

# Governance Quality and the Sustainable Development Goals in ASEAN Countries

Governance Quality  
and the Sustainable  
Development Goals

Siti Nurhayati

Universitas Indonesia; Depok, Indonesia

E-Mail: siti.nurhayati32@ui.ac.id

Purwatiningsih

Universitas Indonesia; Depok, Indonesia

E-Mail: purwatiningsih.mba@ui.ac.id

2279

Submitted:  
OCTOBER 2025

Accepted:  
DECEMBER 2025

## ABSTRACT

Amid growing concern over sustainable development, this study aims to examine the relationship between the quality of national governance and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in ASEAN countries. Governance quality is measured using the six dimensions of the worldwide governance indicators, namely voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. Sustainable Development Goals performance is assessed using the SDG Index. The study employs a quantitative approach by analyzing 900 observations from 10 ASEAN countries over the period 2015–2024, using panel data regression complemented with robustness checks. The findings indicate that several governance dimensions, particularly political stability, government effectiveness, rule of law, and control of corruption, have a significant relationship with SDG achievement. In contrast, voice and accountability and regulatory quality do not show significant effects. The robustness test reveals a change in significance for regulatory quality, suggesting that this variable is sensitive to model specifications. This research contributes to the literature on public governance and sustainable development, especially within the context of developing countries in Southeast Asia. Practically, the findings provide important implications for ASEAN governments to strengthen governance reforms to accelerate the attainment of the 2030 SDG agenda.

**Keywords:** ASEAN Countries, Governance Quality, Panel Data Analysis, Sustainable Development Goals, Worldwide Governance Indicators.

## ABSTRAK

Di tengah meningkatnya kekhawatiran terhadap pembangunan berkelanjutan, studi ini bertujuan untuk meneliti hubungan antara kualitas tata kelola nasional dan pencapaian Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan (SDG) di negara-negara ASEAN. Kualitas tata kelola diukur menggunakan enam dimensi Indikator tata kelola dunia, yaitu suara dan akuntabilitas, stabilitas politik, efektivitas pemerintah, kualitas regulasi, supremasi hukum, dan pengendalian korupsi. Kinerja SDG dinilai menggunakan Indeks SDG. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan menganalisis 900 observasi dari 10 negara ASEAN selama periode 2015–2024, menggunakan regresi data panel yang dilengkapi dengan uji ketahanan (robustness test). Temuan menunjukkan bahwa beberapa dimensi tata kelola, khususnya stabilitas politik, efektivitas pemerintah, supremasi hukum, dan pengendalian korupsi, memiliki hubungan yang signifikan dengan pencapaian SDG. Sebaliknya, suara dan akuntabilitas serta kualitas regulasi tidak menunjukkan efek yang signifikan. Uji ketahanan mengungkapkan perubahan signifikansi untuk kualitas regulasi, menunjukkan bahwa variabel ini sensitif terhadap spesifikasi model. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada literatur tentang tata kelola publik dan pembangunan berkelanjutan, terutama dalam konteks negara berkembang di Asia Tenggara. Secara praktis, temuan ini

JIAKES

Jurnal Ilmiah Akuntansi  
Kesatuan  
Vol. 13 No. 6, 2025  
pp. 2279-2290  
IBI Kesatuan  
ISSN 2337 – 7852  
E-ISSN 2721 – 3048  
DOI: 10.37641/jiakes.v13i6.4751

*memberikan implikasi penting bagi pemerintah ASEAN untuk memperkuat reformasi tata kelola guna mempercepat pencapaian agenda SDG 2030.*

**Kata kunci:** Negara-negara ASEAN, Kualitas Tata Kelola, Analisis Data Panel, Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan, Indikator Tata Kelola Dunia.

## INTRODUCTION

2280

The acceleration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has become a global priority; however, the 2025 UN Report shows that global progress remains far from the 2030 targets, with only 35% of indicators on track or showing moderate improvement (United Nations, 2025). A similar pattern is observed in ASEAN. According to the ASEAN SDGs Indicators Progress Report 2025, the region has made progress in key goals such as poverty reduction, gender equality, clean energy, and strong institutions (Goals 1, 5, 7, and 16). Nevertheless, most targets require substantial acceleration, particularly in food security, climate action, and renewable energy adoption (Hu & Cheng, 2024; ASEAN Secretariat, 2025). These challenges are compounded by governance disparities, high levels of corruption, weak rule of law, and uneven institutional capacities across member states (Omeje, 2020; Atta et al., 2024; Suardi et al., 2024).

Contemporary literature highlights governance quality as a critical determinant of sustainable development. Evidence from Europe demonstrates that transparency, government effectiveness, political stability, and control of corruption significantly enhance SDG performance (Robiyanto et al., 2023; Bisogno et al., 2025). Studies in Africa by Adebayo et al. (2025) similarly indicate a strong link between governance and sustainable development, while Omri and Mabrouk (2020) and Dhaoui (2022) emphasize institutional capacity as the foundation of SDG advancement. Research in Asia also points to the importance of regulatory quality, public integrity, and policy coordination for achieving SDGs (Vazquez et al., 2020; Ahmed & Anifowose, 2024).

Despite these findings, research gaps remain in the ASEAN context. Knox and Orazgaliyev (2024) highlight weak governance including low rule of law and persistent corruption as major development constraints in Central Asia, with similar patterns mirrored in Southeast Asia. However, empirical studies that examine all six dimensions of the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) separately within ASEAN remain limited. Disaggregated WGI analysis is necessary to identify which governance components most strongly influence SDG achievement and to reduce bias arising from aggregated indices (Acharya, 2009; Stef et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2023).

Policy-oriented literature from Transparency International (2024–2025), the World Bank (2024), and the OECD 2024 further underscores governance as a key accelerator of SDGs, serving not only as the guardian of public finances but also as the engine of policy coordination, transparency, and multi-stakeholder partnerships (SDG 17). At the national level, the Ministry of National Development Planning 2024 places Governance Transformation as a core pillar of the National Long-Term Development Plan (*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Panjang Nasional/RPJPN*) 2025–2045, reaffirming the direct link between bureaucratic reform and SDG progress.

Addressing these gaps, the present study aims to examine the relationship between governance quality measured through the six WGI dimensions: voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption and SDG performance in ASEAN countries during 2015–2024. Using panel data regression and robustness tests, the study provides empirically robust insights. This research contributes to the academic literature on governance and sustainable development in developing regions and offers policy-relevant recommendations for ASEAN governments to strengthen governance reforms in support of the SDGs 2030 agenda.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **Voice and Accountability, Political Stability, and SDGs Achievement**

Based on institutional theory, states respond not only to internal pressures but also to external pressures from the global community. For example, the commitment to the SDGs has evolved into a form of “global norm” that encourages countries to align their domestic policies with international expectations (Hakim, 2022; Andini & Putra, 2024; Bisogno et al., 2025; United Nations, 2025). Voice and Accountability (VA) within the WGI framework reflects the extent of citizen participation in political processes as well as freedoms of expression, association, and the press (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2011). The literature demonstrates that this dimension plays a significant role in advancing SDG achievement by strengthening transparency and public accountability (Sachs et al., 2023). Government accountability is also viewed as a prerequisite for good governance, ensuring that sustainability-oriented policies are effectively operationalized and implemented (Ríos et al., 2024; Lyulyov et al., 2024). Empirical studies across Europe and Africa show that public participation and civic engagement accelerate SDG progress (Knox & Orazgaliyev, 2024; Adebayo et al., 2025). Findings from the UNDP (2023) and studies in Southeast Asia further highlight the role of media freedom and political participation in strengthening public service delivery and supporting SDG 16 as the institutional foundation of sustainable development.

Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism (PV), as defined by the WGI framework, reflects the likelihood that political instability or violence, including terrorism, will disrupt governmental processes (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2024). Prior studies consistently show that political stability supports sustainable development. Evidence from North Africa indicates that countries with higher political stability perform better on SDG 4, SDG 9, and SDG 16 (Ikram & Boudraa, 2025). Similar findings by Benito et al. (2023) highlight the centrality of political stability for SDG achievement. Conversely, that political instability has adverse fiscal effects in South Asia, diverting public expenditure away from essential social sectors toward military spending, thereby undermining progress on SDG 3, SDG 4, and SDG 9. Stable political environments also reduce political opportunism and strengthen governance quality (Al-Refai & Saad, 2024; Ríos et al., 2025). While studies in ASEAN show positive effects of stability on SDGs, findings from Europe reveal mixed outcomes, suggesting contextual variation (Knox & Orazgaliyev, 2024).

H1: Voice and accountability has a significant effect on SDG achievement.

H2: Political stability and absence of violence/terrorism has a significant effect on SDG achievement.

### **Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, and SDGs Achievement**

Government Effectiveness (GE) within the WGI framework captures the quality of public services, the professionalism of the bureaucracy, the competence of policymakers, and the degree of independence from political pressures (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2024; Chen & Chen, 2024). Empirical evidence demonstrates that GE is a critical determinant of SDG progress. Studies in Europe and Africa show that countries with efficient bureaucracies perform better in education, health, and social inequality indicators (Costantiello & Leogrande, 2024; Adebayo et al., 2025; Dharmawati et al., 2025). More recent findings by Quah (2016) highlight that professional and politically insulated bureaucracies in Malaysia and Indonesia are essential for implementing complex, cross-sectoral SDG programs such as sustainable urban development (SDG 11) and sustainable consumption and waste management (SDG 12). Theoretically, stable and effective government structures foster consistent bureaucratic behaviour that supports long-term policy commitments, thereby enhancing SDG implementation. Additional empirical studies confirm the positive association between government effectiveness, digital governance, and SDG performance (Park & Kim, 2020; Knox & Orazgaliyev, 2024; Bhatti, 2025).

Regulatory Quality (RQ) within the WGI framework assesses the government's ability to design and implement policies and regulations that support economic activity and private sector development (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2024). Existing literature identifies regulatory quality as a critical driver of sustainable development outcomes. Bisogno et al. (2025) demonstrate that strong regulatory frameworks significantly enhance SDG performance, particularly in economic growth and innovation. This relationship is further supported by Knox and Orazgaliyev (2024), who find that transparent and consistent regulatory environments positively influence the achievement of SDG 8 (economic growth) and SDG 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure). At the national level, Udemba and Philip (2022) show that pro-investment and transparent regulatory policies in Indonesia's renewable energy sector successfully attract greater Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into green projects, directly contributing to SDG 7 and SDG 13. Additional studies emphasize that clear and adaptive regulations facilitate green growth and enhance business compliance through digitalized licensing systems (Handoyo & Anas, 2024). Research on digital governance further indicates that e-government strengthens regulatory effectiveness and acts as a conditional factor influencing sustainable development outcomes (Dhaoui, 2022; Fan et al., 2023; Hendratmoko, 2023).

H3: Government effectiveness has a significant effect on SDG achievement.

H4: Regulatory quality has a significant effect on SDG achievement.

### **Rule of Law, Control Corruption, and SDGs Achievement**

Rule of Law (RL), as defined in the WGI framework, assesses the extent to which governmental and non-governmental actors have confidence in and comply with legal rules, including the quality of law enforcement and the judicial system (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2024). Prior studies highlight RL as a fundamental determinant of sustainable development. Bisogno et al. (2025) find that the strict rule of law significantly enhances the achievement of SDG 16, while Acemoglu and Robinson (2019) show that the rule of law strengthens the effectiveness of economic and social policies in middle-income countries. Alden Wily (2018) further argues that robust RL is essential for protecting land tenure and natural resource rights of indigenous and vulnerable communities, directly contributing to SDG 10 and SDG 15. Without effective legal enforcement, large-scale infrastructure projects risk triggering land conflicts and social marginalization, contradicting the SDGs' core principle of leaving no one behind. Consistent with these findings, the World Justice Project (2024) reports a strong correlation between higher rule of law and improved SDG 16 outcomes.

Control of Corruption (CC) in the WGI framework measures the extent to which public power is used for private gain, including petty and grand corruption as well as state capture by elites and private interests (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2024). Empirical studies consistently show that corruption is a major barrier to sustainable development. Ahmed and Anifowose (2024) and Adebayo et al. (2025) demonstrate that weak corruption control undermines economic performance and slows SDG progress, particularly in developing countries. Evidence from ASEAN further reveals that corruption in public procurement leads to significant budget leakages and substandard infrastructure, resulting in ineffective SDG outcomes such as poor health and mobility improvements. Panda and Leepsa (2017) also emphasizes that corruption exacerbates agency conflicts and hampers long-term development. Although a limited set of studies supports the "grease the wheels" hypothesis, the broader body of literature supports the "sand the wheels" view, arguing that corruption weakens governance and obstructs development (Ahmed & Anifowose, 2024).

H5: Rule of law has a significant effect on SDG achievement.

H6: Control of corruption has a significant effect on SDG achievement.

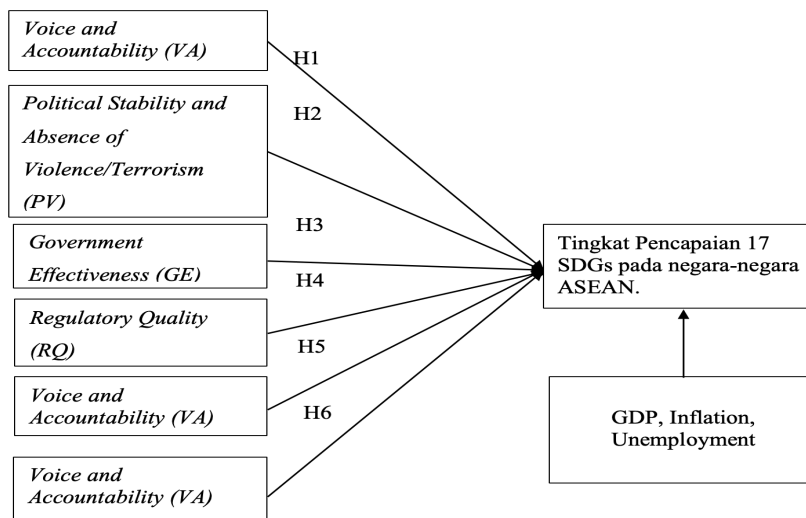


Figure 1. Research framework

Based on Figure 1, the conceptual framework that the causal relationship between governance and sustainable development is examined through the six core dimensions of the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) as predictors of SDG achievement scores in the ASEAN region. This research incorporates three macroeconomic control variables, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), inflation, and unemployment. The inclusion of GDP serves to control for a country's fiscal capacity to finance sustainability programs, whereas inflation and unemployment are included to account for the influence of economic fluctuations and social welfare dynamics that may inherently affect a country's SDG Index score beyond the governance-related factors. This Framework is built on institutional theories as a conceptual basis for explaining the relationship.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs the entire ASEAN region as its population, consisting of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar. The population was selected because ASEAN represents a strategic region that contributes more than 90% of Southeast Asia's GDP and plays a significant role in global SDG achievement. The research sample includes data on governance quality based on the six dimensions of the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) and SDG performance for the period 2015–2024, totalling 900 observations. The timeframe aligns with the launch of the SDG agenda in 2015. SDG Index data were obtained from the United Nations annual reports beginning in 2016, while governance indicators were sourced from the WGI starting in 2015.

Governance quality, serving as the independent variable, is measured through six dimensions of the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), which include voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. Data were collected from WGI 2024, World bank website. Meanwhile, the level of SDG achievement acts as the dependent variable, measured using the aggregate score of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. SDGs data were collected from the SDG Index 2025, the United Nations website. To ensure the accuracy of the analysis results, this research also incorporates macroeconomic control variables consisting of GDP, inflation, and unemployment to adjust for the influence of external economic fluctuations on a country's SDG achievement. Data were collected from World Development Index (WDI) 2025.

This study employs panel data regression, processed in Stata to examine the relationship between governance quality and SDG achievement in ASEAN countries. The initial stage presents descriptive statistics to illustrate the distribution of the SDG

Index, the six WGI indicators, the EGDI, and control variables (GDP per capita, inflation, and unemployment). Subsequently, the selection of the appropriate panel regression model is conducted through three main diagnostic tests: the Chow Test to determine whether CEM or FEM is more suitable, the Hausman Test to choose between FEM and REM, and the Breusch–Pagan Lagrange Multiplier Test to decide between CEM and REM. Classical assumption tests are applied to ensure model validity, including examinations of heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation. When violations are detected, the estimations are corrected using robust or clustered standard errors. A robustness test is also conducted to confirm the consistency of the results. The research model in this study refers to Bisogno et.al (2025) and is specified as follows:

$$SDG_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 WGI_{it-1} + \gamma_1 GDP_{it-1} + \gamma_2 INF_{it-1} + \gamma_3 UEM_{it-1} + \mu_i + \varepsilon_{it}$$

## RESULTS

The descriptive statistics in Table 1 indicate that SDG achievement among ASEAN countries exhibits considerable variation. The average SDG Index is 67.03, with values ranging from 58 to 75, reflecting substantial disparities in sustainable development performance across countries. The six governance indicators (WGI) also display notable heterogeneity, as evidenced by relatively large standard deviations in voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. This pattern is consistent with the findings of Bisogno et al. (2025), who argue that institutional quality in developing countries tends to be more diverse, which in turn directly affects variation in SDG outcomes. Macroeconomic control variables, GDP growth, inflation, and unemployment likewise show significant fluctuations, indicating differing economic dynamics across ASEAN countries.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistic

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
SDG Index	90	67.03581	4.160551	58.02518	75.34209
Voice and Accountability (VA)	90	-0.741111	0.6497527	-1.84	0.18
Political Stability (PS)	90	0.0148889	0.9097651	-2.2	1.6
Government Effectiveness (GE)	90	0.2512222	0.9783176	-1.75	2.32
Regulatory Quality (RQ)	90	0.1081111	0.9100721	-1.44	2.31
Rule of Law (RL)	90	-0.094556	0.8762165	-1.62	1.84
Control of Corruption (CC)	90	-0.181	0.9703376	-1.36	2.14
GDP	90	3.587315	4.109389	-12.01637	9.756804
Inflation	90	2.954608	4.362715	-1.61068	31.23013
Unemployment	90	2.822722	1.996,367	0.119	9.316

This study employs panel data regression to examine the relationship between governance quality and SDG achievement in ASEAN countries. Three estimation approaches are used Common Effect Model (CEM), Fixed Effects Model (FEM), and Random Effects Model (REM) and the model selection follows a series of specification tests. The Chow Test indicates that FEM is preferable to CEM (Prob > F = 0.0000 < 0.05). The Hausman Test, however, yields Prob > Chi<sup>2</sup> = 0.0688 (> 0.05), suggesting that REM is more appropriate. Subsequently, the Lagrange Multiplier Test shows Prob > Chibar<sup>2</sup> = 1.0000 (> 0.05), which implies that CEM is the most suitable model. Therefore, the final regression specification used in this study is the Common Effect Model. The classical assumption tests are then conducted. The Breusch–Pagan heteroskedasticity test shows no heteroskedasticity (Prob > Chi<sup>2</sup> = 0.3958 > 0.05), whereas the autocorrelation test indicates the presence of autocorrelation (Prob = 0.000 < 0.05). As a result, robust standard errors are required for valid inference. The CEM is subsequently applied to assess the influence of the six WGI dimensions (VA, PS, GE, RQ, RL, CC) and the control variables (GDP, inflation, unemployment) on the SDG Index through t-tests, F-tests, and the coefficient of determination. An independent variable is considered statistically significant when its p-value is less than 0.05.

**Table 2.** Regression Analysis Model

SDG Index	t	P>(t)	Significance
Voice and Accountability (VA)	-1.17	0.245	
Political Stability (PS)	-6.82	0.000	***
Government Effectiveness (GE)	3.32	0.001	***
Regulatory Quality (RQ)	-2.40	0.019	***
Rule of Law (RL)	6.82	0.000	***
Control of Corruption (CC)	-5.54	0.000	***
GDP	-0.80	0.427	
Inflation	0.60	0.549	
Unemployment	-1.46	0.148	
Constant	50.16	0.000	
Information P<0,05 ***			

The regression analysis results in Table 2 indicate that not all governance dimensions exert a significant influence on SDG achievement in ASEAN countries. The voice and accountability variable is not significant ( $p = 0.245$ ), leading to the rejection of Hypothesis 1. Conversely, political stability ( $p = 0.000$ ), government effectiveness ( $p = 0.001$ ), regulatory quality ( $p = 0.019$ ), rule of law ( $p = 0.000$ ), and control of corruption ( $p = 0.000$ ) demonstrate significant partial effects on the SDG Index, thereby supporting Hypotheses 2 through Hypotheses 6. The control variables, GDP ( $p = 0.427$ ), inflation ( $p = 0.549$ ), and unemployment ( $p = 0.548$ ) do not exhibit significant partial effects on the SDG Index. Simultaneously, all independent and control variables jointly influence SDG achievement, as evidenced by the F-test result ( $p = 0.000$ ). The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.7927$ ) further indicates that 79.27% of the variation in the SDG Index can be explained by the model, which includes the six WGI dimensions along with macroeconomic control variables.

The robustness analysis examines the effects of the independent variables voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption along with the control variables GDP, inflation, and unemployment on the SDG Index. The model evaluates the magnitude of these relationships, where each independent variable is considered statistically significant in explaining the dependent variable if its probability value (p-value) is below 0.05.

**Table 3.** Robustness Analysis

SDG Index	T-Statistic	P>(t)	Significance
Voice and accountability	-1.25	0.213	
Political stability	-8.28	0.000	***
Government effectiveness	2.98	0.004	***
Regulatory quality	-1.95	0.055	
Rule of law	6.76	0.000	***
Control of corruption	-4.67	0.000	***
GDP	-0.84	0.405	
Inflation	0.83	0.410	
Unemployment	-1.61	0.111	
Constant	53.04	0.000	
Information P<0,05 ***			

The robustness analysis results in Table 3 indicate consistency with the main regression findings, although regulatory quality exhibits a change in significance. Voice and accountability remain non-significant, leading to the rejection of Hypothesis 1. Conversely, political stability, government effectiveness, rule of law, and control of corruption continue to show significant effects on the SDG Index, resulting in the acceptance of Hypotheses 2, 3, 5, and 6. Regulatory quality becomes non-significant ( $p = 0.055$ ), leading to the rejection of Hypothesis 4 in the robustness estimation. The three control variables GDP, inflation, and unemployment—remain non-significant, indicating that macroeconomic factors do not influence SDG Index variation within this model. The F-test confirms that the model is jointly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), and the  $R^2$  value of 0.7927

suggests that 79.27% of the variation in SDG Index is explained by the included predictors.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings indicate that the influence of governance dimensions on SDG achievement in ASEAN is heterogeneous. Voice and accountability show no significant effect, both before and after the robustness test, suggesting that high levels of public participation and freedom of expression do not translate directly into effective implementation of development policies. Public participation has not been strong enough to reduce agency problems (agency theory) and is not sufficiently supported by core institutional pillars such as law enforcement and bureaucratic effectiveness (institutional theory). These results differ from evidence found by Knox and Orazgaliyev (2024) and Bisogno et al. (2025).

Political Stability is significant but has a negative coefficient. This reflects that political stability in ASEAN tends to be elitist, characterized by concentrated power and limited space for criticism, thus failing to support the structural reforms required to advance SDGs. Such stability does not equate to public legitimacy and often reinforces the status quo (legitimacy and institutional theories). These findings align with Kim et al. (2025), who reveal that non-substantive political stability does not foster sustainable development. Government effectiveness is positively and significantly associated with SDG achievement, reaffirming that bureaucratic capacity plays a central role in successful policy implementation. This dimension reduces agency problems, strengthens institutional capacity, and enhances public legitimacy. The finding is consistent with Knox and Orazgaliyev (2024), Bisogno et al. (2025), and Adebayo (2025).

Regulatory quality is significant but negatively signed. This indicates that regulatory improvements in ASEAN are largely procedural, emphasizing formalities rather than strengthening the effectiveness of implementation. Misalignment between regulatory orientation and institutional capacity produces adverse development outcomes. Non-inclusive and inconsistently enforced regulations also weaken public legitimacy. These results align with Guillamon et al. (2025) and Bisogno et al. (2025). Rule of law is positively and significantly related to SDG achievement, confirming that legal enforcement is foundational for policy consistency and public trust. This finding is consistent with Bisogno et al. (2025).

Control of corruption is also significant but negatively signed. Although control of corruption scores appear to increase, such improvements do not reflect substantive reductions in corruption. Weak enforcement and supervisory capacity prevent anti-corruption reforms from effectively addressing agency problems (agency and institutional theories). Inconsistent anti-corruption campaigns also erode public trust and weaken support for SDG agendas (Ramadhani et al., 2025). These results are consistent with Kim et al. (2025). The results highlight that governance quality plays a crucial role in shaping SDG performance in ASEAN. However, its effectiveness is highly dependent on institutional capacity, public legitimacy, and consistent policy implementation.

The robustness test was conducted to ensure that the estimation results were not biased by heteroskedasticity or autocorrelation, given that ASEAN panel data exhibit substantial cross-country variation and non-homogeneous error structures. Since the purpose of the robustness correction is to stabilize the standard errors rather than alter the regression coefficients, variables that remain significant after the robustness test are considered to have stronger and more reliable relationships. The robustness indicate that four governance dimensions, political stability, government effectiveness, rule of law, and control of corruption, remain significant, confirming that their effects on SDG achievement are consistent and robust. Conversely, Voice and accountability remain insignificant both before and after the robustness correction, indicating that public participation in ASEAN has yet to translate effectively into SDG implementation. Regulatory quality becomes insignificant after robustness, suggesting that its influence is unstable and sensitive to variance adjustments. This can be explained by the nature of

regulatory frameworks in ASEAN, which tend to be formalistic, overlap with other governance dimensions such as GE and RL, and differ widely in institutional capacity across member states (Ionaşcu et al., 2025).

The control variables GDP, inflation, and unemployment also remain insignificant before and after robustness, demonstrating that short-term macroeconomic indicators are not direct determinants of SDG performance, which is driven largely by long-term structural transformation. The robustness test confirms that the main findings of the study are stable and not sensitive to changes in model specification.

## CONCLUSION

This study analyses the effects of six dimensions of national governance (WGI) voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption on the achievement of the SDGs in ten ASEAN countries during the period 2015–2024, along with a robustness test. The findings show that the influence of governance on SDG performance is not homogeneous. Voice and accountability have no significant effect, indicating that public participation has not been effectively integrated into ASEAN’s development agenda. Political stability is significant but negative, reflecting elite-driven stability that does not promote the reforms necessary for achieving the SDGs. Government Effectiveness has a significant positive effect, confirming that bureaucratic capacity is a key determinant of SDG success. Regulatory quality is significant but negative, and becomes insignificant after the robustness test, indicating that regulation in ASEAN tends to be formalistic rather than effective in implementation.

Rule of law shows a significant positive effect, emphasizing the importance of legal enforcement, while control of corruption is significant but negative, suggesting that higher control of corruption scores do not yet reflect substantive reductions in corruption due to weak enforcement capacity. The robustness test confirms the stability of the results, except for regulatory quality, which loses significance. Control variables such as GDP, inflation, and unemployment remain insignificant. The study provides theoretical implications that the effectiveness of governance depends on institutional capacity and digital readiness; empirical implications that structural governance factors are more decisive for SDG achievement; and practical implications encouraging digitalization in strategic sectors, implementation-oriented regulatory reform, and stronger bureaucratic capacity and law enforcement. The study’s limitations include variable coverage, the relatively short observation period, and the heterogeneity of ASEAN countries. Therefore, future research is recommended to incorporate additional moderating/mediating variables, extend the data period, and conduct country-specific case studies.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2019). Rents and economic development: the perspective of Why Nations Fail. *Public Choice*, 181(1), 13-28.
- [2] Acharya, A. (2009). *Constructing a security community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the problem of regional order*. London: Routledge.
- [3] Adebayo, A., Ackers, B., Erin, O., & Adegboye, A. (2025). Governance quality and sustainable development: insights from the united nations sustainable development goals in Africa. *Public Organization Review*, 5(4), 1-26.
- [4] Ahmed, A., & Anifowose, M. (2024). Corruption, corporate governance, and sustainable development goals in Africa. *Corporate Governance: The International Journal of Business in Society*, 24(1), 119-138.
- [5] Alden Wily, L. (2018). Collective land ownership in the 21st century: Overview of global trends. *Land*, 7(2), 68-71.
- [6] Al-Refai, M. S., & Saad, M. A. (2024). E-government development and governance in MENA countries: an empirical study. *Access Journal*, 5(1), 7-20.
- [7] Andini, R., & Putra, D. (2024). The role of civil society organizations in localizing SDGs: A comparative study in Southeast Asia. *Journal of Sustainable Development & Governance*, 5(1), 45–62.

- [8] ASEAN Secretariat. (2024). *ASEAN key figures 2024*. Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat.
- [9] ASEAN Secretariat. (2025). *ASEAN SDG indicators progress report 2025*. Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat.
- [10] Atta, N., Sharifi, A., & Ying Lee, C. (2024). The relationship between the rule of law and environmental sustainability: empirical evidence from the analysis of global indices. *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology*, 31(8), 1023-1039.
- [11] Benito, B., Guillamón, M. D., & Ríos, A. M. (2023). The sustainable development goals: How does their implementation affect the financial sustainability of the largest Spanish municipalities. *Sustainable Development*, 31(4), 2836-2850.
- [12] Benlahcene, A., Ramdani, A., & Safi, B. (2024). The nature of government-citizen communication in the Algerian Southern states. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1), 235-247.
- [13] Bhatti, H. A. (2025). One million more: assessing a decade of progress in undergraduate STEM education. *Journal of Microbiology and Biology Education*, 26(3), 15-25.
- [14] Bisogno, M., Cuadrado Ballesteros, B., Manes Rossi, F., & Peña Miguel, N. (2025). Governance quality and the sustainable development goals: an assessment in Europe. *Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting & Financial Management*, 37(6), 193-219.
- [15] Chen, Y., & Chen, Z. (2024). Can e-government online services offer enhanced governance support? A national-level analysis based on fsQCA and NCA. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*, 9(3), 100-116.
- [16] Costantiello, A., & Leogrande, A. (2024). The regulatory quality in the light of environmental, social and governance framework at world level. *Discover Global Society*, 2(1), 1-10.
- [17] Dharmawati, T., Saehu, M. S., Setiawan, M. A., & Pryangan, W. (2025). Evaluating the effectiveness of corporate governance mechanisms in mitigating earnings management: a literature-based review. *Jurnal Ilmiah Akuntansi Kesatuan*, 13(5), 1227-1238.
- [18] Dhaoui, I. (2022). E-government for sustainable development: evidence from MENA Countries. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 13(4), 2875-2895.
- [19] Dhaoui, I. (2022). E-government for sustainable development: Evidence from MENA countries. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 13(3), 2070-2099.
- [20] Fan, B., Zhang, Y., & Luo, M. (2023). Does information technology-organizational resource fit shape e-government performance? *Government Information Quarterly*, 40(2), 101-105
- [21] Hakim, F. N. (2022). Measuring the impact of political participation on public service delivery for health and education (SDGs 3 & 4) in the ASEAN-5 countries. *International Public Management Review*, 23(3), 204-225.
- [22] Handoyo, S., & Anas, S. (2024). The effect of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) on firm performance: the moderating role of country regulatory quality and government effectiveness in ASEAN. *Cogent Business & Management*, 11(1), 237-238.
- [23] Hendratmoko, S. (2023). ASEAN's digital integration: strategic management, challenges, opportunities, and the role of new technologies. *Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis Digital*, 2(4), 1271-1286.
- [24] Herrero, M., Thornton, P. K., Mason-D'Croz, D., Palmer, J., Bodirsky, B. L., Pradhan, P., ... & Rockström, J. (2021). Articulating the effect of food systems innovation on the Sustainable Development Goals. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 5(1), 50-62.
- [25] Hu, J. L., & Cheng, Y. C. (2024). ASEAN's efficiency scores in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. *Sustainable Development*, 32(5), 5499-5512.
- [26] Ikram, M., & Boudraa, C. (2025). The role of quality governance in achieving sustainable development goals in North Africa: An integrated decision-support system. *Sustainable Operations and Computers*. 3(4), 34-36.
- [27] Ionașcu, A. E., Hordofa, D. F., Dănilă, A., Spătariu, E. C., Burcă, A. L., & Horga, M. G. (2025). ESG Performance in the EU and ASEAN: The Roles of Institutional Governance, Economic Structure, and Global Integration. *Sustainability*, 17(17), 7997-8008.
- [28] Kaufmann, D., & Kraay, A. (2024). *Worldwide governance indicators: 2023 update*. Retrieved on September 1, 2025, from <http://www.govindicators.org>
- [29] Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., & Mastruzzi, M. (2011). The worldwide governance indicators: Methodology and analytical issues. *Hague journal on the rule of law*, 3(2), 220-246.
- [30] Kim, Y. R., Kim, W., Roh, Y., & Roh, T. (2025). Political stability and economic development: Institutional sclerosis and the moderating role of institutions. *Sustainable Development*, 33(5), 6543-6556.
- [31] Knox, C., & Orazgaliyev, S. (2024). Sustainable development goals and good governance nexus: Implementation challenges in central Asia. *Public Administration and Development*, 44(4), 237-251.
- [32] Lee, K. H., & Chen, W. (2024). Regulatory stability vs. fiscal incentives: Determinants of foreign direct investment in ASEAN's renewable energy sector. *Singapore Economic Review*, 69(1), 145-168.
- [33] Lyulyov, O., Pimonenko, T., Saura, J. R., & Barbosa, B. (2024). How do e-governance and e-business drive sustainable development goals?. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 3(5), 1991-1999.
- [34] Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas. (2023). *Laporan pelaksanaan pencapaian tujuan pembangunan berkelanjutan (TPB/SDGs) tahun 2023*. Jakarta: Bappenas.
- [35] Omeje, A. N. (2024). Institutional quality and trade competitiveness in ASEAN Region: Implication for inclusive and sustainable development. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 12(3), 123-125.
- [36] Omri, A., & Mabrouk, N. B. (2020). Good governance for sustainable development goals: Getting ahead of the pack or falling behind?. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 83(2), 106-108.

- [37] Panda, B., & Leepsa, N. M. (2017). Agency theory: Review of theory and evidence on problems and perspectives. *Indian journal of corporate governance*, 10(1), 74-95.
- [38] Park, C. H., & Kim, K. (2020). E-government as an anti-corruption tool: Panel data analysis across countries. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 86(4), 691-707.
- [39] Quah, J. S. (Ed.). (2016). *The role of the public bureaucracy in policy implementation in five ASEAN countries* (Vol. 9). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [40] Ramadhani, D. P. S., Sulaiman, H. R., Anggraeni, A. W., & Aisyah, S. (2025). The effectiveness of e-government services in enhancing public trust: A comparative study across ASEAN countries. *Journal of Management and Informatics*, 4(1), 649-667.
- [41] Ríos, A. M., Raimo, N., Benito, B., Vitolla, F., & Guillamón, M. D. (2025). Governing for the goals: How governance quality shapes the achievement of the sustainable development goals. *Sustainable Development*, 4(4), 567-569.
- [42] Robiyanto, R., Nugroho, B. A., Handriani, E., & Frensidy, B. (2023). Measuring the effectiveness of ASEAN-5 initiatives from emerging market portfolio's perspective. *Cogent Business & Management*, 10(1), 216-219.
- [43] Sachs, J. D., Lafortune, G., Kroll, C., Fuller, G., & Woelm, F. (2023). *Sustainable development report 2023*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [44] Stef, V. J., Alama, A. E., & Piatkowski, M. (2023). Institutional quality and its impact on food security: A global analysis. *Food Policy*, 115(2), 102-112.
- [45] Suardi, I., Rossieta, H., Djakman, C., & Diyanty, V. (2024). Procurement governance in reducing corruption in the Indonesian public sector: a mixed method approach. *Cogent Business & Management*, 11(1), 239-249.
- [46] Udemba, E. N., & Philip, L. D. (2022). Policy insight from renewable energy, foreign direct investment (FDI), and urbanization towards climate goal: insight from Indonesia. *Environmental Science and Pollution Research*, 29(36), 54492-54506.
- [47] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). (2024). *E-government survey 2024: The digital government in the Era of AI*. United Nations Publications. Retrieved on May 3, 2025, from <https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb>.
- [48] Vazquez-Brust, D., Piao, R. S., de Melo, M. F. D. S., Yaryd, R. T., & Carvalho, M. M. (2020). The governance of collaboration for sustainable development: Exploring the "black box". *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 256(2), 12-22.
- [49] World Bank. (2024). *World Development Indicators*. Retrieved on May 3, 2025, from <http://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>
- [50] Xu, T., Liu, J., & Zhang, Y. (2023). The impact of institutional quality on economic growth and climate resilience: Evidence from developing nations. *Economic Modelling*, 120(2), 106-113).
- [51] Yang, J., & Min, K. (2025). Transforming ASEAN's future: how clean energy and innovation can shape environmental progress. *Cogent Economics & Finance*, 13(1), 245-250.

