

IMPACT OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP ON ETHICAL CLIMATE, SUPERVISOR CONFLICT, AND ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

Precepts from servant leadership theory are used to test a model that links servant leadership with interpersonal conflict with the supervisor, ethical climate, and organizational outcomes. Study findings show that servant leadership is conducive to lower levels of interpersonal conflict with the supervisor and higher ethical climate perceptions. Conflict with the supervisor affects work-family conflict and felt stress, eventually impacting job satisfaction and turnover intention. The model was tested with survey responses from 85 frontline employees working for an airline in South America.

Research findings demonstrate that servant leadership helps create an environment conducive to employee wellbeing. Employees who think that their supervisor engages in servant leadership behaviors are less likely to participate in conflict with their supervisor which is shown to affect work-family conflict and felt stress. Servant leadership can thus be beneficial for the employee and her or his family. Reducing work-family conflict is not only the *right thing to do* but is also beneficial to the firm due to its impact on job satisfaction, felt stress, and eventually turnover. Results linking supervisory conflict with work-family conflict also add credence to the spillover hypotheses which posit that strain resulting from a person's job can cross work boundaries and affect the employee-family relationships. The indirect effect of servant leadership on work-family conflict brings support to the notion that the benefits of servant leadership go beyond what happens inside the organization as it positively affects *other* organizational stakeholders. Study findings have important implications for theory development as proponents of servant leadership have recently proposed that the positive impact of servant leadership occurs through high quality leader-follower relationships.

References available upon request