



The Influence of Leader-Member Exchange and Mindfulness on Work Engagement at PT Great Giant Pineapple

Gading Azarine Paramesthi

Management Department, University of Lampung

*Email : gadingazarine07@gmail.com

Ribhan

Management Department, University of Lampung

Email : ribhan@feb.unila.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the direct influence of leader-member exchange and mindfulness on work engagement in permanent employees in the farming service department of PT Great Giant Pineapple. The research was conducted using a quantitative approach with data collection using a questionnaire with a Likert scale. The sampling method used probability sampling with simple random sampling technique, with a sample size of 180 respondents. Instruments, hypothesis testing, and research data were analyzed using SPSS 26 software. This research analysis method uses multiple linear regression analysis. The results showed that this study supports all hypotheses, leader-member exchange has a direct positive and significant effect on work engagement, and mindfulness has a direct positive and significant effect on work engagement, based on the research that has been done, indicating that leaders and employees need to develop mutually supportive relationships based on trust to encourage strong work engagement. Increasing mindfulness in individuals can help employees work multitasking, because it can build a higher level of vitality in work activities, then in an effort to maintain strong work engagement, companies should provide creative challenges and innovations in work tasks.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations continuously navigate a rapidly changing environment due to the swift technological advancements characteristic of the current globalization era. This phenomenon is often referred to as VUCA, an acronym for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. Such demands for change compel organizations to leverage reliable assets to achieve competitive advantages, particularly human resources (Du et al., 2023). The success or failure of an organization hinges on its ability to effectively utilize its human resource base (Barot, 2020). A key component in attaining globally recognized core competitive advantage is work engagement (Saks, 2017). Work engagement, as defined by Schaufeli et al. (2002), is a positive and fulfilling psychological state concerning one's job, characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Performance fueled by employees' positive emotions, such as their willingness to exert more effort than expected, exemplifies work engagement (Costa et al., 2014). This engagement is crucial, serving as one of the strongest predictors of human resource performance (Borst et al., 2020). The positive impacts of work engagement extend not only to employees but also to the organizations they serve (Rahmadani & Schaufeli, 2022).





According to Deloitte's Global Human Capital Trends 2020 report, work engagement ranks among the top three human resource trends (Du et al., 2023). However, The 2023 Gallup report indicates that Indonesia ranks third in Southeast Asia for work engagement, with only 24% of Indonesian employees classified as engaged, while 69% are disengaged, and 6% are actively disengaged. The report shows that work engagement in Indonesia is still low (Amanda Savitri et al., 2023). This low engagement level poses a challenge for organizations aiming to maintain employee commitment to their work. High work engagement yields numerous positive outcomes, including reduced stress and turnover intentions, lower absenteeism rates, and increased job satisfaction (Wagner & Koob, 2022). Conversely, low engagement manifests in apathy, difficulty concentrating, lack of enthusiasm, and unproductive use of work time (Pri & Zamralita, 2017). To maintaining competitiveness and facilitating sustainable human resource management in the VUCA era, fostering cooperation between leaders and employees is essential (Du et al., 2023).

The leader-member exchange (LMX) theory elucidates the dyadic relationship between supervisors and subordinates, emphasizing mutual respect and trust (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). This theory suggests that the quality of relationships, ranging from low to high, significantly influences employee work engagement (Hobfoll et al., 2018). A strong LMX can encourage employees to respond with heightened work engagement (Wagner & Koob, 2022). Mindfulness is another strategy that demonstrates considerable potential for enhancing competitive advantage across various organizational contexts (Krishnan, 2021). Research indicates that mindfulness helps employees effectively comprehend job-related information (Dane & Brummel, 2014). Although studies on mindfulness's impact on work engagement are limited, interest is growing in exploring how individuals can benefit from mindfulness practices in the workplace (Qi et al., 2021). Mindfulness is identified as a personal resource that fosters positive employee emotions (Puspo Wiroko, 2019), aligning with the definition of work engagement as a positive mental state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

This study focuses on PT Great Giant Pineapple (GGP), a private agro-industrial company based in Terbanggi Besar, Lampung Tengah, Indonesia. GGP is renowned for producing pineapples and tropical fruits, currently being the top three canned pineapple producers in the world. Prior research indicates that organizational factors contribute only 4% to employee work engagement, with 96% determined by individual employees (Zahreni et al., 2020). The research will specifically analyze the Farming Service Department, encompassing Maintenance 1 and 2, Engineering, and Engineering Design sub-departments, primarily comprised of male employees engaged in multitasking roles. The multitasking nature of roles in the Farming Service Department may hinder concentration, thereby affecting employees' engagement, particularly regarding the absorption dimension (Schaufeli et al., 2006). The substantial workload necessitates implementing mindfulness to enhance vitality and focus on current tasks (Liu et al., 2020). Additionally, challenges in coordinating schedules between leaders and employees may limit opportunities for high-quality interactions (Eisenberger et al., 2010).

The primary objectives of this study are to investigate the effects of leader-member exchange and mindfulness on work engagement. The research is significant for academics as it offers valuable insights and references for future studies concerning the interplay between these variables, thereby addressing existing gaps in the literature. Additionally, the findings hold practical implications for organizations by providing essential information for the effective management of human resources, emphasizing key factors that contribute to enhancing employee engagement.

LITERATURE RESEARCH

A. Leader-Member Exchange

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory emphasizes the quality of the dyadic relationship between leaders and subordinates, where higher-quality exchanges foster trust, respect, and loyalty, leading to positive outcomes like emotional support and intrinsic rewards (Graen & HI-Bien, 1995; Erdogan & Bauer, 2014). Lower-quality LMX relationships, however, are characterized by economic exchange and lack of trust (Radstaak & Hennes, 2017). LMX evolves through stages—from formal, transactional interactions to a mature partnership where mutual understanding strengthens collaboration (Graen & HI-Bien, 1995). This study employs the LMX-7 scale to assess respect, trust, and obligation (Graen & HI-Bien, 1995).





B. Mindfulness

Mindfulness refers to the self-regulation of attention to present events and the ability to remain open and non-reactive (Li, 2022). It enhances awareness of current experiences and internal emotional changes, facilitating emotional regulation and work engagement (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Kuang et al., 2022). Mindfulness is characterized by deliberate attention to the present moment without judgment (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). It comprises two key components: self-regulation of focus and orientation towards specific experiences (Bishop et al., 2004). High levels of mindfulness promote resilience, allowing individuals to concentrate on their tasks effectively, thereby enhancing their work vitality (S. Liu et al., 2020). The Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-R (CAMS-R) includes four dimensions: Attention, Present-focus, Awareness, and Acceptance (Feldman et al., 2007; Gunasekara & Zheng, 2019).

C. Work Engagement

The concept of work engagement, introduced by Kahn (1990), describes the connection employees have with their roles at physical, cognitive, and emotional levels, leading to positive outcomes for both individuals (personal growth) and organizations (performance quality) (Schaufeli et al., 2006). It involves personal resource investment and reflects an employee's commitment to their work (Christian et al., 2011; Insan & Masmarulan, 2021). Work engagement correlates with organizational competitiveness, enhancing productivity, job satisfaction, and loyalty (Rahmadani & Schaufeli, 2022). Based on Schaufeli et al. (2006), work engagement comprises three dimensions: Vigor, Dedication, and Absorption, highlighting an employee's energy, emotional commitment, and concentration in their tasks.

METHOD

A. Data Source and Data Collection Method

Data sources for this research include both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through questionnaires and interviews conducted with employees of PT Great Giant Pineapple (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Secondary data refers to information previously gathered by others, such as prior research and published articles accessed online (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Data collection methods employed include questionnaires, aimed at assessing the influence of leader-member exchange on work engagement, and structured interviews with employees in the farming service department (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

B. Population and Sample

This research examines the influence of leader-member exchange and mindfulness on work engagement among employees at PT Great Giant Pineapple, specifically focusing on the Farming Service Department. The population consists of 252 permanent employees, including Maintenance 1 and 2, Engineering, and Engineering Design (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). A sample of 180 employees was determined using simple random sampling, adhering to the recommendation that sample sizes should range from five to ten times the number of questionnaire items, which total 36 (Hair et al., 2019; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

C. Variable Conceptual and Definition

The conceptual definitions of the study's variables clarify their scope. Leader-member exchange (LMX) refers to the quality of the relationship between leaders and employees, emphasizing how leaders cultivate reciprocal interactions with staff (Graen & HI-Bien, 1995). Mindfulness is defined as a self-generated awareness characterized by intentional focus on the present moment, free from judgment (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, as cited in Feldman et al., 2007). Work engagement represents a positive mental state characterized by high energy, absorption, and dedication in work activities, leading to increased job satisfaction (Schaufeli et al., 2006). The operational definitions include specific indicators measured on a Likert scale.

D. Research Instrument Test

The research employs a Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," to assess the instruments used. For the Leader-member exchange (X1), measurement is based on the LMX-7 questionnaire developed by Graen and HI-Bien (1995), as referenced in H. Liu et al. (2023), consisting of seven items related





to leader-employee relationships. The Mindfulness variable (X2) is measured using the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised (CAMS-R) developed by Feldman et al. (2007), comprising 12 items assessing individual mindfulness levels at work. Finally, Work engagement is measured through the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) created by Schaufeli et al. (2006), featuring 17 items reflecting individual job engagement.

E. Data Analysis Method

The research instrument validation involves assessing both validity and reliability to ensure the accuracy of the data collected through the questionnaire. Validity, as defined by Sekaran and Bougie (2016), measures how well the instrument captures the intended concept, with KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) values exceeding 0.5 indicating valid items (Ghozali, 2016). Reliability assesses the consistency of the instrument, with Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.6 indicating reliability (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Ghozali, 2016). Normality tests determine whether variables are normally distributed based on significance levels (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). Descriptive statistics summarize data characteristics, while multiple linear regression analyzes the impact of independent variables (Leader-member exchange and Mindfulness) on the dependent variable (Work engagement). Hypothesis testing includes t-tests to evaluate the significance of independent variables against the dependent variable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Data Collection Results

The distribution of questionnaires for this study took place from May 13, 2024, to June 10, 2024. A total of 180 permanent employees from the farming service department at PT Great Giant Pineapple participated in the research. The questionnaire comprised 36 items, categorized into three variables: 7 items assessing leader-member exchange, 12 items measuring mindfulness, and 17 items evaluating work engagement. The results of the questionnaire distribution indicate that all 180 distributed questionnaires were returned and can be processed, with none deemed unprocessable.

2. Respondent Characteristics

The respondents in this study are permanent employees from the farming service department at PT Great Giant Pineapple, totaling 180 individuals. The demographic information reveals a predominance of male respondents, comprising 98.9%, while females account for only 1.1%, reflecting the mechanical and technical nature of roles in this department. Age distribution indicates that 56.7% of the respondents are between 40-49 years old, with 27.2% over 49 years. Educationally, 96.7% of the employees hold a high school diploma or equivalent, with very few having a diploma or bachelor's degree. Additionally, regarding tenure, 80.6% of the employees have over 15 years of service, suggesting a stable workforce with considerable experience in their roles. This demographic profile is crucial for understanding the context in which the study is conducted.

3. Results of Analysis of Respondent Statement Descriptions

The analysis of respondent statements in this study provides insights into their responses across various items, expressed as percentages. To assess the intensity of each variable, the highest scores for each variable were multiplied by the number of items, then divided into five categories as proposed by Sugiyono (2019). The categories are as follows: 1.00–1.80 (Very Low), 1.81–2.60 (Low), 2.61–3.40 (Moderate), 3.41–4.20 (High), and 4.21–5.00 (Very High). Leader-member exchange was measured using the LMX-7 scale developed by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). The responses reveal a high average score of 4.05 for the leader-member exchange variable. The item with the highest average (4.23) was "I usually know that my leader is satisfied with what I do," highlighting the interactive nature of leadership in providing feedback. Conversely, the lowest average (3.62) was found in the item "My leader would sacrifice to help me at work," suggesting that while leaders may assist, the expectation for personal sacrifice is less emphasized. Overall, these findings demonstrate a robust leader-member exchange environment.

Mindfulness was evaluated using the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale-Revised (CAMS-R) developed by Feldman (2007). The results, yielded an overall average score of 3.89, indicating a high level of mindfulness among respondents. The statement with the highest score (4.22) was "I can focus on the task at





hand," reflecting employees' ability to concentrate effectively. In contrast, the lowest score (3.47) was for "I am preoccupied with past work," suggesting that employees are adept at learning from past experiences without dwelling on them. This indicates that mindfulness practices are well-integrated within the workforce, fostering a conducive work environment. Work engagement was assessed using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli et al. (2006). The overall average score for work engagement was 3.98, demonstrating a high level of engagement among employees. The statement "I feel happy when I work diligently" received the highest average score (4.26), suggesting a positive emotional connection to work. However, the item "Time flies when I am working" scored the lowest (3.49), indicating that while employees are engaged, they may not always feel a sense of time passing during tasks. The results highlight that employees exhibit high levels of vigor (4.05), dedication (4.10), and absorption (3.83), confirming strong work engagement within the organization.

4. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the impact of two independent variables, Leader-member exchange (X1) and Mindfulness (X2), on the dependent variable, Work engagement (Y), at a 95% confidence level (α = 0.05) using SPSS version 26. The results indicated that the coefficient for Leader-member exchange (X1) was 0.365, while Mindfulness (X2) had a coefficient of 0.303. This suggests a positive relationship, indicating that as the quality of leader-member exchange and mindfulness improves, employee work engagement increases correspondingly. The regression equation established is Y = 0.365X1 + 0.303X2.

Table 1. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Result

Table with 6 columns: Model, Unstandardized Coefficients (B, Std. Error), Standardized Coefficients (Beta), T, Sig. Rows include Constant, Leader-member exchange, and Mindfulness.

5. Results of t-Test (Partial)

The partial hypothesis testing was conducted to assess the significant effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable using a t-test at a 95% confidence level (α = 0.05) with 177 degrees of freedom. The t-table value obtained was 1.97346. For Leader-member exchange (X1), the significance level was 0.000, with a calculated t-value of 5.562, exceeding the t-table value, supporting H1. Thus, Leader-member exchange has a positive and significant effect on work engagement. Similarly, for Mindfulness (X2), the significance was also 0.000, with a t-value of 4.618, supporting H2, indicating a positive and significant impact on work engagement.

Table 2. t-Test result

Table with 5 columns: Variable, t value, t table, Sig., Conclusion. Rows include Leader-member exchange (X1) and Mindfulness (X2).

6. The Effect of Leader-member Exchange on Work Engagement

The findings of this study indicate that Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) significantly and positively influences work engagement among employees at PT Great Giant Pineapple. This is evidenced by a t-value of 5.562, which exceeds the critical value of 1.97346, coupled with a significance level of 0.000, indicating strong support for the hypothesis. High-quality relationships between supervisors and subordinates foster enhanced work engagement, as indicated by the majority of employees having over 15 years of service in the farming





department. The quality of LMX facilitates employees' commitment to their roles, promoting longevity in their positions (Du et al., 2023). The study reveals that a robust LMX enables employees to exceed minimum job expectations, driven by increased support and trust that develop over time (Maslyn and Uhl-Bien, 2001; Costa et al., 2014). The average score of 4.23 in feedback-related statements further underscores the significant correlation between LMX and work engagement, highlighting the importance of interactive, two-way communication between leaders and their teams (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Furthermore, the interactive role of leaders extends beyond mere instruction, as they actively participate in problem-solving, evidenced by an obligation dimension score of 3.99. This indicates that leaders fulfill their responsibilities in fostering effective work relationships. However, lower scores of 3.62 and 3.78 on specific trust and obligation statements reveal areas for improvement, particularly in leaders' willingness to support employees beyond formal obligations. Enhancing social support and task autonomy can significantly contribute to employees' development (Breevaart et al., 2015). Overall, the average score of 4.05 for LMX quality suggests a strong, supportive interaction between supervisors and subordinates, leading to increased work engagement reflected by a score of 3.97. While there are indications of a lack of complete absorption in work, with an average of 3.83, employees express enjoyment and focus, as indicated by scores of 3.94 and 4.26, respectively. Thus, the establishment of high-quality LMX is crucial for fostering dedicated employee engagement, which aligns with previous research emphasizing its positive impact on work engagement (Aggarwal et al., 2020; Santalla-Banderali and Alvarado, 2022; Liu et al., 2023). Maintaining effective relationships within organizations is essential to create a conducive work environment that enhances employee focus and engagement.

7. The Effect of Mindfulness on Work Engagement

The results of this study reveal that mindfulness has a significant positive impact on work engagement among employees at PT Great Giant Pineapple. This conclusion is supported by a t-value of 4.618, surpassing the critical value of 1.97346, and a significance level of 0.000, indicating strong support for the hypothesis. Mindfulness, defined as the capacity to maintain awareness of present actions without judgment, correlates with work engagement. Previous research (Gunasekara and Zheng, 2019; Liu et al., 2020; Bartlett et al., 2021) indicates that individuals who can focus on their current tasks tend to experience greater control and heightened energy, thereby enhancing their work engagement. Liu et al. (2020) emphasize that mindfulness helps employees mitigate negative emotional distractions from both current and past situations, allowing them to approach their work with positivity and enthusiasm. Furthermore, Brown et al. (2007) assert that increased self-awareness concerning emotions, thoughts, and behaviors fosters enthusiasm toward work-related tasks.

Respondent feedback underscores the vital correlation between self-awareness, attention, and acceptance in fostering employee engagement, with an average mindfulness score of 3.89 among employees at PT Great Giant Pineapple. Mindfulness promotes the ability to self-regulate and navigate workplace pressures effectively (Malinowski and Lim, 2015). Notably, employees scored 4.22 on their focus on current tasks, indicating a lack of distraction from past or future responsibilities. However, maintaining attention over extended periods remains challenging, as evidenced by a lower score of 3.67. Overall, the attention dimension averages 3.90, suggesting employees can concentrate on relevant tasks while disregarding distractions. Awareness (3.92) and acceptance (3.99) scores indicate that employees can observe their thoughts and emotions non-judgmentally, thereby minimizing negative environmental influences. Furthermore, mindfulness positively affects the absorption dimension of work engagement, with an average score of 3.83, leading to a robust overall work engagement score of 3.98. Employees with heightened mindfulness demonstrate better control over their thoughts and emotions, mitigating mental fatigue during multitasking (Kudesia et al., 2020). This capacity enables them to engage more deeply with their work, fostering resilience in the face of challenges. The findings affirm that higher levels of mindfulness contribute significantly to employee work engagement, supporting the acceptance of Hypothesis 2.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated how leader-member exchange and mindfulness affect work engagement at PT Great Giant Pineapple, confirming the proposed hypotheses. Firstly, leader-member exchange (X1)





significantly enhances work engagement (Y), as strong relationships between leaders and employees foster dedication and enthusiasm at work. Secondly, mindfulness (X2) also positively impacts work engagement, allowing employees to focus better on their tasks and manage their thoughts and emotions effectively.

Based on the findings, several recommendations are made. Leaders should promote open communication about employee needs and provide support to build trust and enhance work engagement. Additionally, since multitasking is common, the company should offer mindfulness training to help employees focus on their tasks for longer periods. While employees are generally engaged and motivated, there is potential for improved job satisfaction; thus, introducing creative challenges and development programs could increase enjoyment in their work. The study recognizes limitations, including the focus on a specific department and suggests future research consider a broader range of employees and additional factors influencing work engagement.

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