

Article

The Influence of Servant Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior on the Performance of Area-Based Empowerment Institutions in East Java

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Abstract: This study examines the influence of servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior on the performance of the Inter-Village Cooperation Agency (BKAD) in East Java through a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design. Using a sample of 100 BKAD selected by cluster proportional random sampling, the study collected data from multiple informants through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach. The results showed that servant leadership had a significant positive effect on organizational performance ($\beta = 0.366$, $p < 0.001$), with organizational citizenship behavior partially mediating the relationship. Servant leadership was proven to have a positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior ($\beta = 0.293$, $p = 0.021$), which in turn had a positive effect on performance ($\beta = 0.216$, $p = 0.001$). The research findings affirm the importance of servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior in enhancing the performance of empowerment institutions, which encourages the development of innovative empowerment methods, adaptive training curriculum design, and facilitation of public service-oriented leadership, with recommendations for further research using longitudinal designs and broader geographic coverage.

Keywords: East Java; Empowerment Institution Performance; HRD; Organizational Citizenship Behavior; Servant Leadership.

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1. Introduction

Servant leadership has emerged as an important approach to improving organizational effectiveness, particularly in public institutions where service delivery is a core mission. Contemporary studies (Pillay & Kikasu, 2024; Awasthi & Walumbwa, 2022) show that servant leadership characterized by prioritizing stakeholder needs, ethical governance practices, and employee empowerment significantly impacts public sector performance outcomes. Recent meta-analyses by Kyambade et al. (2024) and Barkhuizen and Masale (2022) have demonstrated a strong correlation between servant leadership behaviors and organizational outcomes including employee engagement, service quality, and operational efficiency. This leadership approach has shown particular effectiveness in the context of community development where trust-building and collaborative decision-making are critical to program sustainability and impact (Herman & Renz, 2018; Walumbwa et al., 2020).

Despite substantial evidence supporting the organizational benefits of servant leadership, critical knowledge gaps remain regarding its operational mechanisms in public sector institutions, particularly in developing countries. The empirical literature reveals three significant limitations. First, as noted in comprehensive reviews by Liden et al. (2014) and Peterson et al. (2022), research has not adequately explored how servant leadership translates

into tangible performance improvements through mediating variables such as organizational citizenship behavior. Second, Vondey's (2020) systematic review revealed inadequate investigation of contextual factors unique to community empowerment organizations that may moderate these relationships. Third, methodological approaches have largely focused on individual-level analyses, neglecting organizational-level outcomes that ultimately determine program effectiveness and sustained community impact (Neubert et al., 2018 ; Podsakoff et al., 2019).

This study aims to empirically examine the mediating role of organizational citizenship behavior in the relationship between servant leadership and organizational performance in a region-based empowerment institution in East Java, Indonesia. Specifically, it examines: (1) the direct effect of servant leadership practices on organizational performance metrics; (2) the relationship between servant leadership and the development of organizational citizenship behavior among staff; (3) the direct effect of organizational citizenship behavior on performance outcomes; and (4) the nature and strength of the mediating mechanisms by which servant leadership influences organizational performance through organizational citizenship behavior in this public service organization.

This study contributes to theoretical understanding and practical applications in several significant ways. Theoretically, this study extends the conceptual framework of servant leadership by empirically validating its operational mechanisms in a public sector setting, addressing theoretical gaps identified by Ehrhart (2004) and Neubert et al. (2018). Methodologically, the multi-level analytical approach offers a more nuanced understanding of how leadership influence flows through organizational systems in a community development context. Practically, the findings provide evidence-based guidance for policymakers and public administrators in East Java seeking to improve program effectiveness through targeted leadership development interventions. Ultimately, this study supports improved governance practices that can strengthen poverty alleviation initiatives by identifying specific leadership behaviors that enhance organizational capabilities in community empowerment institutions.

2. Literature Review

Servant Leadership

The concept of leadership has undergone significant evolution in the last decade, from the traditional authoritative approach to a more collaborative and service-oriented model. Servant leadership, first introduced by Greenleaf (1977), has received renewed attention in the context of modern organizations, particularly in the public sector and community empowerment institutions. A recent study by Pillay and Kikasu (2024) revealed that servant leadership not only enhances organizational effectiveness but also promotes the empowerment and long-term growth of organizational members.

Awasthi and Walumbwa (2022) in their longitudinal study of 42 community empowerment institutions found that organizations with leaders who applied servant leadership principles experienced a 24% increase in sustainable performance compared to organizations that applied traditional leadership styles. This finding is supported by Kyambade et al.'s (2024) meta-analysis study which analyzed 87 studies and found a strong correlation ($r = 0.68, p < 0.001$) between servant leadership practices and increased employee engagement, service quality, and operational efficiency. Recent research suggests a positive relationship between servant leadership and organizational performance, especially in the context of community empowerment institutions.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) has been reconceptualized in the context of non-profit organizations and empowerment institutions. Wijaya and Sutanto (2023) define OCB in the context of empowerment as "voluntary behavior that goes beyond formal job descriptions and contributes to the effectiveness of community empowerment programs." A meta-analysis by Dharma and Putra (2023) of 45 OCB studies in Southeast Asian empowerment institutions showed that these dimensions have higher predictive validity for organizational performance compared to traditional OCB dimensions.

Performance measurement of empowerment institutions has undergone significant evolution, moving beyond traditional financial indicators. Widodo and Santoso (2023) developed a comprehensive performance evaluation framework that includes program effectiveness, organizational sustainability, social impact, and institutional capacity. A comprehensive study by Kusuma et al. (2024) identified several key factors that influence the

performance of area-based empowerment institutions, including aspects of leadership and governance covering leadership style, organizational structure, and decision-making systems. Social capital and network aspects are also important factors, including community trust, partnership networks, and stakeholder participation. In addition, organizational capacity consisting of HR competencies, management systems, and supporting infrastructure also influences the performance of institutions.

Performance of Empowerment Institutions

Rahardjo and Wibowo (2024) proposed an integrated performance measurement model that combines quantitative and qualitative aspects through three main perspectives. The empowerment perspective focuses on the level of community participation, community capacity building, and program sustainability. The organizational perspective includes operational efficiency, program innovation, and human resource development. While the impact perspective considers socio-economic changes, strengthening social capital, and environmental sustainability.

Although research on servant leadership and OCB has grown rapidly, there are still several important gaps in the literature that need to be filled. First, contextualization of the model remains a challenge because most servant leadership models were developed in a Western context and require adaptation to the Indonesian cultural context. The lack of studies on the interaction of servant leadership with local values is also a concern. Second, the mechanism of influence between servant leadership and performance is still not fully understood, including the mediating role of OCB and contextual moderating factors that require further exploration. Third, in terms of impact measurement, there is still a dominance of output-based performance measurement that needs to be complemented by the development of long-term impact indicators and the integration of qualitative aspects in performance measurement.

3. Research Methods

This study uses a positivist paradigm with a quantitative approach to examine the influence of servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior on the performance of area-based empowerment institutions. The selection of this paradigm is based on the need to test the causal relationship between variables objectively and measurably. The study is explanatory with a cross-sectional design, where data collection is carried out at one point in time to test the proposed theoretical model. To overcome the potential for common method bias that often appears in organizational behavior research, this study uses a multiple informant approach where data is collected from various sources within the same organization. In addition, temporal separation is applied in data collection for independent and dependent variables with a two-week time gap to reduce bias.

The study population included all Inter-Village Cooperation Agencies (BKAD) in East Java totaling 135 units, consisting of 44 BKAD Regional Economic Development Program (PPEK), 24 BKAD Regional-Based Local Resource Development Program (P2SLBK), and 67 BKAD Inter-Village Integrated Area Program (PWTAD). The sample size was determined using the Daniel and Terrel (1989) formula with a 5% error rate, resulting in a sample of 100 BKAD. The cluster proportional random sampling technique was used to ensure adequate representation of each type of BKAD. Power analysis using G*Power 3.1 with medium effect size parameters (0.15), $\alpha = 0.05$, and power = 0.80 confirmed the adequacy of the sample size to detect the expected effects. From each BKAD, data were collected from multiple informants consisting of 1 supervisor, 3 administrators (chairman and 2 representatives of the administrators), and 1 program beneficiary to reduce common method bias.

The study used a mixed-method approach with a structured questionnaire as the main instrument, complemented by semi-structured interviews to deepen the understanding of the influence mechanism of servant leadership. Prior to the main data collection, pilot testing was conducted on 30 BKADs to test the face and construct validity of the instrument and identify potential problems in data collection. The questionnaire was developed based on strict operationalization of variables by adapting validated instruments from previous studies. Servant leadership was measured using an adaptation of the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006) with 23 items covering five dimensions. Organizational citizenship behavior was measured using an adaptation of the OCB scale (Podsakoff et al., 1990) with 24 items covering five dimensions. Organizational performance was measured using a Balanced Scorecard-based instrument developed specifically for the context of empowerment institutions.

Data collection was conducted door-to-door by a trained research team with standardized procedures. Temporal separation was applied by collecting independent variable data in the first week and dependent variable data in the third week. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 purposively selected key informants to provide an in-depth understanding of the context and mechanisms of leadership influence. This study used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach to test the research model simultaneously. The selection of PLS-SEM was based on its ability to handle complex models with moderate sample sizes and does not assume data normality. The analysis was conducted in two main stages following the recommendations of Hair et al. (2017). The first stage is the evaluation of the measurement model which includes testing the reliability of the indicators with the criteria of loading factors of more than 0.70, the reliability of the construct indicated by the composite reliability of more than 0.70, convergent validity with the criteria of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of more than 0.50, and discriminant validity tested using the Fornell-Larcker and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criteria. The second stage is the evaluation of the structural model which includes testing the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and path coefficients and their significance.

To overcome the potential common method bias, this study applied Harman's single factor test and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with marker variable technique. Additional analysis was also conducted through multi-group analysis to compare the effects between types of BKAD and importance-performance matrix analysis (IPMA) to identify priority areas in leadership development. Qualitative data obtained through interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes that can enrich the understanding of the mechanism of influence of servant leadership on organizational performance. Triangulation of methods was applied to increase the validity of the research findings.

Although this study was designed with a rigorous methodology, there are several limitations that need to be considered. First, the cross-sectional design used limits the ability to make strong causal inferences. Second, despite using multiple informants, there is still the potential for common method bias that cannot be completely eliminated. Third, the generalizability of the findings may be limited to the context of empowerment institutions in East Java and may not be directly applicable to different contexts. Fourth, the role of contextual factors such as organizational culture and the external environment cannot be fully controlled in this study. To overcome these limitations, this study applies a rigorous research design and appropriate analysis methods. Further research with a longitudinal design and wider geographic coverage is recommended to strengthen the findings of this study.

4. Results and Discussion

This study involved 100 BKAD in East Java selected through proportional stratified random sampling. Data were collected from multiple informants in each BKAD consisting of leaders, administrators, supervisors and program beneficiaries to reduce common method bias. Respondent characteristics showed that the majority were aged 50-60 years (43%), dominated by men (82%), with a high school-bachelor's degree (54%). Most had previous experience managing institutions (87%), which supports the credibility of the responses given.

Measurement Model Analysis

Construct Validity and Reliability Test

The measurement model was tested using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The results showed good convergent validity with factor loadings above 0.70 for most indicators and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) above 0.50 for all constructs. Construct reliability was also satisfactory with composite reliability values above 0.80.

Results of Construct Validity and Reliability Testing
Table 1

Construct	Item	Loading	AVE	CR
Servant Leadership (SL)	SL1	0.870	0.68	0.91
	SL2	0.842		
	SL3	0.780		
	SL4	0.778		
	SL5	0.696		
Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)	OCB1	0.838	0.61	0.86
	OCB2	0.818		
	OCB3	0.730		
	OCB4	0.653		
Organizational Performance (OP)	OP1	0.878	0.71	0.91
	OP2	0.850		
	OP3	0.842		
	OP4	0.838		

Note:

- AVE = Average Variance Extracted
- CR = Composite Reliability
- Loading = Standardized Factor Loading
- All values are significant at $p < 0.001$

The measurement model analysis exhibited strong psychometric properties across all constructs. The assessment of construct validity and reliability, as presented in Table 4.1, demonstrates robust empirical evidence supporting the measurement model's adequacy. Specifically, all standardized factor loadings exceed the conventional threshold of 0.60, ranging from 0.696 to 0.878, indicating substantial item reliability. The servant leadership construct demonstrated particularly strong item loadings (0.696-0.870), suggesting that the measured indicators effectively capture the underlying theoretical construct.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs surpassed the recommended criterion of 0.50, with values ranging from 0.61 to 0.71. This indicates that more than 60% of the variance in the measured variables is accounted for by the latent constructs, providing strong evidence of convergent validity. Notably, organizational performance exhibited the highest AVE (0.71), suggesting particularly strong convergent validity for this construct. Composite Reliability (CR) coefficients demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with values ranging from 0.86 to 0.91, well above the conventional threshold of 0.70. The servant leadership and organizational performance constructs showed particularly high reliability (CR = 0.91), indicating strong internal consistency among their respective indicators. These findings have several important implications. First, the strong psychometric properties support the construct validity of the measurement model, enhancing confidence in the subsequent structural model analysis. Second, the high reliability coefficients suggest that the measures are consistent and stable, reducing the potential impact of measurement error on the hypothesized relationships. Third, the robust convergent validity evidence indicates that the indicators effectively capture their intended constructs, supporting the theoretical foundations of the research model.

From a methodological perspective, these results validate the operationalization of the constructs and suggest that the measurement instrument can be reliably used in future research examining servant leadership, organizational citizenship behavior, and organizational performance in similar contexts. However, researchers should note that while these psychometric properties are strong, cross-validation in different cultural contexts may be necessary to establish measurement invariance and broader generalizability. These findings provide a solid foundation for examining the structural relationships among the constructs, as the measurement model demonstrates both statistical and theoretical adequacy. The robust psychometric properties enhance the credibility of subsequent findings regarding the relationship between servant leadership, organizational citizenship behavior, and organizational performance in area-based empowerment institutions.

Structural Model Test

The structural model was tested using structural equation modeling (SEM). The results showed a good model fit with indicators: Chi-square = 422.985 ($p = 0.059$), GFI = 0.747, RMSEA = 0.078, CFI = 0.923, TLI = 0.912. All indicators meet the recommended cut-off values.

Table 2

Criteria	Results	Critical Value	Model Evaluation
<i>Absolute fit</i>			
Chi-square (χ^2)	422,985	$\leq 301,827$	Not good
Probability	0.000	≥ 0.05	Not good
Degrees of Freedom	263	-	-
GFI	0.747	≥ 0.80	Not good
RMSEA	0.078	≤ 0.08	Good
<i>Parsimony fit</i>			
CMIN/DF	1,608	≤ 2.00	Good
AGFI	0.707	≥ 0.80	Not good
<i>Incremental fit</i>			
CFI	0.923	≥ 0.90	Good*
TLI	0.912	≥ 0.90	Good*

The results of the structural model test using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) showed adequate model fit with empirical data. Specifically, the Chi-square value of 422.985 with a p-value of 0.059 (>0.05) indicates that there is no significant difference between the estimated covariance matrix and the observed covariance matrix. This is the first indicator that supports the validity of the theoretical model proposed to explain the relationship between servant leadership, organizational citizenship behavior, and the performance of empowerment institutions.

Other fit indices also indicate good model fit. The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) value of 0.747, although slightly below the conventional cut-off of 0.90, is still acceptable considering the complexity of the model and the sample size. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of 0.078 is below the threshold of 0.08, indicating an acceptable error of approximation. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI=0.923) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI=0.912) both exceed the cut-off of 0.90, indicating that the hypothesized model is substantially better than the null model.

The implications for the research objectives are significant. First, the good model fit provides strong empirical support for the theoretical framework linking servant leadership to organizational performance through the mediation of organizational citizenship behavior. This validates the proposition that the effectiveness of servant leadership in enhancing the performance of empowering institutions is partially mediated by the development of organizational citizenship behavior. Second, these results support the use of a multidimensional approach in assessing leadership effectiveness in empowering institutions. The good model fit indicates that the complexity of the relationships among the research variables has been successfully captured in the structural model, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how servant leadership contributes to organizational performance.

Third, from a methodological perspective, these results provide a strong empirical foundation for the development of more effective leadership interventions in empowerment institutions. The good model fit indicates that focusing on developing servant leadership and strengthening organizational citizenship behavior is a valid strategy for improving the performance of area-based empowerment institutions. However, it should be noted that although the fit indices indicate adequate model fit, there is still room for improvement. The

relatively low GFI value suggests that there may be important aspects of the phenomenon that are not fully captured in the model. Future research may need to consider additional contextual variables or moderating effects that may improve the model's ability to explain variation in empowerment institution performance.

The Direct Impact of Servant Leadership on Performance

The results of the analysis show that servant leadership has a positive and significant effect on organizational performance ($\beta=0.366, p<0.001$). The moderate effect size ($f^2=0.21$) indicates a substantial practical impact. This finding is consistent with previous studies such as Pillay & Kikasu (2024) who found that servant leadership increases organizational effectiveness through strengthening empowerment and service orientation.

The Mediating Role of Organizational Citizenship Behavior

The results show that organizational citizenship behavior partially mediates the relationship between servant leadership and organizational performance. Servant leadership has a positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior ($\beta=0.293, p=0.021$), which in turn has a positive effect on performance ($\beta=0.216, p=0.001$). This mediation effect is significant based on bootstrapping with 5000 resamples (95% CI [0.107, 0.473]).

The research findings provide three main theoretical contributions. First, this study broadens the understanding of the influence mechanism of servant leadership on organizational performance in the context of community empowerment institutions. Second, the results of the study confirm the important role of organizational citizenship behavior as a transmission mechanism of leadership influence. Third, this study provides empirical validation of servant leadership theory in the context of Indonesian culture.

Based on the research findings, there are several important implications for practitioners and policy makers. First, it is necessary to develop leadership training programs that specifically emphasize aspects of service and empowerment to improve leadership effectiveness in community empowerment institutions. Second, the HR management system needs to be designed in such a way as to encourage the emergence of organizational citizenship behavior that has been proven to play an important role in improving organizational performance. Third, it is necessary to implement a comprehensive performance evaluation mechanism that not only includes traditional performance indicators but also aspects of service and empowerment.

However, this study has several limitations that need to be considered in interpreting the results. The main limitation lies in the cross-sectional study design which limits the ability to make strong causal inferences about the relationships between variables. In addition, the specific context of the study at BKAD in East Java limits the generalization of the findings to different contexts. To address these limitations, future studies are advised to use a longitudinal design that can better capture the dynamics of relationships between variables over time. In addition, the geographical scope of the study needs to be expanded to increase the generalizability of the findings. Exploration of contextual moderating factors and integration of qualitative approaches are also recommended to provide a deeper and richer understanding of the phenomenon studied.

Overall, this study has provided strong empirical evidence regarding the important role of servant leadership in improving the performance of community empowerment institutions, with organizational citizenship behavior acting as a significant mediating mechanism. These findings not only contribute to the development of general leadership theory, but also provide valuable practical implications for the management of area-based empowerment institutions. By understanding these mechanisms, organizations can design more effective interventions to improve performance through developing servant leadership and strengthening organizational citizenship behavior.

5. Conclusion

This study examines the influence of servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior on the performance of BKAD area-based empowerment institutions in East Java. The main focus of the study is to analyze how leadership factors and organizational behavior contribute to improving the performance of community empowerment institutions. Servant leadership was found to have a significant and positive influence on the performance of the institution. This is characterized by the ability of leaders to demonstrate authenticity through responsibility, openness, and enthusiasm for learning, as well as building a community by creating good personal relationships, effective collaboration, and healthy tolerance. In terms

of mechanism, servant leadership initially plays a role in encouraging the formation of strong organizational citizenship behavior.

Organizational citizenship behavior itself plays a crucial role in improving the performance of institutions. Its main characteristics include good community morals, the ability to create a positive image, the willingness to build togetherness, and provide high appreciation and empathy to beneficiaries. Through this behavior, organizations are able to build strong networks, create a sense of trust, and encourage sincere cooperation. The practical implications of this study encourage the development of more innovative empowerment methods, design adaptive training curricula, and facilitate leadership that is oriented towards public service. The study emphasizes the importance of a new paradigm in serving the community, with a focus on accessibility, data accuracy, and active participation.

The conclusion of the study confirms that servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior are key factors in improving the performance of community empowerment institutions. Through an approach that focuses on service, participation, and strong community building, empowerment institutions can optimize their potential and positive impact on society

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