Exploring Servant Leadership and Work Commitment on Service Quality in Small and Medium Enterprises in the Agricultural Sector in Karawang, West Java

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Abstract

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in the national economy. MSMEs are a populist economic system that can help alleviate poverty, and their growth has the potential to expand the economic base and contribute significantly to improving the regional economy and national resilience. The large number of MSMEs can become government partners in resource management. The MSME development strategy focuses on the agricultural sector in Karawang Regency. The success or failure of government policies in advancing MSMEs in the agricultural sector in Karawang Regency depends heavily on leadership, work commitment, and service quality. No company can develop or operate well until MSME participants provide exceptional service quality, work commitment, and service leadership. Therefore, it is important to address service problems in the MSME sector, especially in the agricultural sector in Karawang Regency. The main objective of this study is to empirically investigate the impact of servant leadership and work dedication on service quality. Data were collected using an online survey distributed to 259 SMEs in the agricultural industry in Karawang Regency, Indonesia. Data were evaluated using SEM. Hypotheses were assessed directly and jointly using two-step Partial Least Squares (PLS) path modelling. Based on the research findings, servant leadership had a higher influence value of 30.5% in influencing service quality than work commitment, which had a value of 22.4%. Mediation testing using the Sobel test resulted in a t-statistic value of 2.33 > 1.96 and a one-sided p-value of 0.00 < 0.05. Work dedication is an effective mediating component to increase the impact of servant leadership on service quality.

Keywords: *Service Leadership, Work Commitment, Service Quality, Agricultural, MSMEs.*

1. Introduction

Since 2009, bureaucratic reform has been implemented routinely and repeatedly. The Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation Number 11 of 2015, which regulates the Bureaucratic Reform Roadmap 2015-2019, must be updated to reflect the Bureaucratic Reform Roadmap 2020-2024 [1]. The goal of bureaucratic reform is to realise a bureaucracy that is clean, accountable, effective and efficient and able to provide quality public services. The bureaucracy, as the executor of government obligations, continues to make adjustments to fulfil the objectives of administrative reform. These modifications seek to improve the quality of public services while increasing their accessibility [2]. To ensure that the public benefits from the government's rapid bureaucratic reforms, particularly in the workplace, integrity zones serve as a model for maintaining integrity and providing excellent services.

Karawang Regency is in the northern part of West Java Province, physically located between 107o 02' - 107o 40' East Longitude and 5o 56' - 6o 34' South Latitude. Geographically, Karawang has an area of 1,913.71 km2 [3]. Karawang Regency is divided into four regions, with the largest and smallest regions first, followed by the lowest and highest regions. Cibuaya is the sub-district with the largest 118.22 km2, the smallest area is East Karawang at 30.37 square kilometres. Cilebar sub-district has the lowest elevation of 1.60 MDPL, followed by Tegalwaru sub-district, which has the highest elevation of 104.20 MDPL [4].

Administratively, Karawang borders the Java Sea to the north, Subang Regency to the east, Purwakarta Regency to the southeast, Bogor Regency and Cianjur Regency to the south, and Bekasi Regency to the west. Karawang is one of the most fertile areas in West Java, hence

agriculture occupies most of the land [5]. The landscape in Karawang Regency is a relatively flat plain, with elevations ranging from 0 to 5 metres above sea level. Only a small part of the area is undulating and hilly with an altitude between 0 - 1200 m above sea level. The area of Kabupaten Karawang is mostly covered by extensive coastal plains that lie on the North coast and are sedimentary rocks formed by loose materials, mainly marine deposits and volcanic alluvium [6]. The central part is occupied by hills, mainly formed by sedimentary rocks, while in the south lies Mount Sanggabuana with an altitude of ± 1,291 m above sea level. By its morphology, Karawang Regency consists of lowlands. A river flowing north towards the Citarum River separates Karawang Regency from Bekasi Regency, and the Cilamaya River borders the region with Subang Regency. In addition to the rivers, there are three main irrigation channels: North Tarum Main Channel, Central Tarum Main Channel, and West Tarum Main Channel that are utilised to irrigate rice fields, ponds, and industrial areas [7].

The number of labour force in August 2022 was 1.20 million workers, an increase of 34.74 thousand people compared to August 2021. The labour force participation rate (TPAK) rose by 1.32 percentage points, from 64.19 to 65.51 per cent. The working population totalled 1.078 million people, an increase of 0.06 million people compared to August 2021. Services employed 56.17 per cent of the workforce, followed by manufacturing (27.69 per cent) and agriculture (16.14 per cent). The number of people working in service activities was 462.05 thousand (42.86 per cent), while those working in informal activities were 615.89 thousand (57.14 per cent). The Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) in August 2022 was 9.87%. The TPT decreased by 1.96 percentage points from August 2021 (11.83%). The working-age population affected by COVID-19 in August 2022 was 27.75 thousand people [8].

The economy of Karawang Regency is mainly based on agriculture. With an agricultural production land area of 95,018.5 hectares, it certainly provides benefits for the community. Only a small part of the community depends on the processing industry and the private service sector [9].

Table 1. Main Agricultural Commodities of Karawang Regency in 2018-2021

No.	Main Food Commodities	Total Consumption (Kg/Cap/Year)			
		2018	2019	2020	2021
1	Rice	112,6	115	111,5	177,03
2	Corn	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,42
3	Soybeans	17,3	12,2	13,3	8,14
4	Vine Sweet Potatoes	1,3	0,9	1,2	2,2
5	Cassava	5,5	5,8	7,8	6,01
	Total Population	**2.336.009**	**2.323.700**	**2.361.019**	**-**

The processing plan and the underutilised growth of MSMEs, especially in Karawang Regency, will be a serious concern. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in a country's economy [9]. MSMEs have a significant impact on labour absorption and economic growth, helping to reduce unemployment, create jobs, and improve the welfare of a country. MSMEs should be nurtured because they play an important role in the economic development of the country and region. The participation of MSMEs in Making Indonesia 4.0 aims to make Indonesia one of the ten strongest economies in the world by 2030, as well as increase annual economic growth by 2% to become a middle-income country by 2025, because it has been proven that MSMEs have a collective impact on Indonesia's economic sector, consisting of 99% of the total number of companies that can absorb 97% of the workforce and contribute 57% to Indonesia's annual GDP [10].

MSMEs face various challenges, including a lack of funding, superior product development, difficulty marketing products, a lack of human resource competence, managerial skills, and limited use of information technology [11]. Karawang Regency, which is considered one of West Java's granaries, is predicted to grow further in the agricultural industry. To maintain this predicate, it can improve its performance in order to improve public services, increase work dedication, and increase the professionalism of human resources. To achieve all of these objectives, the role of work unit leaders is to encourage work commitment and improve service quality both to internal parties (work unit employees) and external parties such as stakeholders or the community [12].

 Showed that servant leadership has a major impact on commitment and service quality. Servant leadership allows people to work more comfortably, perform their tasks more effectively, and foster the ideals of the company, allowing employees to complete their work well, honestly, and with improved performance [13]. Leaders should further empower themselves to help colleagues serve others voluntarily, as well as develop sportsmanship, altruism, rigour, courtesy, and civic virtue among employees. Based on the research findings, servant leadership has a significant positive effect on service quality, commitment has a large positive effect on service quality, and servant leadership has a considerable positive effect on service quality when commitment is present [13]. Servant leadership is an effective leadership style that can improve organisational performance by focusing on corporate culture, employee engagement, and business strategy [14]. Servant leaders leverage their influence to empower and hold people accountable, foster a sense of community within their organisation, prioritise helping followers to grow and develop, uphold good business ethics and integrity, and adhere to basic principles regardless of nationality. The results of the study found that organisational commitment affects service quality. Found that the quality of interaction and the quality of the physical environment in the Brady Cronin model of service quality have a direct effect on customer loyalty [15]. While the quality of service quality results has no direct effect on customer loyalty. Indirectly, the three service quality services affect customer loyalty through commitment. Managerial contributions should be made with a focus on employee well-being and pleasure to influence employee job satisfaction and, consequently, to foster employee commitment by providing higher internal service quality [16].

2. Methods

This research is explanatory research, which aims to explain the relationship between variables and test the research hypothesis with a quantitative approach through research instruments [17]. The population used is the agricultural sector SMEs of Karawang Regency with a productive age of 15-24 years (Table 1), and totalled 733 businesses in 2023. Based on the Slovin formula, the sample size was 259 small

and medium enterprises. Business entity (SME). The sampling technique used was simple random sampling, meaning that samples were taken randomly without regard to population strata.

Table 2. Respondents by Age Group in Karawang Regency 2018-2021

District	Age Group 25-34
Base	32
Tegalwaru	17
Ciampel	46
Telukjambe Timur	1
Telukjambe Barat	1
Klari	21
Cikampek	2
Purwasari	1
Tirtamulya	36
Jatsari	11
Banyusari	20
Kotabaru	10
Cilamaya Wetan	38
Cilamaya Kulon	67
Lemahabang	17
Telagasari	23
Majalaya	4
East Karawang	1
West Karawang	20
Rawamerta	12
Tempuran	24
Kutawaluya	14
Rengasdengklok	26
Jayakerta	13
Pedes	33
Cilebar	35
Cibuaya	36
Tirtajaya	45
Batujaya	88
Karawang Regency	**733**

2.1. Research Model Development

This research will use three latent variables/constructs, namely Servant Leadership, Work Commitment and Service Quality, as shown in Figure 1.
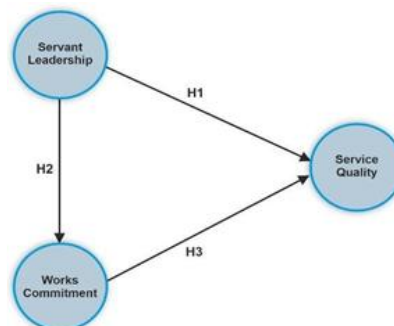
Fig 1. Research Model

The research variables used are:

1. Servant Leadership (SL) functions as a research independent variable (independent variable) [18]. Leadership in a company can be interpreted as a very important factor because the company needs a driving force for its employees, who are expected to have a positive impact on the company, one of which is the leadership style needed to achieve the company's vision as a motivator for subordinates to carry out their duties. Servant leadership is the habit of leading others to prioritise the goals, objectives and needs of people over the needs and ambitions of the leader himself [19]. Servant leadership is defined as a leadership style that addresses ethical issues, builds a unique and comfortable organisation, interacts with consumers, and views subordinates or employees as valuable assets to the company. This type of leader always prioritises the interests of his followers over his own. It is concluded from several statements that

the Servant Leadership (SL) variable is measured by several factors used, namely listening (SL1), empathy (SL2), healing (SL3), persuasion (SL4), and conceptualisation (SL5).

2. In this study, the dependent variables are service quality (SQ) and work commitment (WC). There are several definitions of service quality (SQ), including the completeness of the elements of a product or service that can fulfil a requirement. Service quality is defined as the actions or deeds of a person or organisation aimed at providing satisfaction to customers or employees [20]. Meanwhile, Aria and Atik (2018) argue that service quality is an important factor to consider when offering good services. The level of Service Quality is a very important aspect for organisations because it affects client happiness, and consumer satisfaction will arise if the level of Service Quality offered is good. Based on the conclusion of several statements, service quality is determined by indicators such as tangible evidence (SQ1), reliability (SQ2), responsibility (SQ3), competence (SQ4), courtesy (SQ5), credibility (SQ6), security (SQ7), access (SQ8), communication (SQ9), and understanding (SQ10). Meanwhile, Work Commitment (WC) means that every member of the corporation must have a strong sense of employee loyalty. Commitment is based on the theory of reciprocity, which shows that employees feel indebted to the company [21]. Organisations provide staff training as one example. This idea refers to training and the concept of commitment, because training is one of the practices that employees perceive as a reward, thus causing them to exert more effort to show loyalty to the company. Work commitment is measured by the factors of affective commitment (WC1), continuance commitment (WC2) and normative commitment (WC3). Mediating Variables (Intervention Variables). Mediating factors are factors that strengthen or reduce the direct relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The new Work Commitment (WC) will be used as a mediating variable.

2.2. Formulation of Research Hypothesis

The making of the research hypothesis is based on the results of determining the research model in Figure 1 and identifying research variables. This research idea is formulated as:

H1: Servant Leadership (SL) has a significant influence on Service Quality (SQ) of Small and Medium Enterprises in Agriculture in Karawang Regency.

H2: Servant Leadership (SL) has a significant influence on Work Commitment (WC) of Small and Medium Enterprises in Agriculture in Karawang Regency.

H3: Work Commitment (WC) has a mediating influence between Servant Leadership (SL) on Service Quality (SQ) of Small and Medium Enterprises in Agriculture in Karawang Regency.

2.3. Definition of Operationalisation of Research Variables

The operational definition of research variables is a construct or attribute that will be studied so that it can be quantified, such as the Servant Leadership (SL), Work Commitment (WC), and Service Quality (SQ) variables shown in Table 3. The results of the operational definition of variables will be used to prepare research instruments, particularly questionnaires, as a data collection strategy. The questionnaire was prepared as a general statement to collect respondents' demographic profile using a 1-5 point Likert scale [22].

Table 3. Operational Definition of Variables

Latent Variable	Indicators	Code
Servant Leadership (SL)	Listening	SL1
Adaptation	Empathy	SL2
(Blanchard, 2019)	Healing	SL3
	Persuasion	Sl4
	Conceptualisation	SL5
Works Commitment (WC)	Affective Commitment	WC1
Adaptation (Robbins, 2015)	Continuance Commitment	WC2
	Normative Commitment	WC3
Service Quality (SQ)	Tangibles	SQ1
Adaptation (Ardiansyah,	Reliability	SQ2
2018)	Responsiveness	SQ3
	Competence	SQ4
	Courtesy	SQ5
	Credibility	SQ6
	Security	SQ7
	Access	SQ8
	Communication	SQ9
	Understanding	SQ10

3. Results And Discussion

The findings of this study were obtained from data collection procedures that included a questionnaire approach. The research population consists of Agricultural Sector SMEs in Karawang Regency with a productive age of 15-24 years (Table 1), based on 2023 data, totalling 733 businesses. Using the Slovin formula, the required sample was 259 SMEs in Karawang Regency.

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used in data processing to identify respondents (SMEs in Karawang Regency) as research samples by generating respondent demographics to obtain profiling or respondent characteristics, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Profiling Respondents by Gender

Gender	Total	Percentage
Men	84	32
Women	175	68
Total	**259**	**259**

Table 5. Profiling Respondents by Age

Age	Total	Percentage
Under 21 Years	35	14
21 - 30 Years	74	28
31 - 40 Years	108	42
41 - 50 Years	23	9
Above 50 Years	19	7
Total	**259**	**259**

Table 6. Profiling Respondents by Length of Establishment

Length of time the SME has been established	Total	Percentage
Under 5 Years	84	32
5 - 10 Years	39	15
10 - 15 Years	65	25
15 - 20 Years	49	19
Above 20 Years	22	9
Total	**259**	**259**

3.2. Data Normality Test

The normality test table shows that most of the univariate normality tests are normally distributed, with critical ratio (C.R) values for kurtosis and skewness around ± 2.58. Multivariately, the data fulfils the normal assumption, as the value of -0.457 is within the range of ± 2.58.

3.3. SEM Analysis

SEM-PLS analysis consists of two stages, namely testing the exterior model and testing the inner model using the SmartPLS 4.0 application. The outer model evaluation describes the relationship between latent variables or constructs and their indicators [23].

1. Convergent Validity

Convergent validity testing examines the relationship between indicator scores and their respective constructs (loading factors). The convergent validity test results in Table 7 are the first iteration test results. The first convergent validity test, where Servant Leadership (SL) has 5 indicators, Service Quality has 10 indicators, and Job Commitment has 3 indicators, shows that the loading factor value of all

indicators is greater than 0.5. Indicators with a loading factor value > 0.5 indicate that the data has and meets convergent validity, or each indicator can determine its variable.

Table 7. Instrument Measurement Results

SL	SQ	WC	Description
0.919	-	-	Valid
0.905	-	-	Valid
0.902	-	-	Valid
0.906	-	-	Valid
0.858	-	-	Valid
-	0.839	-	Valid
-	0.740	-	Valid
-	0.830	-	Valid
-	0.836	-	Valid
-	0.866	-	Valid
-	0.803	-	Valid
-	0.804	-	Valid
-	0.757	-	Valid
-	0.665	-	Valid
-	0.774	-	Valid
-	-	0.827	Valid
-	-	0.911	Valid

2. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is determined in two ways: cross-loading criteria and average variance extracted (AVE) (square root) [24]. The test results show that each indicator has discriminant validity or can determine its construct variable because the construct cross-loading is greater than other constructs and the AVE value is greater than 0.5, which means that each variable has a different concept in measuring readiness. SMEs in Karawang Regency.

3. Composite Reliability

The results of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha have a value> 0.7, which indicates that composite reliability has been fulfilled and the indicators of each variable have a consistent value when measuring the research variables of Servant Leadership and Work Commitment of Karawang Regency SMEs on Service Quality [25].

3.4. Testing the Inner Model

Testing the inner model: Testing the structural model (inner model) consists of testing the model fit, R-square.

1. Model Fit,

    Table 8 shows the results of the three criteria for the effect of SL on SQ, the effect of SL on WC, and the effect of WC on SQ.

Table 8. Path Coefficient Inner Model

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
SL -> SQ	0.305	0.308	0.060	5.070	0.000
SL -> WC	0.237	0.239	0.066	3.611	0.000
WC -> SQ	0.224	0.229	0.073	3.088	0.002

    The results of the Model Fit Index p-value test criteria show that the direct effect of Servant Leadership (SL) on Service Quality (SQ) has a P-value of 0.000 <0.05. The direct effect of Servant Leadership (SL) on Work Commitment (WC) has a P-value of 0.000 <0.05. The direct effect of Work Commitment (WC) on Service Quality (SQ) has a P-value of 0.002 <0.000.

2. R-square

    The results of the R-Square test show that the endogenous variables SQ and WC can be explained moderately (half) by the exogenous variable SL, which indicates that as much as 5.6% of the WC construct data variance and 17.4% of the SQ construct data variance are influenced by the SL construct.
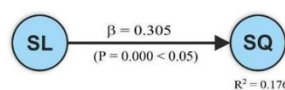
3.5. Testing the Mediation Effect

Testing the mediation effect: done by testing the direct effect, indirect effect and calculating the Sobel Test. The direct effect results are as shown in Figure 2.

Table 9 shows the results of the indirect effect between the WC variable mediating the SL variable on SQ.

Table 9. Indirect Effect

Variable	Specific indirect effects
SL -> WC -> SQ	0.053

The results of testing the mediation effect with the sobel test (Figure 3) show that the direct effect of SL on WC (0.237), the direct effect of WC on SQ (0.224), the standard error of the effect of SL on WC (0.066), the standard error of the effect of WC on SQ (0.073). Thus, the sobel test statistic (2.33 > 1.96) and p-value (0.00 < 0.05) were obtained.
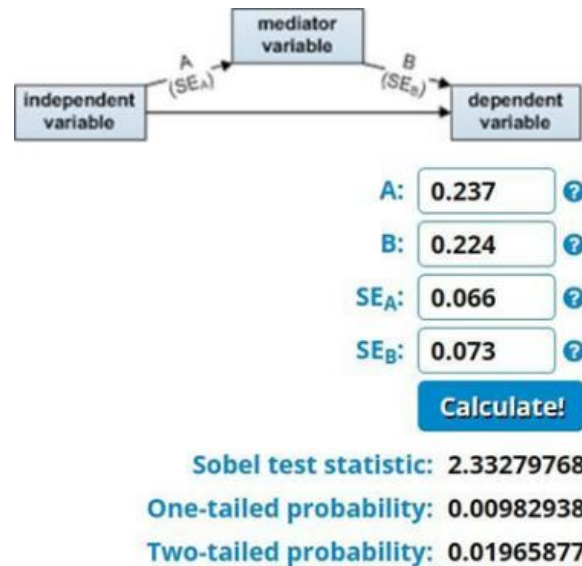
Fig 2. Mediation Model with Sobel Test

3.6. Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis testing is carried out based on the path coefficient value and p-value, with the results of hypothesis testing in Table 8. Hypothesis 1: The results of data processing show that the t-statistic value is 5.070> 1.96 and the p-value is 0.000 <0.05, which means that it is significant, the Servant Leadership factors based on listening, empathy, healing, persuasion and conceptualization significantly affect Service Quality in agricultural SMEs in Karawang Regency or it is concluded that it is accepted. Hypothesis 2: The results of data processing show that the t-statistic value is 3.611> 1.96 and the p-value is 0.000 <0.05, which means that it is significant, the Servant Leadership factors based on listening, empathy, healing, persuasion and conceptualization significantly affect Work Commitment in agricultural SMEs in Karawang Regency or it is concluded that it is accepted. Hypothesis 3: The results of data processing show that the t-statistic value is 3.088> 1.96 and p-value
0.002 <0.05, which means that it is significant; the Work Commitment factors based on affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment significantly affect Service Quality in agricultural SMEs in Karawang Regency, or it is concluded that it is accepted.

4. Conclusions

The elements that determine the service quality of agricultural SMEs in Karawang Regency are servant leadership and work commitment, which have a considerable impact. Servant leadership is measured based on listening, empathy, healing, persuasion, and conceptualisation of agricultural sector SMEs in Karawang Regency. While work commitment is measured by indicators of affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Based on the direct effect, Servant Leadership is more dominant with an influence value of 0.305 (30.5%) in influencing Service Quality, compared to work commitment with 0.224 (22.4%) in influencing Service Quality. It was found that the Work Commitment variable is a good mediating variable in increasing the influence of Servant Leadership on Service Quality, where the mediation test with the Nobel test obtained a t-statistic value of 2.33> 1.96, and or with a p-value (one-tailed) probability of 0.00 < 0.05. The research findings are in line with previous research shows that servant leadership has a significant effect on commitment and service quality. Servant leadership allows people to work more comfortably, perform their duties more effectively, and foster the ideals of the company, allowing employees to complete their work well, honestly, and with improved performance. Leaders should further empower themselves to help colleagues serve others voluntarily, as well as develop sportsmanship, altruism, rigour, courtesy, and civic virtue among employees. Stated that organisational dedication affects service quality, found that the quality of interaction and the physical environment in service quality have a direct impact on customer loyalty. The three services, including service quality, have an indirect impact on client loyalty through commitment. According to managerial contributions should prioritise employee welfare and enjoyment in order to influence employee job satisfaction and, as a result, build employee commitment by offering higher quality internal services.

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