

The Effect of Servant Leadership on Work Engagement: The Mediating Role of Person-Organization Fit

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the relationship between servant leadership and work engagement and investigate the mediating role of person-organization fit in this relationship. The research was conducted in July 2023 on blue-collar employees in the glass industry in the Marmara Region. A total of 266 employees participated in the survey. Confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were conducted using the MPLUS7 package program, and hypotheses were tested using the SPSS26 program. The results of the analyses indicated that servant leadership positively influences person-organization fit and work engagement. Additionally, it was found that person-organization fit increases work engagement. Furthermore, it was revealed that person-organization fit partially mediates the effect of servant leadership on work engagement.



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1. INTRODUCTION

Radical transformations are a necessity, especially in today's organizational paradigm is very high and technological advances have reached incredible levels compared with the traditional centralized, standardized, and formalized bureaucratic organization based on fear, which has been the dominant organizational paradigm since the beginning of the industrial revolution (Fry, 2003). In today's rapidly changing and complex business environment, "work engagement" has become a highly emphasized topic for both researchers and organizations (Bakker et al., 2011). Research indicates that work engagement is closely linked to employee attitudes, behaviors, well-being, and performance (Dalal et al., 2012; Leiter & Bakker, 2010). Therefore, it is evident that work engagement plays a crucial role in determining organizational performance (Choi et al., 2015). Additionally, having a community of employees with high levels of work integration is considered can provide a competitive advantage over rivals (Saks et al., 2022; Rich et al., 2010). In this context, the main purpose of this study is to assess how effective management practices are in fostering employee engagement within the framework of servant leadership, a significant topic that has gained attention in recent times.

Undoubtedly, in these change and transformation-based competitive conditions, the servant leadership approach, which contributes positively to both working and social life, focuses entirely on the employee's welfare and tries to spread the spirit of cooperation through effective communication emerges as an effective practice (Bakan & Doğan, 2012; Barbuto & Gifford, 2010). Besides, the leader demonstrates this approach without expecting anything in return (Spears, 1998). This servant leadership approach, centered on giving and contributing, enables employees to integrate with the organization through effective communication and collaboration (Vondey, 2010). In this leadership approach, while there are no direct performance expectations in return, this method indirectly fosters the desired engagement phenomenon, which positively impacts business processes (Liden et al., 2014; Walumbwa et al., 2010). When employees are well engagement with their jobs, they are more effective and productive, thereby increasing their performance (Roberts & Davenport, 2002). As a matter of fact, what organizations expect from employees in accordance with the psychological contract is to fulfill the duties and responsibilities assigned to them during working hours in a willing, enthusiastic, and focused manner and to engage in actions that increase, improve, and develop the performance of the organization (Anderson and Schalk, 1998). Although this situation is examined as performance in behavioral terms, its attitudinal reflection is the employee's mental and psychological readiness towards work (Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004). The readiness to perform one's work, the energy, and the value placed on the work itself—in other words, the employee's engagement with their job—reflects the attitudinal orientation to contributive performance of employees (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Engaged employees are highly enthusiastic about their work and serve as a critical source of inspiration for others (De Clercq et al., 2014). The emergence of this positive work attitude is undoubtedly the result of an effective leadership style. Recently, the importance of servant leadership in creating this desired positive work environment

has been frequently emphasized (Roberts, 2018). This approach is considered vital for employees to better integrate with their work. This is because servant leadership reflects a philosophy that primarily values employees as human beings with its employee-oriented characteristics. It aims “to create a positive working environment by communicating effectively with followers, listening to their needs and desires, and helping them reach their potential” (Liden et al., 2008). In addition, with its principles of integrity and honesty, it creates an environment of trust that increases employees' loyalty and ensures the creation of a suitable environment for the desired performance. In this context, it can be stated that servant leadership is an important organizational resource that enables employees to engage with their work.

In this respect, the main purpose of this study is to examine the effect of servant leadership on job engagement. In addition, some perceptual mechanisms play an important role in managerial approaches affecting employee attitudes and behaviors (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Academic studies try to determine this situation with mediator variables. In this study, the mediating role of person-organization fit in the effect of servant leadership on work engagement was examined. This is because person-organization fit refers to a perceptual support system that makes the employee feel psychological well and indicates that they have similar values with the organization they are a member of. In workplaces, which occupy an important part of their daily lives, people wish to maintain their psychological well-being and welfare (Abrams, 2010). It is certain that an employee who does not feel suitable for their job or organization, who believes they do not belong to the organization they are in, and who does not share common characteristics with it cannot be psychologically well-being and cannot be expected to work willingly and meet the expected performance standards. On the other hand, employees who find themselves aligned with the organization's values integrate with the company's goals and are motivated to contribute positively to achieving a superior position to organization over competitors. At this point, it is possible to say that servant leadership is an effective type of leadership that facilitates employees' adaptation to their organizations with its person-oriented attitude and unifying and integrative orientation (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Accordingly, it is predicted that the servant leadership approach, will have a significant impact on the formation of person-organization fit and engagement with work. So, examining the mediating role of employees' fit with the organization in the relationship between servant leadership and job integration is another purpose of this study.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, servant leadership, person-organization fit, and work engagement, which are discussed within the scope of the research, are briefly explained conceptually, and hypotheses are developed to examine the assumed relationships between the variables.

2.1. Servant Leadership

The servant leadership approach differs from traditional leadership approaches by prioritizing serving followers and making them the focal point. This approach emphasizes keeping personal interests in the background. Servant leaders view this as a crucial element in achieving success and strive to shape the organizational culture in this direction (Farling et al., 1999). The motivation of such leaders is not the desire for personal gain or power but rather the development and empowerment of their followers in both social and professional areas (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

Greenleaf, who is known to have first used the concept of servant leadership, was influenced by the novel "Journey to the East" in which he read and put forward the idea that leaders can also be servants (Greenleaf, 1977). In his seminal work "The Servant as Leader," Greenleaf (2003) asks: "Are those around the servant leader developing as individuals? Are they on their way to becoming healthier, wiser, more free and more independent and servants too? And what is the impact of this on the least privileged in society? Will they be able to benefit from this or at least avoid deprivation?" These questions highlight the leader's strong focus on the growth and well-being of their followers (Duyan & Van Dierendonck, 2014).

Servant leaders can address their followers' spiritual needs by offering guidance, skill development, encouragement, and motivation. They can also meet their physical needs by providing necessary resources (Bakan & Doğan, 2012). Additionally, servant leadership is characterized by an "ethical" approach, which involves open communication and fair, honest interaction with others (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016).

In his 1998 work on servant leadership, Spears describes several key attributes of this leadership style. These include: considering people's wishes and prioritizing communication (listening), accepting others by trying to understand their situations (empathy), making an effort to improve the emotional well-being of followers (healing), being conscious of events and staying alert (awareness), influencing others through individual skills rather than positional power (persuasion), having a future-oriented perspective (conceptualization), describing the current situation through intuition (foresight); prioritizing meeting the needs of others (stewardship), caring about personal, professional, and spiritual development of oneself and others (commitment to people's development), and emphasizing the importance of communities in individual life (building community) (Spears, 1998).

Patterson made significant contributions to the development of the concept by outlining servant leadership across 7 dimensions in the model he proposed (Cited in Bakan & Doğan, 2012; Aslan & Özata, 2011). These are *agapoo love* (representing an inner passion that drives the leader to prioritize meeting the wishes, desires, and needs of others as a primary necessity, ahead of factors such as efficiency and profitability), *humility* (reflecting the leader's ability to focus on others without considering themselves as superior), *altruism* (the commitment to the well-being of others without

expecting anything in return), *vision* (a long-term perspective that others can accept and believe in), *trust* (the honest stance that the leader inspires through fair and ethical behavior, gaining the faith of others), *empowerment* (ensuring the development of followers by strengthening them; and finally), *service* (the leader focuses entirely on their followers without considering his/her individual interests, acting solely to contribute to them).

Servant leadership emphasizes “the necessity and importance of valuing people, listening to them, empowering them, and possessing characteristics such as influence, vision, trust, reliability, competence, task sharing, integrity, honesty, modeling and transparency, service, stewardship, communication, belief, leading, appreciating others, encouraging, teaching, and empowering people” (Akgemci et al., 2019). Servant leadership is demonstrated through the use of knowledge and experience to exhibit behaviors that serve the needs of others and the community rather than prioritizing individual interests in decision-making and choices (Barbuto & Gifford, 2010).

2.2. Person-Organization Fit

The Person-Environment Fit Theory, proposed by Lewin in 1935, makes the basic assumption that outcomes are influenced by the interaction between individuals and their environment. Good adjustment is usually linked to positive outcomes for the individual. Person-environment fit is a multidimensional approach, encompassing the fit between person and group, person and organization, person and vocation, and person and person (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006).

The concept of person-organization fit is a key component of the PE Fit Theory, which examines the compatibility of individuals with their work, the teams they engage with, their supervisors, and the organization they are part of (Caplan, 1987). The concept of person-organization fit focuses on the employee's perception of how well their own values align with those of the organization (Farooqui & Nagendra, 2014).

Kristof (1996) made significant contributions to the development of the concept of person-organization fit. She defines it as "the fit that occurs when at least one party of the person and organization meets the needs of the other or both have similar basic characteristics." Unlike person-environment fit “person-organization fit emphasizes the importance of the fit between employees and work processes and the creation of an organizational identity through the institutionalization of consistent values that permeate an organization's culture” (Morley, 2007).

Schneider, Goldstein, and Smith (1995) also focused on person-organization fit by examining the employee's career path during the recruitment and leaving process within the scope of the employee's organizational life from the attraction-selection-attrition perspective. People's preferences for a place to work are shaped by their assessment of how well their personal characteristics align with an organization's goals, business processes, and culture. Individuals are drawn to organizations they believe can help them achieve their specific goals and with which they feel a sense of compatibility. Following

this, organizations recruit candidates with the desired characteristics. However, if the expected harmony between the individual and the organization is not achieved, the employee may decide to leave the job. This process is linked to person-organization fit and influences various employee behaviors, including identification with the organization, work engagement, organizational commitment, and intention to leave (Schneider et al., 1995).

Bretz and Judge (1994) assessed person-organization fit from four distinct perspectives: (1) The alignment of individual knowledge, skills, and abilities with basic job requirements; (2) the harmony between individual needs and organizational structures; (3) the congruence between an individual's values and the organizational culture; and (4) the resemblance between an individual's personality and the perceived organizational image. These dimensions are interconnected and collectively contribute to understanding an employee's behavioral experiences within the organization. Of these dimensions, value fit, which is frequently discussed, signifies the alignment between organizational values and the personal beliefs and values of employees, irrespective of work (Kristof, 1996).

In their study Jansen and Brown (2006) evaluated the multidimensional approach to person-organization fit. This approach focuses on four dimensions: person-vocation fit, which refers to matching individuals with suitable career options based on career choice theories; person-job fit, which examines the relationship between one's abilities or desires and the demands or characteristics of a specific job; person-organization fit, which assesses the similarity between an individual and an organization, and their ability to meet each other's needs; person-group fit, which looks at the compatibility of skills and interpersonal relationships between individuals and work groups; and person-person fit, which emphasizes the compatibility between an employee and their colleagues.

Research indicates that person-organization fit is strongly linked to desirable employee behaviors such as job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, psychological well-being, organizational identification, job performance, and organizational commitment (Chen et al., 2016; Farooqui & Nagendra, 2014; Pelealu, 2022; Silverthorne, 2004; Mete et al., 2016).

In this study, I discussed person-organization fit by focusing on the harmony between personality and values. I examined how the fit between servant leadership and work engagement is influenced by the intersection of personal and organizational values. The person-value fit perspective explores the cognitive alignment between personal characteristics and perceptions of the organizational profile. It is based on the assumption that employees have a mental representation of the organizational profile (Hoffman & Woehr, 2006).

2.3. Work Engagement

The concept of engagement, first cited in the literature in Kahn's article "Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work" (1990), is defined as the physical,

cognitive, and emotional expression of employees in their organizational roles within the framework of "Role Theory."

Roberts and Davenport (2002) briefly defined work engagement as "employee enthusiasm and participation in work". According to the researchers, employees who are highly engaged with their work identify with the work personally, and the work itself plays a role as a source of motivation for the employee. Although it is widely accepted that work engagement is caused by both personal and environmental factors, research on the subject shows that integration with work is examined as a reaction of the employee against the characteristics of the job (İnceoğlu & Warr, 2011).

The job demand-resource model plays a crucial role in defining the concept of work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). According to the model, every job comes with physical and psychological demands that individuals must face. These demands are the challenges that individuals encounter in their work and stem from the nature of the job itself. Additionally, various job resources help individuals deal with these challenges, allowing them to learn and grow in the workplace. These resources include mentoring, leadership, meaningfulness of work, autonomy, and serve as a support mechanism that contributes to the well-being of the employee (Wan et al., 2018). It is believed that low job resources can lead to employee burnout, while high job resources can lead to work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). From this perspective, work resources can be seen as an intrinsic motivation tool that emphasizes personal development and psychological well-being, as well as an external motivation tool that encompasses the arrangements made for the work environment.

Factors such as social support, rewards, recognition by managers and colleagues, learning opportunities, and level of autonomy are considered to be the main drivers of work resources at the individual level (Bakker, 2011; Maslach et al., 2001; Saks, 2006). Work engagement, which is seen as a positive expression of employee motivation (Kahn, 2010), plays a critical role in facilitating many positive outcomes, including "productivity, organizational citizenship behaviors, and overall job performance".

2.4. Hypotheses Development

As a result of the understanding of the impact of the social side of the employee on business life, it can be said that employees act with a higher sense of commitment when their needs and wishes are handled more caringly by their managers or leaders (De Clercq et al., 2014). With a follower-driven approach such as servant leadership, a more intense sense of psychological security and meaningfulness emerges by understanding employees' unique characteristics, supporting their achievements, and establishing empathy. Humility, which prioritizes employees' interests, is a critical element of servant leadership (Van Dierendonck, 2011). In addition, servant leaders meet the needs of their followers through personal support and coaching. With this care, servant leaders can enhance psychological safety and meaningfulness, and by recognizing their unique and special qualities, they can generate positive

energy among followers (Liden et al., 2008; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Thus, employees are more committed to their work, and work engagement increases (Brown & Leigh, 1996; Kahn, 1990). In this research, it was explored how servant leaders who set aside their self-interest for the benefit of their followers can stimulate work engagement among followers. According to past research findings that show a positive impact of servant leadership on work engagement (Zhou et al., 2022; Haar et al., 2017; Kaya & Karatepe, 2020), the following hypothesis has been developed.

H₁: Servant leadership has a positive effect on work engagement.

Piasentin and Chapman (2006) stated that in the majority of studies about person-organization fit that they examined in their meta-analysis study, person-organization fit is evaluated as an individual's perception of fit between their own values and the values of the organization. The servant-oriented behaviors displayed by managers go beyond this harmony by providing the opportunity for quality interaction with their followers. It has been suggested that the person-oriented attitude in the servant leadership approach enables employees to feel safe and to establish strong relationships within the organization (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Chatman (1991) stated that person-organization fit (P-O fit) focuses on how a person's values, when they intersect with an organization's value system, influence that person's behavior. In this case, servant leadership qualities encompass ethics, a follower-centric approach, and encouragement for development, facilitating the employees' acceptance of the organization's value system and fostering person-organization alignment. The servant leader “motivates followers, listens to them, understands their needs, and puts their needs above his/her own interests” which further increases the employee's person-organization fit (Kiker et al., 2019). In addition, the motivation to serve the followers, as well as the intense effort for their well-being, allows for deeper interactions between the leader and the followers. This allows the leader, who plays the role of a bridge between the organization and the employees, to convey his/her values, beliefs, and thoughts to followers more effectively (Li, 2006). Thus, it is possible to fit employee values with organizational values. In their research, Dahlez et al. (2021) provided substantial support for this conclusion. So, the second hypothesis developed in this direction is as follows:

H₂: Servant leadership has a positive effect on person-organization fit.

Along with the selection and placement processes, the skills and abilities of the employee recruited are suitable for the job requirements, which ensures high participation (Juhdi et al., 2013). With person-organization fit, employees unite around a common goal and increase the effectiveness of their job performance. Thus, a psychological security situation is created between the employee and the organization (Biswas & Bhatnagar, 2013). This psychological security situation is also seen as one of the most important prerequisites for the employee's commitment to work and engagement with work. (Biswas & Bhatnagar, 2013). Bono and Judge (2003) also suggested that employees who find organizational values compatible with their own values have higher work engagement rates. In addition

to matching the skills with the job requirements, the integrity of the values held by the employees and the organizational culture and values helps to create job satisfaction, job engagement, and some goal-oriented behaviors. According to Bakker et al. (2023), job resources such as supervisor support, appreciation, and organizational climate, which includes organizational value systems and work relations, are believed to play a significant role in fostering strong employee engagement with their respective organizations. The results of the studies reported that person-organization fit was related to work engagement (Ünal & Turgut; 2015, Hamid & Yahya, 2011). Thus, the following hypothesis was developed.

H₃: Person-organization fit has a positive effect on work engagement.

Person-organization fit examines how an employee's behavior is influenced by the organization's values (Chatman,1991). According to Field Theory, people's individual perceptions of their working environments and the special interactions they have are the most important determinants of their behavior. Thus, the perception of the working environment and job determines the direction of employee behavior. In this context, servant leadership, which exhibits a behavioral approach such as meeting the needs of its subordinates by developing emotional connections with its subordinates and dedicating itself to realizing their interests without expecting anything in return, without using any punitive power within the authority of its position, enables the employee to develop a positive relationship with the organization and by feeling compatible with the organization, it can play a role as a force that enables the employee to be more engaged in their work. This force triggers employees to perform their jobs effectively and integrate with the work towards the success of the organization's mission and vision (Hamid & Yahya, 2011). Responding to a strong belief in their organization, accepting organizational goals and values, and being prepared to make significant efforts to serve the organization are indicators of a high degree of engagement (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2009). At this point, it is evident that servant leadership stands out as an effective and impactful style of leadership. This leadership approach plays a significant role in aiding employees in their adaptation to organizational dynamics. Servant leadership is characterized by its person-centered attitude, which prioritizes the individual needs and growth of employees. Furthermore, it fosters a unifying and integrative orientation, emphasizing collaboration and inclusivity within the organizational framework (Van Dierendonck, 2011). In this context, the last hypothesis developed as follows:

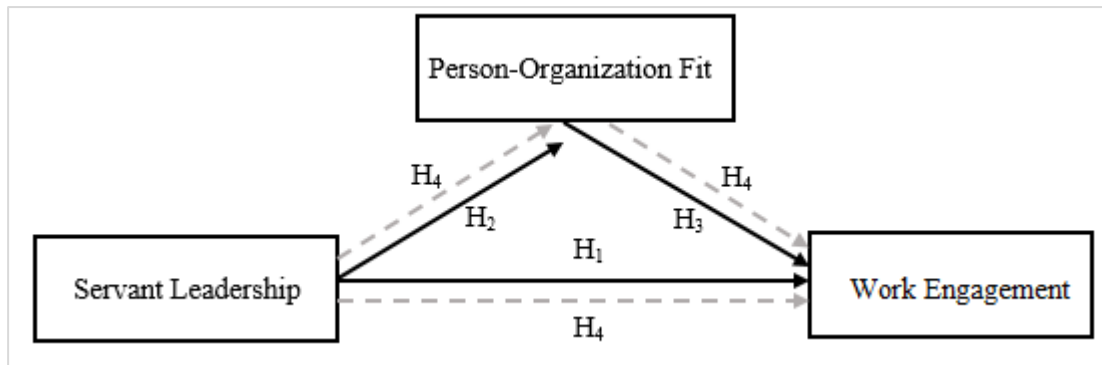
H₄: Person-organization fit has a mediating role between servant leadership and work engagement.

3. METHOD

The study aims to explore how servant leadership impacts work engagement and to determine if person-organization fit plays a mediating role in this relationship. To achieve this, a relational

scanning model, as depicted in Figure 1, was developed along with hypotheses based on the existing literature.

Figure 1. Research Model



3.1. Sample

For research purposes, ethical approval was obtained from the Gümüşhane University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board during a meeting dated 14/06/2023 and numbered 2023/3. The research was conducted in July 2023 and focused on blue-collar employees in the glass industry sector. A total of 278 employees participated in the research. After excluding incomplete and incorrectly filled questionnaires, the final sample size for evaluation was determined to be 266.

3.2. Measurement Tools

For servant leadership, which is the independent variable of the research, the servant leadership scale consisting of 7 items and one dimension belonging to Liden et al. (2015) was used. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was made by Kılıç and Aydın (2016). In order to measure the person-organization fit of the research participants, a scale consisting of 4 items developed by Netemeyer et al. (1997) was used. The Turkish translation of the scale was carried out by Turunç and Çelik (2012). Finally, in order to measure the engagement of employees with work, a short version consisting of 9 items developed by Schaufeli et al. (2006), tested for validity and reliability, published in many languages and Turkish, and made available for scientific studies, was used. The validity and reliability of the Turkish translation have been demonstrated by Kenek and Sökmen (2022). All scale statements were prepared in the form of a 5-point Likert scale as "1: Strongly disagree, 5: Strongly Agree".

3.3. Results

After the data was collected, it was examined that the scales met the validity and reliability criteria before conducting the regression analyses. In order to do this, confirmatory factor analysis is required. However, before doing that, it is performed the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity to assess the suitability of the scales for CFA. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin acceptable limit value of 0.60 indicates that the sample size is sufficient for factor analysis. The significance level sought from Bartlett's sphericity test indicates that the correlation

between the items in the scale is suitable for factor analysis (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2014). As a result of the tests carried out to check whether these preliminary values are met; for servant leadership, KMO= 0.883 and Bartlett's sphericity test result was significant ($p < 0.001$); for person-organization fit, KMO= 0.842 and Bartlett's sphericity test result was significant ($p < .001$) and finally, for work engagement the KMO value was 0.897 and Bartlett's sphericity test ($p < .001$) was found to give significant results. Thus, confirmatory factor analyzes for the scales were carried out.

3.3.1. Confirmatory Factor Analyzes

MPLUS 7 statistical program was used in confirmatory factor analyzes for the scales. The results of the CFA conducted for servant leadership, which was considered as the independent variable of the research, showed that the factor loading of the item "sl1" in the scale was lower than 0.3 and was removed from the scale. After taking into account the model modification indices and conducting CFA again, it was observed that the factor loadings of the remaining scale items ranged between 0.80 and 0.92. The fit indices also chi-square/degrees of freedom ($\chi^2/df = 2.25$; RMSEA= 0.069; CFI= 0.995; TLI= 0.988; SRMR= 0.012 were determined as. Thus, it was concluded that the items used were suitable for the current servant leadership measurement structure.

The CFA results for the person-organization fit scale show that the items used have excellent fit values with the scale structure, and their factor loadings are between 0.73 and 0.90. The obtained model fit values are as follows: chi-square/degrees of freedom (χ^2/df)= 1.38; RMSEA= 0.038; CFI= 0.999; TLI= 0.997; SRMR=0.008.

Finally, according to the CFA findings performed for the work engagement scale, factor loadings varied between 0.55 and 0.82, and model fit values were chi-square/degrees of freedom (χ^2/df)= 2.56; RMSEA= 0.077; CFI= 0.972; TLI= 0.948; SRMR=0.30 was observed to be at an acceptable level.

Table 1. Confirmatory factor analysis results of the scales

Variables	KMO	Barlett	χ^2/df	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR	AVE	CR	α
SL	.883	$p < .001$	2.25	.069	.995	.988	.012	.74	.94	.95
PO Fit	.842	$p < .001$	1.38	.038	.999	.997	.008	.71	.91	.90
WE	.897	$p < .001$	2.56	.077	.972	.954	.030	.52	.90	.91

3.3.2. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was performed to examine relationships between research variables. "There is a weak relationship between variables if $.30 > r$ ", medium if $.30 \leq r < .50$ ", and strong if $.50 \leq r < 1$ " (Cohen, 2013). According to the analysis results, there are positive significant relationships between servant leadership and person-organization fit ($r = .459$; $p < .001$) and work engagement ($r =$

.398; $p < 0.001$). In addition, there is a positive significant relationship between person-organization fit and work engagement ($r = .398$; $p < .001$).

Table 2. The relationships between variables

	Variables	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3
1	Servant Leadership	2.93	1.08	---		
2	Person-Organization Fit	3.62	1.01	.459	---	
3	Work Engagement	3.73	0.71	.398	.422	---

Note: *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-sided).

3.3.3. Regression Analyzes

Simple linear regression analyses were carried out to test the first three hypotheses developed for the purpose of the research. Accordingly, as stated in Table 3, it was determined that servant leadership positively affects work engagement ($\beta = 0.398$; $p < .001$). Furthermore, research has revealed that servant leadership can explain 15% of the variation in work engagement ($R^2 = 0.159$), and H_1 (Servant leadership has a positive effect on work engagement.) was accepted. It was observed that servant leadership also positively affects person-organization fit ($\beta = 0.459$; $p < .001$) and can explain the 21% change in person-organization fit. Therefore, H_2 (Servant leadership has a positive effect on person-organization fit.) was accepted. In addition, the significant and positive effect of person-organization fit on work engagement ($\beta = 0.422$; $p < .001$) is another finding. Accordingly, it can be stated that person-organization fit can explain 18% of the variance in work engagement, and thus H_3 (Person-organization has a positive effect on work engagement.) was also accepted.

Table 3. Simple Linear Regression Analyzes

	Regression Analyzes	B	S.E.	β	p	Model Statistics
(H ₁)	Independent Variable: Servant Leadership Dependent Variable: Work Engagement	0.261	0.037	0.398	0.00	$R^2 = 0.159$ $F = 49.781$ $p < 0.000$
(H ₂)	Independent Variable: Servant Leadership Dependent Variable: Person-Organization Fit	0.430	0.051	0.459	0.00	$R^2 = 0.211$ $F = 70.518$ $p < 0.001$
(H ₃)	Independent Variable: Person-Organization Fit Dependent Variable: Work Engagement	0.295	0.039	0.422	0.00	$R^2 = 0.178$ $F = 57.046$ $p < 0.001$

Note: B: Unstandardized beta coefficient; S.E.: Standard Error; β : Standardized beta coefficient

After conducting simple linear regression analyses to test the first three hypotheses, a multiple regression analysis was performed using the SPSS Process macro to explore the mediating role of person-organization fit between servant leadership and work engagement. This analysis also used the Bootstrap ($n = 5000$) method, which involves repeated sampling from observed data to create the

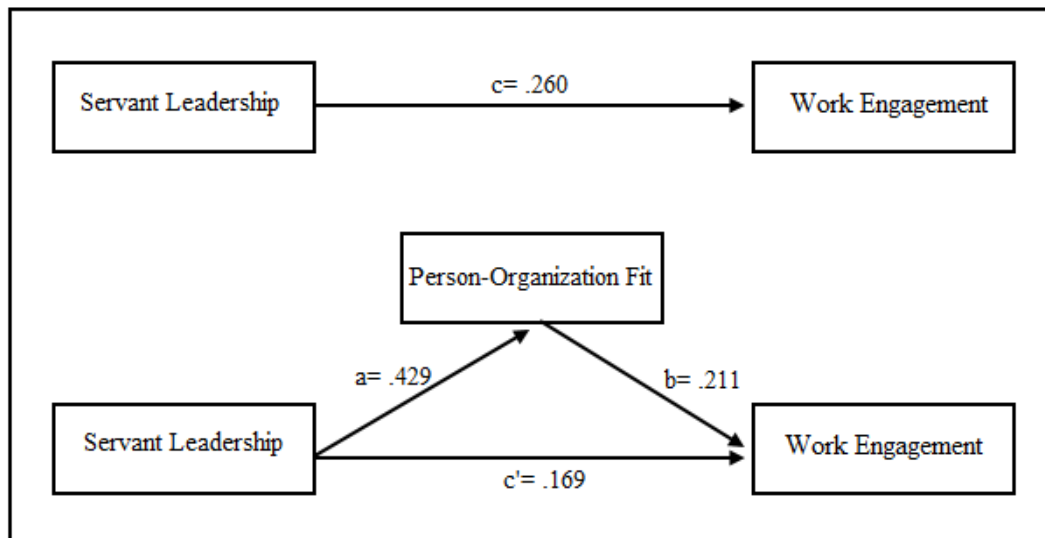
necessary sampling distributions and helps estimate the significance of indirect effects (95% confidence interval).

Table 4. Multiple Regresyon Analysis

		Conclusion Variables									
		M= Person-Organization Fit				Y= Work engagement					
Estimator Variables		B	S.E.	LLCI	ULCI		B	S.E.	LLCI	ULCI	
X	a path	.429	.051	.329	.530	R ² = .211 F= 106.5 p< .001	c' path	.169	.039	.091	.248
SL											
M	b path										R ² = .203 F= 39.4 p< .001
PO Fit							.211	.042	.127	.295	
							B	S.E.	LLCI	ULCI	
Total Effect							c path	.260	.037	.188	.333
Direct Effect							c' path	.169	.039	.091	.248
Indirect Effect							(a×b)	.090	.025	.045	.145

Note: *b*: Unstandardized beta coefficient; S.E.: Standard error; LLCI: Lower Limit Confidence Interval; ULCI: Upper Limit Confidence Interval, X: independent variable, Y: dependent variable, M: mediator variable

Figure 2. Direct, Indirect and Total Impact of Servant Leadership on Work Engagement



According to Table 4, which presents the results of the regression analysis conducted to investigate the mediating role of person-organization fit in the impact of servant leadership on work engagement, the indirect effect (a×b) of servant leadership, when examined combined with person-organization fit, on work engagement is statistically significant (p< 0.001; B= .090; S.E.= .025) (bootstrap 95% confidence interval LLCI= .045; ULCI= .145). In addition, the direct effect (c') of

servant leadership on work engagement continues to be significant ($p < 0.001$; $B = .169$; $S.E. = .039$; $LLCI = .091$; $ULCI = .248$). Based on the findings, it can be stated that person-organization fit partially mediates between servant leadership and work engagement. Thus, H_4 (Person-organization fit has a mediating role between servant leadership and work engagement.) was supported.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of the analyses support the developed hypotheses. According to the results, servant leadership has a positive effect on work engagement and person-organization fit. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 were accepted. Additionally, person-organization fit positively influences work engagement, leading to the acceptance of Hypothesis 3. Finally, person-organization fit partially mediates between servant leadership and work engagement, resulting in the acceptance of Hypothesis 4 as well.

The significant impact of servant leadership on work engagement aligns with the results of similar studies. For instance, in separate studies involving public and private sector employees, Bao et al. (2018) found that servant leadership significantly impacts work engagement, with leader-member exchange mediating in this relationship. It is argued that servant leadership predominantly fosters employee participation through social exchange. In another study in the information technology area, it was concluded that servant leadership significantly influences work engagement, and this effect is further enhanced when there is a shared purpose between the leader and the followers (De Clercq et al., 2014). This suggests that when leaders and followers are aligned in their goals, their interactions reach higher levels, leading to positive employee behavior. In addition, the findings I obtained with the research support the relationship between servant leadership and person-organization fit. This result is in line with previous research of Romadhoni et al. (2023) and Dahleez et al. (2021), who finds a positive association between servant leadership and person-organization fit. The findings indicate that employees value practices that help them view their supervisors as supportive and service-oriented. However, relationship between person-organization fit and work engagement supports previous research findings of Hamid and Yahya (2011) and Ünal and Turgut (2015). These studies emphasize that employees who are compatible with their organizations can help them feel psychologically ready to devote themselves to work and expend high levels of energy.

Indeed, I have demonstrated that perceived person-organization fit serves as a partial mediator in the relationship. This clearly shows two positive associations: servant leadership positively influences person-organization fit, which in turn enhances work engagement.

4.1. Theoretical Implications

This study suggests that servant leadership can be a valuable organizational asset in mitigating the negative effects of job demands and promoting employee participation. According to the theory of Job Demand-Resources, managers who are competent, empowering, helpful, and willing to make

sacrifices without expecting anything in return can create the perception among their followers that they have sufficient personal and social resources and can serve as a support mechanism in their engagement with their work. This is the first implication drawn from the research findings.

In addition, this research shows that servant leadership has a role in facilitating employees' adaptation to the organization. As Piasentin and Chapman (2006) emphasize, person-organization fit is generally evaluated on the extent to which the person perceives engagement between own values and the values of the organization he/she works for. Leaders, on the other hand, are the representatives of the social side of the organization, with the role of ensuring that the culture, values, policies, and functioning of the organization are adopted by the employees, implementing the norms developed regarding these issues and monitoring whether they are fulfilled. In this context, the transfer of values and culture that servant leadership tries to provide with a humble approach without pressure can help facilitate employee acceptance. At the same time, person-organization fit reflects an attitude that can emerge not only as a result of the harmony of mutual values but also as a result of meeting mutual expectations (Kristof, 1996). Therefore, servant leadership, which is driven by a desire to serve and addresses the needs of its followers (Singhal & Chatterjee, 2006), is likely to enhance organizational fit. This occurs by making employees feel psychologically supported and valued by management.

The research findings indicate that person-organization fit positively influences employee work engagement as well as contributes to various organizational attitudes and behaviors (Yılmazar, 2016; Akbaş, 2011). Work engagement encompasses their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral orientation towards their work and is closely linked to their individual role performance (Kim et al., 2013). According to Field Theory, employees who perceive a positive fit with their job and organization may be influenced by this harmony (Memon et al., 2014). When an individual sees a similarity between their own values and those of the organization, it can lead to a sense of commitment to the organization (Cable, 1995). On the other hand, in the context of the Job Demand-Resource Theory, achieving value fit between the employee and the organization or enables positive work behaviors to emerge. In the context of this research, person-organization fit plays a resource role in the emergence of work engagement (Ünal & Turgut, 2015). The higher a person fits in with the organization and embraces its values, the more engaged they will be with their job. This idea is supported by Social Identity Theory (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012).

4.2. Managerial Implications

Employee engagement is crucial for the success of all organizations as it reflects the effectiveness and efficiency of the managers and human resources involved in organizational processes (Choi et al., 2015; Saks et al., 2022). Different leadership styles have an impact on increasing employees' levels of work engagement. Modern approaches such as transformational leadership (Breevaart et al. 2014), humble leadership (Tan & Photchanachan, 2021), ethical leadership (Engelbrecht et al. 2017),

paternalistic leadership (Öge et al. 2018), and spiritual leadership (Huang, 2022) focus on the social and psychological aspects of employees. Each leadership approach has specific behavioral tendencies to motivate employees. In addition to this, based on the research findings, it can be concluded that servant leadership is an effective approach to ensure that employees fulfill their duties and responsibilities in the organization with enthusiasm, focus, and energy. The analysis also indicates that servant leadership can enhance employees' engagement with their work by creating a good fit between the person and the organization. Servant leadership plays a crucial role in fostering this fit by emphasizing communication, integrity, persuasion over punishment, and the emotional and mental well-being of employees. In this way, the servant leader acts as a bridge for transmitting the organization's values to the employees and plays a significant role in aligning individual and organizational values (Chatman, 1991).

In practical, when selecting employees, it is important to consider not only their ability to meet job requirements but also their values and whether they can adapt to the organization. Because, sometimes resolving conflicts between the organization and its employees over values can be much harder than teaching job skills. In the workplace, addressing the needs of employees can significantly enhance their adaptation to the organization and encourage positive work behaviors (Luthans, 2002). It is crucial for organizations to prioritize fulfilling basic needs, such as competitive wages and safe working conditions, as this will foster psychological security among employees (Seubert et al., 2021). From a managerial perspective, providing opportunities for participation in decision-making and delegating authority in certain situations can enhance psychological empowerment and encourage constructive work behaviors (Van den Broeck et al., 2016; Richardson et al., 2021). Additionally, evaluating fatigue levels associated with various roles and scheduling regular breaks can assist employees in managing their energy throughout the day (Sahlin et al., 1998). These are all basic employee needs that are expected to be met by the organization. So, leadership, with its inherent prioritization of fulfilling follower needs, offers promise in fulfilling the expectations of followers” (Liden et al., 2014). This approach can ultimately lead to increased motivation and improved focus on their tasks. Moreover, servant leadership is considered to be an effective approach for guiding Generation Z employees who are entering or about to enter the workforce. They are perceived to have interactional needs, expect humanistic behavior from managers, and desire high levels of communication and feedback (Csobanka, 2016; Dolot, 2018). In this context, it is believed that managers who adopt a servant leadership approach in certain organizational processes, especially in job orientation and task assignment, will achieve successful outcomes.

4.3. Limitations and Further Research

The study has a few limitations that should be taken into account. One of the main limitations is that the data was collected through self-assessment questionnaires completed by non-managerial blue-collar employees. Moreover, the research was only focused on the glass industry. These factors restrict the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, since the study only focused on servant leadership,

person-organization fit, and job engagement, it may not allow for comprehensive managerial inferences based on the results. Therefore, it's crucial to conduct further research across different sectors and with diverse samples to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of servant leadership on employee attitudes and behaviors and to make substantial contributions to the existing literature.

Ethics committee approval for the study was obtained from the Gümüşhane University Ethics Committee on June 14, 2023, with document number E-95674917-108.99-182312.

The study has been crafted in adherence to the principles of research and publication ethics.

The author declares that there exists no financial conflict of interest involving any institution, organization, or individual(s) associated with the article.

The entire work was carried out by its only, stated author.

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