

Mediating Role of Affective Commitment in the Relationship Between Servant Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of servant leadership on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), with affective commitment serving as a mediating variable. The aim of the study is to examine how servant leadership influences OCB through the mediating role of affective commitment. This research employs a quantitative method to analyze the relationships among the variables. The research was conducted at Directorate General of Customs and Excise (DJBC) in Indonesia, with a sample size of 125 respondents selected through proportional sampling. The analysis was performed using Smart PLS 3 software. The results reveal that servant leadership has a positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior, as stated in the first hypothesis. The second hypothesis confirms that servant leadership significantly affects affective commitment. The third hypothesis indicates that affective commitment influences organizational citizenship behavior. The fourth hypothesis demonstrates that affective commitment mediates the relationship between servant leadership and OCB. The findings indicate that enhancing servant leadership and affective commitment can significantly boost OCB within the organization. The study highlights the essential role of affective commitment in facilitating the positive behaviors associated with servant leadership, which in turn fosters OCB. By enhancing OCB, DJBC is expected to improve its competitiveness.

Keywords: Servant Leadership, Affective Commitment, Organizational Citizenship Behavior

1. Introduction

In facing a dynamic environment, the role of Human Resources (HR) becomes crucial for an organization's success. An effective HR management allows organizations to ensure that employees have the skills and knowledge necessary to adapt to changes. HR plays a role in creating an innovative work culture that encourages high performance and the achievement of the organization's strategic goals. In this context, leadership plays an important role in managing and optimizing the potential of HR (Siraj et al., 2022). Servant leadership is an approach that serves and has a positive relationship with work motivation, team and individual performance, and organizational effectiveness (Baloch et al., 2021). Servant leadership has been proven to

support employee development and growth, while also encouraging ethical and fair behavior, which are crucial for success in navigating change (Heine et al., 2023).

Servant leaders show concern and care for the well-being and personal development of their subordinates. Allen et al. (2018) reveals that the attention given by servant leaders to their followers impacts the level of engagement and participation of followers in organizational activities. Robbins et al. (2017) explain that affective commitment refers to an individual's emotional attachment to the organization and belief in the values upheld by the organization. Previous studies by Elche et al. (2020), Qiu and Dooley (2022), and Gnankob et al. (2022), have explored the impact of servant leadership on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). However, none of these studies have considered affective commitment as a mediating variable. This study addresses this research gap by introducing affective commitment as a mediating variable in the relationship between servant leadership and OCB.

The Directorate General of Customs and Excise (DJBC) is an Indonesian government agency under the Ministry of Finance that handles customs and excise supervision and services. In 2020, the Ministry of Finance adopted a policy of negative growth to streamline the organization and improve its efficiency. This policy involves accelerating the adoption of new work patterns, reorganizing the organization, simplifying business processes, and optimizing the use of information technology to speed up and ease job execution. Under the negative-growth policy, the Ministry of Finance has set a target for a decrease in the number of employees from 2020 to 2024. The negative-growth policy is designed to promote the use of technology as an alternative to employee needs. The staffing needs based on Workload Analysis still exceed the number of existing employees. This study introduces a unique contribution by exploring the mediating role of affective commitment in the relationship between Servant Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) within the specific context of Indonesia's public sector, particularly the Directorate General of Customs and Excise (DJBC).

While existing research has examined this relationship across various sectors, its application within DJBC, which operates under distinct organizational dynamics and regulatory frameworks, remains underexplored. As a result, it provides fresh insights into how servant leadership can foster pro-social behaviors by enhancing employees' affective commitment in a bureaucratic and tightly regulated environment. A systematic literature review by Geus et al. (2020) indicates that affective commitment remains under-researched, despite findings from Planer (2019) suggesting that the affective dimension of organizational commitment has the strongest positive correlation with Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). To address this issue, employees need to exhibit extrarole behaviors such as OCB to support the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization. The concept of Social Exchange Theory suggests that servant leaders can act as role models who provide inspiration and intellectual stimulation for employees. As a result, employees feel compelled to reciprocate by taking on extra roles for the institution. This quantitative research offers a significant theoretical contribution to the fields of leadership and organizational development by utilizing social exchange theory as its foundation. It investigates the direct effects of servant leadership on the OCB of public sector employees, while also emphasizing the mediating role of affective commitment.

1. Does Servant Leadership Affect Organizational Citizenship Behavior?
2. Does Servant Leadership Affect Affective Commitment?
3. Does Affective Commitment Affect Organizational Citizenship Behavior?
4. Does Affective Commitment mediate the effect of Servant Leadership on
5. Organizational Citizenship behavior?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Servant Leadership

The concept of servant leadership, introduced by Robert K. Greenleaf, emphasizes that the foremost responsibility of a leader is to serve others (Greenleaf, 1998). Servant leadership is proposed as a leadership style that emphasizes deep respect for individuals while still pursuing organizational objectives (Bell and Habel, 2009). This approach prioritizes creating a learning-oriented environment where valuing each person contributes to overall success (Van Dierendonck, 2011). It cultivates a high level of trust in management, which in turn facilitates more efficient and effective organizational operations (Ehrhart, 2004). Hoch et al. (2018) asserted that servant leadership stands out and better explains a range of employee outcomes compared to other leadership styles. Ying et al. (2020) highlighted that servant leadership surpasses other leadership forms in fostering extra-role behaviors among employees, as it prioritizes the needs of followers and acknowledges a leader's societal responsibilities.

2.2 Affective Commitment

Allen and Meyer (2001) define organizational commitment as a combination of work attitudes, emotions, beliefs, and willingness that reflects the drive, needs, responsibilities, involvement, and a strong desire to persist and contribute their best efforts within the organization. Allen and Meyer (2001) state that the dimensions of organizational commitment include three aspects: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Affective commitment reflects the level of emotional attachment and involvement employees have with the organization, which is evident from their positive or emotional feelings towards it. Greenberg and Baron (2000) define affective commitment as an individual's strong desire to remain with the organization due to positive experiences and the belief that the organization upholds shared values. This form of commitment is evidenced by behaviors such as attendance, loyalty, job performance, work effort, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors in typical organizational settings (Lee et al., 2018). The key indicators of affective commitment include emotional attachment, identification with the organization, and the desire to be actively involved in the organization (Lee et al., 2018).

2.3 Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organ (1988) stated that OCB refers to behaviors that contribute to the success of an organization without being tied to the formal reward systems in place. OCB refers to discretionary actions undertaken by employees based on their own initiative (Humphrey, 2012), which have the potential to boost the organization's effectiveness, and efficiency (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Elche et al. (2020) defined OCB as job-related actions that are discretionary and not explicitly rewarded by the organization's formal reward system. Despite their optional nature,

these behaviors ultimately contribute to the effective and efficient operation of the organization. OCB is driven by personal values and commitment, reflecting a sense of dedication and volunteerism that goes beyond what is required. According to Organ (1988), key aspects of OCB include Altruism, Conscientiousness, Sportsmanship, Courtesy, and Civic Virtue.

3. Hypothesis Development

3.1. Servant Leadership and OCB

Servant leaders are defined by Greenleaf (1998) as individuals who prioritize serving others before choosing to lead. Servant leaders aim to exhibit qualities such as altruism, hope, humility, vision, care for others, integrity, interpersonal acceptance, and trustworthiness (Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011). Mahembe and Engelbrecht (2014) emphasize that servant leadership operates on the principle that to bring out the best in their followers, leaders should engage in one-on-one communication to understand their employees' abilities, needs, aspirations, goals, and potential. Social Exchange Theory (SET) provides a framework for understanding these dynamics by emphasizing the concept of reciprocity—how individuals are inclined to return favors (Madison and Eva, 2019). Blau (1964) asserts that social interactions are primarily motivated by the anticipated benefits. Acts of kindness can disrupt this balance, leading the recipient to feel a compulsion to reciprocate. This reciprocal exchange persists until both parties perceive an equilibrium in their relationship (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Servant leaders, who prioritize the needs of their team members and treat them with fairness, are positioned to cultivate robust, trust-based relationships (Chon and Zoltan, 2019). Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCB) are described by Organ (1988) as the extra efforts made by employees, driven by internal motivations such as the desire to achieve, belong, or contribute, rather than by obligation. Employees often develop a strong sense of duty to reciprocate when working under a servant leader, which frequently leads to positive behaviors such as exceeding their job requirements (Newman et al., 2018). The integrity of servant leaders (Chon and Zoltan, 2019) plays a significant role in this, as their commendable qualities can motivate employees to engage in discretionary positive actions, including the effective management of errors (Guchait et al., 2016).

H1. Servant Leadership influences Organizational Citizenship Behavior

3.2. Servant Leadership and Affective Commitment

Servant leadership helps create a supportive and trustworthy work environment, which encourages followers to develop positive attitudes toward their organizations (Liden et al., 2015). Allen et al. (2018) found that when servant leaders genuinely care for their team members, it boosts their engagement and involvement in organizational activities. McCune Stein et al. (2019) discovered that servant leadership indirectly enhances affective commitment by fostering a sense of organizational support. Servant leadership offers a unique approach that addresses psychological needs like belonging and managing the challenges of today's work environment (Eva et al., 2019). Planer (2019) discovered that affective commitment is the strongest factor linked to them going above and beyond in their roles. Similarly, Ngah et al. (2023) found that affective commitment is a key predictor of employees' willingness to engage in extra efforts that benefit the organization.

H2. Servant Leadership influences Affective Commitment

3.3. *Affective Commitment and OCB*

Gautam et al. (2005) highlighted the integral link between fostering Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and the level of commitment individuals feel towards their organization. Gyensare et al. (2016) demonstrated that employees who establish a strong emotional bond with their organization are more likely to exceed their basic duties, support their colleagues, and undertake additional responsibilities to advance the organization’s goals. This affective commitment reflects the extent to which employees identify with and value their workplace, as well as their inclination to remain with the organization (Allen and Mayer, 1991). Positive work experiences, such as job satisfaction and perceptions of organizational fairness, contribute to the development of this commitment, resulting in increased OCB and reduced issues such as disengagement and absenteeism (Khaola and Rambe, 2020).

H3. Affective Commitment influences Organizational Citizenship Behavior

3.4. *Mediating Role of Affective Commitment*

Walumbwa et al. (2010) discovered that when employees feel committed to their leaders, it helps bridge the gap between servant leadership and their engagement in extra behaviors at work. Allen et al. (2018) pointed out that servant leaders, by caring about their followers, boost their involvement and enthusiasm for organizational activities. Similarly, McCune Stein et al. (2019) found that servant leadership enhances affective commitment by fostering a sense of organizational support. Other studies reinforce the strong connection between servant leadership and organizational commitment, particularly emotional attachment (Aboramadan et al., 2019). Ngah et al. (2023) showed that emotional attachment helps explain how servant leadership can lead to extra efforts by employees, like those seen in OCB.

H4. Affective Commitment mediates the influences of Servant Leadership on Organizational Citizenship Behavior

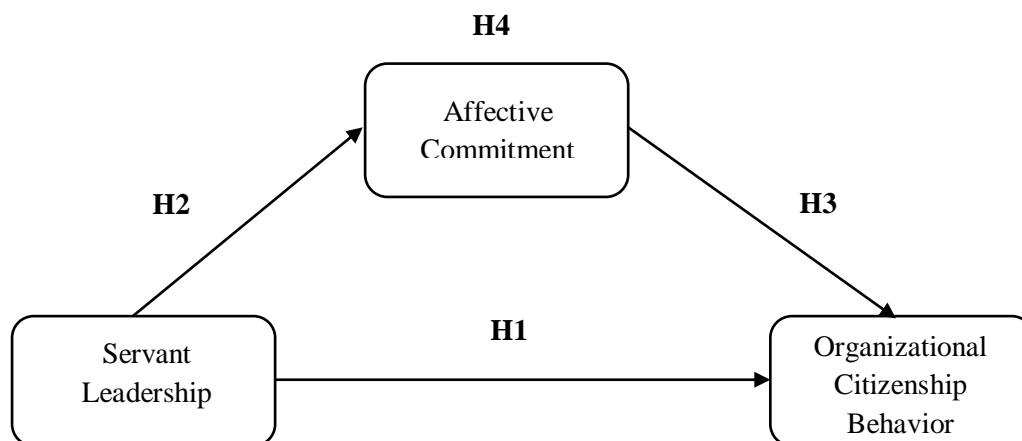


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

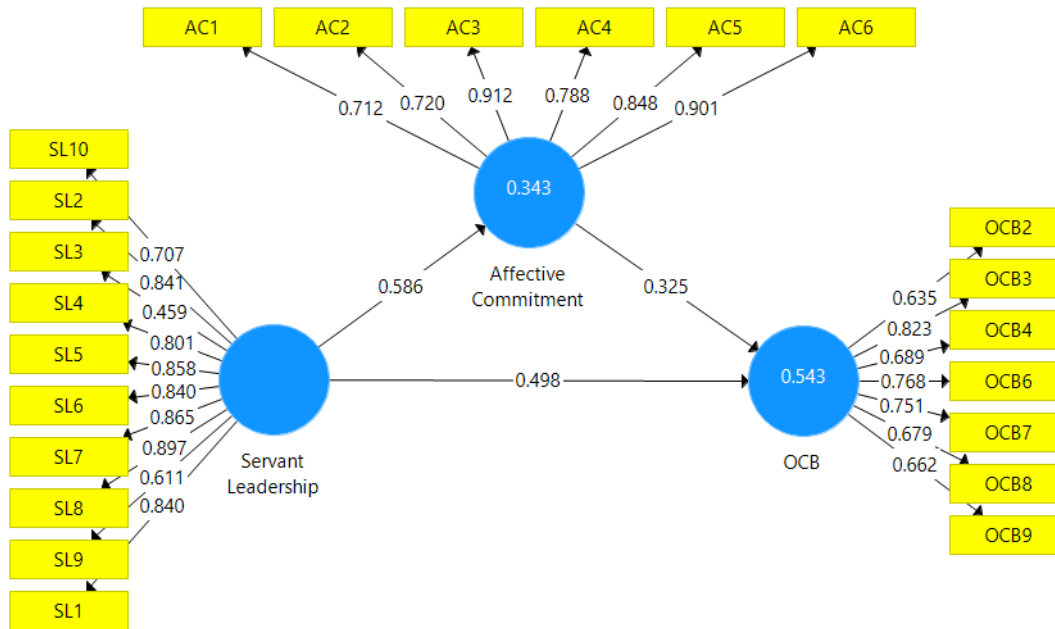
4. Method

This research employed a quantitative survey method, involving a sample of 125 employees from DJBC. Data was collected using a proportional random sampling technique, with questionnaires distributed online via Google Forms. The anonymity and confidentiality of respondents were strictly maintained and never disclosed to any third parties. Data processing was conducted using the Smart-PLS 3 software. According to Hair et al. (2014), the sample size requirement of at least 5 times the number of indicators was met, with 25 indicators in total.

The indicators for servant leadership were measured using a questionnaire developed by Ehrhart (2004) and validated by Gnankob et al. (2022). Affective commitment indicators were assessed using a questionnaire from Allen and Meyer (1996), validated by Ngah et al. (2023). OCB indicators were measured using a questionnaire by Podsakoff et al. (1990), also validated by Gnankob et al. (2022).

5. Results

In the data processing phase, several statistical tests were conducted using SmartPLS 3 software to achieve precise confirmation regarding the issues in the field. This included tests for validity, reliability, and hypothesis testing, resulting in the generation of the following outer model:



Validity Testing

Validity testing assesses how effectively a questionnaire or test measures the intended construct. During this process, certain statement items were identified as less valid and subsequently excluded. Specifically, the items OCB1 and OCB5 were removed based on the validity test results.

Table 1. Outer Loading

	Affective Commitment	OCB	Servant Leadership
AC1	0.712		
AC2	0.720		
AC3	0.912		
AC4	0.788		
AC5	0.848		
AC6	0.901		
OCB2		0.635	
OCB3		0.823	
OCB4		0.689	
OCB6		0.768	
OCB7		0.751	
OCB8		0.679	
OCB9		0.662	
SL10			0.707
SL2			0.841
SL3			0.459
SL4			0.801
SL5			0.858
SL6			0.840
SL7			0.865
SL8			0.897
SL9			0.611
SL1			0.840

Source: Data Processing, 2024

An indicator is considered valid if it has an outer loading value greater than 0.7. The indicators OCB2, OCB4, OCB8, OCB9, SL3, and SL9 show outer loading values below 0.7. Since both Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability for these variables meet the threshold of above 0.7, and the AVE exceeds the required 0.5, it is acceptable to retain these indicators without removing them (Hair, 2022).

Reliability Testing

This study employs a reliability test to assess the consistency of the respondents' answers. The following section presents the reliability test outcomes and the Cronbach's Alpha Composite scores for this study.

Table 2. Reliability Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Affective Commitment	0.898	0.916	0.923	0.668
OCB	0.846	0.873	0.881	0.516
Servant Leadership	0.925	0.937	0.939	0.613

Source: Data Processing, 2024

According to the data processing results, all variables are confirmed to be reliable.

6. Hypothesis testing

This study employs a hypothesis test to examine the relationships between variables using the bootstrapping method, allowing for the determination of significance values. A hypothesis is accepted if the p-value is below 0.005 and the t-statistic exceeds 1.96 (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 3. Direct Influence Results

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Means (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	PValues
Servant Leadership -> OCB	0.498	0.517	0.084	5.958	0.000
Servant Leadership -> Affective Commitment	0.586	0.589	0.072	8.109	0.000
Affective Commitment -> OCB	0.325	0.314	0.089	3.644	0.000

Source: Data Processing, 2024

Table 4. Results of Indirect Influence

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Means (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	PValues
Servant Leadership -> Affective Commitment-> OCB	0.190	0.185	0.057	3.308	0.001

Source: Data Processing, 2024

7. Discussion

Servant Leadership influences Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Servant Leadership has an impact on Organizational Citizenship Behavior. The findings indicated that the first hypothesis test yielded a t-statistic of 5.958, which exceeds 1.96, and a p-value of 0.000, which is below 0.005. These results confirm that the first hypothesis is supported, indicating that Servant Leadership directly affects Organizational Citizenship Behavior. This aligns with the research by Gnankob et al. (2022), which also found that servant leadership has a direct influence on OCB. In this study's context, the OCB exhibited by DJBC employees is influenced by servant leadership. This suggests that the presence of strong servant leadership within the organization plays a crucial role in shaping and enhancing OCB of its employees.

Servant Leadership influences Affective Commitment

The findings revealed that the second hypothesis test produced a t-statistic of 8.109, exceeding 1.96, and a p-value of 0.000, which is lower than 0.005. These results indicate that the second hypothesis is confirmed, demonstrating that servant leadership impacts affective commitment. This is consistent with previous studies, such as Ngah et al. (2023), which also highlighted the positive influence of Servant Leadership on Affective Commitment. This underscores the important role that Servant Leadership plays in fostering a strong emotional attachment between employees and the organization. When leaders exhibit servant leadership qualities, it can enhance employees' sense of loyalty and commitment, leading to a more engaged and dedicated workforce.

Affective Commitment Affects Organizational Citizenship Behavior

The results confirmed support for the second hypothesis, as evidenced by a t-statistic of 3.644, exceeding 1.96, and a p-value of 0.000, which is below the 0.005. This indicates that servant leadership has a significant impact on affective commitment. This finding aligns with previous research by Ngah et al. (2023), which similarly emphasized the positive impact of affective commitment in promoting OCB. This suggests that when leaders prioritize the well-being and development of their employees, it strengthens the emotional bond between the employees and the organization. As a result, this heightened affective commitment can lead to increased willingness among employees to go above and beyond in their roles, contributing positively to the overall organizational culture.

Affective Commitment mediates the influence of Servant Leadership on Organizational Citizenship Behavior

The analysis reveals that the fourth hypothesis is confirmed, showing a t-statistic of 3.308, exceeding 1.96, and a p-value of 0.001, which is below 0.005. This finding indicates that Affective Commitment functions as a critical mediator, enabling Servant Leadership to enhance OCB effectively. This is consistent with Social Exchange Theory, which posits that when employees experience a strong emotional connection, it amplifies the ability of servant leaders to influence their performance positively (Blau, 1964). By nurturing affective commitment, leaders can inspire employees to go beyond their regular tasks, creating a more supportive and effective

work environment. This emotional connection encourages employees to take extra roles, which not only drives organizational success but also fosters a culture of teamwork and achievement.

8. Implications

Utilizing SEM-PLS statistical analysis, the research develops a model that can guide future investigations into OCB practices in public sector. The findings highlight the importance of the social exchange relationship between leaders and employees, which plays a pivotal role in fostering OCB in public sector. The empirical data from this study will support DJBC in shaping its decision-making processes and developing policies related to extra-role behaviors such as OCB. Beyond the immediate context of DJBC, the study's conclusions are expected to benefit managers, organizational leaders, and public sector practitioners who are either planning or already implementing OCB-related initiatives.

9. Conclusion and Limitations

This research is grounded in social exchange theory, which suggests that when support is felt from the organization, there is an inherent motivation to reciprocate. This reciprocal relationship is rooted in mutual exchange and affective commitment (Shore et al., 2006). Servant leaders capitalize on affective commitment to enhance employee engagement, fostering a positive work environment and encouraging employees to take extra roles behavior. Through this sense of affective commitment, employees begin to see themselves as integral to the organization, transforming their connection from merely professional to deeply emotional. In the context of this study, affective commitment serves as a critical mechanism through which servant leaders can cultivate employees' willingness to go beyond their standard roles.

This study has several limitations. First, the variables examined are limited, indicating that future studies could explore additional variables that might impact OCB. Second, the study relies on a self-administered method to measure the variables, which could introduce bias in the data collection process, as respondents fill out the questionnaires themselves. Third, this study utilizes a cross-sectional design, which inherently limits its ability to establish causal relationships over a longer timeframe.

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