



# A Conceptual Model of Servant Leadership and Organizational Commitment: The Dual Mediating Roles of Organizational Justice and Followers' Thriving at Work

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**Abstract.** This study explores the impact of Servant Leadership on Organizational Justice, Organizational Commitment, and Followers' Thriving at Work. The methodology used is a structured conceptual framework, which synthesizes the literature from various previous relevant studies for the development and analysis of conceptual models. Servant Leadership, a leadership approach that prioritizes employee well-being and growth, is believed to create a supportive and fair work environment that increases employee attachment and loyalty to the organization. Organizational Justice, which includes distributive, procedural, and interactional justice, plays a crucial role in shaping employees' perceptions of justice, which in turn influences their commitments. In addition, Followers' Thriving at Work, which is characterized by vitality and learning in the workplace, serves as an important factor in strengthening Organizational Commitment by increasing employee engagement and motivation. This research proposes that Organizational Justice and Followers' Thriving at Work act as mediators in the relationship between Servant Leadership and Organizational Commitment, offering a comprehensive framework for understanding how leadership behaviors contribute to a more committed and engaged workforce. The implications of these findings are discussed in relation to their relevance for organizations that aim to foster a more loyal, motivated, and high-performing workforce.

**Keywords:** Servant Leadership, Organizational Justice, Organizational Commitment, Followers' Thriving at Work, Conceptual Analysis

## 1 Introduction

In an era of increasingly dynamic global competition, organizations are required to be able to maintain the commitment of their employees as an essential element in ensuring sustainability and long-term success. Organizational commitment has consistently emerged as an indicator of effectiveness for the organization which encompasses emotional attachment, job needs stay and extra effort employees put

towards their work [1]. The issue is that something happens in many organizations where engagement levels decline due to a range of factors; including poor leadership, perceived lack of fairness within the organization, and an environment not conducive to employee development and well-being [2]. One of the major issues that challenge the organization is low organizational justice, the perception employees have with respect to fairness in organization in terms of distribution, procedures and interaction [3]. Feeling disrespected due to such forms of injustice leads invariably to stress and, in turn, low loyalty commitment of employee towards his or her organization. In addition, many organizations also fail to create the conditions that allow employees to thrive at work - that is, feel thriving, healthy, and empowered. In this context, thriving includes not only the aspect of psychological well-being, but also the sense of competence and meaning that the individual feels in his or her work. When thriving at work is not achieved, employees tend to feel depressed, lose motivation, and be less engaged in organizational goals [4].

To address this issue, leading style is a hot topic to be the solution. One of the emerging leadership styles is servant leadership wherein a leader should consider needs, growth, and welfare of employees above self-interest [5]. This model also corresponds to the grand theory of Transformational Leadership, which emphasizes ethical values and a long-term vision in how leaders drive change and motivate their followers. [6]. In addition, servant leadership also has strong roots in Justice Theory, where service-oriented leaders are seen as able to create a higher sense of justice in the organization [7].

However, although the literature has shown that servant leadership has a positive influence on organizational commitment, there is still a significant research gap. Many studies such as [8] Previously, it tended to focus on the direct relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment without considering more complex mediation mechanisms, such as the role of organizational justice and followers' thriving at work. In fact, these two variables can serve as important links that explain how a leader's behavior can affect the end result in the form of employee commitment. In addition, cultural contexts have not been explored much, especially in a collectivist culture such as Indonesia, where interpersonal relationships, respect, and justice play a greater role than individualist cultures. The current study aims to fill this gap by combining two mediation mechanisms, organizational justice and thriving at work, in order to gain further insights into how servant leadership would enhance organizational commitment [3]. In the present study, organizational justice was regarded to be an early stage mechanism of employees feeling being treated fairly, as well as thriving at work being identified as a psychological construct representing employee well being and development potential [9]. Accordingly, this study contributes novelty by integrating justice, welfare, and leadership perspectives into a holistic view.

Practical implications – This research provides a real solution for organizations interested in augmenting their employee engagement through efforts to have more humanistic and inclusive leaders. Through promoting servant leadership, organizations can construct a fairer working environment and provide an atmosphere of empowerment for the development that includes all staff [10]. They provide increase in employee satisfaction, loyalty and the general performance of the enterprise, leading to a competitive advantage for the organization in an era or turbulence [11].

## 2 Theoretical studies

### 2.1 Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory was first introduced by James MacGregor Burns (1978) and further developed by Bernard M. Bass (1985). This theory emphasizes that a leader not only acts as a supervisor or regulator, but also as an inspirer who is able to encourage his followers to reach their best potential. By prioritizing a clear vision, providing motivation, and supporting individual development, transformational leaders are able to create a dynamic and innovative work environment. In its implementation, transformational leadership has four main dimensions referred to as the "Four I's". The first dimension is Idealized Influence, where leaders act as role models who have integrity, confidence, and a high commitment to organizational values. This ideal influence makes his followers feel confident that their leader has a clear vision and is worthy of following. The second dimension, Inspirational Motivation, emphasizes the leader's ability to articulate a vision that evokes and provides hope and optimism to his followers [12]. With effective communication and strong vision delivery, leaders are able to generate a higher morale within the organization.

In addition, the third dimension, Intellectual Stimulation" refers to how leaders stimulate their follower's to think critically and creatively against tough problems. Transformational leaders don't provide answers: They listen and encourage workers to think outside the box to develop creative problem-solving approaches. This leads to an ambidextrous and open culture in the organisation [13]. The last dimension is "Individualized Consideration," which is defined as attending to the individual follower's needs, aspirations, and development in the team. It's about being a mentor who supports and helps develop every individual in the organisation, ensuring that they feel connected and loyal. Employing this method, transformational leadership has been found to have several positive effects on the organization. Managers who can encourage and motivate their employees not only increase individual performance but also create a powerful, innovative organizational culture [13]. In a competitive and ever-changing environment, transformationally led organizations tend to be more adaptive, creative, and highly competitive. In addition, by paying attention to individual well-being and development, this leadership also contributes to increased job satisfaction and employee retention [14].

Despite having many advantages, transformational leadership also faces some criticism. One of them is its nature that is sometimes difficult to measure objectively, since its success depends on interpersonal relationships and individual perceptions of leaders. Additionally, this leadership style can become ineffective if the leader is too dominant in setting the vision without involving employee participation in decision-making. Yes, charismatics are also known to create dependencies within their followers and sometimes become an obstacle for initiative and independence of the organization. In general, transformational leadership is a process that aimed to long-term change and development by individuals or even organisations [15]. Value inculcation, trust building and empowerment are the avenues that transformational leaders may attempt to facilitate a more productive, innovative and future focused work place [16]. Within an " ever more dynamic, evolving and sophisticated economic environment," this is one

of the most applicable theories that can be used in many organizations nowadays.

## 2.2 Servant Leadership

Servant Leadership is a leadership model that makes service to the foundation of the leader [5]. The take-away from this leadership is, rather than focusing on a leader's title or rank (such as typical in conventional models of supreme being leader), the real leaders are first, servers, then they turn around help lead. This idea is for sure conceived by Robert K. Greenleaf, as he also believed that it's not the full extent of power that a person has: The real question is "What will be their effect on the growth and development of others? From a scientific perspective, Servant Leadership is constructed through key dimensions, such as self-awareness, empathy, commitment to the growth of others, and building a collaborative community. Leaders who apply these principles actively support the development of employees' potential, create an inclusive work environment, and prioritize the team's well-being and emotional involvement in achieving organizational goals [17]. Furthermore, Servant Leadership theory has significant implications for innovation, employee engagement, and organizational performance. Research shows that service-oriented leaders are able to increase employee intrinsic motivation, which ultimately encourages creativity and adaptability in the face of changing business environments [18]. In the digital age and economic uncertainty, this approach is becoming increasingly relevant as it emphasizes transformative, ethical, and value-based leadership.

## 2.3. Organizational Justice

OJ is a key concept in management and it describes the effect of fairness in an organization on one's behavior, satisfaction and performance [7]. The sense of fairness in the relationship between employees and organizations can foster loyalty, commitment, and enhance at work motivation [19]. Organizational justice is based on the theory of equity proposed by Adams, according to which individuals compare their input (effort, skills, and loyalty) with output (salary, incentives and recognition) ratio to determine if they are treated equally as other colleagues. In addition to equitable distribution, fairness organizationally is also about the ways decisions are made within an organization. The dimension of procedural justice, focusing on the role of transparency, consistency and participation in decision making processes. When people believe that whatever is done within the organization has been done in an objective and nonpartisan manner, they are going to accept the decision even if it doesn't end up entirely as they'd like it. This hypothesis is consistent with evidence that people are more satisfied when decisions were made through just procedures than arbitrary ones [20]. Fairness not only manifests in distribution and procedural conditions but also in social interaction at the office. Informational justice is based on how employees are treated in situations that involve the daily interactions with their supervisor and coworkers. By demonstrating respect, caring, and clarity in their communication of their decisions supervisors can foster trust in the organization as well as its positive work behaviors [21]. In this aspect, open communication and clarity of information are important elements in building trust and avoiding misunderstandings that can lead to dissatisfaction.

Organizational justice has significant implications for the behavior and well-being of employees. Organizations that meet the principle of justice when they decide about resources, procedures, and social contacts result into a more healthy workplace, more motivation and higher extra-role work behaviors [22]. On the contrary, injustice, may lead to work related stress and conflicts as well as high labor turnover [23]. In a growing dynamic business environment, organizational justice is regarded not only as the ethical issue but also as important managerial skill. Managers who use the fairness principle in the organization enhance more inclusive working culture, higher employee engagement and stronger competitiveness [20]. Thus, doing organizational justice well is not just a moral obligation. It's an act of enlightened self-interest: an investment in the organization's continued existence and success.

## 2.4 Followers' Thriving at work

Followers' Thriving at Work is a concept that describes how individuals in an organization experience continuous psychological growth and feel excited in carrying out their duties [24]. This concept is rooted in the theory of positive psychology and organizational behavior, which emphasizes that thriving is not just optimal performance, but also reflects the holistic well-being of employees. In this context, thriving includes two main dimensions, namely vitality and learning. Vitality describes high energy and morale, while learning refers to the feeling of developing and increasing one's capacity at work. This theory emphasizes that thriving is not a static state, but a dynamic process that is influenced by various factors in the work environment. A supportive work environment, whether through inspirational leadership, an open organizational culture, or supportive colleagues, plays an important role in encouraging thriving [25]. Leaders who apply an empowering leadership and servant leadership approach tend to provide freedom and support for their followers to explore their potential and take initiative in their work [18]. Additionally, organizations that provide access to resources, learning opportunities, and constructive feedback allow employees to continue to grow and feel meaningful in their work.

Psychologically, flourishing is considered the outcome of a synergetic interplay between person and environment. Those who rate their self-regulation, psychological resiliency and proactivity as high are significantly more likely to thrive. They always are itching to improve — and have a good attitude when confronted with adversity. Conversely, a stressful work environment and inhibited recognition as well as an excessively bureaucratic system can eliminate thriving and may even be associated with burnout disengagement [26]. Being happy at work also has long-lasting effects for the employer. Engaged employees are thought to be more creative, productive and also engaged in work. They don't just prioritise their own success, they become part of this enriching and supportive work environment. Additionally, thriving can decrease the rates of turnover and absenteeism among employees, who experiencing energy will more likely express good feelings about organization commitment [27]. In order to develop thriving work climates, organizations should develop such practices as a supportive psychological climate, and continuous learning programs, empowerment-oriented leadership. An organizational culture rooted in a love for strategic innovation, agility, and work-life balance is also essential to ensuring team members can reach their full potential. Therefore, Followers' Thriving at Work theory not only contributes

in explaining how individuals can achieve optimal well-being and performance at work, but also draws attention to the role of organizations as a context that help flourishing [27]. In today's fast-paced and competitive work environment, the need for thriving to be present in each and every person's life is not only clear as a personal benefit but an organisational necessity.

## 2.5 Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is an important aspect in the relationship among employees and work which illustrates their emotional bond to the company they serve [28]. This concept is not only a product of wanting to remain working for the company; but also is a function of belonging, loyalty and wanting to help the company meet its objectives. Organizational commitment is an important antecedent of employee engagement, intensity, and loyalty towards the firm that in turn leads to organization stability and survival within a severe competitive corporate world [29]. If such model is developed to understand the organizational commitment, it is based on three-dimensions of organization commitment which was done by Meyer and Allen (1991); they are affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Affective Commitment: This is the emotional bond that employees have with the organization, they feel aligned to the values and culture of company and internalize their commitment to remain.

Appreciated and valued from the organisation, employee will exhibit high loyalty [30]. On the other hand, ongoing commitment involves rational thought patterns regarding how much it's going to cost you if you leave the organization. Highly-committed employees that continue to stick with the job despite wavering desire are likely this way because they understand that trying another company could mean putting themselves in financial jeopardy or have a negative impact on their career. In contrast, normative commitment refers to the perception of a moral obligation on the part of the employee to remain with an organization [31]. The commitment can be influenced by social factors and a particular work culture, so that employees feel it is morally right to remain at work as they are irreplaceable or because the organisation has heavily invested in their development. A person's organizational commitment level may be influenced by a number of factors, such as leadership style, organizational culture, equity in human resources practices and employee well-being. Leaders can enhance employees' dedication to the organization by providing support and establishing positive relationship with them [32]. Moreover, such an inclusive and transparent native company culture would promote a healthy working atmosphere that fosters loyalty and brings about a higher degree of belonging. Another factor which takes part is justice in the workplace, employees tends to be committed when they perceive that the system of salary, promotion and decision making applied are fair and just. Finally, work-life balance also impacts employee commitment as job flexibility and support for the employee's well-being will positively influence emotional attachment with the organization[33].

## 3 Methodology

This research uses a conceptual approach to clarify theoretical constructs and develop

new interpretations based on existing literature [35]. According to [36] Conceptual reviews contribute towards finding research gaps and provide a basis for future empirical studies. Appropriate literature is incorporated to suit specific needs of the research and make meaning of connections between different concepts. As a result, we have designed a model which can be empirically analyzed in future studies. There are several main questions that the framework tries to answer: (1) Does servant leadership have a positive effect on organizational justice? (2) Does servant leadership have a positive effect on organizational commitment? (3) Does servant leadership have a positive effect on followers' thriving at work? (4) Does organizational justice have a positive effect on organizational commitment? (5) Does followers' thriving at work have a positive effect on organizational commitment? (6) Do organizational justice and followers' thriving at work mediate the relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment?

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 The Influence of Servant Leadership on Organizational Justice**

Servant leadership is a leadership approach that emphasizes service to team members, with the primary goal of supporting their growth and well-being. This approach differs from traditional leadership models that often focus on hierarchy and authority. Servant leaders tend to put the needs of employees above personal or organizational interests, creating a supportive and collaborative work environment. One of the significant impacts of servant leadership is the increase in the perception of organizational justice. Organizational justice is an individual's perception and judgement of fairness in dealing with a certain entity such as a company, department, etc. With regard to their decisions, servant leaders are characterized as transparent and demonstrate fairness in terms of task assignments and rewards, respect for others, and empathy in daily interactions. This generates a sense of fairness among employees, who in return express higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment toward the organization. The relationship between servant leadership and organizational justice A positive linkage has been reported between servant leadership and organizational justice. For example, a study of [37] found that servant leadership has a positive and significant influence on organizational culture, which includes aspects of fairness and organizational citizenship behavior. By creating a culture that is fair and supportive, servant leadership not only increases the perception of fairness but also encourages other positive behaviors in the workplace, such as work engagement and employee performance.

### **4.2 The Influence of Servant Leadership on Organizational Commitment**

Servant leadership, or servant leadership, is a leadership style that emphasizes service to team members as a top priority. Servant leaders focus on employee needs, empower them, and create a supportive work environment. This approach is believed to increase organizational commitment, namely the level of employee attachment and loyalty to the organization. Similarly, another study on lecturers of the S1 Management study program at a private university in Bandung shows that the better the implementation of servant leadership, the higher the level of organizational commitment of lecturers.

Research shows that servant leadership has a positive and significant influence on organizational commitment. For example, in the study [38] found that the implementation of servant leadership increased employee organizational commitment. In addition, servant leadership can also increase affective commitment, namely the emotional attachment of employees to the organization [39]. Thus, the implementation of servant leadership not only improves employee performance but also strengthens their commitment to the organization.

#### **4.3 The Influence of Servant Leadership on Followers' Thriving at Work**

Servant leadership, or servant leadership, is a leadership approach that emphasizes service to team members as a top priority. Servant leaders focus on employee needs, empower them, and create a supportive work environment. This approach is believed to increase thriving at work, which is a condition where employees experience a high sense of vitality and learning in their work. Research shows that servant leadership has a positive influence on thriving at work. For example, one study found that servant leadership was significantly related to thriving at work, with the meaningfulness of work as a mediator and perceived interpersonal justice as a moderator. These findings show that servant leadership can increase thriving at work through increased work meaningfulness, especially the variable of employees feeling treated with respect and dignity [40]. In addition, other research shows that servant leadership can increase employee creativity through increased trust in leaders and thriving at work. These findings show that servant leadership not only increases thriving at work but also encourages employees' creative behavior through increased trust in leaders [41].

#### **4.4 The Influence of Organizational Justice on Organizational Commitment**

Organizational fairness, or employees' perception of fairness in workplace treatment, procedures, and interactions, plays a crucial role in shaping organizational commitments. Organizational commitment refers to an employee's emotional attachment and loyalty to their organization. Research shows that perceived organizational fairness positively affects employee commitment levels. Empirical studies support this relationship. For example, research published in found that the three dimensions of organizational, distributive, procedural, and interactional fairness have a significant positive effect on job satisfaction, which in turn increases organizational commitment [28]. In addition, other research shows that organizational fairness has a significant positive effect on organizational commitment to millennial employees [42]. The mechanism behind this influence can be explained through increased job satisfaction as a mediator. When employees feel they are treated fairly, they tend to be more satisfied with their work, which in turn increases their commitment to the organization. Research in Aksara shows that job satisfaction mediates the influence of organizational fairness on organizational commitment [43]. Thus, consistent application of organizational fairness can strengthen employee loyalty and engagement, ultimately improving the overall performance of the organization.

#### **4.5 The Influence of Followers' Thriving at Work on Organizational Commitment**

Thriving at work, which reflects the feelings of vitality and learning that employees experience in a work environment, is closely related to the organization's commitment. Employees who experience thriving at work tend to show stronger emotional attachment, a desire to remain contributing, and alignment with organizational goals. Research shows that thriving at work has a significant positive effect on organizational commitment. For example, one study found that thriving at work acts as a mediating variable between self-efficacy and organizational citizenship behavior, suggesting that employees who feel thriving at work tend to have a higher commitment to their organization [44]. Thus, organizations that seek to create a work environment that supports thriving at work can increase employee commitment [45]. Measures such as providing development opportunities, creating a positive work culture, and providing adequate support can strengthen employees' attachment to the organization, ultimately contributing to improved employee performance and retention.

#### 4.6 Organizational Justice and Followers' Thriving at Work Mediates the Influence of Servant Leadership on Organizational Commitment

Servant leadership is a leadership approach that emphasizes service to team members as a top priority. This approach not only affects organizational commitments directly, but also through mediators such as organizational justice and thriving at work. Research shows that organizational fairness can mediate the relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment. In a study according to [46], it was found that servant leadership was positively associated with organizational fairness, which in turn increased work engagement. Although work engagement is different from organizational commitment, the two concepts are interrelated, and increased work engagement can contribute to increased organizational commitment. In addition, the feeling of thriving at work, which reflects the feelings of vitality and learning experienced by employees, can also act as a mediator in the relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment. Servant leaders tend to create a work environment that supports employee growth and well-being, which ultimately increases their commitment to the organization. Thus, the effective implementation of servant leadership can increase organizational fairness and a sense of flourishing in the workplace, which together strengthens employees' commitment to the organization [47].

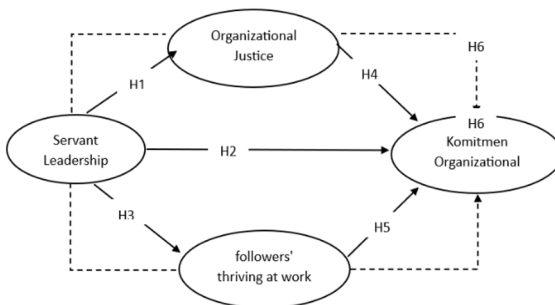


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1. This conceptual framework is derived from the synthesis of previous research

and in-depth discussions. Servant Leadership focuses on employee well-being and growth, which increases their commitment to the organization [48]. Servant leaders encourage justice, support development, and create a positive work environment. Organizational Justice is a key mechanism that connects Servant Leadership with Organizational Commitment, promoting fairness in distribution, procedures, and interactions [48]. Research shows that justice builds trust and loyalty, reinforcing commitment [49]. In addition, Servant Leadership encourages Thriving at Work, increasing employee energy, growth, and commitment, with Organizational Justice and Thriving at Work mediating the relationship.

## 5 Conclusion

This study explores the impact of Servant Leadership on Organizational Justice, Organizational Commitment, and Followers' Thriving at Work. Servant Leadership, which is a leadership approach that prioritizes employee well-being and growth, has been shown to positively influence the perception of Organizational Justice. By creating fairness in resource distribution, decision-making, and interpersonal interaction, servant leaders build an environment of respect and equality, thereby increasing employee commitment to the organization. In addition, Servant Leadership contributes to Followers' Thriving at Work, which is defined by a high level of vitality and learning in the workplace. Employees who feel empowered and supported in their roles tend to be more engaged and aligned with the organization's goals.

Previous research has shown that Servant Leadership not only increases the perception of fairness, but also encourages Thriving at Work, which is important in strengthening employee commitment. Furthermore, Organizational Justice and Thriving at Work act as mediators in the relationship between Servant Leadership and Organizational Commitment. By fostering a work environment that encourages fairness and personal growth, Servant Leadership strengthens employee engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty. These findings show that Servant Leadership is an effective strategy to increase Organizational Commitment, especially through its positive influence on justice and Thriving at Work. Overall, Servant Leadership plays a crucial role in shaping a productive and highly committed workforce, which ultimately contributes to the long-term success of the organization.

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