

The Mediation of Motivation on the Effects of Flexible Work Arrangements and Servant Leadership on Employee Performance during Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the mediation of motivation on the effect of flexible work arrangements and servant leadership on employee performance during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research data was obtained by distributing questionnaires to employees who work from home during the pandemic. The sampling technique used was purposive and convenience sampling. The data applied the SEM-PLS to analyze the proposed relationship model. The result of this study was (1) Flexible Work Arrangement affects motivation (2) Servant leadership affects motivation (3) Flexible work arrangements affects employee performance (4) Servant leadership affects employee performance (5) Motivation affects employee performance (6) Flexible work arrangement affects employee performance significantly through motivation (7) Servant leadership affects employee performance significantly through motivation. According to the research result, employee performance can be increased by motivation, flexible work arrangements, and servant leadership. Motivation as the mediating variable can be applied for flexible work arrangements and servant leadership to increase employee performance.

Keywords

motivation; flexible work arrangements; servant leadership; employee performance



I. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced organizations to make changes that have an impact on employee performance (Muttaqin et al, 2020). This change involves adjusting employees and changing working conditions such as working remotely and implementing policies to limit human contact (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). This change is a concern for organizations because performance is one of the important factors that contribute to the success of an organization (Saputro et al, 2021). Previous research on employee performance has shown that motivation plays an important role in an organization (Bawono et al, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced organizations to implement flexible work arrangements. Flexible work arrangement is an option to be more flexible in determining employee work locations, working hours, and how long employees work (Govender et al, 2018). Previous research on flexible work arrangements and performance conducted by Gunawan & Franksiska (2020), Abid & Barech (2017), and Nuraini et al. (2017) showed that flexible work arrangements had a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

The latest literature recommends a servant leadership style to be applied during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sihombing (2020) state that Covid-19 pandemic caused everyone to behave beyond normal limits as usual. The outbreak of this virus has an impact especially on the economy of a nation and Globally (Ningrum, 2020). The problems posed by the Covid-19 pandemic which have become a global problem have the potential to trigger a new social order or reconstruction (Bara, 2021). Servant leadership is focused on servicing employees and ensuring that their needs are met with the highest priority. So that leaders can help employees achieve optimal performance (Ruiz-Palomino et al, 2021; Gordon & Xing, 2020). Several studies stated that servant leadership has a positive influence on employee performance (Saleem et al, 2020; Wang & Xu, 2017; Pratiwi & Idawati, 2019).

Several researches prove that performance is positively influenced by the support of motivation, flexible work arrangements, and servant leadership. However, some studies have not proven this positive effect. Research states that performance is not influenced by motivation (Julianry et al, 2017), Hoornweg (2020) found that performance is not influenced by flexible work arrangements, and research by Nurhikmah et al (2020) concludes that servant leadership has virtually no impact on employee performance.

Concerning the research gaps, researchers attract to propose research involving these variables. Researchers try to follow up on several studies above to conduct research with the same theme but have different objects, samples, and cultures to strengthen or refute previous research.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Flexible Work Arrangements and Motivation

Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) offer employees to deviate from working hours and locations following applied standards. Employees have flexibilities such as flexibility in employment relationship, flexibility in the scheduling of work, and flexibility in where work is accomplished (Spreitzer et al, 2017). One of the challenges of implementing FWAs is maintaining a routine to provide continuity and must always be motivated. From an employee's point of view, employees should always be motivated to create personal routines, set rules, and have a workspace. In addition, employees need to use the right tools to communicate with coworkers, attend online meetings, and stay positive (Spotaso, 2021).

Filardi et al (2020) conducted a study on 98 workers performing Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) in the Brazilian Federal Data Processing Service (SERPRO) and the Federal Revenue Service. The results of the study stated that 82.2% of the research sample felt motivated by the existence of FWAs. Research by Palumbo et al (2021) states that the presence of teleworking triggers increased motivation at work. These are in line with other research that shows there is a relationship between flexible work arrangements (FWAs) and motivation (Ko & Kim, 2018). From the above discussion, the following proposed hypothesis emerges.

H1: There is a positive effect of flexible work arrangement on motivationis

2.2 Servant leadership and Motivation

The success of an organization is determined by many things, such as leadership style. A leader should be creating an atmosphere that can spur the growth and development of the subordinate's performance. A leader must have a positive effect on their employees. A leader must be able to direct their employees to achieve the goals that have been set (Guterresa et al, 2020). Servant leadership theory explains that leaders must be able to serve and focus on the needs of their employees (Greenleaf, 1977). A leader as a motivator must motivate his

employees so that it affects employee performance following organizational goals (Pratiwi & Idawati, 2019).

Research conducted on 381 employees in a technology company found that the servant leadership style had a positive effect on motivation (Su et al, 2020). Pratiwi & Idawati (2019) also conducted a quantitative study on school teachers at the Lentera Harapan School in Sangihe. The research found that there is a positive effect between servant leadership and motivation. Hariyono & Andreani (2020) found that leadership has been found to have a significant positive effect on work motivation. From the above discussion, the following proposed hypothesis emerges.

H2: There is a positive effect of servant leadership on motivation

2.3 Flexible Working Arrangement and Employee Performance

Flexibility in work arrangements is one of the methods used to gain work efficiency during the Covid-19 pandemic (Spurk & Straub, 2020). This system has an impact on employee performance (Austin-Agole et al, 2020). Employee performance can be measured by looking at the quality and quantity that has been produced (Rahman&Kistyanto, 2019).

The research conducted by Govender et al (2018) revealed that flexible work arrangements and performance are inextricably linked. Majority of employees are satisfied with the flexible work arrangement that has been implemented. Other studies have found a positive relationship between flexible work arrangements and employee performance (Ramakrishnan & Arokiasamy, 2019; Giovanis, 2018). So, the hypothesis proposed is as follows:

H3: There is a positive effect of flexible work arrangements on employee performance

2.4 Servant Leadership and Employee Performance

Servant leadership was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in The Servant as Leader essay. Greenleaf stated that “The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first” (Greenleaf, 1977). Specifically, servant leadership is a people-centered approach according to desired needs (Ruiz-Palomino et al, 2020). Servant leadership has an impact on organizational efficiency and effectiveness, which is considered an important goal of an organization. Servant leadership in an organization provides benefits such as increased employee performance, higher morale, and reduced turnover (Zein et al, 2021).

Yumte et al (2017) stated that servant leadership has a positive effect on employee performance. Other research shows there is a positive effect of servant leadership on employee performance (Zein et al, 2021; Muller et al, 2018). So, the hypothesis proposed is as follows:

H4: There is a positive effect of flexible work arrangements on employee performance

2.5 Motivation and Employee Performance

Motivation is a set of attitudes and values that will affect employees to achieve their goals. Motivation encourages employees to get appropriate behavior to achieve their goals (Velmurugan and Sankar, 2017). Employees must continue to be optimally motivated to improve their performance. Motivation is the main driver for people who do their work (Andayani and Tirtayasa, 2020).

Research collected primary data from 103 samples of employees who work in manufacturing and found motivation has a positive effect on performance (Gomathi & Vishnumoorthy, 2020). This research was supported by Chien et al (2020). Chin et al (2020) found that motivation is positively related to employee performance obtained from 398 employees in Mongolia. This study concludes that motivation is the main factor influencing

employee performance. So, the hypothesis proposed is as follows:
H5: There is a positive effect of motivation on employee performance

2.6 Flexible Work Arrangements and Employee Performance through Motivation

Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) is a practice such as work from home, work outside office hours, reduce or extend work hours. This arrangement is offered by companies to support employees in balancing their work and personal lives and improve company performance (Groen et al, 2018). Motivation to make flexible work arrangements is related to employee performance. Employees who have high motivation in doing their work will work hard to improve their performance (Khan et al, 2021).

Research by Saputro et al (2021) found that flexibility in work affects employee performance through motivation as an intervening variable. The result of this study is supported by Awit & Marticio (2022) who examined 393 employees who work from home. The study also found that motivation as mediating variable on the effects of telework on work performance was demonstrated. From the above discussion, the following proposed hypothesis emerges.

H6: There is a significant mediating effect of Motivation to the effect of Flexible Work Arrangement on employee performance

2.7 Servant Leadership and Employee Performance through Motivation

Servant leadership encourages staff to be able to motivate, move and direct toward organizational goals (Novianti & Suparmono, 2021). Motivation acts as a linking mechanism between servant leadership and employee performance. The existence of an example by a leader will influence his staff. Leaders can direct their staff to generate a willingness to work hard and be enthusiastic about achieving higher performance (Bandura, 1977).

Bayram & Zoubi (2019) conducted a study on 3000 employees in Jordan with a randomized method to examine the relationship between servant leadership and employee performance with motivation as the mediating variable. The result of the study is motivation can influence significantly between servant leadership and employee performance in the Jordanian public service sector, especially the customs department which was previously ignored. The research is supported by the research of Su et al, (2020) and Gutierrez et al (2020). From the above discussion, the following proposed hypothesis emerges.

H7: There is a significant mediating effect of Motivation to the effect of Servant leadership on employee performance

Based on the hypothesis described, the following research models are proposed:

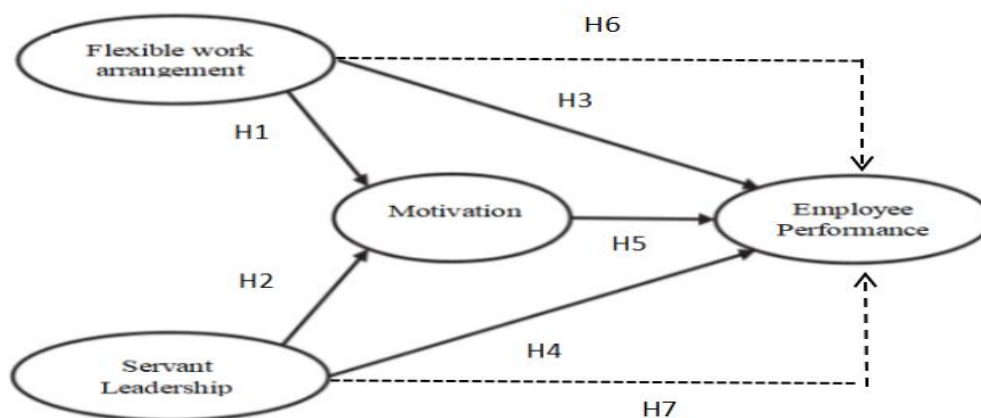


Figure 1. Research Model of Hypothesis

III. Research Methods

3.1 Research Design

This research is a quantitative research. Research sample is the employees who work in startup companies. The dependent variable is employee performance, the independent variable is Flexible Work Arrangements and Servant Leadership, and the mediating variable is motivation.

3.2. Measurement Scale

The output of the data is measured based on the Likert scale. The scale ranged from 1 to 5, from "I totally disagree" to "I fully agree".

3.3 Research Sample

The sample is determined using Maximum Likelihood Estimation technique by Ghozali (2017), total samples for SEM's appropriate is between 100-200 samples. The research sample was employees in startup companies, totaling 100 people. This research using a purposive and convenience sampling technique or a census of 100 employees in startup companies. The questionnaire is distributed through online media using Google Form. The information was obtained indirectly using connections from researchers and whatsapp or telegram groups.

3.4 Data Screening and Analysis

This study was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS). SEM is a type of multivariate analysis in the social sciences. Multivariate analysis is the application of statistical methods for analyzing multiple research variables simultaneously. According to Ghozali (2016), SEM provides researchers with greater flexibility in linking theory and data. PLS has two submodels. That is, the measurement model (outer model) is used for validity and reliability testing, and the structural model (inner model) is used for causality testing or hypothesis testing to test predictive models (Ghozali, 2016).

The validity of convergence is measured by examining external exposure. Questionnaire statements are validated when the outer loading exposure exceeds 0.70.

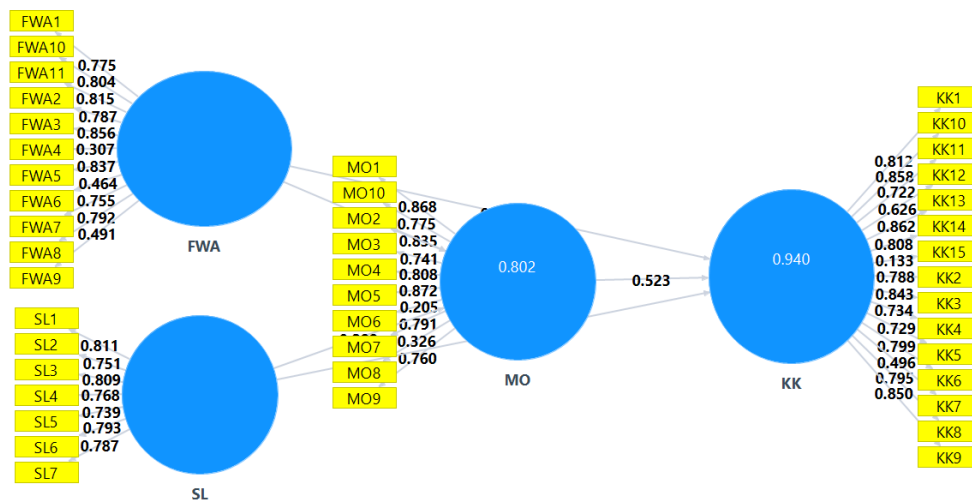


Figure 2. Stage One Measurement Model Output Display

The picture above shows the outer loading of each statement when tested for validation. The questionnaire statement is said to be valid if it has an outer loading above > 0.70 . Invalid items are then discarded and recalculated to get a model image as below:

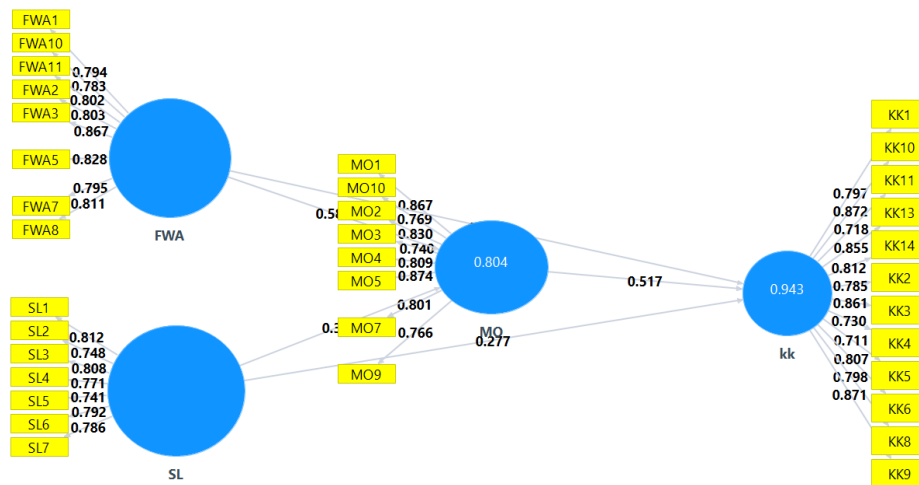


Figure 3. Stage Two Measurement Model Output Display

Table 2 shows that after retesting the statements that have been tested in stage 1 and valid, it is obtained that all statements are valid and can be used in research.

Table 1. Reliability Test

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Result
Flexible Work Arrangement	0,925	0,939	Reliable
Servant Leadership	0,893	0,916	Reliable
Motivation	0,924	0,938	Reliable
Employee Performance	0,949	0,956	Reliable

Based on table 1 shows that the four variables have Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70 and have composite reliability above 0.80, so the measuring instrument used is reliable and feasible to be used in research.

IV. Discussion

To find out whether the hypothesis test is rejected or accepted are to perform bootstrapping on the PLS software and then look at the significant values between constructs, t-statistics, and p-values. The hypothesis can be accepted if it has a significant t-value > 1.96 (significant level = 5%) or a p-value < 0.05 .

Table 2. Path Coefficient Variable

Construct	Original Sample	T Statistic ((O/STDEV))	P values	Result
FWA → motivation	0,349	3,324	0,001	Accepted
SL → motivation	0,289	2,806	0,005	Accepted
FWA → performance	0,220	2,225	0,027	Accepted
SL → performance	0,245	2,862	0,004	Accepted
Motivasi → performce	0,319	3,358	0,001	Accepted

Hypothesis 1 states that a flexible work arrangement affects motivation. Based on table 2, t-statistic in this research is 3.324 or >1.96 and a p-value of 0.001 (<0.05), so hypothesis 1 is accepted. This finding explains that the existence of flexible work arrangements has an impact on employee motivation in Indonesia. This is consistent with the study by Filardi et al. (2020), Palumbo et al. (2021) and Ko & Kim (2018) which state that the existence of a flexible work arrangement triggers motivation to work.

The second construct in this research show that t-statistic is 2.806 (> 1.96) and a p-value of 0.005 (<0.05). So hypothesis 2 which states that Servant leadership affects motivation can be accepted. This finding explains that the presence of servant leadership influences motivation during the Covid-19 pandemic. This is in line with the study by Su et al. (2020), Pratiwi & Idawati (2019), Hariyono & Andreani (2020) which state that the presence of servant leadership has a positive impact on motivation.

Hypothesis 3 states that a flexible work arrangement affects employee performance. In the calculation, the t-statistic is more than 1.96, namely 2.225 and p-values are less than 0.05, namely 0.027. So hypothesis 3 in this study is accepted. This finding explains that the existence of flexible work arrangements during covid-19 pandemic has an impact on employee performance. This is consistent with the research by Govender et al. (2018), Giovanis (2018), Ramakrishnan & Arokiasamy (2019) state that having flexible work arrangements has a positive effect on employee performance.

Hypothesis 4 suspects that servant leadership affects performance. Based on the calculations in the table above, it is stated that the t-statistic is more than 1.96, namely 2.862 and the p-values are less than 0.05 namely 0.004, so hypothesis 4 in this research is accepted. This explains that the presence of servant leadership is perceived to be able to improve employee performance. This is in line with research from Yumte et al (2017), Zein et al (2021), and Muller et al (2018) which concludes that servant leadership has a positive influence on employee performance. The results of this research prove that servant leadership is a leadership style that is able to improve employee performance during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Hypothesis 5 states that motivation affects performance. In the calculations in table 4.16, it is stated that the t-statistic is > 1.96 , namely 3.358 and p-values are less than 0.05, namely 0.001. So hypothesis 4 in this study is accepted. This finding explains that motivation has a positive influence on employee performance. This is in line with research from Gomathi & Vishnumoorthy (2020) and Chien et al (2020) which state that motivation affects employee performance.

Table 3. Indirect Effect

Construct	Original Sample	T Statistic (O/STDEV)	P-values	Result
FWA → motivation → employee performance	0,111	1,973	0,049	Significant
SL → motivation → employee performance	0,092	2,173	0,030	Significant

Based on table 3, the indirect effect shows that the influence of flexible work arrangements on performance through motivation shows a positive direction with t-statistics of 1.973 and p-values of 0.049. The t-statistic value is above 1.96 and the p-value < 0.05 , so it can be concluded that hypothesis 6 is accepted. This finding states that motivation can mediate the effect of flexible work arrangements on employee performance. When employees carry out flexible work arrangements, it will trigger the growth of motivation so that

employees are more willing to spend energy to work better. This has an impact on increasing employee performance so that they can achieve the goals of the organization. This study is in line with research conducted by Saputro et al (2021) and Awit & Marticio (2022).

The influence of servant leadership on employee performance through motivation has a positive relationship with a t-statistic value of 2.173 (>1.96) and a p-value of 0.030 (<0.05). So it can be concluded that servant leadership has a significant positive effect on performance through motivation. This finding shows that motivation is able to mediate the influence of servant leadership on performance. The existence of servant leadership from their superiors triggers employees to be more motivated so that there is an increase in their performance. This result is in line with previous research conducted by Bayram & Zoubi (2019), Su et al (2020), and Guttersa et al (2020).

V. Conclusion

Based on the results, we found that flexible work arrangements and servant leadership influence employee performance and motivation. Motivation affects performance. During the Covid19 pandemic, flexible work arrangements (FWAs) and servant leadership have a significant impact on employee performance through motivation.

Suggestion

The researcher suggests that further research related to performance can use other relevant variables. Researchers also suggest conducting more in-depth research to reduce bias. In addition, filling out the questionnaire can be done directly and face to face.

Future research is expected to use a wider research object, because all companies in Indonesia have been affected by COVID-19 which has affected their performance. So the new system for all companies in Indonesia needs to be studied further.

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