



Link between servant leadership and performance: mediating role of organizational commitment

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effect of servant leadership on performance, with organizational commitment as a mediating variable. The population is the apparatus of Sempor District, Kebumen with a sample size of 50 people. Questionnaires are distributed using a simple random technique and the data is processed using SPSS version 25. The research results confirm servant leadership does not directly influence performance, organizational commitment does not directly influence performance. Servant leadership influences organizational commitment and organizational commitment mediates the influence of servant leadership on the performance of village officials

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1. INTRODUCTION

Servant leadership is one of the leadership styles that is currently developing, (Rai & Prakash, 2012) found that leadership helps create knowledge through behaviors such as sharing and caring relationships. No leadership puts the interests of its followers ahead of helping others. According to (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002), servant leaders are those who prioritize the needs, desires and interests of others over their own interests. Robert K. Greenleaf first created the concept of servant leadership in 1970 (Smith, 2005). Servant leaders can influence the performance of their subordinates in real situations in an organization, according to Robert Greenleaf (Smith, 2005). (Reicher et al., 1995) expanded on this idea by naming ten characteristics of servant leadership: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, service, commitment to the growth of others, and community building. Additionally, (Russell & Stone, 2002) indicated functional and additional qualities for servant leadership. Communication, credibility, competence, and empowerment are functional traits, while honesty, integrity, and exemplary are additional traits. Russell and Stone emphasize that servant leaders must not only communicate effectively and build credibility through consistent and trustworthy actions, but must also be experts in their field and be able to encourage followers to reach their maximum potential. Additional traits such as honesty and integrity are essential to building strong and reliable relationships between leaders and their followers.

Community harmony and well-being are strongly valued in Indonesian society, which is collectivist in nature. This cultural attitude is well suited to servant leadership,

which places a strong emphasis on the leader's duty to serve others and put the needs of the group first. Serving others, prioritizing the needs of the group over one's own, and encouraging a sense of belonging and teamwork are all aspects of servant leadership. Servant leadership can be more effective in a society where putting others first and working for the common good is valued, as it aligns with the cultural ideals of harmony and communal well-being.

A common emphasis of servant leaders is on moral conduct, creating a sense of community, and coordinating corporate objectives with the values of their workforce. Employee commitment rises as a result of this alignment, which strengthens their sense of belonging to the company. Employees' personal and professional growth is a priority for servant leaders. These leaders increase workers' job happiness and emotional attachment to the company by offering growth chances, which fortifies their dedication.

Social cohesiveness and harmony within the group are highly prized in Indonesia's strong collectivist culture. This cultural characteristic is in line with servant leadership, which prioritizes the good of the group over the success of the individual. But Indonesia also has a significant degree of power distance, indicating a strong engrained hierarchical system. This may pose difficulties for servant leadership, which frequently calls on leaders to take a more inclusive and dynamic stance. You can investigate how servant leaders resolve the conflict between shared decision-making and empowerment, which is at the core of the servant leadership style, and societal expectations of hierarchy.

According to (Greenleaf, 1970), the main characteristics of servant leadership are listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, service, and commitment to the growth of others and community development. (Reicher et al., 1995) states that servant leaders have ten traits, but we will discuss the six most important: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, and commitment to the growth of others.

The village head in the Sempor sub-district area, Kebumen Regency seems to have used the servant leadership model. Friendly communication and not too many orders show that. Workers who do a good job receive awards from company leaders. Subordinates are given the opportunity to express their complaints and wishes. The village head's aim in implementing subordinate leadership is to create a pleasant work environment so that it is hoped that it can improve the performance of village officials. (Melchar & Bosco, 2010) research found that there is a significant relationship between subordinate leadership and subordinate performance. (West & Bocârnea, 2008) research examined the relationship between subordinate leaders and organizational performance.

Performance, according to (Bernardin & Russell, 1992), is the result that a person can achieve in carrying out the tasks assigned in accordance with the responsibilities that have been determined. This opinion shows the real results of the work done. Performance is defined as the extent to which a person achieves the expected job requirements (Mathis & Jackson, 2002). This shows that performance includes not just results but also how those results compare to established standards.

(Armstrong & Taylor, 2006) focuses on behavioral elements that influence a person's contribution to organizational goals. He defined performance as behavior that influences a person's performance at work. According to (Rivai, 2009), performance is the work results achieved by a person in completing assigned tasks based on skill, experience and timeliness. This view combines aspects of a person's abilities and time efficiency in achieving work results. (Mangkunegara, 2005) defines performance as the work results achieved by a person based on the quality and quantity of work carried out while carrying out the assigned tasks. To measure performance, standards add dimensions of quantity and quality. (Dessler, 2013) explains performance as actions and work results that can be measured in terms of productivity and efficiency.

Indonesia's unique leadership environment is shaped by its cultural norms, which include collectivism, significant power distance, and religious influences. By examining

the ways in which these cultural elements affect the uptake and efficacy of servant leadership in government agencies, this research can close this knowledge gap.

According to data analysis, there is a significant positive correlation between subordinate performance. Based on the description above, the following hypothesis can be drawn:

H1: Servant Leadership influences employee performance, Organizational commitment is an attitude and behavior that identifies employees as part of the organization's operations and has a sense of loyalty to the organization to towards and achieve the goals and direction of the organization (Wibowo, 2014). High commitment from the organization will produce stable performance (Beer, 2009). Commitment to the organization is influenced by servant leaders. Equality and justice are the main principles of servant leadership, which encourage and support fair treatment for everyone. These values can influence subordinates' perceptions thereby increasing their loyalty and commitment to the organization (Yukl, 2006). Based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis can be drawn: H2: Servant leadership has a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment.

(Gibson et al., 2012) states that organizational commitment is a feeling of self-identification, loyalty and involvement of workers towards their organization. Furthermore, (Wibowo, 2014) stated that basically commitment is individual. Meanwhile, each individual's commitment to the organization where he works can be said to be an employee's organizational commitment as a component that plays a role in the process of organizational activities, and is loyal to the organization to achieve the organization's direction and goals. (Meyer et al., 2002), revealed three components of organizational commitment, including: (1) affective commitment, where employees want to be part or component of the organization because of a sense of emotional bond; (2) continuance commitment, occurs when an employee remains in an organization because of the salary and other benefits provided by the organization, or other work that the employee cannot find; and (3) normative commitment, which arises because employees have truth values. Employees remain in the organization because they are aware that commitment to the organization is something that should be implemented.

According (Locke & Latham, 1990), there is a link between goals and performance, where commitment is one of the principles in setting and achieving goals, with employee involvement in setting their own goals in accordance with the organization's goals. provide the initiative to employees to seek information related to these goals, then provide consistency and commitment in achieving the goals (targets) and ultimately provide feedback on the employee's performance. (Wibowo, 2014) stated that in the end, what is most important is how organizational commitment can improve performance. Thus, the research hypothesis can be formulated as follows: H3: Organizational Commitment has a positive effect on Employee Performance

(Moehariono & Si, 2012) states that performance is the level of achievement in implementing program activities or policies to realize the targets, goals, vision and mission of an organization which are then described in the strategic planning of an organization with indicators including service orientation, integrity, commitment, discipline and work. The same.

(Wang & Noe, 2010) stated that there are various approaches to measuring performance, namely (1) The behavioral approach seeks to explain various employee behaviors that are effective in their work; (2) the results approach emphasizes managing the results of work or work groups, and objectives so that they can be measured based on targets as well as productivity measurements and evaluation systems

(Sopiah, 2008) suggests that one of the factors that influences organizational commitment is satisfaction with leadership. Furthermore, the leadership style required by public service institutions today is servant leadership, because it is in accordance with the vision and mission of the organization, namely as a public servant (Mulyadi, 2015). According to (Yukl, 2006), the main value of servant leadership can increase

subordinates' organizational commitment. Then, based on the goal setting theory put forward by (Locke & Latham, 1990), one of the principles in setting and achieving goals is commitment, which will ultimately provide feedback on employee performance.

A study by (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2021) found that servant leadership focuses on improving employee well-being and encouraging their professional and personal development. When employees feel valued and supported by their leaders, they are more likely to demonstrate a strong commitment to their work, which significantly increases their affective commitment to the organization. According to (Jaiswal & Dhar, 2015) study, high work commitment mediates the relationship between work compensation and employee performance. They found that employees who felt they accepted the compensation they received were more likely to demonstrate better work behavior and better performance because they were more motivated to reciprocate the rewards they received with their performance. Research by (Li et al., 2022) also supports the important role of mediators in work commitment. They found that servant leadership increased employee commitment, which in turn improved their performance. Servant leaders create a work environment that supports and motivates employees to do more for the organization

Apart from that, there are opinions of experts such as (Yousef, 2000) finds that organizational commitment mediates the relationship between leadership behavior and performance. Based on the theory above, the research hypothesis is formulated as follows: H4: organizational commitment mediates the effect of servant leadership on organizational commitment

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a quantitative design by applying survey research methods. The population used was Village Officials in Sempor District with a total sample of 50 research samples using a simple random sampling technique. This research instrument was adapted from previous research (Table 1) with Likert scale items from one to five where a value of one represents the statement 'Strongly Disagree,' while a value of five represents the statement 'Strongly Agree.' The Likert scale, which ranges from 1 to 5, is simple to use and comprehend for responses. With alternatives that are regularly spaced and clearly marked from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," respondents can express agreement or disagreement with a statement in a way that is efficient and intuitive. The instruments in the questionnaire were distributed via Google form to village officials in Sempor District. Of the total distribution of 50 questionnaires, 50 were with a Likert scale of 1-5. The measurement instrument uses indicators from experts as follows

Table 1. Source and Number of Items in the Instrument

Variable	Amount Statement	Source
Servant Leadership	8	Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006
Organizational Commitment	6	Arlen & Mayer, 2002
Performance	5	Wibowo, 2006

Statistical data analysis and path modeling were carried out using SPSS 25 software. The steps were carried out sequentially starting from validity, reliability and normality tests. Followed by regression tests, t tests and determination. The hypothesis is accepted if the sig value < 0.05 and t count > t table. There is a direct influence and an indirect influence, the direct influence tests the relationship between servant leadership and performance while the indirect influence tests the relationship between servant leadership and performance through organizational commitment. Figure one shows the framework, which examines the direct and indirect influence of servant leadership on performance with the mediating variable organizational commitment

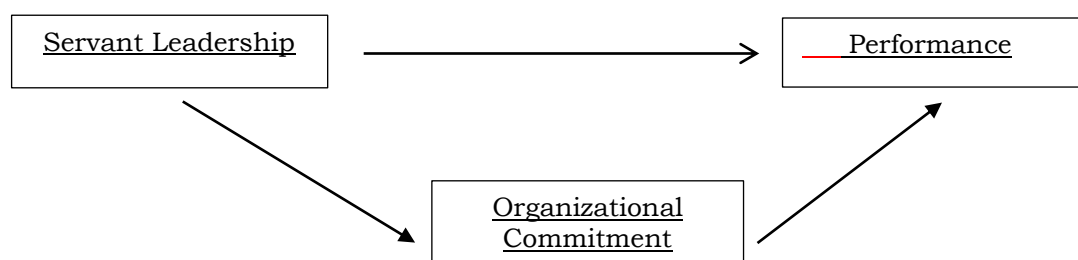


Figure1. Framework

Next, the data was processed using SPSS 25. The validity test carried out showed that all statement items were valid with a sig value of 0.00 and reliable with Cronbach's Alpha above 0.6

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 2 below shows the characteristics of the respondents in this study.

Characteristics	Amount	Prosentase
Sex		
Male	37	0.7
Female	13	0.3
Age (years)		
17-25	3	0.06
26-35	13	0.26
36-45	27	0.54
> 46	17	0.34
Education		
Junior School	7	0.14
High School	37	0.7
S1	8	0.16
Occupation (Years)		
1-5	15	0.3
6-10	17	0.34
11-15	12	0.21
>16		

Based on the table above, the largest number of respondents were men with most ages in the range of 36-45 years. Meanwhile, education is dominated by male respondents and length of work is dominated by 11-15 years of work. Next, the questionnaire data was processed using SPSS 25 and produced the following results

Variable	Indicator	Pearson correlation
Servant Leadership	KL1	0.878
	KL2	0.784
	KL3	0.852
	KL4	0.773
	KL5	0.764
	KL6	0.762
	KL7	0.786
	KL8	0.746
Organizatinl Commitmentl	K1	0.579
	K2	0.796
	K3	0.775
	K4	0.683

	K5	0.353
	K6	0.396
Performance	KK1	0.541
	KK2	0.799
	KK3	0.885
	KK4	0.818
	KK5	0.863

The table above shows the calculated r value $> r$ table and the sig value is 0.00 so that all statement items are declared valid

Table 5. *Reliability*

Variable	Cronbach Alpha
Servant Leadership	0.915
Organizational commitment	0.641
Performance	0.848

Table 5 shows the values for the measurement scale greater than 0.6, thus providing adequate reliability. Furthermore, table 6 below shows the results of the hypothesis test, for hypothesis test 1 it shows that there is no direct influence of servant leadership on performance with a calculated t value of -0.146 and sig 0.884 so that H1 is rejected. Hypothesis test 2 shows that there is no direct effect of servant leadership on organizational commitment as indicated by the calculated t value of -1.995 and sig 0.052 so that H2 is rejected. The results of hypothesis 3 testing show that there is an influence of organizational commitment on the performance of village officials in Sempor sub-district which is indicated by a calculated t value of 2.909 and sig 0.032 so that H3 is accepted. Meanwhile, the mediation test shows the mediating effect of organizational commitment on the influence of servant leadership on the performance of village officials in Sempor District, which is indicated by the calculated t value of 3.324 and sig 0.002 so that H4 is accepted.

Tabel 6. Hypotheses test

Variable		t	Sig
Servant leadership	→ Performance	-0.146	0.884
Servant leadership	→ Org. commitment	-1.995	0.052
Komitmen	→ Performance	2,909	0.032
Servant Leadership	→ Org. Commitment	3.324	0.002

Hypothesis 1 shows that there is no direct effect of servant leadership on performance with a calculated t value of -0.146 and sig 0.884 so that H1 is rejected, meaning that the alternative hypothesis (H1) which states that servant leadership has a direct effect on employee performance is rejected. This means that, based on the data obtained in this research, there is insufficient evidence to support that servant leadership has a significant direct influence on employee performance. The absence of a clear impact can suggest that there are situations where servant leadership is less successful, such as extremely bureaucratic or inflexible organizational environments, like those in some government agencies. In these kinds of situations, compliance with policies and procedures or external accountability systems may have a greater impact on performance than just a leader's style. These findings do not support the results of research conducted by Aghata and Go in 2021 which examined Sabhuri and Kintan Buffet. This result is different from previous research conducted by (Harianto, 2014) which found that servant leadership had a significant effect on employee performance.

Hypothesis 2 shows that there is no direct influence of servant leadership on organizational commitment as indicated by the calculated t value of -1.995 and sig 0.052 so that H2 is rejected. Servant leadership has no effect on organizational commitment, indicating that employee commitment to the apparatus is not caused by their perception

of leadership but rather by things outside of leadership such as culture. Rather than leadership styles, personnel in government organizations may have a strong feeling of commitment. Long-term job security, benefits, or a sense of obligation to serve the public—all of which are typical in public sector employment. The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Susanto in 2022 at the Jambi Pratama Tax Service Office.

Hypothesis 3 shows that there is an influence of organizational commitment on performance because commitment has been formed before becoming an employee. The alternative hypothesis (H3) which states that organizational commitment influences employee performance is accepted. This means that, based on the data obtained in this research, there is sufficient evidence to support that organizational commitment has a significant influence on employee performance. Employee that are dedicated to their company tend to be more engaged and driven at work. Increased motivation leads to improved performance because dedicated workers are more inclined to go above and beyond the call of duty to further the success of the company, put in more effort, and be more productive. The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Maranata et al in 2022 at PT Bank BUMN Semarang.

Hypothesis 4 shows, the mediation test shows the mediating effect of organizational commitment on the effect of servant leadership on performance. One important way that servant leadership raises performance is through organizational commitment. Employee loyalty to the company can be increased by leaders that demonstrate servant leadership behaviors, such as putting the needs of their team members first, creating a friendly work atmosphere, and encouraging moral behavior. This increased dedication then motivates workers to deliver better work..

4. CONCLUSIONS

Our work adds significantly to the body of knowledge on servant leadership by filling up these gaps, especially as it relates to Indonesian government institutions. It offers hitherto unresearched sector-specific, culturally appropriate, and organizationally customized insights. A deeper and more contextualized understanding of leadership in the public sector is provided by this focus on the relationship between servant leadership and the distinctive qualities of Indonesian government organizations. This understanding can be applied to both academic research and real-world leadership development.

The research results confirm servant leadership does not directly influence performance, organizational commitment does not directly influence performance. Servant leadership influences organizational commitment and organizational commitment mediates the influence of servant leadership on the performance of village officials. The results of this research indicate that there is commitment to be a variable that is able to fully mediate the influence of servant leadership on the performance of village officials in Sempor District, Kebumen Regency. This is in accordance with (Irefin & Mechanic, 2014) revealed that commitment is a very important variable in meditating leadership with performance. According to this expert's opinion, high employee commitment will have an impact on their performance in achieving organizational goals.

The limitation of this research is that it is limited to a narrow population of only village officials in Sempor sub-district, so the results of this research cannot be a general conclusion if the research is conducted on a wider population. It is recommended that research be conducted using a wider population and different modeling, such as using the mediating variable of job satisfaction.

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