The Influence of Organizational Justice, Grit and Leader-Member Exchange on Employee Engagement

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this paper is to determine the influence of organizational justice, grit, and leader-member exchange on employee engagement. This research is quantitative research using survey questionnaire prepared on a five-point Likert scale. Proportionate stratified random sampling was used to select the state civil servants from the head office of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (MOECRT) that was located in Senayan, Jakarta. A total of 340 questionnaires were distributed and 243 valid responses collected. Data were analyzed using the structural equation modelling with the help of SmartPLS 4 software. It was found that organizational justice, grit, and leader-member exchange had a positive and significant impact on employee engagement. MOECRT shall focus on the practice of organizational justice in building high quality leader-member exchange and developing grit trait within the employee as they have positive impact on employee engagement.

Keywords: Organizational Justice, Grit, Leader-Member Exchange, Employee Engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement needs to get attention from academic researcher and practitioner because it can give competitive advantage to organization ((Deepa, 2020). Data published by Ministry of State Civil Servant and Bureaucratic Reform shows that Indonesia's State Civil Servant Employee Engagement rate is 14,05% in 2022 (out of 100). This number needs to get a lot of attention and improvements from Indonesia's government on how to increase State Civil Servant Indonesia's Employee Engagement. This survey results also in line with data released by Gallup (2023) summarizing a decrease in global' s employee engagement since pandemic in 2020.

Employee engagement have positive influence to organization's performance (Barrick et al., 2013) and also employee's performance (Vogel et al., 2015). Engaged employees found more concern with organization's issue in regard with how to increase performance, how to go extra mile, trust the organization dan appreciate other employees that all these traits will improve organization's overall performance. It is important for Indonesia's government to increase the civil servant's engagement seeing to data published by Ministry of State Civil Servant and Bureaucratic Reform that says the majority of civil servant in Indonesia wants to have career as a civil servant until they are retired.

A new concept on positive behavior among employee and the relation with performance in education sector (Karlen et al., 2019,Tang et al., 2019), psychology ((Luthans et al., 2018; Schimschal & Lomas, 2018) and business (Dugan et al., 2019; Jordan et al., 2019) suggesting a new concept of Grit. Von Culin et al. (2014)stated that the concept of grit describes how an individual makes efforts and hard work to have an attachment to his long-term desires and also sees this as a meaningful thing to achieve. The concept of Grit is similar to an attitude of conscientiousness or courage that helps an individual overcome their fears in facing a given task (Lucas et al., 2015) and commit to consistently pursuing their long-term goals (Meriac et al., 2015). Employees who have a higher level of grit also show a persistent attitude when completing work, when faced with failure they do not give up easily and use it as a lesson to be more successful in the future (Suzuki et al., 2015).

While concentrating on grit, organization also needs to considerate aspects of organizational justice and their impact towards organization. The concept of organizational justice generally focuses on how employees interpret (determine) fairness regarding the treatment they receive at work and this determination will also influence other variables in relation to work (Moorman, 1991). Furthermore, according to (Hassan & Noor, 2013), the construct of organizational justice has been used widely with the aim of predicting employee behavior and habits in organizations such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intentions. However, empirically, there is still relatively little research that focuses on analyzing the relationship between organizational justice and its dimensions on employee work engagement(Deepa, 2020; Hassan et al., 2010). For this reason, in this research an analysis will be carried out of the relationship between these two variables and how they are managed in the public sector.

In research conducted by (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) on Job Demands Resources (JDR), it was hypothesized that job demands often cause emotional exhaustion and health problems, while job resources facilitate high work engagement to withstand the impact of job demands on emotional experiences (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Bakker & Demerouti (2007) said that job demands (Job Demand) include workload, time pressure, unfavorable physical environment, and difficult interactions with customers and job resources (Job Resources) include performance feedback, rewards, job control, and social support from colleagues and leaders. Therefore, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) has a positive relationship with work engagement, so the higher the quality of LMX, the higher the employee engagement will be (Els et al., 2016).

Analysis on numerous literatures collected using Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and other reliable sources confirm that no study has been conducted in examining 4 (four) variables, namely Employee Engagement, Organizational Justice, Grit, and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX). Based on this phenomenon, author sees a gap for conducting research about employee engagement and also to give a deeper apprehension related to those variables.

The research questions in this study are:

H1: Organizational Justice has positive effect on employee engagement
H2: Grit has positive effect on employee engagement
H3: Leader-Member Exchange has positive effect on employee engagement
H4: Organizational Justice has positive effect on Leader-Member Exchange
H5: Grit has positive effect on Leader-Member Exchange

METHOD

This research will be carried out based on analysis in a quantitative approach, where according to (Cresswell & Cresswell J. D., 2009) quantitative research is research that attempts to explain the phenomenon of a problem using a numerical data approach that is studied using statistical methods. This research will collect primary data by observing the work unit environment and using questionnaires that was delivered to selected respondents (Yusriani, et al.,2024). In collecting secondary data, public data will be used and obtained through search pages, books, journals, previous research results and other secondary data sources that relevant with this research.

Target research population is to all State Civil Apparatus (Aparatur Sipil Negara/ASN) who serve the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology and are based at the Senayan head office, DKI Jakarta. Sampling method uses a proportional stratified random sampling technique. The margin of error that will be used in this research is 5% and the confidence level is 90%, thus determining the sample size using the Slovin formula for a population of 4,393 employees is 257 respondents. The operationalization of variables in this research is explained in detail in the following table:

Tabel 1. Operationalization of Research Variables

Variable	Code	Indicator	Reference
Organizational Justice	PJ	Procedural Justice	20-item Organizational Scale by Colquitt et al (2001)
	DJ	Distributive Justice	
	IJ	Interactional Justice	
Grit	PE	Perseverance of Effort	8-item Grit Scale by Duckworth & Quinn (2009)
	CI	Consistency of Interest	
Leader Member Exchange	LMX	LMX *Relationship*	LMX-7 Scale by Scandura & Graen (1984)
Employee Engagement	V	Vigour	UWES-9 by Schaufeli et al (2006)
	D	Dedication	
	AB	Absorption	

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data for this research was collected using online form of questionnaire and sent to prospective respondents via Whatsapp media. Response rate of this research is 72% with 243 respondents that filled out valid data. The characteristics of respondents in this research described in Table 2.

Tabel 2. Profile of Respondents

Categories	Details	Amount	Percentage(%)
Gender	Men	111	46
	Women	132	54
Education Level	Junior High and below	6	2
	D1/D2/D3	15	6
	S1/D4	175	72
	S2	46	19
	S3	1	0
Age	29 years and below	41	17
	30 to 45	158	65
	46 to 60	44	18

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

Instrument Test

Analysis of the measurement model (outer model) in this research aims to ensure that the measurements in research can be said to be appropriate because they are valid and reliable. According to Hair et al. (2019), in the analysis of the measurement model in research there are four factors that are of concern, namely checking factor loading, conducting AVE convergent validity analysis, assessing reliability through internal consistency reliability, and assessing discriminant validity.

Table 3 Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Test

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Results
Employee Engagement	0.522	Valid
Grit	0.523	Valid
Leader Member Exchange	0.587	Valid
Organizational Justice	0.507	Valid

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

The results of testing the AVE value in Table 3 have met the criteria of being higher than 0.5 so it can be concluded that all variables in this research are valid.

Table 4. Cronbach Alpha dan Composite Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	Results
Employee Engagement	0.869	0.876	Reliable
Grit	0.85	0.854	Reliable
Leader Member Exchange	0.882	0.894	Reliable
Organizational Justice	0.935	0.941	Reliable

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

According to Hair et al. (2019), a higher CA & CR value will indicate higher reliability, where a reliability value of 0.60 - 0.70 is in the "acceptable" category, and a value between 0.70 - 0.90 is included in the category satisfactory to good. Based on data from table 4, it can be concluded that the reliability testing values in this research are in good category in the range of 0.85 – 0.94.

Table 5. Fornell-Larcker Test

Variable	Employee Engagement	Grit	LMX	Organizational Justice
Employee Engagement	0.722			
Grit	0.553	0.723		
Leader Member Exchange	0.564	0.501	0.766	
Organizational Justice	0.402	0.243	0.536	0.712

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

Discriminant validity can be evaluated based on Fornell-Larcker criterion, and based resluts from Table 5 can be concluded that the data used in this research is reliable.

Hypothesis test

Hypothesis test of this research is needed to analyze the effect of organizational justice, grit, and leader-member exchange on employee engagement. The results of hypothesis test is as table 6 below.

Table 6 R-square Analysis

Model	R-square	R-square adjusted
Employee Engagement	0.433	0.425
Leader Member Exchange	0.434	0.429

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

Based on the test results, the R-square value for the Employee Engagement variable is 0.433, which means that the factors of organizational justice, grit and leader-member exchange (LMX) can explain 43.3% of employee engagement. Furthermore, the variable leader-member exchange (LMX) has a value of 0.434, which means that the variables organizational justice and grit can explain 43.4% of leader-member exchange (LMX).

Table 7 f-square Analysis

Variable	Employee Engagement	Grit	LMX	Organizational Justice
Employee Engagement				
Grit	0.178		0.258	
Leader Member Exchange	0.088			
Organizational Justice	0.03		0.323	

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

Based on the test results, it can be concluded that grit has the highest impact on employee engagement and organizational justice has the highest impact on leader-member exchange (LMX).

Table 8 Hypothesis Analysis

Hypothesis	Model	Path coefficient	t-values	P-values
H1	OJ -> EE	0.153	2.504	0.012
H2	GRIT -> EE	0.367	6.21	0.000
H3	LMX -> EE	0.297	3.793	0.000
H4	OJ -> LMX	0.441	5.436	0.000
H5	GRIT -> LMX	0.394	4.962	0.000

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

Table 8 results support all hypothesis that was tested in this research to be accepted. It is found that Organizational Justice variable has a significant effect on Employee Engagement because it has a t-statistic value of 2.504 (higher than 1.65) and a p-value of 0.012 (lower than 0.1). The influence of Organizational Justice on Employee Engagement is positive with a path coefficient value of 0.153. Thus, these results support the first hypothesis (H1) which states that Organizational Justice has a positive effect on employee engagement. Grit variable has a significant effect on Employee Engagement because it has a t-statistic value of 6.21 (higher than 1.65) and a p-value of 0.000 (lower than 0.1). The influence of Grit on Employee Engagement is positive with a path coefficient value of 0.367. Thus, these results support the second hypothesis (H2) which states that Grit has a positive effect on employee engagement. Leader-Member Exchange variable has a significant effect on Employee Engagement because it has a t-statistic value of 3.793 (higher than 1.65) and a p-value of 0.000 (lower than 0.1). The influence of Leader-Member Exchange on Employee Engagement is positive with a path coefficient value of 0.297. Thus, these results support the third hypothesis (H3) which states that Leader-Member Exchange has a positive effect on employee engagement.

Organizational Justice variable has a significant effect on Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) because it has a t-statistic value of 5.436 (higher than 1.65) and a p-value of 0.000 (lower than 0.1). The influence of Organizational Justice on Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) is positive with a path coefficient value of 0.441. Thus, these results support the fourth hypothesis (H4) which states

that Organizational Justice has a positive effect on Leader-Member Exchange (LMX). Grit variable has a significant effect on Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) because it has a t-statistic value of 4.962 (higher than 1.65) and a p-value of 0.000 (lower than 0.1). The influence of Grit on Leader-Member Exchange is positive with a path coefficient value of 0.394. Thus, these results support the fifth hypothesis (H5) which states that Grit has a positive effect on Leader-Member Exchange (LMX).

The results of this research indicate that organizational justice identified to have positive and significant impact on employee engagement. According to Cropanzano et al., (2007) organizational justice can be measured through these indicators: (1). Distributive justice: a fair perception formed by employees regarding the rewards or results received by individuals in an organization such as rewards, income and appreciation. (2). Procedural justice: fair perceptions formed by employees regarding the stages used in the organization when making decisions. (3). Interactional justice is measured in two indicators which are interpersonal justice and informational justice. Research by Nurofia (2009), where an employee will become more engaged when they have the perception that they are treated fairly by the organization where they work, get results that are commensurate with the efforts made and the organization is able to build employee trust and productivity.

Distributive justice describes employees' perceptions/views of the fairness of the distribution of benefits within the Ministry in the form of awards, promotions and compensation. Employees hope that there will be a distribution of responsibilities, rights and benefits by considering the employee's skills and contributions. According to Cropanzano et al., (2007), equity theory is a concept where justice does not mean equality, but refers to a comparison of the contribution given and what is obtained (equity). Based on that, employees expect that the organization will distribute responsibilities, rights and benefits in consideration of their skills and contributions to organization.

Procedural justice describes the views/perceptions of employees within the ministry regarding the procedures or methods used in making fair decisions regarding performance appraisals, giving awards, promotions and giving rewards. It is important for organization to make improvements regarding procedures used in organization. Employees expected the procedures used in organization to be free from bias that this will have a positive and significant effect on employee engagement.

Interpersonal justice describes the fair perceptions formed by employees regarding the treatment they receive in accordance with the attention, respect and dignity given by parties in the organization. Informational justice describes the fair perceptions formed by employees based on the information and honesty conveyed to employees. According to Colquitt (2001), an employee or leader is said to act interactionally when he is able to share information appropriately and avoid rude or cruel comments that arise in interpersonal relationships with other employees. Employees or leaders identified as interactionally when they able to share information appropriately and avoid harsh or cruel comments that arise in interpersonal relationships with other employees (Colquitt, 2001).Employees form an opinion that organizational justice is demonstrated when leaders treat

them polite, with dignity, respectful and does not give negative remarks regarding their age, sex, education or work structure.

Duckworth (2016) said that all individuals have the ability to grow their level of grit if they focus on four specific methods. The first stage is to grow and develop interest in certain abilities, and the next stage is to improve these abilities at every available opportunity. The third stage is to continue to remember the biggest goal you want to achieve in life, and the final stage is to adopt a growth mindset. In the context of the organization where they work, employees are often faced with the opportunity to think about and feel the social meaning of the work they do. According to Suzuki et al., (2015) when someone considers the work they do to be important and meaningful, they may feel happier and more engaged in carrying it out. The Grit concept conveys that a person's success is not only determined by the level of IQ or talent, but also how the individual has consistent interest and persistence of effort. Important and meaningful work is one aspect of grit, namely passion, which is described as consistent interest in something and continuous effort (persevere) to achieve the best version of that interest.

Other research related to Grit was conducted by Singh et al., (2016) by analyzing the relationship between 3 variables found that there was a significant positive relationship between meaning at work, work engagement and grit. This research also found that gritty employee will have higher engagement when they are given work that has meaning. Likewise with research conducted by Rusdi et al. (2023) shows that grit positively influences the work engagement of millennial generation employees. Based on the f-square value, the grit variable is the variable that has the highest influence on employee engagement compared to other variables in this research. For this reason, this variable must be the focus in employee management within the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in increasing employee engagement.

The theory proposed by Luethke. T. N. et al. (2020) is that when an employee tries to achieve long-term goals, by going through all the challenges and failures they face, then they need to build and maintain resources related to relationships, emotions, information and motivation (Hobfoll et al., 2018). This power will be available when a quality exchange is formed with the leader. An employee with a high grit value assesses the importance of effective relationships with leaders so that they can convey what their desires/passions are in their lives so that leaders also understand the division of tasks more effectively among their members. Dividing tasks that are interesting to employees will improve the quality of exchanges and increase employee grit because they get meaningful tasks that are in line with their long-term goals (Peterson et al., 2007).

Duckworth (2016) said that individuals who have high grit set challenging long-term goals and persist when facing setbacks or negative feedback. This non-cognitive ability influences a person's ability to set and pursue (long-term) goals and is able to adjust short-term goals and goal achievement strategies when facing difficulties or negative feedback received. The concept presented by Jordan et al. (2019) defines grit as the non-cognitive competency of goal-setting. When employees have long-term goals established by themselves in accordance to their individual interests or passions. Achieving a goal leads to a pleasant state of emotional satisfaction; failure to achieve a goal leads to an unpleasant state of dissatisfaction.

According to Byrne (2022), employee engagement (which is also often referred to as work engagement) is the condition of a person who is invested in work, being authentic at work and providing performance with passion, persistence, enthusiasm and energy. According to Dienesch & Liden (1986), there are three variables that reflect high-quality leader-member exchange and one of them is equal contribution. The contribution in question is the same goal that the leadership and members involved want to achieve. If employees evaluate that they have the same goals in the exchange/relationship formed, then employees with high grit will be more engaged and give extra miles to maintain quality relationships with their leaders. Engagement can also increase because employees/members receive support from leaders so they feel they have the resources needed to complete their tasks. The existence of leader-member exchange (LMX) with the same goals/contributions will encourage leaders and members to work together and help in achieving the common goal. For this reason, the influence of grit on employee engagement will be better when it is mediated by leader-member exchange (LMX).

The Job Demands Resources (JDR) model can also explain the mediating role of leader-member exchange (LMX) on the influence of grit on employee engagement. The JDR (Job Demands-Resources) model is based on the idea that job characteristics are divided into two categories, namely demands and resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job demands (such as high workloads) can lead to negative impacts and decreased health while job resources (such as autonomy and social support) can have a positive impact, motivating processes and encouraging higher performance with work engagement. One form of resource as referred to in the model is supervisory support which is an important aspect of job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). When an employee gets emotional support from his or her leader, such as a leader who understands the needs of the job, the problems they face, and is willing to help the employee in completing the work, then this will be able to increase the employee's engagement in work.

Employee will have increased trust upon their leader when they obtain the perception or experience to participate in a procedure, able to express their opinions, and the procedures used are also applied consistently and free from bias. Higher trust will ultimately improve the quality of the leader's relationships/exchanges with his members, and enable members to shift from the outgroup to ingroup. Research conducted by (Chaurasia & Shukla, 2014) found that quality relationships between leaders and members have a positive effect on employee engagement and performance in various types of work. Quality relationships can be described as relationships built between leaders and work team members in the form of a level of trust, mutual understanding and support. Leaders within the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology are expected to be able to build close relationships through mutual respect, facilitating the development of their members so that in the end it will help the organization achieve its goals (Casimir et al., 2014).

Homans (1961) believes that based on social exchange theory, the relationships that occur in social groups can be explained by the relationships between one another, where when together they interact with each other. For this reason, research results showing that organizational justice has a positive and significant influence on leader-member exchange (LMX) also support this theory. Organizations that succeed in managing justice in the organization effectively will receive various

benefits such as higher engagement, higher quality relationships/exchanges between leaders and members (Leow & Khong, 2009). According to Molm et al. (2000), reciprocal exchange is carried out not by an exchange that is stated explicitly, but is an exchange that occurs based on the attitude/behavior of the opposing party. For this reason, the concept of leader-member exchange, where leaders provide support to their members, polite and respectful treatment of members, will encourage employees to behave positively and reciprocate with higher engagement in work.

The results of this research support the model presented by Saks (2006), where grit is the first aspect related to employee psychological character that is proven to have a positive influence on employee engagement. The next aspect, namely the ability of the organization to create a conducive work environment, can be reflected by the employee's perception of organizational justice which encourages the creation of a positive work environment and employees feel safe/secure with procedures and distribution within the organization. The final aspect, namely employee interaction with all levels of the organization, is described in the leader-member exchange variable that occurs.

CONCLUSION

Employee engagement is important for the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, with the duties and functions of formulating policies related to education, educators and education personnel who will face various challenges in the use of technology in education in the future. According to Hofmann & Morgeson (1999), employee engagement emerges collectively in organizations through affective and social processes in the organizational environment. For example, according to Pugh (2001), employee engagement is very contagious and easily transferred to other employees. The practices and interactions that occur in an organization can be determined by what employees expect in the organization, as the variables analyzed in this research, namely organizational justice, grit, and leader-member exchange, were found to have a significant influence on employee engagement so that they must be paid attention to in Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology.

Regarding grit, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology is advised to pay attention to the sustainability of ideas/projects carried out by employees so that they are more stable and do not experience too many changes. Changes that are too dynamic can reduce employee grit, especially in the aspect of consistency of interest. Apart from that, it is recommended to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology to add grit instruments in the selection for employee procurement or selection for filling high leadership positions within the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. It is further recommended that the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology can use grit instruments in employee competency assessment instruments as well as talent acquisition processes in the context of talent management within the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology.

MOECRT can create a work environment full of positive emotions. This can of course be done with a high quality of leader-member exchange, where employees also feel they have the resources

(support) to complete their work tasks. The existence of high-quality leader-member exchange within the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology can occur by encouraging the provision of support from leaders to employees so that employees have the resources needed to complete their tasks. It is also important to pay more attention on employee engagement by making employees feel valued and involved in more meaningful work. Quality exchange relationships between leaders and members within the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology will encourage leaders and members to work together and help in achieving common goals within the organization.

For further research, it is recommended to expand the research area outside the public sector or outside Indonesia. Apart from that, other variables can also be added which are theoretically proven to have a positive influence on employee engagement. For future research, it is also recommended to provide interview data related to the variables studied so that the analysis obtained is sharper.

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