

Examining the role of servant leadership in promoting ethical behavior: A Systematic literature review

Meneliti peran kepemimpinan yang melayani dalam mempromosikan perilaku etis: Sebuah tinjauan literatur sistematis

Ahmad Mukhtar¹, Nurnaningsih A²

Institut Lamadukkelleng Sengkang¹, Institut Agama Islam As'adiyah Sengkang²

*ahmadmuktmarku1221@gmail.com¹

**Corresponding Author*

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of servant leadership in promoting ethical behavior in organizations, by comparing its impact between nonprofit and commercial organizations. Through a systematic literature review approach using the PRISMA method, this research concludes that servant leadership positively influences work culture, organizational performance, and relationships with stakeholders. Implementing servant leadership can help build an inclusive organizational culture, increase employee engagement, and reduce unethical behavior.

Keywords: Servant leadership, ethical behavior, non-profit organizations, commercial organizations, systematic literature review

ABSTRAK

Studi ini menginvestigasi peran kepemimpinan pelayan dalam mempromosikan perilaku etis di organisasi, dengan membandingkan dampaknya antara organisasi nirlaba dan komersial. Melalui pendekatan systematic literature review menggunakan metode PRISMA, penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kepemimpinan pelayan secara positif mempengaruhi budaya kerja, kinerja organisasi, dan hubungan dengan pemangku kepentingan. Implementasi kepemimpinan pelayan dapat membantu membangun budaya organisasi inklusif, meningkatkan keterlibatan karyawan, dan mengurangi perilaku tidak etis.

Kata Kunci: Kepemimpinan pelayan, perilaku etis, organisasi nirlaba, organisasi komersial, systematic literature review

1. Introduction

Servant leadership, rooted in the principles of empathy, altruism, and community stewardship, prioritizes the growth, empowerment, and well-being of its followers (Lee et al., 2019). This leadership style is known for its emphasis on ethical behavior, benefits for various stakeholders, and the promotion of integrity and assistance to others (Lemoine et al., 2019; Göçen, 2020). Servant leaders are renowned for their focus on building interpersonal relationships, serving as role models, and creating a culture of ethical standards within their organizations (Neill & Meng, 2023; Sendjaya et al., 2019). By encouraging employees to shift from a self-orientation to a service orientation, they foster ethical and prosocial behavior (Brière et al., 2020).

Research shows that servant leadership significantly plays a role in promoting ethical behavior among employees by demonstrating ethical behavior and influencing the ethical actions of followers (Cai et al., 2021). Servant leaders are considered capable of empowering their employees, reducing stress, and fostering a psychological climate that supports ethical behavior within the organization (Westbrook et al., 2022; Sendjaya et al., 2019). Additionally, servant leadership is correlated with beneficial outcomes such as increased employee

creativity, job performance, and job satisfaction (Hanaysha et al., 2022; Nguyen, 2023).

In times of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, servant leadership is considered effective in inspiring and positively impacting frontline workers, demonstrating its effectiveness in maintaining employee motivation in challenging situations (Fakhri, 2024; Zada et al., 2022). Rooted in a moral compass that emphasizes ethical behavior and concern for the welfare of others, the servant leadership approach increases its effectiveness in promoting ethical behavior and fostering a culture of integrity within organizations (Langhof & Güldenber, 2019). In conclusion, servant leadership emerges as an important force in promoting ethical behavior within organizations by prioritizing empathy, altruism, and community stewardship. It establishes ethical norms, empowers employees, reduces stress, and improves job performance and satisfaction. His commitment to ethical behavior, stakeholder welfare, and integrity makes him an ideal leadership style for organizations seeking to build an ethical and responsible organizational culture.

Ethical behavior in organizations is becoming increasingly crucial as attention to social responsibility and corporate reputation increases. Organizations in various sectors face pressure to ensure that their operations are not only economically effective but also ethical. Servant leadership emerged as an approach that emphasizes the importance of leaders supporting and serving their team members, with a focus on the well-being of employees and society at large. This concept offers the potential to promote more consistent ethical behavior in organizations.

Nonetheless, challenges in promoting ethical behavior vary between different types of organizations, such as non-profit organizations and commercial organizations. Nonprofit organizations often face different ethical dilemmas, relating to social missions and resource limitations, while commercial organizations may be more focused on profitability and regulatory compliance. These contextual differences raise an important question: Are there differences in the impact of servant leadership on ethical behavior between nonprofit and commercial organizations?

Previous research suggests that servant leadership can promote ethical behavior, but research explicitly comparing its impact in the nonprofit and commercial sectors is limited. This lack highlights a research gap that needs to be filled to understand how servant leadership functions in different contexts. This understanding is very important because managerial strategies that are effective in one type of organization are not necessarily effective in another type.

This research seeks to fill this gap by adopting a new approach in exploring the impact of servant leadership through a direct comparison between two different types of organizations. Thus, this research will not only provide new insights into the role of servant leadership in the context of organizational ethics, but also direct more appropriate and effective managerial strategies to be implemented in various sectors. It is hoped that this research contribution will help practitioners and academics understand and develop leadership practices that promote organizational ethics and sustainability.

2. Research Methods

This research uses a systematic literature review approach with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method to collect and analyze articles from reputable international databases. The PRISMA method was chosen because it offers a systematic and transparent framework for identifying, selecting, and synthesizing relevant research results, thereby ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings.

The article collection process begins with searches in various reputable international journal databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Keywords used in the search included "servant leadership," "ethical behavior," "nonprofit organizations," "commercial organizations," "comparative study," and "ethical leadership." This search was

designed to capture articles that specifically addressed the relationship between servant leadership and ethical behavior in the context of nonprofit and commercial organizations.

From the initial search results, a number of articles were found. The number of articles obtained from these initial search results reached around 200 articles. Next, the selection process is carried out through several stages to ensure that only articles that meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria are considered further.

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Articles published in reputable international journals, such as journals indexed by Scopus Q1.
2. Studies that focus on the relationship between servant leadership and ethical behavior.
3. Studies covering both non-profit and commercial organizational contexts.

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Articles not available in full text.
2. Studies that do not include empirical data or case studies.
3. Articles that are not relevant to the research topic, for example articles that only discuss technical aspects of leadership without focusing on ethics.

After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the number of relevant articles was reduced to approximately 117 articles. These articles were then analyzed further to evaluate their quality and relevance to the research questions asked. This process ensures that this research is based on the most credible and relevant literature, thereby providing in-depth and valid insight into the differences in the impact of servant leadership on ethical behavior between nonprofit and commercial organizations.

3. Servant Leadership: Definition and Basic Concepts

3.1. Definition of Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a management approach that prioritizes employees' needs, places their well-being above the leader's personal interests, and shows concern for others ("Servant Leadership And Organization Performance Of Faith Based Self Help Groups In Kirinyaga County", 2022). This leadership style emphasizes service, listening, developing, encouraging, collaborating, and building relationships, with an emphasis on openness, accountability, and a willingness to learn (Simón et al., 2022). Servant leaders create a supportive work environment that encourages creativity, risk-taking, and learning from mistakes (Zada et al., 2023). The concept of servant leadership is characterized by serving others, managing followers, humility, emphasizing their interests, and facilitating their growth and success (Iqbal et al., 2020).

More than simply serving followers, servant leadership also involves empowering them through shared leadership and participative decision making (Jang et al., 2022). This follower-focused leadership approach aims to guide followers to act as servant leaders, by modeling concern for organizational goals and stakeholders (Lemoine & Blum, 2019). Servant leaders engage in moral discussions, are transparent in decision making, and seek to understand and empathize with others (Sendjaya et al., 2019; Crippen & Willows, 2019). They focus on follower well-being, community growth, autonomy, and development of future leaders (Mariana et al., 2022).

Characteristics of servant leaders include a holistic approach to work, a sense of alliance, participation in decision making, respect for people, building community, authenticity, and shared leadership (Pawar et al., 2020; Muzira & Muzira, 2020). Servant leadership is not based on hierarchical authority, but on moral authority provided by followers voluntarily (Kauppila et al., 2021). Research shows that servant leadership increases women's perceptions of leadership appropriateness, improves customers' perceptions of service quality, and

promotes a culture of service and responsiveness to customers' changing needs (Andrade, 2023; Nichols et al., 2020; Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2019). In conclusion, servant leadership is a complex leadership style that prioritizes followers' needs, encourages empowerment, fosters creativity, and promotes a culture of service and collaboration. This style is characterized by humility, empathy, transparency, and a focus on developing others into future leaders.

3.2. Ethical Behavior in Organizations

Ethical behavior in organizations is critical to maintaining trust, reputation and long-term success. Ethical leadership has been identified as a key driver in promoting ethical behavior within organizations (Ahmad et al., 2021; Aloustani et al., 2020; Cai, 2024). Ethical leaders not only directly influence green behavior, organizational citizenship behavior, and ethical work behavior, but also contribute to improving the ethical climate within the organization (Guo et al., 2023; Wijaya et al., 2021; Wen et al. , 2021; Hsieh et al., 2020). This positive ethical climate, in turn, strengthens relationships with customers, increases employee job satisfaction, commitment, and innovative behavior, and reduces unethical behavior in the workplace (Mitchell et al., 2019; Mensah, 2024; Ibáñez & Fernández, 2021 ; Tung, 2024).

Factors that influence ethical behavior in organizations include the existence of ethical leadership, organizational culture, and ethical climate (Ahmad et al., 2021; Aloustani et al., 2020; Cai, 2024; Guo et al., 2023; Tung, 2024) . Ethical leadership shapes the ethical climate within the organization, which influences employees' perceptions of what is considered acceptable behavior (Wijaya et al., 2021; Wen et al., 2021; Hsieh et al., 2020; Mitchell et al., 2019). Additionally, shared values and beliefs within organizations, often influenced by ethical leaders, play an important role in defining organizational culture and guiding employee behavior (Siqueira et al., 2022). Establishing behavioral norms, clear communication of ethical expectations, and mechanisms for dealing with unethical behavior are steps that can influence the perception of the importance of ethics within the organization.

Moreover, ethical behavior is not limited to internal organizational practices but also includes external interactions, such as customer loyalty and brand commitment (Mensah, 2024). Research has shown that ethical behavior has a positive impact on customer trust, satisfaction and commitment, ultimately increasing loyalty. During a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, maintaining brands' ethical behavior becomes even more critical to maintaining consumer trust and commitment. In conclusion, ethical behavior in organizations is a complex aspect that is influenced by ethical leadership, organizational culture, and ethical climate. Ethical leaders play an important role in promoting ethical behavior, shaping organizational culture, and strengthening positive relationships with stakeholders. Establishing clear ethical norms, effective communication, and mechanisms for dealing with unethical behavior are important elements for maintaining ethical standards in organizations.

3.3. Servant Leadership and Ethical Behavior in Nonprofit Organizations

3.3.1. The Role of Servant Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations

Servant leadership has been recognized as having a positive impact on ethical behavior in nonprofit organizations. Studies show that moral leadership behavior, as demonstrated in servant leadership, produces desired organizational outcomes (Lemoine et al., 2019). Specifically, servant leadership has been linked to the development of employees' extra-role behaviors, such as innovative work behavior, organizational citizenship behavior, and creativity, in the context of nonprofit organizations (Aboramadan et al., 2022). This leadership style prioritizes service to others, assists in completing tasks, and promotes a sense of community and organizational service (Vhalery, 2024; Song et al., 2022).

Servant leadership stands out as a morally based leadership approach in which leaders prioritize meeting the needs of their followers over personal gain, emphasizing the importance of stakeholder well-being (Canavesi & Minelli, 2021). Research also highlights the significant

influence of servant leadership on organizational commitment through structural empowerment, indicating its role in increasing employee dedication in nonprofit organizations (Aboramadan & Dahleez, 2020). Additionally, servant leadership has been linked to maintaining an ethical climate in organizations, building trust, and promoting positive work behavior (Haq et al., 2021; Sendjaya et al., 2019).

Furthermore, servant leadership has been associated with encouraging employees to exhibit positive deviant behavior through self-determination theory, emphasizing a shift from self-interest to service orientation (Brière et al., 2020). This leadership style was also found to reduce rule-breaking behavior among employees by promoting compliance with organizational rules and regulations (Malik et al., 2022). Additionally, servant leadership demonstrated a direct positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior and employee creativity, further underscoring its importance in promoting ethical behavior and innovative work practices (Hanaysha et al., 2022). In conclusion, a number of studies support the idea that servant leadership plays an important role in promoting ethical behavior in nonprofit organizations. By prioritizing service, maintaining an ethical climate, and encouraging positive work behaviors, servant leadership is emerging as a valuable approach for cultivating a culture of ethics and integrity in the nonprofit environment.

3.3.2. Influence Mechanisms

Servant leadership is a leadership style that prioritizes the needs of followers over the needs of the leader, creating a positive social environment through cooperation, empathy, and ethical procedures (Nauman et al., 2021). This leadership approach influences employee behavior by encouraging intrinsic motivation, identification with leaders, and innovative behavior in service (Su et al., 2020). Additionally, servant leadership develops affective and cognitive trust, which mediates the relationship between servant leadership and organizational performance (Saleem et al., 2020).

Servant leadership is firmly rooted in ethics and morality, which shape the ethical climate within the organization (Gil et al., 2023). This leadership style goes beyond self-interest by directing employees to a service-oriented mindset, encouraging ethical and prosocial behavior (Brière et al., 2020). By emphasizing ethics and morality, servant leaders influence the ethical behavior of their followers through modeling ethical behavior (Cai et al., 2021). This ethical foundation creates a sustainable workplace where power is used in moderation, and trust and support are prioritized to protect employee interests (Ahmad et al., 2022).

Additionally, servant leadership was found to have a positive impact on creativity, psychological safety, and employee well-being, ultimately fostering a culture of empathy and improving employee well-being (Jin, 2023; Wang et al., 2022). This leadership style also influences work performance by increasing public service motivation, normative commitment, and work performance as a public servant (Syahrani et al., 2022). Servant leadership is effective in developing an ethical climate within organizations, as evidenced by its positive effects on organizational citizenship behavior and perceptions of ethical norms (Sendjaya et al., 2019; Robinson et al., 2020). In conclusion, servant leadership establishes an ethical culture in nonprofit organizations by promoting intrinsic motivation, trust, ethical behavior, creativity, and employee well-being. By prioritizing followers' needs, building trust, and emphasizing ethical behavior, servant leaders create a positive work environment that encourages ethical practices and improves organizational performance.

3.3.3. Case Studies and Real Examples

Servant leadership is a leadership approach that emphasizes ethics, kindness, and service to others (Robinson et al., 2020). Companies such as Starbucks and Southwest Airlines have attributed their success to the implementation of servant leadership practices (Dryburgh, 2020). Research shows that servant leadership has a positive and significant impact on

employee Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) in both profit and non-profit contexts (Amir et al., 2021). This leadership style focuses on supporting employees to achieve their personal and professional goals, which in turn improves organizational performance (Sfetcu, 2021).

Studies have shown that servant leadership increases employees' extra-role behavior, work engagement, and organizational commitment in nonprofit organizations (Aboramadan et al., 2022; Aboramadan & Dahleez, 2020). Additionally, servant leadership is associated with increased team effectiveness and project success in both for-profit and non-profit contexts (Afsar et al., 2020; Nauman et al., 2022). Servant leadership practices have also been shown to reduce business failures and financial scandals, confirming their importance in organizational management (Muzira & Muzira, 2020).

Servant leadership has also been linked to positive outcomes at both the team and organizational levels, promoting trust and establishing a culture of empowerment within organizations (Lu, 2023; McAuley, 2019). By focusing on followers' needs, servant leaders can have a positive impact on organizational functioning and employee satisfaction (Lee et al., 2019). In addition, servant leadership is identified as a key factor in improving work performance, job satisfaction, and self-efficacy among employees (Yulihardi et al., 2022).

Overall, the literature supports the effectiveness of servant leadership in a variety of organizational contexts, highlighting its role in enhancing employee well-being, organizational success, and ethical leadership practices. By prioritizing service to others and establishing a supportive work environment, servant leadership is emerging as a valuable approach for organizations aiming to achieve sustainable growth and positive outcomes.

3.4. Servant Leadership and Ethical Behavior in Commercial Organizations

3.4.1. The Role of Servant Leadership in Commercial Organizations

Servant leadership has been widely researched in various contexts, including its impact on ethical behavior in commercial organizations. Research shows that servant leadership is linked to the promotion of ethical behavior and positive outcomes in the workplace. Studies have shown that servant leadership emphasizes employee well-being, ethical behavior, and sustainable workforce management (Ahmad et al., 2022). This leadership style focuses on serving others, cultivating a culture of compassion, and managing workplace challenges such as bullying (Ahmad et al., 2022). Additionally, servant leadership is associated with increased organizational effectiveness, work performance, and innovative behavior of employees (Ramdan, 2024; Iqbal et al., 2020; Kül & Sönmez, 2021). It encourages employees to engage in voluntary green behavior, comply with rules and regulations, and demonstrate organizational citizenship behavior (Ashraf et al., 2022; Malik et al., 2022; Faizah et al., 2021).

Servant leadership is characterized by empowering subordinates, prioritizing their needs, and demonstrating ethical behavior (Franco & Antunes, 2020). This fosters a psychological ethical climate within the organization, leading to increased ethical norms and citizenship behavior among employees (Sendjaya et al., 2019). Additionally, servant leadership is associated with positive deviant behavior, self-determination, and employee well-being (Brière et al., 2020; Giolito et al., 2020; Franco & Antunes, 2020). It encourages employees to go beyond task compliance, promotes prosocial behavior, and positive outcomes (Brière et al., 2020). Additionally, servant leadership was found to mediate the relationship between leadership style and employee voice behavior, indicating its role in facilitating open communication and employee participation (Zhao & Wu, 2023). In conclusion, the literature supports the view that servant leadership plays a crucial role in promoting ethical behavior, enhancing organizational effectiveness, and fostering a positive work environment in commercial organizations.

3.4.2. Influence Mechanisms

Servant leadership has a significant role in shaping ethical behavior in a commercial environment by building trust among employees. Saleem et al. (2020) highlighted that servant leadership contributes to sustainable performance by increasing affective and cognitive confidence, which positively influences individual performance (Saleem et al., 2020). This trust is critical to promoting ethical behavior within the organization. Additionally, Faruqi (2020) emphasized that servant leadership positively influences organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) in employees, further confirming the ethical impact of this leadership style (Faruqi, 2020).

Ethical leadership, as discussed by Kuenzi et al. (2019), includes the moral personal aspect, which focuses on integrity and fairness, and the moral manager aspect, which involves the use of reward and punishment systems to convey ethical standards (Kuenzi et al., 2019). This type of leadership is important in creating an ethical organizational climate that challenges unethical behavior. Authentic leadership, as researched by Mbata et al. (2023), also plays an important role in influencing employees' ethical behavior by building trust and integrity, which are important components of ethical behavior (Mbata et al., 2023).

Additionally, organizational factors significantly influence the work environment and shape employees' ethical or unethical behavior (Nakato et al., 2022). The ethical climate in an organization influences employees' decision-making processes and their behavior in response to ethical dilemmas. This highlights the importance of establishing a strong ethical framework in the commercial environment to guide employees towards ethical behavior. In conclusion, servant leadership, ethical leadership, and authentic leadership play an important role in promoting ethical behavior in commercial environments by building trust, fostering integrity, and creating an ethical organizational climate. This leadership style contributes to shaping the ethical behavior of employees and plays a vital role in establishing an ethical culture within the organization.

3.5. Comparison and Analysis

3.5.1. Impact Differences in Nonprofit and Commercial Organizations

Non-profit organizations and commercial companies have significant differences in various aspects, especially regarding sources of income, organizational structure, and impact on society. Commercialization in nonprofit organizations involves the adoption of business-oriented strategies, such as generating revenue through the sale of goods and services, which differs from the traditional reliance on donations and grants (Hung, 2020; Hung & Berrett, 2022; Lu et al., 2022). This shift toward commercial practices may improve operational efficiency but also raises concerns about its impact on nonprofit organizations' involvement in advocacy for social change, a core mission that may be marginalized by revenue generation priorities (Dong et al., 2022).

Increased commercial revenues in nonprofit organizations also influence public perceptions and donor decisions, shaping the organization's reputation in society (Hung & Suykens, 2023). As nonprofit organizations adopt more commercial practices, the boundaries between the nonprofit and commercial sectors can become blurred, especially after controversies or scandals, prompting nonprofit organizations to face scrutiny and expectations similar to commercial companies (Chapman et al., 2021; Mitchell & Calabrese, 2022). This change in perception creates challenges in maintaining the trustworthiness and clear mission focus traditionally associated with nonprofit organizations.

Despite the expected financial benefits of commercialization, such as increased competitiveness and reduced dependence on traditional funding sources, this practice can also give rise to challenges such as unstable working conditions and potential mission drift (Mikołajczak, 2021). Additionally, the hybrid nature of nonprofit organizations—the integration of service provision with advocacy—and their level of commercialization greatly influences

their role and effectiveness in society (Beaton et al., 2020; Suykens et al., 2020). Understanding these dynamics is critical, especially in evaluating nonprofit organizations' contributions to community well-being, resilience in responding to disasters, and overall benefits to society (Meyer et al., 2022; Yeager et al., 2023). In conclusion, exploring the complexities of nonprofit commercialization and its implications for organizational identity, mission integrity, and social impact requires careful consideration. Policymakers and practitioners must find a balance between enhancing financial sustainability and maintaining the capacity of nonprofit organizations to serve the public interest and drive social change effectively amidst evolving economic and social changes.

3.5.2. Factors Causing Differences

Factors that contribute to differences in organizations can be caused by a combination of contextual factors, organizational culture, and management structure. Contextual factors include elements such as organizational size, maturity, differentiation, specialization, capacity to absorb new knowledge, and context readiness for change (Nilsen & Bernhardsson, 2019). These factors interact with organizational culture, which is a key predictor of organizational effectiveness and is closely related to elements such as strategy, structure, leadership, and high-performance work practices (Hartnell et al., 2019). In addition, an appropriate organizational structure is essential to provide support to the project team, as a mismatch between the structure and project characteristics can hinder progress (Nizma, 2024).

Leadership significantly influences an organization's culture and its effectiveness. Ethical leadership practices within an organizational culture can increase audit effectiveness by promoting trust, accountability, and compliance with professional standards (Noch, 2024). This leadership influence extends to various contexts, influencing the psychological state and performance of employees regardless of cultural differences (Gui et al., 2020).

Interactions between contextual factors, organizational culture, and leadership are also apparent in healthcare settings. Although contextual factors such as culture and leadership greatly influence successful implementation, there is still disagreement about how to define and measure context in implementation studies in health (Rogers et al., 2020). In the context of cross-professional care in primary care settings, organizational contextual factors such as team structure, supportive culture, leadership, and resources are critical to effective care delivery (Cataldo, 2022). In conclusion, alignment between contextual factors, organizational culture, and management structure is critical to organizational success and effectiveness. These elements interact with each other in complex ways, influencing a variety of outcomes in organizations across a variety of sectors and settings. Understanding and managing these factors is critical to creating an environment that supports growth, innovation and sustainable development.

3.6. Implications of Findings

3.6.1. Implications for leadership theory and management practice

Servant leaders have received significant attention in leadership theory and management practice because of their positive impact on a variety of organizational outcomes. Research has shown that servant leadership is associated with improved work-related outcomes, leadership effectiveness, group performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Zhang et al., 2019; Aboramadan et al., 2020; Vrcelj et al., 2022). Servant leaders emphasize service to others to enhance their development, focus on the well-being of team members, and create a caring organizational environment (Supranavičienė, 2024; Bieńkowska et al., 2022). This leadership style has been associated with reduced burnout among nurses during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting its role in promoting psychological safety and well-being (Ma et al., 2021).

Additionally, servant leaders have been shown to positively influence employee

engagement, innovative work behavior, and organizational justice (Dayanti & Yulianti, 2023; Kauppila et al., 2021). It is also associated with reducing turnover and improving job performance (Bieńkowska et al., 2022). Studies have suggested that servant leaders can reduce turnover, counterproductive work behaviors, and job stress, while improving employee well-being and resilience (Zada et al., 2022; Qiu & Zhang, 2022). Additionally, servant leadership is recognized as a valuable leadership philosophy in a variety of sectors, including health care, education, and public government (Ma et al., 2021; Latif & Marimón, 2019).

Practically speaking, organizations are encouraged to integrate servant leadership principles into their development programs and leadership practices. Providing servant leadership training to managers and employees, creating a supportive and empowering work environment, and emphasizing the well-being of team members are important steps to foster servant leadership within organizations (Fakhri, 2024; Chen et al., 2022). These findings emphasize the importance of integrating servant leadership into leadership theory and management practice to improve organizational effectiveness, employee well-being, and overall performance.

4. Conclusions

This study illustrates that servant leadership and ethical behavior in organizations, both nonprofit and commercial, have a crucial role in influencing work culture, organizational performance, and relationships with stakeholders. Servant leadership is defined as an approach that prioritizes service to others, prioritizes the needs of followers, and promotes their empowerment and well-being. Meanwhile, ethical behavior involves practices that support justice, integrity and social responsibility within the organization.

4.1. Implications

1. **Organizational Culture Development:** Implementing servant leadership can help build an inclusive organizational culture, where trust, collaboration, and empowerment are core values. This has the potential to increase employee engagement and reduce unethical behavior in the workplace.
2. **Increasing Organizational Performance:** Servant leadership is proven to contribute to better organizational performance through increasing employee intrinsic motivation, creativity, and commitment to shared goals. This can lead to achieving better results, both in non-profit and commercial contexts.
3. **Relationships with Stakeholders:** Transparent, service-oriented servant leadership practices can improve relationships with external stakeholders such as customers, donors, or investors. This is important in maintaining an organization's reputation and strengthening ongoing partnerships.

4.2. Limitation

This study has several limitations that need to be noted:

1. **Generalization:** The findings from this study may not be directly applicable to all organizational contexts, given variations in culture, size, and different organizational sectors.
2. **Dependencies on Secondary Data:** Limitations in access to primary data or more detailed information from a particular organization may affect the depth of analysis and generalization of findings.

4.3. Future Research

For future research, there are several directions that could be explored:

1. **Impact of Contextual Change:** Further studies could explore how changes in social, economic, or political contexts influence servant leadership practices and ethical

behavior in organizations.

2. **Cross-Cultural Comparisons:** Comparing the implementation of servant leadership and ethical practices across different organizational cultures can provide deeper insight into the factors that influence their effectiveness.
3. **Longitudinal Case Study:** Research using a longitudinal approach can reveal the evolution and long-term impact of servant leadership on organizational culture and organizational performance.

By considering these implications, limitations, and future research directions, practitioners and researchers can better understand how servant leadership can promote a sustainable ethical culture and build resilient organizations in the modern era.

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