

Improving Employee Performance through Servant Leadership and Managerial Skills: The Strategic Role of Career Achievement

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of servant leadership and managerial skills on employee performance with career achievement as a mediating variable. The research uses a quantitative approach with the type of explanatory research. The data was analyzed using the Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method with the help of SmartPLS software. The results of the study show that servant leadership has a positive effect on employee performance and career achievement. Managerial skills have been proven to have a positive effect on career achievement, but do not have a direct effect on employee performance. Furthermore, career achievement has a positive and significant influence on employee performance. The results of the mediation test showed that career achievement was able to mediate the influence of servant leadership and managerial skills on employee performance. These findings indicate that service-oriented leadership and managerial skill development need to be integrated with career management systems to optimally improve employee performance. This research provides practical implications for human resource management in designing sustainable leadership and career development strategies

Keywords: Servant Leadership, Managerial Skills, Career Achievements, Employee Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education is a strategic institution in human resource development and scientific development. The success of universities in carrying out the function of the tridharma; Education, research, and community service are highly determined by the quality of the performance of human resources, especially lecturers and education staff. In the context of increasingly competitive and dynamic higher education organizations, the demand for superior performance depends not only on individual competencies, but also on the effectiveness of leadership and managerial skills of leaders across various academic and administrative units (Bangbon et al., 2023; Durie & Beshir, 2016). Universities are currently facing various complex challenges, such as increasing accreditation demands, pressure on scientific publications, digital transformation of learning, and increasingly high expectations of students and stakeholders. This condition requires university leaders to not only be oriented towards achieving institutional targets, but also to be able to create a work environment that supports individual development and career sustainability of academics (Balwant et al., 2019; Zaleha et al., 2014). Unpreparedness of leadership in responding to this dynamic has the potential to



reduce performance, increase work fatigue, and hinder the career achievement of lecturers and education staff.

In recent years, the concept of servant leadership has received increasing attention in the context of educational organizations. Servant leadership emphasizes service orientation, empowerment, and individual development as the core of effective leadership practice (Eva et al., 2019; Russell, 2006). In the university environment, servant leadership is reflected through the efforts of leaders in supporting the development of lecturer competencies, creating an inclusive academic climate, and building trusting and collaborative working relationships (Aboramadan & Hamad, 2021). Previous research has shown that servant leadership is positively related to various organizational outcomes, such as organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment, and individual performance (Farooqui, 2024).

On the other hand, managerial skills are important abilities that university leaders must have to manage academic and administrative resources effectively. Managerial skills include planning, organizing, leadership, communication, and decision-making skills that are oriented towards achieving organizational goals (Aquino, 2023; Desai et al., 2024; Rosier et al., 2024). In the context of higher education, good managerial skills enable faculty, department, or work unit leaders to manage workloads, optimize team performance, and create a fair and transparent system of evaluation and development (Esther et al., 2023).

Servant leadership and managerial skills are two aspects of leadership that complement each other and have the potential to work synergistically in improving the performance of human resources in higher education. Servant leadership provides a foundation of human values and orientation in leadership, while managerial skills provide the technical and strategic tools to effectively implement those values in organizational practices. The combination of the two allows leaders to focus not only on achieving institutional targets, but also on developing individual potential on a sustainable basis (Basalama & Piartrini, 2019; Nazir & Iqbal, 2024).

However, performance improvement in the context of higher education cannot be separated from an individual's perception of his or her career achievement. Career achievement reflects the extent to which an individual feels that the professional development, promotion, recognition, and career advancement experienced are in accordance with the expectations and efforts that have been made (Robbins & Judge, 2016). In the academic environment, career achievement is an important factor that motivates lecturers and education staff to improve performance, both in the fields of teaching, research, and academic services. Service-oriented leadership supported by adequate managerial skills is believed to be able to create more equitable and transparent career development opportunities, thus having a positive impact on individual performance.

Although a number of studies have examined the influence of servant leadership and managerial skills on performance in various sectors, research that comprehensively places career achievement as a mediating variable in the context of higher education is still relatively limited. Most previous studies have tended to focus their analysis on the direct relationship between leadership and performance, or to highlight individual factors such as job satisfaction and motivation separately (Ashari et al., 2024; Joni et al., 2024; Moha, 2024). This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the role of career achievement as a mechanism that bridges the influence of servant leadership and managerial skills on the performance of human resources in higher education. Thus, this research is expected to make a theoretical and practical contribution to the development

of a sustainable leadership model oriented towards strengthening the performance and career of the academic community.

Literature Review

Servant Leadership in the Context of Higher Education

Servant leadership is a leadership approach that places service to followers as a top priority, with the aim of encouraging individual growth and organizational sustainability (Aboramadan & Hamad, 2021; Smith, 2005). Servant leadership leaders focus on empowerment, empathy, capacity building, and creating a work environment that supports collaboration and trust (Eva et al., 2019). In the context of higher education, servant leadership is becoming increasingly relevant considering the characteristics of knowledge-based academic organizations, professional autonomy, and collegial working relationships.

Previous research has shown that servant leadership has a positive influence on various educational organizational outcomes, such as organizational commitment, work involvement, and extra behavior of lecturers and education staff (Agusta & Azmy, 2023; Kumari et al., 2022). Leaders who implement servant leadership tend to create a supportive academic climate, provide space for professional development, and encourage the active participation of the academic community in decision-making. This condition not only improves the well-being of individuals, but also strengthens the effectiveness of the institution as a whole.

Managerial Skills as Leadership Capabilities

Managerial skills refer to a set of abilities that allow a leader to effectively manage organizational resources, including planning, organizing, leadership, communication, and control abilities (Aquino, 2023). In a university environment, managerial skills are crucial because leaders are faced with the complexity of academic human resource management, institutional performance demands, and the dynamics of changes in higher education policies (Desai et al., 2024).

Rosier et al (2024) emphasizing that managerial skills play an important role in bridging the strategic vision of leaders with operational implementation at the work unit level. Leaders with good managerial skills are able to allocate workloads fairly, manage conflicts, and create a transparent performance evaluation system. In the context of higher education, these skills not only have an impact on organizational efficiency, but also on the perception of fairness and career development opportunities for lecturers and education staff (Esther et al., 2023).

Human Resource Performance in Higher Education

Performance is the level of achievement of individual work results in accordance with the tasks and responsibilities given (Hanh, 2023). In higher education, the performance of lecturers and education staff reflects their contribution to the achievement of the tridharma, the quality of academic services, and the achievement of institutional targets. High performance is an important indicator of the success of human resource management and the competitiveness of universities at the national and international levels. A number of studies show that employee performance in higher education institutions is influenced by leadership factors, organizational support, and the clarity of the career development system (Nadeak & Siregar, 2022; Wang, 2024). Effective leadership is not only able to increase work productivity, but also encourages individuals to show commitment and initiative in carrying out their academic and administrative roles.

Career Achievement as a Psychological and Organizational Outcome

Career achievement refers to an individual's perception of career progress, recognition, and success achieved throughout his or her professional journey (Robbins & Judge, 2016). Career achievement can be objective, such as promotion and increased income, or subjective, such as satisfaction with career development and professional recognition.

In the context of higher education, career achievement has strategic significance because it is related to the motivation of lecturers and education staff to improve performance, academic productivity, and loyalty to the institution. A work environment that supports competency development and provides clear career opportunities has been proven to be able to increase the perception of individual career achievement (Bangbon et al., 2023). On the other hand, the unclarity of the career system has the potential to reduce employee motivation and performance.

Hypothesis Development

The Influence of Servant Leadership on Career Achievement

Servant Leadership emphasizes the role of a leader as a servant who focuses on the development, well-being, and growth of individuals in the organization. Leaders with a servant leadership style are not only oriented towards achieving organizational goals, but also strive to create a work environment that supports the development of potential and career advancement of subordinates. In the context of higher education, servant leadership is reflected through leadership support for the development of the competencies of lecturers and education staff, the provision of professional development opportunities, and recognition of individual contributions to the institution's achievements.

Research conducted by Eva et al (2019) states that servant leadership has a positive influence on career development and employee career satisfaction through increased trust and empowerment. These findings are reinforced by research Kumari et al (2022) which shows that servant leadership contributes significantly to the perception of career success because leaders play an active role in facilitating learning and professional growth. However, in contrast to research conducted by Money (2024) who found that the direct influence of servant leadership on career outcomes is not always significant without supporting mechanisms such as a clear performance management system.

However, conceptually, servant leadership is still seen as a leadership style that is able to create psychological and structural conditions that support career achievement. Individuals who feel supported and empowered by their leaders tend to have higher confidence, feel valued, and are motivated to achieve better career advancement (Agusta & Azmy, 2023). Therefore, servant leadership is estimated to have an influence on individual career achievement in college.

H1: Servant leadership affects career achievement.

The Influence of Managerial Skills on Career Achievement

Managerial skills are the ability of leaders to plan, organize, direct, and control organizational resources effectively. In the university environment, the managerial skills of leaders greatly determine the clarity of the work system, the division of tasks, performance evaluation, and the management of career development opportunities for lecturers and education staff. Leaders with good managerial skills are able to create a fair and transparent work structure, thus opening up opportunities for individuals to develop and achieve career advancement.

Research Desai et al (2024) shows that managerial skills are positively related to employee career satisfaction and success because leaders are able to manage

performance and human resource development systematically. Similar results were also found by Rosier et al (2024) which states that effective managerial skills contribute to the perception of promotion opportunities and career development. Leadership competencies in decision-making and communication allow employees to understand the available career paths and their achievement criteria.

Good managerial skills also increase employee trust in the organizational system. When employees feel that performance appraisals and career development are done objectively, they tend to be more motivated to increase their contributions and achieve higher career achievement (Esther et al., 2023). Thus, managerial skills are estimated to have a positive influence on individual career achievement in higher education.

H2: Managerial skills affect career achievement.

The Influence of Servant Leadership on Performance

Servant leadership plays an important role in improving individual performance through the creation of a supportive and development-oriented work environment. Leaders who prioritize service tend to provide emotional support, clarity of roles, and learning opportunities that encourage employees to work optimally. In the context of higher education, servant leadership can improve the performance of lecturers and education staff in carrying out academic and administrative tasks.

Eva et al (2019) Found that servant leadership has a positive effect on performance through increased work engagement and organizational commitment. These findings are supported by Farooqui (2024) which states that servant leadership encourages extra work behavior and improved performance quality. Individuals who are led with a servant leadership approach tend to feel valued and have a higher sense of responsibility for their work. Thus, servant leadership is expected to be able to encourage the improvement of individual performance in the university environment.

H3: Servant leadership has a positive effect on performance.

The Influence of Managerial Skills on Performance

Managerial skills are an important factor in ensuring that organizational resources are used effectively to achieve goals. Leaders with good managerial skills are able to coordinate work activities, set realistic targets, and provide constructive feedback to employees. In higher education, this contributes to improving the performance of lecturers and education staff.

Aquino (2023) states that managerial skills have a positive relationship with employee performance because of the ability of leaders to manage work processes efficiently. Research Esther et al (2023) It was also found that managerial skills have a significant effect on work productivity in educational organizations. These skills enable leaders to create a structured work system and support the achievement of optimal work outcomes. Therefore, managerial skills are estimated to have a positive influence on individual performance in higher education.

H4: Managerial skills have a positive effect on performance.

The Influence of Performance on Career Achievement

Performance is the main indicator that organizations often use in assessing an individual's eligibility for recognition and career advancement. High-performing individuals tend to gain greater trust, development opportunities, and promotions. In higher education, the performance of lecturers and education personnel is an important basis in career assessment, both in the form of structural positions and professional development.

Robbins & Judge (2016) stating that performance has a significant influence on career success, both objectively and subjectively. Research Helmuth et al (2023) It also shows that individuals with consistent performance have a higher perception of career achievement. Good performance reflects an individual's competence and commitment to the organization, thereby increasing career advancement opportunities. Thus, performance is estimated to have a positive effect on individual career achievement.

H5: Performance has a positive effect on career achievement.

The Role of Career Achievement in Mediating the Influence of Servant Leadership and Managerial Skills on Performance

In the context of higher education organizations, effective leadership not only has a direct impact on performance, but also affects an individual's perception of his or her career achievements. Good servant leadership and managerial skills have the potential to create a work environment that supports career development, which in turn encourages the improvement of individual performance. Career achievement serves as a psychological and organizational mechanism that bridges the relationship between leadership and performance.

Individuals who feel that organizations provide fair and transparent career opportunities tend to show higher motivation and work commitment. Helmuth et al (2023) states that the perception of career success can increase an individual's energy and engagement at work. Thus, servant leadership and managerial skills not only affect performance directly, but also indirectly through career achievement as a mediating variable. Based on this description, career achievement is positioned as a mediating variable in the relationship between servant leadership and managerial skills to performance.

H6: Career achievement mediates the influence of servant leadership on performance.

H7: Career achievement mediates the influence of managerial skills on performance.

Conceptual Model

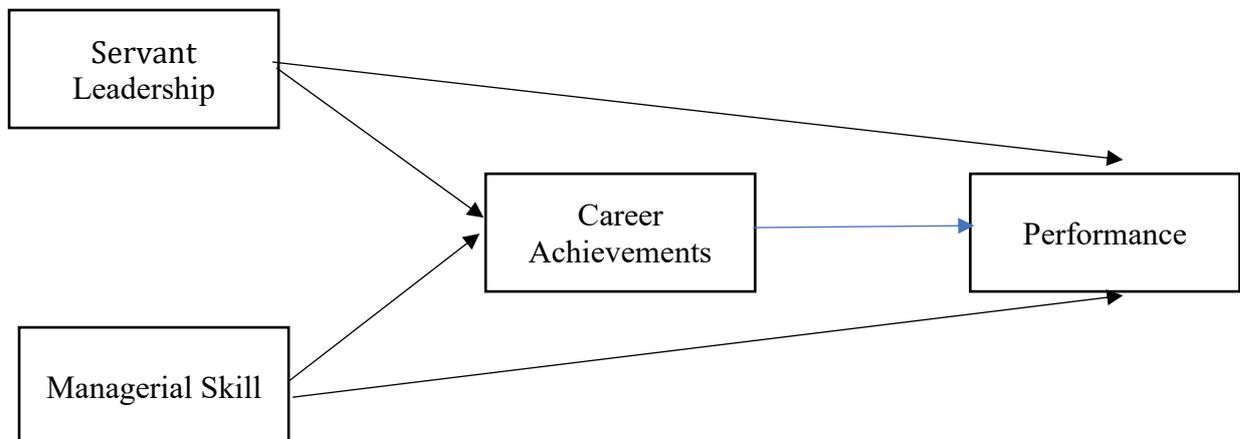


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research type that aims to examine the causal relationship between servant leadership, managerial skills, performance, and career achievement (Ghozali, 2021). The research population is lecturers and education personnel at universities, with a sample of 99 respondents selected using purposive sampling techniques based on certain criteria, namely lecturers who have the status of permanent employees and have a minimum working period of two years.

Data collection was carried out through a questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale that has been tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis was carried out using the Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method with the help of SmartPLS software. The analysis procedure includes the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) to test the validity and reliability of the construct and the evaluation of the structural model (inner model) to test the relationship between variables (Hair et al., 2022).

Tabel 1. Operational Definitions and Indicators

The operationalization of variables and indicators is presented in Table 2.1 below.

Variabel	Indicator	Explanation
Servant Leadership	Support and develop employees (Fakhri et al., 2024)	It is important because it shows the role of the leader in ensuring employees continue to develop professionally, which contributes to better motivation and performance.
	Empathy (Kumari et al., 2022)	Empathy improves understanding and interpersonal relationships between leaders and employees, which has a positive impact on morale and productivity.
	Listening (Pujiastutianingsih & Ricky, 2023)	Listening skills strengthen employees' trust in leaders, creating an open and collaborative work environment.
Managerial Skills	Improving the Community (Hoover & Douglas, 2018)	Helps build a sense of community in the workplace, which can increase employee engagement and loyalty to the organization.
	Providing Empowerment (Shaasha et al., 2024)	Giving employees autonomy increases their sense of responsibility and encourages initiative-taking, which leads to improved performance.
	Technical Capabilities (Mohamed et al., 2022)	Mastering specific tasks helps managers run operations efficiently and guide employees accurately.
	Interpersonal Abilities (Beenen et al., 2021)	These skills are essential for fostering good relationships with employees, creating effective teamwork, and resolving conflicts well.
	Conceptual Abilities (Mashavira & Chipunza, 2021)	Help managers understand and solve problems holistically, as well as steer organizational strategy in a profitable direction.

Career Achievements	Decision Making (Mohamed et al., 2022)	Speed and accuracy in making decisions are critical to responding to emerging challenges and ensuring organizations remain competitive.
	Skills in Managing Time (Beenen et al., 2021)	Managing time effectively allows managers to maximize productivity and ensure all projects are on schedule.
	Promotion or Promotion (Saing et al., 2021)	Measures how often employees receive promotions as an indication of success in career achievement.
	Increased Responsibility (Saing et al., 2021)	Describe whether employees get additional responsibilities that indicate progress in their careers.
	Salary and Benefits (Saing et al., 2021)	Assess changes in salary or benefits as indicators of success in a career.
	Job Satisfaction and Position Prestige (Saing et al., 2021)	Measuring employee satisfaction with their position and prestige as a form of career achievement.
Performance	Professional Recognition (Saing et al., 2021)	Measure the extent to which employees gain formal or informal recognition for their competencies and contributions, such as good performance appraisals, leadership trust, or professional reputation in the work environment.
	Working Quantity (Nazirwan & Fadhlan, 2024)	Measuring how much work is completed is important to assess employee productivity over a period of time.
	Quality of Work (Sugiarti, 2022)	It is important to ensure that the work is not only completed on time but also has a high level of excellence.
	Effectiveness and Efficiency (Basri & Arsal, 2022)	Measuring employees' ability to optimally use resources to achieve desired results, which is relevant to assessing productivity.
	Organizational Commitment (Dafiq & Solihat, 2023)	Demonstrates how far employees are willing to support the company's goals, which relate to employee retention and organizational sustainability.
	Creativity and Innovation (Rossi et al., 2024)	Innovation is essential to maintain a competitive advantage and adapt to change, as well as measure employees' contribution to organizational development.
Job Satisfaction (Moha, 2024)	Describe an individual's level of satisfaction with their work, which affects work morale, loyalty, and overall performance results.	

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Evaluation of Measurement Models (Outer Model)

Table 2. Loading Factor

	Employee Performance	Managerial Skill	Career Achievements	Servant Leadership
KK1	0.873			
KK2	0.836			
KK3	0.810			
KK4	0.872			
KK5	0.801			
KK6	0.761			
MS1		0.824		
MS2		0.822		
MS3		0.899		
MS4		0.896		
MS5		0.944		
PK1			0.826	
PK2			0.868	
PK3			0.865	
PK4			0.830	
PK5			0.752	
SL1				0.824
SL2				0.858
SL3				0.841
SL4				0.895
SL5				0.826

The results of the outer model evaluation showed that all indicators in the construct of Servant Leadership, Managerial Skill, Employee Performance, and Career Achievement had an outer loading value above 0.70, thus meeting the criteria for convergent validity. These findings confirm that each indicator is able to represent constructs consistently.

From a human resource management perspective, these results show that servant leadership practices, managerial skills, and career achievement are reliably measurable aspects in explaining employee performance improvements. Thus, the instruments used are relevant to analyze the role of human resource management in encouraging employee effectiveness and career development.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Tests

Variabel	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Employee Performance	0.907	0.908	0.928	0.683
Managerial Skill	0.925	0.932	0.944	0.771
Career Achievements	0.886	0.896	0.916	0.687
Servant Leadership	0.903	0.905	0.928	0.721

The results of the reliability test showed that the entire construct had Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values (ρ_a and ρ_c) above 0.70 and AVE values exceeded 0.50. This indicates that the research instrument has a good level of reliability and validity.

In the context of human resource management, these findings indicate that measurements of servant leadership, managerial skills, employee performance, and career achievement are carried out consistently and are able to capture important aspects of human resource management, especially in supporting competency development, work effectiveness, and employee career progress.

Goodness of fit Structural Model (Inner Model)

Model evaluation uses R-square (R^2) for dependent constructs. Value *R-square* reflects the predictive power of the entire model (Siregar et al., 2024) with value constraints *R-square* greater than 0.10 or greater than 10 percent (or *goodness-fit* of the model). Based on data processing with PLS, the value of the determination coefficient (*R-square*) is generated as follows:

Table 4. R-square value

Variabel	R-square	R-square adjusted
Employee Performance	0.715	0.705
Career Achievements	0.617	0.608

The results of the structural model evaluation showed that the R-square value for Employee Performance was 0.715, which means that 71.5% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by the variables of Servant Leadership and Managerial Skill. Meanwhile, Career Achievement has an R-square value of 0.617, which indicates that 61.7% of career achievements are influenced by variables in the research model. From a human resource management perspective, this relatively high R-square value confirms that leadership practices and managerial abilities play a strategic role in improving performance while driving employee career achievement, while the rest are influenced by other HR factors outside the model (Ghozali, 2014).

Hypothesis Testing

Direct Effect

Table 5. Direct Path coefficient

Variabel	Original sample (O)	P values
Managerial Skills -> Employee Performance	0.199	0.072
Managerial Skills -> Career Achievements	0.392	0.002
Career Achievement -> Employee Performance	0.512	0.000
Servant Leadership -> Employee Performance	0.202	0.035
Servant Leadership -> Career Achievements	0.435	0.001

Based on the results of relationship testing in Table 5, it was found that managerial skills did not have a significant influence on employee performance ($\beta = 0.199$; $p = 0.072$). This shows that the managerial skills possessed by employees have not been directly able to improve employee performance. Thus, the H1 hypothesis is rejected.

The relationship between managerial skills and career achievement showed a positive and significant influence ($\beta = 0.392$; $p = 0.002$). This means that the better the managerial skills that employees have, the higher the chances of career achievement achieved. Therefore, the H2 hypothesis is accepted. Furthermore, career achievement has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.512$; $p = 0.000$). These results show that the career improvement that employees feel contributes significantly to their performance improvement. Thus, the H3 hypothesis is accepted.

The test results also showed that servant leadership had a positive and significant influence on employee performance ($\beta = 0.202$; $p = 0.035$). This indicates that the higher the implementation of servant leadership by the leadership, the more employee performance will also improve. Therefore, the H4 hypothesis is accepted. In addition, servant leadership has a positive and significant effect on career achievement ($\beta = 0.435$; $p = 0.001$). These findings show that a service-oriented leadership style is able to drive employee career development and success. Thus, the H5 hypothesis is accepted.

Indirect Influence

Table 6. Indirect Path coefficient

Variabel	Original sample (O)	P values
Servant Leadership -> Career Achievement -> Employee Performance	0.223	0.002
Managerial Skills -> Career Achievement -> Employee Performance	0.201	0.013

Based on the results of the indirect effects test in Table 6, it was obtained that career achievement mediated the relationship between servant leadership and employee performance with a coefficient value of 0.223 and a p-value of 0.002. This shows that the implementation of servant leadership is able to improve employee performance through increasing career achievement. Thus, the mediation hypothesis is accepted.

In addition, career achievement has also been proven to mediate the relationship between managerial skills and employee performance with a coefficient value of 0.201 and a p-value of 0.013. These findings indicate that managerial skills contribute to improving employee performance indirectly through successful career achievement. Therefore, the mediation hypothesis is accepted.

The Influence of Managerial Skills on Employee Performance

The results of the study show that managerial skills have not had a significant direct influence on employee performance. These findings indicate that the ownership of managerial skills by employees has not been automatically reflected in improving the quality and quantity of work output. In the practice of human resource management, this condition indicates that individual skills require the support of the organizational system in order to have an optimal impact. Without reward mechanisms, fair performance evaluation, and clarity of roles, managerial skills tend not to be utilized to the fullest. Additionally, employees may not be given enough space to implement those skills in decision-making or job management. This causes the contribution of managerial skills to

performance to become less visible. Therefore, integrated human resource management is an important factor in optimizing the potential of employee skills.

Theoretically, these findings suggest that managerial skills do not always have a direct impact on performance in the absence of other supporting factors. Robbins & Judge (2016) explains that performance is influenced by a combination of ability, motivation, and opportunity to perform. The results of this study are in line with the findings Money (2024) which states that individual skills need a conducive organizational context in order to influence performance. Nevertheless, these findings differ from some previous studies that placed managerial skills as a key determinant of performance. This difference suggests that the influence of managerial skills is contextual. Thus, managerial skills are more accurately understood as an indirect factor in improving performance.

The Influence of Managerial Skills on Career Achievement

The results of the study show that managerial skills have a positive effect on employee career achievement. These findings indicate that skills in managing work, making decisions, and coordinating with others contribute to career advancement. In human resource management, managerial skills are seen as a form of core competencies that increase the value of individuals in the eyes of the organization. Employees who have managerial skills tend to be more trusted to hold greater responsibility. This trust opens up opportunities for promotion and career development. In addition, this skill also increases employees' readiness to face the challenges of higher positions. Therefore, managerial skills are an important factor in employee career achievement.

Theoretically, these findings are in line with human capital theory which states that individual skills and abilities are strategic assets of the organization (Becker, 1975). Employees with higher skills have better career opportunities because they are considered able to make a greater contribution. The results of this study also support the findings Desai et al (2024) which states that skill development is positively related to career success. Research Aquino (2023) It was also found that managerial competence increases the chances of promotion and recognition of the organization. Thus, these findings reinforce the view that an organization's investment in employee skill development has a direct impact on career achievement. This emphasizes the importance of continuous training and development of human resources.

The Influence of Career Achievement on Employee Performance

The results of the study show that career achievement has a positive effect on employee performance. These findings indicate that employees who experience career advancement tend to show higher morale and job responsibility. In human resource management, career achievement serves as a form of reward that reinforces positive work behavior. Employees who feel valued and recognized will be motivated to maintain and even improve their performance. In addition, career achievement also increases a sense of security and job satisfaction. This condition creates a reciprocal relationship between career success and work productivity. Therefore, career achievement is an important factor in improving employee performance.

Theoretically, these findings are in line with motivation theory that success and recognition are the main drivers of work behavior (Robbins & Judge, 2016). Career achievement can be seen as an intrinsic form of motivation that increases work commitment. Research Corbeanu & Iliescu (2023) It also shows that career success contributes to improved performance and work engagement. Similar findings were put forward by Ituma et al (2024) which states that satisfaction with career development encourages employees to work more optimally. Thus, career achievement is not only a

result of performance, but also a driver of subsequent performance. This strengthens the strategic role of the career system in HR management.

The Influence of Servant Leadership on Employee Performance

The results of the study show that servant leadership has a positive effect on employee performance. These findings indicate that leadership that emphasizes service, empathy, and empowerment is able to create a conducive work environment. In human resource management, servant leadership plays a role in building harmonious and trusting working relationships. Employees who feel supported by leaders tend to perform better. Additionally, this leadership approach encourages engagement and work responsibility. A supportive work environment also increases employee comfort and focus in completing tasks. Therefore, servant leadership is one of the relevant leadership styles in improving performance.

Theoretically, these findings support the concept of servant leadership put forward by Smith (2005). This theory emphasizes that a servant leader will encourage the growth and effectiveness of subordinates. The results of this study are also in line with Silalahi et al (2022) who found that servant leadership improves performance through increased motivation and job satisfaction. Research Pradipta & Pusparini (2024) It also shows that service-based leadership has a positive impact on individual performance. Thus, these findings reinforce the empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of servant leadership. This emphasizes the importance of developing a human-oriented leadership style.

The Influence of Servant Leadership on Career Achievement

The results of the study show that servant leadership has a positive effect on employee career achievement. These findings indicate that leaders who provide support and development opportunities are able to drive the career advancement of subordinates. In human resource management, servant leadership plays a role in creating an inclusive career system that is oriented towards individual development. Employees who feel facilitated tend to be more confident in developing their potential. Additionally, leadership support increases employee access to development opportunities. This has an impact on increasing responsibility and recognition of work. Therefore, servant leadership contributes to employee career achievement.

Theoretically, these findings are in line with the concept of servant leadership which emphasizes the empowerment and development of subordinates Smith (2005). Research Anwar et al (2024) It also found that servant leadership contributes to employee career success. Similar findings were put forward by Ramdhani et al (2024) which states that leadership support increases career development opportunities. Thus, servant leadership acts as a catalyst in the career development process. These results reinforce the view that leadership has a strategic role in career management. Therefore, organizations need to encourage the consistent implementation of servant leadership.

The Role of Career Achievement in Mediating the Relationship of Servant Leadership to Employee Performance

The results of the study show that career achievement mediates the relationship between servant leadership and employee performance. These findings indicate that servant leadership improves performance not only directly, but also through employee career success. In human resource management, this shows the importance of integrating leadership with the career system. Servant leaders encourage individual development, which then impacts performance. Employees who are successful in their careers tend to

show higher work commitments. This condition strengthens the influence of leadership on performance. Therefore, career achievement is an important path in performance improvement.

Theoretically, these results support the view Smith (2005) that servant leadership focuses on individual growth. Research Cui et al (2025) It also shows that career development amplifies the impact of leadership on performance. These findings are in line with motivation theory that career success increases work drive. Thus, career achievement acts as a connecting mechanism between leadership and performance. These results confirm that effective leadership needs to be accompanied by a clear career system. This has important implications for human resource management.

The Role of Career Achievement in Mediating the Relationship of Managerial Skills to Employee Performance

The results show that career achievement mediates the relationship between managerial skills and employee performance. These findings indicate that managerial skills have an impact on performance when followed by recognition and career advancement. In human resource management, the career system functions as a link between competencies and work results. Employees whose skills are recognized tend to be more motivated to work optimally. In addition, career achievement strengthens confidence and job responsibility. This condition encourages continuous performance improvement. Therefore, career achievement is an important factor in optimizing employee skills.

Theoretically, these findings are in line with human capital theory which emphasizes the importance of actualizing individual abilities (Becker, 1975). Research Aditya et al (2021) It also found that career achievement strengthens the relationship between competence and performance. These results suggest that managerial skills require structural pathways to have an impact on performance. Thus, the career system plays a strategic role in HR management. These findings enrich the literature by placing career achievement as important mediators. Therefore, organizations need to manage skills and careers in an integrated manner

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion that has been carried out, it can be concluded that the variables studied have an important role in improving organizational performance through human resource management mechanisms. The findings of the study show that service-oriented leadership is able to create a work environment that supports competency development and employee engagement. In addition, managerial ability has proven to be a key factor that bridges the influence of leadership on performance, both directly and indirectly. Employees who are led with a participatory and empathetic approach tend to show more optimal levels of performance. This indicates that the success of an organization is not only determined by the structure and system, but also by the quality of the relationship between leaders and employees. Overall, this study emphasizes the importance of a humanist leadership approach in human resource management. Thus, the research objective of understanding the relationship between variables has been achieved empirically.

Theoretically, the results of this study enrich the study of human resource management by providing empirical evidence regarding the relevance of service leadership theory in the context of public sector organizations. These findings reinforce the view that leadership not only functions as a tool of control, but also as a means of empowering employees. From a practical perspective, the results of this research can be

used as a basis for organizational leaders to develop a leadership style that is more oriented towards individual development. Organizations are expected to design leadership training programs that emphasize improving managerial skills and interpersonal abilities. In addition, human resource management policies need to be directed at creating a work climate that supports collaboration and trust. The implementation of these findings is believed to improve employee performance in a sustainable manner. Thus, this research has a significant contribution to the development of human resource management practices.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered in the interpretation of the results. First, the scope of research that is limited to one type of organization allows for different outcomes if applied to the context of another organization. Second, the use of quantitative methods with questionnaires has the potential to cause a bias in respondents' perceptions. In addition, the variables studied are still limited so they do not fully describe the complexity of factors that affect employee performance. Therefore, further research is recommended to add other variables such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, or organizational commitment. Future research can also use a mixed methods approach to gain a deeper understanding. Taking into account these limitations, it is hoped that future research will be able to produce more comprehensive and generalizable findings.

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