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Employee Engagement Among Generation Z in Tourism Business: The Role of Technology, Organizational Culture, and Servant Leadership

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ABSTRACT
Employee engagement among Generation Z in tourism businesses is essential as they enter the workforce. This study examines how information technology utilization, organizational culture, and servant leadership influence employee engagement among Generation Z in Jakarta's tourism sector. It also explores the mediating role of servant leadership in these relationships. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 200 respondents through purposive sampling. Analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4 software. The results indicate that information technology utilization, organizational culture, and servant leadership positively impact employee engagement. Additionally, servant leadership mediates the relationship between information technology utilization, organizational culture, and employee engagement. This study contributes to employee engagement theory by emphasizing the psychological conditions necessary for full engagement. It also underscores servant leadership's role in fostering psychological safety through support, empowerment, and ethical guidance. From a practical perspective, the findings highlight the need for tourism businesses to leverage technology, build a strong organizational culture, and adopt servant leadership practices that align with Generation Z's expectations to enhance engagement.

Keywords: *employee engagement; information technology utilization; organizational culture; servant leadership; tourism business*

INTRODUCTION
Employee engagement has emerged as a critical component in human resource management across industries, particularly within service-oriented sectors, including tourism. In the tourism industry, where customer experience and service quality are primary competitive advantages, the role of employees becomes central to organizational success. Engaged employees are likelier to demonstrate enthusiasm, persistence, and dedication, improving service performance and guest satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2009; Liu et al., 2025; Phan et al., 2023). They also foster a positive organizational culture and reduce turnover rates, enhancing workforce stability and profitability (Bakker & Leiter, 2010; Karatepe et al., 2022). Therefore, tourism businesses must implement effective strategies that boost employee engagement to maintain high service standards and ensure long-term organizational competitiveness.

Despite the increasing academic attention on sustainable tourism, there is a disproportionate focus on environmental and destination-related aspects, while the sustainability of the tourism workforce remains underexplored (Baum, 2007; Scheyvens, 2007). This is particularly evident in rural tourism contexts where the workforce often consists of informal, seasonal labor with limited access to training or social protection, making them vulnerable and less productive (Novelli et al., 2012). In contrast, urban tourism hubs like Jakarta face distinct yet equally critical challenges, including digital transformation, workforce turnover, and generational shifts. Thus, workforce sustainability, especially employee engagement, deserves more critical examination as a strategic factor in ensuring the long-term viability of tourism enterprises (AlNaqbi & Shamsudin, 2024; Mahran et al., 2025).

Tourism drives global and national economic growth by generating employment opportunities, stimulating investment, and significantly contributing to GDP (Hasibuan et al., 2023; Rasool et al., 2021). As one of the

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world's fastest-growing industries, tourism not only supports direct employment in hospitality, transportation, and travel services (Thommandru et al., 2023) but also has a multiplier effect on other sectors, such as retail, entertainment, and infrastructure development (Dogru et al., 2019).

In Indonesia, tourism remains a strategic sector, with the government actively promoting sustainable tourism initiatives, improving infrastructure, and supporting the growth of new destinations. Policies such as developing 5 Super Priority Tourism Destinations and digitalizing tourism services demonstrate Indonesia's commitment to enhancing its global competitiveness. Sustainable tourism practices are also encouraged to balance economic benefits with environmental and socio-cultural preservation (Achmad, 2023; Kusumah, 2024; Partelow, 2020; Prayitno, 2023).

As a capital city and central tourism hub, Jakarta reflects the complexities of the national tourism labor market, characterized by a mixture of formal and informal sectors, high service expectations, and evolving consumer demands. The city's hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and attractions rely heavily on human resources for value creation, placing employee engagement at the heart of service delivery and innovation (Kristiana et al., 2025). The challenge lies in ensuring that these businesses attract, retain, and motivate employees, particularly among the younger generation entering the workforce.

As Generation Z enters the workforce, the tourism industry is experiencing significant shifts in workplace dynamics. Born between 1997 and 2012, Generation Z is becoming an increasingly dominant segment of the labor market, particularly in the hospitality and tourism sector (Goh & Okumus, 2020). Unlike previous generations, Generation Z employees exhibit distinct work values and expectations, requiring companies to adapt their management strategies to engage and retain them effectively.

One of the defining characteristics of Generation Z employees is their desire for meaningful work that aligns with their values. They seek workplaces that foster inclusivity, purpose-driven missions, and opportunities for personal and professional growth (Chen et al., 2018; Sakdiyakorn et al., 2021). This generation also values flexibility, work-life balance, and a collaborative work environment, which influences their level of engagement in the workplace. However, the tourism industry, characterized by demanding work conditions such as long hours, physically intensive tasks, and relatively low wages, poses challenges in maintaining high levels of engagement among Generation Z employees (Goh & Lee, 2018; Seyfi et al., 2024).

Given these challenges, organizations in the tourism sector must recognize the critical factors contributing to Generation Z employee engagement. Employers must implement strategies that address their expectations, such as providing career development opportunities, leveraging technology to streamline tasks, and fostering a supportive work culture. Leadership also plays a pivotal role in engagement, as Generation Z employees respond positively to servant leadership approaches that emphasize empathy, empowerment, and ethical guidance. As the proportion of Generation Z employees in tourism businesses continues to grow, companies must proactively adapt their policies and workplace cultures to attract, engage, and retain this new generation of workers. By doing so, they can build a motivated, committed workforce capable of driving the future success of the tourism industry.

Information technology is a crucial factor in enhancing employee engagement in the digital era. Effective information technology improves work efficiency, supports better communication, and facilitates more flexible work processes, contributing to increased employee engagement, particularly among Generation Z, who are highly familiar with digital technology (Szymkowiak et al., 2021). Information technology enhances employee engagement by improving communication, collaboration, and productivity in the workplace. Advanced information technology systems can also facilitate feedback mechanisms and streamline processes, making employees feel supported and valued (Chatzifoti et al., 2024; Lukić, 2023). Digital transformation, driven by information technology, improves organizational processes and employee performance by aligning leadership with technology initiatives. Additionally, information technology empowers employees, encouraging deeper engagement by meeting their needs for efficient work systems and innovative environments (Qiao et al., 2024).

Organizational culture shapes employees' attitudes, behaviors, and overall workplace dynamics. Organizational culture consists of a set of fundamental assumptions shared by a group, developed through experiences in addressing external challenges and internal coordination (Schein, 2004; Tadesse Bogale & Debela,

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2024). These assumptions, regarded as valid, are passed down to new members as the proper way to interpret, think about, and respond to organizational issues. Essentially, organizational culture represents the deeply embedded beliefs that influence how an organization functions, often operating unconsciously among its members.

As a crucial component of social knowledge, organizational culture establishes the norms, values, and shared beliefs that guide organizational interactions and decision-making (Saebah & Merthayasa, 2023; Spicer, 2020). It is the foundation for workplace expectations, influencing how employees collaborate, communicate, and contribute to organizational goals. A strong and positive organizational culture fosters an environment where employees feel valued, motivated, and aligned with the company's vision. This, in turn, reinforces organizational values and enhances employee commitment (Schein, 2010; Tadesse Bogale & Debela, 2024). Organizations with a well-defined culture promote consistency in work practices, strengthen employee identity, and create a sense of belonging, leading to higher engagement levels. Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated the positive relationship between organizational culture and employee engagement. Research indicates that a supportive and inclusive organizational culture significantly enhances employees' willingness to contribute and stay committed to their roles (Saebah & Merthayasa, 2024; Siswanto, 2023). Moreover, Lee (2020) found that employees working in environments with strong cultural values exhibit a greater commitment to their responsibilities, ultimately leading to improved job performance and organizational success.

Servant leadership is widely acknowledged as a critical factor in enhancing employee engagement, particularly in contemporary organizational settings. This leadership approach prioritizes employees' needs, fosters a supportive and inclusive work environment, and promotes engagement by ensuring employees feel valued and empowered (Eva et al., 2019). Unlike traditional leadership models that emphasize authority and control, servant leadership focuses on the well-being and development of employees, thereby creating conditions conducive to higher engagement levels. Servant leaders significantly contribute to the assessment and development of their followers, thereby enhancing employee motivation and commitment (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011; El Reqib & Tariq, 2025). When employees perceive that their leaders genuinely care for their professional and personal growth, they are more likely to exhibit dedication and actively contribute to organizational success (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Irvan et al, 2022). Furthermore, employees tend to demonstrate higher levels of engagement when their personal needs are met, enhancing their sense of belonging and job satisfaction (Page & Wong, 2000; Yan et al., 2020). In academic contexts, research has consistently highlighted the significant impact of servant leadership on employee engagement, reinforcing its relevance across various industries (Aboramadan et al., 2022; Zhou et al., 2022).

This research addresses existing gaps in the literature. Studies on employee engagement within the tourism sector remain limited (Radic et al., 2020). Canavesi and Minelli (2022) highlight the significance of servant leadership in enhancing employee engagement. However, its role as a mediator has not been thoroughly examined. However, previous research has primarily focused on Generation Y (Millennials), while the engagement of Generation Z employees in the tourism sector remains underexplored (Chillakuri, 2020).

Building on the identified research gaps, this study examines the factors influencing employee engagement among Generation Z employees in Jakarta's tourism business. Specifically, it explores the roles of information technology utilization, organizational culture, and servant leadership in enhancing employee engagement. Additionally, this research investigates the mediating role of servant leadership in this relationship, which represents the novelty of this study in the context of the tourism business sector.

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Conceptual Framework

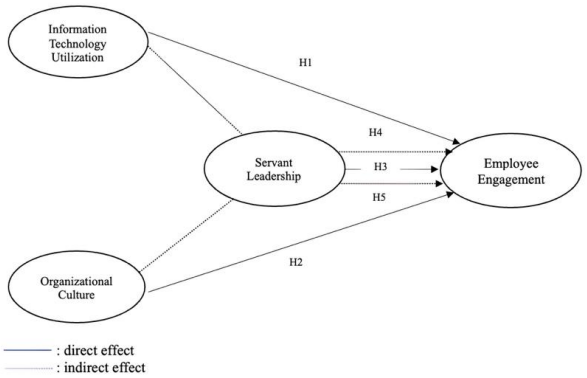


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Based on the above conceptual framework (Figure 1), the hypotheses formulated in this study are as follows:

H1: Information technology utilization has a positive effect on employee engagement
H2: Organizational culture has a positive effect on employee engagement
H3: Servant leadership has a positive effect on employee engagement
H4: Servant leadership mediates the relationship between information technology utilization and employee engagement
H5: Servant leadership mediates the relationship between organizational culture and employee engagement

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research approach using a survey method with a questionnaire. The target respondents are Generation Z employees working in Jakarta's tourism businesses (hotels, F&B services, travel agencies, and tourist attractions). Purposive sampling was employed, specifically targeting Generation Z employees in the tourism sector with at least one year of work experience in their current tourism-related job.

Respondents were recruited from diverse tourism business types and across different company sizes and locations within Jakarta to reduce selection bias and ensure representativeness. This ensured variation in roles, work environments, and exposure to organizational practices. Although purposive, the sampling process adhered to inclusion criteria to capture a broad representation of Generation Z tourism workers.

Jakarta was chosen as the research site due to its strategic role as Indonesia's leading tourism business hub, where digital transformation and workforce development policies are actively implemented. Although not among the Five Super Priority Tourism Destinations, Jakarta is a national entry point and pilot location for tourism digitalization initiatives. Therefore, studying Generation Z employees in Jakarta aligns with Indonesia's efforts to enhance global tourism competitiveness through policy and technological innovation.

According to Kock and Hadaya (2018), there are two methods for estimating the minimum sample size: the inverse square root method and the gamma-exponential method. This study adopts the inverse square root method, which requires a minimum sample size of 160 respondents. In total, 200 respondents participated in this study. This sample size is adequate given the complexity of the structural equation model and the number of latent variables, satisfying the minimum statistical power requirements for PLS-SEM analysis.

The questionnaire measured information technology utilization, organizational culture, servant leadership, and employee engagement, using a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Agree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. Statistical analysis is conducted using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach with the assistance of SmartPLS 4 software.

The selection of PLS-SEM was based on several justifications, as Hair et al. (2017) outlined. Firstly, PLS-SEM is suitable for research involving relatively small sample sizes. Second, it is capable of processing categorical ordinal data. Third, it can handle data with non-normal distribution. Fourth, this approach is well suited to exploratory studies that seek to expand the theoretical framework. Lastly, PLS-SEM is highly effective in analyzing complex research models incorporating multiple variables, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of constructs and testing hypothesized relationships. The PLS-SEM analysis comprises two primary components: the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

The study sample (n = 200) consisted of 52.5% male and

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47.5% female respondents. Most respondents were between 21 and 26 years, with 107 respondents (53.5%) in this age range. 71 respondents (33.5%) were aged over 26 years, and 22 (11%) were aged between 15 and 20 years. The data on education levels indicate that the majority of respondents, accounting for 90 respondents (45%), have completed high school, 68 respondents (34%) hold a bachelor's degree (D4/S1), 37 respondents (18.5%) have completed a diploma program (D1-D3). Lastly, 5 respondents (2.5%) fall into the "Other" category, which could include alternative forms of education such as certifications, informal training, or postgraduate studies.

Most respondents reside in Jakarta, accounting for 110 respondents (55%). This is followed by 60 respondents (30%) from West Java, which includes areas such as Bekasi, Bogor, Depok, Karawang, and surrounding regions. Additionally, 30 respondents (15%) are from Banten, covering locations such as Serang, Greater Tangerang, and nearby areas. This distribution highlights the concentration of tourism business professionals in key urban and economic hubs within the Jakarta Area.

The respondent profile based on occupation sector reveals a diverse distribution of professionals across various tourism and hospitality industry segments. The most significant proportion, 70 respondents (35%), are employed in the tourist attraction sector, which includes roles in theme parks, cultural sites, and heritage tourism. This is followed by food and beverage (F&B) services, with 54 respondents (27%), representing those working in restaurants, cafés, and catering businesses. The hotel industry comprises 45 respondents (22.5%), indicating a significant portion of employees engaged in accommodation services. Lastly, travel agents account for 31 respondents (15.5%), reflecting professionals involved in itinerary planning, tour operations, and customer service within the travel industry. Table 1 provides a detailed summary of the respondent profile.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Employees' Details	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	105	52.5%
Female	95	47.5.8%
Age		
15-20	22	11%
21-26	107	53.5%
>26	71	33.5%
Education		
High School	90	45%
D1-D3	37	18.5%
D4/S1	68	34%
Other	5	2.5%
Domicile		
Jakarta	110	55%
Banten (Serang, Greater Tangerang, and surrounding areas)	30	15%
West Java (Bekasi, Bogor, Depok, Karawang, and surrounding areas)	60	30%
Occupation Sector		
Hotel	45	22.5%
F&B Services	54	27%
Travel Agent	31	15.5%
Tourist Attraction	70	35%

Soure: Field data, 2025

Measurement Model

Outer Loading

The loading factor values must exceed 0.7 to assess convergent validity, while the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) should be greater than 0.5. For discriminant validity, the square root of the AVE must surpass the correlations between variables. Reliability is confirmed when the composite reliability surpasses 0.7. As presented in Table 2, all variables in this study fulfill these requirements.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Results

Variable	Item	Loading Factor	CR	AVE
IT Ulitization (IT)	IT1	0.882	0.903	0.720
	IT2	0.874		
	IT3	0.852		
	IT4	0.845		
	IT5	0.785		
Organizational Culture (OC)	OC1	0.811	0.894	0.699
	OC	0.863		
	OC3	0.820		
	OC4	0.869		
	OC5	0.816		
Servant	SL1	0.892	0.904	0.722

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Variable	Item	Loading Factor	CR	AVE
Leadership (SL)	SL2	0.839		
	SL3	0.872		
	SL4	0.839		
	SL5	0.804		
Employee Engagement (EE)	EE1	0.834	0.909	0.731
	EE2	0.847		
	EE3	0.882		
	EE4	0.840		
	EE5	0.871		

Source: Analyzed data, 2025

Discriminat Validity

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Discriminant validity is assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) method, which compares the average correlation of indicators between different constructs to those within the same construct (Hair et al., 2019). A construct is considered to have discriminant validity if the HTMT value is less than 0.9, as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Values

	Information Technology Utilization	Organizational Culture	Servant Leadership	Employee Engagement
Information Technology Utilization	-	-	-	0.889
Organizational Culture	0.854	-	-	0.853
Servant Leadership	0.844	0.862	-	0.838
Employee Engagement	-	-	-	-

Source: Analyzed data, 2025

Cross-Validated Predictive Ability Test (CVPAT)

The Cross-Validated Predictive Ability Test (CVPAT) has been increasingly recommended for evaluating prediction-oriented model comparisons in PLS-SEM (Liengaard et al., 2021). This study incorporates CVPAT analysis alongside the Indicator Average (IA), both at the overall model level and for individual indicators, as presented in Table 4. Based on the flowchart outlined by Sharma et al. (2022), the model meets the criteria for predictive validity. Comparative findings reveal that the PLS model demonstrates lower prediction error than the Indicator Average (IA) and the Linear Model (LM), affirming its superior predictive performance. The validation results indicate that the PLS model exhibits medium to high predictive power.

Table 4. Cross-Validated Predictive Ability Test

Variable	PLS-SEM vs Indicator Average (IA)			PLS-SEM vs Linear model (LM)		
	Average loss difference	t-value	p-value	Average loss difference	t-value	p-value
Employee Engagement	-0.311	4.237	0.000	-0.035	3.941	0.000
Servant Leadership	-0.329	4.619	0.000	-0.032	3.368	0.001
Overall	-0.320	4.504	0.000	-0.034	4.810	0.000

Source: Analyzed data, 2025

Structural Model

This section assesses the significance of path coefficients. Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping technique in PLS-SEM and further validated through a regression model. The corresponding results are presented in Figure 2.

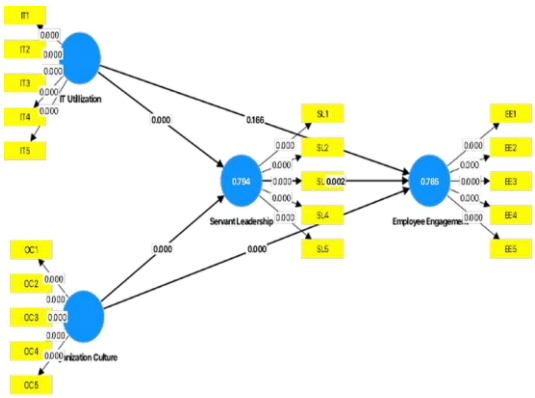


Figure 2. Structural Model
Source: Field data, 2025

Table 5 presents the model fit assessment, indicating that the R^2 value exceeds 0.333, the cross-validated redundancy is positive and above zero, and the SRMR value remains below 0.08.

Table 5. Model Fitness

	R-Square	Q^2	SRMR
Employee Engagement	0.785	0.749	0.047
Servant Leadership	0.794	0.783	

Source: Analyzed data (2025)

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Hypothesis testing aims to assess whether there is sufficient evidence to support or reject the proposed relationships between variables. This study employed a one-tailed test, using a t-table threshold of 1.65 at a 5% significance level. According to Hair et al. (2019), a p-value of less than 0.05 signifies that the hypothesis is supported. The results of the hypothesis testing are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypotheses	Standardized Coefficient	ρ values	Confidence Interval		Results
			5.0%	95.0%	
H1: Information Technology Utilization -> Employee Engagement	0.259	0.002	0.125	0.415	Supported
H2: Organizational Culture -> Employee Engagement	0.637	0.000	0.478	0.768	Supported
H3: Servant Leadership -> Employee Engagement	0.381	0.002	0.149	0.594	Supported
H4: Information Technology Utilization -> Servant Leadership -> Employee Engagement	0.160	0.013	0.055	0.292	Supported
H5: Organizational Culture -> Servant Leadership -> Employee Engagement	0.193	0.004	0.071	0.309	Supported

Source: Analyzed data, 2025

Discussion

The findings indicate that information technology utilization significantly impacts employee engagement (β = 0.259, p = 0.002), thus supporting Hypothesis 1 and corroborating prior findings. Prior studies have established that information technology utilization enhances employee engagement by improving communication, collaboration, and overall workplace productivity. Integrating IT systems facilitates seamless communication and resource accessibility, leading to higher engagement levels. This enables employees to perform tasks more efficiently while fostering a sense of inclusion and connection within teams (Chatzifoti et al., 2024; Lukić, 2023). This study argues that information technology utilization is not merely a technical support tool, but a strategic enabler of employee engagement among digital-native workers, particularly Generation Z.

Information technology utilization becomes even more critical in the context of Generation Z employees in the tourism business. As digital natives, Generation Z workers are highly accustomed to using technology for professional and personal interactions. They expect workplaces to provide digital tools that streamline workflows, facilitate real-time collaboration, and offer continuous learning opportunities. Tourism businesses that leverage IT solutions, such as mobile apps, cloud-based platforms, and AI-driven customer service systems, can better engage Generation Z employees by aligning with their tech-driven work preferences.

Moreover, technology-enhanced work environments foster autonomy and flexibility that Generation Z employees value, allowing them to manage tasks efficiently and control their work. Feedback mechanisms integrated into digital platforms can strengthen engagement by ensuring employees receive timely recognition and constructive input. When organizations in the tourism sector invest in advanced IT infrastructure, they not only improve operational efficiency but also create an engaging work culture that resonates with the expectations of Generation Z employees, ultimately leading to higher job satisfaction and retention.

The results indicate that organizational culture significantly positively impacts employee engagement (β = 0.637, p = 0.000), supporting Hypothesis 2 and aligning with previous studies (Saebah & Merthayasa, 2024; Siswanto, 2023). Organizational culture represents employees' shared attitudes and behaviors, forming a fundamental basis for establishing norms, values, and workplace behaviors (Saebah & Merthayasa, 2023; Spicer, 2020). This study extends previous research by highlighting that organizational culture tailored to Generation Z values, such as inclusivity, digital adaptability, and career meaning, plays a more decisive role in fostering engagement than generic cultural frameworks.

For Generation Z employees working in tourism, organizational culture is a key determinant in influencing their work engagement. Unlike previous generations, Generation Z values perceived organizational support,

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meaningfulness and organizational commitment, which directly influence their level of engagement (Widodo et al., 2025). Studies suggest that organizational culture fosters digital business climate to enhance engagement levels among Generation Z workers (Lazar et al., 2023).

Moreover, Lee (2020) highlighted that a strong organizational culture fosters a sense of commitment and responsibility, which is particularly relevant for Generation Z employees who prioritize workplace flexibility, career growth, and alignment with corporate values (Schroth, 2019). In the tourism sector, where employee interaction with guests is central, a positive organizational culture emphasizing employee well-being, innovation, and teamwork can significantly boost engagement levels (Kristiana, 2025; Kristiana et al., 2025).

The results demonstrate that servant leadership significantly positively impacts employee engagement ($\beta = 0.381$, $p = 0.002$), supporting Hypothesis 3 and aligning with previous research. Servant leadership emphasizes the leader's role in diagnosing and understanding the needs of their followers (El Reqib & Tariq, 2025). Employees tend to be more motivated when their personal and professional needs are fulfilled (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Research also suggests that employees exhibit greater dedication when they perceive their leaders as supportive and focused on their well-being (Page & Wong, 2000; Yan et al., 2020). The impact of servant leadership on engagement has been widely studied in academic settings (Aboramadan et al., 2022; Zhou et al., 2022). This study supports the growing body of literature that positions servant leadership as a central driver of engagement, especially in service-based sectors where relational dynamics and employee-centered management are crucial.

For Generation Z employees in the tourism sector, servant leadership is a key driver in prioritizing flexible work arrangements, career growth and workplaces aligned with sustainability, diversity and social responsibility (Dabija et al., 2023). Unlike previous generations, Generation Z seeks leaders who act as mentors rather than authoritative figures, guiding while empowering employees to take ownership of their work (Wong et al., 2021).

Servant leadership cultivates a workplace environment that resonates with Generation Z's core values, including inclusivity, ethical leadership, and corporate social responsibility (Seyfi et al., 2024). Generation Z employees in the service industry are more likely to demonstrate innovation when guided by leaders who invest in their growth and professional development (Gabriel et al., 2022). However, the disconnect between top management and employees has contributed to low engagement and workplace dissatisfaction, key factors driving turnover (Dwesini, 2019). As a result, the tourism business has shifted its focus toward innovative talent management and strategic recruitment approaches to attract, engage, and retain Generation Z professionals.

The findings indicate that servant leadership is a significant mediating variable in the relationship between information technology utilization and employee engagement (Hypothesis 4) and organizational culture and employee engagement (Hypothesis 5). These results align with previous studies emphasizing the critical role of servant leadership in fostering employee engagement (Aboramadan et al., 2022; Zhou et al., 2022). Servant leaders prioritize employee well-being, empowerment, and development, which enhances workplace motivation and commitment (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). These findings suggest that the mediating role of servant leadership amplifies the impact of IT and organizational culture on engagement by aligning technological and cultural investments with human-centered leadership behaviors.

From a Generation Z perspective in the tourism business, the mediation effect of servant leadership is particularly relevant. Generation Z employees are highly tech-savvy and expect digital integration in their professional environments (Ouedraogo et al., 2023). Thus, the role of information technology utilization in enhancing leadership effectiveness becomes crucial. Servant leaders who facilitate knowledge sharing, can enhance employee engagement (Chen et al., 2022), for example, by leveraging technology to improve communication, collaboration, and access to information within the organization. Furthermore, Generation Z values collaborative and purpose-driven work cultures, making organizational culture a key driver in their engagement levels (Seyfi et al., 2024). Servant leaders bridge organizational values and employee expectations, ensuring alignment that fosters a sense of belonging and job satisfaction (Gabriel et al., 2022).

The novelty of this study lies in integrating information technology utilization, servant leadership, and organizational culture as complementary factors influencing Generation Z employee engagement in the tourism business. While previous research has explored the individual impacts of these variables, this study

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provides a comprehensive mediation model, demonstrating how technology and workplace culture interact through leadership to drive engagement. Given the high turnover rates among Generation Z employees in tourism (Dwesini, 2019), the findings offer practical insights for HR managers and industry leaders to adopt servant leadership principles, enhance IT adoption, and cultivate an inclusive organizational culture to attract and retain young talent.

This study contributes to the existing literature by integrating information technology utilization, organizational culture, and servant leadership as complementary determinants of employee engagement. While previous research has examined these variables separately, this study offers a comprehensive mediation model elucidating their interconnected effects. It reinforces employee engagement theory, which emphasizes the psychological conditions necessary for employees to fully engage in their work, meaningfulness, safety, and availability (Kahn, 1990). In this context, information technology utilization and organizational culture create an enabling environment that fosters meaningful work experiences. At the same time, servant leadership enhances psychological safety by providing support, empowerment, and ethical guidance. Moreover, the study expands on leadership theories by showcasing the role of servant leadership in fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment, particularly for Generation Z employees who prioritize flexibility, collaboration, and purpose-driven work.

The findings of this study offer several specific and actionable implications for tourism business practitioners, particularly in effectively managing and engaging employees from Generation Z. First, the strong influence of information technology utilization on employee engagement underscores the importance of investing in integrated, mobile-friendly digital platforms that support real-time collaboration, seamless knowledge sharing, and continuous learning. Tourism and hospitality organizations are encouraged to adopt cloud-based systems to enhance operational efficiency. Moreover, integrating digital learning platforms, including gamified microlearning tools, can address the learning preferences of Generation Z and support ongoing skills development.

Second, the role of organizational culture in enhancing engagement among Generation Z necessitates the development of workplace environments that prioritize inclusivity, transparency, and shared ethical values. Tourism businesses should implement structured initiatives such as diversity and inclusion programs, open communication forums, and employee-led corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects. These cultural strategies are critical to Generation Z, who value authenticity, social impact, and ethical workplace leadership.

Third, the study highlights the need to strengthen organizational servant leadership practices. Human Resource (HR) managers should design leadership development programs that emphasize competencies such as empathy, humility, listening, and empowerment. Practical steps may include 360-degree feedback systems, mentoring circles, and role-playing workshops that equip managerial staff with the skills necessary to foster a supportive leadership climate. Organizations can bridge hierarchical gaps by promoting servant leadership and enhancing trust, psychological safety, and well-being among Generation Z employees.

Finally, organizations must provide precise and personalized career development opportunities to address high turnover rates among Generation Z workers. Initiatives such as individual development plans (IDPs), quarterly coaching sessions, and access to cross-functional projects can support professional growth and long-term retention. Generation Z is more likely to remain in organizations that invest in their personal and professional aspirations, offer flexibility, and create visible pathways for advancement.

Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations. First, the research is limited to the tourism businesses (hotels, F&B services, travel agencies, and tourist attractions) in Jakarta, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to another city in Indonesia. Future studies could explore whether similar relationships hold in different service industries.

Second, while this study focuses on servant leadership as a mediating variable, additional mediators or moderators, such as employee resilience, digital literacy, or psychological safety, could be explored to deepen understanding of engagement dynamics among Generation Z employees. Lastly, as the digital workplace continues to evolve, future research should examine the role of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual collaboration tools, and augmented reality in shaping employee engagement and leadership effectiveness in the tourism business.

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CONCLUSION

The study highlights the significant impact of information technology utilization, organizational culture, and servant leadership on employee engagement, particularly for Generation Z employees in the tourism business. As digital natives, Generation Z employees highly value technology-driven work environments that enhance communication, collaboration, and operational efficiency. The findings reveal that information technology utilization positively influences engagement.

A strong organizational culture also contributes to higher engagement levels by instilling a sense of belonging, motivation, and alignment with company values. Generation Z employees are known for seeking workplaces that prioritize inclusivity, purpose-driven missions, and a positive work atmosphere. A well-established organizational culture supports these expectations and helps retain young talent in the competitive tourism industry.

Furthermore, servant leadership is a crucial mediator in this dynamic, emphasizing employee growth, empowerment, and well-being. Leaders who embrace servant leadership actively support their teams, encourage professional development, and create a psychologically safe environment. The study's key contribution lies in demonstrating how these three factors, technology, organizational culture, and leadership, interact to cultivate an engaging workplace suited to the needs and expectations of Generation Z professionals in the tourism business.

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DECLARATIONS

We hereby confirm that no conflicts of interest, whether financial, professional, or personal, could have influenced any aspect of this research.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The corresponding author, representing all co-authors, confirms that this study adheres to established ethical standards. Relevant ethical guidelines and regulatory requirements conducted all procedures.

INFORMED CONSENT

All participants in this study provided informed consent prior to their involvement. They were fully informed about the research's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits, and their participation was voluntary.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The data used in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author.

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