

Leadership and Organizational Culture on Employee Engagement

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Abstract

An organization faces the challenge of creating engaged employees. Several factors that can foster employee engagement are leadership and work culture. At the Indonesian Music Museum, employee engagement needs to be explored, given that it is a non-profit organization whose operational costs and funding are self-funded. This study employed qualitative methods, with the head and staff of the Indonesian Music Museum as the research subjects. Data collection techniques included participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The results provide an overview of the leadership style and organizational culture that influence employee engagement at the Indonesian Music Museum. The leadership style adopted by the head of the Indonesian Music Museum is democratic. This study explains that the two concepts of leadership and organizational culture complement each other. Effective leaders can shape and maintain a positive work culture, while a positive culture strengthens leadership effectiveness. The synergy between the two creates a work environment where employees feel motivated, valued, and have a sense of ownership, which is the core of employee engagement.

Keywords: human resource, leadership, organizational culture, employee engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Human resources (HR) within an organization play a crucial role in ensuring the smooth running of organizational activities. HR is a valuable asset and the primary driver in achieving organizational goals. Human resources are currently viewed as a highly strategic and valuable human capital (Rasul, 2020). One aspect of HR management is the

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extent to which employees are involved in planning, decision-making, and the implementation of organizational activities. Organizations must be more open in viewing HR, recognizing that HR is not merely a tool for achieving organizational goals. Rather, it is a strategic asset that requires consistent attention.

Well-managed HR is a potential asset that can provide a competitive advantage for an organization (Santosa, 2012). Organizations must find unique ways to attract, retain, and motivate their employees, a challenge (Saks, 2006). The ultimate goal in HR management is to have engaged employees. Engaged employees provide positive feedback, are willing to work as members, and make a significant effort to contribute to the achievement of organizational goals (Budriene & Diskiene, 2020). This type of human resource has a high commitment to the organization, enjoys and takes pride in their work (Dandona, 2016).

One factor that can create employee engagement is leadership. Several leadership styles can be applied by a leader when leading an organization. Generally, leadership styles include authoritarian, democratic, and transformational leadership (Hasibuan, 2017). Leadership styles are dynamic, tailored to the members they lead (Pratiwi & Rizky, 2024). Good leaders, able to apply a leadership style appropriate to the situation and conditions of the organization, can motivate employees to perform better and achieve organizational goals.

In addition to leadership, organizational culture also impacts employee engagement. Four factors influence employee engagement: the work itself and opportunities for development, trust in leadership, recognition and rewards, and organizational culture (Truss et al., 2013). Organizational culture, as a factor influencing employee engagement, refers to the underlying values, beliefs, and principles that serve as the foundation for an organization's management system, as well as a set of management practices and behaviors. Organizational culture is a complex and intense aspect of an organization, encompassing values, norms, rites, and rituals that are mutually agreed upon and implemented (Akbar & Budiani, 2021).

Based on the above description, employee engagement can be influenced by leadership and organizational culture. Many previous researchers have found this relationship. Therefore, it is worth considering conducting similar research with a different timeframe and objectives. Therefore, this study addresses this gap and provides a basis for further research.

The Indonesian Music Museum is a non-profit organization, with its operational costs and funding being self-funded. Therefore, to achieve engaged employees, further



research is needed, considering that a career at the Indonesian Music Museum is certainly not just about earning a salary. The Indonesian Music Museum's employees are those who love music and care about its preservation. Therefore, several factors influence the engagement of Indonesian Music Museum employees.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership

Leadership is a crucial element in the sustainability and progress of an organization. The issue of leadership has been around since the beginning of human history, since humans began to recognize the importance of living in groups to achieve common goals (Fitriani, 2015). Leadership itself is defined as a complex process in which a leader influences subordinates in carrying out tasks to achieve the organization's vision, mission, and goals, thereby leading the organization to greater progress and unity (Liden, Wang, & Wang, 2025). A leader is someone who attains leadership status within a group or organization through election, heredity, or other means, and possesses the ability to influence, motivate, and mobilize individuals or groups to achieve institutional or organizational goals. The way a leader influences subordinates reflects their leadership style, which ultimately can influence the work climate or culture of an organization.

Over time, leadership theory has developed into three main approaches: trait theory, behavioral theory, and environmental theory (Syahril, 2019). Trait theory, also known as genetic theory, holds that leaders are born, not made. Behavioral theory emphasizes that leadership can be learned through self-development through experience and training, while environmental theory emphasizes that the emergence of leaders is a product of time, place, and circumstances. These three theories form the basis for understanding the dynamics of leadership in organizations, or what can be called grand theory.

Organizational Culture

The progress of an organization is inseparable from the characteristics developed since its inception. Both small and large organizations possess unique characteristics that distinguish them from other organizations. Typically, organizational characteristics are characterized by the way individuals within the organization think, interact, and act. These characteristics are known as organizational culture.

Organizational culture is a set of assumptions or belief systems, values, and norms developed within an organization that serve as behavioral guidelines for its members to



address external and internal adaptation issues (Mangkunegara, 2009). Organizational culture does not emerge suddenly; rather, it involves a long process. There are three stages in the formation of organizational culture (Schein, 2010): (1) the formation stage, which begins when the founders of the organization establish the vision, values, and beliefs that will lead to the organization's success. (2) the development stage, where the values from the formation stage begin to be implemented by organizational members. (3) the consolidation stage, where the implemented values become deeply rooted and have proven effective over the long term, and are passed on to new members.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement comes from the words "employee" and "engagement." "Employee" means "employee" in Indonesian, while "engagement" means "involvement." Engagement is not burnout, but rather meaningful, motivated, and enthusiastic work (Hasan, Nikmah, & Wahyu, 2022). Employee engagement is an individual's state of being able to express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally while carrying out their work role (Khan, 1990). Employee engagement is an employee's emotional commitment to the company and its vision (Macey & Schneider, 2008). This emotional commitment means that an employee cares about their work at the company they work for and works not just for a paycheck or promotion, but for the company's vision. Employee engagement goes beyond job satisfaction to reflect overall employee involvement in the company's or organization's activities. High levels of engagement foster an employee's emotional attachment to the company or organization, thereby increasing voluntary contributions (Saks, 2006).

Seven main determinants of employee engagement that influence employee performance, namely leadership, relationships with teams and co-workers, work environment, training and career development, compensation, organizational policies, and workplace well-being (Anitha, 2014). It is stated that there are three factors that influence employee engagement, including: psychological meaningfulness related to the individual's value attached to work goals compared to his own personal goals, psychological safety, defined as the experience of being able to act in a reasonable manner and being able to use and optimize all skills and knowledge in a role without having to fear ridicule or experiencing negative consequences, and psychological availability as the ability to engage as a result of having cognitive, emotional and physical resources (Khan, 1990)



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Indonesian Music Museum is the only music museum in Indonesia, located in Malang, East Java. It houses thousands of Indonesian and international songs in cassette and vinyl collections. As a self-supporting organization, staff engagement needs to be examined, as salaries and other benefits are relatively low. Therefore, it is important to consider organizational culture and leadership models. The following research findings are presented.

Leadership and Employee Engagement

Based on observations and interviews, the Head of the Indonesian Music Museum employs a democratic leadership style. The museum director's displays align with the characteristics of a democratic leadership style proposed by Schein (2010).

1. Leaders are willing to delegate some authority to staff. For example, when receiving a collection donation, the museum director will assign a curator to assess it. The director trusts the curator's assessment.
2. Leaders are willing to collaborate with staff to complete tasks. For example, they are willing to assist the administration in completing activity reports, shop for events with administrators, and collaborate on providing collections for exhibitions.
3. Leaders are observant, sensitive, and responsive to the needs and desires of their staff. Whenever they delegate work, they always assign it to a member of staff, and it is completed successfully because the staff understands the job and enjoys it.

Work activities at the Indonesian Music Museum are designed to ensure that initiative does not have to come from the leader. Everyone is free to express their ideas and initiatives, and they will be considered when they align with the needs of the work. Effective two-way communication, mutual respect, and disagreements are resolved through consensus. Communication flows not solely from the leader, but also from open communication with fellow staff. Staff are accustomed to voicing their opinions, and leaders are willing to listen. Leaders grant limited latitude or freedom to all staff, as long as the information conveyed is accountable. When delegating a task, leaders simultaneously trust that those entrusted with responsibility are capable and able to complete the task well.

None of the Indonesian Music Museum staff feel overburdened. Leaders are observant and sensitive to the abilities and competencies of each staff member. They are willing to work collaboratively to complete tasks. They emphasize equality, with each staff member having equal rights based on their competencies (Karwati & Priansa, 2013).

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Democratic leadership in an organization requires a leader to treat subordinates like friends or colleagues, ensuring that they work without awkwardness and achieving organizational goals together (Zubaida, Maruf, & Lazuardi, 2024). The Indonesian Music Museum leader is accustomed to engaging with staff in completing tasks. For example, when preparing an exhibition, they work with staff to choose the theme, select the exhibits, organize the exhibition space, and tidy up after the event is over. This isn't a lack of trust in staff, but rather a focus on establishing productive and effective two-way communication, providing space for staff to express their opinions and ideas, ensuring that initiative doesn't come solely from the leader. Staff should feel comfortable in their work, given the limited rewards they receive. Therefore, it must be compensated with other forms of appreciation, such as trusting staff to complete their work, providing opportunities for staff to express themselves in their work, and other things that can impact staff psychologically to create a pleasant and comfortable work atmosphere.

Leaders are not simply bosses; they serve, understanding the needs and desires of their subordinates (Liden, Wang, & Wang, 2025). A comfortable psychological environment at work, along with good communication with the leader, is a key determinant of whether subordinates engage or disengage (Khan, 1990). Leaders will create employee engagement when they are able to motivate and enable subordinates to contribute to achieving the organization's collective goals (Liden, Wang, & Wang, 2025). Leaders who are able to create employee engagement are proven to have low turnover rates. Since 2015, only two staff members have resigned for clear reasons, meaning they were not uncomfortable or dissatisfied with their work at the Indonesian Music Museum.

Organizational Culture and Employee Engagement

Interview data from staff at the Indonesian Music Museum (Museum Musik Indonesia) indicates an organizational culture that drives employee performance. While not comprehensive, it does identify characteristics of an organization, such as a commitment to purpose, where staff work based on their passion and aim to protect cultural heritage, particularly in the field of music. The staff's statements in the interview data align with the characteristics of organizational culture according to Hasan (2022), explaining the organizational culture and types of employee engagement according to Khan (1990):

- a. Team Orientation. In museums, one of the most important cultural values is collaboration. This collaborative culture is evident in the fact that all employees, from collections staff to exhibition guides, work together to achieve common goals, rather than engaging in unhealthy competition. For example, all employees are assigned their

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own tasks evenly, enabling them to collaborate across departments to achieve organizational goals (the Indonesian Music Museum). This strong collaboration fosters a positive work environment for staff. Furthermore, work at the Indonesian Music Museum tends to be slow-paced, eliminating competition with other staff.

- b. Results Orientation. Tasks assigned to each staff member are assigned deadlines. This ensures that each staff member has a clear vision of completing their assigned tasks and delivering results.
- c. Understanding of Organizational Goals. Museums are synonymous with a culture of "preserving heritage for future generations." Consistent with this statement, the staff of the Indonesian Music Museum collectively expressed a sense of belonging to the museum. Most of the staff at the Indonesian Music Museum are artists, so they naturally enjoy their work and want to play a role in preserving cultural heritage. Furthermore, being a member of staff at the Indonesian Music Museum represents one's identity.
- d. Employee Loyalty. Having a commitment to collection preservation, as staff largely manage the song collection, which constitutes cultural heritage. This heritage must be properly archived to become a national treasure. Therefore, it can be concluded that the staff have a work culture that prioritizes preservation, namely maintaining and caring for collections, artifacts, and works of art to maintain their authenticity.
- e. Work Ethic. Staff have a shared agreement to treat collections as valuable works that must be properly managed. Staff at the Indonesian Music Museum have backgrounds in the arts and hobbies, so they understand how to appreciate collections that are works of art from others and hold high cultural value.
- f. Attention to Detail. In carrying out their duties, staff always pay attention to detail, ensuring that each task is carried out carefully and accurately. It has been explained that staff at the Indonesian Music Museum have backgrounds in the arts and are also art enthusiasts. Therefore, when managing the museum's collections, they utilize their full cognitive abilities. They understand the importance of the collections and manage them with dedication and care. Furthermore, the staff's experience in the arts makes the work easy and professional.
- g. People-Oriented. Staff receive benefits at work, such as a schedule of working hours tailored to their physical needs, including breaks, drinking water, a prayer area, and restrooms. However, safety and health are not provided, as the Indonesian Music Museum still lacks a permanent and modest salary. Furthermore, there is a lack of recognition for staff, as well as career development and training. They stated that all



work is completed by those assigned within a reasonable timeframe and with reasonable results. Regarding career development and training, staff typically receive these internally or through direct discussions with artists and collectors visiting the museum.

- h. Regarding innovation and risk-taking, staff stated that there is a lack of innovation at the Indonesian Music Museum. This was conveyed by the fact that collection management is still manual. There has been no innovation, while the number of museum collections continues to grow, both from individuals and organizations. Therefore, the courage to take risks has not been demonstrated, due to the lack of innovation.

From the explanation of the characteristics of organizational culture and types of employee engagement outlined above, it can be seen that the implemented organizational culture aligns with mutually agreed-upon values and norms for effective implementation, such as team orientation, results-oriented, employee loyalty, and others. The implemented organizational culture has impacted the Indonesian Music Museum staff, enabling them to remain engaged and contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage, particularly in the field of music. Although welfare, recognition, career development, and training are not provided, staff loyalty, as a form of belonging, remains.

Essentially, an existing organizational culture within an organization will impact employee performance improvement. This improvement is driven by various aspects of the organizational culture, such as recognition for high-achieving employees and social and health welfare. Furthermore, training and self-development are also necessary for staff to acquire the latest knowledge on museum management that is relevant to current developments.

The Indonesian Music Museum has fulfilled some aspects of organizational culture related to employee engagement. Interviews revealed that staff feel emotionally and intellectually connected to their work, team, and the organization where they work. However, due to several unmet aspects, staff lack enthusiasm and motivation for their work. For example, there's a lack of appreciation for staff. Therefore, this shortcoming can be used as a basis for evaluation to create an organizational culture that supports employee engagement and thus improves staff performance for the museum.

CONCLUSION

Human Resources (HR) within an organization are crucial for carrying out organizational activities and achieving goals. Organizational attention to HR is necessary

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to transform employees into potential assets. Employees who receive attention from the organization are likely to provide positive feedback and exert significant effort in contributing to the achievement of organizational goals. Several factors that can create engaged employees are leadership and organizational culture.

At the Indonesian Music Museum, a non-profit organization, it is important to ensure that employees are engaged and loyal to the organization. Research indicates that the leadership style employed at the Indonesian Music Museum is democratic. This is characterized by decentralized decision-making, which involves employees in decision-making. Furthermore, there is good two-way communication, and museum staff do not feel tightly controlled in their work. However, there are still several shortcomings in the leadership factor, such as the lack of long-term development or sustainability plans by the leadership, related to staff careers and organizational innovation.

Regarding work culture, the Indonesian Music Museum has mutually agreed-upon values and norms. Employees work as a hobby, adhere to the principle of preserving the nation's memory, and are committed to collection management. However, the work culture still faces several weaknesses in innovation, ensuring stability and security, rewards, collaboration, and slow competition. Furthermore, at the Indonesian Music Museum, staff engagement is driven by leadership, organizational culture, and a deep integration of the music world. Staff feel a sense of meaning in their work (psychological meaningfulness), feel safe expressing or optimizing their skills and knowledge (psychological safety), and have the ability to engage cognitively, emotionally, and physically (psychological availability).

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