

The Influence of Servant Leadership on Employee Performance and Organizational Commitment: The Mediating Effect of Work Motivation

Enhancing Public
Sector Performance
and Commitment

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ABSTRACT

This research examines how servant leadership influences employee performance and organizational commitment within the Indonesian public sector, with work motivation as a mediating factor. Using a quantitative approach and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) on 157 employees, the study develops a framework for enhancing employee outcomes. The results indicate that servant leadership has a positive impact on both performance and commitment, through direct and indirect channels. Work motivation proved to be a critical mediator, explaining 38.95% of the total effect of servant leadership on performance and 24.68% of the effect on commitment. The main contribution of this study is its integrated model, which explores the synergy between servant leadership and motivation within the bureaucratic and collectivist setting of Indonesian public enterprises. These findings strengthen existing motivation theories, while practically, they underscore the necessity for public organizations to adopt an approach that cultivates servant leaders and strengthens motivation through supportive systems. In summary, servant leadership and work motivation function together to improve performance and commitment. Future studies are encouraged to extend this model to other industries and use mixed-methods research for deeper contextual understanding.

Keywords: Employee Performance, Organizational Commitment, Public Sector, Servant Leadership, Work Motivation.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana kepemimpinan yang melayani mempengaruhi kinerja karyawan dan komitmen organisasi di sektor publik Indonesia, dengan motivasi kerja sebagai faktor mediasi. Menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dan Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) pada 157 karyawan, studi ini mengembangkan kerangka kerja untuk meningkatkan hasil karyawan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan yang melayani memiliki dampak positif pada kinerja dan komitmen, melalui saluran langsung dan tidak langsung. Motivasi kerja terbukti menjadi mediator kritis, menjelaskan 38.95% dari total efek kepemimpinan pelayan terhadap kinerja dan 24.68% dari efek pada komitmen. Kontribusi utama dari penelitian ini adalah model

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terintegrasinya, yang mengeksplorasi sinergi antara kepemimpinan yang melayani dan motivasi dalam lingkungan birokrasi dan kolektivisme perusahaan publik Indonesia. Secara teoritis, temuan ini memperkuat teori motivasi yang ada, sementara secara praktis, mereka menggarisbawahi perlunya organisasi publik untuk mengadopsi pendekatan yang menumbuhkan pemimpin yang melayani dan memperkuat motivasi melalui sistem pendukung. Singkatnya, kepemimpinan pelayan dan motivasi kerja berfungsi bersama untuk meningkatkan kinerja dan komitmen. Studi di masa depan didorong untuk memperluas model ini ke industri lain dan menggunakan penelitian metode campuran untuk pemahaman kontekstual yang lebih dalam.

Kata kunci: Kinerja Karyawan, Komitmen Organisasi, Sektor Publik, Kepemimpinan Pelayan, Motivasi Kerja.

INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of public and comparable organizations worldwide is deeply connected to two fundamental factors: the quality of employee work and their dedication to the organization (Donkor, 2020; Pantih et al., 2025). These factors are crucial for achieving institutional goals and driving local economic development. A variety of elements, including leadership approach, organizational structure, communication, and workplace culture, have been identified as major influences on employee performance and commitment across different regions. Gaining a deeper understanding of how these elements operate in diverse organizational settings is essential for improving operational efficiency, especially in a rapidly expanding public sector like Indonesia's. International research highlights the significant role that leadership plays in shaping employee performance and dedication.

Research in China by Li et al. (2020) demonstrated that participatory leadership styles led to better performance and loyalty, while authoritarian approaches had a negative effect on commitment. Similarly, studies in Western countries emphasize the importance of transparent organizational structures and career development opportunities in boosting motivation and commitment, as found in a German study by Schmidt and Müller (2022). In the United States, work flexibility and a healthy work-life balance were found to be critical for improving employee performance in public companies (Rumbi & Christian, 2021). The importance of management-employee communication for improving commitment and productivity was also a key finding. These studies collectively emphasize that effective leadership and organizational strategies must be aligned with the cultural and professional needs of the workforce.

Employee performance in the public sector is influenced by multiple organizational factors such as leadership, competence, and discipline. Recent studies show that these variables not only directly affect performance but also operate through employee retention, which plays a mediating role in strengthening long-term employee outcomes (Zahari et al., 2024; Sismiati et al., 2025). These findings reinforce the need to explore leadership approaches and other mediators, such as motivation, that can further enhance both performance and organizational commitment in the Indonesian public sector. While these principles are applicable to the Indonesian public sector, the country still faces specific challenges. The public sector in Indonesia has seen remarkable growth, particularly since the 2014 regional government law mandated that these organizations contribute to regional original revenue in addition to providing public services.

Despite this growth, issues with employee performance and commitment continue to hinder effectiveness. Weak oversight and enforcement mechanisms contribute to suboptimal employee performance and low organizational commitment. Furthermore, many Indonesian public sectors prioritize their role as service providers over economic principles, as noted by Yusuf et al. (2017). Research on the local water company Makassar City highlighted that low performance was linked to weak organizational commitment and an insufficient organizational culture. Prayuda (2023) observed that many public sectors struggle to cultivate a work environment that fosters high levels of commitment.

High turnover rates and a lack of structured employee development programs have also been identified as challenges to improving performance and commitment, as noted by Darsono (2024). Given these difficulties, it is evident that a leadership approach is needed to enhance worker dedication and output. In the field of organizational studies, servant leadership, which highlights a leader's responsibility to support and nurture their staff, has shown great promise. By fostering a culture that is supportive and encouraging, servant leadership has been demonstrated to enhance employee commitment and motivation. Servant leaders put their team members' professional and personal development first, which fosters a feeling of camaraderie and loyalty.

This study seeks to address ongoing challenges in Indonesian public enterprises, particularly low organizational commitment, weak employee performance, and limited human resource development, through a people-centered perspective. Focusing on public sector institutions in Bogor Regency, the research investigates how servant leadership and work motivation contribute to enhancing employee outcomes. Its main contribution lies in presenting an integrated framework that positions work motivation as a mediator between servant leadership and employee performance and commitment. The overarching aim is to clarify how servant leadership, when reinforced by motivation, can effectively strengthen performance and commitment within the public sector context

LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The Influence of Servant Leadership on Performance and Commitment

Servant leadership, defined as a leadership style prioritizing the needs of followers over personal interests, has emerged as a potent approach to enhancing employee outcomes in organizational settings (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). This leadership style emphasizes empathy, humility, and empowerment, fostering a supportive environment that drives performance and loyalty. In the Indonesian public sector, where bureaucratic and collectivist cultures dominate, servant leadership aligns well with communal values, promoting employee dedication. Robbins and Coulter (2024) describe employee performance as the outcome of activities judged by efficiency and effectiveness, measured through work quality, quantity, and timeliness. Similarly, organizational commitment reflects an individual's desire to stay with an organization, driven by emotional attachment and goal alignment (Colquitt et al., 2015). Studies like Choudhary et al. (2013) highlight that servant leadership fosters loyalty by creating a sense of trust and shared purpose.

Bayram and Zoubi (2020) found a significant positive effect of servant leadership on employee performance, emphasizing its role in enhancing self-reported productivity in public sector contexts. In Indonesia, Sudarmo et al. (2022) and Anshori et al. (2023) confirm that servant leadership improves performance by encouraging accountability and stewardship. For organizational commitment, Hestevold (2021) reported a direct positive influence, supported by Hermawan et al. (2021), who noted its impact on commitment in collectivist settings. These findings suggest that servant leadership directly enhances both performance and commitment by fostering a supportive and empowering workplace. In the Indonesian public sector, where low commitment and suboptimal performance persist, servant leadership offers a promising solution.

H1: Servant leadership has a significant influence on employee performance.

H2: Servant leadership has a significant influence on organizational commitment

The Influence of Work Motivation on Employee Performance and Commitment

Work motivation, encompassing internal and external forces that drive behavior, is a critical determinant of employee outcomes in public sector organizations. Akeel and Indra (2013) define motivation as an impulse driven by curiosity to act in specific ways at work, while Kinicki (2016) describes it as a psychological process directing behavior's intensity and persistence. In this study, motivation is measured through intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions, both vital in bureaucratic settings (Megawaty et al., 2022).

Motivation enhances employee performance by increasing effort and focus on organizational goals, as noted by Bernardin and Russell (2007), who define performance as results from specific job functions over time.

Garjito et al. (2024) demonstrated that motivation significantly influences performance, a finding echoed by Rumbi and Christian (2021) in emerging economies. For organizational commitment, Spector (2021) and Vrceelj et al. (2024) argue that motivated employees exhibit greater loyalty due to alignment with organizational values. Murray and Holmes (2021) found that intrinsic motivation significantly boosts commitment, while Esquivel et al. (2023) noted contributions from both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In Indonesia's public sector, where motivation is often undermined by rigid structures, fostering motivation is essential for improving outcomes. Howladar and Rahman (2021) and Setiadi et al. (2023) further confirm that motivated employees demonstrate higher commitment, reinforcing the need for supportive systems.

H3: Work motivation has a significant influence on employee performance.

H4: Work motivation has a significant influence on organizational commitment.

The Influence of Servant Leadership on Work Motivation

Servant leadership plays a pivotal role in fostering work motivation by prioritizing employees' growth and well-being, particularly in public sector contexts. Defined by Marothia and Vyas (2020) as leadership rooted in serving others for shared goals, servant leadership enhances motivation through empowerment and emotional support. Donia et al. (2016) emphasize that servant leaders inspire motivation by aligning individual and organizational objectives. In Indonesia's collectivist culture, this approach resonates strongly, as leaders who demonstrate humility and stewardship cultivate a motivated workforce (Sihombing et al., 2024).

Harwiki (2016) found a significant positive effect of servant leadership on motivation, highlighting its ability to foster intrinsic motivation through recognition and responsibility. Su et al. (2020) reported a positive correlation between servant leadership and motivation, emphasizing its role in enhancing employees' drive. Pakpahan (2021) further notes that servant leadership boosts motivation by creating a sense of purpose, critical in bureaucratic settings where extrinsic rewards like salary may be limited. Mishra et al. (2023) argue that servant leadership's focus on emotional healing and empowerment directly influences intrinsic motivation, which is vital for public sector employees facing high workloads. In Indonesia, where motivation is often challenged by bureaucratic inefficiencies, servant leadership offers a pathway to enhance employee drive. Greenberg (2010) suggests that supportive leadership reduces workplace stress, further boosting motivation. These findings underscore servant leadership's role in creating a motivated workforce, particularly in collectivist and bureaucratic environments like Indonesia's public sector.

H5: Servant leadership has a significant influence on work motivation.

The Mediating Influence of Work Motivation

Work motivation serves as a critical mediator in the relationship between servant leadership and employee outcomes, amplifying the impact of leadership on performance and commitment. Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) note that servant leadership fosters a supportive environment that enhances motivation, which in turn drives performance and loyalty. In the Indonesian public sector, where bureaucratic structures often hinder motivation, this mediating role is particularly significant (Ekhsan & Aziz, 2021). Su et al. (2020) found that servant leadership indirectly influences performance through motivation, as motivated employees exhibit greater effort and alignment with organizational goals. Rumbi and Christian (2021) and Garjito et al. (2024) confirm that motivation mediates the link between leadership and performance, with motivation explaining significant variance in outcomes. For organizational commitment, Howladar

and Rahman (2021) and Murray and Holmes (2021) highlight that motivation strengthens employees' emotional attachment to the organization, amplifying servant leadership's impact.

Anshori et al. (2023) and Setiadi et al. (2023) further note that in collectivist cultures, servant leadership's focus on empowerment enhances motivation, which subsequently boosts commitment. Mishra et al. (2023) and Sihombing et al. (2024) emphasize that motivation mediates leadership effects by fostering a sense of purpose and reducing turnover intentions. In Indonesia, where public sector challenges include low commitment, motivation acts as a conduit for servant leadership's benefits. Choudhary et al. (2013) and Hermawan et al. (2021) support this, noting that motivated employees exhibit stronger loyalty when led by servant leaders.

H6: Work motivation mediates the relationship between servant leadership on employee performance.

H7: Work motivation mediates the relationship between servant leadership on organizational commitment.

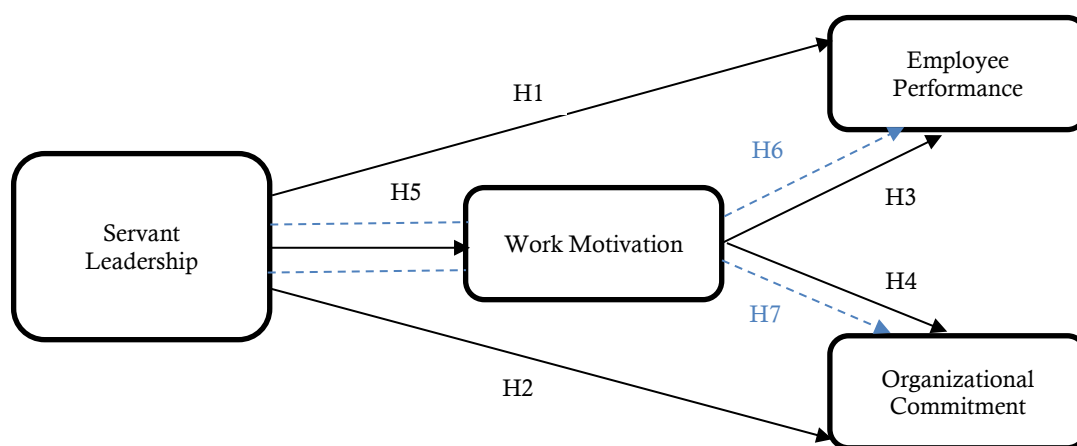


Figure 1. Research Framework

Figure 1 presents the research framework illustrating the direct relationships among servant leadership, work motivation, organizational commitment, and employee performance. Servant leadership is proposed to have direct effects on employee performance (H1), organizational commitment (H3), and work motivation (H5). Additionally, work motivation directly influences employee performance (H2) and organizational commitment (H4), while also serving as a mediating variable (H6, H7) between servant leadership and both outcome variables.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopted a quantitative approach with an explanatory sequential design to investigate the relationships between servant leadership, work motivation, employee performance, and organizational commitment in the Indonesian public sector. The research was conducted with approval from the Ethics Committee of Universitas Pakuan and relevant government agencies in Bogor Regency, ensuring compliance with ethical standards. All participants provided written informed consent before involvement. Data were collected using questionnaires administered to 157 public sector employees, selected through purposive sampling from a population of 254 staff across various public enterprises in Bogor Regency. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula, targeting employees with at least two years of service and managerial or staff roles to ensure relevant insights into organizational dynamics. A preliminary survey of 50

respondents was conducted to refine the questionnaire, identifying issues with item clarity and response consistency, as recommended by Fowler (2013).

The questionnaire utilized a Likert scale (1–5) to measure servant leadership, work motivation, and organizational commitment, with items adapted from established scales. Servant leadership was assessed using 20 items based on Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), covering dimensions like humility and empowerment. Work motivation included 15 items from Kinicki (2016), addressing intrinsic and extrinsic factors, while organizational commitment was measured with 18 items from Colquitt et al. (2015), focusing on affective, continuance, and normative dimensions. Employee performance was evaluated using a rating scale completed by managers, assessing work quality, quantity, and timeliness with 12 items from Robbins and Coulter (2024). The preliminary survey confirmed item comprehension and reduced potential biases before the main data collection. Any missing data were addressed to ensure completeness of the dataset.

Data analysis was performed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in Jeffreys’s Amazing Statistics Program (JASP). Construct validity and reliability were assessed through Cronbach’s Alpha ($\alpha > 0.70$), Composite Reliability ($\omega > 0.70$), and Average Variance Extracted ($AVE > 0.50$), ensuring robust measurement. Discriminant validity was verified by comparing inter-construct correlations with the square root of AVE. Assumptions of SEM, including data normality and absence of multicollinearity, were tested using skewness-kurtosis values and variance inflation factors ($VIF < 5$). The SEM analysis followed a two-step procedure, first evaluating the measurement model and then the structural model. Path coefficients were estimated to evaluate direct and indirect effects, with a significance level of $p < 0.05$. Model fit was assessed using goodness-of-fit indices, including RMSEA (< 0.08), CFI (> 0.90), and TLI (> 0.90), confirming the model’s alignment with empirical data. This rigorous approach ensured a comprehensive analysis of the proposed relationships, addressing the study’s objectives within the bureaucratic context of Indonesia’s public sector.

RESULTS

The analysis, conducted using Jeffreys’s Amazing Statistics Program (JASP), tested direct and indirect effects among variables, with data collected from 157 public sector employees in Bogor Regency. The results confirm the validity and reliability of the measurement model, demonstrate significant path coefficients, and provide insights into the mediating role of work motivation. The findings validate all proposed hypotheses, highlighting the critical role of servant leadership and work motivation in enhancing employee outcomes within a bureaucratic and collectivist context.

Construct Reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) describe the consistency and validity of the measurement model, where the reliability coefficient reflects the ability of each questionnaire item to consistently measure the research variables, while AVE indicates the average loading factor of each variable (Hair et al., 2021). The results of the data analysis are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Construct Reliability

Latent Variable	Coefficient α	Coefficient ω
Employee Performance	0.935	0.934
Organizational Commitment	0.926	0.926
Work Motivation	0.947	0.949
Servant Leadership	0.973	0.939

Table 2. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Latent Variable	AVE
Employee Performance	0.743
Organizational Commitment	0.644
Work Motivation	0.694
Servant Leadership	0.685

The findings, as shown in Table 1, show that every construct in this study satisfies the validity and reliability requirements. Strong internal consistency was confirmed by Cronbach's Alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (ω) values that exceeded the 0.70 standard, ranging from 0.926 to 0.973. Solid convergent validity was demonstrated by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, as shown in Table 2, which ranged from 0.644 to 0.743 and exceeded the suggested 0.50 level. Convergent and discriminant measurements were used to further evaluate construct validity. When factor loadings and AVE values were greater than 0.70 and 0.50, respectively, convergent validity was demonstrated. A thorough summary of the factor loadings for each indicator is given in Table 3. As shown, all indicators have factor loadings above 0.70, and as previously demonstrated in Table 2, all AVE values are above 0.60. These results confirm that all variables possess strong convergent validity.

Table 3. Factor Loadings

Variable	Indicator	Estimate	P-Value
Employee Performance	Y1_1	0.857	<0.001
	Y1_2	0.892	<0.001
	Y1_3	0.786	<0.001
	Y1_4	0.898	<0.001
	Y1_5	0.873	<0.001
Organizational Commitment	Y2_1	0.782	<0.001
	Y2_2	0.743	<0.001
	Y2_3	0.844	<0.001
	Y2_4	0.837	<0.001
	Y2_5	0.858	<0.001
	Y2_6	0.840	<0.001
	Y2_7	0.702	<0.001
Work Motivation	Z_1	0.787	<0.001
	Z_2	0.804	<0.001
	Z_3	0.884	<0.001
	Z_4	0.735	<0.001
	Z_5	0.866	<0.001
	Z_6	0.877	<0.001
	Z_7	0.842	<0.001
	Z_8	0.857	<0.001
Servant Leadership	X1_1	0.774	<0.001
	X1_2	0.855	<0.001
	X1_3	0.846	<0.001
	X1_4	0.843	<0.001
	X1_5	0.770	<0.001
	X1_6	0.926	<0.001
	X1_7	0.763	<0.001

Based on Table 3, the convergent validity was established as the factor loadings of all indicators were greater than 0.70, and as noted above, all AVE values were above 0.50. These results confirm that all variables possess strong convergent validity. Discriminant validity was also evaluated to ensure each construct is empirically distinct from others. The results showed that the constructs as a whole demonstrate acceptable discriminant validity. The coefficient of servant leadership's direct influence path on employee performance, organizational commitment, and work motivation is displayed in Figure 2.

Figure 2 visually represents the causal relationships and the strength of the direct influences among the study's variables. It illustrates the core structural model, including the independent variable servant leadership (X1), the mediating variable work motivation (Z), and the two dependent variables, employee performance (Y1) and organizational commitment (Y2). The arrows connecting the variables show the direction of influence, and the numbers along these arrows are the standardized path coefficients. The diagram shows a significant positive path coefficient of 0.72 from servant leadership to work motivation, indicating a strong direct effect. Work motivation, in turn, directly improves organizational commitment (0.48), as well as employee performance (0.57). Direct

relationships between servant leadership and the two dependent variables are also shown in the model. The path to organizational commitment has a value of 0.48, whereas the direct path from servant leadership to employee performance has a coefficient of 0.34. The study's hypotheses were tested using these values in conjunction with the other path coefficients in order to fully comprehend the direct and indirect effects of servant leadership on employee outcomes.

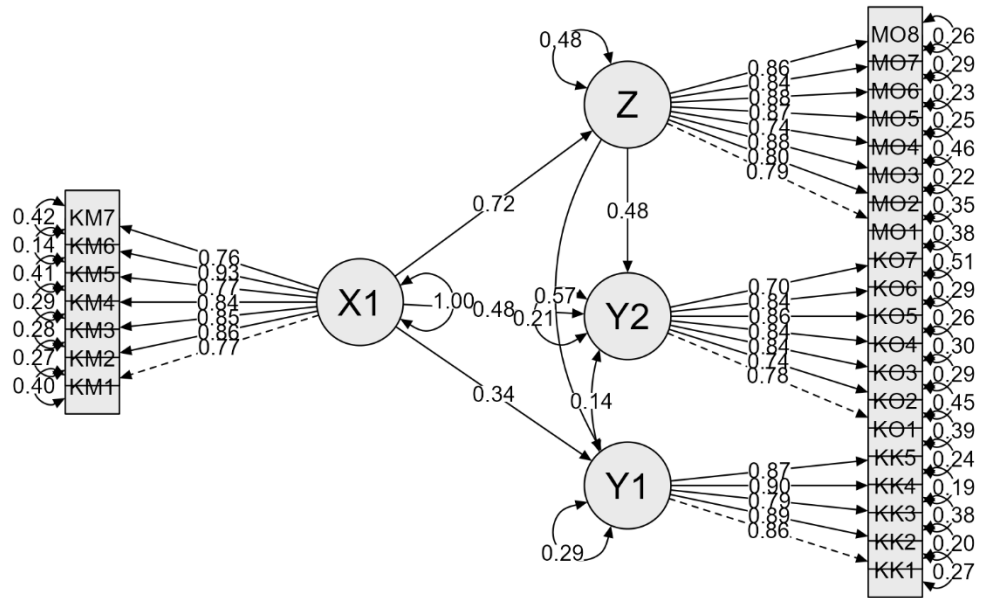


Figure 2. Direct Influence Path Coefficient

Table 4. Direct Effects

Outcome	Predictor	Estimate	P-Value
Employee Performance	Work Motivation	0.568	<0.001
	Servant Leadership	0.337	<0.001
Organizational Commitment	Work Motivation	0.482	<0.001
	Servant Leadership	0.478	<0.001
Work Motivation	Servant Leadership	0.723	<0.001

Table 4 shows that all direct effects of the predictor variables on the outcomes are statistically significant, with p-values below 0.001. For employee performance, work motivation exerts a strong positive effect ($\beta = 0.568$), while servant leadership also contributes positively ($\beta = 0.337$). Regarding organizational commitment, work motivation demonstrates a positive impact ($\beta = 0.482$), alongside servant leadership ($\beta = 0.478$). Servant leadership strongly influences work motivation itself, with a coefficient of 0.723.

Table 5. Indirect Effects

Hypothesis	Estimate	P-Value
Servant Leadership → Work Motivation → Employee Performance.	0.411	<0.001
Servant Leadership → Work Motivation → Organizational Commitment	0.348	<0.001

Table 5 shows that there are statistically significant indirect benefits of servant leadership on the results through work motivation. With a route coefficient of 0.411, servant leadership specifically improves employee performance, and with a coefficient of 0.348, it indirectly influences organizational commitment through work motivation.

Table 6. Total Effects

Hypothesis	Estimate	P-Value
Servant Leadership → Employee Performance	0.748	<0.001
Servant Leadership → Organizational Commitment	0.827	<0.001
Work Motivation → Employee Performance	0.568	<0.001
Work Motivation → Organizational Commitment	0.482	<0.001
Servant Leadership → Work Motivation.	0.723	<0.001

Table 6 presents the combined direct and indirect influences of the predictors on the outcomes. All total effects were found to be statistically significant with p-values less than 0.05. Furthermore, Table 6 allows for the calculation of the proportion of the total effect that is mediated by work motivation, using the formula:

$$\text{Mediated Proportion} = \frac{\text{Indirect Effects}}{\text{Total Effects}}$$

Based on the formula, the study found that 38.95% of the total influence of servant leadership on employee performance was mediated by work motivation, while 24.68% of the total influence on organizational commitment was mediated by work motivation. The robustness of the model was further supported by sensitivity analyses, which tested alternative model specifications, such as excluding certain indicators with high factor loadings to check for potential overfitting. These tests confirmed that the results remained stable, with minimal changes in path coefficients. The findings highlight the practical importance of servant leadership in addressing challenges like low commitment and suboptimal performance in Indonesia’s public sector. By fostering motivation, servant leadership creates a virtuous cycle that enhances both performance and loyalty, offering a pathway for organizational improvement in bureaucratic settings.

DISCUSSION

This study confirms that servant leadership significantly enhances employee performance and organizational commitment in Indonesia’s public sector, both directly and indirectly through work motivation, aligning with prior research in various contexts. Bayram and Zoubi (2020) found that servant leadership directly improves employee performance, a result mirrored in this study’s direct effect, suggesting that behaviors like empowerment and humility foster high-quality work outcomes. Similarly, Choudhary et al. (2013) and Hestevold (2021) reported a strong direct effect on organizational commitment, consistent with this study’s finding. The stronger direct effect on commitment compared to its indirect effect indicates that servant leadership builds loyalty primarily through emotional bonds, resonating with Indonesia’s collectivist culture where trust in leaders is paramount. In contrast, the indirect effect on employee performance surpasses the direct effect, suggesting that motivation is a critical channel for enhancing work outcomes. This aligns with Rumbi and Christian (2021) and Garjito et al. (2024), who emphasize the role of motivation in driving performance in bureaucratic settings.

The mediating role of work motivation, accounting for 38.95% of the effect on performance and 24.68% on commitment, underscores its importance in Indonesia’s public sector, where bureaucratic rigidities often dampen employee drive. Su et al. (2020) reported a positive correlation between servant leadership and motivation, supporting this study’s finding that servant leadership fosters motivation, which in turn enhances performance and commitment. This mediation is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where paternalistic leadership, aligns with servant leadership’s focus on nurturing employees (Liana & Hidayat, 2021). However, Vuong (2023) suggests that transformational leadership may outperform servant leadership in high-autonomy settings, highlighting a potential contrast. In Indonesia’s hierarchical public sector, servant leadership’s empathetic approach appears more effective, as it fosters motivation in environments with limited autonomy (Susanto et al., 2023). These findings support

self-determination theory, where servant leadership enhances intrinsic motivation by fulfilling employees' needs for competence and relatedness (Murray & Holmes, 2021).

The study tested control variables to ensure robustness, finding no significant effects, indicating that the relationships hold across demographic groups. Esquivel et al. (2023) noted that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation significantly boost commitment, reinforcing this study's results. However, limitations must be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design limits causal inferences, and the sample size may restrict generalizability beyond Bogor Regency. High factor loadings on some indicators suggest potential overfitting, warranting further refinement of the measurement instrument. Compared to Sismiati (2025), who found retention as a mediator, this study's focus on motivation offers a complementary perspective, though retention could be explored in future research. Khan et al. (2020) and Goestjahjanti et al. (2022) further validate the model's applicability in collectivist settings, but studies like Rumbi and Christian (2021) suggest that organizational culture may moderate these effects, a factor not examined here.

These findings offer practical guidance for Indonesia's public sector. Organizations should implement servant leadership training programs, emphasizing empathy and empowerment, to enhance motivation and performance. Structured reward systems, such as performance-based incentives or recognition programs, can further boost motivation, addressing bureaucratic inefficiencies. Regular feedback mechanisms and two-way communication can strengthen emotional bonds, fostering commitment. These findings not only corroborate existing research on servant leadership and motivation in collectivist public sector settings but also provide actionable insights for policymakers and organizational leaders seeking to enhance employee performance and commitment in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that servant leadership plays a vital role in improving both employee performance and organizational commitment within the public sector. These influences manifest through direct effects as well as indirect mechanisms, with work motivation serving as a key mediator. The analysis highlights a strong linkage between servant leadership and work motivation, showing that leadership enhances motivation, which subsequently drives performance and commitment. In sum, this research validates an integrated theoretical model and provides crucial practical recommendations for public sectors to create a motivated, high-performing workforce.

This study has several limitations that can serve as a foundation for future research. The use of a purposive sample of public sector employees in Bogor Regency, Indonesia, limits the generalizability of the findings to other sectors or cultural contexts. The study's cross-sectional design provides a snapshot in time, which prevents a definitive determination of causal relationships or the long-term evolution of these variables. Additionally, while the measurement model showed strong validity and reliability, the slightly high factor loadings on some indicators suggest a need for further refinement of the measurement instrument to improve discriminant validity. The quantitative-only methodology may not have captured the deeper contextual nuances of how these variables are perceived and experienced by employees in this specific environment. Future research should aim to expand the model to other sectors and employ mixed methods approaches to deepen contextual understanding.

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