

## The Effect of Servant Leadership on Psychological Empowerment and Human Resource Performance

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**Abstract.** *This study aims to examine and strengthen hypotheses regarding the relationship variables using an explanatory research approach, which emphasizes testing the interconnections between theoretical constructs. Primary data were collected through the distribution of both closed and open-ended questionnaires to respondents, while secondary data served as supporting information. The research population consisted of all 203 employees of the Customs and Excise Supervision and Service Office (KPPBC) Type Madya Pabean a Semarang, with sampling measured using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. Data analysis was conducted using structural equation modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Square (PLS). The findings reveal that Servant Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Psychological Empowerment, Servant Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Human Resource Performance, and Psychological Empowerment also has a positive and significant effect on Human Resource Performance. These results confirm that the implementation of a servant leadership style enhances employees' psychological empowerment and, in turn, drives the achievement of more optimal human resource performance.*

**Keywords:** *Human Resource Performance; Psychological Empowerment; Servant Leadership.*

### 1. Introduction

Rapid digital change across various sectors has had a significant impact, including on the customs and excise sector, which now faces significant challenges in adapting to technological advancements. At the Directorate General of Customs and Excise, the development of customs and excise regulations has become increasingly complex, as the implementation of digital systems impacts administrative and supervisory processes at every level. The implementation of more advanced digital technology requires a more

efficient, transparent, and accessible system. Therefore, these changes require rapid adaptation in terms of regulations and human resource (HR) training.

In an increasingly complex and dynamic work environment, leadership style is a crucial factor influencing employee performance and well-being. One leadership approach that has received widespread attention is servant leadership.(MM Khan et al., 2022)This leadership style emphasizes a leader's commitment to serving the needs of the team, empowering individuals, and creating a work environment that supports the personal and professional development of employees.(Mahon, 2021)This approach not only strengthens the relationship between leaders and employees, but also encourages deeper engagement in tasks and responsibilities in the workplace.(Waddell, 2020).

Leadership is a person's ability to influence others, generally through motivation to work in accordance with applicable goals and objectives.(Rachmawati & Lantu, 2014)Leadership is part of the management function and plays a crucial role in improving quality and encouraging innovative work behavior through employee motivation, creating a conducive atmosphere, and fostering creativity and innovation, all of which lead to competitive advantage for the organization (Supriyanto et al., 2020).

Various theories debate the appropriate leadership style to foster innovative work behavior among employees, and previous research emphasizes the importance of servant leadership, which not only brings the team closer but also builds community within the team (Building Community) and grows the resources, financial and other resources, that have been entrusted to them (Eva et al., 2019). Servant leadership focuses not only on performance expectations but also on the personal development of their followers.(Rachmawati & Lantu, 2014). Servant leaders focus on long-term sustainable performance (Pawar et al., 2020).

Engaging and developing others is a key to becoming a servant leader. Serving cannot occur without the involvement and development of all team members (Pawar et al., 2020). Servant leadership serves to reduce competition within organizations, increase egalitarianism, and bring about societal change (MM Khan et al., 2020). Servant leadership is shaped by the surrounding conditions (MM Khan et al., 2021). By setting the right example, servant leaders can inspire members to act in the public interest. Servant leaders strive to build close, family-like relationships among members within the organization (Bavik et al., 2017).

Research on the role of servant leadership in human resource performance remains controversial, including research that states that servant leadership has a positive and significant impact on human resource performance (Anggesti et al., 2023). This finding contrasts with the finding that servant leadership does not have a positive and significant impact on human resource performance (Maulida, 2023). Therefore, this discrepancy creates an interesting field of research. In this study, psychological empowerment is proposed as a mediator.

Psychological empowerment, namely employees' feeling that they have control, competence, and meaning in the work they do.(Ghalavi & Nastiezaie, 2020)When

employees feel psychologically empowered, they tend to have higher self-confidence, take greater initiative, and actively contribute to achieving organizational goals (Faraz et al., 2019a). Thus, psychological empowerment is a key element in creating an inclusive work environment that supports optimal performance.

## 2. Research Methods

This research was conducted to test a hypothesis with the intention of confirming or strengthening the hypothesis, with the hope that it will ultimately strengthen the theory that can be used as a basis. In relation to the above, the type of research used is "Explanatory Research" or research that is explanatory in nature, which means that this research emphasizes the relationship between research variables by testing hypotheses. The description contains descriptions but the focus is on the relationship between variables (Singarimbun, 1982).

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Descriptive Analysis of Research Data

Descriptive analysis is the process of systematically presenting, organizing, and depicting collected data so that it can be clearly understood and easily interpreted. The primary purpose of descriptive analysis is to provide a comprehensive overview of the data's characteristics, in this case the central tendency, namely the mean and standard deviation. By using descriptive statistical techniques, researchers can identify general trends, patterns, or unique characteristics of the sample being studied.

Respondent response criteria follow the following assessment scale: Strongly Agree (SS) with a score of 5, Agree (S) with a score of 4, Quite Agree (CS) with a score of 3, Disagree (TS) with a score of 2, and Strongly Disagree (STS) with a score of 1. Furthermore, from this scale, the data will be grouped into three categories. To determine the score criteria for each group can be calculated as follows (Sugiyono, 2017):

Highest score = 5

Lowest score = 1

Range = Highest score – lowest score = 5 - 1 = 4

Class interval = Range / number of categories = 4/3 = 1.33

Based on the size of the class interval, the criteria for the three categories are: low category, score = 1.00 – 2.33, medium category, score = 2.34 – 3.66 and high/good category, with a score of 3.67 – 5.00. The complete calculation results for each indicator are presented below.

The descriptive analysis results in Table above show that the Wisdom indicator has the highest average score, at 3.90. This indicates that employees assess leaders as having the ability to use wisdom in decision-making, making this aspect a key strength in the servant leadership style at KPPBC. On the other hand, the Altruistic Calling indicator has the lowest average score, at 3.87, although it is still in the good category. This means that although leaders have demonstrated concern and a desire to serve, the aspect of sacrificing personal

interests can still be improved to further strengthen the value of service-oriented leadership. These findings indicate that servant leadership in this agency has been effective, but efforts are still needed to strengthen the leaders' altruistic motivation to maintain consistency in serving subordinates and the public.

In the psychological empowerment variable, the Meaning indicator had the highest average score, at 3.91. This indicates that employees perceive their work as meaningful and aligned with their personal values, fostering a strong sense of emotional attachment to the organization. Conversely, the Competence indicator with the lowest average score, at 3.80. This finding suggests that some employees still lack confidence in their ability to complete their work optimally. This situation underscores the importance of capacity building programs to help all employees feel more competent, thereby fostering psychological empowerment across the board.

The description of HR performance data shows that the Effectiveness indicator obtained the highest average score, namely 3.99. This means that employees assess that the tasks and work they perform have been effective in achieving organizational goals, so that the effectiveness aspect is a dominant factor in performance. Conversely, the Independence indicator has the lowest average score, namely 3.89. Although the value is still quite good, this indicates that some employees still require direction or supervision in carrying out their duties, so that work independence is not fully optimal. This finding indicates that employee performance at KPPBC has been quite high, especially in the effectiveness aspect, but the organization needs to continue to encourage increased independence to strengthen individual and team productivity.

### **3.2. Evaluation of Measurement Model (Outer Model)**

Data analysis in this study was conducted using PLS (Partial Least Square) and the data was processed using the Smart PLS 4.1.0 program. According to Ghazali and Latan (2015:7) the PLS measurement model consists of a measurement model (outer model), Goodness of fit (GoF) criteria and a structural model (inner model). PLS aims to test predictive relationships between constructs by seeing whether there is an influence or relationship between the constructs.

Measurement model testing (outer model) shows how the manifest or observed variables represent the latent variables to be measured. Measurement model evaluation is conducted to test the model's validity and reliability. Validity criteria are measured using convergent and discriminant validity, while construct reliability criteria are measured using composite reliability, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Cronbach's alpha.

#### **1. Convergent Validity**

*Convergent validity* The measurement model with reflective indicators is assessed based on the correlation between item scores and component scores calculated using PLS. The individual reflective measure is declared high if the loading factor value is more than 0.7 with the measured construct for confirmatory research and the loading factor value

between 0.6 - 0.7 for exploratory research is still acceptable and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value must be greater than 0.5.

The convergent validity evaluation for each latent variable can be presented in the outer loading section, which describes the indicator's strength in explaining the latent variable. The results of the convergent validity test can be presented as follows:

## **2. Evaluation of Convergent Validity of Servant Leadership (X1)**

The measurement of the Servant Leadership variable in this study reflects five indicators. The factor loading values for each Servant Leadership variable indicator indicate the evaluation of the outer model measurement model. The following shows the outer loading values for the Servant Leadership construct.

The data presentation above shows that all indicators of the Servant Leadership variable (X1) have a factor loading value in the range of 0.730 – 0.929. Because the loading value is above 0.700, it can be stated that the Servant Leadership variable (X1) can be explained well or can be called convergently valid by the indicators of Alturistic Calling, Alturistic Calling, Emotional Healing, Wisdom, Persuasive Mapping, and Organizational Stewardship.

## **3. Evaluation of Convergent Validity of Psychological Empowerment Variables**

The measurement of the Psychological Empowerment variable in this study reflects four indicators. The factor loading values for each Psychological Empowerment variable indicator indicate the evaluation of the outer model measurement model. The following shows the outer loading values for the Psychological Empowerment construct.

The data presented above shows that all indicators of the Psychological empowerment (Y1) variable have factor loading values in the range of 0.899 – 0.919. Because the loading value is above 0.700, it can be stated that the Psychological empowerment (Y1) variable can be explained well or can be called convergently valid by the indicators Meaning, Self-determination, Competence, Impact.

## **4. Evaluation of Convergent Validity of HR Performance Variables**

The HR Performance variable in this study is measured based on the reflection of five indicators. Evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) is identified from the factor loading values of each HR Performance variable indicator. The following shows the loading values for the HR Performance variable.

The table above shows the magnitude of the loading factor for each indicator for the HR Performance variable (Y2) obtained in the range of 0.748 – 0.853. Because the loading value is above 0.700, it can be stated that the HR Performance variable (Y2) can be explained well or can be said to be valid convergently by the indicators of Work Quality, Quantity, Timeliness, Effectiveness, Independence.

Based on the results of convergent validity testing on each variable, it can be said that all indicators used in this research model are declared valid, so they can be used as a measure for the variables used in this research.



## 5. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity testing is carried out in three ways, namely: 1) looking at the Fornell Lacker Criterion criteria which is known from the square root of average variance extracted (AVE) or the root of AVE, 2) looking at the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) value, and 3) checking the cross-loading. The test results on each variable can be explained as follows:

### a. Fornell Lacker Criterion

The Fornell Lacker Criterion test is to test the validity of the indicator by comparing the root value of the Average Variance Extract (AVE) with the correlation between constructs with other constructs.

The Fornell-Larcker Criterion test can be considered qualified if the root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is greater than the correlation between constructs. Table 4.9 shows that the root of the AVE value is higher than the correlation values between other constructs. This indicates that the constructs in the estimated model meet the criteria for high discriminant validity, meaning the results of the data analysis are acceptable because the values describing the relationships between constructs develop, and the root of the AVE value has a value greater than the correlation value between constructs. This indicates that all constructs have good discriminant validity. Thus, the research instrument used to measure all constructs or latent variables in this study has met the criteria for discriminant validity.

### b. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Test Results

Validity testing using the Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) criterion was conducted by examining the HTMT matrix. The accepted HTMT criterion was below 0.9, indicating that the discriminant validity evaluation was acceptable.

shows that none of the HTMT matrix values exceed 0.9. This means that the model demonstrates acceptable discriminant validity evaluation. The discriminant validity test results indicate that the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) test requirements have been met, thus all constructs in the estimated model meet the criteria for good discriminant validity, meaning the data analysis results are acceptable.

### c. Cross Loading

Cross-loading analysis is conducted to determine the correlation between indicators and latent constructs. The following cross-loading table displays the results of the correlation analysis of a construct with its own indicators and with other indicators.

The validity discrimination test is considered valid if the correlation value of the construct with its own indicator is greater than with other constructs, and if all correlation values of the construct with its own indicator and other constructs show positive values. All constructs in the estimated model meet the criteria of high discriminant validity, as shown by the results of data processing displayed in the cross-loading table. On this basis, the results of data analysis can be accepted that the data has good discriminant validity.

### **3.3. The Influence of Servant Leadership on Psychological Empowerment.**

The results of the first test indicate that servant leadership has a positive and significant influence on employee psychological empowerment. This means that the stronger the implementation of servant leadership, the higher the self-confidence, work meaning, and psychological control employees feel in carrying out their duties. Several previous studies confirm the findings of servant leadership's influence on employee innovative work behavior (Cai et al., 2018; Faraz et al., 2019). Servant leadership behavior can lead to employee psychological empowerment (Khan et al., 2021).

In this study, Servant Leadership is reflected through five main indicators: Altruistic Calling, Emotional Healing, Wisdom, Persuasive Mapping, and Organizational Stewardship. These five dimensions have been shown to play a role in driving increased Psychological Empowerment, which in this study is measured through four indicators: Meaning, Self-determination, Competence, and Impact.

The Servant Leadership variable shows that the indicator with the highest outer loading value is Persuasive Mapping, while in the Psychological Empowerment variable, the indicator with the highest outer loading value is Competence. This finding indicates that the better the leader's ability to convey vision, ideas, and direction of thought persuasively, the higher the level of competence perceived by employees. This means that a leadership style that is able to influence with a persuasive approach can foster self-confidence, improve abilities, and encourage employee confidence in their capacity to carry out tasks. Thus, Persuasive Mapping not only functions as a leader's communication instrument, but also becomes an important factor in strengthening individual competence, which has direct implications for improving human resource performance.

The Servant Leadership variable shows that the indicator with the lowest outer loading value is Emotional Healing, while the lowest indicator in the Psychological Empowerment variable is Impact. This finding indicates that a leader's ability to provide Emotional Healing, namely caring, empathy, and emotional support to subordinates, is closely related to increasing employee perceptions of Impact or the real impact of their contributions to the organization. In other words, the higher the quality of Emotional Healing possessed by a leader, the greater the sense of empowerment of employees in influencing work results and organizational achievements. This means that leadership oriented towards emotional healing not only strengthens interpersonal relationships but also increases employee confidence that their roles make a significant contribution to organizational goals.

### **3.4. The Influence of Servant Leadership on HR Performance.**

The results of the first test indicate that Servant Leadership has a positive and significant impact on HR performance. This means that the higher the implementation of service-oriented leadership, the higher the employee performance. Research by (Suwanto Suwanto et al., 2022) also shows that leaders who prioritize service to their teams can improve work quality and employee job satisfaction.

In this study, Servant Leadership is reflected through five main indicators, namely Altruistic Calling, Emotional Healing, Wisdom, Persuasive Mapping, and Organizational Stewardship. These five dimensions of leadership have been proven to contribute significantly in driving increased HR Performance. Meanwhile, HR Performance in this study is measured based on five indicators, namely work quality, quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence. The results of the study confirm that service-oriented leadership is able to foster commitment, provide emotional support, and guide employees wisely so that it is reflected in higher quality, productive, timely, efficient, and independent performance.

The Servant Leadership variable shows that the indicator with the highest outer loading value is Persuasive Mapping, while in the Human Resource Performance variable, the highest indicator is Effectiveness. This finding indicates that a leader's ability to construct convincing, logical, and easily understood arguments for subordinates (Persuasive Mapping) contributes significantly to increasing employee work effectiveness. This means that the better a leader is able to direct, influence, and communicate the organization's vision through persuasive argument mapping, the higher the effectiveness demonstrated by employees in carrying out tasks, achieving targets, and optimizing overall organizational performance.

The Servant Leadership variable shows that the indicator with the lowest outer loading value is Emotional Healing, while in the Human Resource Performance variable, the indicator with the lowest value is Work Quality. This finding indicates that improving a leader's ability to provide emotional support, empathy, and help employees overcome stress or psychological problems will have a positive impact on improving the quality of employee work results. This means that the quality of human resource work is not only determined by technical skills, but is also greatly influenced by the extent to which the leader is able to facilitate emotional recovery and build a healthy and supportive work climate. Thus, organizations need to strengthen the Emotional Healing dimension in leadership so that employee work quality can be maintained consistently and sustainably.

### **3.5. The Influence of Psychological Empowerment on HR Performance.**

The results of the first test indicate that psychological empowerment has a positive and significant impact on HR performance. This means that the higher an employee's sense of psychological empowerment, the more optimal their performance. These results support research by Liu & Ren (2022), which found that employees who feel psychologically empowered are more proactive, innovative, and demonstrate better work results.

The Psychological Empowerment variable in this study is represented through four indicators: Meaning, Self-determination, Competence, and Impact. These four dimensions have been shown to contribute to improving human resource (HR) performance. HR performance in this study is measured through five reflective indicators: work quality, quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence.

The Psychological Empowerment variable shows that the indicator with the highest outer loading value is Competence, while in the Human Resource Performance variable, the



indicator with the highest outer loading value is Effectiveness. This finding indicates that the higher the level of competence perceived by an individual, the greater their ability to work effectively in achieving organizational goals. This means that when employees have strong confidence in their own capacity and feel capable of carrying out their duties well, this will directly contribute to increased work effectiveness, both in terms of achieving targets, optimizing resources, and completing work with high quality.

The Psychological Empowerment variable with the lowest outer loading value is the Impact indicator, while the Human Resource Performance variable has the lowest outer loading value in the Work Quality indicator. This finding indicates that the greater the impact or influence an employee feels on their work and environment, the better the work quality they can demonstrate. This means that when employees feel that their contributions bring real change and have a positive impact on the organization, they will be more motivated to improve their accuracy, precision, and quality work results. Thus, organizations need to create conditions that encourage employees to feel a sense of impact, for example through involvement in decision-making, providing space for innovation, and recognition for work results, so that the resulting performance quality can be optimized.

### **3.6. The influence of the role of psychological empowerment in the influence of servant leadership on human resource performance**

The test results indicate a positive influence of Servant Leadership on HR Performance through increased employee psychological empowerment. This means that Servant Leadership has a significant positive influence on HR Performance through psychological empowerment.

The analysis results show that the original sample value (O) of the Servant Leadership pathway directly on HR Performance is 0.348, while the Servant Leadership pathway indirectly on HR Performance through Psychological Empowerment is 0.234. Although the indirect influence through Psychological Empowerment is proven to be positive and significant, when compared, the coefficient value of the direct path is greater than the indirect path. This indicates that Servant Leadership has a stronger and more effective influence directly on improving HR performance than through the mediating role of Psychological Empowerment. Thus, Psychological Empowerment does not act as an intervening variable in the relationship between Servant Leadership and HR performance, but only becomes a variable that contributes positively without fully mediating.

## **4. Conclusion**

The research problem formulation that emerged was "How can HR performance be improved when supported by servant leadership with psychological empowerment as a mediator?" Then the answer to the question in this research is as follows: 1. Based on the results of the first test, it shows that Servant Leadership has a positive and significant influence on employee psychological empowerment. 2. Based on the results of the first test, it shows that Servant Leadership has a positive and significant influence on HR Performance. 3. Based on the results of the first test, it shows that psychological empowerment has a

positive and significant influence on HR performance. 4. The test results indicate a positive influence of Servant Leadership on HR Performance through increased employee psychological empowerment. This means that Servant Leadership has a significant positive influence on HR Performance through psychological empowerment.

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