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# The Influence of Servant Leadership on the Performance Among Kindergarten Teachers

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**Abstract:** This article aim to examine the influence of servant leadership on work engagement and affective commiment. which affect task performance among Kindergarten (TK) teachers in Batam City. The method used in this research is quantitative research with purposive sampling method. The sample in this study was taken from teachers working in kindergartens in Batam City. The researchers chose this sample because kindergarten teachers play a crucial role in providing foundational education to children before they move on to the next level of education. Data for this study were obtained from 337 respondents who filled out an online questionnaire, answering a total of 36 questions. Out of the seven hypotheses proposed in this study, all of them showed significant results. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research indicating that servant leadership significantly impacts the job engagement and affective commitment of kindergarten teachers in Batam City. This, in turn, significantly affects the performance of teachers in their duties. This type of leadership enables kindergarten teachers to fully carry out their tasks and responsibilities effectively. Additionally, teachers can utilize their abilities in school settings to make positive contributions to themselves and their organizations.

**Keywords:** Servant Leadership, Affective Commitment, Work Engagement.

## INTRODUCTION

As (Eva et al., 2019)outlined, servant leadership is characterized by three key attributes: motives, mode, and mindset. Firstly, motives encompass the personal drive to assume leadership responsibility for advancing followers. Leaders offer diverse opportunities for growth across various dimensions, including psychological, emotional, and ethical well-being, fostering maturity and wisdom. Such an approach necessitates a foundation of maturity and robust character. Secondly, servant leadership is demonstrated by prioritizing followers' needs, interests, and objectives over personal interests. Leaders demonstrate an understanding of followers' backgrounds, values, and beliefs, treating each individual as unique with distinct desires, aspirations, and strengths. Lastly, the servant leader's mindset involves a shift from self-centeredness to genuine concern for others within the broader organizational community.

A servant leader is a leader who focuses on people, emphasizing followers' interests over their own. Servant leaders have a desire to do good in the community and are inspired by this (Aboramadan, 2021). Effective servant leadership can cultivate a culture centered on true justice, dedicated service, and community involvement, thereby enhancing team effectiveness and performance. Servant leaders are known for supporting employees by helping them grow and succeed, fostering career development, and promoting self-improvement. Additionally, they empower their team members to acquire new skills and engage in dynamic and critical thinking.(Hanaysha et al., 2022).

Leadership style refers to the approach and attitudes a leader employs to motivate employees, aiming to foster collaboration without causing them to feel overwhelmed, ultimately helping the organization meet its objectives. It encompasses how a leader intuitively inspires their team to work more effectively towards achieving established goals. (Mon et al., 2023)

The topic of leadership has captivated scholars and philosophers since antiquity. In the realm of education, school principals and teachers are pivotal to the quality of educational outcomes. Ideally, teachers would be highly motivated and enthusiastic about their work, while administrators would employ optimal leadership strategies to influence and inspire their staff. The concept of servant leadership, though not novel, is recognized as a fundamental and enduring principle that has been embraced across various cultures for centuries. In educational institutions, servant leadership is particularly important as it prioritizes the development of trusting relationships with subordinates. (Mehmood & Ch, 2023).

Leadership in education involves the process of influencing teachers and other stakeholders, extending beyond a single individual. Ideally, this influential process fosters an effective learning environment that all stakeholders—including students, teachers, parents, and the community—perceive as valuable. It ensures the smooth operation of all organizational processes within the school, such as monitoring learning progress, managing personnel, and allocating resources (Daniëls et al., 2019).

Based on data from the Badan Pusat Statistik in 2022, there were 91,367 kindergartens throughout Indonesia, while the number of kindergarten teachers totaled 344,283.(bps.go.id, 2021)

Meanwhile, according to data from Dinas Pendidikan Kota Batam in 2023, the number of kindergartens in Batam City was 424, and the number of kindergarten teachers, based on data from Badan Pusat Statistik in 2022, was 1,123. (batamkota.bps.go.id, 2022)

The reason for selecting kindergarten teachers as the subject of this study is due to the age range of children entering kindergarten, which spans from 4 to 6 years old. This age range is considered the Golden Age, signifying a critical stage of growth and development in early childhood. Therefore, the role of teachers in educating children in kindergarten is crucial. This article addresses the topic of servant leadership and its impact on task performance to understand the importance of leadership on teacher performance, as explained in the research (Nagarajan et al., 2022) Life satisfaction is a critical factor influencing job performance and student learning. Teachers with high levels of life satisfaction are more motivated and dedicated to their work, which enhances their classroom performance. Early childhood education encompasses educational programs and activities for children from birth to age eight, a period essential for their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. Consequently, high-quality early childhood education is vital for future success (Sandilos et al., 2020). The benefit of this research is to determine the extent of the impact of servant leadership on the performance of kindergarten teachers, as teachers play a vital role in educating children.

This study aims to investigate how servant leadership influences work engagement and affective commitment among kindergarten teachers, the object of this research is kindergarten teachers, which represents the novelty of this study. Additionally, the article highlights the

significance of job satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between the variables under scrutiny.

## METHOD

In this study, we utilized a survey questionnaire to investigate the impact of servant leadership on the performance of kindergarten teachers in Batam City, with affective commitment and work engagement as mediating variables. The questionnaire was distributed among kindergarten teachers in Batam City, and their responses were collected. To ensure the success of our research, it was crucial to identify relevant attributes and design the questionnaire accordingly. The questionnaire was developed based on primary questions reported in the literature, encompassing 36 questions distributed across five main categories: Servant Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Work Engagement, Task Performance, and Affective Commitment. Respondents were asked to rate the importance and impact of specific attributes on project delays using a five-point Likert scale (1 very low, 2 low, 3 moderate, 4 high, 5 very high). All collected data were carefully considered in our decision-making process using established methods.

The Krejcie and Morgan method is used to determine the minimum sample size to be taken. The population for this study is drawn from kindergarten teachers in the city of Batam. Data collection employs a questionnaire distribution technique via Google Forms, with a Likert scale ranging from 1 (one) to 5 (five). Data analysis uses Partial Least Squares (PLS), presenting the output results with the PLS Algorithm, and tests the Outer model (validity and reliability tests) as well as the Inner model. The sampling method used is Purposive Sampling.

In this study, the proposed model (Figure 1) examines how servant leadership influences the work engagement and emotional commitment of academic staff in kindergarten educational settings, with job satisfaction as a mediating mechanism. (Lim & Dini, 2023) Furthermore, the model seeks to investigate the effects of work engagement and emotional commitment on the task performance of academic staff.

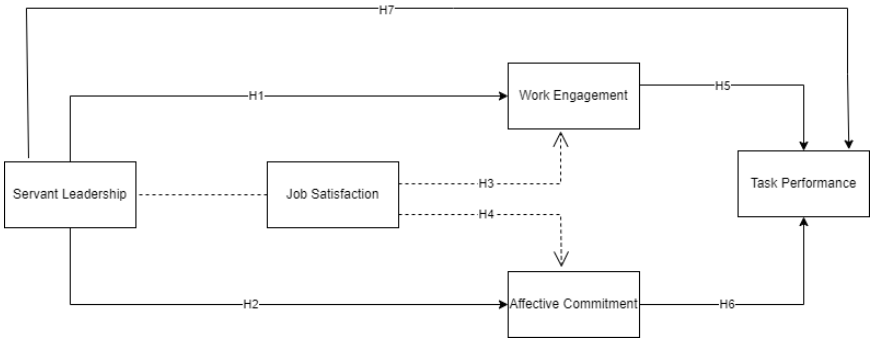



**Figure 1. Research Model**

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

**Table 1. Convergent and Realibility Test**

| Construct | Item | VIF | Outer Loading | CR | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Affective Commitment** | AC1: I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this institution | 1.177 | 0.711 | 0.764 | 0.52 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | AC3: I really feel as if this institution's problems are my own | 1.188 | 0.776 | | |
| | AC4:I think that I could easily become as attached to another institution as I am to this one | 1.094 | 0.673 | | |
| **Job Satisfaction** | JS2: I feel that I am happier in my work than most other people | 1.219 | 0.749 | 0.802 | 0.575 |
| | JS4:Most days I am enthusiastic about my work | 1.292 | 0.73 | | |
| | JS6: My job is like hobby to me | 1.24 | 0.794 | | |
| **Servant Leadership** | SL3: I would seek help from my leader if I had a personal problem | 1.12 | 0.757 | 0.756 | 0.509 |
| | SL5: My leader puts my best interest ahead of his/her own | 1.189 | 0.703 | | |
| | SL7: My leader would not compromise ethical principles to achieve success | 1.113 | 0.677 | | |
| **Task Performance** | TP2:I handle emergencies well | 1.017 | 0.718 | 0.721 | 0.564 |
| | TP5: I aim to attain perfection in my work | 1.144 | 0.783 | | |
| **Work Engagement** | WE2: At my job, I feel strong and vigorous | 1.144 | 0.791 | 0.749 | 0.501 |
| | WE4: My job inspires me | 1.183 | 0.7 | | |
| | WE8: I am immersed in my work | 1.077 | 0.623 | | |

Source:Processed data (2024)

The results of the VIF test indicate that the data is free from common method variance. All variables meet the criteria for convergent validity, with outer loadings values exceeding 0.6. According to the table, all Composite Reliability values exceed 0.6, and the AVE values are above 0.5, thereby fulfilling the criteria for validity and reliability (J. F. Hair et al., 2019).

## Discriminant Validity

**Table 2. Cross Loading**

| Variable | AC | JS | SL | TP | WE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AC1** | 0.711 | 0.195 | 0.188 | 0.262 | 0.237 |
| **AC3** | 0.776 | 0.241 | 0.281 | 0.276 | 0.245 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AC4** | 0.673 | 0.227 | 0.234 | 0.238 | 0.216 |
| **JS2** | 0.152 | 0.749 | 0.253 | 0.239 | 0.338 |
| **JS4** | 0.212 | 0.73 | 0.193 | 0.28 | 0.21 |
| **JS6** | 0.324 | 0.794 | 0.196 | 0.347 | 0.325 |
| **SL3** | 0.274 | 0.285 | 0.757 | 0.184 | 0.314 |
| **SL5** | 0.191 | 0.136 | 0.703 | 0.192 | 0.235 |
| **SL7** | 0.227 | 0.16 | 0.677 | 0.251 | 0.242 |
| **TP2** | 0.222 | 0.269 | 0.173 | 0.718 | 0.319 |
| **TP5** | 0.313 | 0.305 | 0.26 | 0.783 | 0.278 |
| **WE2** | 0.215 | 0.378 | 0.277 | 0.344 | 0.791 |
| **WE4** | 0.221 | 0.22 | 0.262 | 0.209 | 0.7 |
| **WE8** | 0.26 | 0.2 | 0.26 | 0.266 | 0.623 |

Source:Processed data (2024)

Based on the table, all values indicate that all variables have high correlations with other variables.

**Table 3. Fornell-Lacker criterion**

| | AC | JS | SL | TP | WE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AC | 0.721 | | | | |
| JS | 0.308 | 0.758 | | | |
| SL | 0.329 | 0.282 | 0.713 | | |
| TP | 0.359 | 0.383 | 0.291 | 0.751 | |
| WE | 0.322 | 0.391 | 0.375 | 0.395 | 0.708 |

Source:Processed data (2024)

The table shows that all variables exhibit high construct values. Specifically, Affective Commitment is 0.721, Job Satisfaction is 0.758, Servant Leadership is 0.713, Task Performance is 0.751, and Work Engagement is 0.708 (J. F. Hair et al., 2018).

## Inner Model

**Table 4. Direct Effect**

| Path | Original Sample (O) | Sample Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (STDEV) | T Statistics (\|O/STDEV\|) | P Values |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AC→TP** | 0.233 | 0.236 | 0.069 | 3.381 | 0.001 |
| **JS→AC** | 0.234 | 0.235 | 0.052 | 4.51 | 0 |
| **JS→WE** | 0.31 | 0.31 | 0.051 | 6.113 | 0 |
| **SL→AC** | 0.263 | 0.266 | 0.05 | 5.259 | 0 |
| **SL→JS** | 0.282 | 0.289 | 0.051 | 5.491 | 0 |
| **SL→TP** | 0.11 | 0.108 | 0.056 | 1.979 | 0.048 |
| **SL→WE** | 0.287 | 0.29 | 0.051 | 5.661 | 0 |
| **WE→TP** | 0.279 | 0.281 | 0.056 | 5.019 | 0 |

Source:Processed data (2024)

Affective Commitment has a significant positive effect of 0.069 on Task Performance, with P-values of 0.001 and a T-Statistic of 3.381. Job Satisfaction has a significant positive effect of 0.052 on Affective Commitment, with P-values of 0.000 and a T-Statistic of 4.510.

Job Satisfaction also has a significant positive effect of 0.051 on Work Engagement, with P-values of 0.000 and a T-Statistic of 6.113.

Servant Leadership has a significant positive effect of 0.050 on Affective Commitment, with P-values of 0.000 and a T-Statistic of 5.259. It also has a significant positive effect of 0.051 on Job Satisfaction, with P-values of 0.000 and a T-Statistic of 5.491. Furthermore, Servant Leadership has a significant positive effect of 0.056 on Task Performance, with P-values of 0.048 and a T-Statistic of 1.979, as well as a significant positive effect of 0.051 on Work Engagement, with P-values of 0.000 and a T-Statistic of 5.661.

Finally, Work Engagement has a significant positive effect of 0.056 on Task Performance, with P-values of 0.000 and a T-Statistic of 5.019.

**Table 5. Indirect Effect**

| Variable | Original Sample (O) | Sample Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (STDEV) | T Statistics (\|O/STDEV\|) | P Values |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SL→JS→AC** | 0.066 | 0.068 | 0.02 | 3.382 | 0.001 |
| **SL→JS→WE** | 0.088 | 0.09 | 0.022 | 4.049 | 0 |

Source:Processed data (2024)

T-statistic exceeding 1.96 and P-values below 0.05 indicate that Job Satisfaction serves as a significant mediator in the relationship between servant leadership and both Affective Commitment and Work Engagement.

## R Squares

**Table 6. R Squares Result**

| **Variable** | **Original Sample (O)** | **Sample Mean (M)** | **Standard Deviation (STDEV)** | **T Statistics (\|O/STDEV\|)** | **P Values** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AC** | 0.158 | 0.167 | 0.038 | 4.19 | 0 |
| **JS** | 0.08 | 0.086 | 0.03 | 2.671 | 0.008 |
| **TP** | 0.225 | 0.238 | 0.056 | 4.014 | 0 |
| **WE** | 0.229 | 0.237 | 0.042 | 5.403 | 0 |

Source:Processed data (2024)

The R-squared values for the endogenous variables indicate that Servant Leadership (SL) and Job Satisfaction (JS) together explain 16.7% of the variance in Affective Commitment, 8.6% of the variance in Job Satisfaction, 23.8% of the variance in Task Performance, and 23.7% of the variance in Work Engagement. These values suggest that the included variables have a relatively weak predictive power in explaining the observed variance in each respective outcome. The majority of the variance, ranging from 76.2% to 91.4%, remains unaccounted for and may be attributed to other factors not considered in the model.

## SRMR

**Table 7. SRMR result**

| | **Sample Mean (M)** |
|---|---|
| **Saturated Model** | 0.066 |
| **Estimated Model** | 0.068 |

Source:Processed data (2024)

Based on the table results, the model aligns with the data.

## Discussion

**Table 8. Hyphotesis**

| Hyphothesis | Result |
|---|---|
| **H1: Servant leadership has a positive effect on work engagement.** | Significant |
| **H2: Servant leadership has a positive effect on affective commitment** | Significant |
| **H5: Work engagement positively influences task performance** | Significant |
| **H6: Affective commitment positively influences task performance** | Significant |
| **H7: Servant leadership positively influences task performance** | Significant |

Source:Processed data (2024)

The first hypothesis posits that servant leadership has a positive effect on work engagement, and this result is found to be significant. This finding aligns with the study by Rehman et al. (2022), which asserts that servant leadership fosters greater self-efficacy, thereby enhancing work engagement.

The second hypothesis suggests that servant leadership positively impacts affective commitment. The results for this hypothesis are consistent with the research by Sitanggang et al. (2022), which states that managers' efforts to meet employees' needs and prioritize their interests over personal gains enhance affective commitment. Managers who are attentive, considerate in decision-making, problem-solvers, supportive of employee development, and socially minded in recognizing employee achievements can increase employees' affective commitment.

According to Ma et al. (2020), work engagement indicates that when overqualified employees are actively involved in their work roles, they can channel their personal energy into physical, cognitive, and emotional efforts to perform their job tasks better. This finding supports the fifth hypothesis, which states that work engagement positively influences task performance.

Employees with high levels of affective commitment demonstrate a profound psychological and emotional attachment to their organization, manifesting in positive behaviors, maximal effort, willingness to make sacrifices, and intense loyalty. Such individuals are more inclined to remain with the organization over time. As a result, those with high affective commitment are likely to wholeheartedly dedicate themselves to their tasks and engage in contextual behaviors. The findings of Uraon and Gupta's (2020) study support the sixth hypothesis, indicating a positive impact of affective commitment on task performance.

The seventh hypothesis, which posits that servant leadership has a positive impact on task performance, is substantiated by the research of Zada et al. (2022). This study indicates that when servant leaders guide their colleagues, the employees feel mentally engaged and empowered, benefiting from the autonomy in their work under servant leadership.

**Table 9. Hyphotesis**

| **Hyphothesis** | **Result** |
|---|---|
| H3: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between servant leadership and work engagement | Significant |
| H4: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between servant leadership and the affective commitment of academic employees | Significant |

Source:Processed data (2024)

The third hypothesis posits that servant leadership positively influences affective commitment through task performance. Research by Chandra and Widhianto Wibowo (2023) states that leaders who care for and appreciate employees, and provide necessary guidance, create conducive conditions that enhance job satisfaction and influence employees' affective commitment. The results of this study support the third hypothesis.

Kaur (2018) found that job satisfaction is a relevant mediator between servant leadership, work engagement, and organizational commitment. This study also provides empirical support for the relationship between servant leadership and both work engagement and organizational commitment. These findings align with the fourth hypothesis, which posits that servant leadership positively impacts work engagement through job satisfaction.

## CONCLUSION

This study seeks to examine the relationship between servant leadership and task performance among kindergarten teachers. The results indicate that servant leadership positively significant impacts the performance of these teachers. Research suggests that servant leaders are highly people-oriented. It is posited that autonomy in the workplace allows employees to fully utilize their abilities, which benefits both the organization and the employees. Furthermore, leaders who practice servant leadership concentrate on employee activities and offer mutual support, thereby enhancing their emotional well-being and improving task performance (Zada et al., 2022Servant leaders improve employee job performance through active engagement, development, and exploration of their potential. By embodying servant leadership behaviors, leaders foster employee motivation, thereby enhancing their commitment and ultimately leading to improved job outcomes. According to social-based theory, servant leaders shape the behaviors and attitudes of their followers by setting an example through their own actions. Additionally, they motivate their followers to develop leadership skills, thereby enhancing their job performance (Ludwikowska, 2023).

This study also aims to present job satisfaction as a mediating variable influencing the relationship between servant leadership and both affective commitment and work engagement. The findings align with previous research. Employees with work engagement tend to experience positive mental and emotional states at the workplace, which can positively impact job outcomes. Employees with work engagement usually have access to adequate work resources, which can reduce stress associated with job demands and enhance job satisfaction (Fatoki, 2023). Job satisfaction strongly influences employees' commitment to the organization. When employees are highly committed to their organization, they tend to experience high job satisfaction while facing lower levels of stress and absenteeism. Organizations need to delve into the factors that drive job satisfaction among employees, as those who are highly satisfied are likely to demonstrate a strong commitment to the organization (Kaur, 2018).

In this article, the impact of servant leadership on employee task performance is discussed, focusing on kindergarten teachers in Batam City. For future research, considering the analysis of different leadership styles is recommended. Currently, the study's subjects are kindergarten teachers; however, future studies could explore other subjects. A limitation of this study is the sample being restricted to kindergarten teachers in Batam City, potentially affecting the generalizability of the results to kindergarten teachers in other areas.

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