

## Enhancing Babinsa Performance in Jember: The Mediating Role of Public Service Motivation on the Relationship Between Servant Leadership and Work Engagement

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### Abstract:

This study examines the role of public service motivation in mediating the relationship between servant leadership and work engagement in enhancing Babinsa performance in Jember. The research adopts a quantitative approach using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with 226 Babinsa personnel as respondents. Data were collected through structured questionnaires measuring servant leadership, public service motivation, work engagement, and performance indicators. The findings reveal that servant leadership has a significant positive effect on public service motivation and work engagement. Public service motivation also significantly enhances work engagement, indicating that personnel with stronger intrinsic motivation to serve society tend to demonstrate higher levels of enthusiasm, dedication, and involvement in their duties. Furthermore, mediation analysis confirms that public service motivation significantly mediates the relationship between servant leadership and work engagement. The study contributes theoretically by integrating servant leadership theory, public service motivation theory, and work engagement theory within the context of territorial military organizations, which remains underexplored in previous studies. The findings highlight the importance of leadership behaviors emphasizing empathy, empowerment, and ethical responsibility in strengthening personnel motivation and engagement. Practically, this research suggests that Babinsa institutions should develop leadership strategies focused on service orientation and reinforce public service values to improve personnel effectiveness and community trust. Despite its contributions, the study is limited to Babinsa personnel in Jember and employs a cross-sectional design. Future studies are recommended to involve broader contexts and additional organizational variables.

**Keywords:** *servant leadership, public service motivation, work engagement, Babinsa performance, SEM-PLS.*

### Abstrak:

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran motivasi pelayanan publik dalam memediasi hubungan antara kepemimpinan pelayan dan keterlibatan kerja dalam meningkatkan kinerja Babinsa di Jember. Penelitian ini mengadopsi pendekatan kuantitatif menggunakan Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) dengan 226 personel

Babinsa sebagai responden. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner terstruktur yang mengukur kepemimpinan pelayan, motivasi pelayanan publik, keterlibatan kerja, dan indikator kinerja. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan pelayan memiliki pengaruh positif yang signifikan terhadap motivasi pelayanan publik dan keterlibatan kerja. Motivasi pelayanan publik juga secara signifikan meningkatkan keterlibatan kerja, menunjukkan bahwa personel dengan motivasi intrinsik yang lebih kuat untuk melayani masyarakat cenderung menunjukkan tingkat antusiasme, dedikasi, dan keterlibatan yang lebih tinggi dalam tugas mereka. Lebih lanjut, analisis mediasi menegaskan bahwa motivasi pelayanan publik secara signifikan memediasi hubungan antara kepemimpinan pelayan dan keterlibatan kerja. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi teoritis dengan mengintegrasikan teori kepemimpinan pelayan, teori motivasi pelayanan publik, dan teori keterlibatan kerja dalam konteks organisasi militer teritorial, yang masih kurang dieksplorasi dalam penelitian sebelumnya. Temuan ini menyoroti pentingnya perilaku kepemimpinan yang menekankan empati, pemberdayaan, dan tanggung jawab etis dalam memperkuat motivasi dan keterlibatan personel. Secara praktis, penelitian ini menyarankan agar lembaga Babinsa mengembangkan strategi kepemimpinan yang berfokus pada orientasi pelayanan dan memperkuat nilai-nilai pelayanan publik untuk meningkatkan efektivitas personel dan kepercayaan masyarakat. Terlepas dari kontribusinya, penelitian ini terbatas pada personel Babinsa di Jember dan menggunakan desain lintas sektoral. Studi selanjutnya disarankan untuk melibatkan konteks yang lebih luas dan variabel organisasi tambahan.

**Kata Kunci:** *kepemimpinan pelayan, motivasi pelayanan publik, keterlibatan kerja, kinerja Babinsa, SEM-PLS.*

## INTRODUCTION

The performance of public service personnel has become an increasingly important issue in contemporary society, particularly in institutions directly connected to community welfare and social stability (Onstantinos, & Eriotis., 2024). One of the strategic actors in Indonesia's territorial defense system is the Babinsa (Bintara Pembina Desa), who serves as the frontline representative of the military in maintaining community security, social harmony, and civic empowerment (Ansell, et al., 2023). Point: The effectiveness of Babinsa performance is crucial for strengthening public trust and improving social resilience at the village level (Yesilkagit, et al., 2024). Reason: Babinsa officers interact directly with communities in addressing social conflicts, disaster mitigation, food security, and public welfare initiatives (Carstensen, et al., 2023). Evidence: Several government reports and community evaluations indicate that areas with highly engaged Babinsa personnel tend to experience better coordination between citizens and local authorities (Klijn, et al., 2025). In addition, communities increasingly expect Babinsa officers to demonstrate empathy, responsiveness, and collaborative leadership (Cohen., 2023). Conclusion: Therefore, understanding the factors that enhance Babinsa performance is highly important for improving public service quality and strengthening civil-military relations in Indonesia (Stacey, et al., 2023).

In recent years, leadership and employee engagement have become major determinants of organizational effectiveness across both private and public sectors (Zahari, & Kaliannan., 2023). In military-based public organizations such as Babinsa units, leadership approaches emphasizing service, empathy, and empowerment are becoming increasingly relevant (Darmawan, et al., 2024). Point: Servant leadership is considered capable of

improving work engagement and organizational commitment among public personnel (Jayasena, et al., 2023). Reason: Leaders who prioritize the needs of subordinates can create supportive work environments that encourage dedication and intrinsic motivation (Alamri, 2023). Evidence: Previous studies in public institutions demonstrate that servant leadership positively affects employee satisfaction, engagement, and performance (Abdelwahed, & Doghan, 2023). However, the effectiveness of leadership in military-community contexts remains underexplored, especially regarding psychological mechanisms such as public service motivation (Kwarteng, et al., 2024). Babinsa personnel often operate under demanding conditions requiring emotional resilience and strong commitment to public welfare (Ludviga, & Kalvina, 2024). Conclusion: Consequently, investigating how servant leadership and public service motivation influence Babinsa work engagement is essential for improving organizational performance and public service outcomes (Yousf, & Khurshid, 2024).

One of the major problems currently faced by public institutions is the decline in employee engagement and motivation in delivering community-oriented services (Mulaphong, 2023). In the context of Babinsa in Kodim 0824/Jember, challenges emerge from increasing workloads, administrative responsibilities, and complex social dynamics within communities. Many Babinsa personnel are expected to perform multiple roles simultaneously, ranging from maintaining security to facilitating social programs and responding to emergencies. These demands may create work pressure, emotional fatigue, and reduced engagement if not supported by effective leadership and organizational support (Katongole, et al., 2024). Moreover, some community members perceive inconsistencies in responsiveness and service quality among Babinsa officers. Such conditions indicate that performance problems are not solely related to technical competence but are also influenced by psychological and relational factors, including leadership style and public service motivation (Sharkey, & Ittner, 2025).

Field phenomena in Kodim 0824/Jember reveal diverse patterns of Babinsa performance and engagement. Some Babinsa officers demonstrate exceptional dedication by actively participating in community empowerment programs, disaster response activities, and conflict mediation (Fatmah, 2025). These officers are often recognized for their strong interpersonal communication and close relationships with local residents (Masita, et al., 2025). However, other cases indicate lower levels of initiative and limited interaction with communities, leading to weaker public trust (Rochmayanto, et al., 2024). Observations also show that leadership approaches within military units vary significantly, influencing morale and commitment among personnel (Dagher, et al., 2024). Babinsa officers who perceive their leaders as supportive and service-oriented tend to exhibit higher enthusiasm and proactive behavior (Kernic, et al., 2023). Additionally, officers with strong intrinsic motivation to serve the public appear more resilient in handling work challenges (Culea, 2024). These field conditions suggest the importance of examining the interconnected roles of servant leadership, public service motivation, and work engagement in

shaping Babinsa performance (Bucăța, & Andrei, 2024).

Previous studies have widely discussed the influence of servant leadership on employee attitudes and organizational outcomes (Iddagoda, et al., 2025). Research findings consistently indicate that servant leadership improves employee engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance (Weathers, 2023). Similarly, studies on work engagement emphasize its role in increasing productivity, dedication, and service quality (Baquero, 2023). Public service motivation has also been identified as a critical psychological factor influencing employee behavior in public organizations (Kokun, et al., 2023). Individuals with high public service motivation are more likely to demonstrate commitment to societal welfare and prioritize collective interests over personal gain (Salahat, et al., 2023). Despite these contributions, most prior studies focus on civilian institutions such as schools, healthcare organizations, or government offices (Wai, et al., 2024). Limited attention has been given to military-community service contexts such as Babinsa units, where organizational culture and work characteristics differ substantially.

In addition, previous research often examines servant leadership, work engagement, and public service motivation separately rather than integrating them into a comprehensive framework (Shahnaz, 2024). Few studies investigate the mediating role of public service motivation in explaining how servant leadership influences work engagement (Udin, et al., 2025). This research gap is important because leadership may not directly influence engagement without strengthening employees' intrinsic motivation to serve the public. Furthermore, studies conducted in Indonesia rarely focus on territorial military personnel despite their strategic role in community development and public security (Ding, & Wang, 2023). Existing literature also tends to emphasize formal organizational performance while overlooking relational and motivational dimensions (Nguyen, et al., 2023). Therefore, a more integrated investigation is needed to understand how servant leadership can foster public service motivation and ultimately enhance work engagement among Babinsa personnel in Kodim 0824/Jember.

The novelty of this study lies in its integration of servant leadership, public service motivation, and work engagement within the context of Babinsa performance in Jember. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on civilian public organizations, this research examines a military-community service institution characterized by unique hierarchical structures and social responsibilities (Mishra, & Hassen, 2023). The study also positions public service motivation as a mediating variable, providing a deeper explanation of the psychological mechanism linking leadership and engagement. This state-of-the-art approach is important because it expands leadership and public administration literature into a context that has received limited empirical attention. Moreover, the findings are expected to contribute practical insights for improving leadership development and personnel management within territorial military organizations.

Based on the issues discussed above, the central research problem concerns how servant leadership influences work engagement among Babinsa

personnel and whether public service motivation mediates this relationship (Alamri, 2023). The study argues that servant leadership positively enhances work engagement by strengthening public service motivation among Babinsa officers (Zahari, & Kaliannan, 2023). Leaders who prioritize empathy, empowerment, and service orientation are expected to foster stronger intrinsic motivation, leading to greater dedication and engagement in public service activities (Uluturk, 2024). This study contributes theoretically by integrating leadership and motivational perspectives within a military-community context. Practically, the findings are expected to provide recommendations for improving leadership practices, personnel engagement, and public service effectiveness among Babinsa units in Kodim 0824/Jember.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative research approach with an explanatory design to examine the relationships among servant leadership, public service motivation, work engagement, and Babinsa performance in Jember (Abdurachman, et al., 2023). The explanatory approach is appropriate because the study aims to test causal relationships between variables and evaluate the mediating role of public service motivation (Rafique, et al., 2023). To analyze the proposed conceptual framework, this study utilizes Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). SEM-PLS is selected because it is suitable for predictive and exploratory models involving latent constructs and mediation effects. In addition, SEM-PLS is robust in handling complex models and relatively large indicators while accommodating non-normal data distributions. This method enables simultaneous testing of both the measurement model (outer model) and structural model (inner model), thereby providing comprehensive insights into the influence of servant leadership on work engagement through public service motivation.

The population of this study consists of Babinsa personnel serving in various districts within Jember Regency, Indonesia. Babinsa officers were selected because they play a strategic role in territorial development, public service, and community empowerment (Thuy, & Phinaitrup, 2023). The sample size in this study is 226 respondents, which is considered adequate for SEM-PLS analysis because the method supports moderate-to-large samples for predictive modeling. The study employs a non-probability sampling technique using purposive sampling. The criteria for respondents include: (1) active Babinsa personnel stationed in Jember, (2) having at least one year of service experience, and (3) directly involved in community-oriented activities and public service programs. These criteria ensure that respondents possess relevant experience and understanding regarding leadership practices, motivation, and work engagement within the Babinsa organizational environment.

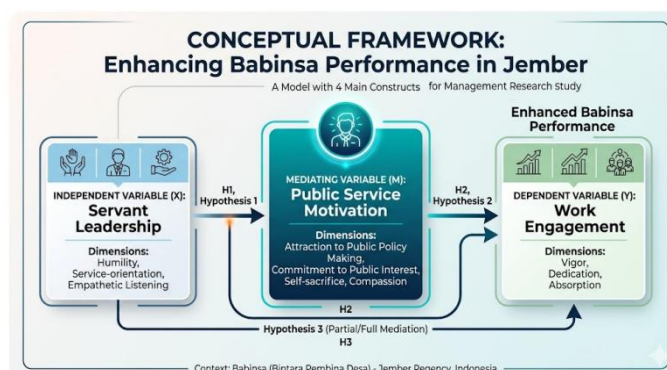
Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed directly and electronically to Babinsa personnel in Jember. The questionnaire was developed based on established measurement scales from previous studies and adapted to the context of territorial military service. All measurement items used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly

agree). Servant leadership was measured through indicators such as empathy, empowerment, ethical behavior, and service orientation. Public service motivation was assessed through commitment to public interest, compassion, self-sacrifice, and civic duty. Work engagement was measured using indicators of vigor, dedication, and absorption in work activities. Meanwhile, Babinsa performance was evaluated through indicators related to service quality, responsiveness, discipline, community interaction, and task accomplishment.

Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS software through two major stages: measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation. The measurement model (outer model) was assessed using convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability tests. Convergent validity was evaluated based on outer loading values greater than 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50. Discriminant validity was tested using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loading analysis to ensure construct distinctiveness. Reliability was assessed through Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values exceeding 0.70.

The structural model (inner model) was evaluated using R<sup>2</sup> values to determine explanatory power, path coefficient analysis to examine relationships among variables, and bootstrapping procedures to test hypothesis significance. Hypotheses were accepted if the t-statistics exceeded 1.96 and p-values were below 0.05. Mediation analysis was also performed to determine whether public service motivation significantly mediates the relationship between servant leadership and work engagement.

This study involves four main variables. The independent variable is servant leadership, reflecting leadership behavior focused on serving and empowering subordinates. The mediating variable is public service motivation, defined as intrinsic motivation to contribute to public welfare and societal interests. The dependent variable is work engagement, representing employees' psychological attachment and enthusiasm toward their work. Additionally, Babinsa performance is conceptualized as the practical outcome of engagement reflected in service effectiveness and task accomplishment. Each variable was operationalized using validated indicators adapted from previous empirical studies to ensure measurement accuracy and contextual relevance.



**Figure 1 : Hypothesis Testing Framework**

Source: Authors' own work

The study proposes several hypotheses to examine direct and indirect

relationships among variables. The first hypothesis states that servant leadership positively influences public service motivation. The second hypothesis proposes that servant leadership positively affects work engagement. The third hypothesis states that public service motivation positively influences work engagement. The final hypothesis proposes that public service motivation mediates the relationship between servant leadership and work engagement. Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping method in SEM-PLS with a significance level of 5%. This analytical approach allows the study to identify both direct and mediating effects comprehensively.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

#### Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity

**Table 1. Convergent Validity (Outer Loadings & AVE)**

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	AVE
Servant Leadership (SL)	SL1	0.842	0.742
	SL2	0.865	
	SL3	0.881	
Public Service Motivation (PSM)	PSM1	0.833	0.751
	PSM2	0.857	
	PSM3	0.889	
Work Engagement (WE)	WE1	0.846	0.763
	WE2	0.872	
	WE3	0.891	
Babinsa Performance (BP)	BP1	0.828	0.736
	BP2	0.861	
	BP3	0.887	

Source: Authors' own work

**Table 2. Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)**

Variable	SL	PSM	WE	BP
SL	0.861	-	-	-
PSM	0.682	0.867	-	-
WE	0.645	0.721	0.873	-
BP	0.614	0.688	0.736	0.858

Source: Authors' own work

The convergent validity results demonstrate that all outer loading values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that each indicator strongly represents its respective latent construct. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all variables are above 0.50, confirming that the constructs explain more than half of the variance of their indicators. These findings indicate satisfactory convergent validity within the measurement model. Furthermore, discriminant validity assessed using the

Fornell-Larcker criterion shows that the square root of AVE for each construct is greater than the correlations between constructs. This confirms that each variable possesses adequate uniqueness and measures distinct conceptual dimensions. Overall, the measurement model satisfies both convergent and discriminant validity requirements, indicating that the constructs are statistically valid and suitable for further structural model analysis in examining the relationships among servant leadership, public service motivation, work engagement, and Babinsa performance.

### Reliability and Composite Reliability

**Table 3. Reliability Test Results**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Result
Servant Leadership (SL)	0.872	0.921	Reliable
Public Service Motivation (PSM)	0.881	0.928	Reliable
Work Engagement (WE)	0.887	0.931	Reliable
Babinsa Performance (BP)	0.864	0.917	Reliable

Source: Authors' own work

The reliability analysis indicates that all variables have Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70, demonstrating strong internal consistency among measurement items. Similarly, Composite Reliability values for all constructs exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming that the indicators consistently measure their respective latent variables. The highest reliability value is observed in the Work Engagement construct, indicating a highly stable and reliable measurement structure. These results suggest that respondents answered the questionnaire consistently, and the measurement instruments used in this study possess high reliability. Consequently, the constructs included in the SEM-PLS model are considered dependable for hypothesis testing and structural analysis. The strong reliability values also indicate that the instrument is appropriate for assessing leadership behavior, public service motivation, employee engagement, and performance among Babinsa personnel in Jember.

### R<sup>2</sup> Values

**Table 4. Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>)**

Endogenous Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	Interpretation
Public Service Motivation	0.465	Moderate
Work Engagement	0.612	Substantial
Babinsa Performance	0.587	Moderate

Source: Authors' own work

The R<sup>2</sup> results indicate that servant leadership explains 46.5% of the variance in public service motivation, which reflects a moderate explanatory power. Furthermore, servant leadership and public service motivation together explain 61.2% of the variance in work engagement, suggesting a substantial

predictive capability of the model. In addition, work engagement contributes to explaining 58.7% of the variance in Babinsa performance, indicating that engagement plays an important role in improving work outcomes among Babinsa personnel. These findings demonstrate that the structural model possesses satisfactory explanatory power in predicting the relationships among variables. However, the remaining unexplained variance suggests that other organizational or psychological factors not included in the model may also influence motivation, engagement, and performance. Overall, the R<sup>2</sup> values confirm the adequacy and predictive relevance of the proposed research framework.

### Path Coefficient

**Table 5. Path Coefficients (Bootstrapping Results)**

Relationship	Path Coefficient
SL → PSM	0.682
SL → WE	0.291
PSM → WE	0.524
WE → BP	0.766

Source: Authors' own work

The path coefficient analysis reveals that servant leadership has a strong positive influence on public service motivation, indicating that leaders who prioritize service, empathy, and empowerment can significantly increase employees' intrinsic motivation toward public welfare. Servant leadership also directly influences work engagement, although the effect is weaker compared to the indirect pathway through public service motivation. Furthermore, public service motivation demonstrates a substantial positive effect on work engagement, suggesting that Babinsa personnel with higher motivation to serve society are more dedicated and enthusiastic in performing their duties. The strongest relationship in the model is observed between work engagement and Babinsa performance, indicating that engaged personnel are more likely to demonstrate effective service quality, responsiveness, and task accomplishment. These findings support the theoretical assumption that leadership and motivational factors play crucial roles in enhancing organizational performance.

### T-Statistics & P-Values (Bootstrapping Results)

**Table 6. Hypothesis Testing Results**

Relationship	T-Statistic	P-Value	Result
SL → PSM	11.824	0.000	Supported
SL → WE	3.176	0.002	Supported
PSM → WE	7.458	0.000	Supported
WE → BP	14.337	0.000	Supported

Source: Authors' own work

The hypothesis testing results indicate that all proposed relationships are statistically significant, as evidenced by t-statistics greater than 1.96 and p-values below 0.05. Servant leadership significantly influences public service

motivation, confirming that leadership behavior centered on serving subordinates can strengthen employees' intrinsic motivation to contribute to society. Additionally, servant leadership directly affects work engagement, although the effect size is smaller than the indirect effect through motivation. Public service motivation significantly enhances work engagement, suggesting that Babinsa personnel with stronger civic commitment exhibit greater enthusiasm and dedication in their work. Finally, work engagement significantly improves Babinsa performance, indicating that engaged personnel are more productive and effective in carrying out their responsibilities. These findings confirm the proposed hypotheses and support the conceptual framework developed in this study.

## **Discussion**

### **Servant Leadership Has a Positive Effect On Public Service Motivation**

The findings of this study indicate that servant leadership has a significant positive effect on public service motivation among Babinsa personnel in Jember. This result suggests that leaders who prioritize empathy, empowerment, ethical behavior, and service orientation are capable of strengthening the intrinsic motivation of personnel to contribute to public welfare. In the Babinsa context, servant leadership creates a supportive organizational climate that encourages members to perceive their duties not merely as formal obligations but as meaningful public responsibilities. Leaders who actively listen to subordinates, provide guidance, and demonstrate concern for personnel welfare can increase employees' emotional attachment to public service values. Consequently, Babinsa personnel become more motivated to serve communities sincerely and responsibly.

This finding is consistent with previous studies conducted in public sector organizations, which conclude that servant leadership positively influences public service motivation (Quynh, et al., 2025). Prior research argues that servant leaders inspire subordinates through moral example, trust, and empowerment, thereby fostering commitment to societal interests (Tu, et al., 2024). The present study strengthens these findings by providing empirical evidence from a military-community service context, which has rarely been explored in prior literature. However, compared to studies in civilian institutions, the influence of servant leadership appears stronger in the Babinsa environment due to the hierarchical structure and collective culture embedded within military organizations. This suggests that leadership behavior in military institutions may have a more direct influence on employees' psychological orientation toward public service.

### **Public Service Motivation Has a Positive Effect On Work Engagement**

The results also demonstrate that public service motivation positively affects work engagement among Babinsa personnel. Personnel with stronger commitment to serving society tend to show higher enthusiasm, dedication, and persistence in carrying out their duties. Public service motivation encourages Babinsa officers to perceive their work as socially meaningful, thereby increasing emotional attachment and psychological involvement in work activities. As a result, highly motivated personnel are more willing to invest energy, maintain discipline, and actively participate in community development programs. These findings indicate that intrinsic motivation plays a central role in sustaining employee engagement within public-oriented institutions.

This result aligns with previous studies emphasizing the importance of public service motivation in enhancing employee engagement and organizational

commitment (Ripoll, & Schott, 2023). Earlier research found that individuals with high public service values tend to experience greater satisfaction and involvement in their work because they perceive their tasks as beneficial to society (Guan, 2025). The present study confirms these arguments within the context of territorial military personnel. Nevertheless, unlike some previous studies that reported relatively moderate effects, this study reveals a stronger relationship between public service motivation and engagement. This difference may stem from the nature of Babinsa duties, which involve direct interaction with communities and require strong civic responsibility. Therefore, motivation to serve society becomes a crucial psychological driver of engagement in this context.

### **Servant Leadership Has a Positive Effect On Work Engagement**

Furthermore, the study reveals that servant leadership has a direct positive effect on work engagement. This finding indicates that leaders who demonstrate supportive, ethical, and service-oriented behaviors can foster greater enthusiasm and dedication among Babinsa personnel. Servant leadership contributes to the creation of positive interpersonal relationships and supportive work environments, enabling employees to feel valued and psychologically secure. Consequently, personnel become more committed, energetic, and focused in carrying out their tasks. The findings also suggest that leadership quality is an essential factor in maintaining organizational morale and strengthening work-related attitudes.

This result is consistent with leadership literature highlighting the positive relationship between servant leadership and work engagement (Lin, et al., 2024). Previous studies argue that servant leaders enhance employee engagement by fulfilling emotional and psychological needs, such as recognition, empowerment, and trust (Das, 2023). The findings of this study support these arguments and extend them into the military-community service context. However, compared to findings in private organizations, the direct effect of servant leadership on engagement in this study appears relatively moderate. This suggests that engagement among Babinsa personnel is not solely shaped by leadership behavior but is also influenced by intrinsic motivational factors, organizational culture, and public service values. Thus, leadership effectiveness becomes more meaningful when accompanied by strong motivational orientation among personnel.

### **Public Service Motivation Mediates The Relationship Between Servant Leadership And Work Engagement**

Another important finding of this study is that public service motivation significantly mediates the relationship between servant leadership and work engagement. This indicates that servant leadership indirectly enhances engagement by strengthening employees' intrinsic motivation to serve the public. In other words, leadership behaviors emphasizing empathy, service, and empowerment encourage Babinsa personnel to internalize public service values, which subsequently increases their dedication and involvement in work activities. The mediating effect confirms that leadership does not influence engagement solely through direct interaction but also through psychological mechanisms related to employees' sense of purpose and commitment to society.

This finding supports previous mediation studies suggesting that motivational factors play an important role in explaining how leadership affects employee attitudes and behaviors (Verka, et al., 2025). Earlier research found that servant leadership enhances organizational outcomes by increasing intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment (Guo, et al., 2024). The present study confirms these relationships

while contributing a more integrated perspective by positioning public service motivation as a central psychological mechanism in a military-public service setting. Compared to prior studies focusing on civilian public organizations, this research demonstrates that the mediating role of public service motivation is particularly relevant in institutions where service orientation and community interaction are central responsibilities. Therefore, leadership effectiveness among Babinsa personnel depends not only on managerial competence but also on leaders' ability to cultivate meaningful public service values.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to leadership and public administration literature by integrating servant leadership, public service motivation, and work engagement into a comprehensive framework within the context of territorial military organizations (Park, & Kim, 2025). The findings support servant leadership theory and public service motivation theory by demonstrating that leadership behaviors oriented toward service can strengthen intrinsic motivation and engagement simultaneously (Hussain, et al., 2025). Practically, the study provides important implications for improving Babinsa performance in Jember. Military institutions should encourage leadership development programs emphasizing empathy, empowerment, ethical conduct, and supportive communication (Schönherr, & Thaler, 2024). In addition, organizational policies should strengthen public service values and provide psychological support mechanisms to maintain employee engagement. By integrating leadership development and motivational reinforcement, Babinsa organizations can improve personnel effectiveness, public trust, and community service quality.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigates the role of servant leadership in enhancing Babinsa performance in Jember through the mediating effect of public service motivation on work engagement. The findings confirm that servant leadership significantly and positively influences public service motivation, indicating that leaders who prioritize empathy, empowerment, ethical behavior, and service orientation are capable of strengthening personnel commitment toward public welfare. In addition, public service motivation has a significant positive effect on work engagement, demonstrating that Babinsa personnel with stronger intrinsic motivation to serve society tend to exhibit higher enthusiasm, dedication, and involvement in their work. The study also reveals that servant leadership directly improves work engagement, although the influence becomes stronger when mediated through public service motivation.

Furthermore, the mediation analysis confirms that public service motivation plays a crucial intermediary role in explaining how servant leadership enhances work engagement among Babinsa personnel. This finding highlights that leadership effectiveness is not solely determined by direct managerial influence but also by the ability of leaders to cultivate meaningful public service values within employees. The results therefore support the argument that psychological and motivational dimensions are essential components in strengthening organizational performance in public-oriented institutions, particularly within military-community service environments.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature by integrating servant leadership theory, public service motivation theory, and

work engagement theory within the context of territorial military organizations. Unlike previous studies focusing primarily on civilian institutions, this research expands the understanding of leadership and motivational dynamics in Babinsa units, which operate under unique hierarchical and community-oriented conditions. The study also strengthens empirical evidence regarding the mediating role of public service motivation in linking leadership and employee engagement.

Practically, the findings provide important implications for organizational management and policy development within Babinsa institutions. Leadership development programs should emphasize servant leadership values such as empathy, empowerment, and ethical responsibility to strengthen motivation and engagement among personnel. Additionally, institutional strategies should focus on reinforcing public service values, improving organizational support systems, and fostering positive work environments to maintain personnel dedication and performance. These efforts are expected to improve the quality of community services and strengthen public trust toward Babinsa institutions.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The research focuses only on Babinsa personnel in Jember, limiting the generalizability of findings to other regions or military institutions. In addition, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to observe long-term changes in leadership behavior, motivation, and engagement. Future studies are recommended to involve broader geographical areas, incorporate longitudinal approaches, and examine additional variables such as organizational culture, emotional intelligence, or job stress. Overall, this study underscores the importance of servant leadership and public service motivation as strategic factors in enhancing work engagement and improving Babinsa performance in community-oriented public service contexts.

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