RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Role of Servant Leadership in Enhancing Job Satisfaction: The Mediating Effects of Leader-Member Exchange and Trust

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study aims to investigate the impact of Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership on job satisfaction among lecturers in Kendari, considering the roles of trust and leader-member exchange as mediators. The study uses a quantitative approach with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis to examine the relationships between the variables with a sample of 266 private lecturers in Kendari, Indonesia. The results show that both leadership styles, namely Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership, have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, both directly and indirectly through the roles of trust and leader-member exchange. The study also reveals that increasing trust between lecturers and their leaders, along with strong leader-member relationships, can amplify the positive impact of leadership styles on job satisfaction. Additionally, these findings enrich the leadership literature by emphasizing the importance of strong interpersonal relationships and emotional support in improving performance and job satisfaction. The practical implications of these findings suggest that leaders of educational institutions should adopt leadership styles that promote well-being and effective communication among lecturers and leadership, aiming to create a more productive and harmonious work environment. However, this study has limitations, such as the use of a cross-sectional approach that only examines variables at a single point in time, and the limited scope of the research, which was conducted solely in Kendari. Therefore, further research with a broader scope and a more in-depth approach is needed to explore the long-term dynamics of the influence of leadership styles.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a crucial element in modern organizations, particularly in the education sector, where effective relationships between leaders and members impact individual performance and job satisfaction (Mwesigwa et al., 2020; Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). Servant leadership, which focuses on service and empowering subordinates, and transformational leadership, which encourages inspiration and innovation, have been widely recognized in the literature as effective leadership approaches to improve job satisfaction (Newman et al., 2017; Xie, 2020).

Job satisfaction, as a key factor in organizational performance, is a major concern in higher education institutions (Asrar-ul-Haq et al., 2017). In this context, leadership styles that can enhance motivation and well-being among lecturers are highly relevant to ensure the sustainability of educational quality

(Lee et al., 2018). Therefore, this study focuses on the impact of servant leadership and transformational leadership on job satisfaction among lecturers through mediating mechanisms such as leader-member exchange (LMX) and trust.

Servant leadership has been proven to enhance job satisfaction through the empowerment of employees and the creation of an inclusive work environment. Judge et al. (2020) emphasizes that this approach contributes to the development of a sense of fairness in the workplace, ultimately increasing job satisfaction. In the context of higher education in Indonesia, Anselmus Dami et al. (2024) show that servant leadership has a significant positive impact on lecturers' job satisfaction by strengthening interpersonal relationships.

In contrast, transformational leadership is known for its ability to inspire and motivate subordinates through shared vision and values. Mwesigwa et al. (2020) explain that this leadership style promotes positive changes in organizations by enhancing employees' commitment to organizational goals. In educational institutions, transformational leadership provides significant benefits in driving innovation and continuous learning, which ultimately improves job satisfaction among lecturers. While the relationship between servant leadership, transformational leadership, and job satisfaction has been extensively studied, there is a theoretical gap in understanding the mechanisms that bridge these relationships. Most previous studies have focused on direct relationships without considering the role of mediators such as leader-member exchange (LMX) and trust, which are highly relevant in the context of higher education institutions (Dami et al., 2022; Ardiansyah et al., 2024).

Moreover, existing research has primarily been conducted in the business sector, with limited studies in higher education, particularly among lecturers in regions such as Kendari. The complexity of leadership relationships in higher education requires a more specific research approach to deeply explain these dynamics (Tantri et al., 2021; Batool et al., 2024). Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring the role of LMX and trust as mediators. This study proposes that leader-member exchange (LMX) serves as an important mediator in the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction. According to social exchange theory, servant leadership, which focuses on empowerment and service, strengthens the relationship between leaders and subordinates, leading to high-quality LMX. Anselmus Dami et al. (2024) argue that positive relationships within LMX not only enhance mutual trust but also directly impact job satisfaction.

Additionally, trust is proposed as a mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction. Transformational leadership, through the inspiration and motivation it offers to employees, fosters a high level of trust between leaders and subordinates. Zargar et al. (2019) show that trust strengthens the positive effect of transformational leadership on job satisfaction by creating a supportive work environment. Both of these mediators provide new insights into how leadership styles can indirectly influence job satisfaction.

This study aims to investigate the impact of servant leadership and transformational leadership on job satisfaction among lecturers in Kendari, considering the roles of leader-member exchange (LMX) and trust as mediators. Specifically, the research will evaluate the impact of servant leadership on job satisfaction through LMX, analyze the influence of transformational leadership on job satisfaction through trust, and contribute both theoretical and practical insights into understanding the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction in the context of higher education. The results of this study are expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of effective leadership mechanisms and offer recommendations for higher education institutions to improve job satisfaction among lecturers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hypotheses Development

Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction

Servant leadership and job satisfaction have been significant areas of focus in leadership research. Farrington and Lillah (2019) shows that servant leadership creates a fair environment, which enhances overall job satisfaction. In Indonesia, Anselmus Dami et al. (2024) found that servant leadership has a significant positive impact on job satisfaction in higher education institutions, even more so than other leadership styles. A similar positive effect of servant leadership on job satisfaction was reported by Lee et al. (2018) in a fitness club setting, demonstrating the relevance of this leadership style across different organizational contexts. Moreover, factors such as organizational culture and proactive employee behavior can strengthen the positive impact of servant leadership on job satisfaction. Gil et al. (2024) found that proactive employee behavior enhances the positive effects of servant leadership, emphasizing the importance of a proactive culture and engagement within the organization to maximize the benefits of servant leadership. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

H1: Servant leadership has a significant impact on job satisfaction.

Servant Leadership and Trust

Servant leadership, which prioritizes serving employees and creating supportive work relationships, has a significant impact on trust. Zargar et al. (2019) found that servant leadership enhances trust in leaders, which ultimately positively affects employees' work attitudes. This study emphasizes the importance of this leadership style in fostering trust-based work relationships. Similarly, Chan and Mak (2014) demonstrated that servant leadership significantly influences followers' trust in their leaders, strengthening mutually beneficial work relationships. The trust developed through servant leadership not only improves leader-employee relationships but also enhances organizational commitment. Miao et al. (2014) found that effective implementation of servant leadership increases trust among employees in the public sector in China, which in turn strengthens organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

H2: Servant leadership has a significant impact on trust

Servant Leadership and Leader-Member Exchange

Servant leadership, which emphasizes serving employees, empowerment, and creating an inclusive work environment, significantly affects the quality of the leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship. Dami et al. (2022) found that servant leadership creates work relationships based on mutual trust and respect, which ultimately enhances LMX. This study confirms that leaders who focus on the needs of employees and support their growth create stronger and more productive work relationships. Khattak et al. (2023) showed that servant leadership enhances the quality of LMX through positive interactions between leaders and team members. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

H3: Servant Leadership has a significant impact on leader-member exchange

Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction

The relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction has been extensively studied in leadership literature. Mustaqim and Sabri (2021) found that transformational leaders are able to enhance organizational commitment, which directly leads to increased job satisfaction among employees. In another study, Roz (2019) highlighted that job satisfaction plays a mediating role in the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance, suggesting that satisfied employees are more likely to work effectively under transformational leadership. Furthermore, several mechanisms have been identified as connecting transformational leadership to job satisfaction. Mufti et al. (2020) demonstrated that transformational leadership fosters psychological empowerment among employees, which significantly boosts job satisfaction. This

empowerment arises from transformational leaders' ability to inspire and motivate their followers, creating a positive and supportive work environment that contributes to employees' overall job satisfaction. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

H4: Transformational leadership has a significant impact on job satisfaction

Transformational Leadership and Trust

Transformational leadership, characterized by inspiration, motivation, and the ability to influence positive change, plays a crucial role in building trust between leaders and employees. Bartram and Casimir (2007) found that trust is a key mediating factor in the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction. When leaders demonstrate attention to the individual needs of employees and provide a clear vision, trust in the leader tends to increase. This aligns with the study by (Yang, 2014), which showed that transformational leadership fosters trust through a motivating and inclusive approach. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

H5: Transformational leadership has a significant impact on trust

Transformational Leadership and Leader-Member Exchange

Transformational leadership, which emphasizes motivation, inspiration, and individual development, has been shown to positively influence the quality of relationships between leaders and followers, known as leader-member exchange (LMX). LMX refers to the quality of interactions between a leader and team members, characterized by mutual trust, respect, and shared commitment. Dulebohn et al. (2012), through their meta-analysis, found that transformational leadership behaviors such as providing a vision, emotional support, and individual recognition, create strong and mutually beneficial relationships between leaders and employees. Heriyadi et al. (2020) further emphasized that transformational leadership influences LMX through effective communication and attention to the individual needs of team members Therefore, the hypothesis is:

H6: Transformational leadership has a significant impact on Leader-Member Exchange

Trust and Job Satisfaction

Trust, which encompasses employees' belief in the integrity, competence, and good intentions of their leaders, plays a significant role in determining employee job satisfaction. Zargar et al. (2019) found that trust in the leader enhances job satisfaction by creating positive relationships and a supportive environment. Employees who have a high level of trust in their leaders feel more motivated and satisfied with their work because they believe their interests are well protected. Miao et al. (2014) also affirmed that trust acts as a key mechanism in strengthening the relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction. Budiyanti et al. (2022) showed that trust in the leader not only increases job satisfaction but also motivates employees to work more effectively. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

H7: Trust has a significant impact on Job Satisfaction

Leader-Member Exchange and Job Satisfaction

Leader-member exchange (LMX), which reflects the quality of the relationship between a leader and team members, plays a key role in influencing job satisfaction.

Volmer et al. (2011) found that employees with high-quality LMX relationships with their leaders reported higher levels of job satisfaction. This is due to the attention and support provided by leaders in these relationships, which creates a sense of being valued and accepted in the workplace. Heriyadi et al. (2020) emphasized that good LMX fosters more effective communication between leaders and team members, ultimately enhancing job satisfaction. LMX also serves as a mediator in the relationship between various leadership factors and job satisfaction. Dami et al. (2022) found that LMX mediates the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction, indicating that the quality of the relationship between leader and team member is a key element in creating a satisfying work experience. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

H8: Leader-Member Exchange has a significant impact on Job Satisfaction

Leader-Member Exchange as a Mediator Between Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction

Leaders who serve are capable of creating mutually beneficial relationships, which lie at the heart of LMX. Khattak et al. (2023) also found that servant leadership fosters high-quality LMX through supportive and constructive interactions. Leaders who demonstrate genuine concern for the well-being of their employees create a more conducive work environment, enabling closer relationships between leaders and subordinates. Newman et al. (2017) affirmed that LMX is a key mechanism that explains how servant leadership can enhance job satisfaction. When employees feel they have a high-quality working relationship with their leader, they are more likely to be satisfied with their job. Dami et al. (2022) also emphasized that LMX not only enhances job satisfaction but also provides emotional and professional support to employees, which strengthens the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction. This suggests that LMX acts as a crucial bridge in this relationship. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

H9: Leader–Member Exchange significantly mediates the relationship between Servant Leadership And Job Satisfaction

Leader-Member Exchange Mediates the Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction

Transformational leadership creates an inclusive and supportive work environment through open communication, recognition of employee contributions, and empowerment. Research by Dulebohn et al. (2017) found that transformational leadership behaviors such as providing a vision, individual recognition, and emotional support strengthen positive relationships between leaders and team members. Heriyadi et al. (2020) emphasized that transformational leaders build high-quality LMX by showing genuine concern for the well-being and needs of their subordinates. This approach fosters mutually beneficial working relationships, increasing respect and trust between leaders and team members. Saleem (2015) affirmed that LMX mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction, indicating that the quality of the working relationship plays a key role in enhancing the positive impact of this leadership style. Rezapour and Sattari Ardabili (2017) also found that LMX improves employees' positive perceptions of their work, contributing to higher job satisfaction. This suggests that a healthy and supportive working relationship is a crucial element connecting transformational leadership with positive employee outcomes. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

H10: Leader-Member Exchange significantly mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction.

Trust Mediates the Relationship Between Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction

Leaders who apply servant leadership create a work environment based on fairness, concern for employee well-being, and individual empowerment. Zargar et al. (2019) found that servant leadership contributes to the development of trust, which creates positive working relationships between leaders and team members. Trust mediates the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction by strengthening employees' confidence in their leaders. Research by Chan (2018) showed that trust plays a significant role in explaining how servant leadership enhances job satisfaction. When trust in a leader is high, employees feel more valued, motivated, and satisfied with their work. Miao et al. (2014) also demonstrated that trust built through servant leadership strengthens organizational commitment and fosters job satisfaction. In this context, trust not only facilitates positive working relationships but also acts as a critical mechanism linking leader behavior to employee job satisfaction. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

H11: Trust significantly mediates the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction.

Trust Mediates the Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction

Transformational leadership builds trust through inspiration, motivation, and attention to employees' individual needs, which ultimately enhances job satisfaction. Yang (2014) found that transformational leadership builds trust by creating an open and inclusive work environment where employees feel supported and valued. Bartram and Casimir (2007) also emphasized that transformational leadership behaviors, such as providing individual recognition and motivating employees, foster high trust in leaders. This trust allows employees to feel comfortable participating actively in their work and contributing their best. Walumbwa et al. (2004) showed that transformational leadership enhances job satisfaction through increased trust, creating supportive and motivating work relationships. Miao et al. (2014) also demonstrated that trust mediates this relationship by strengthening employees' positive perceptions of leadership and the organization. Trust built through transformational leadership creates a sense of security and confidence in employees that their leader is acting in their best interests, which ultimately boosts job satisfaction. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

H12: Trust significantly mediates the relationship between Transformational Leadership And Job Satisfaction

METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative research aimed at examining the impact of leadership styles, specifically servant leadership and transformational leadership, on job satisfaction among lecturers at private universities in Kendari. Additionally, this research investigates the mediating role of trust and leader-member exchange (LMX) in the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction. The study population consists of lecturers at private universities in Kendari, with a sample selected using the sampling technique recommended by Hair et al. (2019), which suggests an ideal sample size of between 100 and 200 respondents for SEM-PLS analysis. In this study, a sample of 266 lecturers in Kendari City, Indonesia, agreed to participate. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measuring servant leadership, transformational leadership, job satisfaction, trust, and LMX. The analysis tool used is Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis through the SEM-PLS method to analyze the relationships between variables. A Likert scale of 1-5 was used in the questionnaire, with response options ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5).

In this study, the Servant Leadership variable is measured based on the components proposed by Latif and Marimon (2019), which include various indicators such as the avoidance of abuse of power, integrity in decision-making, academic development of lecturers, the application of servant leadership, attention to lecturers' welfare, participation in decision-making, empowerment of lecturers' innovation, the application of innovative management policies, collaboration with lecturers, skills in anticipating the impact of decisions, leadership based on spiritual calling, guidance on lecturers' life goals, career promotion for lecturers, as well as lecturers' development and training. Meanwhile, the Transformational Leadership variable is measured by indicators proposed by Manzoor et al. (2019), including strengthening collaboration among lecturers, attention to lecturers' personal well-being, role modeling in leadership, enhancing performance standards for lecturers, inspiration through future vision, and innovation in problem-solving.

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX), according to Liden and Maslyn (1998), is measured by indicators including the presence of the rector who is personally liked, recognition of the rector's knowledge, admiration for the rector's attitude in the workplace, support from the rector in difficult situations, defense of performance in front of leaders, defense of acknowledgment of mistakes, performance beyond job description, and initiatives in research and publication. The Trust variable is measured by indicators such as the rector's professionalism in performing tasks, confidence in the rector's competence, positive assessments from colleagues, openness in sharing ideas, respect from colleagues, and appreciation for the rector by colleagues. Lastly, the Job Satisfaction variable is measured using indicators developed by Weiss (1967), which include the opportunity to do different things, the opportunity to be a meaningful individual, the opportunity to provide direction, the

opportunity to use one's abilities, satisfaction in completing specific tasks, satisfaction with rector support, satisfaction with rector policies, satisfaction with current salary, opportunities for career development, and satisfaction with working conditions.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Table 1. Demographics Profile

Characteristic	Category	N	Percentage
Age	30-35	102	38,35
	36-41	64	24,06
	42-47	56	21,05
	48-53	44	16,54
		266	100
Sex	Man	120	45,11
	Woman	146	54,89
		266	100
Education	Bachelor's Degree	213	80,08
	Master's Degree	53	19,92
		266	100
Work experience	2-7	148	55,64
	8-13	91	34,21
	14-19	26	9,77
	20-25	1	0,38
		266	100

The data describes the demographic characteristics of 266 private university lecturers. The majority of respondents are aged between 30 and 35 years (38.35%), with a slightly higher proportion of women compared to men (54.89% versus 45.11%). In terms of education, the majority of respondents hold a Bachelor's degree (80.08%), while 19.92% have a Master's degree. Regarding work experience, more than half of the respondents (55.64%) have between 2 and 7 years of experience, with only a few having more than 13 years of experience. This profile reflects a relatively young population of private university lecturers, most of whom have higher education and a moderate level of work experience.

Table 2. Measurement Model

Variables	Items	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Servant Leadership	SL1	0,858	0,984	0,984	0,827
	SL2	0,894			
	SL3	0,905			
	SL4	0,925			
	SL5	0,953			
	SL6	0,939			
	SL7	0,923			
	SL8	0,905			
	SL9	0,904			
	SL10	0,896			
	SL11	0,898			
	SL12	0,928			
	SL13	0,906			
	SL14	0,891			
Transformational Leadership	TL1	0,938	0,969	0,969	0,867
	TL2	0,913			
	TL3	0,929			

	TL4	0,951			
	TL5	0,914			
	TL6	0,942			
Leader-Member Exchange	LMX1	0,903	0,970	0,970	0,826
	LMX2	0,895			
	LMX3	0,889			
	LMX4	0,937			
	LMX5	0,916			
	LMX6	0,931			
	LMX7	0,897			
	LMX8	0,901			
Trust	T1	0,928	0,966	0,966	0,854
	T2	0,899			
	T3	0,907			
	T4	0,949			
	T5	0,934			
	T6	0,927			
Job Satisfaction	JS1	0,885	0,970	0,970	0,785
	JS2	0,863			
	JS3	0,885			
	JS4	0,914			
	JS5	0,866			
	JS6	0,913			
	JS7	0,883			
	JS8	0,905			
	JS9	0,850			
	JS10	0,894			

The data presents the results of reliability and validity measurements for the five main variables: Servant Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX), Trust, and Job Satisfaction. All variables show very high Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values (greater than 0.9), indicating excellent internal consistency. Additionally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each variable are above 0.7, indicating good convergent validity, where the items used can explain most of the variance in each construct. Overall, this data demonstrates very good reliability and validity for all the constructs measured.

Table 3. Discriminant validity of constructs (HTMT)

		1	2	3	4	5
1	Job Satisfaction					
2	Leader-Member Exchange	0,598				
3	Servant Leadership	0,487	0,475			
4	Transformational Leadership	0,454	0,438	0,324		
5	Trust	0,609	0,572	0,468	0,436	

Table 3 presents the discriminant validity of constructs using the HTMT ratio, which helps assess whether the constructs are distinct from each other. The correlations between the constructs show moderate to strong relationships. Job Satisfaction has a significant correlation with Leader-Member Exchange and Trust, indicating a meaningful connection. Leader-Member Exchange also correlates strongly with Trust, as well as with Job Satisfaction. Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership both show moderate correlations with Job Satisfaction, Leader-Member Exchange, and Trust, suggesting their relevance in these relationships. Trust is positively correlated with all the other constructs, with the highest correlation being with Job Satisfaction. The HTMT values, all below 0.85, indicate good discriminant validity, confirming that the constructs are distinct from each other and not excessively correlated.

Table 4. R Square and Q²

	R-square	Q²predict
Job Satisfaction	0,479	0,290
Leader-Member Exchange	0,301	0,270
Trust	0,293	0,265

Table 4 provides the R-squared (R^2) and Q²predict values, which measure the model's explanatory power and predictive relevance. The R^2 values indicate that the model explains 47.9% of the variance in Job Satisfaction, 30.1% in Leader-Member Exchange, and 29.3% in Trust, showing a moderate level of explanatory power for these variables. Meanwhile, the Q²predict values (0.290 for Job Satisfaction, 0.270 for Leader-Member Exchange, and 0.265 for Trust) suggest that the model has moderate predictive relevance, as they are all above the threshold of 0. These findings indicate that the model is reasonably effective in both explaining and predicting the relationships between the constructs.

Table 5. Results of Hypothesis Test

Path	Original sample	P values
Servant _Leadership -> Job Satisfaction	0,166	0,010
Servant _Leadership -> Trust	0,358	0,000
Servant _Leadership -> Leader-Member _Exchange	0,367	0,000
Transformational _Leadership -> Job Satisfaction	0,144	0,014
Transformational _Leadership -> Trust	0,308	0,000
Transformational _Leadership -> Leader-Member _Exchange	0,308	0,000
Trust -> Job Satisfaction	0,300	0,001
Leader-Member _Exchange -> Kepuasan _Kerja	0,276	0,001
Servant _Leadership -> Leader-Member _Exchange -> Job Satisfaction	0,101	0,029
Servant _Leadership -> Trust -> Job Satisfaction	0,107	0,027
Transformational _Leadership -> Leader-Member _Exchange -> Job Satisfaction	0,085	0,041
Transformational _Leadership -> Trust -> Job Satisfaction	0,092	0,043

The results of this study show that both leadership styles, namely Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership, have a significant impact on job satisfaction among lecturers. Servant Leadership is found to have a positive influence on job satisfaction, with a path coefficient of 0.166 and a significance level of 0.010. The better the implementation of Servant Leadership, the higher the job satisfaction perceived by the lecturers. Additionally, Servant Leadership significantly affects Trust and Leader-Member Exchange, indicating that service-oriented leadership can increase trust in leaders and strengthen the relationship between leaders and members.

Meanwhile, Transformational Leadership also has a significant impact on job satisfaction, with a path coefficient of 0.144 and a significance level of 0.014. Transformational leadership proves to enhance job satisfaction among lecturers and strengthen relationships with Trust and Leader-Member Exchange. These findings show that both leadership styles, in addition to directly improving job satisfaction, also strengthen healthy interpersonal relationships between leaders and lecturers. On the other hand, Trust and Leader-Member Exchange play a significant mediating role in the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of trust and good relationships in creating a work environment that supports job satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

The first test in this study reveals a significant positive impact between Servant Leadership and faculty job satisfaction. This finding suggests that when leaders adopt a leadership style focused on service and individual development, faculty members feel more satisfied with their jobs (Mwesigwa et al., 2020). Servant leadership emphasizes the well-being and development of faculty, directly enhancing their job satisfaction (Al-Mahdy et al., 2016; Jam et al., 2018). Furthermore, the results show that Servant Leadership also has a significant influence on the level of trust that faculty have in

their leaders. A service-oriented leadership approach fosters mutual trust, as faculty perceive that their leaders act with integrity and focus on collective well-being. The trust formed in this relationship creates a more harmonious and collaborative work environment.

In addition, Servant Leadership strengthens the relationship between leaders and team members, which is reflected in the quality of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX). Leaders who apply a service-oriented approach tend to build closer and better relationships with faculty, which in turn improves communication, collaboration, and overall team performance (Arshad et al., 2021; Auh et al., 2016). This finding highlights that positive relationships between leaders and members are crucial for creating a productive and supportive work environment.

The research also shows that the implementation of Transformational Leadership positively impacts faculty job satisfaction. Leaders who can inspire and provide a clear vision for the future motivate faculty to work with greater enthusiasm and feel satisfied with their contributions (Matos & Kasztelnik, 2021). Transformational leadership, which prioritizes innovation and individual development, enhances faculty job satisfaction as they feel valued and empowered to achieve collective goals (Boamah, 2022; Davis, 2023).

Additionally, Transformational Leadership also strengthens the trust relationship between leaders and faculty. When leaders show concern for individual needs and provide ongoing support, faculty members feel more confident in their leaders' ability to lead effectively. This trust creates a more stable and supportive work environment, enabling faculty to contribute more effectively to the achievement of institutional goals (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008).

Further testing shows that both Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership play crucial roles in building positive working relationships between leaders and faculty. This is reflected in higher Leader-Member Exchange quality, which in turn contributes to increased job satisfaction (Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004; Jordan & Troth, 2011). Faculty who feel they have a strong and positive relationship with their leaders tend to be more satisfied with their work and more motivated to perform to the best of their abilities.

Faculty trust in their leaders has also been proven to be a key factor influencing job satisfaction. When leaders succeed in building high levels of trust, faculty feel valued and supported, which enhances their job satisfaction. Moreover, this study found that Leader-Member Exchange serves as a mediator between Servant or Transformational Leadership and faculty job satisfaction (Dami et al., 2022; Jyoti & Bhau, 2015; Ragaisis, 2018), indicating that a strong working relationship can amplify the positive influence of leadership on job satisfaction. Finally, the findings of this study show that both Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership have a significant impact on faculty job satisfaction, both directly and indirectly through increased trust and Leader-Member Exchange. The trust built between leaders and faculty, along with strong working relationships, plays an essential role in creating a supportive work environment, which in turn enhances faculty job satisfaction overall (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016; Tsai, 2011).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that both Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership have a significant impact on faculty job satisfaction in Kendari. The application of Servant Leadership, which focuses on service, attention to the needs and well-being of members, and the empowerment of individuals, has been shown to enhance faculty job satisfaction, their trust in leaders, and strengthen the working relationship between leaders and members. Similarly, Transformational Leadership, which inspires and promotes positive change, has a significant positive impact on job satisfaction, increases faculty trust in leaders, and fosters supportive and collaborative working relationships.

Additionally, this study found that Trust and Leader-Member Exchange play an important role in mediating the influence of these two leadership styles on faculty job satisfaction. High levels of trust between faculty and leaders create a more supportive work environment, while strong working

relationships further enhance the positive impact of both leadership styles. In this context, both Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership not only have a direct influence but also provide an indirect impact on job satisfaction through the improvement of Trust and Leader-Member Exchange.

The implementation of Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership has a significant positive impact on faculty job satisfaction. Both leadership styles enhance job satisfaction both directly and indirectly through factors such as trust and leader-member exchange. These findings imply that leaders in educational institutions need to adopt leadership styles focused on service and inspiration to create a more supportive work environment, strengthen communication, and improve relationships between faculty and leadership. Consequently, the implementation of effective leadership can enhance faculty satisfaction and performance overall, making a significant contribution to the development of educational organizations. Therefore, further research with a longitudinal approach and a broader scope across different regions should be conducted to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of leadership styles on faculty job satisfaction in various areas.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS:

The individual contributions of each author to the publication of this manuscript are as follows:
The First Author designed the research idea, developed the project, and wrote the manuscript.
The Second Author performed data analysis, statistical testing, and wrote the results section of the manuscript.
The Third Author participated in the research design, data collection, and assisted in manuscript writing.
The Fourth Author contributed to the literature analysis and final manuscript revisions.
All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Note:
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