

Enhancing Public Service Motivation: The Influence of Servant Leadership and Basic Need Satisfaction in Health Center Employees

Muhamad Agung Ali Fikri^{1*}, Lala Hucadinota Ainul Amri², Multi Nadeak³

¹Universitas Insan Pembangunan Indonesia, Indonesia

²Politeknik Negeri Media Kreatif, Indonesia

³Sekolah Tinggi Teknologi Bandung, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: jurnalkaryaku@gmail.com

Abstract Motivating public service employees such as Puskesmas employees, especially in this pandemic era, is very crucial for every Puskesmas unit. Therefore, this study aims to measure the correlation of the effect of servant leadership on public service motivation, both directly and indirectly through the mediation of basic need satisfaction. Data were collected from 73 health center employees, including doctors, who work at health centers in Tangerang Regency. The research method used was quantitative method and confirmatory survey with the help of SmartPLS 3.0 software. This study shows that servant leadership practices have a positive and significant influence on public service motivation of Puskesmas employees, both directly and indirectly through the mediation of basic need satisfaction.

Keywords: Basic need satisfaction, public service motivation, servant leadership.



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INTRODUCTION

Fostering work motivation is important, as work motivation has been linked to job satisfaction (Novitasari, Asbari, & Sasono, 2021a; Nugroho et al., 2021) innovation (Asbari et al., 2020; Novitasari, Hutagalung, et al., 2021; Suroso et al., 2021a) and performance (Asbari, Purwanto, et al., 2021; Asbari & Novitasari, 2021; Johan et al., 2021a; Novitasari, Asbari, & Purwanto, 2020; Novitasari & Asbari, 2021a; Putra et al., 2021; Sudiyono et al., 2020).. At a time when there is a scarcity of superior human resources, while public demands to continuously improve the performance of Puskesmas services, the ability of leaders and organizations to increase work motivation is increasingly important and critical.

In the public administration literature, focus has been centered on the concept of motivated public service (PSM). Defined as "the orientation of individuals to provide services" to people with the aim of doing good for others and society" (Im et al., 2016; Mahmood et al., 2020; Tangaraja et al., 2015). PSM can be seen as a specific type of prosocial motivation (Jensen & Bro, 2018; Shim & Faerman, 2017).. As such, PSM is often contrasted with other types of motivation based on the inherent pleasure of an activity (public service motivation) or the expected reward/avoidance of sanctions (external regulation). Importantly, PSM not only encourages employees to put effort towards interesting and enjoyable tasks with prosocial consequences, but also helps explain why employees put extra effort into tasks that are inherently unpleasant or not incentivized by monetary rewards (Houston, 2011), making it important for public leaders to know how to stimulate this type of motivation. (Johan et al., 2021b; Jumiran et al., 2020; Novitasari, Asbari, Putra, et al., 2021; Novitasari & Asbari, 2021b; Suroso et al., 2021b)..

Servant leadership entails behaviors that aim to direct and inspire efforts to meet organizational goals by articulating a vision that raises employees' awareness of the importance of organizational values, mission, and outcomes. Aiming to make employees transcend their own personal interests for the sake of the organization (Jensen et al., 2016; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996; True, Moynihan, & Pandey, 2012), this leadership strategy is increasingly recognized in the public administration literature as an important antecedent of PSM (e.g., Wright et al., 2012). While recent empirical studies show a positive correlation between servant leadership and PSM (Krogsgaard, Thomsen, & Andersen, 2014; Park & Rainey,

2008; Vandenberg, 2014; Wright et al., 2012), none of these studies integrate other types of motivation or explore the mechanisms underlying this relationship. A core expectation in servant leadership theory is that transformational leaders "activate the higher-order needs of employees" (Wright et al., 2012, p. 207), but this expectation has been little tested (see Hetland, Hetland, Andreassen, Pallesen, & Notelaers, 2011; Kovjanic, Schuh, & Jonas, 2013; Kovjanic, Schuh, Jonas, Quaquebeke, & Dick, 2012), and has not been examined with motivation as an end result.

In this article, the authors build on the insights of self-determination theory (SDT), as it introduces the importance of basic need satisfaction (for autonomy, competence, and relatedness) and introduces basic need fulfillment as a mediating mechanism between servant leadership and public service motivation. This is based on several reasons: First, understanding the psychological mechanisms through which organizational leadership can enhance or derail employee motivation is critical for leaders. Ideally, leaders can use this information in decisions about how to motivate employees to achieve organizational goals. (Asbari, Purba, et al., 2021b, 2021a).. Second, motivation is a multifaceted concept (Wise, 2004), and focusing on public service motivation during this pandemic is considered more useful. Third and finally, integrating SDT, servant leadership, and PSM theories has the potential to explain the ways in which servant leadership type shapes employee perceptions of better public service motivation.

Servant leadership is a leadership approach that emphasizes the moral behavior of leaders. This approach is different from other theories of leadership, such as: charismatic and transformational leadership (Bass, 1985). In particular, according to Aboramadan (2020) and Latif (2021) the servant leadership approach differs from popular leadership styles in several ways: a) servant leaders act in the best interest of their followers and are uniquely concerned with the success of all organizational stakeholders; b) servant leadership includes a moral component; and c) servant leaders engage in self-reflection to reduce leader hubris. Spears (2010) empirically showed that servant leadership is different from other leadership styles, such as LMX and servant leadership.

Regarding the importance of servant leadership for organizations, a recent literature study conducted by Parris and Peachey (2013) revealed that servant leadership is feasible and valuable at the individual and organizational levels and it increases the overall effectiveness of individuals and teams. When servant leadership practices are implemented in a company, performance increases by 15%-20%, and group productivity increases by 20%-50% (Romig, 2001). Although servant leadership is widely practiced in boardrooms and organizations, it remains understudied (Bass and Bass, 2008). In fact, only a small number of studies have empirically examined this construct (Parris and Peachey, 2013), which has recently been identified as the ethical foundation and leadership framework needed to address the challenges of the twenty-first century (Parris and Peachey, 2013).

According to SDT, people differ not only in terms of how motivated they are to perform an activity but also in terms of the type of motivation behind the action (Deci et al., 2017). (Deci et al., 2017). The fundamental distinction in theory between autonomous motivation and controlled motivation, is determined by whether the motivation involves a "sense of volition and having the experience of choosing" or a "feeling of pressure and having to engage in action" (Gagné & Deci, 2005, p. 334). These types of motivation can be seen as part of a motivational continuum, where public service motivation is prototypically autonomous (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Referring to whether an activity is seen as inherently interesting or enjoyable (Ryan & Deci, 2000b), public service motivation is contrasted with other types of extrinsic motivation, which require some sort of device between activities and which can be separated from the outcome (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

When the activity is performed because of external (or "ostensibly" external) consequences. (such as implicit approval, tangible rewards, or increased self-esteem), motivation is said to be extrinsically controlling. However, when the regulation of behavior, and the value associated with it, has been internalized to the extent that external consequences are no longer necessary, motivation is said to be extrinsically autonomous (Gagné & Des, 2005). According to SDT, the latter case occurs when people identify with the (unpleasant) value of the activity for a purpose of their own choosing, or even see the behavior as an integral part of who they are (goals, values, and regulations) of a behavior that is coherent with other aspects of one's life; Gagne & Deci, 2005). Defined as "an individual's orientation to provide service" to people with the goal of doing good for others and society" (Hondeghem & Perry, 2009), PSM has both autonomous and extrinsic characteristics. When service-motivated public activities are based on what external parties expect from the activity (to do good), they may involve effort directed at tasks that are not seen as inherently interesting. However, the expected outcome is not directed at (and therefore does not control) the person performing the activity. Rather, such tasks are likely to be performed because "the activity is necessary for the end result" of service delivery or because not performing the task would be unthinkable for people like them" (Houston, 2011).

Needs satisfaction has also been considered a core feature of servant leadership theory (Podsakoff

et al., 1996). As noted by Kovjanic and colleagues (2012), it is by valuing and addressing needs that transformational leaders develop their followers' potential and foster their commitment and effort to the collective. (Asbari, Novitasari, et al., 2021; Novitasari et al., 2021; Purwanto et al., 2021; Purwanto, Bernarto, et al., 2020; Silitonga et al., 2021).. Therefore, the authors argue that SDT and its notion of basic need satisfaction are necessary components to understand how servant leadership fosters public service motivation. The author identifies servant leadership as capable of increasing employee satisfaction.

Based on the previous discussion, the theoretical framework is introduced as shown in Figure 1 below.

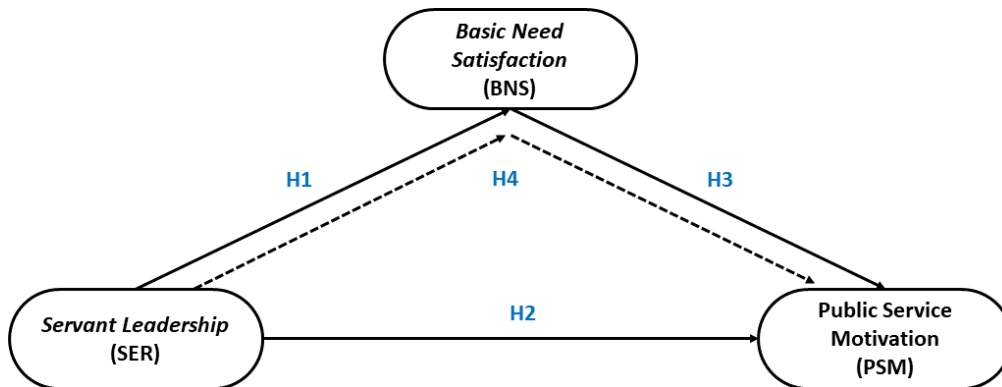


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Research

Based on the above, this study develops the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Servant leadership has a significant effect on basic need satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Servant leadership has a significant effect on public service motivation.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Basic need satisfaction has a significant effect on public service motivation.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Basic need satisfaction mediates the relationship between servant leadership and public service motivation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a survey technique using quantitative analysis and to collect data on the effect of servant leadership on employees' public service motivation, both directly and indirectly through the mediation of basic need satisfaction. The survey enabled the researchers to collect data from employees who participated in leadership training sessions conducted by their supervisors, and assisted them in assessing employees' perceived public service motivation. This technique was adopted because of its ability to collect data quickly compared to other tools, while allowing for random sample selection, and allowing researchers to measure and control several variables. Thereafter, in order to identify findings or patterns within the relevant sample, the collected data was then analyzed in depth. The aim of this research is to gather maximally useful knowledge to form valid hypotheses, which minimizes subjectivity. Thus, positivist theory was adopted in this study as it identifies similarities seen through observation and investigation work. Therefore, a deductive approach was followed, seeking to propose and test hypotheses to fit existing theories.

For the purpose of this study, the questionnaire was designed in several sections: The first section includes demographic questions where employees anonymously state their gender, age, education, and tenure in the company. The second section includes five questions that capture the extent to which servant leadership is practiced in the company. These measurement items (SER1-SER5) are taken from Bande et al. (2016). The instrument used to measure basic need satisfaction was adapted from Law et al. (2004) by using 6 items (BNS1-BNS6). While the instrument used to measure public service motivation is adapted from Mehta et al. Mehta et al. (2009) using 7 items (PSM1-PSM7). The questionnaire was designed in such a way as to target doctors and employees of health centers in Tangerang Regency. To ensure the adequacy of the research tool in the context, the researcher forwarded the questionnaire to four researchers whose notes were then incorporated. Subsequently, the questionnaire was piloted on 30 employees. The researchers collected data anonymously in accordance with research ethics standards and were able to receive a considerable response rate through online communication.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

In total there were 73 employees who participated. Respondents have different age groups, ranging between under the age of 29 years (79.5%), 30-49 years (13.7%), and more than age 50 years (6.8%). Their working period also varied, 54.8% in of them in under 5 years, 27.4% have worked between 5-10 years, and 17.8% the rest have worked more than 10 years. The highest education of respondents is the majority at the level of Diploma (75.3%).

The measurement model testing stage includes testing convergent validity, discriminant validity. Meanwhile, to test construct reliability, *Cronbach's alpha* and *composite reliability values* are used. The results of PLS analysis can be used to test the research hypothesis if all indicators in the PLS model have met the requirements of convergent validity, discriminant validity and reliability tests.

The convergent validity test is carried out by looking at the *loading factor* value of each indicator on its construct. In most references, a factor weight of 0.5 or more is considered to have a strong enough validation to explain the latent construct (Chin, 1998; Ghozali, 2014; Hair et al., 2010). (Chin, 1998; Ghozali, 2014; Hair et al., 2010).. In this study, the minimum limit for the amount of *loading factor* accepted is 0.7, and provided that the AVE value of each construct is > 0.5 . (Ghozali, 2014). After going through SmartPLS 3.0 processing, all indicators or research items have a *loading factor* value above 0.7 and an AVE value above 0.5. The fit or valid model of this study can be seen in Table 1. So thus, the convergent validity of this research model has met the requirements. The loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability and AVE values for each construct can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Items Loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variables	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho-A	Composite Reliability	AVE
<i>Servant Leadership</i> (SER)	SER1	0,920	0,880	0,924	0,916	0,695
	SER2	0,954				
	SER3	0,801				
	SER4	0,914				
	SER5	0,492				
<i>Basic Need Satisfaction</i> (BNS)	BNS1	0,904	0,956	0,958	0,966	0,851
	BNS2	0,930				
	BNS3	0,931				
	BNS4	0,939				
	BNS5	0,907				
<i>Public Service Motivation</i> (PSM)	PSM1	0,814	0,869	0,905	0,897	0,555
	PSM2	0,799				
	PSM3	0,726				
	PSM4	0,702				
	PSM5	0,774				
	PSM6	0,767				
	PSM7	0,613				

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

Variables	BNS	PSM	SER
BNS	0,922		
PSM	0,643	0,745	
SER	0,562	0,849	0,834

Table 3. Collinearity (VIF)

Variables	BNS	PSM	SER
BNS			
PSM		1,461	

Variables	BNS	PSM	SER
SER	1,000	1,461	

Table 4. R Square Value

Variables	R Square	R Square Adjusted
BNS	0,316	0,310
PSM	0,761	0,757

Table 5. Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Relationship	Beta	M	SE	T Statistics	P-Values	Decision
H1	SER -> BNS	0,562	0,568	0,045	12,382	0,000	Supported
H2	SER -> PSM	0,712	0,716	0,037	19,044	0,000	Supported
H3	BNS -> PSM	0,243	0,240	0,052	4,674	0,000	Supported
H4	SER -> BNS -> PSM	0,137	0,136	0,031	4,415	0,000	Supported

Discriminant validity is conducted to confirm that each notion within a latent variable is distinct from concepts within other latent variables. For a model to have acceptable discriminant validity, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) square value of each exogenous construct should be higher than the correlation between that construct and other constructs. The source is Ghazali (2014). Discriminant validity testing findings are determined by examining the AVE square value, specifically by using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion Value from Table 4. The discriminant validity test results in table 3 indicate that all constructs have an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) square root value higher than the correlation value with other latent constructs, as per the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The cross-loading value of all components of an indicator is higher than the other indicator items in Table 4, indicating that the model has achieved discriminant validity. (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). A collinearity evaluation is performed to assess the presence of collinearity in the model. To determine collinearity, one must calculate the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for each construct. A VIF score exceeding 5 indicates collinearity in the model (Hair et al., 2014). The reference is from Hair et al. (2014). All Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) ratings in Table 3 are below 5, indicating the absence of collinearity issues in this model.

Reliability of a construct can be evaluated by examining the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values associated with each construct. The suggested composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values exceed 0.7. (Ghozali, 2014). The results of the reliability test in table 2 indicate that all constructions exhibit composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.7. Overall, all structures have achieved the necessary reliability.

PLS hypothesis testing is often referred to as the inner model test. This test involves assessing the importance of direct and indirect effects and quantifying the extent of the impact of exogenous variables on endogenous variables. An influence test is required to assess the impact of the knowledge management method on employee innovation performance. The study conducted an effect test utilizing the t-statistic test within the partial least squares (PLS) analysis model through the SmartPLS 3.0 software. With the *bootstrapping* technique, the *R Square* value and significance test value are obtained as Table 4 and Table 5.

The researcher presents the fact of the correlation of the direct effect of *servant leadership* on public service motivation (H2). Secondly, we proceed to the respective mediation terms; namely, the path from *servant leadership* to *basic need satisfaction* (H1) and from *basic need satisfaction* to public service motivation (H3). Finally, we tested the joint significance of the indirect relationship (H4). From the test results presented in Table 5, it was found that all hypotheses were accepted (**H1, H2, H3, H4 accepted/supported**). The researcher noted that the data found partial support for the direct path from *servant leadership* to *basic need satisfaction* (H1) and public service

motivation (H3). This means that employees' perceptions of *servant leadership* behavior are very positive and statistically significant on *basic need satisfaction* and public service motivation. This result suggests that employees/doctors express greater pleasure and joy at work when leaders rely on *servant leadership* to a greater extent. To assess the hypothesis, the researcher tested whether *servant leadership* is directly related to public service motivation, and indirectly through *basic need satisfaction*. Here, the researcher found a positive and significant influence relationship.

This result reinforces the idea in SDT that job satisfaction is very important to increase public service motivation in every work activity. (Fayzhall et al., 2020; Hutagalung et al., 2020; Jumiran et al., 2020; Novitasari, Asbari, Purwanto, et al., 2020; Novitasari, Asbari, & Sasono, 2021b; Nuryanti et al., 2020; Sutardi et al., 2020; Yuwono, Novitasari, Asbari, et al., 2020; Yuwono, Novitasari, Hutagalung, et al., 2020).while job satisfaction is strongly related to the positive influence of *servant leadership* (Choi et al., 2016). (Choi et al., 2016; Fayzhall et al., 2020; Weller et al., 2019).. The results of this research work are supported by the previous researchers mentioned above (Fikri et al., 2021). Clearly, the researcher identified that *servant leadership* is able to increase job satisfaction and public service motivation.

This study has some limitations on several counts. First, *servant leadership*, *basic need satisfaction* and public service motivation were all measured at one point in time, and this makes it difficult to clearly determine the temporal order of the variables empirically. Although SDT explicitly argues in accordance with the causal sequence proposed in this study, i.e. that increased basic need satisfaction will increase employees' public service motivation, SDT does not explicitly argue for a causal sequence. (Bidee et al., 2017; Goldman et al., 2017; Rezvani et al., 2017).. Second, the sample only consisted of employees and doctors of health centers in Tangerang district, whose leaders voluntarily participated in this study. This could be problematic in terms of generalization to the population of employees/physicians whose leaders did not volunteer. Third, the population of this study is Puskesmas employees, which could have different results if the study was conducted on other industry populations, such as retail and similar service industries.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that servant leadership practices have a significant and positive impact on both basic need satisfaction and public service motivation among employees and doctors in Health Center Health Facility units. The empirical analysis revealed that servant leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing the satisfaction of basic needs, such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which in turn contributes to higher levels of public service motivation. Additionally, the research findings suggest that servant leadership not only directly influences public service motivation but also indirectly through the mediation of basic need satisfaction. This highlights the importance of leadership styles that prioritize the well-being and development of employees in fostering a strong sense of motivation towards serving the public.

Furthermore, the study acknowledges some limitations, including the focus on a specific population of Puskesmas employees in the Tangerang district, which may limit the generalizability of the results to other industry populations. The researchers also note the cross-sectional nature of the data collection, which makes it challenging to establish a clear temporal order among the variables. Despite these limitations, the study underscores the significance of servant leadership in increasing job satisfaction and public service motivation, emphasizing the need for further research to explore the causal relationships between servant leadership, basic need satisfaction, and public service motivation in diverse organizational settings.

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