

The Effect of Servant Leadership and Compensation on Employee Engagement Makassar City Tourism Office

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of servant leadership and compensation on employee engagement at the Makassar City Tourism Office in Indonesia. The research addresses a critical gap in understanding how leadership style and compensation strategies affect employee engagement within public sector tourism organizations. Using a quantitative methodology, the study collected data from 50 employees through a mixed-method approach incorporating questionnaires, direct observations, and interviews. Statistical analysis revealed that servant leadership has a significant positive influence on employee engagement, demonstrating that leadership approaches focused on serving and supporting employees can enhance their workplace commitment and involvement. Similarly, compensation was found to have a substantial positive effect on employee engagement, confirming that both financial and non-financial rewards play crucial roles in fostering employee motivation and dedication. The findings provide practical implications for public sector organizations, particularly in tourism management, suggesting that the implementation of servant leadership principles combined with effective compensation strategies can create an optimal work environment that promotes higher levels of employee engagement. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on public sector management and offers valuable insights for policy makers and organizational leaders seeking to enhance workforce engagement in government tourism offices.

Keywords: Compensation, Employee Engagement, Servant Leadership, Tourism Office.

1. Introduction

The backbone of any organization, including government entities, is its human resources (HR). In this case, the Makassar City Tourism Office has an important role in developing the tourism sector which is one of the drivers of the regional economy. However, the level of employee engagement is closely tied to the success of a company. Employee engagement reflects the extent to which they feel connected, motivated, and committed to achieving organizational goals. Having employees who are highly engaged in their work can lead to maximum performance levels, whereas low engagement among employees can result in decreased productivity and a decline in the quality of service provided to the community. In the Makassar City Tourism Office, the impact of employee engagement on the growth of the tourism industry highlights its significance. Employees who are actively involved in their work will be more motivated to make significant contributions to tourism programs, which can ultimately increase tourist appeal and satisfaction (Prilatama & Churiyah, 2023). A study indicates that effective leadership along with fair compensation can enhance productivity in the workplace and contribute to the achievement of company goals (Mega, 2023). Therefore, strategies to increase employee engagement, such as training, career development, and



recognition of employee contributions, need to be implemented to achieve organizational goals effectively.

The leadership style adopted by a company is a crucial element in impacting employee engagement. Servant leadership is considered an efficient approach in fostering strong connections between leaders and their staff members. Leaders who prioritize service not only provide direction, but also support employee needs, build trust, and create a harmonious work environment (Herlina et al., 2021). In the Makassar City Tourism Office, the implementation of servant leadership can be the key to increasing employee engagement, given the importance of their role in providing public services and promoting tourist destinations. In addition to leadership, compensation also plays an important role in increasing employee engagement. Fair compensation linked to the effort put in by employees can boost their drive and contentment at work. In the context of government, including the Makassar City Tourism Office, adequate compensation is not only in the form of salary, but also non-financial rewards such as recognition, incentives, and other benefits. Employees may feel a sense of gratitude, leading to increased engagement with the organization in the long run. In the context of employee engagement, the leadership style implemented by the organization is one of the main factors that influences employee engagement. Servant leadership is an effective approach in building positive relationships between leaders and employees. Leaders who prioritize service not only provide direction, but also support employee needs, build trust, and create a harmonious work environment. Research shows that servant leadership can increase employee engagement by creating a strong emotional bond between leaders and team members. In the Makassar City Tourism Office, the implementation of servant leadership can be the key to increasing employee engagement, given the importance of their role in providing public services and promoting tourist destinations. Research by Liden et al. (2008) shows that servant leadership boosts employee dedication and participation, ultimately enhancing company performance. Leaders who embody servant leadership principles can foster a more efficient workplace and enhance the effectiveness of tourism initiatives.

Fair and appropriate compensation based on an employee's efforts can boost their morale and contentment with their job. Research by Saks (2006) confirms that there is a strong correlation between proper compensation and the extent to which employees are engaged in their work. In the context of government, including the Makassar City Tourism Office, adequate compensation is not only in the form of salary, but also non-financial rewards such as recognition, incentives, and other benefits. This can create a sense of appreciation among employees, which ultimately strengthens their involvement in the organization.

However, based on initial observations, there are indications of low employee engagement at the Makassar City Tourism Office. This can be seen from the low work efficiency, such as less than optimal use of working hours and delays in completing tasks. Work targets are not being met due to this obstacle, which is also affecting the quality of services rendered. This issue calls for a reassessment of the factors that affect employee involvement, such as introducing servant leadership and revising compensation strategies. As a result, the main focus of this research is to investigate how servant leadership and compensation impact the level of employee engagement within the Makassar City Tourism Office. The findings from this study are anticipated to offer valuable insights for companies looking to develop successful tactics for enhancing employee engagement, thus aiding in the advancement of tourism initiatives that are currently in progress.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Servant Leadership

In 1970, Robert K. Greenleaf presented the idea of servant leadership in his essay "The Servant as Leader". This approach suggests that successful leaders are individuals who focus on the well-being of others, foster trust, understanding, and encourage personal growth. As per Greenleaf, servant leaders not only offer guidance, but also concentrate on supporting, empowering, and fostering a workplace atmosphere that promotes the growth and welfare of employees, ultimately boosting employee involvement (Rahayani, 2016; Yang, 2023). Servant leadership focuses on developing positive relationships between leaders and employees. Leaders who apply these principles strive to understand and meet the needs of employees, which in turn creates a higher sense of mutual trust and commitment. This is in line with research showing that servant leadership can increase employee job satisfaction and engagement (Alasadi et al., 2019; Joseph & Winston, 2005). In an organizational context, the implementation of servant leadership can result in a more inclusive and collaborative work culture, where employees feel valued and motivated to contribute optimally (Liden et al., 2008), (Richardson, 2023). In the Makassar City Tourism Office, the implementation of servant leadership can be key to increasing employee engagement, given the importance of their role in providing public services and promoting tourist destinations. Leaders can boost overall organizational performance by establishing a positive and empowering workplace that encourages employees to take ownership of their tasks and obligations (Hadley, 2024; Gupta & Nambudiri, 2021).

2.2. Compensation

In the context of human resource management, compensation is one of the important elements that play a role in increasing employee engagement. According to Nawawi (2018), compensation is a way for organizations to show gratitude to their employees for their efforts in reaching company objectives. There are two main components to this concept, which are financial and non-financial rewards. Financial compensation comprises of wages, rewards, and perks, whereas non-financial compensation encompasses acknowledgment, perks, and amenities given to staff members.

Adequate and fair compensation is believed to increase motivation, job satisfaction, and ultimately employee engagement. Studies indicate that employees are more motivated to work and give their best for the organization when they believe that their compensation aligns with their efforts and expectations. This is in line with the findings by Saks (2006), which confirms that fair compensation is positively related to the level of employee engagement. Furthermore, good compensation can also create a sense of justice in the work environment. When employees feel appreciated through the compensation they receive, employees are more likely to have a higher commitment to the organization and actively participate in achieving organizational goals.

2.3. Employee engagement

Employee engagement is often defined based on the theory of Kahn (1990), which describes employee engagement as the degree to which individuals bring their physical, cognitive, and emotional energy to work. This theory emphasizes the importance of a supportive work environment, inspiring leadership, and adequate rewards to create high engagement. Kahn argues that employee engagement is influenced not only by individual factors, but also by the social context and work environment around them (Rahman & Muktadir, 2021). Research shows that a positive work environment and support from leaders

can increase employee engagement. For example, Manjaree and Perera (2021) found that good leadership contributed to higher levels of employee engagement, especially in challenging situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Aljandali, 2016). In addition, Luthfiana and Yuhertiana (2021) emphasized that employee engagement includes physical and mental connections to work, which contribute to better motivation and performance (Al-Azab & Al-Romeedy, 2023). Firdinata & Hendriyani (2021) also highlighted the importance of employee engagement as a way to connect themselves to the organization's vision and mission, indicating that engagement is not just about working hard, but also about putting themselves emotionally into their work. To achieve high employee engagement, organizations need to create a supportive environment, provide inspiring leadership, and offer adequate rewards.

2.4. Social Relations Theory in Organizations

The theory of social relations in organizations emphasizes the importance of interactions between leaders and employees in creating a harmonious work environment. Servant leadership, which prioritizes the needs of employees, can improve interpersonal relationships by building trust and mutual respect. Leaders who practice servant leadership not only provide direction, but also listen and support employees in achieving their goals. This creates a stronger bond between leaders and employees, which in turn increases employee engagement and motivation to contribute optimally to the organization (Mercurio, 2015).

However, equitable remuneration also serves as a crucial factor in enhancing employees' perception of fairness and gratitude. By ensuring that employees are adequately rewarded for their efforts, it can lead to higher levels of job satisfaction and loyalty to the company. Research shows that fairness in compensation is positively related to employee engagement levels, where employees who feel valued tend to be more engaged and committed to their work (Ploscaru et al., 2023). A positive work environment is established when servant leadership and fair compensation are combined, resulting in employees feeling appreciated and encouraged. This leads to better interpersonal connections and fosters a culture of inclusivity and collaboration within the organization. In the context of the Makassar City Tourism Office, the implementation of these two elements can be an important strategy to increase employee engagement, which is essential in providing quality public services and promoting tourist destinations effectively (Wang, 2022).

3. Methods

This research was conducted at the Makassar City Tourism Office with a quantitative approach, which is a method commonly used in social research to collect numerical data that can be analyzed statistically. Data were collected through questionnaires, observations, and interviews, which are effective data collection techniques in understanding social phenomena and community behavior (Rahman & Muktadir, 2021).

The research sample consisted of 50 respondents taken using the Slovin formula with a 10% error rate, which is a valid method for determining sample size in quantitative research (Aljandali, 2016). Primary data includes the variables Servant Leadership, Compensation, and Employee Engagement, while secondary data includes organizational information relevant to the analysis (Al-Azab & Al-Romeedy, 2023).

Data collection was carried out using a four-level Likert scale questionnaire (1-4), which is a measuring tool often used in social research to measure respondents' attitudes and perceptions. Validity and reliability tests were carried out to ensure that the research instrument was adequate, with testing using SPSS and regression analysis. Normality test, heteroscedasticity, and path analysis were used to measure the direct and indirect

relationships between independent and dependent variables, which are important to understand the dynamics between variables in the context of this study (Al-Azab & Al-Romeedy, 2023). The theory underwent testing through the t-test and F-test, both conducted at a significance level of 0.05. The t-test is utilized to establish if there is a notable distinction between two sets, whereas the F-test is employed to evaluate variations between two or more sets. This method is important to ensure that the research results are reliable and valid, and contribute to the understanding of the influence of servant leadership and other factors on employee engagement at the Makassar City Tourism Office.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Research Results

The findings from this research suggest that both servant leadership and compensation play a crucial role in shaping the level of employee engagement within the Makassar City Tourism Office. Based on the reliability analysis, variable X1 (Servant Leadership) has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.985, variable X2 (Compensation) of 0.981, and variable Y (Employee Engagement) of 0.972. All Cronbach's Alpha values are greater than 0.60, indicating that each statement item in the three variables is feasible and reliable for use in the study. Testing of the analysis requirements and basic classical assumptions of regression has also been carried out. The study findings indicate that the factors examined in this research meet the qualifications of the required classical requirements and assumptions, such as normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity. Therefore, the study can be continued with the significance analysis and interpretation of the multiple linear regression model.

Table 1. Multiple Linear Regression Test Result

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.441	.951		.464	.645
	Servant Leadership	.396	.110	.664	3.613	.001
	Compensation	.228	.132	.317	1.725	.091

Based on the table above, the regression equation is obtained as follows:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e_i$$

$$Y = 0,441 + 0,396 X_1 + 0,228 X_2 + e$$

A study was carried out using multiple linear regression analysis to investigate how servant leadership and compensation impact employee engagement, both individually and together. The value of the servant leadership (X1) and compensation (X2) variables is assumed to remain constant or equal to zero, so the value of the employee engagement (Y) variable is 0.441. This indicates that there is a fundamental impact on how engaged employees are that doesn't rely on factors like servant leadership or compensation.

Furthermore, the servant leadership (X1) variable has a positive effect on employee engagement (Y) with a coefficient of 0.396. If the servant leadership variable increases by 1 unit, then employee engagement will also increase by 0.396 units, as long as the other variables remain the same. This interpretation emphasizes the importance of implementing servant leadership to increase employee engagement in the organization. The compensation

variable (X2) has a positive effect on employee engagement (Y) with a regression coefficient of 0.228, meaning that every increase in the compensation variable by 1 unit will cause an increase in employee engagement by 0.228, provided that the other variables remain constant. This interpretation suggests that better compensation will contribute positively to employee engagement, increasing their motivation and commitment to the organization. If there is a statement that employee engagement actually decreases, it needs to be reviewed because it is not in accordance with the direction of the positive relationship indicated by the regression coefficient. Based on these data, the variables of servant leadership and compensation partially influence employee engagement, with this the first and second hypotheses proposed can be accepted.

The t-test is employed to assess if the independent variable has a partial impact on the dependent variable. If the t-value is greater than the critical value from the table, then the influence between the independent and dependent variables is considered significant. The outcomes of the t-test are outlined below:

Table 2. Partial Test (t) Result

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.441	.951		.464	.645
	Servant Leadership	.396	.110	.664	3.613	.001
	Compensation	.228	.132	.317	1.725	.091

The t-test findings demonstrate that the factor of servant leadership has a strong, positive impact on the level of employee involvement. This is apparent from the t value of 3.613 being higher than the critical t value of 1.677, and a significance level of 0.001 which is below the threshold of 0.05. This finding indicates that leadership that prioritizes service can significantly increase employee engagement in the workplace. Meanwhile, the compensation variable (X2) also has a significant influence on employee engagement, although its impact is relatively smaller than servant leadership. The t value of 1.725 only slightly exceeds the t table of 1.677, with a significance value of 0.091. Overall, each one-unit increase in the servant leadership variable can increase the employee engagement value by 66.4%. These results emphasize the importance of a combination of servant leadership and appropriate compensation policies to create a work environment that encourages optimal employee engagement.

The simultaneous F test is utilized to assess the combined impact of multiple independent variables on a single dependent variable. When the F value surpasses the F table value, it indicates that the independent variables collectively exert a substantial influence on the dependent variable. The findings of the F test yield the following results:

Table 3. Simultaneous F Test Result

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1917.124	2	958.562	503.629	.000 ^a
Residual	89.456	47	1.903		
Total	2006.580	49			

The findings from the F test indicate that the obtained F value exceeds the critical F value at a significance level of 5%. The significant F value of 0.000 suggests that both servant

leadership (X1) and compensation (X2) have a substantial impact on employee engagement (Y). As a result, the third hypothesis put forward in this research is supported. In addition, the adjusted R square value of 0.954 indicates that the variables of servant leadership and compensation together are able to explain 95% of the variation that occurs in employee engagement, while the remaining 5% is explained by other factors not examined in this study. This finding shows that the combination of servant leadership and appropriate compensation policies plays a very important role in increasing employee engagement in the organization.

4.2. Discussion

Servant leadership's impact on employee engagement demonstrates that prioritizing service in leadership plays a crucial role in boosting employee involvement. According to Trompenaars & Voerman (2010), servant leadership is a combination of the ability to serve and lead harmoniously, where these two aspects strengthen each other to create a positive impact in the work environment. Leaders with this approach prioritize the well-being and development of individuals within the team, thereby creating a higher sense of involvement and loyalty in employees (Omanwar, 2021; Özyılmaz & Cicek, 2015).

The study findings confirm the hypothesis H1 that asserts servant leadership has a direct impact on employee engagement. Analysis indicates that servant leadership has a strong and positive correlation with employee engagement when evaluated separately. In other words, the stronger the character of servant leadership that a leader has, the greater the impact on increasing employee engagement in the organization (Miao et al., 2014). This study shows that servant leadership contributes to organizational commitment, which in turn increases employee engagement.

This study is in line with the findings of Priyono et al. (2019) and Alasadi et al. (2019) which confirms that servant leadership has a clear impact on employee engagement. Those who practice this type of leadership are known to prioritize the needs of their employees, encourage their development, and cultivate a workplace culture that recognizes the unique strengths of each individual. By adopting this leadership style, organizations can foster a greater sense of belonging, dedication, and drive among employees, leading to increased emotional, mental, and physical investment in their tasks (Labuan, 2024). Servant leadership is not only a leadership style, but also an effective managerial strategy to create more harmonious and productive working relationships. In the context of an organization such as the Makassar City Tourism Office, the application of this leadership style can be one of the keys to achieving organizational goals by optimally involving employees.

The influence of compensation on employee engagement highlights the importance of providing fair and appropriate rewards to employees as one of the main factors in increasing their engagement in the workplace. According to Nawawi (2018), compensation in the context of an organization is a form of appreciation given to workers for their services and contributions in achieving organizational goals (Anitha, 2014). Compensation includes financial aspects such as salary, bonuses, incentives, as well as non-financial benefits such as allowances, recognition, and work facilities (Setiawan, 2023).

The study findings confirm the validity of hypothesis H2, which suggests that employee engagement is impacted by compensation. The research indicates that compensation plays a crucial role in boosting employee engagement in a positive manner. Essentially, when companies align compensation with employee expectations and performance, it leads to a greater sense of recognition, drive, and commitment. These results are in line with earlier research (Citta et al., 2023; Handoko et al., 2022) which shows that compensation and work environment have a significant influence on employee performance, with work motivation as

an intervening variable, indicating that good compensation can increase employee motivation and engagement.

Compensation serves not just as a reward, but also fosters a perception of justice within the workplace. When workers believe that their pay reflects their hard work and commitment, they are more likely to feel valued and develop a deep emotional connection with the company. This ultimately increases commitment, job satisfaction, and active participation in achieving organizational goals. Research by Khoiriah & Utami (2019) also supports that good compensation can increase employee motivation and engagement (Albrecht et al., 2015).

Furthermore, this study shows that every increase in compensation has a direct impact on increasing employee engagement. In other words, when organizations invest in competitive and fair compensation policies, they are indirectly investing in the performance and productivity of their employees. In the context of the Makassar City Tourism Office, providing adequate compensation can be an important strategy to create a more productive work environment and support the success of tourism programs.

The influence of servant leadership (X_1) and compensation (X_2) on employee engagement (Y) shows that both variables have a significant contribution to increasing employee engagement in the workplace. (Sihombing et al., 2018), employee engagement is the level of commitment and involvement of employees towards the organization where they work. The hypothesis proposed is that servant leadership and compensation have a simultaneous effect on employee engagement. The results of the analysis show a F value of 503.692, which is compared to the F table value of 3.19 at a significance level of 0.05 (5%). Thus, it can be concluded that the F value $> F$ table ($503.692 > 3.19$) with an F significance of $0.000 < 0.05$, which means that the variables servant leadership (X_1) and compensation (X_2) together have a significant effect on employee engagement (Y) (Saad et al., 2021).

Research by Rachman et al. (2021) supports this finding, showing that leaders who use a servant leadership style are expected to be trustworthy, have the ability to empower subordinates, and have a vision and mission that are in line with the company's goals. This is in line with research by Widyastuti (2022), which found that servant leadership has a positive effect on employee performance, which in turn can increase employee engagement,

At the Makassar City Tourism Office, the implementation of servant leadership and fair compensation can significantly affect employee engagement. Firmansyah (2024) discovered that good compensation that is in accordance with employee expectations contributes to increasing their involvement in work. Thus, the combination of effective servant leadership and an adequate compensation system can create a more productive work environment and support the success of tourism programs in each region.

5. Conclusion

The main objective of this research is to examine how servant leadership and compensation impact the level of employee engagement within the Makassar City Tourism Office. Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that servant leadership has a significant and positive influence on employee engagement. A leadership style that prioritizes service to subordinates can enhance individual employee engagement. The better the implementation of servant leadership, the higher the level of employee engagement in their work. Compensation also has a significant influence on employee engagement. Properly provided compensation, both in financial and non-financial forms, can encourage employees to be more committed and feel appreciated within the organization. Adequate compensation motivates employees to give their best contributions. Simultaneously, servant leadership and

compensation have a significant influence on employee engagement. The combination of these factors creates a work environment that supports overall employee engagement. These findings indicate that both servant leadership and compensation play an essential role in building a positive and productive work culture. Thus, this study provides insight that implementing servant leadership and good compensation policies can be effective strategies to increase employee engagement at the Makassar City Tourism Office.

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