How Followers' Perception of Insider Status Influences the Relationship Between Servant Leadership and Work Attitude?

Shu-Chuan Jennifer Yeh[1*], Wen Chun Wang[2], Yi Hsien Wang[3], Thomas T. H. Wan[4], Hsueh-Chih Chou[5]

[1]Institute of Health Care Management & Department of Business Management, National Sun Yat-sen University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan
[2, 5]Department of Business Management, National Sun Yat-sen University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan
[3]Institute of Human Resource Management, National Changhua University of Education, Changhua, Taiwan
[4]Department of Health Management and Informatics, College of Public Affairs, University of Central Florida, Orlando, USA

ABSTRACT

Servant leadership starts with an individual whose main interests are to serve, inspire and lead followers. Thus, the servant leader is an individual who is always pursuing and looking for better ways to achieve shared goals with fellow workers. The current study investigates the influencing mechanism of servant leadership on job satisfaction based on the social identity theory. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to develop a model of perceived insider status that mediates the relationships between servant leadership and employee job satisfaction. Data were collected from matched 90 leaders and 285 followers from the service industry in Taiwan. To avoid common method variance issue, we collected data across three-time points from two different sources. The statistical analyses included descriptive analysis, correlational approach, confirmatory factor analysis, and multi-level analyses. Using the bootstrapping method, the indirect effects of servant leadership on job satisfaction via perceived insider status were found to be significant. This study underscores the importance of encouraging leaders to engage in servant leader behaviors, thereby enhancing followers' perception as insiders and improving followers' job satisfaction. Since servant leaders focus on employee-oriented tactics, it is essential to train leaders to enhance followers' intrinsic motivation and shape their perceptions of belongingness and effectiveness.

©CIKD Publishing

When a new group is established, group members become acquainted with each other and their organizations through the process of organizational socialization. Such a process aims to connect new groups with their environments (Thomas & Anderson, 1998) and for group members to understand the responsibilities and culture (Stamper & Masterson, 2002). Through organizational socialization, individuals may perceive themselves as insiders within a particular group (Stamper & Masterson, 2002, p. 876).

The concept of Perceived Insider Status (PIS) can be explained using the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which suggests that an individual feels a sense of belonging to particular groups. Social identity theory underlines the importance of an individual's self-concept. An individual may act differently in various social contexts, depending on their group affiliations. Studies have identified similarities between PIS and Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) in the in-group versus out-group context (Tyler & Blader, 2003). Particularly, Stamper and Masterson (2002) defined PIS as perceiving insider status between an employee and an organization. They suggested that PIS is a specific measure of the feeling of insider status in the employee–organization relationship, whereas LMX is an employee–leader relationship. LMX theory holds that leaders should provide rewards and/or support for in-group members that may not be accessible to other out-group members (Tyler & Blader, 2003). The in-group members experience favorable treatment from their leaders and therefore are more likely to feel like an insider within the team (Eisenberger et al., 2002).

Servant leadership emphasizes the emotional, relational, and moral aspects (Reed, Vidaver-Cohen, & Colwell, 2011) that contribute to the sense of personal accomplishment when dealing with work-related stress. Servant leadership starts with an individual whose main interests are to serve, inspire and lead followers. Thus, the servant leader is an individual who is always pursuing and looking for better ways to achieve shared goals with fellow workers. They consider creating value for others, embracing a holistic way to work, promoting a concept of teams, and sharing ideas in decision-making (Reed et al., 2011). Through these behaviors, servant leaders strengthen followers' perceived insider status within the organization, increasing followers' intrinsic motivation and willingness to perform extra roles or –tasks that are not written responsibilities (Panaccio et al., 2015). Thus, in this study, PIS serves as a crucial intrinsic motivation that links servant leadership and job satisfaction. We theorize that PIS mediates the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction.

By investigating how servant leadership is linked to job satisfaction through the mediating effects of perceived insider status, this study aims to contribute to the servant leadership literature and PIS literature in several ways. First, this study reinforces servant leadership as a key factor in engaging employees (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). The theory of servant leadership is of great value to the enhancement of followers' motivation and the prioritization of followers' needs. As servant leaders are perceived to be ethical, acceptive, and empathetic of their followers (Van Dierendonck, 2011), they tend to have empowering, sensing of trust, and respectful relationships with their followers (Akdol & Arikboga, 2017). Servant leaders empower followers and hold them to a good degree of accountability based on their abilities, needs, and what they can control in an outcome. Consequently, followers enjoy greater autonomy and discretion in their jobs and are more likely to meet the requirements of their roles and perform other non-required tasks.

The current study is one of few that examines mediating psychological processes to illustrate how servant leadership influences followers' job satisfaction. In doing so, our study answers how PIS could play a mediator to link the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction. It provides empirical evidence in support of servant leadership, social identity, and social exchange theories (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Stamper & Masterson, 2002). Furthermore, we highlight the possibility of training servant leaders to positively influence their followers by strengthening insider's perspectives and feelings of empowerment. Servant leaders can inspire followers to identify themselves as part of the same group or team. Finally, followers internalize the servant leader's values and beliefs and seek appraisal and recognition from the leaders (Akdol & Arikboga, 2017; Sun, 2013).

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses
Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction
Servant leaders can motivate followers by emphasizing the fulfillment of followers' needs (Greenleaf, 1970). The followers' needs include personal growth and development, empowerment, and well-being. Servant leaders generate followers' respect by displaying a willingness to sacrifice for others, employing moral and ethical rules, and providing guidance (van Dierendonck, 2011). Followers are inspired and influenced by their leaders' attitudes, values, and behaviors. By fostering followers' growth and satisfying their needs in an authentic and empowering manner, servant leaders influence followers' creative potential and organizational outcomes (Williams et al., 2017).

Through the articulation of inspiring visions, servant leaders provide an environment wherein followers are encouraged to explore new ideas. Because servant leadership is employee-focused in nature, it allows for mistakes or creates a culture with the experimentation of new ideas and thus facilitates employee satisfaction. Servant leaders who encourage employees' development and facilitate a sense of belonging are likely to nurture a feeling of autonomy (Ekmekci et al., 2021; Yang, Liu, & Gu, 2017). Servant leaders prioritize employees' needs before their own and provide the necessary support to satisfy employees. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H₁: *Team leaders' servant leadership is positively related to followers' job satisfaction.*
H₂: *Team leaders' servant leadership is positively associated with followers' perceived insider status.*

Perceived Insider Status: A Social Identity Theory Perspective
PIS is defined as "the extent to which an individual perceives oneself as an insider within a particular organization" (Stamper & Masterson, 2002, p. 876). Research has examined PIS from various perspectives. When explaining PIS as a type of member–group relationship, organizational identification is often used (Ashforth & Meal, 1989). The primary idea of social identity theory is that people classify themselves into various categories, for example, according to ethnicity, age generation, or organizational membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Ashforth and Meal (1989) suggested that an individual perceives themself as belonging to a social category without complete internalization (which is defined as values, attitudes, and beliefs). Members within the same social category may share emotional attachment, common experience, interests, and values (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Social identity theory also encompasses the concept of social comparison. Individuals positively evaluate their in-group to differentiate themselves from other out-groups (Turner, 1978). Group members must internalize their self-concept and subjectively identify with their in-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Closeness, difference, and situational salience determine the distinct differences between out- and in-groups (Turner, 1978).

Social identification is psychologically connected with the success or failure of the group. Brewer (1979) suggested that the allocation of members to a particular group creates in-group preference. Individuals identify with the distinctive and respectable in-group and become rivalry with other groups (Ashforth & Meal, 1989). Followers identify with their social categories to enhance self-confidence (Tajfel, 1978). Once followers self-identify with their leaders or groups, they are prone to undertake favorable behaviors toward their groups. Therefore, PIS entails a process of social identity that facilitates followers' self-esteem and sense of belonging and further influences organizational outcomes.

PIS and Job Satisfaction

PIS provides a sense of recognition and acceptance by their leaders and in-group team members– a crucial psychological perception that allows insiders to feel comfortable engaging in social exchanges within the group. According to the social exchange theory, positive social exchanges involve the norm of reciprocity, such that people will exchange in ways that benefit both themselves and others (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Gouldner, 1960). In our theoretical model, employees perceive their leaders as servant leaders that prioritize followers' needs, thereby strengthening perceived insider status and capturing employees' relatedness with their teams. Thus, employees show job satisfaction.

The perception of being an insider helps facilitate the recognition of the social norm of reciprocity, thereby creating a feeling of intimacy and increasing an individual's motivation (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Furthermore, the social norm of reciprocity prompts employees to consider ways to reciprocate to their organization; this creates a role identity and a set of role expectations through internalization processes (Wang et al., 2017). Previous research also supports this positive association between PIS and performance (Chen & Aryee, 2007).

Taking the norm of reciprocity perspective (Gouldner, 1960), when employees perceive themselves as insiders, they believe that their contributions to the organization are treasured (Hui, Lee, & Wang, 2015), that they are appreciated by their supervisors and peers, and that they are part of an organization in-group. Followers are more likely to respond positively to the organization, which is reflected in greater job satisfaction (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The perception of being an insider is a feeling of assurance, leading to job satisfaction. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H$_3$: *PIS is positively related to followers' job satisfaction.*

Mediating Role of PIS

Studies have supported the premise that leadership is related to employee job satisfaction (Neubert et al., 2008; Williams et al., 2017); yet, the mechanism of how leadership influences job satisfaction is relatively less studied (Hunter et al., 2013; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Combining the aforementioned hypotheses, we develop a mediation model, proposing that the characteristics of servant leaders are likely to increase followers' job satisfaction by

strengthening followers' perceived insider status. In addition, servant leaders influence followers' behavior and performance by promoting individuals' learning and growth, facilitating new approaches, and enabling novel and useful ideas (Neubert et al., 2008; Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Besides nurturing a sense of psychological security and a trustworthy climate, servant leaders encourage followers to undertake behaviors beyond their written tasks and responsibilities (van Dierendonck, 2011).

The perception of being an insider provides a sense of belonging to the group members that helps build the relationships between members, group, and organizations (Pierce et al., 1989; Stamper & Masterson, 2002). PIS can also be treated as an individual's identification with the leader. Through the process of identification, followers could be inspired or influenced by their leaders (Gu, Tang, & Jiang, 2015). Riketta (2005) found a positive relationship between a strong identification and job satisfaction and in-role performance. The feeling of being an insider leads team members to consider themselves to be competent, meaningful, and valuable (Yang et al., 2018). PIS can reflect followers' expectations in intangible social and non-economic exchanges with their leaders or employers (Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005). Followers can fulfill their personal developmental needs, such as self-esteem, through their leaders' supportive resources, thus engendering a positive attitude toward their teams (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). As we mentioned in the previous paragraph, this exchange foundation is derived from the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), which calls for encouraging favorable treatment behavior and discouraging unfavorable treatment behavior. The norm of reciprocity can stabilize social groups and maintain social relationships.

To summarize, we developed a theory linking servant leadership to perceived insider status and related perceived insider status to job satisfaction. We demonstrate that higher PIS can lead to higher job satisfaction as a result of servant leaders motivating followers (Chen & Aryee, 2007). Integrating the relationships, we propose that perceived insider status mediates the relationships of servant leadership with job satisfaction. The mediating relationship is consistent with the perception–attitude–behavior relations theorized in previous studies (Chen & Aryee, 2007; Stamper & Masterson, 2002) as well as the norm of reciprocity from the social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Therefore, we regard PIS as a mediator in the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction.

H₄: *PIS mediates the effects of servant leadership on job satisfaction.*

The study hypotheses are visually summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework in this Study
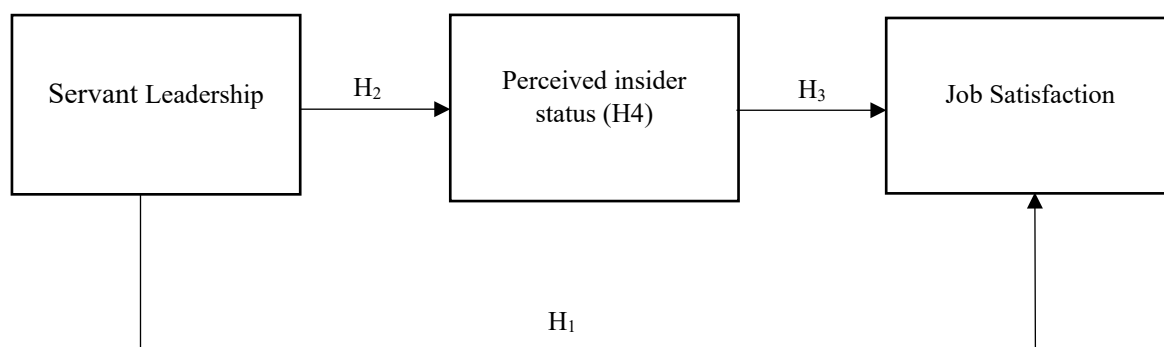
Method

Participants and Procedure

This study used convenient sampling to solicit participants from the service industry. All participants had a minimum of one-year working experience within the team. We sent out surveys to 111 teams and 392 participants during the years 2015–2018. A total of 107 participants did not complete all the surveys, resulting in a final sample of 285 participants across 90 teams, with 3–5 team members on average. The effective return rate was 73%. The average age was 28.8 years, with 62.1% female participants. Approximately 68% of participants engaged in extracurricular activities, and 34.7% have leadership experiences.

Participants were requested to answer three surveys during their team activities: 1) the first survey (containing measures of servant leadership and PIS) was conducted during the 6th week, 2) the second survey (containing measures of servant leadership and PIS) was conducted during the 12th week, and 3) the third survey (containing measures of job satisfaction and control variables) was conducted during the 18th week. One way to minimize the common method variance was to collect data at separate time points to avoid participants postulating the study purpose. Thus, we used servant leadership from the first time survey, PIS from the second time survey, and job satisfaction and control variables from the third time survey, respectively. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (15-CT2-17 (141117-1)). Informed consent was also obtained during the survey.

Measures

Unless otherwise noted, items were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Servant leadership. The servant leadership scale was measured using an 18-item scale from van Dierendonck et al. (2017). This is a team-level measure. One of the sample items is "My leader gives me the information I need to do my work well." Four items were deleted based on the criteria of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Hoyle, 1995). The results of the CFA showed an acceptable fit (χ^2 (77, N = 285) = 284.80, p < .05; CFI = .90, TLI = .89, RMSEA = .09, SRMR = .05). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .93. Ratings on the five dimensions were averaged as a single servant leadership score.

Servant leaders are often viewed as role models, given their formal status and priority in serving others first (Yukl, 2013), which results in followers imitating the behaviors of their immediate superiors (Weiss, 1977). Whether the leaders possess servant leadership must be agreed upon by members of the unit; thus, the aggregated value or average of all followers' ratings was used to represent the level of servant leadership. Because servant leadership is a team-level variable, we examined whether the aggregating individual score is appropriate for this variable. The median rWG(j) value was .94 for servant leadership, indicating strong inter-rater agreement (James, Demaree, & Wolf, 1984). We tested the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) to examine if the multilevel analyses were appropriate. Results indicated that ICC (1) and ICC (2) for servant leadership were .18 and .41, respectively, exhibiting adequate levels of agreement and between-group differences (Byrne, 2012; Shieh, 2016). The aforementioned values support our use of the aggregate individual score for the team-level servant leadership (LeBreton & Senter, 2008).

Perceived insider status (PIS). The PIS was adopted from Stamper and Masterson's (2002) 6-item scale. Team members self-rated this scale. The sample items included, "I feel very much a part of my work organization," and "My work organization makes me believe that I am included in it." The scale exhibited good internal consistency ($\alpha = .84$).

Job satisfaction. Four items were measured for job satisfaction. Three items were adopted from Seashore et al. (1982). These items were "Overall, I am satisfied with my group''; ''In general, I don't like my group''; and ''In general, I like working in the group.'' Based on expert suggestion, one more item was added "If I can choose again, I will still join this group," to account for job satisfaction's relation to loyalty, intention to stay, employee security, and job pride (Gaertner & Nollen, 1992; Keiningham et al., 2007; Magee, 2015). A higher score indicated higher satisfaction. The CFA results showed acceptable fit (χ^2 (2, N = 285) = 4.22, $p > .05$; CFI = .99, TLI = .99, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .02). The internal consistency of this scale was $\alpha = .85$.

Control variables. We included age (measured in years) and gender (coded 1 = male, 0 = female) in the teams as control variables as they are related to employees' work-related outcomes (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016). Job satisfaction depends on the discrepancy between the job employees want and the job they actually have (Lance et al., 1995). Motivation and job satisfaction change with age, specifically for middle-aged and older workers (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004, p. 440). One study pointed out that older employees were more motivated by intrinsic rewards while younger employees were more motivated by extrinsic rewards (Inceoglu et al., 2012). Gender differences in job satisfaction may not apply to all professions. For example, one British survey found that men and women with the same jobs reported identical job satisfaction, but women's expectations were relatively lower than that of men (Clark, 1997). Other studies, however, have found men to be more satisfied than women in their jobs (Forgionne & Peeters, 1982; Shapiro & Stern, 1975). Moreover, previous studies have shown that followers' extracurricular activity experiences (EAE) (1 = yes, 0 = no) and experience in leading extracurricular activity (LEA) (1 = yes, 0 = no) influence interpersonal skills and early career job satisfaction (Rubin, Bommer, & Baldwin, 2002). Therefore, we also controlled for these factors. Both EAE and LEA were measured as dichotomous variables.

Data Analysis

To evaluate leaders' servant leadership, we invited multiple followers to evaluate their team leader. The nested structure implies the interdependence among individuals in the same team with its own norms and leadership style (Dyer, Hanges, & Hall, 2005). We used MPlus 7.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2015) with the estimation of maximum likelihood to test our multilevel models. To examine the model fits, we used AMOS 18 to evaluate the comparative fit index (CFI) ($\geq .90$), Tucker-Lewis fit index (TLI) ($\geq .90$), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) indices ($\geq .08$), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) ($\geq .08$) to indicate a good model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

To test the hypotheses, we performed two-level multilevel (followers nested in each team) mediation designs with traditional 2-1-1 multilevel modeling (Preacher et al., 2010). To examine the mediating effects, we used the Monte Carlo method to conduct the simulation with a bootstrapping procedure (5,000 iterations) with R-3.5.0 (Selig & Preacher, 2008).

Results

The mean, standard deviation, correlations, and internal reliabilities of study variables are shown in Table 1. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to examine whether the items load on its anticipated construct. The results of the proposed CFA model exhibited an acceptable fit (χ^2 (77, N = 285) = 284.80, $p < .05$; CFI = .90, TLI = .89, RMSEA = .09, SRMR = .05).

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations between the Variables

Level		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Individual/Level-1(n=285)								
1	Age							
2	Gender	.14*						
3	EAE	.04	.00					
4	LEA	.27**	.04	.38**				
5	Servant leadership	-.06	.19**	.17**	.02	(.93)		
6	PIS	-.07	-.05	.19**	.13*	.48**	(.84)	
8	Job satisfaction	-.07	.06	.15*	.07	.49**	.56**	(.85)
Mean		28.8				49.64	23.77	15.73
SD		3.23				8.31	3.68	2.77

Note. (1) Reliability (coefficient alpha) are in parentheses on the diagonal. (2) Gender 1 = male, 0 = female. EAE= extracurricular activity experience (1 = yes, 0 = no). LEA= leading experience in extracurricular activities (1 = yes, 0 = no). (3) ***$p < .001$ **$p < .01$ *$p < .05$.

Hypothesis Tests

As presented in Table 2, the relationship between servant relationship and job satisfaction was statistically significant ($\gamma = .19$, $p < .001$). Therefore, H_1 is supported. Results indicated that H_2 is supported that servant leadership was statistically related to PIS ($\gamma = .24$, $p < .001$). H_3 is supported too because PIS was significantly associated with job satisfaction ($\gamma = .37$, $p < .001$).

Table 2

Multilevel Modeling Results for Job Satisfaction

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Level 1				
Intercept	15.72*** (.20)	6.50*** (1.72)	10.26*** (1.69)	10.26*** (1.69)
Gender	.66* (.33)	.44 (.32)	.61* (.30)	.58 (.30)
Age	-.24 *(.12)	-.17 (.12)	-.11 (.10)	-.09 (.10)
EAE	.56 (.41)	.21 (.39)	-.01 (.35)	-.01 (.35)
LEA	.32 (.37)	.46 (.35)	.08 (.33)	.10 (.32)
PIS			.37*** (.04)	.37*** (.04)
Level 2				
Servant Leadership		.19*** (.03)	.11** (.03)	.11** (.03)
Variance components				
Within-unit (L1) variance (σ^2)	5.93***	5.91***	4.39***	4.38***
Intercept (L2) variance (τ_{00})	1.45***	0.55	.47	.47
R^2 (individual level)	.04	.02	.30	.30
R^2 (organizational level)		.66	.45	.45

Note. N = 285 (Level 1); *N* = 90 (Level 2). Values in parentheses are standard error. All entries corresponding to the predicting variables are unstandardized estimations of the fixed effects, γs, with robust standard errors. EAE means to extracurricular activity experience. LEA is an experience in leading extracurricular activities. ***$p < .001$ **$p < .01$ *$p < .05$.

We proposed that PIS mediates the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction. Results indicated that the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction was statistically significant ($\gamma = .11$, $p < .01$, Table 2). In addition, servant leadership was related to PIS ($\gamma = .24$, $p < .001$, Table 3). PIS was positively related to job satisfaction after controlling for servant leadership ($\gamma = .37$, $p < .001$, Table 2), indicating H_3 was supported too. The indirect effect through PIS (.09) was significant ($p < .001$, 95% CI [.04, .11]). These results support H_4, thus indicating that PIS partially mediates the relationship

between servant leadership and job satisfaction. Figure 2 displays the results of multilevel analyses with standardized path coefficients.

Table 3

Multilevel Modeling Results Between Servant Leadership and Perceived Insider Status (PIS)

	PIS (Level 1)
Level 2	
Servant Leadership	.24*** (.04)
Variance components	
Within-unit (L1) variance (σ^2)	11.67***
Intercept (L2) variance (τ_{00})	.12
R^2 (organizational level)	.94

Note. N = 285 (Level 1); *N* = 90 (Level 2). Values in parentheses are standard error. All entries corresponding to the predicting variables are unstandardized estimations of the fixed effects, γs, with robust standard errors. ***$p < .001$ **$p < .01$ *$p < .05$.

Figure 2

Results of Multilevel Analyses with Standardized path coefficients
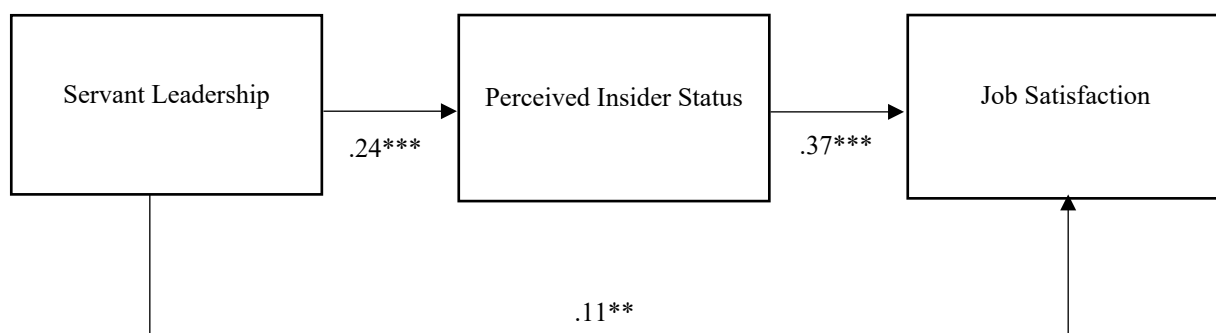
Discussion

Based on the theory of social identity, this cross-level study demonstrates that servant leaders influence followers' perception of being insiders, positively impacting job satisfaction. These findings provide substantial contributions to the servant leadership literature from several perspectives. First, servant leadership is one of the interactive leadership styles in terms of leaders' and followers' engagement. Servant leaders focus on serving members by prioritizing followers' needs over the leaders' interest (Northouse, 2007), increasing followers' job satisfaction. Our results indicated that servant leadership has a positive influence on job satisfaction (Neubert, Hunter, & Tolentino, 2016; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

Second, because servant leaders encourage a climate of service and caring for followers, followers may receive positive emotional feelings from their leaders and perceive themselves as insiders. The perception of being insiders enhances followers' intrinsic motivation. A servant leader recognizes and realizes each follower's abilities and creates personal development opportunities for the followers (Greenleaf, 1998). A crucial characteristic of servant leadership is to empower people, which refers to giving power to others (Conger, 2000). The purpose of empowerment is to foster followers' self-confidence and provide them with power, thereby encouraging followers' personal development (van Dierendonck, 2011). The present study affirms that servant leadership influences followers' job satisfaction through increased PIS.

Our study extends the mediating mechanism through which servant leadership influences job satisfaction. This study noted that followers' self-identification is indicated when their PIS partially mediates the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction. PIS indicates that followers subjectively identified with the relevant in-group and internalized themselves as

their group membership. This differentiates the group from others and provides a unique identity for the group. PIS influences followers' feelings of prestige for their groups through intergroup comparison, thus facilitating self-esteem. When followers identify themselves with their servant leaders, they engender followers' intrinsic motivation, and they will lead followers to feel comfortable confronting challenges and attempting new approaches while performing their jobs (Zhang & Bartol, 2010) and increase job satisfaction (Lawler & Hall, 1970).

The PIS of followers also suggests a positive leader-follower relationship that fulfills the followers' social psychological needs (e.g., sense of identity, belonging, and mutual trust; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007) and task-related requirements (e.g., supporting and facilitating new approaches and useful ideas). Therefore, followers' positive perception of the leader-follower relationship builds mutual trust and increases satisfaction, as evidenced in this study. PIS can reflect followers' more immediate interests and requirements and is, therefore, a significant predictor of job satisfaction (Knapp, Smith, & Sprinkle, 2014).

Implications

The current research underscores several practical implications for organizations. First, this study explains that servant leaders facilitate followers' PIS and use it to further increase job satisfaction. Organizations can derive increased benefits if followers perceive themselves as crucial members of the groups. Therefore, because servant leaders focus on employee-oriented tactics, it is essential to train leaders to enhance followers' intrinsic motivation and shape their perceptions of belongingness and effectiveness.

Second, our results highlight the benefits that leaders gain from using servant leadership to increase followers' PIS and indirectly enhance job satisfaction. A servant leader can positively influence followers to manage their work by empowering them. Leaders should pay close attention to nurturing the relationship between themselves and their followers. Followers can perceive their relationship as either insiders or outsiders, which can positively or negatively influence followers' identification (Chiniara & Bentein, 2018). Additionally, our research indicates that servant leaders influence followers' intrinsic motivation by facilitating their PIS, which encourages followers to achieve work meaningfulness, attempt challenging tasks, and ultimately increase job satisfaction. Followers are prone to regard their groups positively when they perceive their leaders to be prioritizing their personal development, thus increasing the levels of organizational identification (Knapp et al., 2014). Because leadership behavior can be developed, training leaders with servant leadership skills through community services to develop a strong sense of social responsibilities and thus become good leaders in the future.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. The study data regarding servant leadership, PIS, and job satisfaction were collected by followers, thus suggesting potential common method bias. In this study, we attempted to reduce the potential common method bias by using recommendations from Podsakoff et al. (2003) and collecting data from two different sources at three different periods. In addition to the time-separated measurements, we also aggregated servant leadership to the group level. The efforts from the multilevel design and variables collected at different time points suggest that the common method bias is not a critical problem. Future research should engage longitudinal designs and repeated observations to comprehensively assess the dynamic relationships among servant leadership, attitudes, and work-related outcomes.

Although this study contributed findings regarding the significance of intrinsic motivation on job satisfaction by examining the mediating role of PIS, studies exploring the potential effects of extrinsic rewards on the relationships between servant leadership and job satisfaction in organizations are also recommended. Finally, individual differences may account for the variance in job satisfaction; therefore, personality traits may also be crucial moderators of individual and organizational behaviors. Focusing on personality traits may help understand how individual differences influence how servant leadership is related to significant work-related outcomes.

Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence regarding servant leadership theory by expanding Greenleaf's original proposition that servant leadership focuses on serving others and further influencing work-related outcomes. By understanding servant leadership, the current study identifies a crucial mechanism, PIS, through which these leader behaviors influence followers' job satisfaction. In particular, PIS strongly increases job satisfaction by providing followers with a sense of belonging and the perception of receiving support.

Declarations
Acknowledgements

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Ethics Approval

Not applicable.

Funding Acknowledgements

Not applicable.

Citation to this article

Yeh, S.C.J., Wang, W. C., Wang, Y. H., Wan, T. T. H., & Chou, H-C. (2022). How followers' perception of insider status influences the relationship between servant leadership and work attitude? *International Journal of Organizational Leadership, 11*(2), 127-140. https://doi.org/10.33844/ijol.2022.60623

Rights and Permissions

References

Akdol, B., & Arikboga, F. S. (2017). Leader member exchange as a mediator of the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction: A research on Turkish ICT companies. *International Journal of Organizational Leadership*, *6*(4), 525–535.

Allen, N. J., & Meyer, J. P. (1990). The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization. *Journal of Occupational Psychology, 63*(1), 1–18.

Ashforth, B. E., & Meal, F. (1989). Social identity theory and the organization, *Academy of Management Review, 14*, 20–39.

Brewer, M. B. (1979). In-group bias in the minimal intergroup situation: A cognitive-motivational analysis, *Psychological Bulletin, 86*, 307–324.

Byrne, B. M. (2012). *Structural equation modeling with Mplus: Basic concepts, applications, and programming*, Routledge, New York, NY.

Chen, Z. X., & Aryee, S. (2007). Delegation and employee work outcomes: An examination of the cultural context of mediating processes in China, *Academy of Management Journal, 50*, 226–238.

Chiniara, M., & Bentein, K. (2016). Linking servant leadership to individual performance: Differentiating the mediating role of autonomy, competence and relatedness need satisfaction. *The Leadership Quarterly, 27*(1), 124–141.

Chiniara, M., & Bentein, K. (2018). The servant leadership advantage: When perceiving low differentiation in leader-member relationship quality influences team cohesion, team task performance and service OCB. *The Leadership Quarterly, 29*(2), 333–345.

Clark, A. E. (1997). Job satisfaction and gender: Why are women so happy at work? *Labour Economics, 4*(4), 341–372

Conger, J. A. (2000). Motivate performance through empowerment, In E. A. Locke (Ed.), *The Blackwell handbook of principles of organizational behavior* (pp. 137–149). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Coyle-Shapiro, J. A-M., & Conway, N. (2005). Exchange relationships: examining psychological contracts and perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 90*(4), 774–781.

Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social exchange theory: An interdisciplinary review. *Journal of Management, 31*(6), 874–900.

Dyer, N. G., Hanges, P. J., & Hall, R. J. (2005). Applying multilevel confirmatory factor analysis techniques to the study of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 16*(1), 149–167.

Eisenberger, R., Stinglhamber, F., Vandenberghe, C., Sucharski, I., & Rhoades, L. (2002). Perceived supervisor support: Contributions to perceived organizational support and employee retention, *Journal of Applied Psychology, 87*(3), 565–73.

Ekmekci, O. T., Camgoz, S. M., Guney, S., & Oktem, M. K. (2021). The mediating effect of perceived stress on transformational and passive-avoidant, leadership-commitment linkages. *International Journal of Organizational Leadership*, *10*(4), 348–366.

Forgionne, G. A., & Peeters, V. E. (1982). Differences in job motivation and satisfaction among female and male managers. *Human Relations*, *35*, 101–18.

Gaertner, K. N., & Nollen, S. D. (1992). Turnover intentions and desire among executives. *Human Relations, 45*(5), 447–465.

Gouldner, A. (1960). The norm of reciprocity: A preliminary statement. *American Sociological Review, 25*(2), 161–178.

Greenleaf, R. K. (1970). *The servant as leader*. The Robert K. Greenleaf Center, Indianapolis, IN.

Greenleaf, R. K. (1998). *The power of servant-leadership.* Berrett-Koehler.

Gu, Q., Tang, T. L. P., & Jiang, W. (2015). Does moral leadership enhance employee creativity? Employee identification with leader and leader-member exchange (LMX) in the Chinese context. *Journal of Business Ethics, 126*(3), 513–529.

Hoyle, R. H. (1995). *Structural equation modeling: Concepts, issues, and applications,* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, pp. 180.

Hu, L., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling*, *6*(1), 1–55.

Hui, C., Lee, C., & Wang, H. (2015). Organizational inducements and employee citizenship behavior: The mediating role of perceived insider status and the moderating role of collectivism. *Human Resource Management*, *54*(3), 439–456.

Hunter, E. M., Neubert, M. J., Perry, S. J., Witt, L. A., Penney, L. M., & Weinberger, E. (2013). Servant leaders inspire servant followers: Antecedents and outcomes for employees and the organization. *The Leadership Quarterly, 24*(2), 316–331.

Inceoglu, I., Segers, J., & Bartram, A. D. (2012). Age-related differences in work motivation. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 85*, 300–329.

James, L. R., Demaree, R. G., & Wolf, G. (1984). Estimating within-group interrater reliability with and without response bias. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 69*(1), 85–98.

Kanfer, R., & Ackerman, P. L. (2004). Aging, adult development, and work motivation. *Academy of Management Review, 29*, 440–458.

Keiningham, T. L., Cooil, B., Lerzan Aksoy, Andreassen, T. W., Weiner, J. (2007). The value of different customer satisfaction and loyalty metrics in predicting customer retention, recommendation, and share-of-wallet. *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal, 17*(4), 361–384.

Knapp, J. R., Smith, B. R**.,** & Sprinkle, T. A. (2014). Clarifying the relational ties of organizational belonging: Understanding the roles of perceived insider status, psychological ownership, and organizational identification. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, *21*(3), 273–285.

Lance, C. E., Mallard, A. G., & Michalos, A. C. (1995). Tests of the causal directions of global-life facet satisfaction relationships. *Social Indicators Research, 34*, 69–92.

Lawler, E. E., & Hall, D. T. (1970). Relationship of job characteristics to job involvement, satisfaction, and intrinsic motivation. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 54(*4), 305–312.

LeBreton, J. M., & Senter, J. L. (2008). Answers to 20 questions about interrater reliability and interrater agreement. *Organizational Research Methods, 11*(4), 815–852.

Magee, W. (2015). Effects of Gender and Age on Pride in Work, and Job Satisfaction. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 16,* 1091–1115.

Muthén, L. K., & Muthén, B. O. (1998-2015). *Mplus user's guide* (7th ed.). Muthén and Muthén.

Neubert, M. J., Hunter, E, H., & Tolentino, R. C. (2016). A servant leader and their stakeholders: When does organizational structure enhance a leader's influence? *The Leadership Quarterly, 27*(6), 896–910.

Neubert, M. J., Kacmar, K. M., Carlson, D. S., Chonko, L. B., & Roberts, J. A. (2008). Regulatory focus as a mediator of the influence of initiating structure and servant leadership on employee behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 93*(6), 1220–1233.

Northouse, P. (2007). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (4th ed.). Sage.

Panaccio, A., Henderson, D. J., Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., & Cao, X. (2015). Toward an understanding of when and why servant leadership accounts for employee extra-role behaviors. *Journal of Business Psychology*, *30*(4), 657–675.

Pierce, J. L., Gardner, D. G., Cummings, L. L., & Dunham, R. B. (1989). Organization-based self-esteem: Construct definition, operationalization, and validation. *Academy of Management Journal, 32*(3), 622–648.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J.-Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88(*5)*,* 879–903.

Preacher, K. J., Zyphur, M. J., & Zhang, A. (2010). A general multilevel SEM framework for assessing multilevel mediation. *Psychological Methods, 15*(3), 209 –233.

Reed, L. L., Vidaver-Cohen, D., & Colwell, S. R. (2011). A new scale to measure executive servant leadership: Development, analysis, and implications for research. *Journal of Business Ethics, 101*(3), 415–434.

Riketta, M. (2005). Cognitive differentiation between self, ingroup, and outgroup: The roles of identification and perceived intergroup conflict. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *35*(1), 97–106.

Rubin, R. S., Bommer, W. H., & Baldwin, T. T. (2002). Using extracurricular activity as an indicator of interpersonal skill: Prudent evaluation or recruiting malpractice. *Human Resource Management, 41*(4), 441–454.

Seashore, S. E., Lawler, E. E., Mirvis, P., & Cammann, C. (Eds.) (1982). *Observing and measuring organizational change: A guide to field practice.* Wiley.

Selig, J. P., & Preacher, K. J. (2008). Monte Carlo method for assessing mediation: An interactive tool for creating confidence intervals for indirect effects [Computer software]. http://quantpsy.org/.

Shapiro, J., & Stern, L. (1975). *Job satisfaction: male and female, professional and non-professional workers*. *Personnel Journal, 54*, 388–9,406–7.

Shieh, G. (2016). Choosing the best index for the average score intraclass correlation coefficient. *Behavior Research Methods, 48*(3), 994–1003.

Sluss, D. M., & Ashforth, B. E. (2007). Relational identity and identification: Defining ourselves through work relationships. *Academy of Management Review, 32*(1), 9–32.

Stamper, C. L., & Masterson, S. S. (2002). Insider or outsider? How employee perceptions of insider status affect their work behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 23*(8), 875–894.

Sun, P. (2013). The servant identity: Influences on the cognition and behavior of servant leaders. *The Leadership Quarterly, 24,* 544–557.

Turner, J. C. (1978). Social comparison, similarity and ingroup favouritism. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Differentiation between social groups: Studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 235–250)*.* Academic Press.

Tajfel, H. (1978). The achievement of group differentiation. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Differentiation between social groups: Studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 77–98). Academic Press.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J.C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relation* (pp. 7–24). Hall Publishers.

Thomas, H. D. C., & Anderson, N. (1998). Changes in newcomers' psychological contracts during organizational socialization: A study of recruits entering the British Army. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 19*(S1), 745–767.

Tyler, T.R., & Blader, S.L. (2003). The group engagement model: Procedural justice, social identity, and cooperative behavior. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 7*(4), 349–61.

van Dierendonck, D. (2011). Servant leadership: A review and synthesis. *Journal of Management, 37*(4), 1228–1261.

van Dierendonck, D., & Nuijten, I. (2011). The servant survey (SLS): Development and validation of a multidimensional measure. *Journal of Business Psychology, 26*(3), 249–267.

van Dierendonck, D., Sousa, M., Gunnarsdóttir, S., Bobbio, A., Hakanen, J., Verdorfer, A. P.,… Rodriguez-Carvajal, R. (2017). The cross-cultural invariance of the servant leadership survey: A comparative study across eight countries, *Administrative Sciences, 7*(2), 8–18.

Wang, H., Feng, J., Prevellie, P., & Wu, k. (2017). Why do I contribute when I am aninsider? A moderated mediation approach to perceived insider status and employee's innovative behavior. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 30*(7), 1184–1197.

Weiss, H. M. (1977). Subordinate imitation of supervisor behavior: The role of modeling in organizational socialization. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 19*(1), 89–105.

Williams, W. A., Randolph-Seng, B., Hayek, M., Pane Haden, S. S., & Guclu, A. (2017). Servant leadership and followership creativity: The influence of workplace spirituality and political skill. *Leadership and Organizational Development Journal, 38*(2), 178–193.

Yang, J., Liu, H., & Gu, J. (2017). A multi-level study of servant leadership on creativity: The roles of self-efficacy and power distance. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, *38*(5), 610–629.

Yang, Z., Zhang, H., Kwan, H. K., & Chen, S. (2018). Crossover effects of servant leadership and job social support on employee spouses: The mediating role of employee organization-based self-esteem. *Journal of Business Ethics, 147(*3), 595–604.

Yukl, G. (2013). *Leadership in organizations* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River.

Zhang, X., & Bartol, K. M. (2010). Linking empowering leadership and employee creativity: The influence of psychological empowerment, intrinsic motivation, and creative process management. *Academy of Management Journal, 53*(1), 107–128.