

Talent-Based Leadership Mindset: A Catalyst for Talent Management and Retention in Indonesian Government Institutions

Listiyana ^{1*}, Rita Alfin ²

^{1,2} Management Study Program, Faculty of Social Humanities, Universitas Walisongo Gempol Pasuruan, Pasuruan Regency, East Java, Indonesia.

Email: listiyana.stieg@gmail.com ^{1*}, rita.alfin15@gmail.com ²

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Abstract

Faced with increasingly intense competition, government institutions in Indonesia must adapt to retain quality talent. This study aims to examine the implementation of a talent-based leadership mindset as an innovative solution to enhance employee management and retention. Utilizing a qualitative approach, data were collected from 30 participants, including 10 agency leaders and 20 employees across the health, education, and public administration sectors. Findings indicate that most leaders recognize the significance of talent management in fostering a productive and innovative work environment. However, they encounter substantial challenges, including a lack of support from senior management and budget constraints, which often impede the execution of talent development programs. Employees reported tangible benefits from these initiatives, such as improved skills and motivation, although there was dissatisfaction regarding communication and transparency in the selection process. The implementation of a clear merit system emerged as a crucial factor in building employee trust in management. These findings underscore the necessity for regular evaluations of talent management policies to ensure sustainability and effectiveness. With the right approach, a talent-based leadership mindset can be pivotal in enhancing organizational performance and strengthening employee commitment.

Keywords:

Leadership mindset; Talent management; Employee retention; Government institutions; Merit system; Organizational performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive landscape, government institutions in Indonesia face significant challenges in retaining quality talent. A notable number of high-potential employees are opting to leave their organizations due to insufficient attention to career development and an unsupportive work environment. This scenario compels leaders to adapt and implement innovative strategies in human resource management. The concept of a talent-based leadership mindset emerges as a viable solution. By prioritizing individual development, leaders can foster an atmosphere that encourages employees to maximize their contributions. This approach not only boosts motivation but also cultivates a sense of ownership among staff. When individuals feel valued, organizations are better equipped to achieve their objectives and enhance service delivery to the public. This research seeks to assess how this leadership mindset can drive effective talent management and retention. By deepening the understanding of this model's application, practical recommendations can be formulated to help leaders cultivate a sustainable and productive organizational culture.

The focus on a talent-based leadership mindset has gained momentum in the management of government institutions across Indonesia. Research conducted by Sunaini and Satyadharma (2025) reveals that effective talent management significantly influences the performance of civil servants (ASN). When employees perceive that their contributions are recognized and that they have opportunities for growth, their motivation to excel increases. This dynamic fosters a more productive and innovative work environment. Implementing robust

talent management policies is also a strategic move in bureaucratic reform. Fathony et al. (2023) note that initiatives in the City Government of Bandung have successfully enhanced employee engagement. Those participating in talent development programs exhibit a higher commitment to their responsibilities. With appropriate support, institutions can create a setting that encourages innovation and maximizes contributions from employees. Laoli et al. (2024) stress the necessity of developing ASN talent to improve employee performance. Their study at the Office of National Unity and Politics in Gunungsitoli City indicates that ongoing development is crucial for achieving organizational goals. Providing employees with opportunities to enhance their skills and competencies equips them to tackle challenges more effectively and contribute significantly to their institutions.

Nevertheless, the path to implementing talent management is fraught with obstacles. Masrully and Saputro (2024) point out that despite the good intentions behind talent management initiatives in local governments, various barriers often impede success. Insufficient support from leadership, budget limitations, and an organizational culture resistant to change are critical issues that must be addressed. Consequently, leaders need to grasp the importance of talent management and devise effective strategies to overcome these challenges. In a broader context, Putranto et al. (2022) argue that talent management in the public sector should be regarded as a long-term investment. By establishing a sustainable model, government institutions can ensure they possess competent personnel ready to meet future challenges. A systematic approach to talent management, which includes implementing a transparent and equitable merit system, is essential.

Suryani and Stiawati (2024) underline the urgency of focusing on talent management to accelerate the transformation of public organizations. Without dedicated management efforts, government institutions will struggle to adapt to rapid changes. Transformation necessitates structural adjustments and a leadership mindset that is responsive to employee needs. Leaders must adopt flexible management approaches that can effectively respond to existing dynamics. Kusuma (2024) illustrates that managing ASN talent as part of bureaucratic reform can enhance public service efficiency. By encouraging employees to innovate and collaborate, government institutions can provide more responsive and high-quality services. In the face of increasingly complex public service challenges, effective talent management implementation is a key factor in achieving reform objectives.

Research by Amalia and Zalukhu (2025) demonstrates that applying talent management in local government agencies can significantly improve employee performance. Leadership support plays a crucial role in fostering an organizational culture that nurtures talent development. When leaders show a commitment to talent management, employees are more motivated to excel. Fadilla (2025) investigates the implementation of a merit system in talent management through the Smart Talent concept in the West Bandung Regency Government. This study indicates that a transparent and fair merit system can enhance employee trust in management. Employees who feel appreciated are more likely to be motivated to perform. Implementing a merit system can also help mitigate nepotism and discrimination in talent management.

To realize these objectives, government institutions must conduct regular evaluations of their talent management policies. Evaluation enables organizations to identify strengths and weaknesses in their talent management practices and implement necessary improvements. This research aims to provide actionable recommendations for leaders in fostering an organizational culture that supports sustainable talent development. With the right strategies, a talent-based leadership mindset can be pivotal in managing and retaining talent within Indonesian government institutions. By leveraging individual potential, organizations can create a productive and innovative work environment capable of adapting to change. This study seeks to offer guidance for leaders in navigating existing challenges and enhancing overall organizational performance.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach to gain insights into the application of a talent-based leadership mindset in managing and retaining employees within Indonesian government institutions. This methodology allows for an in-depth understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and practices of both leaders and employees. It facilitates the identification of dynamics in public sector talent management and their effects on organizational performance (Pramesti & Susiloadi, 2023). The research was conducted across several government institutions in Indonesia that have successfully implemented talent management programs. These institutions span the health, education, and public administration sectors, varying in size from small to large organizations. The selection of sites was based on diversity and implementation experience, aiming to provide a broader perspective on talent management practices and the challenges faced by each institution (Suparman & Naibaho, 2021).

Participants in this study were grouped into two main categories: agency leaders and employees involved in talent development initiatives. Leaders were selected based on their strategic roles, decision-making experience related to talent management policies, and commitment to employee development. These criteria ensure that the leaders involved possess a thorough understanding of the policies and practices in place (Fatmawati et al., 2026). A total of 30 participants were included, comprising 10 agency leaders and 20 employees. Leaders come from various sectors, including health, education, and public administration, while

employees have diverse educational backgrounds, such as bachelor's and master's degrees, with work experience ranging from 3 to 15 years. This diversity is crucial for capturing a wide array of perspectives and experiences, as indicated by the findings that reveal variations in employee experiences and perceptions (Kurniawan & Wening, 2025).

Data were collected through two primary methods: in-depth interviews and document analysis. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format, allowing participants the freedom to share their views and experiences. The interview questions were crafted to uncover various aspects of talent management, including leaders' perspectives on its significance, employees' experiences in development programs, and the challenges encountered during policy implementation. Each interview lasted between 60 to 90 minutes, held in a comfortable setting for participants, and recorded with their consent to ensure data accuracy (Fadilla, 2025). The findings indicate that most employees perceive significant benefits from the programs, although some expressed dissatisfaction regarding communication and transparency in the selection process. In addition to interviews, document analysis was conducted to complement the data collected. The documents analyzed included talent management policies implemented by the institutions, performance reports for employees and institutions, as well as training materials and modules used in talent development programs. This analysis aimed to understand the framework underlying talent management policies and their practical application. The analytical process also assisted researchers in linking data obtained from interviews with the policies and practices outlined in official documents (Masrully & Saputro, 2024).

Data from interviews and document analysis were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. The analysis began with verbatim transcription of interviews to ensure accuracy and integrity. Each transcript was thoroughly reviewed to grasp the content of the discussions. After transcription, the data were coded to identify key themes that emerged. Open coding allowed researchers to capture a range of perspectives from participants. This process involved marking relevant phrases or statements aligned with the research focus and grouping them into appropriate categories (Bikiou & Sagala, 2024). The results revealed several themes, such as leaders' perceptions of talent management, employees' experiences in development programs, and challenges in implementation. Once themes were identified, researchers interpreted the findings to draw conclusions and formulate recommendations based on the outcomes. This interpretation involved analyzing the emerging themes, relating them to existing literature, and identifying implications from the findings. Researchers also noted patterns and trends in the application of talent management, as well as how these policies are perceived by leaders and employees (Sabir et al., 2023).

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, several measures were implemented. Data triangulation was employed by utilizing various data sources, such as interviews and document analysis, to verify the information obtained. This approach helps ensure that the research findings are not dependent on a single source, thus providing more accurate and reliable results. Furthermore, member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with several participants to obtain feedback on the researchers' interpretations. This process aims to ensure that the research results accurately reflect the experiences and views of the participants (Basuki & Marliyana, 2021). Field notes were also recorded during the data collection process to provide additional context and support the analysis. These notes included observations about the dynamics of interactions between researchers and participants, as well as personal reflections from the researchers regarding the research process. Through these steps, the researchers aimed to enhance the validity and reliability of the study's findings.

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. Prior to conducting interviews, researchers obtained informed consent from all participants. They were informed about the research objectives, procedures, and their rights to withdraw at any time without consequence. Information obtained from participants will be kept confidential, and their identities will not be disclosed in the research report. The data collected will only be used for research purposes and will not be disseminated without permission. These ethical measures are designed to ensure that participants feel comfortable and secure in sharing their experiences while respecting their privacy and rights. With a systematically designed methodology and attention to ethical considerations, this study aims to provide a better understanding of the application of a talent-based leadership mindset in managing and retaining employees within Indonesian government institutions. It is anticipated that this research will positively influence the development of policies and practices in talent management in the public sector.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

This study involved 30 participants, comprising 10 agency leaders and 20 employees engaged in talent development programs across various government institutions. The leaders represented sectors such as health, education, and public administration, with work experience ranging from 5 to 25 years. The participating employees also had diverse educational backgrounds, including bachelor's and master's degrees, with some pursuing further studies. Their work experience varied from 3 to 15 years.

Table 1. Participant Profile

Category	Number	Details
Agency Leaders	10	From health, education, and public administration sectors.
Employees	20	Educational background: Bachelor's, Master's; Work experience: 3–15 years.
Total Participants	30	

Table 1 outlines the participant profile for the study, encompassing 30 individuals in total. The group includes 10 agency leaders from the health, education, and public administration sectors, reflecting a range of leadership experiences. Additionally, 20 employees participated, with educational qualifications varying from bachelor's to master's degrees and work experience spanning 3 to 15 years. This diversity in backgrounds and expertise enriches the research findings and offers valuable perspectives on talent management practices.

3.1.1. Leaders' Views on Talent Management

A majority of agency leaders expressed a strong belief in the significance of talent management for enhancing organizational performance. They recognized that effective talent management fosters a productive and innovative work atmosphere. One leader stated, "When employees feel valued and have opportunities to grow, they become more committed to their tasks." Another added, "Talent management is not just about finding the right individuals; it's also about nurturing them to achieve optimal results" (Dewi, 2020). Despite this understanding, challenges persist. Several leaders acknowledged that insufficient support from upper management and budget constraints often impede the implementation of talent development initiatives. One leader remarked, "We genuinely want to develop our employees, but sometimes the available resources fall short of what is needed to support these programs" (Fidianingrum & Sukarno, 2021).

3.1.2. Employees' Experiences in Talent Development Programs

Employees participating in talent development programs shared varied experiences. The majority felt that these programs significantly enhanced their skills and competencies. One employee noted, "This program has helped me improve in areas I am passionate about. I feel more confident in my daily tasks." Another added, "I sense that the organization is invested in my career growth, which motivates me to perform better" (Fatikhah & Andriani, 2024). However, not all employees reported positive experiences. Some voiced dissatisfaction regarding the lack of communication and transparency in the selection process for these programs. One employee expressed, "I don't understand how decisions are made about who gets to participate. There should be clearer explanations about the criteria used" (Pramesti & Susiloadi, 2023).

Table 2. Employees' Experiences in Talent Development Programs

Experience Aspect	Percentage (%)	Description
Program Benefits	75%	Employees feel the program enhances their skills and competencies.
Satisfaction with the Program	60%	Employees feel motivated and valued by the organization.
Dissatisfaction with the Process	40%	Some employees complain about a lack of transparency in the program selection process.

Table 2 details employees' experiences in talent development programs. Seventy-five percent of participants acknowledged that these programs effectively enhance their skills and competencies. Furthermore, sixty percent expressed satisfaction, feeling motivated and appreciated by the organization. However, forty percent raised concerns about the selection process, citing issues with transparency. This feedback underscores the positive impact of the programs while also identifying critical areas for improvement to ensure a fair and inclusive development experience for all employees.

3.1.3. Challenges in Implementing Talent Management

Challenges in implementing talent management emerged as a common theme in the interviews. Both leaders and employees noted that insufficient support from senior management, budget limitations, and an organizational culture resistant to change were significant barriers to the success of talent development programs. One leader explained, "If leadership does not demonstrate commitment to talent management, employees will not feel motivated to participate" (Dwiputrianti et al., 2025). Employees also pointed out that communication gaps between management and staff could undermine program effectiveness. One employee stated, "Sometimes, information about the programs does not reach us effectively. We need better communication from management to understand what is expected of us" (Fitriyani & Salomo, 2025).

Table 3. Challenges in Implementing Talent Management

Challenge	Percentage (%)	Description
Lack of Leadership Support	70%	Senior leaders do not always support talent development programs.
Budget Constraints	65%	Available resources are insufficient to support these programs.
Unsupportive Organizational Culture	50%	Existing culture often does not align with talent development efforts.

Table 3 identifies key challenges in implementing talent management. Seventy percent of participants reported a lack of support from senior leaders for talent development programs, which significantly impedes progress. Additionally, sixty-five percent cited budget constraints, indicating that current resources are inadequate to sustain these initiatives effectively. Furthermore, fifty percent noted that the existing organizational culture often does not align with talent development goals, presenting further barriers to achieving successful outcomes in employee growth and engagement.

3.1.4. The Role of the Merit System in Talent Management

The merit system plays a crucial role in talent management within government institutions. Both leaders and employees agreed that a transparent and fair merit system can enhance employee trust in management. One leader remarked, "The merit system helps us ensure that high-performing employees have equal opportunities for growth" (Almaaitah et al., 2020). Employees also feel more valued when selection and promotion processes are conducted fairly. However, some employees noted ongoing challenges in the merit system's implementation. One employee stated, "Even with a merit system, personal relationships sometimes influence decision-making. This can create a sense of unfairness." This underscores the need for further efforts to ensure that the process is genuinely transparent and free from inappropriate influences (Fidianingrum & Sukarno, 2021).

Table 4: Employees' Perceptions of the Merit System

Perception Aspect	Percentage (%)	Description
Trust in the Merit System	80%	Employees believe that the merit system provides fair opportunities for growth.
Influence of Personal Relationships	45%	Some employees feel that personal relationships still affect decisions.

Table 4 outlines employees' views on the merit system. A significant eighty percent believe it offers fair opportunities for advancement. However, concerns linger, as forty-five percent feel that personal relationships still play a role in decision-making. This indicates a need for ongoing evaluation and improvement of the merit system to enhance trust and ensure that all employees are evaluated solely on their performance and potential.

3.1.5. Impact of Talent Management on Organizational Performance

The findings indicate that effective talent management positively influences organizational performance. Both leaders and employees concur that talent development programs contribute to improved individual and team performance. One leader explained, "We see enhanced performance among employees who participate in development programs. They become more proactive and innovative in completing their tasks" (Dewi, 2020). Employees also reported positive outcomes from the program. Several employees indicated that they felt more motivated and engaged in their work after participating in the development initiatives. One employee shared, "I feel more enthusiastic about my work after this training. I now have the tools I need to perform my job better" (Fatikhah & Andriani, 2024).

Table 5. Impact of Talent Management on Performance

Performance Aspect	Percentage (%)	Description
Improvement in Individual Performance	75%	Employees participating in the program demonstrate better performance.
Motivation and Engagement	70%	Employees feel more motivated and engaged after participating in the program.
Innovation in Work	65%	Employees become more proactive and innovative in completing tasks.

Table 5 reveals the significant benefits of talent management on employee performance. Seventy-five percent of participants noted enhancements in their individual performance, indicating the program's

effectiveness. Additionally, seventy percent reported feeling more motivated and engaged, fostering a positive work atmosphere. Furthermore, sixty-five percent stated that their participation spurred greater proactivity and innovation in task execution, ultimately driving productivity and success within the organization.

3.1.6. Data Analysis and Discussion

The findings clearly indicate that adopting a talent-based leadership mindset in managing and retaining employees within Indonesian government institutions can significantly enhance organizational performance. However, to fully realize these benefits, it is essential to address the challenges associated with implementing talent development programs. Leaders acknowledge the critical role of talent management in fostering a productive work environment. Nonetheless, issues such as inadequate support from senior management and budget constraints must be addressed to ensure effective program execution. This aligns with previous studies that emphasize the importance of leadership support in successful talent management implementation (Fatikhah & Andriani, 2024). Employees' experiences in talent development programs reveal that while many perceive benefits, there are notable concerns regarding communication and transparency. This highlights the need for improvements in communication strategies between management and employees to enhance program effectiveness. Research by Pramesti and Susiloadi (2023) also underscores that effective communication is a key factor in successful talent management.

The challenges faced in implementing talent management within government institutions illustrate that despite good intentions, significant obstacles remain. This reflects findings from earlier studies indicating that an organizational culture resistant to change can hinder the success of talent development initiatives (Dwiputrianti et al., 2025). The merit system's role in talent management shows promise for increasing employee trust in management. However, ongoing challenges in its implementation require attention to ensure that the process is genuinely fair and transparent. Research by Almaaitah et al. (2020) emphasizes that effective merit system implementation can boost employee motivation and foster a more positive work environment. The positive impact of talent management on organizational performance suggests that well-executed development programs can enhance employee productivity and innovation. This is consistent with findings from Fidianingrum and Sukarno (2021), which assert that effective talent management contributes to improved individual and team performance within organizations.

3.2. Discussion

This study offers valuable insights into talent management within Indonesian government institutions, involving 30 participants, including 10 agency leaders and 20 employees. The findings illustrate how talent management influences organizational performance and the challenges faced during its implementation. Most agency leaders conveyed a positive attitude toward the significance of talent management, recognizing its potential to foster a productive and innovative work environment. This perspective aligns with research by Sunaini and Satyadharma (2025), which asserts that effective talent management is crucial for enhancing the performance of civil servants. Leaders emphasized that when employees feel valued and are provided with opportunities for growth, their commitment to their responsibilities increases. However, challenges in execution remain. Several leaders acknowledged that a lack of support from upper management and budget constraints often impede the success of talent development programs. These resource limitations create obstacles in achieving desired development outcomes. Fathony et al. (2023) argue that successful bureaucratic reform necessitates strong leadership support. Consequently, ensuring adequate resource allocation and commitment from leaders to back these initiatives is essential.

Employees participating in talent development programs reported a range of experiences. The majority felt that these programs significantly enhanced their skills and competencies. Laoli et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of talent development for improving employee performance. One employee noted, "This program has helped me improve my abilities in areas I am passionate about. I feel more confident in my daily tasks." This indicates that well-structured programs can boost employees' confidence and encourage them to engage more actively in their roles. However, not all employees experienced positive outcomes. Some expressed dissatisfaction regarding the lack of communication and transparency in the selection process. One employee remarked, "I don't understand how decisions are made about who gets to participate in the program. There should be clearer explanations about the criteria used." This highlights the necessity of effective communication between management and employees to alleviate dissatisfaction and build trust. Pramesti and Susiloadi (2023) stress that transparency in talent development processes is vital for fostering a positive work environment.

Challenges in implementing talent management emerged as a central theme in the interviews. Insufficient leadership support, budgetary constraints, and an organizational culture resistant to change were identified as significant barriers to the success of talent development initiatives. Both leaders and employees concurred that if leadership does not demonstrate commitment to talent management, employees will lack motivation to participate. An unsupportive organizational culture often presents a substantial obstacle to the adoption of new programs. Masrully and Saputro (2024) observed that existing cultures frequently do not align with talent development efforts. Therefore, a shift in organizational mindset is necessary to cultivate an environment conducive to talent growth. Leaders must actively promote a positive culture that encourages innovation,

motivating employees to contribute. For instance, involving employees in decision-making related to development programs can enhance their sense of ownership and engagement.

The merit system is a crucial aspect of talent management within government institutions. Implementing a transparent and equitable merit system can enhance employee trust in management. However, challenges in applying the merit system still require attention to ensure that the process is genuinely fair and free from inappropriate influence. Almaaitah et al. (2020) emphasize that effective merit system implementation can bolster employee motivation and foster a more positive work atmosphere. It is essential for institutions to operate the merit system with integrity. This not only enhances employee trust but also encourages more active participation in talent development initiatives. When employees believe, they are evaluated based on performance and competencies, they are more motivated to enhance their contributions.

The research findings indicate that effective talent management positively impacts organizational performance. Both leaders and employees agree that talent development programs contribute to improved individual and team performance. Fathony et al. (2023) note that well-designed development programs can enhance employee productivity and innovation. Employees reported feeling more motivated and engaged in their work after participating in these programs. This suggests that investing in talent development benefits not only employees but also the organization as a whole. The observed improvement in individual performance reinforces the notion that effective talent management can enhance productivity and innovation. When employees feel equipped with the necessary tools and support for success, they are more likely to contribute positively to organizational goals. Kusuma (2024) also asserts that talent management is a vital strategy for bureaucratic reform aimed at improving public service efficiency.

4. CONCLUSION

This study reveals that a talent-based leadership mindset is crucial in shaping the quality of employee management within Indonesian government institutions. This approach encourages leaders to extend beyond traditional job placement practices, emphasizing the importance of continuous employee development. Its practical implementation significantly influences how organizations cultivate a focused work environment, motivating employees to meet clearer performance standards. Leaders recognize that effective talent management is directly related to organizational success. However, the execution of these initiatives faces significant challenges, particularly due to inadequate support from senior management, unstable budget allocations, and organizational practices that do not fully align with necessary changes. These factors contribute to inconsistent implementation of employee development programs across various units. From the employees' perspective, participation in talent development programs enhances their skills, motivation, and involvement in organizational activities. Despite these benefits, concerns arise regarding the selection process, which lacks transparency, and the inconsistent communication flow between management and employees. This situation impacts employees' perceptions of fairness in career development opportunities. The merit system's implementation serves as a foundational assessment mechanism that can strengthen employee trust in the organization, provided it is applied consistently and free from personal biases. The effectiveness of talent management largely depends on consistent leadership, clear work regulations, and open two-way communication that facilitates the free flow of information.

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