



Research article

From Boss to Buddy: How Servant Leadership and Talent Management Make Employees Go the Extra Mile

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of servant leadership and talent management on employee thriving, and to test the moderating role of talent management in strengthening the relationship between servant leadership and thriving. Utilizing a quantitative approach with data collected from 143 employees across banking, commerce, and education sectors in Jakarta, this research employed PLS-SEM for data analysis. The findings indicate that both servant leadership and talent management have a significant positive effect on employee thriving. However, contrary to the hypothesis, talent management does not moderate the relationship between servant leadership and thriving. This suggests that while both are critical resources that independently contribute to employee growth and vitality, they operate through distinct mechanisms without a synergistic interaction. The results are discussed through the lens of Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, highlighting the practical implications for leaders and HR practitioners to simultaneously yet independently develop both leadership quality and talent systems to foster a thriving workforce.

Keywords: Servant Leadership, Talent Management, Employee Thriving, Conservation of Resources Theory, PLS-SEM.

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh servant leadership dan talent management terhadap employee thriving, serta menguji peran moderasi talent management dalam memperkuat hubungan antara servant leadership dan thriving. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dan data dari 143 karyawan di sektor perbankan, perdagangan, dan pendidikan di Jakarta, penelitian ini menggunakan PLS-SEM untuk analisis data. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa baik servant leadership maupun talent management memiliki pengaruh positif yang signifikan terhadap employee thriving. Namun, bertentangan dengan hipotesis, talent management tidak memoderasi hubungan antara servant leadership dan thriving. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa meskipun keduanya merupakan sumber daya kritis yang secara independen berkontribusi pada pertumbuhan dan vitalitas karyawan, mereka beroperasi melalui mekanisme yang berbeda tanpa interaksi sinergis. Hasil tersebut dibahas melalui lensa Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, menyoroti implikasi praktis bagi para pemimpin dan praktisi SDM untuk secara simultan namun independen mengembangkan kualitas kepemimpinan dan sistem talenta guna mendorong tenaga kerja yang thriving.

Kata Kunci: *Servant Leadership, Talent Management, Employee Thriving, Conservation of Resources Theory, PLS-SEM.*

1. Introduction

In the contemporary business landscape, organizations are increasingly recognizing the pivotal role that employees play in achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Kareska, 2023). The concept of employee thriving, which goes beyond mere job satisfaction and engagement, has emerged as a critical factor in organizational success. Thriving employees are not only more productive but also demonstrate greater levels of creativity, innovation, and commitment to their organizations (Iqbal et al., 2024; Shet, 2024). However, achieving employee thriving requires a strategic approach that prioritizes both individual and organizational well-being.

The Indonesian context, characterized by a rapidly growing economy and a dynamic workforce, highlights the importance of thriving employees. As Indonesian companies seek to compete on the global stage, they must create workplaces that attract and retain top talent. By cultivating a thriving culture, organizations in Indonesia can enhance their reputation as desirable employers and improve their overall performance. However, there is a dearth of research exploring the factors that contribute to employee thriving in the Indonesian context. This research is further motivated by the critical role of creativity and innovation for organizational sustainability and growth, particularly within dynamic economic landscapes like Indonesia. As highlighted by Sugiono et al. (2023), fostering such capabilities is essential for businesses to navigate competitive pressures and resource constraints, underscoring the practical importance of investigating antecedents like servant leadership and talent management that cultivate an environment for employee thriving and, by extension, innovative potential.

This study focuses on two key variables believed to influence employee thriving: servant leadership and talent management. Servant leadership, a philosophy that emphasizes serving the needs of others, has been shown to foster a positive work environment and enhance employee well-being (Ortiz-Gómez et al., 2022). Talent management, on the other hand, refers to the systematic process of attracting, developing, and retaining talented individuals. Together, these two concepts provides a promising framework for understanding the factors that contribute to employee thriving.

In the past five years, interest in employee thriving—a dynamic psychological state characterized by feelings of vitality and learning—has increased significantly as a key outcome in organizational studies. Previous research has powerfully demonstrated that servant leadership, with its focus on empowerment, service, and the holistic growth of followers, is a key driver of thriving (Eva et al., 2019). Similarly, effective talent management systems, designed to attract, develop, and retain talented employees, contribute to the creation of an environment that supports learning and energy (Meyers & van Woerkom, 2014). However, although these two variables have been studied independently, a crucial research gap exists regarding the interaction and joint mechanisms between servant leadership and talent management in facilitating employee thriving.

First, there is the lack of a unified framework that unifies how these two organizational forces synergize. Research by Lee et al. (2020) suggests that servant leadership strengthens the effectiveness of HR management practices by creating a climate of trust. On the other hand, Kafetzopoulos and Gotzamani (2022) and Turyahebwa et al. (2022) found that talent management requires supportive leadership to actualize its benefits. However, no research has explicitly examined how servant leadership and talent management interact—whether they reinforce each other (moderating effect) or instead go through the same mediation pathway (parallel mediation)—to achieve thriving. Hobfoll's (2011) Conservation of Resources (COR) theory is well-suited to explain this gap. COR theory states that individuals strive to acquire, maintain, and protect their resources. Servant leadership acts as a resource caravan that provides social resources (support, autonomy) (Xiao et al., 2024), while talent management functions as a resource passageway that provides structural resources (training, career paths). This research gap is understanding how these caravans and passageways integrate to prevent resource exhaustion and optimally build employee resources, thereby fostering thriving environments.

Second, there is limited research testing this model in diverse cultural and industrial settings. Most studies on servant leadership and talent management are still dominated by Western contexts. Research by Golparvar & Heidarian (2018) confirms that the relationship between leadership and outcomes can be moderated by cultural values. Furthermore, these results are strongly supported by a meta-analysis by Zhang et al. (2021), which found that the influence of servant leadership on employee outcomes is moderated by culture.

Meanwhile, studies in Asian contexts, particularly Indonesia, which has a collectivist culture and high power distance, are still scarce. How servant leadership, which may be perceived differently in strong hierarchies, interacts with often formal talent management systems to foster thriving, remains an open question. COR theory is again relevant because it explains that cultural values and context influence individuals' assessments of what is considered a valuable resource. Thus, research in non-Western contexts is urgently needed to determine whether the interaction between these two variables remains consistent or has unique dynamics.

Third, a multi-level analytical approach is necessary, as talent management is an organizational policy, servant leadership is at the team level, and thriving is experienced individually. The gap lies in the lack of research that simultaneously captures this multi-level complexity. COR theory, which is inherently multi-level (resources can exist at the individual, group, and organizational levels), provides a strong theoretical foundation for designing research that examines how resources at the organizational (talent management) and group (servant leadership) levels are internalized by individuals to achieve thriving.

Previous research has explored the relationship between servant leadership, talent management, and employee outcomes (Nugroho & Putro, 2025; Shasena, 2021). However, there is a dearth of research that examines the combined impact of servant leadership and

talent management on employee thriving, particularly in the Indonesian context. Although there has been research linking servant leadership interactions with talent management, the outcomes are different, as in the study of Elzek et al. (2024) on organizational sustainability performance output and the research of Rahmayanti and Johan (2024) on employee performance output and innovative behavior. A research gap exists in understanding how these two variables interact to create a thriving workplace culture.

This study aims to address this research gap by investigating the relationship between servant leadership, talent management, and employee thriving in Indonesian organizations. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) To what extent does servant leadership influence employee thriving in Indonesian organizations? (2) To what extent does talent management influence employee thriving in Indonesian organizations? (3) How do servant leadership and talent management interact to influence employee thriving? By answering these questions, this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on employee thriving and provide practical insights for organizations seeking to create more fulfilling and productive workplaces.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. The Conservation Resource Theory

The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, pioneered by Stevan E. Hobfoll, posits that individuals are fundamentally motivated to obtain, retain, protect, and foster valued resources (Hobfoll, 2011). These resources can be object-based (e.g., tools, income), condition-based (e.g., employment, seniority), personal (e.g., self-efficacy, optimism), or energy-based (e.g., time, knowledge). A core tenet of the theory is that psychological stress occurs when these resources are threatened, lost, or when significant resource investments fail to yield anticipated gains. Conversely, the possession of abundant resources creates a positive gain spiral, enabling individuals to become more resilient and thrive, as they have a 'resource caravan' to draw upon to meet demands and invest in future growth (Halbesleben et al., 2014). In the organizational context, COR theory provides a powerful lens for understanding how workplace resources—such as social support, autonomy, and development opportunities—can buffer against burnout and act as catalysts for employee well-being and performance (Chen & Eyoun, 2021).

Within the specific research context of the interaction between servant leadership and talent management on employee thriving, COR theory offers a highly cohesive framework. Servant leadership is conceptualized as a critical social resource; a leader who empowers, supports, and develops their followers directly provides and protects the personal resources of their team members (Liao et al., 2022). Simultaneously, an effective talent management system functions as a valuable strategic-organizational resource, providing clear career pathways, training, and competency development that allow employees to invest in and accumulate new resources (Damer, 2020; Ndou et al., 2021). Employee thriving—the combined experience of vitality and learning is the quintessential manifestation of the positive gain spiral described by COR theory. The interaction between these two resource streams servant leadership (a team-level/relational resource) and talent management (an organizational-level/structural resource) is predicted to create a synergistic resource caravan passageway (Hobfoll et al., 2018). This passageway ensures that the organization's resource investment through talent management is not wasted but is rather nurtured and activated by the supportive team environment fostered by a servant leader, ultimately facilitating a sustainable state of employee thriving.

Crucially, this interaction underscores a resource amplification process essential for thriving to materialize. While talent management systems provide the structural opportunity for resource gain (e.g., training programs, career paths), they do not guarantee successful resource acquisition. As Sugiono et al. (2023) demonstrated, talent management's positive effect on thriving is not automatic and can be enhanced or constrained by other factors. This is where servant leadership acts as a critical catalytic mechanism. From a COR theory perspective, servant leaders reduce the perceived risk and personal cost of investing resources into talent management initiatives by providing tailored guidance and psychological safety. This ensures organizational opportunities are successfully translated into tangible personal resources for the employee (Shahid et al., 2021).

Without this supportive leadership buffer, formal talent practices can be perceived as demanding additional investments without adequate support, potentially leading to resource loss and anxiety, thus thwarting thriving. Therefore, this research posits that servant leadership is vital for activating the resource potential inherent in talent management systems. This presents a clear and compelling research gap: the need to empirically investigate the moderating role of talent management in the relationship between servant leadership and employee thriving. The positive effect of servant leadership on thriving will be significantly stronger in environments with highly developed talent management systems, as the two create a synergistic resource caravan passageway that optimally facilitates the conditions for employees to flourish.

2.2. Servant Leadership and thriving

A robust body of empirical research provides strong foundational support for the positive influence of servant leadership on employee thriving. Numerous studies across diverse contexts have consistently demonstrated this direct relationship (Jang et al., 2023; Jiang & Wei, 2024; Usman et al., 2021). Servant leaders, by prioritizing the needs and growth of their followers, create an environment of support, empowerment, and ethical clarity, which serves as a fertile ground for employees to simultaneously experience vitality (energy) and learning (a sense of continual development)—the two core dimensions of thriving (Spreitzer et al., 2005). For instance, Jiang and Wei (2024) confirmed a "significantly positive impact" of servant leadership on followers' thriving at work, while Jang et al. (2023) similarly found that servant leadership "significantly relates to thriving at work."

However, despite this well-established correlation, a critical research gap persists regarding the precise resource-based mechanisms that underlie this process. As noted by Jiang and Wei (2024), "the psychological mechanism in this process has not been fully understood." Most explanations have leaned on frameworks like Self-Determination Theory (Jiang & Wei, 2024) or Social Exchange Theory (Usman et al., 2021), which, while valuable, do not fully account for the dynamic process of resource accumulation and investment that is central to thriving. This is where Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory provides a more granular and powerful explanatory lens. COR theory posits that individuals strive to obtain, retain, and protect valuable resources, and that stress arises from the threat of resource loss, while thriving emerges from resource gain spirals (Hobfoll, 1989).

From a COR perspective, servant leadership is a paramount contextual resource that directly builds and protects employees' resource reservoirs. The actions of a servant leader—providing emotional support, granting autonomy, offering developmental feedback, and ensuring fairness—constitute significant investments of social and developmental resources into the employee (Liden et al., 2014). These resources reduce the individual's risk of resource depletion and provide the necessary fuel (e.g., energy, knowledge, psychological safety) for them to engage in the agentic behaviors (e.g., task focus, exploration) that are essential for thriving (Usman et al., 2021). This process initiates a gain spiral: as employees thrive, they

build greater personal resources (e.g., resilience, competence, self-efficacy), making them more capable of securing future resources, thus sustaining the thriving state (Halbesleben et al., 2014).

Therefore, this study hypothesizes that servant leadership positively influences employee thriving (H1). It seeks to fill the identified gap by explicitly employing COR theory to frame servant leadership not just as a behavioral style, but as a vital source of resources that catalyzes the positive psychological state of thriving, thereby offering a more nuanced understanding of the fundamental mechanics driving this critical relationship.

H1: Servant leadership influences employee thriving.

Although the direct empirical evidence linking talent management (TM) to employee thriving is still emerging, a compelling theoretical argument can be constructed based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory and supported by adjacent empirical findings. Talent management systems—encompassing strategic practices for identifying, developing, and retaining key employees—function as critical organizational resource passageways (Hobfoll, 1989). These systems provide structured investments in employees' development, such as targeted training, career pathing, and succession planning, which supply valuable resources including new competencies, social capital, recognition, and opportunities for growth.

The provision of these resources is intrinsically aligned with the dual components of thriving: learning and vitality. Formal training and development opportunities directly facilitate skill acquisition and knowledge expansion, thereby fueling the sense of learning (Spreitzer & Sutcliffe, 2022). Furthermore, being recognized as a valued talent and having clarity about one's future within the organization can enhance psychological empowerment and energy (vitality), as it signals to employees that they are valued and have a secure future within the organization (Sugiono et al., 2023). This is consistent with the findings of Jiang and Wei (2024), who demonstrated that leadership practices that satisfy psychological needs—a key outcome of effective TM—are crucial for fostering thriving. Similarly, Wang et al. (2022) showed that organizational systems can be appraised as challenges that positively influence thriving when perceived as opportunities for growth.

However, a significant research gap remains. The study by Sugiono et al. (2023) stands as one of the first to empirically confirm this positive correlation, revealing that talent management promotes thriving at work. Yet, the precise mechanisms through which this occurs are not fully understood. COR theory provides a robust framework to explain this relationship: TM systems represent an investment of organizational resources into the employee. For this investment to successfully translate into personal resource gains (and thus thriving), employees must be able to leverage these opportunities without perceiving them as overly demanding or threatening to their existing resources. This underscores the need to investigate potential moderators, such as leadership, that can influence how TM is implemented and perceived.

Therefore, building on the foundational work of Sugiono et al. (2023) and grounded in the principles of COR theory, it is hypothesized that talent management positively influences employee thriving (H2). This hypothesis posits that TM systems, by acting as a conduit for critical developmental and psychological resources, create an environment conducive to the experience of vitality and learning. This study aims to not only test this direct relationship but also to contribute to closing the existing gap by exploring the contextual factors that optimize this resource conversion process.

H2: Talent management influences employee thriving

Building upon the established positive effects of servant leadership (SL) and talent management (TM) on employee thriving, this study proposes a crucial extension by

hypothesizing that TM moderates the relationship between SL and thriving. While both SL and TM independently contribute to thriving, their interaction is likely to create a synergistic effect that amplifies or optimizes this relationship. This hypothesis is grounded in Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory and addresses a significant gap in the existing literature.

Servant leadership primarily functions as a relational and social resource, providing personalized support, empowerment, and psychological safety (Liden et al., 2014). These resources are vital for initiating thriving. However, for these resources to be fully actualized into sustained growth and vitality, they often require complementary structural and organizational resources. This is where talent management systems become critical. TM provides the formal mechanisms—such as structured development programs, clear career pathways, and recognition systems—that translate the empowerment and support from a servant leader into tangible opportunities for growth (Sugiono et al., 2023). In the absence of robust TM, the positive influence of a servant leader may be constrained, as employees might lack the clear channels or resources to act upon the motivation and support they receive.

Conversely, in environments where TM systems are weak or perceived as unfair, the inherent resources provided by a servant leader become even more critical. The leader can buffer against the negative perceptions of TM by providing explanations, offering alternative support, and ensuring fairness, thereby preventing the resource loss that would otherwise thwart thriving (Wang et al., 2022). This dynamic interplay suggests a substitution effect at low levels of TM.

Therefore, a significant research gap exists in understanding this contingency. While studies have shown the independent effects of SL (Jiang & Wei, 2024; Jang et al., 2023) and the emerging direct effect of TM (Sugiono et al., 2023), no research has yet empirically tested their interactive effect on thriving. COR theory provides the perfect lens for this, framing SL and TM as two different categories of resources that can interact to create a resource caravan passageway (Hobfoll et al., 2018). The central question is whether these resources are compensatory or complementary.

It is hypothesized that talent management strengthens the positive relationship between servant leadership and employee thriving. Specifically, the relationship between SL and thriving is proposed to be strongest when TM is high. Under these conditions, the relational resources provided by the servant leader are effectively channeled and amplified by the structural resources of the TM system, creating an optimal environment for resource gains and thus thriving. This study will test this moderating effect, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the boundary conditions that maximize the impact of servant leadership.

H3: Talent management moderates the effect of servant leadership on employee thriving

2.3. Conceptual model

The research model is grounded in Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, positioning servant leadership as a relational resource and talent management as a structural resource, both directly influencing employee thriving. The model further tests talent management as a moderator to examine potential synergistic effects between these resources. This theoretical framing clarifies how organizational and leadership resources collectively foster employee growth and vitality.

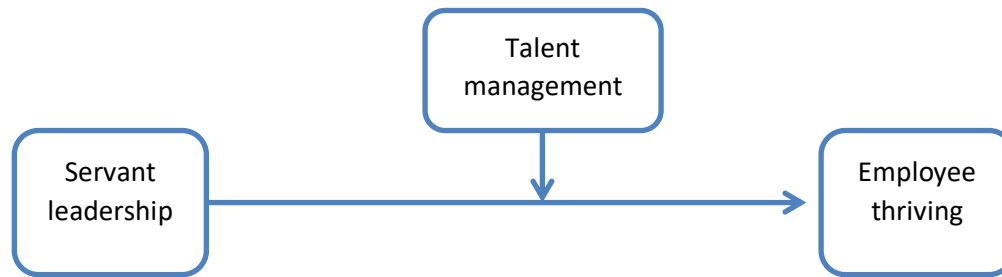


Figure 1. Research model

3. Methods

3.1. Sampling procedure

This study employed a quantitative approach, utilizing an online questionnaire for data collection. The target population consisted of employees working across three key industrial sectors in Jakarta, Indonesia: banking, trade/commerce, and education. The sampling technique applied was incidental (convenience) sampling, a non-probability method where data was collected from individuals from the target population who were readily available and willing to participate. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed online. Out of these, 143 questionnaires were returned fully completed and deemed suitable for analysis, resulting in a response rate of 95.3%. The final sample size of 143 employees is considered adequate and fulfills the requirement for social science research as per Roscoe's (1975) rule of thumb, which suggests that sample sizes between 30 and 500 are generally sufficient for most research purposes (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This sample provides a foundational basis for the analysis intended in this study.

3.2. Measurement

All constructs in this study were measured using established scales from previous literature. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), for all items.

Servant Leadership (SL)

The Servant Leadership construct was measured using the 6-item short form of the Servant Leadership Behavior Scale (SLBS) developed by Sendjaya et al. (2019). This scale captures the key behavioral manifestations of servant leadership. A sample item is: "My leader puts my best interests ahead of his/her own."

Talent Management (TM)

Talent Management was operationalized using a 4-item scale adapted from Jayaraman et al. (2018). The items were selected from the dimension of "Critical Position" to focus on the strategic identification and management of key roles, which is a core aspect of talent management systems. A sample item is: "My organization has a clear process to identify critical positions."

Employee Thriving (THR)

The Employee Thriving construct was measured using a 10-item scale developed by Zhai et al. (2020), which is an adaptation and extension of the original work by Porath et al. (2012). This scale measures the two core dimensions of thriving: learning (5 items) and vitality (5 items). A sample item for learning is: "I continue to learn more and more as time goes by," and for vitality: "I feel alive and vital at work."

3.3. Data analysis technique

This research involves multiple variables and is therefore classified as a multivariate study (Hair et al., 2019). The data analysis technique employed in this study is Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), utilizing SmartPLS 4 software. PLS-SEM is a variance-based structural equation modeling method that is particularly suitable for this study due to its ability to handle complex models with small to medium sample sizes, and its less stringent requirements regarding data distribution (Hair et al., 2019). This approach is well-suited for research focused on prediction and theory development. The analysis will be conducted in two stages as recommended by Legate et al. (2023):

Assessment of the Measurement (Outer) Model: This stage evaluates the reliability and validity of the constructs (Servant Leadership, Talent Management, and Employee Thriving). This includes examining indicator loadings, internal consistency reliability (Composite Reliability), convergent validity (Average Variance Extracted - AVE), and discriminant validity (Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio - HTMT).

Assessment of the Structural (Inner) Model: This stage evaluates the hypothesized relationships between the constructs. This includes examining the path coefficients, their significance level (determined via bootstrapping procedures, 10.000), and the coefficient of determination (R^2) to assess the model's predictive power.

4. Results and implications

4.1. Results

The table 1 provides a demographic overview of the 143 respondents who participated in this study on servant leadership, talent management, and employee thriving. The profile indicates a diverse and relevant sample for the research context.

Table 1. Descriptive

No	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender		
	Men	43	30%
	Women	100	70%
2	Age		
	21-30	86	60%
	31-40	31	21,6%
	41-50	20	14%
	>50	6	4%
3	Sector field		
	Banking	31	22%
	Commerce	66	46%
	Education	46	32%

Source: researcher

Female respondents constitute the majority of the sample (70%, $n=100$), while male respondents make up 30% ($n=43$). This distribution is common in organizational studies, particularly in sectors like services, commerce, and education, and does not pose an issue for the analysis. The PLS-SEM method used in this study is robust and does not require proportional gender representation for valid results.

The sample is predominantly composed of young employees, with the largest group being those aged 21-30 (60%, n=86). This is followed by the 31-40 age group (21.6%, n=31). Together, these two groups represent over 80% of the total sample. This is highly relevant for the study of talent management and thriving, as employees in these age brackets are often the primary focus of developmental programs and are typically in active career-building phases. Their perspectives on leadership and growth opportunities are crucial for this research. The smaller representation of older employees (>40 years, 18%) suggests that the findings may be more reflective of the experiences of younger workforce demographics.

The sample was drawn from three key industries in Jakarta: Commerce (46%, n=66), Education (32%, n=46), and Banking (22%, n=31). This cross-sector representation enhances the generalizability of the study's findings beyond a single industry. It allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how servant leadership and talent management practices influence employee thriving across different organizational contexts—from the competitive and performance-driven environment of banking and commerce to the service-oriented and developmental setting of education.

In conclusion, the demographic profile confirms that the data was collected from a relevant and varied group of working professionals, strengthening the validity and potential applicability of the research results across different genders, generational cohorts, and industrial sectors.

4.2 Outer Model

The assessment of the outer loadings for the reflective constructs was conducted to evaluate the indicator reliability, which measures how much of the variation in an item is explained by the construct. According to Hair et al. (2019), a commonly accepted threshold for retaining an item is a loading of 0.708 or higher, as this indicates that the construct explains more than 50% of the item's variance.

For the Servant Leadership (SL) construct, all six items demonstrated high outer loadings, all exceeding the recommended threshold. This indicates that each item is a strong and reliable indicator of the latent SL construct, confirming the excellent reliability and convergent validity of this measurement scale.

In contrast, the Talent Management (TM) scale initially consisted of four items. However, one item (TM1) exhibited a loading below the 0.708 threshold and was consequently removed from the model. The retention of the remaining three items, which all met the required cutoff, strengthens the unidimensionality and reliability of the TM construct by ensuring that all indicators are robust representations of the underlying latent variable.

The Employee Thriving (THV) construct presented a more nuanced scenario. From the original ten items, four were removed due to low loadings. Among the six retained items, two (THV1: 0.530 and THV3: 0.681) still had loadings below the ideal 0.708 threshold. However, a decision was made to retain them for two primary reasons grounded in methodological literature. First, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for the construct was 0.606, which successfully exceeds the critical value of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019). This confirms that, on average, the construct explains a satisfactory amount of variance in its indicators, even if some individual items are slightly weaker. Second, as noted by Hulland (1999) and reinforced by Hair et al. (2019), retaining indicators with loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 can be considered acceptable if their removal leads to a decrease in the composite reliability (CR) or AVE of the construct. Since the overall construct validity was deemed adequate with the inclusion of these items, their removal was not necessary to preserve the theoretical meaning and content validity of the thriving scale.

Table 2. Reliability

Variabel	Cronbach's α	ρA	CR	AVE	HTMT	
					SL	TM
SL	0,929	0,943	0,944	0,738		
TM	0,878	0,904	0,924	0,803	0,844	
THV	0,868	0,902	0,900	0,606	0,494	0,561

Source: output from PLS SEM

The provided table 1 presents the results of the measurement model assessment, which is crucial for establishing the reliability and validity of the constructs used in this study: Servant Leadership (SL), Talent Management (TM), and Employee Thriving (THV). The evaluation is based on established psychometric thresholds recommended by leading scholars in the field (Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2015).

Firstly, the internal consistency reliability of all constructs is confirmed to be excellent. This is evidenced by the values for Cronbach's Alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (ρA and CR), all of which surpass the stringent threshold of 0.70. Specifically, Servant Leadership ($\alpha = 0.929$, $\rho A = 0.943$, CR = 0.944), Talent Management ($\alpha = 0.878$, $\rho A = 0.904$, CR = 0.924), and Employee Thriving ($\alpha = 0.868$, $\rho A = 0.902$, CR = 0.900) demonstrate that the scales are highly reliable and that the items within each construct consistently measure the same underlying concept.

Secondly, convergent validity is established by examining the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The AVE values for both Servant Leadership (AVE = 0.738) and Talent Management (AVE = 0.803) exceed the required threshold of 0.50, indicating that a significant portion of the variance in the items is captured by the construct itself rather than by measurement error. The AVE for Employee Thriving (AVE = 0.606) also meets this criterion, confirming that all three constructs have adequate convergent validity.

Finally, discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations. The HTMT values between all pairs of constructs are well below the conservative threshold of 0.85 (SL-TM = 0.844, SL-THV = 0.494, TM-THV = 0.561). This provides strong evidence that each construct is truly distinct from the others in the model. For instance, the low HTMT value between Servant Leadership and Talent Management (0.844), while being the highest, still confirms that they are separate concepts, which is fundamental for testing their unique and interactive effects on thriving.

In conclusion, the results robustly confirm that the measurement model is reliable, valid, and suitable for proceeding to the evaluation of the structural model. This means we can be confident that the observed relationships between variables in the subsequent analysis truly reflect the theoretical connections between servant leadership, talent management, and employee thriving, rather than being an artifact of poorly measuring these concepts.

4.3. Inner Model

The assessment of collinearity among the predictor constructs is a critical step in evaluating the structural model. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is used to detect potential multicollinearity, which can distort the estimated path coefficients and their significance levels. As a rule of thumb, VIF values above 5 indicate a potential collinearity problem, while a more stringent threshold of 3.3 is often applied in methodological literature to ensure more robust estimates (Hair et al., 2019; Kock & Lynn, 2012).

In this study, the VIF values for the predictor constructs were examined. The VIF for Servant Leadership (SL) was calculated at 3.524, and for Talent Management (TM), it was 2.551. While the value for SL (3.524) slightly exceeds the stringent threshold of 3.3, it remains comfortably below the conservative cutoff of 5. The value for TM (2.551) is well within both acceptable limits.

This indicates that while there is a moderate level of correlation between the independent constructs, it does not constitute severe multicollinearity that would bias the regression estimates in the structural model. Therefore, both constructs can be retained for further analysis, and the path coefficients can be interpreted with confidence.

The coefficient of determination, R-square (R^2), is evaluated to assess the model's predictive accuracy and to determine the amount of variance in the endogenous construct explained by the exogenous constructs. In this study, the R^2 value for Employee Thriving is 0.283, indicating that the two predictor constructs—Servant Leadership and Talent Management—collectively explain 28.3% of the variance in Employee Thriving.

To contextualize the substantive significance of this value, guidelines specific to behavioral sciences are applied. Cohen (1988) proposed benchmarks for R^2 in behavioral research, where values of 0.02, 0.13, and 0.26 represent weak, moderate, and substantial explanatory power, respectively. With an R^2 of 0.283, the model exceeds the threshold for substantial explanatory power, underscoring the meaningful combined influence of Servant Leadership and Talent Management on Employee Thriving.

This interpretation is further reinforced by Hair et al. (2019), who emphasize that R^2 thresholds must be contextualized within the research domain. In organizational and psychological studies, where human behavior is influenced by multifaceted, often unmeasured factors (e.g., individual differences, external socio-economic conditions), R^2 values between 0.20 and 0.30 are generally considered acceptable and meaningful. Thus, the model demonstrates robust predictive relevance within the behavioral research context, confirming that Servant Leadership and Talent Management are critical antecedents of Employee Thriving.

Table 3. Hypotheses test

Jalur (pengaruh langsung)	Koefisien jalur	Standar deviasi	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	Kesimpulan
SL→THV (H1)	0,281	0,148	1,904	0,028	0,050	0,535	H1: support
TM→THV (H2)	0,344	0,114	3,017	0,001	0,150	0,525	H2: support
SL*TM→THV (H3)	0,101	0,099	1,023	0,153	-0,076	0,251	H3: not support

Source: output from PLS SEM

The findings of the structural model analysis, derived from a bootstrapping procedure with 10,000 subsamples to ensure robust statistical power, provide critical insights into the proposed relationships between servant leadership, talent management, and employee thriving. All hypotheses were tested using a one-tailed significance test, as the study's hypotheses were directionally specific, predicting positive relationships between the constructs.

The analysis reveals strong support for the direct effect hypotheses. Servant

leadership demonstrates a statistically significant positive influence on employee thriving ($\beta = 0.281$, $t = 1.904$, $p = 0.028$), confirming hypothesis H1. This finding aligns with Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, as servant leaders provide crucial emotional and developmental resources that enable employees to experience both vitality and learning. Similarly, talent management shows a significant positive effect on employee thriving ($\beta = 0.344$, $t = 3.017$, $p = 0.001$), supporting hypothesis H2. This suggests that organizational systems for identifying, developing, and retaining talent serve as structural resources that complement the relational resources provided by servant leaders, collectively fostering a thriving workforce.

However, the moderating effect proposed in hypothesis H3 was not supported by the data ($\beta = 0.101$, $t = 1.023$, $p = 0.153$). The interaction between servant leadership and talent management did not produce a statistically significant effect on employee thriving. This indicates that while both factors independently contribute to thriving, they do not interact synergistically in this organizational context. The non-significant finding may be attributed to several factors, including the possibility that the relationship between leadership and thriving operates through different mechanisms than those influenced by talent management systems, or that the sample characteristics limited the detection of interaction effects.

From a theoretical perspective, these results underscore the importance of both relational and structural resources in promoting employee thriving, consistent with COR theory's emphasis on resource accumulation. Practically, organizations should prioritize developing both servant leadership capabilities and robust talent management systems, as each contributes independently to employee growth and vitality. Future research might explore boundary conditions or additional mediating mechanisms that could clarify the relationship between these organizational factors and employee thriving in different cultural or industrial contexts.

4.4. Discussion

The robust support for Hypothesis 1, which posits a positive influence of servant leadership on employee thriving, provides a significant contribution to the literature on positive organizational psychology and leadership. This finding is not an isolated phenomenon but rather a consistent outcome that aligns with a growing body of international empirical evidence. For instance, the work of Jiang and Wei (2024) and Jang et al. (2023) empirically corroborates that employees under servant leaders report higher levels of both vitality and learning, the two core dimensions of thriving. This relationship is fundamentally rooted in the very nature of servant leadership, which inverts the traditional leadership paradigm by prioritizing the growth, well-being, and empowerment of followers above all else (Eva et al., 2019).

The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory offers a powerful and parsimonious framework to decipher the mechanisms behind this relationship. Servant leaders act as paramount resource caravans (Hobfoll et al., 2018), consistently providing their followers with a multitude of critical resources. These resources are both social—such as trust, emotional support, and a sense of community—and developmental—including autonomy, mentorship, and opportunities for skill acquisition (Liden et al., 2014). From the COR perspective, this constant influx of resources does two things simultaneously. First, it directly builds the employees' resource reservoirs, providing the raw materials (energy, knowledge, support) necessary to engage in the agentic behaviors that are the engine of thriving, such as task focus and exploration (Usman et al., 2021). Second, and perhaps more importantly, it creates a protective buffer against resource loss. In a climate of psychological safety and support fostered by a servant leader, employees perceive fewer threats to their resources and are therefore more willing to invest their existing resources into challenging tasks that promote learning and growth, thus initiating a positive resource gain spiral (Halbesleben et al., 2014).

This process effectively transforms the workplace into a resource passageway where challenges are reframed as opportunities for growth rather than threats of depletion. For example, a servant leader's practice of empowering employees provides them with the resource of autonomy. This autonomy allows them to make decisions and solve problems, leading to successful outcomes that further build their resources of competence and self-efficacy (the learning dimension), while the act of exercising control itself can be energizing (the vitality dimension). This intricate process of resource investment and gain elucidates why servant leadership is so effective: it systematically creates the conditions for employees to not only perform but to truly flourish.

Therefore, this finding moves beyond establishing a mere correlation. It illuminates the fundamental how and why servant leadership cultivates thriving. By framing servant leadership through the lens of COR theory, we can understand it as a strategic investment in human capital that generates returns in the form of a more energized, adaptive, and continuously learning workforce. This provides organizational leaders with a compelling, theory-based rationale to adopt and genuinely embody servant leadership principles, not as a soft management fad, but as a critical strategy for building sustainable competitive advantage through their most valuable asset: their people.

The empirical support for Hypothesis 2, which posits a positive influence of talent management on employee thriving, offers a substantial contribution to the evolving discourse on strategic human resource management and its psychological impacts. This finding aligns with the pioneering work of Sugiono et al. (2023), who demonstrated that talent management systems significantly promote thriving at work, particularly when mediated by factors such as person-organization fit. The confirmation of this relationship in the present study reinforces the notion that organizational investments in structured talent practices are not merely operational necessities but powerful catalysts for employee growth and vitality.

The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory provides a robust theoretical lens to interpret this relationship. Talent management systems function as institutionalized resource passageways (Hobfoll et al., 2018), designed to systematically identify, develop, and retain valuable human capital. These systems provide employees with critical resources, including structured developmental opportunities, clear career pathways, recognition, and job security (Jayaraman et al., 2018). From a COR perspective, these resources reduce uncertainty and perceived threats of resource loss, thereby enabling employees to invest their personal resources—such as time, effort, and attention—into activities that foster learning and vitality. For instance, access to targeted training programs directly enhances employees' knowledge and skills (the learning dimension), while recognition and career advancement opportunities reinforce their sense of value and belonging, thereby boosting energy and motivation (the vitality dimension).

Furthermore, talent management systems cultivate a resource gain spiral by creating conditions that encourage proactive behaviors. When employees perceive that their organization is invested in their growth, they are more likely to engage in agentic activities such as seeking feedback, pursuing challenging assignments, and building social networks (Usman et al., 2021). These behaviors, in turn, generate additional resources, including social capital, self-efficacy, and resilience, which further amplify thriving. This aligns with the findings of Wang et al. (2022), who noted that organizational systems like talent management are appraised as challenges rather than hindrances when they are perceived as opportunities for growth and achievement.

However, the effectiveness of talent management in promoting thriving is not automatic. Its success hinges on how these systems are perceived and implemented. For

example, Sugiono et al. (2023) emphasized the moderating role of person-organization fit, suggesting that employees are more likely to thrive when they align with the organizational values embedded in talent management practices. Similarly, Wang et al. (2022) highlighted that systems perceived as burdensome or unfair can lead to resource depletion rather than gain. Thus, while talent management provides the structural resources necessary for thriving, its impact is optimized in environments where these resources are perceived as genuine investments in employees' well-being and growth.

In conclusion, this finding underscores the strategic importance of talent management as a key driver of employee thriving. By framing talent management through the lens of COR theory, we gain a deeper understanding of its role as a resource caravan that supplies employees with the tools and opportunities needed to flourish. This insight encourages organizations to move beyond transactional approaches to talent management and instead design systems that genuinely foster resource accumulation, thereby creating a sustainable foundation for thriving.

Contrary to the initial hypothesis, the results of this study did not support the proposed moderating effect of talent management on the relationship between servant leadership and employee thriving (H3). This non-finding is particularly intriguing given the strong theoretical rationale derived from Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, which posits that resources often operate synergistically to produce greater outcomes. The hypothesis was built on the premise that servant leadership (providing relational resources) and talent management (providing structural resources) would interact to create a resource caravan passageway (Hobfoll et al., 2018), thereby amplifying the positive effect of servant leadership on thriving. However, the statistical analysis revealed no such interaction, suggesting that these two constructs influence thriving through independent mechanisms rather than synergistic ones.

Several explanations may account for this unexpected outcome. First, the nature of the resources provided by servant leadership and talent management might be too distinct to interact in the hypothesized manner. Servant leadership primarily offers social and emotional resources (e.g., trust, empowerment, psychological safety), while talent management provides structural and institutional resources (e.g., formal training, career paths, performance management). According to Halbesleben et al. (2014), resources are more likely to interact when they are similar in nature or when one resource directly enhances the utility of the other. In this case, the relational resources from servant leadership may operate on a different psychological plane than the structural resources from talent management, resulting in additive rather than multiplicative effects.

Second, the non-significant moderating effect could be attributed to the possibility that talent management systems, as implemented in the sampled organizations, were not sufficiently salient or well-designed to alter the strength of the relationship between leadership and thriving. As noted by Wang et al. (2022), organizational systems are often appraised by employees as either challenges or hindrances. If talent management practices were perceived as bureaucratic, unfair, or disconnected from employees' immediate needs, they might have failed to function as meaningful contextual enhancers. This aligns with COR Theory's emphasis on the subjective appraisal of resources: if employees do not perceive talent management as a valuable resource, it cannot effectively moderate the impact of other resources like servant leadership.

Third, the relationship between servant leadership and thriving may be so robust that it is less susceptible to moderation by organizational systems. Servant leadership, by its very nature, addresses fundamental psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and

relatedness (Jiang & Wei, 2024). When these needs are met through high-quality leadership, the additional impact of formal talent systems might be marginal. This perspective finds support in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which suggests that intrinsic motivations (often nurtured by servant leaders) are powerful drivers of behavior and well-being, potentially overshadowing the influence of extrinsic structural factors like talent management (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

From a methodological standpoint, the non-finding could also reflect sample-specific characteristics or measurement limitations. For instance, if the talent management scale captured only certain dimensions (e.g., critical position identification, as per Jayaraman et al., 2018), it might have overlooked other aspects (e.g., developmental opportunities or rewards) that could have interacted more strongly with servant leadership. The non-significant moderating result for talent management, however, contrasts with findings from other contexts. For instance, Sari (2024) found that talent management did act as a significant boundary condition for servant leadership's influence on employee idea generation. This discrepancy suggests that the moderating role of talent management may be highly specific to the outcome variable measured. It is plausible that structural resources like talent management systems are more effective in amplifying leadership's impact on explicit, innovation-related behaviors (e.g., idea generation) than on the broader psychological state of thriving, which may be influenced by a more complex set of factors.

In conclusion, while H3 was not supported, this outcome invites deeper theoretical reflection. It suggests that the resource-based dynamics between leadership and organizational systems are more complex than initially assumed. Future research could explore alternative moderators (e.g., organizational culture, individual differences) or mediators (e.g., psychological empowerment) to better understand the conditions under which servant leadership and talent management jointly influence thriving. This study underscores the importance of not only identifying resources but also understanding their interplay—or lack thereof—in fostering employee well-being.

5. Conclusion

This study confirms that both servant leadership and talent management independently and significantly contribute to enhancing employee thriving, underscoring their roles as critical relational and structural resources, respectively. However, talent management does not amplify the positive effect of servant leadership on thriving, indicating that these factors operate through distinct, non-interactive mechanisms within the organizational context examined.

Theoretical Implications

The findings offer three key theoretical contributions. First, they reinforce and extend Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory by empirically validating servant leadership and talent management as valuable resources that foster thriving through independent pathways. Second, the non-significant moderating effect challenges the assumption that relational and structural resources necessarily interact synergistically, suggesting instead that their influences may be parallel rather than multiplicative. Third, the study integrates leadership and human resource management literatures, providing a nuanced framework for understanding how different organizational elements collectively shape employee psychological experiences.

Practical Implications

Organizations should prioritize developing servant leadership capabilities among managers through targeted training programs focused on empowerment, emotional support, and ethical stewardship. Simultaneously, they must implement transparent and equitable talent management systems that provide clear career pathways, developmental opportunities, and recognition mechanisms. Importantly, leaders and HR practitioners should recognize that these initiatives drive thriving through separate channels, necessitating coordinated but distinct strategies for maximizing their impact.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies should explore: 1) Potential mediators (e.g., psychological safety, perceived organizational support) that elucidate the mechanisms linking servant leadership and talent management to thriving; 2) Boundary conditions (e.g., organizational culture, industry context) that may influence the observed relationships; 3) Longitudinal designs to capture the dynamic evolution of thriving in response to leadership and talent management interventions; and 4) Mixed-methods approaches to gain deeper qualitative insights into how employees subjectively experience these resources.

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