

Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction: Mediatory Role of Perceived Organizational Support

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate how perceived organizational support mediated the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction. In a cross-sectional survey research design, 297 personnel of parastatals and ministries under the control of the Delta State Government were the participants. Hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling, and data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The results show that servant leadership strongly predicted both perceived organizational support and job satisfaction, while perceived organizational support significantly predicted job satisfaction. Furthermore, the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction is partially mediated by perceived organizational support. It was suggested that the Delta State Government train leaders in its parastatals and ministries on the concept of servant leadership and foster an environment where employees feel appreciated by their employer.

Keywords: Servant Leadership, Perceived Organizational Support, Job Satisfaction, Structural Equation Modeling

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1. Introduction

Leadership has been thoroughly researched in management literature because it has a substantial impact on the success of an organization by directing people's efforts toward organizational goals (Shetty, Rao, & Kamath, 2022). Servant leadership (SL) is important because of its significant impact on follower's behavior (Al-Asadi, Muhammed, Abidi, & Dzenopoljac, 2019), and is a style of leadership that has increasingly attracted attention in recent years. Greenleaf (1970), who advocated that a leader must first aim to serve before consciously choosing to want to lead, is credited with its developing. The follower-oriented nature of SL is a crucial component. The main characteristic of a servant leader is that he is a servant. According to Judge, Bono, and Locke (2000), consistent with the rule of reciprocity norm, in exchange for the fulfillment of obligations and promises by their employer and through perceived organizational support (POS), employees experience high levels of job satisfaction (JS). POS is the extent to which employees consider their organization as caring, give importance to them and appreciate their contributions, and thereby fulfill their needs (Sihag & Sarikwal, 2015). Researchers have suggested that both POS and SL are important antecedents of JS. Furthermore, limited studies have been done on linking SL, POS and JS in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the researchers' best knowledge, this study is the first to look into the mediating role of POS on the relationship between SL and JS in Nigeria. This makes the current study significant.

2. Conceptual Review

2.1 Servant Leadership

According to Greenleaf (1970), a servant leader is someone who has a passion to serve others and see to it that their needs are met. SL is a type of leadership in which the leader puts the needs of others ahead of their own, to serve others, to foster their growth, and to offer them chances to prosper both physically and emotionally (Grisaffe, VanMeter, & Chonko, 2016). Servant leaders also uphold morals, show compassion for others, and nurture followers (Spears, 2010). They establish connections with followers to achieve goals and serve as an example for them (Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, Dierendonck, & Liden, 2019). Serving people and meeting their needs is the servant leader's major goal (Karatepe, Ozturk, & Kim, 2019). SL places a strong emphasis on a leader's moral character and capacity to serve others, especially their team members, clients, and communities (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008).

Several researchers have suggested behaviors used to describe servant leaders (van Dierendonck, 2011). Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) identified eight characteristics: empowerment, responsibility, remaining in the background, modesty, authenticity, courage, forgiveness and stewardship, whereas, humility, agape, vision, love, altruism, empowering others, trust, and service were suggested by Patterson (2003). Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) presented five dimensions: emotional healing, altruistic vocation, wisdom, persuasive mapping and organizational stewardship. Laub (1999) developed six facets: authenticity, value others, develops people, provide leadership, make good communities and share experience of leadership. Page and Wong (2000), presented eleven dimensions: servant hood, modesty, setting of goals, integrity, others development, caring for people, visioning, empowering others, shared decision making, leading and team building, while, Spears (2010) developed persuasion, awareness,

healing, building communities, conceptualization, listening, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others, empathy and foresight. Furthermore, Liden et al. (2008) identify seven dimensions: emotional healing, empowering, helping followers grow and succeed, behaving ethically, putting followers first, creating value for the community, and conceptual skills.

2.2 Job Satisfaction

As JS has the ability to affect a wide range of organizational actions, it is one of the job attitudes that has been studied the most (Aruoren & Oisamoje, 2023). Generally, it is a reflection of positive or negative emotional reactions of employees due to the job they perform, including their powers and responsibilities (Spector, 1997). This attitude, developed by employees, can be the result of positive or negative perceptions of various internal and external factors, such as salary, working conditions, and workplace environment. Employees with higher levels of JS have a more positive and constructive attitude toward their organizations than do those with lower levels of JS (Greenberg & Baron, 2000). Thus, JS refers to how employees perceive their work's fulfillment or how it helps them to express their personal values in tasks relating to their jobs (Sokro, Soma & Timothy, 2021). Luthans (1998) describes JS as an enjoyable or pleasant emotional state that results from an evaluation of one's employment or work experience. It is a result of employee's perception of how well their job provides those things that are viewed as important. According to Evans (2001), when an individual feels that their needs linked to their job are being met to a certain amount, they are said to be in a state of mind known as JS. JS is also referred to as an intrinsic (extrinsic) emotional and mental reaction that results from an employee's evaluation of their employment, or experiences at work. (Locke, 1976; Warr, Cook, & Wall, 1979).

Wyrwa and Kamierczyk (2020) recognized several elements as JS's precursors. They include the job requirements, the environment in which it is performed, organizational culture, the caliber of organizational management, the quantity and stress level of the work, coworkers and superiors, salary and benefits, conflict, and the state of the labor market. A fair reward system, job security, employing human abilities, growth potential, interpersonal relationships at work, equity, the social relevance of the work, and a harmony between one's personal and professional life are eight factors that organizations should take into consideration in order to promote JS, according to Sabonete, Lopes, Rosado, and Reis (2021). If these elements are properly managed, they have a beneficial impact; if they are not, they may become hurdles at work and negatively influence JS. Hence, JS is associated with increased organizational productivity, lower staff turnover, and lower job stress. Therefore, JS is necessary for an organization to maintain a productive workplace (Weir, 2013). Developing organizations' systematic management and leadership techniques is essential for increasing the high levels of JS experienced by their personnel. When workers are satisfied in their employment, they are more likely to put up their best effort and perform at higher levels (Raab, 2020).

2.3 Perceived Organizational Support

Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) stated in a fundamental study that employees of organizations often have ideas about how much their organization values their efforts and is concerned about their well-being. These beliefs constitute the employees' POS. Researchers believe that employees develop a commitment to meet the exigency of approval, respect, and affiliation and evaluate the benefits of increased workload (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). POS increases employees' duty to assist the organization achieve its goals, their passionate dedication to the organization, and the expectation that their performance will be rewarded (Eisenberger, Shanock, & Wen, 2020). Employees develop this belief based on their assessment of the organization's commitment to the tangible and nontangible benefits offered to them. POS can lead to positive behavioral outcomes, including improved performance within and outside of one's role, and decreased withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism and resignation.

In a study of 361 employees of different organizations and a second study of 71 high school teachers, Eisenberger et al. (1986) found evidence that organizational commitment (OC) is strongly related to the degree employees believe their organization is committed to them. Thus, they suggest that POS probably increases employees' emotional attachment to their organization. They also found that the strength of the relation between POS and OC varies with the degree employees embrace the idea of trading their work efforts for material and symbolic benefits. Employees generally gauge their own value and wellbeing based on the recognition and support they receive from the organization. If they feel that the organization they are working for is not investing in them, it can lead to feelings of job insecurity that do not align with their expectations, particularly during times of downsizing or restructuring (Shoss, 2017; Bohle, Chambel, Medina, & Cunha, 2018). Hence, if the POS does not align with employees' expectations, the feeling of betrayal causes the fear of losing their job and is followed by a decrease in OC (Bohle et al., 2018). As such, organizations should consider increasing POS among employees. A recent meta-analysis conducted by Kurtessis, Eisenberger, Ford, Buffardi, Stewart, and Adis (2017) show an increased interest in POS, demonstrating a clear and consistent relationship between POS and its predicted causes and consequences. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework for this study.

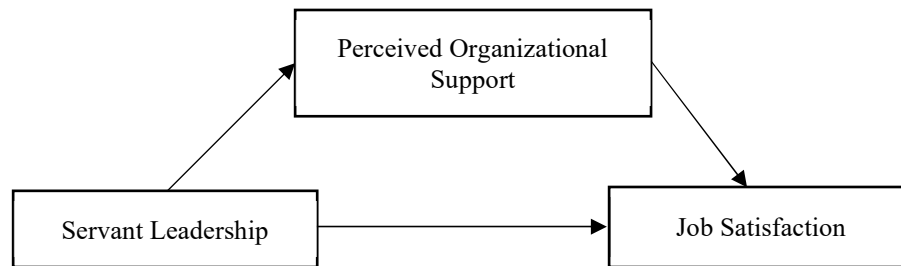


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. Theoretical Review

Both the social exchange (SE) and organizational support (OS) theories serve as the foundation for this investigation. Employees contribute to the advancement of their organization, according to the OS theory, when they believe that it assists them with their needs (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). This suggests that individuals within organizations engage in reciprocal interactions. Employees who believe they are in a supportive atmosphere will therefore feel compelled to respond by acting in a way that benefits the organization (Zhang & Jia, 2010). Workers who experience a high level of OS are more likely to feel that the organization appreciates and respects them; additionally, this sense of support is associated with heightened confidence in their ability to do their job successfully because resources required for them to perform well are provided (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). SE theory suggests that parties go inside and maintain exchange relations with others in the hope that doing so will be beneficial (Blau, 1964). Blau (1964) defined SE as “the voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others” (p. 91). Workers will feel obligated to repay the organization's actions by increasing their loyalty, commitment, and performance if they believe it treats them fairly and is concerned about their welfare (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001).

4. Empirical Review

4.1 Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction

Leaders play a dominant role within organizations, and leadership behavior has been shown to influence JS of employees (Aruoren, 2018; Aruoren, 2020). The study by Dami, Imron, Burhanuddin, and Supriyanto (2022) used a sample of 160 lecturers from 26 Christian higher education institutions in Indonesia to investigate the role of trust mediation and leader member exchange (LMX) in the influence of SL on JS. Findings from partial least square- structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis showed that SL significantly influences JS. In their 2018 study, Farrington and Lillah used information gathered from 241 private healthcare practitioners and their staff in South African to examine the impact of SL on JS. Multiple regression (MR) result indicated that there was only a significant positive relationship between caring for others and JS for the employee sample group, but there was a significant positive relationship between developing others and JS for both sample groups. The practitioners' displays of humility and servanthood were not found to have an impact on JS. Effects of strategic human resources management and SL on the "rule-breaking" behaviors and JS of the employees in their organization were examined in Adiguzel, Ozcinar, and Karadal's (2020) study in Turkey. Participants included 385 public and private sector employees. SEM results demonstrated that SL has a favorable significant impact on JS. Using 72 participants selected from the staff of the Central Sulawesi Province Industry and Trade Office in Indonesia, Bakri, Mustainah, and Pricylia (2021) studied the relationship between SL and JS. MR result revealed that SL explained significant variations in JS. Moore (2019) looked into the connections between OC, JS, and SL in two different cultural contexts. There were 215 participants (132 from US culture, and 83 from non-US culture). SL was found to be positively associated with JS and OC in both cultures, according to the results obtained from MR. From these studies, we propose that:

H1: Servant Leadership is significantly related to Job Satisfaction.

4.2 Servant leadership and Perceived Organizational Support

Since they are in charge of making the choices that determine the policies and practices affecting the direction of the business and how it treats employees, leaders are widely advocated as the key sources of POS (Hayton, Carnabuci, & Eisenberger, 2012). Shetty, Rao, and Kamath (2022) study on SL in India focused on how it influenced POS in manufacturing and educational institutions. 631 employees participated in the study. A significant association between SL and POS was found using regression analysis. In a study of 382 salespeople in the US, DeConinck and DeConinck (2017) investigated how SL influences POS. SEM results revealed that SL has a significant influence on POS. Using questionnaires distributed to 115 employees in the US, Huning, Hurt, and Frieder (2020) investigated the mediating effects of POS, job embeddedness, and JS on the relationship between SL and turnover intentions. PROCESS analysis findings revealed that SL and JS have a positive and

significant association. Beshlideh, Sharifi, Hashemi, and Naami (2018) used data gathered from 230 employees in Iran, to explore the relationship between SL, POS, JS, OC, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). According to SEM findings, SL significantly influenced POS, JS, OC, and OCB. From these studies, we propose that:

H2: Servant Leadership is significantly related to Perceived Organizational Support.

4.3 Perceived Organizational Support and Job Satisfaction

Employees that believe their labor is valued and appreciated by the organization where they work are happier at work. The results of a study to ascertain the effect of POS and cross-cultural adjustment on Japanese expatriates' job burnout and JS were given by Takatsuka and Yimcharoen (2021). The study included 207 Japanese expatriates in Bangkok. Results showed that POS and cross-cultural acclimatization were key factors in improving JS. In their study, Abid, Shaikh, Asif, Elah, Anwar, and Butt (2021) tested the hypothesis that JS is influenced by POS. Data from 936 Pakistani employees were collected to investigate this model. Findings from Process Model 7 showed that POS significantly predicted JS. The goal of Mascarenhas, Galvo, and Marques' (2022) study was to examine how gender affects work engagement, organizational identification, and POS on JS. 171 professors and support employees of Portuguese higher education institutions participated in the study. According to PLS-SEM results, POS has a stronger influence on JS for male employees. In their 2019 study, Ayuningtias, Shabrina, Prasetyo, and Rahayu used information gathered from 110 employees of PT. TMK in Bogor, Indonesia, to examine the relationship between POS and JS in the construction industry. Regression analysis' findings revealed that JS has a significant positive effect on POS. The mediating role of JS in the link between POS and job performance was examined by Karaaliolu and Karabulut (2019) among 700 white-collar workers in Istanbul's energy sector. The findings of the path analysis showed that POS significantly and positively influence JS. Hence, we propose that:

H3: Perceived Organizational Support is significantly related to Job Satisfaction.

4.4 Mediator Effects of Perceived Organizational Support

The activities of top leaders and supervisors help the working environment in an organization (Huang, Du, Wu, Achyldurdyeva, Wu, & Lin, 2021). Li, Zhao, Li, and Pang (2023) evaluated whether POS mediated the impact of visionary leadership on employee creativity using a sample of 229 supervisor-subordinate dyads working in China. According to the findings of SEM, POS mediated this relationship. The study by Fattah, Yesiltas, and Atan (2022) investigates how POS, participatory decision-making, and turnover intention interact. The analysis of data from 323 employees in Iraq using SEM revealed that POS mediates the association between knowledge sharing, participatory decision-making, and turnover intention. The relationship between POS, affective commitment, and intention to leave was explored in Dinç's (2015) study. 176 managers in Turkey, participated in the study. The data was analyzed using hierarchical regression analysis. The findings demonstrated that POS fully mediates both the positive relationships between effort-reward fairness and affective commitment as well as the negative relationships between effort-reward fairness and intention to leave. The theoretical model created for the mediator role of POS in the relationship between organizational identity and organizational stress was put to the test in a study by Eksi, Ozgenel, and Demirci (2020). 320 instructors who work in educational institutions in Istanbul provided the data for this study. The results of the SEM showed that POS fully mediated this relationship. In their study, Aruoren and Isiaka (2023) looked at how POS mediated the relationship between OC and organizational silence. 212 Seplat Petroleum Development Company Plc personnel in Nigeria actively participated. According to the path coefficients obtained from SEM, POS fully mediated this relationship. From these discussions, we propose that:

H4: Perceived Organizational Support mediates the association between Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction.

5. Methods

5.1 Sample and Procedure

Public sector employees, employed by nine Ministries of Delta State Government in Nigeria, provided the data. The ministries of agriculture, commerce and industry, economy planning, finance, health, justice, transport, and the environment are among them. Purposive sampling was used to choose participants in order to ensure responses were from respondents with a wealth of information (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). After assuring respondents that participation was voluntary and responses were just for research purposes, they were asked to complete questionnaires distributed, and 320 of them were returned. 297 copies of the questionnaires were utilized instead for the analysis since 23 of them were incomplete. An 84.9% response rate resulted from this.

5.2 Measures

Scales from earlier studies were utilized to measure the study variables. Eight items from Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, and Rhoades (2002) were utilized to quantify POS. A 7-point Likert scale with 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree, was used to gauge respondents' levels of agreement with these statements. "My organization really cares about my well-being," was a sample item. Seven items were utilized to assess SL which were adopted from Liden, Wayne, Liao, and Meuser(2014). A 7-point Likert scale, with 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree, was used to gauge respondents' perceptions of the SL practices of

their immediate supervisor. A sample item was "My supervisor makes my career development a priority." Furthermore, 20 items adopted from Weiss, Davis, England, and Lofquist (1977) were utilized to measure JS. On a 5-point Likert scale, where 1=very dissatisfied and 5=very satisfied, respondents were asked to rate their level of JS. "The working condition" was a sample item.

5.3 Model Specification

The following model guided the study:

$$\begin{aligned}
 JS &= \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 SL + \epsilon_1 && \text{I} \\
 POS &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 SL + \epsilon_2 && \text{II} \\
 POS &= \mu_0 + \mu_1 JS + \epsilon_3 && \text{III} \\
 JS &= \Omega_0 + \Omega_1 SL + \Omega_2 POS + \epsilon_4 && \text{IV}
 \end{aligned}$$

Where, JS = Job Satisfaction; POS = Perceived Organizational Support; SL = Servant leadership;
 $\alpha_1, \beta_1, \mu_1, \Omega_1$ = Coefficients; $\alpha_0, \beta_0, \mu_0, \Omega_0$ = Constant terms; $\epsilon_1, \epsilon_2, \epsilon_3, \epsilon_4$ = Error terms

6. Results

6.1 Socio-demographic Attributes

In regards to gender, there were 179 females and 118 males. According to the age distribution, there were 70 people aged 20 to 29 years, 116 people aged 30 to 39 years, 92 people aged 40 to 49 years, and 19 people above 50 years. Regarding marital status, there were 89 singles, 176 married people, 17 separated people, and 15 widowed people. Holders of qualifications below Bachelors' Degrees were 123, Bachelor's degree holders 140, and Postgraduate degree holders 34. The respondents' employment history revealed that 212 had worked between one and ten years, 69 between eleven and twenty years, twelve between twenty-one and thirty years, and four over thirty years.

6.2 Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation

Table 1 shows the mean, standard deviation, correlation, and Cronbach's alpha. The correlation coefficients provide the direction and preliminary support for the proposed hypotheses. As indicated a negative and insignificant relationship was found between SL and JS ($r = -0.07, p < 0.05$); POS was positively and significantly associated with SL ($r = +0.19, p < 0.05$); and JS was positively and significantly related to POS ($r = +0.52, p < 0.05$).

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation

Variables	Mean	SD	Gender	Age	Ms	Hel	Tenure	JS	SL	POS
Gender	-	-	1.00							
Age	-	-	-0.03	1.00						
Ms	-	-	0.19*	0.60*	1.00					
Hel	-	-	-0.24*	-0.01	-0.05	1.00				
Tenure	-	-	-0.05	0.63*	0.49*	-0.10	1.00			
JS	4.02	0.91	-0.17*	0.10	-0.08	0.36*	-0.14*	1.00		
SL	4.05	1.78	-0.21*	-0.05	-0.11	0.24*	0.12*	-0.07	1.00	
POS	4.61	1.57	-0.15*	0.02	-0.08	0.19*	-0.01	0.19*	0.52*	1.00

Source: Researcher's Compilation, 2023; SD = Standard deviation; Ms = Marital status; Hel = Highest educational level; N = 297.

6.2 Measurement Model

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed on the data to discover the factor structure of the measures as well as its internal reliability. Prior to performing EFA, Bartlett test of sphericity indicated a chi-square value of 7471.221, degree of freedom of 595, and a significant p -value of 0.000, while Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.896. Therefore, this study's data were deemed appropriate for factor analysis purposes (Lloret, Ferreres, Hernandez, & Tomas, 2017; Kaiser, 1974). EFA was performed using varimax orthogonal factor rotation approach, and three factors with eigen values greater than one were extracted which explained 80.47% of variance in the distribution. Only items with factor loadings greater than 0.60 were retained for further analysis, as can be seen in Table 2.0 (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011). Figure 2.0 shows the Scree plot of the extracted factors from the EFA. The point where the slope of the curve levels off indicated the number of factors that should be retained in the study. As can be confirmed from the Scree plot, three factors (POS, SL and JS) were retained.

Further examination of the measurement model indicated that Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) for SL, POS, and JS were 0.89, 0.87, and 0.94 respectively (Table 2.0). These values were greater than 0.7, the cut-off criteria suggested by (Taber, 2018). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for SL, POS, and JS were 0.62, 0.55, and 0.59 respectively (Table 2.0). These numbers also exceeded the threshold of 0.50 (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2012). Furthermore, Composite Reliability (CR) for SL, POS, and JS were 0.89, 0.83, and 0.94 respectively (Table 2.0), which were greater than the acceptable cut-off point of 0.70 as advised by Hair, Sarstedt, Matthews, and Ringle (2016). Finally, discriminant validity was assessed using the technique recommended by Fornell and Larcker

(1981). In Table 3.0, the correlations between the research variables are shown on the off-diagonals while the square roots of the AVEs are shown along the diagonal. According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the square roots of the AVE of the constructs are larger than the correlations of the other constructs. These results suggest that the measures adopted in this study were valid and reliable.

Data was gathered from the same source and at the same time, therefore there could be a problem of common method bias (CMB). Nonetheless, this problem was assessed using Harman's single factor test (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). The maximum variance explained by POS was 45.67%, which was less than the 50% threshold which indicated that CMB was not a problem in this study.

Table 2.: Factor loadings, α coefficient, AVE, and CR

Retained Items	Factor loadings			α	AVE	CR			
	POS	JS	SL						
POS 2	0.72			0.87	0.55	0.83			
POS 3	0.83								
POS 4	0.76								
POS 5	0.64								
JS 1		0.73		0.94	0.59	0.94			
JS 5		0.70							
JS 6		0.79							
JS 10		0.78							
JS 11		0.75							
JS12		0.82							
JS 13		0.76							
JS14		0.80							
JS 15		0.71							
JS 16		0.80							
JS 17		0.79							
SL 1			0.77				0.89	0.62	0.89
SL 2			0.85						
SL 3			0.80						
SL 4			0.77						
SL7			0.74						

Source: Researcher's Compilation

Table 3: Discriminant Validity

Variables	JS	SL	POS
JS	(0.77)		
SL	-0.07	(0.79)	
POS	0.19*	0.52*	(0.74)

Source: Researcher's Compilation

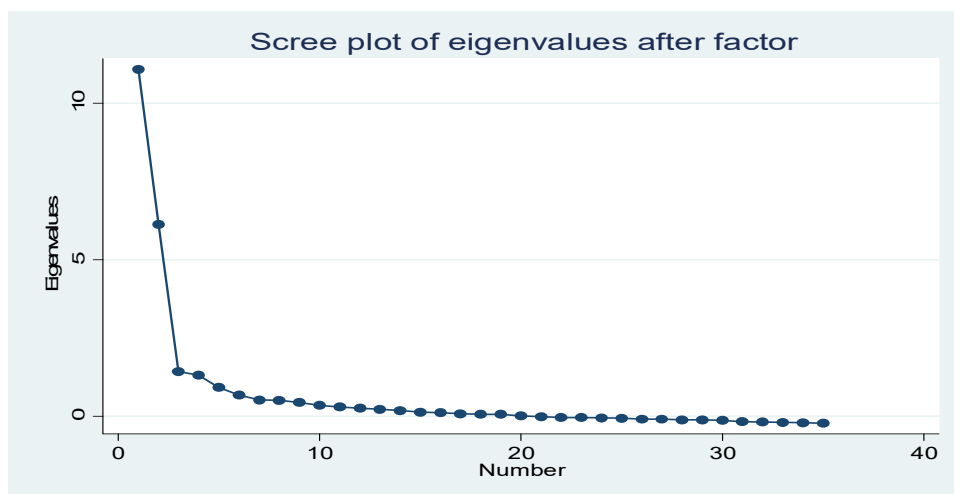


Figure 2: Scree Plot

Source: STATA Output

6.3 Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

A three-factor measurement model was proposed in the study and confirmatory factor analysis was employed to evaluate how the model fits the data. Several fit indices were used including root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), normed fit index (NFI), comparative fit index (CFI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), and adjusted goodness-of-fit-index (AGFI). Comparing the estimated fit indices with the cut-off criteria specified by Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, and Müller (2003), Table 4.0 shows acceptable model fit. SEM was used to test the proposed hypotheses, while Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure evaluated the mediation effect. Table 5.0 and Figure 3.0 shows that SL was positive and significantly related to JS with $\beta = +0.20$. Thus, H1 cannot be rejected. Also, a positive and significant relationship was established between SL and POS with $\beta = +0.41$, thus H2 cannot be rejected. Additionally, a positive and significant relationship was confirmed between POS and JS with $\beta = +0.15$, thus H3 cannot be rejected. Finally, in the presence of POS, a positive and significant relationship was observed between SL and JS with β increasing to 0.26 (Table 5.0). Sobel test (Table 6.0) also indicated a significant p – value. Hence, a partial mediating effect of POS on the nexus between SL and JS was confirmed (Baron & Kenny, 1986). H4 can therefore not be rejected.

Table 4: Goodness- of – Fit Indices

Fit Measure	Good Fit	Acceptable Fit	Estimated Fit
χ^2 /df	$0 \leq \chi^2 /df \leq 2$	$2 < \chi^2 /df \leq 3$	2.36
RMSEA	$0 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.05$	$0.05 < RMSEA \leq 0.08$	0.07
SRMR	$0 \leq SRMR \leq 0.05$	$0.05 \leq SRMR \leq 0.10$	0.09
NFI	$0.95 \leq NFI \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq NFI < 0.95$	0.93
CFI	$0.95 \leq CFI \leq 1.00$	$0.95 \leq CFI < 0.97$	0.95
GFI	$0.95 \leq GFI \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq GFI < 0.95$	0.91
AGFI	$0.90 \leq AGFI \leq 1.00$	$0.85 \leq AGFI < 0.90$	0.88

Source: Researcher's Compilation; χ^2 = Chi-Square, df = Degree of Freedom.

Table 5: Direct, Indirect and Total Effects

Path	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Std. Err.	z	p>/z/	95% Conf. Interval
JS → SL	0.20*	-	0.20*	0.035	5.69	0.000	0.129 0.265
POS → SL	0.41*	-	0.41*	0.049	8.37	0.000	0.314 0.505
JS → POS	0.15*	-	0.15*	0.045	3.28	0.001	0.059 0.235
JS → POS → SL	0.20*	0.06*	0.26*	0.019	3.16	0.002	0.023 0.098

Source: Researcher's Compilation. * $p < 0.05$

Table 6: Sobel test of Indirect Effect

Estimate	Delta	Sobel	Monte Carlo
Indirect Effect	0.060	0.060	0.059
Std Err.	0.019	0.020	0.020
z – value	3.164	3.055	2.914
p – value	0.002	0.002	0.004
Conf. Interval	0.023, 0.098	0.022, 0.099	0.022, 0.103

Source: STATA Result

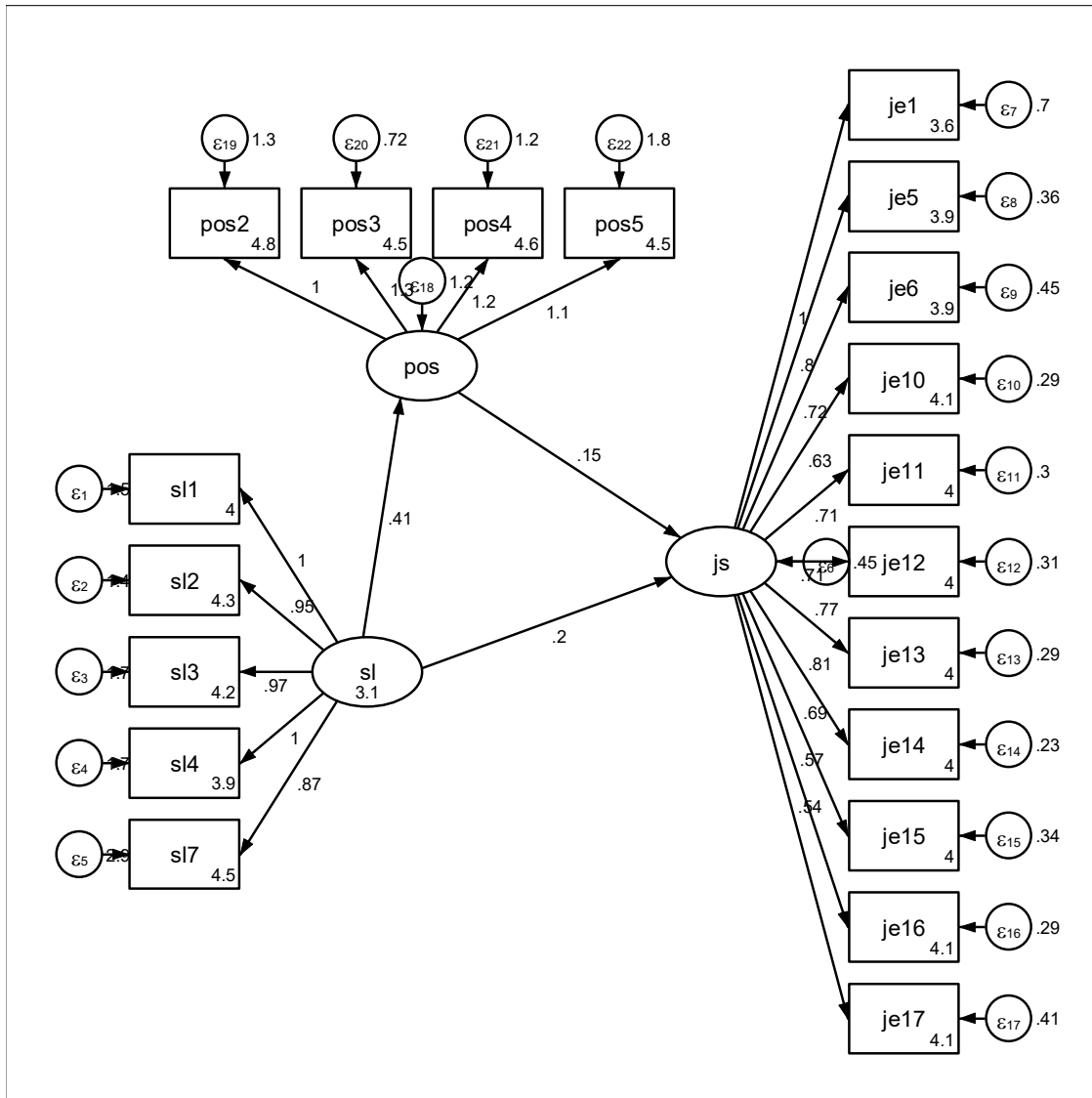


Figure 3: Path Diagram; Source: STATA Output

7. Discussion

This study's primary goal was to determine whether POS mediates the relationship between SL and JS. Findings provide support for the hypothesized relationships. The results demonstrated a positive but significant association between SL and JS. This result is in agreement with previous studies of Dami et al, (2022), Adiguzel et al, (2020) and Bakri et al, (2021). SL takes the lead in fostering employee dedication, satisfaction, and the provision of high-quality services. In light of this, SL increases employee satisfaction, engagement, and productivity (Odori, Aruoren & Oberoma, 2023). Another finding was that SL was positive and significantly related to POS. This finding concurs with that of Shetty et al, (2022), Huning et al, (2020) and Beshlidesh et al, (2018). When an organizational leader practices SL, the employees feel that the company values them, is proud of their accomplishments, and is ready to assist them when they need it. The study also established that POS is positive and significantly related to JS. This finding is in agreement with that of Takatsuka and Yimcharoen (2021), Abid et al, (2021), Mascarenhas et al, (2022), Ayuningtias et al, (2019) and Karaaliolu and Karabulut (2019). This finding demonstrates that when employees believe their employer views their contribution to the organization's goals favorably and is concerned about their wellbeing, they are more satisfied with their jobs. Furthermore, the study provided support for the partial mediating role of POS on the association linking SL and JS. Thus, organizational leaders who want to increase JS of employees should focus on increasing their POS. The SE theory and OS theory by Eisenberger et al. (1986) and Blau (1964), respectively, propose that people contribute positively rather than adversely when they receive a favor, which was investigated in this study.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed to comprehend the mediating role of POS on the association between SL and JS using data from a sample made up of employees of Delta State Ministries and Parastatals. The study results confirm the hypothesized relationships. SL was found to significantly predict JS and POS, while POS was significantly related to JS. Furthermore, it was established that POS partially mediates the nexus between SL and JS. These findings demonstrate how crucial it is to raise the level of POS and JS through SL because doing so increases productivity. Considering the study's findings, it is recommended that the Delta State Government should pay special attention to identify, estimate and improve SL behavior in its Ministries and Parastatals. Furthermore, Ministries and Parastatals in Delta State should create an enabling working environment for employees to develop a high level of POS.

A number of limitations should be considered when interpreting these results. First, causality between the research variables cannot be drawn because of cross-sectional research design. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies should consider experimental or longitudinal research designs, to discover the possible reciprocal relationships. Secondly, participants were drawn only from the public sector. Future studies should involve private sector employees.

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