The Impact of Servant Leadership on Employees' Motivation with the Mediating Role of Employees' Job Satisfaction: The Case of the Petroleum Sector in Egypt

Radi, Sherihan

Brandenburg University of Technology, Cottbus – Senftenberg

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Abstract

Servant leadership, the growing trend in today's business and the future leadership style is based on the concept that a healthy business development can be achieved if all employees at all levels are supported. It is a powerful and energetic factor in creating employees motivation encouraging employees to work with a higher degree of enthusiasm to achieve some of the best business results.

The purpose of this research was to examine the impact of servant leadership on employees' motivation with the mediating role of employees' job satisfaction.

The structural equation model (SEM) method has been used and the population sample size consisted of 186 employees working in the petroleum sector in Egypt. The result of this empirical research is that servant leadership has a significant positive impact on employees' motivation in the workplace and that employees' job satisfaction plays a meditating role of 77% of the total effect between servant leadership and employees' motivation.

Insights from this study can be used for the achievement of this research line development in future.

Keywords: servant leadership, employees' motivation, employees' job satisfaction, mediating role.

1. Introduction

As expressed by Pedersen (2021), the concept of leadership has evolved over the years creating various leadership styles that have different views of leaders' relationship with employees, leaders' role and purpose within a company. It is a lifestyle that promotes values of humility, empathy, caring for others and prioritizing ethics rather than profits.

As by Team Asana (2021), Robert K. Greenleaf developed the servant leadership model where in 1970 he believed that the servant-leader starts with the willingness to serve first and then the aspiration to lead.

Servant leadership focuses on the leader serving management, employees, and customers not like the traditional leadership styles. A servant leader doesn't consider himself as the highest priority as he serves rather than being served as mentioned by Becker Logistics (2019).

Servant leadership is not only found in theory anymore as researchers transformed their studies about it to research findings that are empirically verifiable as mentioned by Athal (2021).

1.1 The Problem of the Study

In today's business environment employers constantly seek the implementation of ways and methods that boost productivity and promote a company's business success while increasing and improving both employees' motivation and job satisfaction. Since it is the company's leader/s duties to direct their team towards the increasing of their performance efficiency and outcome, it is essential for any company to apply an appropriate leadership style that provides the employees with the empowerment and tools to achieve professional success through attributing to the increased employees' motivation and job satisfaction.

This research examines the impact of one leadership style; servant leadership on employees' motivation with the mediating role of employees' job satisfaction.

1.2 Research Objectives

• RO1: To study the impact of servant leadership on employees' motivation.

• RO2: To investigate the mediating role of employees' job satisfaction in relation to servant leadership and employees' motivation.

1.3 Research Questions

The study will tend to answer the following research questions:

- What is the role of servant leadership?

- What is the importance of servant leadership?

- What is the impact of servant leadership on employees' motivation?

- What is the impact of servant leadership on employees' job satisfaction?

- What is the mediating role of employees' job satisfaction between servant leadership and employees' motivation?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

H1: Servant leadership has a positive impact on employees' motivation.

H2: Servant leadership has a positive impact on employees' job satisfaction.

H3: Employees' job satisfaction has a positive impact on employees' motivation.

H4: Employees' job satisfaction plays a mediating role between servant leadership and employees' motivation.

2. Literature Review

This section will discuss the literature related to servant leadership, servant leader characteristics, the role and importance of servant leadership, employees' motivation and employees' job satisfaction.

2.1 Servant Leadership

Based on Garibay (2021), the traditional leadership style involves a hierarchy with power at the top based on intimidation and fear and emphasizing on the leader's aggregation of power rather than seeking to become an effective leader. This could lead to devaluation and resentment by the

employees. On the other hand, servant leadership is based on the concept of supporting all employees at all levels while focusing more on employees' engagement and less on individual power.

In accordance with Kenton (2021), servant leadership is a philosophy and a leadership style where an individual achieves authority through interacting with others. The aim of servant leadership is to empower employees, promote innovation, develop leadership qualities and move personnel and management interaction towards a synergistic relationship.

As per Rocco (2020), servant leadership is a revolutionary leadership style as it upturns a company's traditional power hierarchy upside down by placing the employees at the top while leaders serve and empower them.

2.2 Servant Leader Characteristics

Based on Kenton (2021), a servant leader encourages his subordinates to serve others as their priority and aims at encouraging the development of others and sharing power with them. Servant leaders seek to fulfill the organization's needs and are driven by the servant first perspective without aiming to achieve material benefit or gain control.

As discussed by Team Asana (2021), servant leaders present a clear vision and create an environment in which their team members flourish. They offer support and a sense of purpose where team members feel welcomed. The characteristics of servant leaders include listening to their team members, empathizing and healing as in providing support and resources such as mentorship program and weekly 1:1 meetings. The characteristics also include self and general awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and those of their team members. Persuasion, another characteristic where servant leaders persuade others to make decisions which establishes

a level of trust within a team. Besides these characteristics, conceptualization, foresight, accountability, commitment to the growth of people and building community are among the servant leaders' characteristics.

One of the unique servant leadership characteristics is the courage to accept criticism, to sacrifice and to put others ahead of self as expressed by Kourteva (2021).

2.3 The Role of Servant Leadership

In accordance with Pedersen (2021), servant leaders function at two levels. The first level includes providing direction from the top-down such as communicating the company's strategic vision down to the team. The second level is empowering employees from the bottom-up such as sharing decision-making processes, building mutual team trust and confidence.

The servant leadership style operates in business by implementing the servant leadership approach at all personnel levels and offers guidance to those seeking the improvement of their leadership skills as mentioned by Garibay (2021).

Besides achieving business results, servant leaders make employees lives better during the process as they focus on the team's humanity besides business outcomes as by Randall (2021).

2.4 The Importance of Servant leadership

As mentioned by Kenton (2021), servant leaders consider the employees opinions and look out for their interests and this makes them feel supported and valued and also encourages them to advance professionally.

According to Athal (2021), through servant leadership which is concerned for the growth and well-being of the organization and its employees, employees are empowered and feel like significant members and this enables them to identify and resolve any problems that may occur in the organization.

As expressed by Pedersen (2021), servant leadership leads to the creation of employees' sense of belonging, moral boost and improved agility with regard to organizational terms. It results into a more positive work environment and collaborative decision-making.

Servant leadership is important as it creates a nurturing environment and encourages the employees to be serving, humble and compassionate enabling business to grow as by Spencer (2020).

Implementing the philosophy of servant leadership in a company establishes a foundation for growth, trust and limitless potential for the company's employees and customers as by Becker Logistics (2019).

Based on Rocco (2018), servant leadership creates an environment of both ethical conduct and high regard for others which positively influences the company's customers and stakeholders besides increasing the customers' ratings and brand name loyalty. Through the servant leaders' efforts to support employees training, they facilitate the implementation of the company's programs that aim at achieving employees professional and skills development. This leads to having productive, skilled and knowledgeable employees who are able to positively affect the company's reputation in the business market.

2.5 Employees' Motivation

As explained by Pellikaan (2021), motivation is the willpower and energy required for employees to present their best performance. It includes two types: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is an internal drive that enables the employees to carry out their work duties while feeling satisfied such as feeling enthusiastic and proud in their contribution to a goal. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation includes external short-term such as a prize or long-term factors such as a promotion or raise that drive an employee.

Motivation promotes employees efficiency and behavior and encourages them to achieve personal and organizational goals & activities as mentioned by Jahid (2021).

2.6 Employees' Job Satisfaction

Based on BasuMallick (2021), job satisfaction is a positive emotional response and contentment that employees experience at work and involves their satisfaction with their duties, management, colleagues and the company's policies.

3. Conceptual Framework

The figure demonstrated below was constructed according to the study's objectives. The conceptual framework of this research model shows the impact of servant leadership on employees' motivation and the mediating role of employees' job satisfaction.
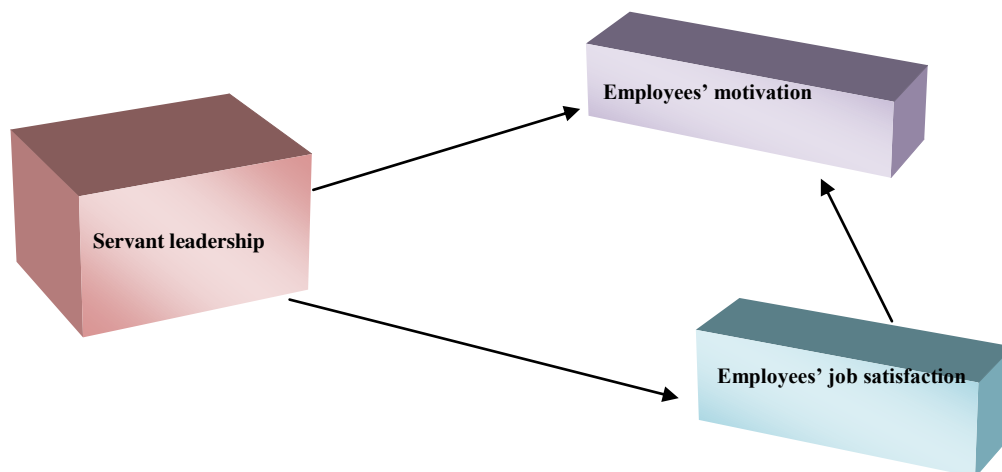

Figure 1: The Impact of Servant Leadership on Employees' Motivation and the Mediating Role of Employees' Job Satisfaction

Source: By researcher

3.1 The Impact of Servant leadership on Employees' Motivation

As explained by Riggins & Riggins (2021) , since servant leadership is concerned with the desire of assisting others, appreciating others' opinions and showing the employees that they are supported, valued and encouraged, employees feel motivated to contribute to their organization and to grow as part of it.

Based on Doolittle (2021), due to the increased leader and follower commitment created by servant leadership, higher levels of intrinsic motivation exists that boost business strategy benefits and workforce alignment. This results into employees' higher performance as there is a positive relation between higher levels of employee intrinsic motivation and work productivity.

The work environment created by servant leadership in the workplace that enhances the employees feelings of being respected and appreciated, leads to higher employee morale and engagement and the establishment of a stronger work culture as discussed by Indeed Editorial Team (2021).

Employees' motivation, engagement, morale and commitment are fueled by the high support levels provided by servant leaders to employees and this also improves pride of work such as allowing employees to freely implement their ideas as discussed by Gomez (2021).

Servant leaders respect and care for all employees and treat each individual employee personally creating mutual trust-intrinsic motivation between leaders and employees as by Becker Logistics (2019).

According to Rocco (2018), servant leadership is considered a dynamic factor in increasing the employees 'motivational levels. Servant leaders use empowerment and reward as preferred motivational tools based on their understanding that great long-term business results can only be achieved through positive reinforcement rather than depending on domination, fear and negative threat. Through servant leadership, a workplace culture is formed that promotes employees' motivation and enthusiasm as well as teamwork and the willingness to go the extra mile.

As mentioned by McCuistion (2018), servant leadership enhances employees' motivation. A servant leader focuses on the welfare of all employees and aims at making a difference in their lives through opening lines of communication, accepting the employees with value and worth and involving them in the decision-making process.

3.2 The Impact of Servant leadership on Employees' Job Satisfaction

One of servant leadership benefits is employee job satisfaction together with a boosted performance as expressed by Pedersen (2021) .

The servant leader creates a friendly work environment and a people-focused culture where employees feel comfortable to ask any questions or express any complaints as by Gomez (2021).

According to Garibay (2021), servant leadership principles in the workplace results into the transformation of an inactive operation into a collaborative and innovative one. Since servant leaders are hard working, employees' job satisfaction increases and they are willing to invest more in their roles.

As discussed by Rocco (2020), servant leaders value employees, put them first and give them the freedom to achieve their career performance goals. Additionally, they offer employees interactive experiences that include various social events creating a second work family and a

welcoming community that employees want to be part of. As a result, employees' performance increases exceptionally as well as their job satisfaction.

3.3 The Impact of Employees' Job Satisfaction on Employees' Motivation

Based on Bourne (2021), job satisfaction includes physiological, environmental and psychological circumstances that create favorable or unfavorable feelings with which employees regard their work. There is a link between employees' job satisfaction and motivation. Employees who are satisfied with their job are more motivated to perform their tasks and produce more efficient outcome.

In accordance with MBA Skool Team (2021), job satisfaction motivates the employees to offer more contribution to the company and deliver their best which leads to the company's growth while the lack of job dissatisfaction results into sluggish employees who are a burden to the company.

Job satisfaction makes employees more engaged and eager to go the extra mile as by BasuMallick (2021).

3.4 The Mediating Role of Employees' Job Satisfaction between Servant Leadership and Employees' Motivation

Employees' job satisfaction is a factor that leads to employees' motivation as by Heathfield (2020).

As discussed by Rožman, Treven, & Čanče (2017), the more job satisfaction increases in a workplace, the more employees become motivated to increase their commitment, work and produce more. Their behavior becomes more energetic and directed towards the achievement of

organizational efficiency and effectiveness and the successful implementation of the successful implementation of the organizational strategy.

When employees feel more satisfied they become more motivated to show their commitment towards work and achieve a desired task as discussed by ArunKumar (2014).

4. Methodology

This study analyzes the impact of servant leadership on employees' motivation with the mediating role of employees' job satisfaction.

4.1. Samples

The research objects of this study are employees working in the petroleum sector in Egypt. 250 questionnaires were distributed while 212 with 26 questionnaires contained incomplete responses, 186 valid questionnaires remained with a response rate of 74.4%.

Table 1 below shows the characteristics of the sample.

Variables	Samples Characteristics		
Gender	Male	126	67.7%
	Female	60	32.3%
Age	21 - 25	62	33.3%
	26 - 30	104	55.9%
	31 - 40	20	10.8%
Educational level	Diploma	2	1.1%
	Bachelor	26	14.0%
	Master	124	66.7%
	PhD	34	18.3%
Position	Basic level employees	156	83.9%
	Basic management	26	14.0%
	Middle management	4	2.2%
Experience	3 or less	20	10.8%
	4-6	62	33.3%
	7-10	78	41.9%

11 or more	26	14.0%

Table 1: Characteristics of the Sample

Source: By researcher

4.2 Measuring Instrument

The questionnaire was designed with the aim of reaching the research's objectives and consists of questions representing all the study's variables that involve servant leadership, employees' motivation and employees' job satisfaction. For the achievement of results consistency, the questionnaire is based on five point Likert-scaling with 1 standing for strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neutral, 4 agree, and 5 strongly agree. A total of 55 items were measured that involve 1. Servant leadership. This study used the measuring scale of Chinese scholars for instance the one made by Wang Chunxiao in 2009. As for the original scale, it consists of 11 dimensions and 44 measuring items. The 11 dimensions include: serving all employees, encouraging the development of all employees, creating a flourishing environment, offering support to all employees, putting others ahead of self, the courage to accept criticism, willing to sacrifice, empowering others, empathizing, valuing all employees and offering guidance to all employees. This research uses the structural equation model and in order to be able to determine the link between service leadership and employees' motivation, correlated dimensions were packed into 3 dimensions: company (creating a flourishing environment, more efficient performance outcomes); employees (encouraging their development, valuing them, supporting and offering guidance to them); personality (putting others ahead of self, the courage to accept criticism, willing to sacrifice, empathizing and empowering others). According to the data analysis, also this scale is in line with the researcher's expectation; 2. Employees' job satisfaction. It is mainly based on MSQ scale that was proposed by Smith, Kendall and Hullin and has 3 measuring items;

3. Employees' motivation that is divided into 2 dimensions: outcome and behavior and has the total of 7 measuring items.

4.3. Methods of Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was conducted using the SPSS17.0 to perform basic statistical analysis and regression analysis. AMOS18.0 was used to perform scale construct validity testing and structural equation modeling and analysis.

5. Results

5.1. Reliability and Validity Analysis

The reliability and validity of the questionnaire samples was tested first. Table 2 below shows the reliability statistics.

Variables	Cronbach's α
Servant leadership	0.92
Employees' job satisfaction	0.87
Employees' motivation	0.90

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Source: By researcher

Table 2 above shows that the Cronbach's α coefficients of servant leadership scale is 0.92, employees' job satisfaction scale is 0.87 and employees' motivation scale is 0.90. All these three are above the generally accepted level of 0.80 which proves that the samples are of good reliability for the achievement of the basic requirements for research and surveying.

As for the model evaluation indices, these are demonstrated in table 3 below.

Index	CMIN/DF	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	IFI	CFI

Value	2.231	0.082	0.954	0.903	0.986	0.986
Standard	1 ~ 3	<0.10	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9

Table 3: Model Evaluation Indices

Source: By researcher

Table 3 demonstrates the following:

CMIN/DF < 3, RMSEA < 0.08, GFI, AGFI, IFI, CFI are greater than 0.9. Based on the usual standards of management research, CMIN/DF should be between 1 and 3, RMSEA should be less than 0.08, but less than 0.1 is acceptable, GFI, AGFI, IFI, CFI should be over 0.9.

As shown above, the overall fitness of the model is high. This indicates that the assumption of the theoretical model structure is reasonable. As for the coefficients in the paths of the model, load of each item in its factor is between 0.78 and 0.97, all above 0.5 and pass the significance test. As a result, the factors' contents are fully reflected in the questionnaire items indicating that the construct validity of the questionnaire is good.

5.2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis of Variables

The means, the standard deviations and the correlation coefficients of servant leadership, employees' job satisfaction and employees' motivation are illustrated in the table below as follows:

Servant leadership and employees' job satisfaction are significantly positively correlated (r = 0.75, p < 0.01). Servant leadership and employees' motivation are significantly positively correlated (r = 0.76, p < 0.01) while employees' job satisfaction and employees' motivation are significantly positively correlated (r = 0.85, p < 0.01).

Variables	Mean	Standard deviation	1	2	3

Servant leadership	3.84	0.56		
Employees' job satisfaction	3.90	0.72	0.75**	
Employees' motivation	3.73	0.74	0.76**	0.85**

**p < 0.01.

Table 4: Mean value, Standard deviation, Correlation coefficient (N = 18)

Source: By researcher

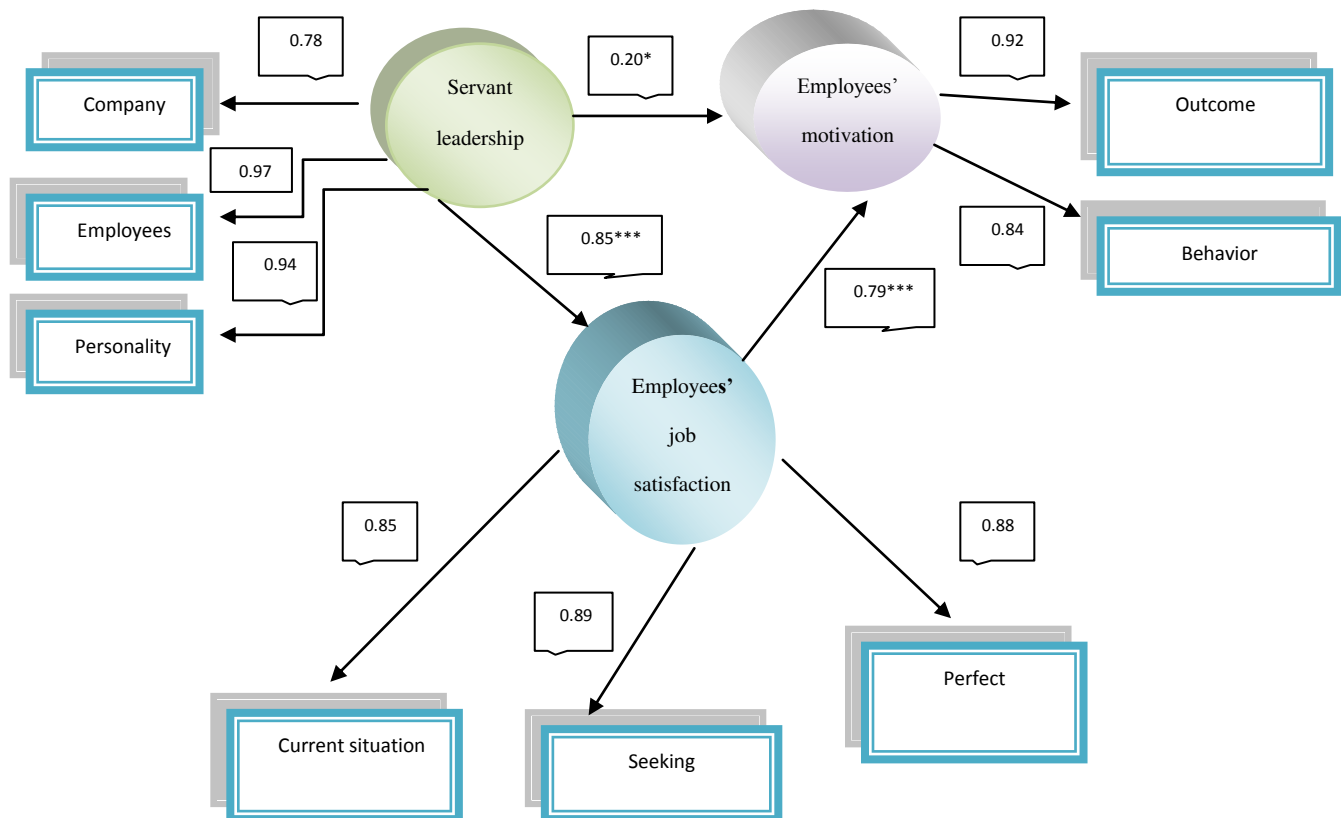## 5.3. Hypotheses Test in Structural Equation Model

Figure 2: Relationship between the structural equation model variables and the path coefficients.

Source: By researcher

Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between the structural equation model variables and the path coefficients: The data analysis results in figure 2 support the research assumptions. 1. Servant leadership has a significant positive impact on employees' job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.85$, $p < 0.001$) which reflects that the more the leader assumes the role of a servant leader, the higher employees' job satisfaction would be and vice versa. 2. Servant leadership has a significant positive impact on employees' motivation ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.05$) which shows that when there is servant leadership, employees' motivation becomes higher and vice versa. 3. Employees' job satisfaction has a significant positive impact on employees' motivation ($\beta = 0.79$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, increased employees' job satisfaction leads to increased employees' motivation and vice versa. 4. Employees' job satisfaction plays a mediating role between servant leadership and employees' motivation as demonstrated in Table 4with the direct effect 0.199, the mediating effect 0.665 and the total effect 0.864. The mediating effect covers 77% of the total effect (0.665/0.864).

6. Discussion and Conclusion

This study has investigated the relationship between servant leadership, employees' motivation and employees' job satisfaction and found out that there is a significant positive correlation between servant leadership and employees' motivation. If companies implement leadership service style in their structure that considers servicing and supporting employees as a priority, employees' motivational levels increase.

The study also found out that employees' job satisfaction plays an intermediary role between service leadership and employees' motivation with an intermediary utility ratio of 80%. This indicates that the impact of service leadership on employees' motivation relies on the intermediary variable of employees' job satisfaction.

In this competitive 21st century and due to the importance of having motivated workforces, companies that will survive and achieve business success are those willing to adopt servant leadership in their organizational structure.

7. Recommendation

This study suggests that due to the importance of the servant leadership role in creating a nurturing and positive work environment of high regard for others that is concerned for the employees and the company's growth and well-being; companies should focus their attention more towards the adoption of servant leadership style in all their different departments to ensure the existence of a motivated, empowered and productive workforce.

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