

“The influence of servant leadership on job satisfaction with individual character as a moderating variable”

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THE INFLUENCE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP ON JOB SATISFACTION WITH INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER AS A MODERATING VARIABLE

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the influence of servant leadership on job satisfaction with individual character as a moderating variable. It used a quantitative approach with multiple linear regression analysis. The population of this study were employees of the Central Sulawesi province industry and trade office. It involved 72 samples selected using a purposive sampling technique. The results showed that servant leadership significantly influence job satisfaction with a value of 82.5%. The most significant factor affecting job satisfaction is wisdom (correlation coefficient = 0.863) in which the higher the wisdom, the higher the job satisfaction. The next factor is persuasive mapping in which the higher the persuasive mapping, the higher the job satisfaction (correlation coefficient = 0.697). Then, it was followed by altruistic calling with the correlation coefficient value of 0.524 in which the higher the altruistic calling, the higher the job satisfaction. The last is emotional healing with a correlation coefficient value of 0.291 in which the higher the emotional healing, the higher the job satisfaction. On the other hand, organizational stewardship is the only factor does not influence the job satisfaction (correlation coefficient = 0.009).

Keywords

service characteristics, employees, government, leaders, organizations

JEL Classification

J81, L20

INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction is the employees' perception of how well their work provides them with important things. Job satisfaction is considered as the result of individual assessment towards job achievement, working environment and life (Mahdavi & Fazlollahtabar, 2011). The most important thing in job satisfaction is the attention of the leader because it will increase productivity or organizational performance (Mamiseishvili & Rosser, 2011; Nasir et al., 2011). Therefore, an employee's job satisfaction is crucial for an organization or company (Côté et al., 2020), as it significantly influence with the productivity of organization (Bhatti & Qureshi, 2007; Ghasemizad et al., 2012).

An organization member or employee with a high level of job satisfaction typically has a low level of leave and attendance, but usually commitment that makes them productive (Aziri, 2011; Shrivastava & Purang, 2009). Discussing job satisfaction has always been fundamental and important for the organization because if there is a problem related to employees' job satisfaction, then it will affect the overall performance of the organization. Therefore, it has prompted some organizations to prioritize the issue of job satisfaction (Bhatti & Qureshi,

2007; Daryanto, 2014; Li et al., 2012). Then, concerning the vertical relationship between superiors and subordinates, it can be said that the leader's behavior, both positive and negative, will highly affect employee job satisfaction (I. Dugguh & Dennis, 2014). Besides, job satisfaction is influenced by unique characteristics of individuals. In this case, it can be influenced by age, gender, education, salary, and tenure, especially in the Industry and Trade Office of Central Sulawesi Province. Individual characteristics that influence job satisfaction include gender, education, and tenure (Hodson, 1984; Nasir, Fatimah, Mohammadi, Wan Shahrazad, et al., 2011). In this study, leadership style refers to the servant leadership style. The current demand for changes to the public bureaucracy in Indonesia is "serving" not being served. This leadership style will increase job satisfaction of the government employees, which, in turn, can be expected to provide satisfactory services to the community.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Job satisfaction is a complex variable highly influenced by the work environment, compensation and commitment, and leadership style (Mathis & Jackson, 2006). Job satisfaction has five main aspects. The five aspects are the nature of the job, the compensation and benefits, the attitude of the leadership and job appraisers, the relationship with colleagues, and the opportunity to get a promotion (Aziri, 2011). Leadership has a major influence on job satisfaction, which will directly affect their work behavior (Adiguzel et al., 2020; Chiniara & Bentein, 2016; Hunter et al., 2013; Neubert et al., 2016; Steel et al., 2017).

Servant leadership is a leadership model that prioritizes services provided to other parties, both horizontally (to fellow leaders) and vertically (to employees, customers, and community). The success of an organization is strongly influenced by the leadership style. Greenleaf (2019) proposes servant leadership as a leadership concept and model that prioritizes services provided for other parties, both horizontally (to fellow leaders) and vertically (to employees, customers, and the community). Furthermore, servant leadership highly emphasizes improving service performance and provides space subordinates in the decision making process that are deemed important to get employees' aspirations (Shahzad et al., 2013). Leadership practice is characterized by the increase of intention to serve others through various approaches which involve all parties.

Servant leadership also combines some important points, namely self-empowerment of employees, overall quality of employees, the team works, work

participatory management, and ethics in each service as it becomes a separate philosophy for leadership (Page & Wong, 2000; Lanctot & Irving, 2007). In the concept of servant leadership, subordinates are given responsibilities for their works to make them develop which finally can lead to job satisfaction. (Drury, 2004).

Servant leaders enhance followers' self-efficacy and meaning through empowerment as one of the keys to make employees accomplished job satisfaction levels (Cheng et al., 2020; Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015; Stouten & Liden, 2020; van Dierendonck et al., 2014). Choosing the right leadership style will result in a high job satisfaction level (Akdol & Arikboga, 2015; Kim et al., 2020; Luu, 2019; Sun & Xia, 2018). Generally, servant leadership has a positive relation with job satisfaction (Drury, 2004). Stated servant leadership has a positive relationship with job satisfaction, more specifically on intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction (McCann et al., 2014). Besides, it is explained that servant leadership has a positive correlation and relationship with job satisfaction (Farrington & Lillah, 2019).

Job satisfaction is a feeling or situation that is pleasant or positive about the work. Job satisfaction describes to what extent a person feels comfortable and satisfied with his/her job (Ali, 2016). The satisfaction and dissatisfaction of employees with their job will determine the subjectivity of their perspective on their work (Hajdukova et al., 2015). Employees express job satisfaction through attitudes, and in this case, the attitude refers to attitudes in building relationships and cooperation, interpreting subjects and phenomena in work, and events occurring in the workplace to personality (Hajdukova et al., 2015).

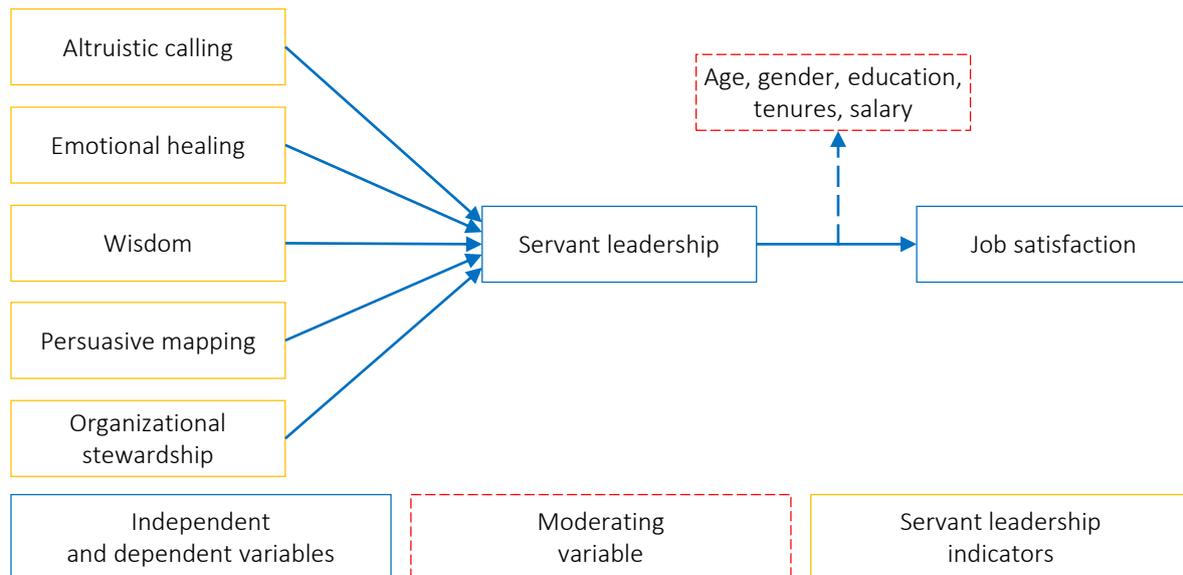


Figure 1. Research conceptual framework

Servant leadership developed by Patterson includes Agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. This model explains that servant leadership shows the attitudes, beliefs, and behavior of the leader. Leaders who are oriented to these seven variables will automatically create satisfaction for their followers in carrying out their duties. Servant leadership style will more easily gain the trust of employees towards their leaders, which in turn will lead to employee loyalty and job satisfaction (Winston, 2003).

Previous research has emphasized the first principle of servant leadership (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). This literature review explains the theory of servant leadership to develop understanding and guide the study. Conceptually, based on factorial analysis, servant leadership can be seen from 5 factors that are generated from 11 characteristics that empirically shows differences, namely, altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). There are many stages or consideration in assessing leadership (Hansbrough et al., 2020).

By referring to Barbuto and Wheeler (2016), the independent variable of this study used five factors of servant leadership and the dependent variable was job satisfaction with individual characteristics as moderating variables (such as age, gen-

der, education, salary, and tenure at the Industry and Trade Office of Central Sulawesi Province).

1.1. Research conceptual framework

Five-factor servant leadership (i.e., altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, wisdom, and organizational stewardship) and job satisfaction were set as independent and dependent variables. Moreover, in this study, individual characteristics, including age, gender, education level, tenure, and salary, are set as moderating variables by proposing a hypothesis that servant leadership in the Industry and Trade Office of Central Sulawesi Province has been appropriate; there is a significant effect of altruistic calls on job satisfaction; there is a significant effect of emotional healing on job satisfaction; there is a significant effect of wisdom on job satisfaction; there is a significant effect of persuasive mapping on job satisfaction; there is a significant effect of organizational stewardship on job satisfaction; there is an effect of individual characteristics on servant leadership and job satisfaction. This can be seen more clearly in Figure 1, which shows the conceptual framework.

1.2. Research hypotheses

- *The level of servant leadership in the Industry and Trade Office in Central Sulawesi Province is appropriate.*

- *Altruistic calling significantly affects job satisfaction.*
- *Emotional healing significantly affects job satisfaction.*
- *Wisdom significantly affects job satisfaction.*
- *Persuasive mapping significantly affects job satisfaction.*
- *Organizational stewardship significantly affects job satisfaction.*
- *Individual characteristics has relation and influences servant leadership and job satisfaction.*

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The population of this study was 72 employees from the Industry and Trade Office of Central Sulawesi Province (implementing staff who did not occupy structural positions). The data were collected through a questionnaire containing statements related to servant leadership variables, individual characteristics, and job satisfaction. Specifically, the servant leadership variable in the questionnaire was based on Barbuto and Wheeler’s questionnaire, which has been adjusted

to the field conditions. The questionnaire has been tested for its validity and reliability. Hypotheses were examined using inferential statistics through SPSS software. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to check the data normality. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistical hypotheses are as follows:

H_0 : Data are distributed normally.

H_1 : Data are not distributed normally.

Based on Table 1, the significance level of all variables is higher than 0.05, then H_0 is supported, meaning that the data are normally distributed.

3. RESULTS

Table 2 shows that out of 72 samples examined, some variables have a relatively high standard deviation, but the data distribution is normal.

3.1. Hypothesis testing

It seems that the level of the servant leadership style at the Industry and Trade Office in Central Sulawesi Province is appropriate. The suggested hypotheses are as follows:

- *The level of servant leadership style is more than 70.*

Table 1. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results

Source: Processed data.

Variables	N	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	Sig.	Hypothesis
Altruistic calling	72	1.268	.080	H_0
Emotional healing	72	1.283	.074	H_0
Wisdom	72	1.280	.076	H_0
Persuasive mapping	72	1.239	.093	H_0
Organizational healing	72	1.304	.067	H_0
Job satisfaction	72	1.288	.072	H_0
Servant leadership	72	0.613	.847	H_0

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of research variables

Source: Processed data.

Variables	N	Number of related questions	Mean value	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Altruistic calling	72	4	13.92	1.70	11.00	17.00
Emotional healing	72	4	14.14	1.89	9.00	19.00
Wisdom	72	5	15.83	3.46	11.00	24.00
Persuasive mapping	72	5	17.06	4.13	8.00	24.00
Organizational healing	72	5	19.31	3.12	13.00	24.00
Servant leadership	72	23	80.25	8.99	57.00	100.00
Job satisfaction	72	12	38.44	8.76	27.00	53.00

- *The level of servant leadership style is less than 70.*

To investigate the hypotheses, respondents' perceptions were analyzed of the ongoing servant leadership style at the Industry and Trade Office in Central Sulawesi Province. Ideally, the average servant leadership value is 115 given by each respondent, with a value for each item statement with a number of 5 ($23 \times 5 = 115$) or $23 \times 5 \times 72 = 8280$. The total score given by the respondent reached 5,778. Thus, the level of servant leadership in this government office was $5,778/8,280 = 0.70$ or 70 (absolute value). The score was compared by using a one-sample T-test with a significance level of $p < 0.05$ and a mean value of 80.25. The results indicate that the mean value is higher than 70. Therefore, it could be said that the servant leadership style is appropriate by the probability of more than 95% with the level of servant leadership style higher than 70. Hence, the first hypothesis is supported in which the servant leadership style is appropriate.

Table 3. Simple sample T-test results

Source: Processed data.

Variable	T	Significance level
Servant leadership	75.723	.000

As a descriptive-verbatim study with quantitative variables, the hypotheses were tested through the Pearson correlation test. Statistical hypotheses of the Pearson correlation test are as follows:

H_0 : *There is a significant relationship between independent and dependent variables.*

H_1 : *There is no significant relationship between independent and dependent variables.*

The significance level of this test for all hypotheses was less than 0.05, indicating a significant correlation between servant leadership (i.e. altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, wisdom, and organizational stewardship) and job satisfaction. The correlation coefficients consisted of positive values, so it could be said that the higher the independent variables, the higher the dependent variables.

Table 4. Pearson correlation coefficient results

Source: Processed data.

Independent variable	Dependent variable		Hypothesis
	Job satisfaction		
Servant leadership	.815	Correlation coefficient	H_0
	.000	Sig (P-value)	
	72	Sample size	
Altruistic calling	.524	Correlation coefficient	H_0
	.000	Sig (P-value)	
	72	Sample size	
Emotional healing	.291	Correlation coefficient	H_0
	.013	Sig (P-value)	
	72	Sample size	
Wisdom	.863	Correlation coefficient	H_0
	.000	Sig (P-value)	
	72	Sample size	
Persuasive mapping	.697	Correlation coefficient	H_0
	.000	Sig (P-value)	
	72	Sample size	
Organizational healing	.009	Correlation coefficient	H_1
	.938	Sig (P-value)	
	72	Sample size	

Furthermore, this study used multiple regression analysis to determine the effect of servant leadership factor (altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, wisdom, organizational stewardship) as independent variables and job satisfaction as the dependent variable. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Statistics of multiple regression of job satisfaction

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the estimate
.915	.837	.825	3.665

Table 5 shows the influence of servant leadership on job satisfaction (0.825). This means that 82.5% of job satisfaction is influenced by servant leadership, and the rest is influenced by other variables not examined in this study. In general, the multiple linear regression used Adjusted R Square, since it is more permanent even though the independent variable increases. Based on Table 5, the multiple correlation coefficient reaches 0.915 with the coefficient determination of 0.837 and the standard deviation of 3.665.

Table 6 presents a significant simultaneous effect of servant leadership on job satisfaction based on the calculated *F*-values.

Table 6. Variance of multiple regression of job satisfaction

Source: Processed data.

Source	Sum of squares	df	F	Significance level
Regression effect	4565.080	5	67.959	.000
Residual	886.698	66		
Total	5451.778	71		

Table 7 indicated that the existence of four out of five variables in the model was significant. Variables such as altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, and persuasive mapping had a significant effect on dependent variables, while organizational stewardship had no significant effect as it had a linear relationship. Therefore, it was not considered in the regression model.

Table 7. Statistics related to retained independent variables in the regression model

Source: Processed data.

Variables	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
(Constant)	-14.092	5.514		-2.556	.013
Altruistic calling	.809	.290	.157	2.790	.007
Emotional healing	.640	.236	.138	2.705	.009
Wisdom	1.499	.171	.591	8.776	.000
Persuasive mapping	.625	.134	.294	4.651	.000

Individual characteristic has relation and influences servant leadership and job satisfaction.

ANOVA test was used to investigate whether the variables are equal or different in terms of respondents' individual characteristics and in different dimensions of the population. The statistical hypotheses of this test are as follows:

H_0 : There is a significant difference between variables.

H_1 : There is no significant difference between variables.

The result of the ANOVA test and using the significance level (more than 0.05) indicates that there is no significant difference between individual characteristics (i.e. age, gender, education, tenures, and salary) and servant leadership. Therefore, it can be said that by the probability of 95%, Individual characteristic does not have relation and influence of servant leadership and job satisfaction, so the hypothesis is not supported.

The results of this study revealed that:

- By the probability of 95%, the level of servant leadership at the Industry and Trade Office of Central Sulawesi Province showed a mean value of 80.25 with a significant level of 0.000. It is higher than the average level (70) by using a one-sample *T*-test. The experimental mean value is higher than the theoretical one meaning that respondents' perception about servant leadership is appropriate. Therefore, the first hypothesis is supported.
- By the probability of 95%, servant leadership has a significant relation with job satisfaction with a correlation coefficient of 0.815 and significant value of 0.000.
- By the probability of 95%, altruistic calling has a significant relation with job satisfaction with a correlation coefficient of 0.524 and significant value of 0.000
- By the probability of 95%, emotional healing has a significant relation with job satisfaction with a correlation coefficient of 0.291 and significant value of 0.013
- By the probability of 95%, wisdom has a significant relation with job satisfaction with a correlation coefficient of 0.863 and significant value of 0.000
- By the probability of 95%, persuasive mapping has a significant relation with job satisfaction with a correlation coefficient of 0.697 and significant value of 0.000
- By the probability of 95%, organizational stewardship has a significant relation with

Table 8. ANOVA test results

Source: Processed data.

Variable	Component	F	Significance level	Result	Level
Servant leadership	Age	2.680	.121	Zero Hypothesis is not supported	30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, more than 50.
	Gender	3.770	.093	Zero Hypothesis is not supported	Male, Female
	Education	1.471	.293	Zero Hypothesis is not supported	Less than diploma, Bachelor, Master.
	Tenures	1.679	.258	Zero Hypothesis is not supported	5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, more than 25
	Salary	2.719	.118	Zero Hypothesis is not supported	In million rupiahs: 2.535.375–2.904.693 2.904.695–3.274.013 3.274.015–3.643.333 3.643.335–4.012.653 4.012.655–4.381.973

job satisfaction with a correlation coefficient of 0.009 and significant value of 0.938

- The result of multiple linear regression showed that servant leadership can explain the changes in job satisfaction of Industry and Trade Office of Central Sulawesi Province with a value of 82.5%.

4. DISCUSSION

It is crucial to consider job satisfaction, especially in government organizations, since a high level of job satisfaction can create a conducive and pleasant work environment. Indeed, such an environment affects work performance because the interaction of staff with the environment can result in job satisfaction. In the current globalization era, job satisfaction is a crucial aspect to be considered, especially in Indonesia (Marzuki et al., 2012).

Generally, job satisfaction often causes problems in government agencies in Indonesia. However, the results of this study indicate that servant leadership has a significant effect on job satisfaction. This study was conducted in local government agencies in Indonesia, especially in Central Sulawesi Province. Overall, servant leadership affects job satisfaction, and it is in line with Hebert (2003). It shows a significant correlation between servant leadership and job satisfaction. The correlation coefficient consists of positive values meaning that the higher the independent variable, the higher the dependent variable. In this study, the factor that greatly influences job satisfaction is wisdom. The higher the wisdom, the higher the job satisfaction, while the altruistic calling be-

comes the second factor. Finally, organizational management is the only independent variable that does not affect job satisfaction.

Servant leadership is required in all organizational activities, particularly for local governments whose orientation is to provide services to the community. Given the poor service quality in the local government agencies, a leader is required who has a vision of service, and it is not easy to get such a leader. It is not easy to be a leader and servant at the same time (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). In this situation, servant leadership is highly needed because it combines several leadership models or can be called a comprehensive leadership model (Sendjaya et al., 2008). This means that servant leadership can be applied to all aspects, including changing employees' perceptions of job satisfaction. This is evidenced by the hypothesis of this study, which shows that servant leadership has a relationship with job satisfaction. Participatory leadership has a positive correlation with employee job satisfaction (Chan, 2019).

The relation between servant leadership with job satisfaction in organizations has been proven by previous studies (Horsman, 2002; Miears, 2004). Job satisfaction is an important theme for workers in organizations and even it is a very attractive topic to anyone who studies it (Lu et al., 2005). Servant leadership embraces all aspects of the organization, both internally and externally. In this case, government agencies in Central Sulawesi Province show a positive relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction as indicated by altruistic calls, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, wisdom, and organizational management. It relates to employees, society as customers,

and the community. Integrity and a willingness to serve are characteristics of servant leadership, which consists of employees, customers, and the community (Liden et al., 2008). Meanwhile, the leadership in regional agencies does not commonly show characteristics of servant leadership. This is reinforced by the definition that subordinates and leaders are said to be opposites (Spears, 2010). It means subordinates and leader are different as proven by this study, but in organization, leaders can gather with the subordinate even serve them.

Job satisfaction can be realized through servant leadership mediated by staff involvement. It indicates that the stronger the relation, the happier the staff. It means that employees enjoy a condu-

cive work environment and leadership involvement. Job satisfaction can be realized if the staff highly perceived the principles of servant leadership (Laub, 1999). The results of previous studies indicate that employees' positive perceptions of servant leadership in organizations mean that the employees have a higher level of job satisfaction (Thompson, 2002). The results of this study are expected to have implications for government organizations in perceiving servant leadership as a job satisfaction value. Studies concerning servant leadership in local government agencies are still limited. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to contribute to researchers and organizations or governments to see the correlation between servant leadership and job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that wisdom has the most significant relation with job satisfaction in the Industry and Trade Office of Central Sulawesi Province. In other words, the higher the wisdom, the higher the job satisfaction. Then, it is followed by altruistic calling in which the higher the altruistic calling, the higher the job satisfaction. The next is emotional healing in which the higher the emotional healing, the higher the job satisfaction. Then, it is followed by persuasive mapping, in which the higher the persuasive mapping, the higher the job satisfaction. Leaders with high persuasive mapping can see the future of the organization, and act and encourage others to get involve. The organizational stewardship is the only variable with no significant relation with job satisfaction. Therefore, further studies are expected to understand more the perception of the staff on organizational stewardship. Based on this concept, it is important to encourage employees to be happier at work because servant leadership is more visible in its commitment to encourage the spirit of work.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Bakri Hasanuddin.

Data curation: Bakri Hasanuddin.

Formal analysis: Bakri Hasanuddin.

Funding acquisition: Bakri Hasanuddin.

Investigation: Mustainah M.

Methodology: Mustainah M.

Project administration: Bakri Hasanuddin, Mustainah M.

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Software: Pricylia Chintya Dewi Buntuang.

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Writing – original draft: Bakri Hasanuddin

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