



The Effect of Servant Leadership on Quality of Work Life through Psychological Safety among Gen Z Employees

<u>INFO PENULIS</u>	<u>INFO ARTIKEL</u>
Oktavia Ramadhia Fitri Universitas Lampung oktaviaramadhia.fitri18@gmail.com Keumala Hayati Universitas Lampung keumala.hayati@feb.unila.ac.id	ISSN: 2808-1307 Vol. 6, No. 2, Agustus 2026 https://jurnal.ardenjaya.com/index.php/ajsh

© 2026 Arden Jaya Publisher All rights reserved

Saran Penulisan Referensi

Fitri, O. R., & Hayati, K. (2026). The Effect of Servant Leadership on Quality of Work Life through Psychological Safety among Gen Z Employees. *Arus Jurnal Sosial dan Humaniora*, 6 (2), 2597-2608.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menguji pengaruh servant leadership terhadap quality of work life dengan psychological safety sebagai variabel mediasi pada karyawan Gen Z di sektor jasa Kota Bandar Lampung, Indonesia. Penelitian ini menjawab semakin pentingnya pemahaman mengenai bagaimana praktik kepemimpinan dan kondisi psikologis membentuk pengalaman kerja yang positif bagi karyawan Gen Z. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif dengan metode survei. Data dikumpulkan dari 150 karyawan Gen Z yang bekerja di sektor jasa melalui teknik purposive sampling. Data dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) dengan bantuan SmartPLS 4. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa servant leadership berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap quality of work life dan psychological safety. Selanjutnya, psychological safety berpengaruh positif terhadap quality of work life serta secara signifikan memediasi hubungan antara servant leadership dan quality of work life. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa servant leadership meningkatkan quality of work life karyawan tidak hanya melalui perilaku kepemimpinan secara langsung, tetapi juga dengan menumbuhkan lingkungan kerja yang aman secara psikologis. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada literatur dengan menegaskan peran mediasi psychological safety dalam menjelaskan mekanisme servant leadership dalam meningkatkan quality of work life, khususnya pada karyawan Gen Z di sektor jasa. Secara praktis, organisasi perlu mendorong praktik servant leadership dan membangun tempat kerja yang aman secara psikologis untuk mendukung kesejahteraan dan pengalaman kerja karyawan yang positif.

Kata Kunci: Servant Leadership, Quality of Work Life, Psychological Safety, Karyawan Gen Z, Sektor Jasa

Abstract

This study examines the effect of servant leadership on quality of work life with psychological safety as a mediating variable among Gen Z employees in the service sector in Bandar Lampung, Indonesia. The study addresses the growing importance of understanding how leadership practices and psychological conditions shape positive work experiences among Gen Z employees. A quantitative research approach was employed using a survey method. Data were collected from 150 Gen Z employees working in the service sector through purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. The results indicate that servant leadership has a positive and significant effect on quality of work life and psychological safety. Furthermore, psychological safety positively influences quality of work life and significantly mediates the relationship between servant leadership and quality of work life. These findings suggest that servant leadership enhances employees' quality of work life not only through direct leadership behaviors but also by fostering a psychologically safe work environment. This study contributes to the literature by highlighting the mediating role of psychological safety in explaining the mechanism through which servant leadership improves quality of work life, particularly among Gen Z employees in the service sector. Practically, organizations should promote servant leadership practices and develop psychologically safe workplaces to support employee well-being and positive work experiences.

Keywords: Servant Leadership, Quality of Work Life, Psychological Safety, Gen Z Employees, Service Sector

A. Introduction

The increasingly dynamic business environment has pushed organizations to shift their human resource management paradigm. Organizations are no longer solely focused on productivity but are also beginning to consider employee well-being as a strategic factor in organizational sustainability and competitiveness (Agustin-Silvestre et al., 2024; Hamid, 2025). This urgency is further exemplified by the decline in global employee engagement, from 23% to 21%, demonstrating the importance of creating a work environment that supports a positive work experience (Gallup, 2024).

This situation is increasingly relevant with the increasing dominance of Gen Z in the workforce. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS, 2025), Gen Z is the second-largest population group in Indonesia, accounting for 27.94%. This Gen has distinct work expectations, such as the need for an open work environment, self-development, work-life balance, and positive relationships with leaders (Sigaeva et al., 2022; Katsaros, 2025). Furthermore, mental health, work flexibility, and a positive organizational culture are important factors for Gen Z in choosing and retaining jobs (Deloitte, 2024). Therefore, organizations need to implement leadership approaches that align with the characteristics of this new generation of workers.

This context is increasingly important in the service sector of Bandar Lampung City, which is a key sector in the regional economy and a major employer (BPS, 2025). The characteristics of service sector jobs, which emphasize service, communication, and customer interaction, require positive working relationships between leaders and employees. One relevant leadership approach is servant leadership, a leadership style that prioritizes service, individual development, and the well-being of subordinates (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 2004; Sendjaya et al., 2019). Eva et al. (2019) explained in their systematic review that servant leadership is a leadership approach oriented toward serving individuals, developing authentic relationships, and creating a positive impact on followers and the organization. This approach has been shown to create a supportive work environment oriented toward employee well-being (Urrila & Eva, 2024; Adams et al., 2025).

One important indicator of employee well-being is the quality of work-life. This concept was introduced by Walton (1973) as working conditions that meet employee needs through a safe work environment, self-development, social relationships, and work-life balance. Furthermore, Sirgy et al. (2001) explained that quality of work-life reflects the extent to which the work environment can meet employees' economic, social, psychological, and self-actualization needs. A good quality of work-life contributes to increased motivation, commitment, and positive work behavior (Xu et al., 2022; Hermanto et al., 2024). Shafitry and

Hayati (2026) demonstrate that servant leadership plays a role in improving quality of work life by creating a work environment that supports employee well-being.

The relationship between servant leadership and quality of work life can be explained through the role of psychological factors, particularly psychological safety. Edmondson (1999) defines psychological safety as an individual's belief that the work environment is safe for expressing ideas, opinions, and mistakes without fear of negative consequences. This condition allows employees to participate openly, take interpersonal risks, and enhance organizational learning and collaboration (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Newman et al. (2017) emphasize that psychological safety is an important construct in understanding individual behavior and the dynamics of work relationships.

Servant leadership characteristics that emphasize empathy, trust, and concern for subordinates are thought to enhance psychological safety. When employees feel supported by their leaders, they are more willing to express ideas and participate in the organization. Servant leadership plays a role in improving psychological safety as a psychological mechanism that encourages positive work experiences and behaviors (Ahmed et al., 2023; Asfour et al., 2025; Jeong et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2023; Le, 2020; Roh et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2022).

In addition to being a consequence of servant leadership, psychological safety also plays a role in improving quality of work life. Employees who feel psychologically safe tend to have better job satisfaction, better interpersonal relationships, and higher engagement. Ma et al. (2021) demonstrated that psychological safety improves employee well-being, while Rabiul et al. (2023) found that psychological safety contributes to employee engagement through a sense of security, comfort, and meaningfulness at work. Thus, psychological safety is thought to mediate the relationship between servant leadership and quality of work life.

Although research on servant leadership, psychological safety, and quality of work life continues to grow, several research gaps remain. Previous studies have focused more on the influence of servant leadership on job satisfaction, engagement, creativity, and innovative behavior than on quality of work life (Adiguzel et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022). Furthermore, the role of psychological safety as a mediator in the relationship between servant leadership and quality of work life is still limited (Newman et al., 2017; Kyambade et al., 2024). Research integrating these three constructs among Gen Z employees in the service sector in Indonesia, particularly in Bandar Lampung, is also rare.

Based on these gaps, this study develops a model that integrates servant leadership, psychological safety, and quality of work life, with psychological safety as a mediating variable. This research provides an empirical contribution by explaining the mechanisms by which service-based leadership can improve the quality of work life for Gen Z employees by creating a psychologically safe work environment. Furthermore, the research findings are expected to provide practical implications for organizations in designing human resource management strategies oriented toward service, psychological safety, and employee well-being.

Hypothesis Development

The Effect of Servant Leadership on Quality of Work Life

Servant leadership is a leadership approach that has the potential to shape employees' work experiences through leader behaviors oriented toward service, support, and individual development (Sendjaya et al., 2019). In the context of quality of work life, leader behavior is a crucial factor because it can influence how individuals assess the work environment and the extent to which the work fulfills their needs. This relationship can be explained using Need Satisfaction Theory, which forms the basis of the theory of quality of work life by Sirgy et al., 2001. This theory explains that quality of work life will improve when individuals perceive that the work environment can meet their economic, social, psychological, and self-development needs (Sirgy et al., 2001).

Servant leadership is thought to improve quality of work life because it prioritizes employee needs and well-being. When employees feel support, attention, and opportunities for development from their leaders, their perceptions of quality of work life tend to improve (Sendjaya et al., 2019). Research by Bayati et al. (2025) found that service-oriented leadership behavior can create a work environment that is more supportive of employee well-being. Furthermore, research by Wang et al. (2022) shows that servant leadership contributes to a more positive work experience.

H1: Servant leadership has a positive and significant impact on the quality of work life for Gen Z employees in the service sector in Bandar Lampung.

The Effect of Servant Leadership on Psychological Safety

Psychological safety describes an individual's perception of the extent to which the work environment provides a sense of security to express opinions, convey ideas, ask questions, and take interpersonal risks without fear of negative consequences (Edmondson, 1999). In a work environment with a high level of psychological safety, individuals tend to be more open in communication, participate more actively, and feel more comfortable showing themselves at work (Edmondson & Lei, 2014).

One of the factors that is thought to influence the formation of psychological safety is leadership behavior. Servant leadership is seen as having characteristics that support the creation of a psychologically safe work environment because it prioritizes the needs, development, and welfare of subordinates (Sendjaya et al., 2019). Leaders who implement servant leadership tend to demonstrate behaviors such as listening, providing support, building authentic relationships, and providing space for employees to express opinions and participate in work.

This relationship can be explained through the psychological safety theory of Edmondson (1999), which states that a sense of security in the work environment is formed when individuals feel that interpersonal interactions do not pose a threat to self-image, status, or social relationships. In an organizational context, leader behavior plays an important role in shaping this perception because the leader determines much of the work climate and communication patterns in the organization (Edmondson, 1999). When leaders show openness, empathy, and provide support to subordinates, individuals will be more confident that the work environment is a safe place to express themselves.

Conceptually, servant leadership is thought to increase psychological safety because this leadership orientation emphasizes positive interpersonal relationships and individual development. Servant leadership dimensions developed by Sendjaya et al. (2019), such as authentic self, covenantal relationship, and transforming influence, show leader behavior that encourages openness, trust, and support for subordinates' growth. These conditions can create a perception of safety that enables employees to interact and engage in work.

Various empirical studies also support the relationship between servant leadership and psychological safety. Research by Wang et al. (2022) found that servant leadership has a positive effect on psychological safety because supportive leader behavior can create a more open and comfortable work environment for employees. Ahmed et al.'s research (2023) shows that servant leadership increases feelings of trust and psychological safety through more positive working relationships between leaders and subordinates. In addition, research by Roh et al. (2023) found that servant leadership behavior contributed to increasing openness of communication and employee courage in conveying ideas.

In the context of this research, this relationship becomes relevant because the respondents are Gen Z employees in the service sector in Bandar Lampung. Gen Z is known to value two-way communication, authentic working relationships, and a work environment that provides a sense of security to express opinions and show one's identity (Sigaeva et al., 2022; Katsaros, 2024). Therefore, servant leadership behavior is thought to be able to create psychologically safer working conditions for Gen Z employees.

H2: Servant leadership has a positive and significant effect on the psychological safety of Gen Z employees in the service sector in Bandar Lampung

The Influence of Psychological Safety on Quality of Work Life

Quality of work life describes an individual's perception of the extent to which the work environment meets their needs, provides a positive work experience, and supports overall well-being (Sirgy et al., 2001). Within this concept, quality of work life is influenced not only by physical and economic aspects but also by the psychological experiences an individual experiences during work. Therefore, the psychological conditions developed in the work environment are one factor that can influence how individuals evaluate the quality of their work life.

One psychological condition thought to play a role in shaping quality of work life is psychological safety. According to Edmondson (1999), psychological safety is an individual's belief that the work environment is safe for taking interpersonal risks, such as expressing opinions, asking questions, providing input, and expressing ideas without fear of negative consequences. When individuals feel psychologically safe, they tend to be more comfortable at work, more open in interactions, and have more positive work experiences.

The relationship between psychological safety and quality of work life can be explained through Need Satisfaction Theory, which forms the basis of Sirgy et al.'s (2001) theory of quality

of work life. This theory explains that the quality of work life will improve if work can meet individual needs, including social needs, esteem, security, and self-actualization. In this context, psychological safety is thought to be a condition that allows these needs to be met because individuals feel accepted, valued, and have space to develop within the work environment.

Conceptually, individuals with high levels of psychological safety tend to experience more positive work experiences because they do not need to allocate energy to avoid social risks or worry about negative evaluations from the work environment (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023). Conversely, low levels of psychological safety can cause individuals to withhold opinions, reduce work participation, and create discomfort, ultimately lowering perceptions of the quality of work life.

This relationship is also supported by previous research. Research by Rabiul et al. (2023) showed that psychological safety positively influences employee work experiences and well-being by creating more comfortable working conditions and supporting individual engagement. Research by Newman et al. (2017) also showed that psychological safety is associated with increased psychological well-being, work engagement, and positive work experiences. Furthermore, research by Asfour et al. (2025) found that psychological safety contributes to increased well-being at work through the creation of a supportive and open work environment.

The relationship between psychological safety and quality of work life in this study is relevant because the respondents were Gen Z employees in the service sector in Bandar Lampung. Gen Z is known to value a work environment that provides a sense of security, open communication, interpersonal support, and opportunities to express opinions (Sigaeva et al., 2022; Katsaros, 2024). When these needs are met through positive psychological conditions, perceptions of the quality of work life are expected to improve.

H3: Psychological safety has a positive and significant impact on the quality of work life for Gen Z employees in the service sector in Bandar Lampung.

The Mediating Role of Psychological Safety Between Servant Leadership and Quality of Work Life

Quality of work life is an individual's perception of the extent to which the work environment meets their needs, provides a positive work experience, and supports overall well-being (Sirgy et al., 2001). In its formation, quality of work life is not only directly influenced by organizational policies or job characteristics, but also by psychological conditions formed through social interactions in the work environment. Therefore, to understand how servant leadership influences quality of work life, an explanatory mechanism is needed that can describe the psychological processes experienced by employees.

One mechanism thought to explain this relationship is psychological safety. According to Edmondson (1999), psychological safety is an individual's belief that the work environment is safe for taking interpersonal risks, such as expressing ideas, asking questions, providing input, or expressing opinions without fear of negative consequences. In a psychologically safe work environment, individuals tend to be more open, more comfortable interacting, and more engaged in their work.

Theoretically, this mediating relationship can be explained through Edmondson's (1999) safety theory and Sirgy et al.'s (2001) need satisfaction theory. Servant leadership, which is service-oriented, attentive to the needs of subordinates, and fostering authentic relationships, is thought to foster a psychologically safe work environment. Furthermore, this psychological state enables individuals to have more positive work experiences, thereby fulfilling their social, esteem, security, and self-actualization needs. Fulfillment of these needs will then improve individuals' perceptions of the quality of their work life.

Servant leadership, in which leader behaviors such as listening to subordinates, providing support, demonstrating empathy, building relationships based on trust, and encouraging individual development, have the potential to foster psychological safety (Sendjaya et al., 2019). When employees feel safe to express themselves and are free from fear of interpersonal consequences, they tend to have more comfortable and meaningful work experiences. This, in turn, is thought to improve the perceived quality of their work life.

This mediating relationship is also supported by previous research. Research by Wang et al. (2022) shows that servant leadership contributes to improved work outcomes through the development of positive psychological states in employees. Research by Ahmed et al. (2023) found that servant leadership behaviors can increase employees' sense of security and openness in the work environment. Meanwhile, research by Newman et al. (2017) showed that psychological safety is associated with increased work well-being, positive work experiences, and work engagement.

Research by Rabiul et al. (2023) indicates that positive psychological well-being is an important mechanism in improving individual perceptions of work experiences and well-being. This finding is supported by research by Asfour et al. (2025), which shows that psychological safety acts as a pathway explaining how the work environment and interpersonal relationships can improve employee well-being.

The mediating role of psychological safety is relevant given the characteristics of Gen Z employees in the service sector in Bandar Lampung, who tend to value interpersonal support, open communication, job security, and meaningful work experiences (Sigaeva et al., 2022; Katsaros, 2024). Therefore, the influence of servant leadership on quality of work life is expected not only to occur directly but also through the formation of psychological safety, a psychological mechanism explaining this relationship.

H4: Psychological safety mediates the influence of servant leadership on quality of work life among Gen Z employees in the service sector in Bandar Lampung.

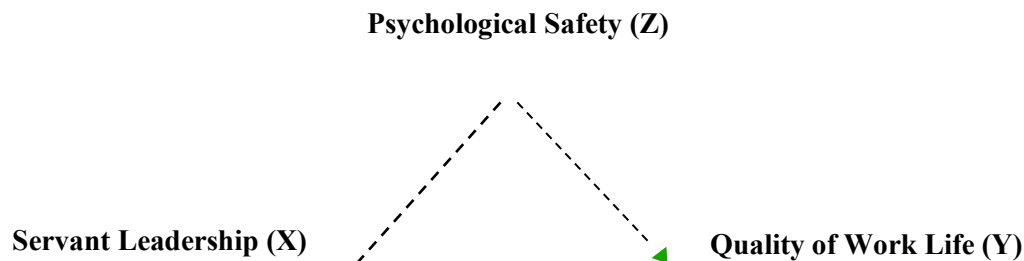


Figure 1: Research Framework

B. Methodology

The sampling technique used in this study was non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling method (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The respondent criteria used in this study were as follows: Employees working in service sector companies in Bandar Lampung City, belonging to the Gen Z category, having worked for at least one year, and having a direct supervisor.

According to Wong (2013), the recommended minimum sample size for analysis using PLS-SEM is between 100 and 200 respondents. Hair et al. (2014) also explain that the minimum sample size in PLS-SEM is 5-10 indicators. This study included six indicators of the servant leadership variable, seven indicators of the quality of work life variable, and seven indicators of psychological safety. With 20 research indicators, this study targeted 150 respondents.

This study involved 150 Gen Z respondents, of which 83 were female (55%). The majority of respondents (39 respondents) were born in 2000, with a bachelor's degree (90 respondents) (60%). Based on length of service, respondents were predominantly employed for 1–2 years (55 respondents) (36.67%), and 3–4 years (52 respondents) (34.67%). The most common occupations were administration (21 respondents) (14%), followed by industry and processing (17 respondents) (11.33%), and those across various other fields.

The data analysis technique used was Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the assistance of SmartPLS 4.0 software. According to Hair et al. (2022), the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) aims to assess the quality of the instrument through validity and reliability testing before evaluating the structural model (inner model). Therefore, this testing is crucial to ensure that the indicators used accurately represent the variables of servant leadership, psychological safety, and quality of work life.

C. Findings and Discussion

Results

Validity and Reliability Tests

The results of the outer model evaluation (Table 1) show that all indicators have outer loading values above 0.70, thus meeting the indicator validity criteria. Convergent validity was also met because all variables had AVE values > 0.50, namely servant leadership (AVE=0.594), quality of work life (AVE=0.583), and psychological safety (AVE=0.585). Furthermore, construct reliability testing showed that all variables had Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.70. Specifically, servant leadership obtained a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.865 and a Composite Reliability of 0.877; quality of work life of 0.945 and 0.949; and psychological

safety of 0.786 and 0.854. Thus, all constructs in this study met the criteria for convergent validity and construct reliability as described by Hair et al. (2022).

Table 1. Outer Model

Variable	Code	Convergent Validity		Composite Reliability	
		SLF>0.60	AVE>0.50	CA>0.70	CR>0.70
Servant Leadership	SL1	0.729			
	SL2	0.778			
	SL3	0.833			
	SL4	0.784	0.594	0.865	0.877
	SL5	0.758			
	SL6	0.739			
Quality of Work Life	QL1	0.727			
	QL2	0.812			
	QL3	0.771			
	QL4	0.821			
	QL6	0.767			
	QL7	0.749			
	QL8	0.711	0.583	0.945	0.949
	QL9	0.781			
	QL11	0.781			
	QL12	0.757			
Psychological Safety	QL13	0.767			
	QL14	0.735			
	QL15	0.750			
	QL16	0.750			
	PS1	0.777			
	PS2	0.778	0.585	0.786	0.854
	PS3	0.779			
	PS6	0.723			

Source: Primary Data 2026

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing in this study was conducted to determine the significance of the relationships between variables in the research model. All hypotheses in this study were declared supported because they had a t-statistic > 1.96 and a p-value < 0.05. Path coefficients are used to indicate the direction and strength of the relationship between latent variables in a structural model. According to Hair et al. (2022), path coefficient values range from -1 to +1, with positive values indicating a unidirectional relationship. The test results (Table 2) indicate that all structural relationships in the model have a positive direction of influence.

The test results (Table 2) indicate that servant leadership has a positive and significant effect on quality of work life, with an original sample value of 0.317, a t-statistic of 3.301, and a p-value of 0.001. Thus, the first hypothesis (H1) is supported. Servant leadership also has a positive and significant effect on psychological safety, as indicated by an original sample value of 0.304, a t-statistic of 3.350, and a p-value of 0.001. Therefore, the second hypothesis (H2) is supported.

The test results also indicate that psychological safety has a positive and significant effect on quality of work life, with an original sample value of 0.251, a t-statistic of 3.083, and a p-value of 0.002. Therefore, the third hypothesis (H3) is supported. In addition to the direct effect, the results of the indirect effect test indicate that psychological safety mediates the effect of servant leadership on quality of work life. This is indicated by an original sample value of 0.076, a t-statistic of 2.313, and a p-value of 0.021. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis (H4) is also supported.

Table 2. Hypothesis Testing

	Hypotesis	Original Sample	T Statistik	P Value	Information
H1	Servant Leadership → Quality of Work Life	0.317	3.301	0.001	Supported

	Hypotesis	Original Sample	T Statistik	P Value	Information
H2	Servant Leadership → Psychological Safety	0.304	3.350	0.001	Supported
H3	Psychological Safety → Quality of Work Life	0.251	3.083	0.002	Supported
H4	Servant Leadership → Psychological Safety → Quality of Work Life	0.076	2.313	0.021	Supported

Source: Primary Data 2026

Coefficient of Determination (R-Square)

The coefficient of determination (R-Square) indicates the ability of exogenous variables to explain the variation in endogenous variables in a structural model. According to Hair et al. (2022), R-Square values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 indicate strong, moderate, and weak predictive ability, respectively. The SmartPLS analysis results (Table 3) showed an R-Square value of 0.093 for psychological safety and 0.212 for quality of work life, indicating that the model's predictive ability for both endogenous variables is still relatively weak.

Table 3. R-Square

	R-Square	Information
Psychological Safety	0.093	Weak
Quality of Work Life	0.212	Weak

Source: Primary Data 2026

F-Square Test

The F-Square test is used to measure the contribution of each exogenous variable to the endogenous variables in a structural model. Hair et al. (2022) stated that F-Square values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effects, respectively. The test results (Tabel 4) show that the influence of servant leadership on quality of work life has an F-Square value of 0.116, the influence of servant leadership on psychological safety is 0.102, and the influence of psychological safety on quality of work life is 0.072. All these values indicate small effects, so although each variable contributes to the model, the magnitude of the structural influence is still relatively limited.

Table 4. F-Square

Variables	Servant Leadership	Quality of Work	Psychological Safety
Servant Leadership		0.116	0.102
Quality of Work			
Psychological Safety		0.072	

Source: Primary Data 2026

Discussion

The Influence of Servant Leadership on Quality of Work Life

The results of this study indicate that servant leadership has a positive and significant effect on the quality of work life of Gen Z employees in the service sector in Bandar Lampung City. This is evidenced by the original sample value of 0.317, the t-statistic of 3.301, and the p-value of 0.001 (<0.05), thus accepting the first hypothesis (H1). This means that the higher the implementation of servant leadership, the higher the quality of work life perceived by employees.

These findings indicate that leaders who prioritize service, listen to aspirations, provide support, and pay attention to the development of subordinates can create a more comfortable and supportive work environment. This condition increases employees' positive perceptions of the organization and encourages an improved quality of work life. These findings align with the concept of servant leadership proposed by Sendjaya et al. (2019), which emphasizes service orientation, authentic relationships, moral responsibility, and individual development.

These results support the research of Adiguzel et al. (2020), which showed that servant leadership increases job satisfaction through attention to employee well-being. Furthermore, Agustin-Silvestre et al. (2024) found that servant leadership contributes to increased work happiness and organizational justice through more positive leader-subordinate relationships. This finding is also consistent with Bayati et al. (2025), who demonstrated that servant leadership can improve the quality of work life through a healthy work environment, harmonious relationships, and attention to employee well-being.

The positive influence of servant leadership on the quality of work life is also relevant to the characteristics of Gen Z, who expect interpersonal support, open communication, and opportunities for growth in the workplace. Sigaeva et al. (2022) explain that servant leadership is an appropriate leadership approach for Gen Z because it fulfills the need for positive work relationships and self-development. This finding is supported by Somu et al. (2025), who demonstrated that servant leadership plays a role in increasing the enthusiasm, dedication, and work engagement of Gen Z employees.

Therefore, servant leadership is a crucial factor in improving the quality of work life of Gen Z employees in the service sector. Organizations need to encourage the implementation of servant-based leadership as a strategy to create a work environment that supports employee well-being, individual development, and positive work experiences.

The Influence of Servant Leadership on Psychological Safety

The results of this study indicate that servant leadership has a positive and significant effect on the psychological safety of Gen Z employees in the service sector in Bandar Lampung City. This is evidenced by the original sample value of 0.304, the t-statistic of 3.350, and the p-value of 0.001 (<0.05), thus accepting the second hypothesis (H2). This means that the higher the implementation of servant leadership, the higher the psychological safety experienced by employees.

These findings indicate that leaders who prioritize service, support, and open relationships can create a work environment where employees feel safe expressing opinions, ideas, and admitting mistakes. This condition strengthens trust between leaders and employees and increases psychological safety within the organization.

These results align with Edmondson's (1999) concept, which explains that psychological safety is an individual's belief that the work environment is safe for taking interpersonal risks without fear of negative consequences. Edmondson & Bransby (2023) also emphasize that psychological safety plays a crucial role in supporting learning, collaboration, and positive organizational behavior.

These research findings support the findings of Ahmed et al. (2023), who showed that servant leadership increases psychological safety by building trust between employees and leaders. Similar results were found by Khani et al. (2023), Roh et al. (2023), and Kyambade et al. (2024), who showed that servant leadership can create a more open, supportive, and respectful work environment by increasing psychological safety.

This influence is increasingly relevant for Gen Z, who tend to value open communication, trust-based relationships, and a work environment that encourages participation. Sigaeva et al. (2022) explain that servant leadership aligns with the needs of Gen Z because it encourages employee openness and engagement.

Thus, servant leadership is an important factor in building employee psychological safety. Organizations, particularly in the service sector, need to encourage the implementation of servant-based leadership to create a safe, open work environment that supports employee development.

The Influence of Psychological Safety on Quality of Work Life

The results of this study indicate that psychological safety has a positive and significant effect on the quality of work life of Gen Z employees in the service sector in Bandar Lampung City. This is evidenced by the original sample value of 0.251, the t-statistic of 3.083, and the p-value of 0.002 (<0.05), thus accepting the third hypothesis (H3). This means that the higher the psychological safety perceived by employees, the better their quality of work life.

These findings suggest that employees who feel safe expressing opinions, ideas, and making mistakes without fear of negative consequences will have a more positive work experience. This condition increases trust, comfort, and support in the work environment, thereby strengthening the perception of the quality of work life.

These results align with Edmondson's (1999) concept that psychological safety reflects an individual's belief that the work environment is safe for taking interpersonal risks. A work environment with a high level of psychological safety encourages open communication, collaboration, and employee participation, ultimately supporting an improved quality of work life (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023).

The findings of this study support Ma et al. (2021), who showed that psychological safety contributes to workplace well-being by creating a more comfortable and supportive environment. Furthermore, Rabiul et al. (2023) found that psychological safety increases work

engagement through a sense of security, support, and meaningfulness in work. These results reinforce the view that a positive psychological state is a crucial factor in shaping the quality of work life.

The influence of psychological safety is increasingly relevant for Gen Z, who expect an open work environment, trust-based relationships, and opportunities for participation. When employees feel valued and supported, they are better able to interact, collaborate, and develop their potential. Therefore, organizations need to build a work culture that supports psychological safety as a strategy to improve the quality of work life for Gen Z employees.

The Role of Psychological Safety in Mediating the Effect of Servant Leadership on Quality of Work Life

The results of this study indicate that psychological safety mediates the effect of servant leadership on the quality of work life of Gen Z employees in the service sector in Bandar Lampung City. This is evidenced by the indirect effect value with the original sample of 0.076, a t-statistic of 2.313, and a p-value of 0.021 (<0.05), thus accepting the fourth hypothesis (H4). These findings indicate that servant leadership not only directly influences quality of work life but also does so by increasing employee psychological safety.

These results indicate that leaders who implement servant leadership through service, care, and support for subordinates can create a sense of safety in the work environment. This established psychological safety allows employees to express opinions, put forward ideas, and participate without fear of negative consequences, thereby improving the work experience and quality of work life.

These findings align with Edmondson's (1999) concept that psychological safety enables individuals to take interpersonal risks in a safe and supportive work environment. The results of this study also support Wang et al. (2022), who showed that psychological safety is a mechanism explaining the positive influence of servant leadership on employee well-being. Furthermore, Ahmed et al. (2023) and Kyambade et al. (2024) emphasized that servant leadership enhances psychological safety by building trust and healthy working relationships.

The mediating role of psychological safety is increasingly relevant for Gen Z, who expect an open, supportive work environment that provides space for participation. Therefore, implementing servant leadership, supported by a psychologically safe work environment, is an important strategy for improving the quality of work life for Gen Z employees.

D. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that servant leadership plays a significant role in improving the quality of work life for Gen Z employees in the service sector in Bandar Lampung City. The analysis demonstrates that servant leadership has a positive and significant impact on quality of work life and psychological safety. Furthermore, psychological safety positively influences quality of work life and acts as a mediator in the relationship between servant leadership and quality of work life. These findings suggest that the influence of servant leadership on employees' positive work experiences occurs not only through direct leadership behaviors but also through the creation of a work environment that allows employees to feel safe, valued, and supported.

This study provides a theoretical contribution by broadening our understanding of the mechanisms by which servant leadership can improve quality of work life through employees' psychological experiences. Specifically, this study emphasizes the importance of psychological safety as a connecting mechanism explaining how servant-based leader behavior translates into positive perceptions of the work environment, particularly in the context of Gen Z, who have high expectations for openness, interpersonal support, and meaningful work relationships.

Based on the research findings, service sector organizations need to strengthen servant leadership practices as part of their human resource management strategy. Leaders need to develop service-oriented behaviors, such as demonstrating concern for employee needs, establishing two-way communication, providing support for competency development, and creating work relationships based on trust. These practices not only have the potential to improve the quality of work life directly but also strengthen employee psychological safety.

Furthermore, organizations need to build a work climate that supports psychological safety by creating a culture of openness, respect for employee opinions, and tolerance for mistakes that are learning-oriented. A psychologically safe work environment will encourage Gen Z

employees to participate more actively, express ideas, and contribute optimally to the organization.

Future research can expand the research model by considering other variables that have the potential to explain quality of work life, such as perceived organizational support, work engagement, organizational commitment, work-life balance, or organizational culture. Furthermore, future research can use a broader sample size across various sectors and regions and employ a longitudinal or mixed-methods approach to more deeply understand changes in employee perceptions and the mechanisms of relationships between variables.

E. References

- Adams, D., Feng, X., & Omar, I. M. (2025). Review of the knowledge base of servant leadership in higher education research, 1998 to 2023. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 00(00), 1–20.
- Adiguzel, Z., Ozcinar, M. F., & Karadal, H. (2020). Does servant leadership moderate the link between strategic human resource management on rule breaking and job satisfaction? *European Research on Management and Business Economics*, 26(2), 103–110.
- Agustin-Silvestre, J. A., Villar-Guevara, M., García-Salirrosas, E. E., & Fernández-Mallma, I. (2024). The Human Side of Leadership: Exploring the Impact of Servant Leadership on Work Happiness and Organizational Justice. *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(12).
- Ahmed, F., Xiong, Z., Faraz, N. A., & Arslan, A. (2023). The interplay between servant leadership, psychological safety, trust in a leader and burnout: assessing causal relationships through a three-wave longitudinal study. *International Journal of Occupational Safety and Ergonomics*, 29(2), 912–924.
- Asfour, L., Saleh, A. M., & Abu-Wardeh, Y. (2025). The Role of Servant Leadership in Fostering Psychological Safety Among Nurses in Jordanian Hospitals. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 2025(1).
- BPS. (2025). Statistik daerah Kota Bandar Lampung 2025. Badan Pusat Statistik.
- Bayati, M. M., Sadeghi, A., Jamasbi, M. M., & Tapak, L. (2025). Servant leadership, work-life quality, and organizational citizenship behavior in nurses: a cross-sectional design. *BMC Nursing*, 24(1).
- Deloitte. (2025). 2025 Gen Z and Millennial Survey. Deloitte Insights.
- Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2), 350–383.
- Edmondson, A. C., & Bransby, D. P. (2023). Psychological Safety Comes of Age: Observed Themes in an Established Literature. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 10, 55–78.
- Edmondson, A. C., & Lei, Z. (2014). Psychological Safety: The History, Renaissance, and Future of an Interpersonal Construct. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1, 23–43.
- Eva, N., Robin, M., Sendjaya, S., van Dierendonck, D., & Liden, R. C. (2019). Servant Leadership: A systematic review and call for future research. *Leadership Quarterly*, 30(1), 111–132.
- Gallup. (2024). State of the global workplace: 2024 report. Gallup.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*. Paulist Press.
- Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2022). *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Hair, J. F., Jr., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2014). *Multivariate data analysis* (7th ed.). Pearson Education Limited.
- Hamid, Z. (2025). The effects of servant leadership and despotic leadership on employees' happiness at work (HAW): the role of job crafting. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Business Administration*, 17(1), 23–45.
- Hermanto, Y. B., Srimulyani, V. A., & Pitoyo, D. J. (2024). The mediating role of quality of work life and organizational commitment in the link between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior. *Heliyon*, 10(6), e27664.
- Jeong, J., Kim, B. J., & Lee, J. (2023). The effect of job insecurity on knowledge hiding behavior: The mediation of psychological safety and the moderation of servant leadership. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11.
- Katsaros, K. K. (2024). Gen Z Employee Adaptive Performance: The Role of Inclusive Leadership and Workplace Happiness. *Administrative Sciences*, 14(8).

- Katsaros, K. K. (2025). Gen Z Tourism Employees' Adaptive Performance During a Major Cultural Shift: The Impact of Leadership and Employee Voice Behavior. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(2).
- Khani, N. U., Zada, M., & Estay, C. (2023). Servant leadership and employee prosocial rule-breaking: The underlying effects of psychological safety and compassion at work. *PLoS ONE*, 18(4 April), 1–17.
- Kyambade, M., Nkurunziza, G., Sewante, L., Namatovu, A., & Tushabe, M. (2024). Servant leadership and healthy work relationships in university context: a moderated mediation analysis of psychological safety and socially responsible leadership. *Cogent Education*, 11(1).
- Le, T. (2020). Servant leadership and abusive leadership on employee work engagement: the role of psychological safety and leader distance. Aalto University.
- Ma, Y., Faraz, N. A., Ahmed, F., Iqbal, M. K., Saeed, U., Mughal, M. F., & Raza, A. (2021). Curbing nurses' burnout during COVID-19: The roles of servant leadership and psychological safety. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 29(8), 2383–2391.
- Newman, A., Donohue, R., & Eva, N. (2017). Psychological safety: A systematic review of the literature. *Human Resource Management Review*, 27(3), 521–535.
- Rabiul, M. K., Mohamed, A. E., Patwary, A. K., Yean, T. F., & Osman, S. Z. (2023). Linking human resources practices to employee engagement in the hospitality industry: the mediating influences of psychological safety, availability and meaningfulness. *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*, 32(2), 223–240.
- Roh, T., Kim, M. J., & Hong, Y. (2023). Does Servant Leadership Decrease Bad Behaviors? The Mediating Role of Psychological Safety and the Moderating Effect of Corporate Social Responsibility. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 15(22).
- Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2016). *Research methods for business: A skill-building approach* (7th ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Schein, E. H., & Bennis, W. G. (1965). *Personal and organizational change through group methods: The laboratory approach*. Wiley.
- Sendjaya, S., Eva, N., Butar Butar, I., Robin, M., & Castles, S. (2019). SLBS-6: Validation of a Short Form of the Servant Leadership Behavior Scale. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 156(4), 941–956.
- Shafitry, N., & Hayati, K. (2026). Burnout and Quality of Work Life: The Moderating Role of Servant Leadership. *Journal of Psychology and Cognition*. <https://abnus.co/index.php/jpcog/article/view/321>
- Sigaeva, N., Arasli, H., Ozdemir, E., Atai, G., & Capkiner, E. (2022). In Search of Effective Gen Z Engagement in the Hospitality Industry: Revisiting Issues of Servant and Authentic Leadership. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 14(20), 1–19.
- Sirgy, M. J., Efraty, D., Siegel, P., & Lee, D. J. (2001). A new measure of quality of work life (QWL) based on need satisfaction and spillover theories. *Social Indicators Research*, 55(3), 241–302.
- Somu, S., Abdullah, M. M. Bin, Alam, M. N., & Islam, M. A. (2025). Does Servant Leadership Influence Vigour, Dedication and Absorption of Generation-Z Employees Role Emotional Stability and Artificial Intelligence Adoption (AIA). *International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion*, 16(3).
- Spears, L. C. (2004). Practicing servant-leadership. In L. C. Spears & M. Lawrence (Eds.), *Practicing servant leadership: Succeeding through trust, bravery, and forgiveness* (pp. 7–37). Jossey-Bass.
- Urrila, L., & Eva, N. (2024). Developing oneself to serve others? Servant leadership practices of mindfulness-trained leaders. *Journal of Business Research*, 183(July), 114858.
- Walton, R. E. (1973). Quality of working life: What is it? *Sloan Management Review*, 15(1), 11–21.
- Wang, W., Kang, S. W., & Choi, S. B. (2022). Servant Leadership and Creativity: A Study of the Sequential Mediating Roles of Psychological Safety and Employee Well-Being. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12(February), 1–13.
- Wong, K. K. K. (2013). Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS- SEM) techniques using SmartPLS. *Marketing bulletin*, 24(1), 1-32.
- Xu, Y., Jie, D., Wu, H., Shi, X., Badulescu, D., Akbar, S., & Badulescu, A. (2022). Reducing Employee Turnover Intentions in Tourism and Hospitality Sector: The Mediating Effect of Quality of Work Life and Intrinsic Motivation. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(18).