for assessing the dimensions of the proposed model.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to develop a model for maximizing decision implementation in governmental organizations based on the development of employees' zone of indifference. The findings demonstrated that successful implementation is not merely the result of formal authority or bureaucratic control, but rather emerges through a multidimensional interaction among professional legitimacy, organizational trust, value congruence, economic exchange, and contextual organizational conditions. The proposed model revealed that the expansion of employees' zone of indifference creates a psychological and organizational environment in which employees redirect their cognitive and emotional resources from resistance and skepticism toward effective execution and problem-solving. In this regard, the findings support the foundational propositions of Barnard regarding the acceptance of authority, which emphasized that organizational directives become effective only when subordinates voluntarily recognize them as legitimate and acceptable (Barnard, 1938). The findings also align with Simon's theory of administrative behavior, according to which employees continuously evaluate organizational directives through cognitive and rational filters before engaging in compliance (Simon, 1947).

One of the most important findings of the study was the central role of professional legitimacy and managerial expertise in expanding the zone of indifference. The results indicated that employees were more willing to implement managerial decisions rapidly and with minimal resistance

when managers possessed technical competence, professional credibility, and merit-based authority. This finding is consistent with the studies of Pitts, who demonstrated that employee compliance with administrative authority is strongly associated with perceptions of managerial competence and fairness (Pitts, 2010). Likewise, Clark and colleagues emphasized that organizational implementation strategies become more effective when employees trust the expertise and judgment of organizational leaders (Clark et al., 2024). In governmental organizations, where employees often face uncertainty, regulatory complexity, and political pressures, professional legitimacy reduces the cognitive burden associated with questioning managerial directives and facilitates organizational coordination.

Another major finding concerned the significance of value and normative congruence in decision implementation. The study showed that employees do not respond to managerial directives solely through economic or procedural calculations; rather, they evaluate decisions through ethical, cultural, and national value systems. When employees perceived directives as aligned with national interests, ethical principles, and organizational values, their willingness to comply increased substantially. This finding supports the arguments of Hagen and colleagues regarding the importance of stakeholder alignment and organizational acceptance in shaping employee behavior (Hagen et al., 2023). It also aligns with the behavioral theory of the firm proposed by Cyert and March, which argues that organizational actions emerge through negotiated alignments among actors with different preferences and values (Cyert & March, 1964). In public organizations, employees frequently interpret managerial directives not merely as technical instructions but as representations of broader institutional and societal priorities. Consequently, implementation success becomes highly dependent on the extent to which organizational decisions resonate with employees' internal value systems.

The findings also revealed that economic and welfare exchange significantly influence the expansion of the zone of indifference. Employees perceived organizational compliance as a reciprocal exchange relationship in which fairness in compensation, job security, and performance-based rewards function as essential prerequisites for voluntary implementation. This result is highly consistent with previous findings indicating that distributive justice and perceived fairness directly affect employee motivation and organizational commitment (Taheri Lari et al., 2016). The

findings additionally support the conclusions of Jahanshahi, who argued that organizational indifference intensifies when employees perceive inequity or lack of recognition within administrative systems (Jahanshahi, 2010). In governmental organizations characterized by rigid hierarchies and limited financial incentives, employees may intentionally delay implementation when they perceive a lack of reciprocal organizational support. Therefore, expanding the zone of indifference requires not only psychological trust but also tangible systems of organizational justice and economic recognition.

A particularly important contribution of the study concerns the role of organizational trust and procedural justice in reducing implementation friction. The findings demonstrated that transparency, managerial consistency, and procedural fairness significantly reduce resistance and psychological hesitation among employees. Employees who trusted organizational processes required fewer bureaucratic controls, less supervision, and fewer formal monitoring mechanisms. This finding strongly supports the arguments of Birken and colleagues, who emphasized that implementation effectiveness depends on organizational environments characterized by supportive climates, trust, and collective engagement (Birken et al., 2017). Similarly, Danaeefard and Eslami highlighted that organizational silence emerges when employees perceive managerial systems as unfair, politically biased, or unpredictable (Danaeefard & Eslami, 2010). The present findings suggest that trust functions as a cognitive resource-saving mechanism: when employees trust managers and organizational systems, they allocate less mental energy to defensive analysis and more energy to implementation and innovation.

The core dimension of the proposed model, namely cognitive transition, represents one of the most theoretically significant findings of the study. The findings demonstrated that employees move from a “why should I implement this?” orientation toward a “how can I implement this effectively?” orientation when the zone of indifference expands. This transition reduces cognitive resistance and creates implementation-focused organizational behavior. The finding aligns with Simon’s bounded rationality perspective, which suggests that employees operate within cognitive limitations and seek simplified frameworks for decision acceptance (Simon, 1947). The findings also correspond with the organizational biological perspective proposed by Papsiene, according to which organizations develop adaptive reflexes that shape collective behavioral responses

(Papsiene, 2024). In this study, the zone of indifference appears to function as a stabilizing organizational reflex that redirects psychological energy away from conflict and toward coordinated action.

The dimension of intelligent compliance further extends classical organizational theories by distinguishing between passive obedience and professionally grounded acceptance. Employees in the present study did not advocate blind compliance; rather, they emphasized conditional acceptance based on legality, ethics, and national interests. This finding demonstrates that expanded implementation capacity does not necessarily imply authoritarian control or unquestioning obedience. Instead, it reflects a balanced relationship between organizational trust and professional judgment. This perspective aligns with contemporary organizational theories emphasizing collaborative governance, adaptive authority, and reflexive organizational behavior (Papsiene, 2024; Robert & Carl, 2015). It also supports Maio and colleagues’ argument that balanced and unbiased decision systems encourage higher levels of cooperation and collective engagement (Maio et al., 2022).

The findings related to contextual and intervening variables demonstrated that even when employees psychologically accept managerial directives, implementation may still fail due to structural and organizational barriers. At the individual level, severe risk aversion, fear of accountability institutions, and learned helplessness emerged as major barriers to implementation. Employees frequently preferred procedural delay and defensive behavior because they feared legal consequences or believed that organizational decisions would ultimately fail. This finding is consistent with previous studies on implementation barriers in public organizations, which identified fear-based organizational cultures and excessive accountability pressures as major obstacles to execution effectiveness (Adnan, Saputra, et al., 2022). Organizational silence theory similarly explains that employees avoid proactive behavior when organizational environments punish initiative or create uncertainty regarding responsibility (Danaeefard & Eslami, 2010). Therefore, the expansion of the zone of indifference alone cannot ensure implementation success unless employees also perceive organizational environments as psychologically safe.

At the organizational level, the findings highlighted the destructive effects of bureaucracy, contradictory directives, politicization, and unstable management systems. Excessive administrative procedures and overlapping approval mechanisms significantly slowed implementation processes

and increased organizational frustration. This finding strongly supports Bellander and colleagues' conclusion that a substantial gap often exists between decision formulation and execution in public organizations because of fragmented implementation structures and inconsistent managerial coordination (Bellander et al., 2025). Likewise, Elbanna and colleagues found that strategy implementation success in public organizations depends heavily on managerial consistency, coordination mechanisms, and operational clarity (Elbanna et al., 2016). The present study extends these findings by showing that organizational barriers not only reduce efficiency but also psychologically contract employees' zone of indifference, thereby intensifying skepticism and defensive organizational behavior.

The findings concerning the consequences of maximal implementation demonstrated that the expansion of the zone of indifference generates positive outcomes at individual, organizational, and national levels. At the individual level, employees experienced restoration of psychological capital, reduced burnout, and greater occupational vitality because they were able to redirect cognitive resources toward meaningful organizational contribution. This finding corresponds with research emphasizing the importance of employee empowerment, organizational support, and participatory climates in promoting psychological well-being and motivation (Taheri Lari et al., 2016). At the organizational level, maximal implementation improved resource productivity, reduced project stagnation, and strengthened internal cohesion. These findings align with studies emphasizing that implementation effectiveness contributes directly to organizational adaptability and strategic success (Clark et al., 2024; Elbanna et al., 2016). At the national level, the model demonstrated that reducing bureaucratic friction and improving implementation coherence facilitate trade processes, strengthen private sector trust, and contribute to broader economic objectives. This finding is especially relevant in strategic governmental organizations responsible for regulating economic interactions and public services.

Another important implication of the study is the interdisciplinary relevance of the zone of indifference concept. Although the concept originated in classical organizational theory, contemporary research in operations research, computational systems, and group decision-making has similarly emphasized the importance of acceptable tolerance boundaries in improving system performance under uncertainty (Teng et al., 2010; Yu et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2025). The present study demonstrates that

the zone of indifference can also function as an organizational tolerance mechanism through which employees simplify decision acceptance and reduce implementation friction. This interdisciplinary convergence strengthens the conceptual robustness of the proposed model and suggests that implementation effectiveness can be analyzed simultaneously through behavioral, organizational, and systems-oriented perspectives.

Overall, the findings indicate that maximizing decision implementation in governmental organizations requires a transition from rigid bureaucratic control toward trust-based, legitimacy-centered, and psychologically adaptive management systems. Public organizations cannot achieve implementation effectiveness solely through formal authority, surveillance, or procedural enforcement. Instead, successful implementation emerges when employees perceive managerial directives as professionally legitimate, ethically aligned, organizationally fair, and operationally feasible. Under such conditions, the zone of indifference expands, cognitive resistance declines, and organizational energy becomes concentrated on execution rather than procedural survival.

One limitation of the present study concerns its focus on a single governmental organization, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other public sector contexts with different administrative structures and organizational cultures. In addition, the qualitative nature of the study means that the findings are influenced by the lived experiences and perceptions of participants, which may reflect contextual and subjective interpretations. Another limitation involves the sensitivity of discussing managerial resistance, organizational distrust, and political influences within governmental settings, which may have affected the openness of some interview responses despite assurances of confidentiality.

Future research may examine the proposed model quantitatively across multiple governmental organizations and compare implementation dynamics across different administrative sectors. Comparative studies between public and private organizations could also provide deeper insights into the role of bureaucratic structures in shaping the zone of indifference. Additionally, future studies may investigate the relationship between organizational trust, psychological safety, and digital governance systems in expanding implementation capacity. Longitudinal research designs would also be valuable for analyzing how managerial stability and organizational reforms influence implementation behavior over time.

From a practical perspective, governmental organizations should prioritize the development of trust-based managerial systems that emphasize professional legitimacy, procedural justice, and transparent communication. Organizations should reduce excessive bureaucratic controls and replace rigid supervisory mechanisms with participatory and competence-based implementation systems. Policymakers and senior managers should also invest in strengthening employees' technical competencies, decision ownership, and psychological safety in order to reduce defensive organizational behaviors. Finally, implementation systems should be redesigned to minimize contradictory directives, stabilize managerial practices, and align organizational incentives with national and institutional objectives.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to all individuals helped us to do the project.

Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

Funding

According to the authors, this article has no financial support.

Ethics Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were considered.

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