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Mediating Effect of Organizational Commitment in the Relationship between Servant Leadership and Employee Satisfaction in Federal Polytechnic Mubi, Adamawa State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examines whether organizational commitment helps explain the link between servant leadership and employee satisfaction in Federal Polytechnic Mubi, Adamawa State, Nigeria. The idea came from a practical concern that many tertiary institutions struggle to build the kind of work environment where staff feel supported and genuinely invested in their jobs. The main objective of the study was mediating effect of organizational commitment in the relationship between servant leadership and employee satisfaction in Federal polytechnic Mubi, Adamawa state, Nigeria. A survey approach was used, drawing responses from 426 academic and non-academic staff selected through stratified sampling. Participants completed established scales on servant leadership, organizational commitment, and employee satisfaction. The analysis relied on descriptive statistics, multiple regression, and Hayes' PROCESS Macro to explore both the direct and indirect relationships among the variables. The findings suggest that servant leadership is a meaningful predictor of how satisfied staff feel and how committed they are to the institution. Commitment, in turn, appeared to have a notable influence on satisfaction. When the mediation was tested, organizational commitment only partly explained the relationship, which implies that servant leadership may improve satisfaction on its own while also shaping employees' emotional connection to the

institution. Taken together, the results point to the usefulness of leadership practices that show concern, fair treatment, and a willingness to support staff beyond routine managerial duties. The study adds to ongoing discussions in leadership and organizational organiza, especially by showing how these relationships play out in a Nigerian polytechnic setting. It also offers practical guidance for administrators who may be looking for ways to strengthen motivation and reduce avoidable turnover. While the research is limited by its single-institution scope, cross-sectional design, and self-report measures, it still provides a reasonable starting point for broader or more long-term studies. In conclusion, the evidence indicates that servant leadership is likely to contribute to greater employee satisfaction and stronger organizational commitment. Institutions aiming to improve staff morale and sustain long-term loyalty may find value in weaving servant-leadership principles into leadership development efforts and everyday administrative culture.

Keywords: Servant Leadership, Organisational Commitment, Employee Satisfaction, Higher Education Institutions, Federal Polytechnic Mubi.

Introduction

In contemporary organizational settings, leadership is pivotal to achieving success and sustainability. Effective leadership is not only about managing tasks and resources but also about influencing and inspiring employees towards organizational goals (Northouse, 2007). This paradigm shift in leadership perspectives has underscored the importance of leadership styles that prioritize the well-being and development of employees, which is where servant leadership comes into play. Servant leadership, a term coined by Robert K. Greenleaf, 1977 is centered on the belief that the primary role of a leader is to serve others. This approach contrasts with traditional leadership models that emphasize hierarchy and control, positioning servant leaders as facilitators who prioritize the needs and growth of their team members. The concept of servant leadership has gained substantial traction in recent years due to its potential to foster a supportive and collaborative organizational culture. Servant leaders are characterized by their empathy, active listening, stewardship, and commitment to the personal and professional growth of their followers (Van Dierendonck et al., 2021). This leadership style is particularly relevant in educational institutions, where the development of human capital is a primary objective. Educational leaders who adopt servant leadership principles can create an environment that promotes mutual respect, collaboration, and a shared vision for success (Eva et al., 2019). Servant leadership begins with a natural feeling that someone wants to serve first, then the choice leads someone to aspire to lead. Whether the first is to be a leader first or to serve first, this shows two extreme types that are part of the diversity of human nature (Taslyan & Hirlakm, 2019).

Servant leadership is a leadership style that focuses on employees rather than organizational results whose main purpose is to serve followers (Greenleaf, 2021). Many benefits of servant leadership. practitioners must be prepared to put forth extraordinary efforts in developing a culture of servant leadership, starting with themselves as role models (Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, Dierendonck & Liden, 2019).

In educational settings, the relationship between leadership styles and institutions' outcomes has been a subject of extensive research. One significant outcome of interest is organizational commitment, which refers to the psychological attachment and loyalty an employee feels towards their organization (Meyer & Allen, 2009). High levels of organizational commitment are associated with numerous positive outcomes, including reduced turnover, increased job satisfaction, and enhanced organizational performance. Servant leadership has been linked to higher organizational commitment, as leaders who prioritize the well-being of their employees can foster stronger emotional bonds and loyalty (Liden et al., 2020).

Another critical outcome influenced by leadership styles is employee satisfaction. Employee satisfaction encompasses various aspects of the work environment, including job roles, work-life balance, and interpersonal relationships. Satisfied employees are more likely to be engaged, productive, and committed to their organization (Judge et al., 2022). Servant leadership, with its focus on empathy and support, can significantly enhance employee satisfaction by creating a work environment where employees feel valued and supported (Yoshida et al., 2021).

The interrelationship between servant leadership, organizational commitment, and employee satisfaction forms the crux of this study. While servant leadership is posited to directly influence both organizational commitment and employee satisfaction, the relationship between these variables is likely bidirectional. Higher organizational commitment can lead to increased employee satisfaction, as committed employees are more likely to find their work meaningful and rewarding (Eisenberger et al., 2021). Conversely, satisfied employees are more likely to develop a strong sense of loyalty and commitment to their organization (Wang et al., 2022).

Despite the theoretical benefits, the implementation of servant leadership institutions faces several challenges. One primary cause is the lack of awareness and understanding of servant leadership principles among the administrative leaders (Bucăţa, Virca, and Popescu, 2022). Additionally, there is often resistance to change, as traditional hierarchical leadership styles are deeply entrenched in the organizational culture. Limited resources and training opportunities further hinder the effective adoption of servant leadership practices within Nigerian educational institutions (Canavesi & Eliana, 2021). The inadequate implementation of servant leadership can lead to various negative outcomes. Employees may experience lower levels of job satisfaction due to a lack of support and recognition from their leaders. This dissatisfaction can result in decreased organizational commitment, leading to higher turnover rates and reduced overall productivity. Moreover, the absence of a servant leadership approach

can stifle innovation and discourage employees from taking initiative, further impacting the institution's growth and performance (Ketut & colleagues, 2022; (Sepahvand, et al., 2019).

Several authors have highlighted the critical role of servant leadership in enhancing organizational commitment and employee satisfaction. Greenleaf (1977), the founder of the servant leadership concept, argued that leaders who prioritize serving their employees contribute to a more motivated and committed workforce. Research by van Dierendonck (2021) supports this view, indicating that servant leadership positively correlates with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In the context of educational institutions, scholars like Eva et al. (2019) have found that servant leadership leads to higher levels of trust and morale among staff, which are essential for creating a conducive learning environment.

From the reviewed literature, it's discovered that servant leadership studies have not been carried out in tertiary institution most especially the Federal polytechnic Mubi, Adamawa State, Nigeria. It is on this note that this study tends to examined effect of servant leadership on organizational commitment and employee satisfaction in Federal polytechnic Mubi, Adamawa state, Nigeria.

To address the identified problem, the study explored the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of servant leadership on employee satisfaction at Federal Polytechnic Mubi?
2. What is the effect of servant leadership on organizational commitment in Federal polytechnic Mubi?
3. What is the effect of organizational commitment on employee satisfaction in Federal Polytechnic Mubi?
4. What is the relationships between servant leadership. organizational commitment and employee satisfaction in Federal polytechnic Mubi?

The main objective of the study effect of servant leadership on organizational commitment and employee satisfaction in Federal polytechnic Mubi, Adamawa state, Nigeria, while the specific objectives are as follows;

1. To examine the effect of servant leadership on employee satisfaction in Federal Polytechnic Mubi.
2. To assess the effect of servant leadership on organizational commitment in Federal polytechnic Mubi.
3. To measure the effect of organizational commitment on employee satisfaction in Federal polytechnic Mubi.
4. To measure mediating effect of organizational commitment on the relationships between servant leadership and employee satisfaction in Federal polytechnic Mubi.

The researcher used the following to test null hypotheses:

1. H1: Servant leadership has no significant effect on employee satisfaction in Federal Polytechnic Mubi.

2. H2: Servant leadership has no significant effect on organizational commitment in Federal Polytechnic Mubi.
3. H3: Organizational commitment has no significant effect on employee satisfaction in Federal polytechnic Mubi.
4. H4: Organizational commitment mediates the relationship between servant leadership and employee satisfaction in Federal polytechnic Mubi.

Concept of Servant Leadership

The term "servant leadership" was coined by Greenleaf (1970) in his book "The Servant as Leader". He refers to servant leaders as those who strive to serve individuals under them, develop those being served, and benefit others in society. Greenleaf was inspired by the book "Journey to the East" by Nobel Laureate Hermann Hesse, in which a group of travelers in India is assisted by a servant. After the servant disappears, the group becomes dysfunctional and breaks up. Later on, the travelers realize that their servant was in fact a highly respected leader. Greenleaf emphasizes going beyond one's self interest as a major characteristic of servant leaders (Van Dierendonck, 2021). Servant leadership is a group-focused approach to leadership in which the leader is merely a "primus inter pares", a first among equals (Ehrhart, 2022). Although servant leaders work primarily as stewards to their followers, striving to create opportunities for their growth and development, they also seek to benefit the wider community by encouraging their followers to be socially responsible, and serve others in the wider society (Searle & Barbuto, 2021).

Servant leadership begin with a natural feeling that someone wants to serve first, then the choice leads someone to aspire to lead. Whether the first is to be a leader first or to serve first, this shows two extreme types that are part of the diversity of human nature (Taslyan & Hirlakm, 2019). Servant leadership is a leadership style that focuses on employees rather than organizational results whose main purpose is to serve followers (Greenleaf, 2021). Many benefits of servant leadership, practitioners must be prepared to put forth extraordinary efforts in developing a culture of servant leadership, starting with themselves as role models (Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, Dierendonck & Liden, 2019).

For the purpose of this study, servant leadership is seen as a distinctive leadership style that places a primary emphasis on the needs, growth, and well-being of employees rather than solely focusing on organizational outcomes. Servant leader actively listen to and understand his employees' perspectives and feelings. He show genuine concern for their well-being. He strive to foster an emotionally healthy work environment, addressing conflicts and encouraging personal and professional growth.

Concept of Employee Satisfaction

The concept of employee satisfaction, viewed through different lenses by various scholars, is defined differently. Greenberg and Baron (2018), for instance, viewed employee satisfaction as a feeling that can produce a positive or negative impact toward one's roles and

responsibilities at work and added that it is important to understand the concept of employee satisfaction as there is no single way to satisfy all workers in the workplace. Employee satisfaction can also be defined as a worker's emotional response to different job related factors resulting in finding pleasure, comfort, confidence, rewards, personal growth and various positive opportunities, including upward mobility, recognition and appraisal done on a merit pattern with monetary value as compensation. Greenberg and Baron (2018) saw it as a positive feeling toward a person's job. This concept, according to George and Jones (2005), is the combination of feelings and beliefs, which include the mental, emotional, and physical domains. Arnett, Laverie and McLane's (2015) definition is summarized by saying that employee satisfaction is reflected as an employee's general affective assessment of himself or herself in the context of his or her job.

Baridam and Nwibere (2018) defined employee satisfaction as the degree to which an individual feels negatively or positively about the various facets of job tasks, the work setting, relationship with co-workers and the job itself. An individual with a significant level of employee satisfaction holds uplifting frames of mind towards their activity while an individual who is less satisfied with their jobs holds negative dispositions about the job (Puskpakumari, 2018).

Concept of Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is a component of behavior. Organizational commitment is a condition in which an employee sides with an organization and its values and goals, and intends to maintain its membership. A high level of organizational commitment means siding with the organization that recruits the employee (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Organizational commitment is a strong desire to remain a member of a particular organization, the desire to strive in accordance with the wishes of the organization and certain beliefs about acceptance of the goals and values of the organization. It can be interpreted that organizational commitment is a person's attitude that shows loyalty to an organization and the process by which a person expresses his concern for the organization (Joo, Biyun, & Jang, 2018). Furthermore, Akanbi and Itiola (2013) see employee commitment as the degree to which employees identify with their organization and are given to adding value to accomplishing the set goals and objectives of their organization. It could likewise be alluded as how much a person identifies himself or herself as an employee of an organization and the amount of enthusiasm displayed in meeting up his or her job roles (Mensah, Akuoko, & Ellis, 2016).

Commitment involves dedicating yourself to something, like a person or a cause. Before you commit, think carefully. A commitment obligates you to do something (Hartung & Rogers, (2022). Commitment is the mental or physical act of directing increased resources to an activity or interpersonal relationship. Cognitive dissonance processes may then increase the perceived value of the target, leading to increased involvement and motivation (Gonzaga, Keltner, Londahl & Smith, 2018). According to Crawford, et al. (2019) indicates a commitment is considered as an intention to perform some action, effect some outcome, and

produce some consequences perceived as obligatory, requiring an investment of personal or social resources such as time, effort, and money, over some non-trivial period. Unlike wishes and wants, an intention contains the means of its fulfilment and therefore constitutes self-directed action; there are no unconscious intentions (Cosgel & Minkler, 2022). As commitments are voluntary, once enacted, the actor is obliged to keep them. However, there is no necessary one-to-one correspondence between commitment-making and commitment-keeping (Berzonsky, 2022).

Effect of Servant Leadership on Employee Satisfaction

Since the aspect of SL has confirmed its positivity in improving the performance of the company, scholars in varied domains were interested in studying the mentioned concept from different points of view such as its effect on the ES. (McCann et al., 2022) defined ES as a great degree of positive attitudes, perceptions and real expectations of the employees toward the company where they work. Additionally, it directs the positive emotions of the individual toward the job (Sepahvand, et al., 2019). To state this matter differently, when the employees have a strong feeling and positive emotions to achieve the goals of the company, it means that they have a sense of satisfaction towards what they do. These feelings can be created through the practicing of SL at that organization. For this reason, SL focuses on the employees for reaching a successful company.

From that perspective, enormous studies directed to examine the influence of SL on the degree of satisfaction among employees. Some revealed the positive impact of SL on increasing the level of satisfaction. For example, a study conducted by Sepahvand et al. (2019) and Rozika et al. (2018) indicated that SL significantly influences ES. McNeff and Irving (2022) also confirmed that ES was increased through the existence of SL at the company. Through encouraging the employees and developing their skills by SL, it contributed to constructing a sense of employee satisfaction in the firm (Kaur, 2018). Moreover, a promising finding was produced in a work by Tischler et al. (2016) which showed that the relationship between SL and employee satisfaction was significance.

Effect of Servant Leadership on Organizational Commitment

Empirically, the results of this study indicate that there is no influence between servant leadership on organizational commitment. This research contradicts the study conducted by Cesário and Chambel, (2022) who concluded that servant leadership has a strong influence on employee commitment. The study result Tariq (2019) where the results of his research prove that serving leadership has a direct impact on employee performance. Conceptually it expands the understanding of servant leadership actions as a reflective construct. Leadership behavior that serves the leader and subordinates will encourage employee organizational commitment. Leaders care for employees in addition to making employees loyal to the organization; will make employees continue to strive to provide the best results from their efforts to increase organizational success (Setiawan, Eliyana, Suryani, & Nathan, 2020).

However, this concept does not apply to this research, because the opinion of alumni as employees who work in companies is that the leadership generally does not provide a constructive attitude. The results showed that almost 70% of alumni as employees are absorbed in companies with medium to lower scale. From the demographics of respondents, it shows that 93% of alumni work in private companies, which could be the majority of small companies (not yet proven because of the shallowness of the research) so that the service leadership process is not implemented which can result in employees working according to what they know.

Servant leadership positively impacts affective commitment by creating a supportive and caring work environment. When leaders show genuine concern for the personal and professional growth of their employees, it fosters a sense of belonging and attachment to the organization (Gopinath, 2020). Employees are more likely to develop a strong emotional attachment to the organization when they feel valued and supported by their leaders. While servant leadership primarily influences affective commitment, it can also impact continuance commitment indirectly. By creating a positive and supportive work environment, servant leaders can increase employee satisfaction and reduce turnover intentions, making employees feel that remaining with the organization is beneficial. The supportive culture fostered by servant leadership can mitigate the perceived costs of leaving, thereby enhancing continuance commitment (Rozika et al. 2018).

Effect of Organizational Commitment and Employee Satisfaction

Numerous studies have investigated the relationship between organizational commitment and employee satisfaction. The findings suggest that there is a positive correlation between these two variables. In other words, employees who are highly committed to their organization are more likely to be satisfied with their job and organization (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Employee satisfaction, on the other hand, refers to the extent to which employees are satisfied with their job and organization (Joo, Biyun, & Jang, 2018). It is a critical variable that affects employee motivation, performance, and turnover (Joo, Biyun, & Jang, 2018). Organizational commitment was a significant predictor of employee satisfaction, accounting for 24% of the variance in satisfaction (Crawford, *et al*., 2019).

Employee satisfaction is the general attitude of employees towards their job. Those who have a positive attitude towards their job may have a high degree of employee satisfaction. Several studies have demonstrated a strong correlation between organisational commitment, commitment, and job volatility (Gopinath, 2020). Those who are committed to the organisation are more likely to stay in the company. Organisational commitment can be seen as an extension of employee satisfaction, as it relates to the employees' positive attitude and loyalty (Mulyono et al., 2020). Satisfied people work harder than others because they are motivated to work better. This shows an extremely high level of commitment to the organisation. The higher the level of satisfaction, the more employees are committed to sticking with the organisation, which has great significance in the organisation's success

(Ingsih, et al., 2020). The results of previous research conducted by Firmananda *et al.,* (2018) summarized in the journal of business administration with the title the effect of employee satisfaction on organizational commitment and employee performance (studies on permanent employees at PG Kebon Agung Malang), the results of the study show that the employee satisfaction variable has a significant effect on the commitment variable.

Mediating effect of Organizational Commitment on the relationship between Servant Leadership on the Employee Satisfaction

Servant Leadership, a leadership style that prioritizes the well-being of employees and focuses on developing their skills and abilities, has been widely recognized as a key driver of employee satisfaction (Khattak and O'Connor, 2020). However, research has also shown that the relationship between Servant Leadership and Employee Satisfaction is not always straightforward, and that other factors may mediate this relationship. One such factor is Organizational Commitment, which refers to the extent to which employees feel committed to their organization and its values (Khattak and O'Connor, 2020). Numerous studies have demonstrated that servant leadership is positively related to Organizational Commitment (Opoku et al. 2019). When leaders prioritize the well-being of their employees and focus on developing their skills and abilities, employees are more likely to feel committed to their organization and its values. This is because Servant Leadership fosters a sense of trust, respect, and loyalty among employees, which in turn contributes to a strong sense of organizational commitment (Gilliland & Dunn, 2023). Furthermore, research has also shown that organizational commitment is a significant predictor of employee satisfaction (Gopinath, 2020). When employees feel committed to their organization and its values, they are more likely to be satisfied with their job and experience positive emotions towards their work (Tariq, 2019). This is because organizational commitment reflects a sense of belonging and identification with the organization, which in turn contributes to a sense of employee satisfaction (Tariq, 2019).

Several studies have empirically tested the mediating effect of organizational commitment on the relationship between servant leadership and employee satisfaction. For example, a study conducted by Kaur, (2018) found that servant leadership was positively related to employee satisfaction, but that this relationship was fully mediated by organizational commitment. Similarly, a study by Rozika et al. (2018) found that servant leadership was positively related to organizational commitment, which in turn predicted employee satisfaction. According to Greenleaf (2021), SL is the genuine feeling that an individual is willing to help others. It pursues to improve those who fulfill others' needs and advocates a group oriented attitude to decision-making to improve organizations and society. Since the introduction of the term, several studies have demonstrated its influence on employees' performance and commitment (Sokol, 2022; Khattak and O'Connor, 2020) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Ozyilmaz and Cicek, 2015; Newman et al., 2022).

Servant Leadership Theory

Servant leadership, first proposed by Greenleaf (1970) is a theoretical framework that advocates that a leader's primary motivation and role is service to others. Greenleaf first coined this modern term servant-leadership in 1970 in the essay entitled, The Servant as Leader (Spears, 1996). Servant leadership is a type of leadership which comes under the democratic style. This theory advocates that a leader's primary motivation and role is to serve and meet the needs of others, which optimally should be the prime motivation for leadership. Servant leaders develop people, helping them to strive and flourish (Russell & Stone, 2021; McMinn, 2022).

Servant leadership is a belief that organizational goals will be achieved on a long term basis only by first facilitating the growth, development and general well being of the individuals who comprise the organization (Stone et al, 2023). It is therefore a leadership style that emphasizes that leaders should be attentive to the concerns of their followers and empathize with them and at the same time they should take care of them and nurture them (Northouse, 2007). The best test of the leader is whether those served grow as persons and whether while being served they become healthier, wiser and more able themselves to become servant leaders (Wheeler, 2021).

According to Dierendonck (2021), servant leadership covers a wide range of behaviours which are hard to grasp in one or two constructs and may sometimes seem difficult to disentangle. Laub (1999) developed a conceptual model consisting of six servant leadership characteristics which include; develops people, valuing people, building community, displaying authenticity, providing leadership and sharing leadership. Russell and Stone (2021) identified twenty attributes observed among servant leaders. They further categorized these attributes into nine functional attributes and eleven accompanying attributes which include; Vision, modeling, communication, persuasion, honesty, pioneering, credibility, listening, integrity, appreciation, competence, encouragement, trust, empowerment, stewardship, service, delegation, visibility and influence.

Patterson (2023) noted that servant leadership is a natural extension of transformational leadership and she came up with a model which comprises of seven dimensions of agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment and service. Building on the work of Greenleaf (1991), Spears (2010) listed ten characteristics that he perceived servant leaders portrayed and they are listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment and building society.

Enrhart (2022) identified major behaviours of servant leaders as forming relationships with subordinates, empowering subordinates, helping subordinates grow and succeed, behaving ethically, having conceptual skills, putting subordinates first and creating value for those outside the organization. Other attributes of servant leadership include emotional healing, creating value for the community, conceptual skills, empowering, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinate first and behaving ethically (Liden et, al, 2008).Despite the vast array of terms used to describe servant leadership, the following are consistently

mentioned as the cornerstone of servant leadership and they are vision, empowerment, humility and service (Patterson, 2023).

Empirical Review

Various scholars have contributed in establishing the existence of relationship between servants leadership, employee satisfaction and organizational commitment which among them includes;

Wekesaya, Olesia, Namusonge, and Mike (2023) conducted a thorough examination of the role of servant leadership on organizational commitment in their exploratory survey of state corporations in Kenya. They highlighted that a crucial determinant influencing an employee's decision to stay with or leave an organization is the leadership style of their supervisors or managers. Recognizing that committed employees often exceed performance expectations, it becomes essential for managers to understand how their leadership behavior can impact employees' commitment to the organization. Servant leadership, a contemporary style that promises effective organizational performance and enhances employee loyalty and commitment, has been identified as a key factor. Various studies have pointed out that one of the significant challenges facing state corporations in Kenya is the issue of commitment, evidenced by a shortage of human resources both at headquarters and in the field, as well as poor service delivery. Employees in these corporations tend to work strictly within designated hours, viewing any additional work as outside their responsibility. Therefore, this study aims to explore the role of servant leadership on organizational commitment in Kenyan state corporations. Ultimately, it develops a conceptual framework to explain the relationship between servant leadership and employee organizational commitment.

Similarly, Stouraitis, Teles, Tsanis, and Kyritsis (2023) investigated servant leadership as a pathway towards mission-centric sustainability in emerging market social enterprises, specifically in South Africa. Their study, which utilized a random sample of 348 local social enterprises, found associations between servant leadership traits and variables such as gender, "title," and "options." Moreover, it was shown that these traits influenced the choice of social enterprise strategy. The chapter concludes with recommendations for managers and potential social entrepreneurs in emerging markets on how to achieve sustainability and avoid mission drift. Additionally, it suggests further avenues for academic research.

In another study, Ibrahim et al. (2023) explored the influence of employee satisfaction and organizational commitment on nurse performance, with work motivation as a mediating factor, at Lagaligo East Luwu Hospital in 2022. This study utilized an analytic observational approach with a cross-sectional design, sampling 130 nurses through proportional random sampling. Path analysis was used to test the hypotheses, revealing that employee satisfaction significantly positively affects work motivation (β= 0.264; T statistic= 2.433) and that organizational commitment also has a significant positive impact on work motivation (β= 0.347; T statistic= 3.742). Work motivation, in turn, positively affects performance (β= 0.160; T statistic= 2.533). Employee satisfaction and organizational commitment were both found to

have significant positive effects on performance (β= 0.179; T statistic= 2.510 and β= 0.151; T statistic= 2.163, respectively). However, neither employee satisfaction nor organizational commitment had a direct effect on performance when mediated by work motivation (β= 0.042; T statistic = 1.888 and β= 0.056; T statistic = 1.911, respectively). The study suggests that hospitals should maintain employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work motivation to enhance the quality of nursing services.

Also, Zuliani et al. (2023) examined the effect of employee satisfaction on employee performance through organizational commitment at PT. Pertamina. Using multiple linear regression and path analysis, they found that employee satisfaction did not have a direct effect on employee performance but had an indirect effect through organizational commitment, as indicated by a total t statistic value of 6.8517 (1.96). The study concludes that high employee satisfaction influences organizational commitment, which in turn affects employee performance. This indicates an indirect relationship between employee satisfaction and employee performance mediated by organizational commitment.

Beny and Alip (2023) investigated the mediating effects of employee satisfaction and organizational commitment on employee turnover. They employed path analysis to examine the role of mediation, utilizing SPSS 24 for data analysis. Classical assumptions were tested to ensure the suitability of path analysis. The study's results demonstrated that employee satisfaction and organizational commitment significantly mediate the relationship between talent management and employee turnover. Additionally, it was found that talent management, along with employee satisfaction and commitment, negatively influences employee turnover.

METHODOLOGY

A cross sectional quantitative survey research design was employed to gather and analyze numerical data pertaining to servant leadership, organizational commitment, and employee satisfaction. The focal point of this study encompassed Federal Polytechnic Mubi, situated in Adamawa State, Nigeria. The population for this study comprised of 2418 staff members employed at Federal Polytechnic Mubi. The academic staff population has a total of 746 representing 30.9% of total population of 2418 and the non-academic staff with the population of 1672 representing 69.1% of total population. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), a sample is a part of the entire population that is studied to obtain information on the whole. Whereas, Yamani (1964) formula was use to draw the sample size for the study, which is calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

$$n = \frac{2{,}369}{1 + 2{,}369(0.005)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{2{,}369}{1 + 2{,}369(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{2{,}369}{7}$$

$$n = 355$$

Therefore, the sample size for this study is 345.

Utilizing a stratified random sampling technique, data collection primarily relied on structured surveys administered to staff members at Federal Polytechnic Mubi. The principal research instrument encompassed a meticulous servant leadership designed questionnaire tailored to gauge perceptions of servant leadership behaviors, organizational commitment, and employee satisfaction. The data collected for this study was analyzed using inferential statistics.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The study administered a total of 426 copies of questionnaires out of which 398 were retrieved from the respondents sampled and 2 were dropped because they were not filled, which resulted to 396 copies that were correctly filled. Therefore, the return constituted a response rate of 93% and only 7% were not retrieved. However, the analysis of the study is based on 396 instruments that are suitable for further analysis.

$H0_1$: Servant leadership has no significant effect on Employee Job Satisfaction in Federal Polytechnic Mubi, Adamawa State, Nigeria.

To evaluate the effect of Servant leadership on employee job satisfaction, the data generated were analysed using multiple linear regression and the results for the goodness-of-fit of the regression model are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 1 Model Summary of the effect Servant leadership on Employee Job Satisfaction

Variables	Coefficients	Std. Error	t-Values	p-values	Hypothesis Testing
(Constant)	2.015	0.186	10.858	0.000	**Ho_1**: Rejected
SLD	0.434	0.044	6.260	0.000	
R	0.447				
R^2	0.199				
Adjust. R^2	0.197				
F-Stats	98.128		0.000		

a. Predictors: (Constant), SLD

b. Dependent Variable: EST

Source: Computed using SPSS 27 from Field Survey data, 2025.

Table 1 indicates that the regression analysis, which examined whether servant leadership predicts employee job satisfaction. The model was statistically significant, ($F_{(1, 394)} = 98.13$, $p < .001$), with servant leadership accounting for roughly 19.9% of the observed variance in employee job satisfaction ($R = 0.447$, $R^2 = 0.199$). Although this represents a moderate relationship, it suggests that perceptions of servant leadership meaningfully influence how satisfied employees feel in their roles. The regression coefficient for servant leadership was

positive and significant (B = 0.434, SE = 0.044, $t = 6.26$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that a one-unit increase in servant leadership corresponds to about a 0.43-unit increase in job satisfaction. Overall, the trend of findings points to a reliable association: higher perceptions of servant-oriented leadership tend to align with higher levels of job satisfaction, though it is clear that other factors also contribute to how employees evaluate their work experiences. Hence, we conclude that Servant leadership has significant effect on Employee Job Satisfaction in Federal Polytechnic Mubi, Adamawa State, Nigeria.

$H0_2$: Servant leadership has no significant effect on organizational commitment in Federal Polytechnic Mubi.

To evaluate the effect of Servant leadership on organizational commitment in Federal Polytechnic Mubi, the data collected from the respondents were analysed using multiple linear regression and the results of the regression model are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Model Summary of Servant leadership and Organizational Commitment

Variables	Coefficients	Std. Error	t-Values	p-values	Hypothesis Testing
(Constant)	2.120	0.195	10.849	0.000	**Ho_2**: Rejected
TAT	0.373	0.046	8.092	0.000	
R	0.378				
R^2	0.143				
Adjust. R^2	0.140				
F-Stats	65.480		0.000		

a. Predictors: (Constant), SLD

b. Dependent Variable: OCM

Source: Computed using SPSS 27 from Field Survey data, 2025.

Table 2 reveals that Servant leadership showed a significant positive effect on organizational commitment, although the overall strength of the model was modest. The regression result was statistically significant, ($F_{(1, 394)} = 65.48$, $p < .001$), with servant leadership explaining about 14.3% of the variance in organizational commitment ($R = 0.378$, $R^2 = 0.143$).

The coefficient for servant leadership was positive and meaningful (B = 0.373, SE = 0.046, t = 8.09, $p < .001$), indicating that higher perceptions of servant leadership were associated with higher levels of employee commitment. This result suggests that supportive and service-oriented leadership may encourage stronger attachment to the institution, the relatively small R^2 also implies that other factors likely contribute substantially to organizational commitment. Therefore, based on the above analysis we conclude that Servant leadership has significant effect on organizational commitment in Federal Polytechnic Mubi, Adamawa state Nigeria.

$H0_3$: Organizational Commitment has no significant effect on employee satisfaction in Federal polytechnic Mubi.

To evaluate the effect of Organizational Commitment on employee satisfaction, the data obtained were analysed using multiple linear regression and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Model Summary of the effect of Organizational Commitment and employee satisfaction

Variables	Coefficients	Std. Error	t-Values	p-values	Hypothesis Testing
(Constant)	2.038	0.161	12.661	0.000	**H_{O3}**: Rejected
OCM	0.487	0.043	11.312	0.000	
R	0.495				
R^2	0.245				
Adjust. R^2	0.243				
F-Stats	127.967		0.000		

a. Predictors: (Constant), OCM

b. Dependent Variable: EST

Source: Computed using SPSS 27 from Field Survey data, 2025.

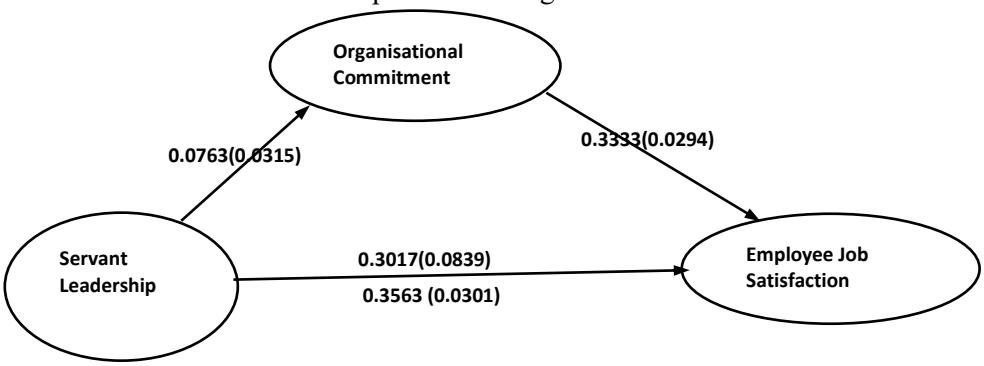
Table 3 indicates that the organizational commitment was found to be a significant predictor of employee satisfaction, with the regression model reaching statistical significance, ($F_{(1, 394)}$ = 127.97, $p < 0.001$). The model explained about 24.5% of the variance in satisfaction (R = .495, R^2 = 0.245), suggesting a moderately strong relationship. The coefficient for organizational commitment was positive and substantial (B = 0.487, SE = 0.043, t = 11.31, p < .001), indicating that higher levels of commitment were associated with higher satisfaction among employees.

Although the unexplained variance (0.755%) remains considerable, the results show a clear trend where the employees who feel more attached and committed to their institution are also more likely to report being satisfied with their jobs. Hence, we conclude that Organizational Commitment has no significant effect on employee satisfaction in Federal polytechnic Mubi Adamawa state Nigeria.

Hypothesis Four: Mediating Effect of Organizational Commitment

H_{04}: Organizational Commitment Mediates the relationship between servant Leadership and Employee Satisfaction in Federal polytechnic Mubi.

Hypothesis four was analysed using the Hayes, (2013) process macro and the coefficients obtained are presented in figure 1.



The study evaluates the mediating role of Organizational commitment on the relationship between servant leadership and employee satisfaction in Federal polytechnic Mubi. The mediation analysis explored whether organizational commitment helps to explain how servant leadership influences employee satisfaction in Federal Polytechnic Mubi. The first part of the model examined the effect of servant leadership on organizational commitment (the mediator) and servant leadership showed a statistically significant positive relationship with organizational commitment, (B = 0.373, SE = 0.046, t = 8.09, p < .001). Although the explained variance was modest (R^2 = 0.142), the trend suggests that employees who view their leaders as supportive and people-oriented tend to feel more attached to the institution. The second stage assessed how servant leadership and organizational commitment jointly predict employee satisfaction. This model accounted for roughly 32% of the variance in satisfaction (R^2 = 0.324), which is a noticeable jump from the earlier models. Both predictors held their ground as servant leadership still had a significant direct effect on satisfaction (B = 0.294, SE = 0.043, t = 6.76, p < .001), while organizational commitment also contributed independently and strongly (B = 0.374, SE = 0.044, t = 8.50, p < .001). The fact that both remained significant suggests that servant leadership does not lose its influence after commitment is added, it simply shares the stage with a meaningful mediator.

The indirect effect of servant leadership on satisfaction through organizational commitment was statistically significant (indirect effect = 0.140, BootSE = 0.036, 95% CI [0.074, 0.216]) because the confidence interval does not include zero. This result indicates that there is clear evidence of partial mediation. The result of the mediation model reflects complementary partial mediation, where servant leadership boosts employee satisfaction directly and indirectly through organizational commitment, with both effects working in the same direction. The summary of the Mediation analysis is presented in Table 14.

Table 4. 1 Mediation analysis Results

Relationship	**Total Effect**	**Direct Effect**	**Indirect Effect**	**Confidence Interval**		**t-statistics**	**Conclusion**
				Upper Bound	**Upper Bound**		
SLD→OCM→EST	0.4338 (0.0000)	0.2941 (0.0000)	0.1397	0.0736	0.2156	3.8379	*Partial Mediation*

Summary of Findings

1. The study also reveals that Servant leadership has significant effect on employee satisfaction in Federal Polytechnic Mubi.
2. The study shows that Servant leadership has significant effect on organizational commitment in Federal Polytechnic Mubi.
3. Organizational commitment has significant effect on employee satisfaction in Federal polytechnic Mubi.
4. Organisational commitment partially mediates the relationship between servant leadership and employee satisfaction in Federal polytechnic Mubi.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Comparatively, the observed linkage between higher educational attainment, marital status, and stronger organisational attachment converges with findings from other African organisational contexts, particularly in developing economies (Chukwuemeka & Igbokwe-Ibeto, 2020; Makhathini & Van der Westhuizen, 2022; Nwibere, 2019). However, when contrasted with Western higher education settings, notable divergences appear in age and gender distributions, largely attributable to differing socio-cultural norms, including entrenched patriarchal structures in Nigeria that shape recruitment and promotion practices (Hofstede et al., 2021; Okeke-Ihejirika et al., 2023; Smith & Adebayo, 2022). These contextual differences highlight the necessity of culturally sensitive interpretations of leadership phenomena and suggest that the present findings meaningfully extend the understanding of servant leadership within under-researched non-Western polytechnic environments (Ezeanolue & Nwosu, 2021; Makhathini & Van der Westhuizen, 2022; van Dierendonck, 2011).

The study established that employees at Federal Polytechnic Mubi expressed generally favourable perceptions of servant leadership, describing their leaders as supportive, empathetic, and genuinely invested in follower development and well-being. Moderately high levels of job satisfaction were similarly reported, driven by recognition, meaningful tasks, and conducive working conditions. Organizational commitment also emerged as strongly positive, reflecting affective attachment and alignment with institutional goals and values (Cerit, 2019; Eliyana et al., 2022; Spears, 2020).

These trends align closely with the broader servant leadership literature, which consistently demonstrates that prioritising follower growth and ethical relational practices enhances both satisfaction and commitment, particularly within educational institutions (Chughtai, 2018; Latif & Marimon, 2021; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2022). Nevertheless, some studies conducted in high power-distance cultures caution that expectations of hierarchical authority may temper the adoption or perceived effectiveness of servant leadership compared with low power-distance settings (Hofstede et al., 2021; Irving & Berndt, 2019; Winston & Fields, 2023). In the present context, communal values akin to Ubuntu philosophy appear to facilitate the acceptance of empathy-oriented leadership, thereby mitigating potential cultural resistance (Bolden & Kirk, 2021; Liden et al., 2022; West & Chohan, 2020).

The results of this study confirm that servant leadership exerts a significant positive influence on both employee job satisfaction and organisational commitment within Federal Polytechnic Mubi. Organisational commitment, in turn, significantly predicts job satisfaction and partially mediates the relationship between servant leadership and satisfaction. These findings are highly consistent with established mediated models in higher education and public-sector organisations across diverse settings (Aboramadan et al., 2021; Amah & Okafor, 2022; Bobbio et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

One of the strongest points of agreement in the findings is the role of servant leadership. Across the different analyses, servant leadership consistently showed a meaningful influence

on both job satisfaction and organisational commitment. That kind of alignment with existing research is reassuring, because it suggests that the theory behind servant leadership particularly its emphasis on empathy, support, and personal growth is not just a textbook idea but something employees actually notice and respond to. The results also supported the idea that organisational commitment feeds into job satisfaction, which aligns neatly with long-standing arguments in organisational behaviour that people who feel attached to their workplace usually bring a more positive attitude to their jobs.

The mediation analysis revealed that organisational commitment only partially explained how servant leadership translates into job satisfaction. This partial mediation signals that something else is at play perhaps job design issues, workload pressures, inconsistent promotion pathways, or even institutional culture. It is also possible that younger employees weigh leadership behaviours differently from older ones, or that staff in operational roles interpret support from leaders in a less emotional and more practical sense. These variations in perception add complexity to a relationship that is often presented as straightforward in theory and these patterns echo much of the broader literature, yet they also nudge the conversation in a slightly different direction. While servant leadership clearly matters, the findings hint that its impact depend on the conditions under which employees work. Social Exchange Theory still helps explain why supportive leadership practices create positive employee attitudes, but the results also suggest that leadership alone may not be enough to sustain satisfaction unless the wider environment reinforces those behaviours. This opens up questions about how institutional policies, communication structures, and career development opportunities interact with leadership to shape employee experiences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the key findings, several practical steps are suggested for the management of Federal Polytechnic Mubi to strengthen employee satisfaction and deepen institutional commitment. Therefore, the study recommends that;

i. The management should deepen Servant Leadership Practices through targeted Leadership Development since servant leadership significantly enhances both employee satisfaction and organisational commitment, management should prioritise continuous leadership training that emphasises empathy, active listening, fairness, and supportive supervision. Extending this training to all supervisory levels such as the HODs, unit heads, and team leads would help institutionalise servant-leadership behaviours across the polytechnic.

ii. The management should also promote a trust-based leadership culture that strengthens commitment and satisfaction because the results suggest employees respond positively when leaders create an atmosphere of trust and psychological safety. Management can reinforce this by encouraging open communication, transparent decision-making, and regular feedback engagements. Simple practices, such as

acknowledging staff contributions and involving them in unit-level decisions, can meaningfully strengthen both commitment and satisfaction.

iii. The management should enhance organisational commitment through clear career progression and recognition systems because organisational commitment directly influences job satisfaction and also partially mediates the servant-leadership effect management should reinforce structural elements that cultivate commitment. The management should provide clearer promotion pathways, establishing fair workload distribution, and implementing consistent recognition and reward systems would help employees feel more valued and connected to the institution.

iv. The management should align leadership practices with broader organisational policies and monitor employee experiences regularly to maximise the combined effect of leadership and organisational conditions. The institution should integrate servant-leadership principles into its wider HR and administrative policies, and this can be complemented by periodic monitoring of employee experiences through surveys or feedback channels to identify emerging issues early and adjust organisational strategies accordingly.

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