

Moral Leadership and Job Satisfaction: The Mediating Effects of Interpersonal and Informational Justice

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Abstract— Job satisfaction remains an important attitude of employees for them to well execute their work roles. This paper reports the influences of moral leadership, interpersonal-, and informational justice. A total of 205 samples in this study were taken from educational staffs of high schools and universities. As expected, this study found that moral leadership was related to job satisfaction. Moral leadership was positively related to interpersonal- and informational justice. Interpersonal- and informational justice were positively related to job satisfaction. Also, this study found that the effect of moral leadership on job satisfaction mediated by interpersonal- and informational justice. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed. Remedies to some limitations of the study and future directions are also addressed.

Keywords: moral leadership, interpersonal justice, informational justice, job satisfaction

I. INTRODUCTION

The focus of this paper is to investigate factors influencing a widely-known job attitude, namely *job satisfaction*. One's attitude toward his/her job is an important factor impacting his/her various behaviors and performance [1]; [2]. The work atmosphere as a result of leadership is believed to be a determinant for employees' job satisfaction. The current study believes that a leadership style may influence such atmosphere. Particularly, the Indonesian society shares a value that morality has a significant meaning in a leadership process. Within the culture, unethical conducts will not only break rules or regulations, but also harm and unbalance the harmony of a particular society. Furthermore, leaders are expected to show virtues and become moral examples within the society. As moral examples, leaders need to show their behaviors as naturally and morally correct [3]; [4]. Leadership behavior, morally or immorally, may become important symbolic patterns which followers may follow. In brief, by showing such behaviors, leaders are able to maintain interpersonal harmony in society and make human society moral in nature [4].

Although extant research has demonstrated the importance of moral leadership and perceived justice on job satisfaction [5]; [6]; [7], it has ignored to examine how moral leadership and employees' perception on organizational justice may together influence job satisfaction [3]. This study employs two dimensions of justice, namely interpersonal justice (i.e., the extent to which an employee perceives to be fairly treated by his/her leader) and informational justice (i.e., the extent to which an employee enjoys effective communication with his/her leader) [8]. This study contributes to theory by opening up the relationships among variables and to practice by giving an insight to practitioners on the importance of practicing moral leadership within organizations, in order for encouraging employee job satisfaction. Figure 1 shows the proposed model and hypotheses examined in this study.

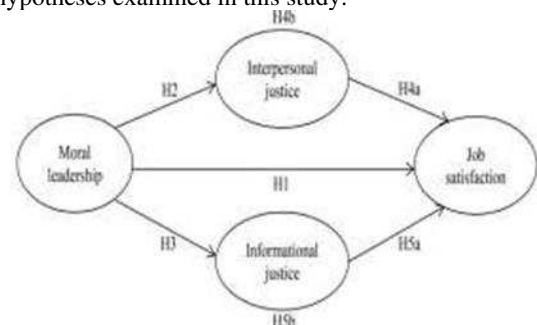


Figure 1: Proposed Model

II. THEORY AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

A. A Review of Relational Leadership Theory and Paternalistic Leadership Theory

Leadership is a process by which an individual (who is labeled as a leader) influences a group of individuals (who are labeled as followers) to achieve organization's goals and the organizational effectiveness [9]. Extant literature has discussed

a significant numbers of the theories of leadership, styles, and practices [9]; [10]. One of important theories is relational leadership theory that emphasizes on a social influence process through which emergent *coordination* and *change* are constructed and produced [11]. Uhl-Bien suggests that within the coordination a leader may evolve social order. While within the change, a leader may deliver new values, attitudes, approached, behavior, and ideologies (p. 655). There are some theories are classified into the theory, for example, leader-member exchange theory (i.e., leadership occurs when an effective leader- member partnership is developed), charismatic leadership theory (i.e., the leader-member relationship is developed followers perceive their leaders as charismatic and the persons they identify with), and paternalistic leadership theory [11] ; [12]. Theorists argue that the development of high quality, trusting, and work relationship is the central issue within relational leadership theory [11]; [13]; [14].

Specifically, paternalistic leadership theory refers to a fatherlike leadership style in which strong authority is combined with concern and considerateness [4] ;[12]. Farh and co-authors [3] suggest three dimensions of relational leadership theory, namely authoritarian (i.e., to assert authority and control), benevolence (i.e., to emphasize individualized and holistic concern), and morality. Moral leadership is characterized behaviors that demonstrate superior personal virtues [3]. The authors also point out that leaders need to show high moral standards (e.g., does not avenge subordinates when he/she offended, does not take credit from subordinates for his/her own interests). In comparison, moral leadership may have a number of similarities with ethical leadership [6]. However, Kim and Brymer [6] defined ethical leadership as a leaders' behaviors that provide ethical standards, reward ethical behaviors and punish the wrongdoers.

Although moral and ethical leadership perspectives are somewhat overlapping, they are also different. While ethical leadership focuses on official rules or relations of organization, moral leadership emphasizes on both the behaviors related to regulated or unregulated norms in organizations.

B. Moral Leadership and Job Satisfaction

Moral leadership is expected to have a positive effect on job satisfaction. Various job elements have already found to be important factor for job satisfaction [15], because moral behaviors should lead higher followers' respect and leaders' self-identity in the perspective of followers [4]; [12]. Specifically, extant works have demonstrated the importance of leadership styles on employee job satisfaction [7]; [15]. Moral leadership covers unselfish behavior of leaders, including not to abuse power for one's own good, and not taking personal revenge in the name of public interest [3] which may also promote ethical climate within a unit or an organization [16]; [6]. According to relational leadership theory, the most important outcome of leadership is a good leader- member

relationship [11]. Since moral values may strengthen the relationship as perceived by employees and harmonious situation within groups, the employees' job satisfaction also may be increased [3]; [6]; [12]. Consistent with prior work [7], it suggests that moral leadership may be expected to promote employees' job satisfaction. Therefore, this study proposes:

Hypothesis 1: Moral leadership is positively related to job satisfaction.

C. Moral Leadership, Interpersonal-, and Informational Justice

This study investigates the impacts of moral leadership on both interpersonal- and informational justice [17]. Interpersonal leadership refers to the extent to which employees are treated with respect [17] and to the dignity and respect that one receives [18]. Whereas, informational justice refers to the extent to which employees be informative and have open communication with their leaders[17];[19]. Extant research only demonstrate a small, but important tract of the meaning of leadership behavior on perceived justice [20]. Sabeen found that managerial behavior was an important predictor for interactional justice (i.e., an interchangeably used for procedural justice that refers to the fairness toward the implementations of systems, procedure, rules or policies). When employees see their leaders to be the persons who can keep morality, their perception on justice is boosted. In a similar vein, based on relational leadership theory, since moral leaders put an emphasis on developing and maintaining important values, beliefs, norms, and work standards within work groups [11], the perceived justice can be expected to be developed [20]. The moral virtues as shown by leaders can conform to ethical and humanitarian ways for interpersonal treatment [21]; [22]. If leaders show the behaviors, the employee perceptions toward organizational justice will be more positive [20]. Taken together, when leaders apply moral behaviors, a justice atmosphere is increased, namely both interpersonal- and informational justice as perceived by employees are enhanced. Therefore, this study proposes:

Hypothesis 2: Moral leadership is positively related to interpersonal justice.

Hypothesis 3: Moral leadership is positively related to informational justice.

D. Mediating Roles of Interpersonal and Informational Justice

When individuals believe they are being treated fairly, they tend to exhibit higher levels of job performance and more organizational citizenship behavior [21]. Equity theory asserts that employees are mostly motivated if they are treated equitably [23] and the motivation may in turn promotes various positive work outcomes [24]. Similar with equity theory, relational leadership theory suggests that employees as entities may learn about leadership process and follower experiences during working with the leaders which the factors may be related to the employee perceptions toward organizational

justice, satisficing and trusting relationships [11]. The theory is consistent with paternalistic leadership theory suggesting that the combination of fatherly benevolence and moral integrity may correspond to the members' sense of equity and justice [3]. Cheng and co- authors argued that leaders who initiate the change on work values, attitudes, approaches, behaviors, and ideologies should also contribute to the enhancement of members' positive responses, which in turn, the positive response may enhance the overall job attitudes, including job satisfaction [6]; [7]; [25]. In light with the above discussion, first, the current study believes that interpersonal- and informational justice may influence the improvement of employees' job satisfaction. Second, it can be expected that the development of interpersonal- and informational justice as a result of moral leadership may in turn promote employees' job satisfaction. In further, it is likely that both types of justice positively correspond to job satisfaction. In addition, interpersonal- and informational justice may also play roles as mediators between moral leadership and job satisfaction. Finally, this study proposes:

Hypothesis 4: Interpersonal justice (a) is positively related to job satisfaction and (b) mediates the relationship between moral leadership and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5: Informational justice (a) is positively related to job satisfaction and (b) mediates the relationship between moral leadership and job satisfaction.

III. METHODS

A. Respondents

We targeted Indonesian educational staffs of high schools (teachers) and universities (lecturers) for this study. We believed that the target respondents were suitable to our study. Job satisfaction of educators is a focal issue as it relates to their performance as knowledge delivers, and contributes to the success, vision, and mission of their educational organizations. All measures were translated into Indonesian, since they were presumed to be unfamiliar with English language. A number of 6 high schools and 12 universities were involved. Initially, we distributed our questionnaire to 260 individuals. Both paper-based and online surveys were conducted. A total of 205 responses were collected and all usable, representing a 79% of response rate. The following table is the characteristics of our respondents.

Table 1: Respondents' Characteristics

	Characteristic	Freq.	%
Gender	Male	98	48
	Female	107	52
Age	≤ 30	32	16
	31 – 40	56	27
	41 – 50	59	29
	≥ 50	58	28
Education	Undergraduate	131	64
	Master's	58	28
	Doctoral	16	7

Note. N = 205

B. Measures

Moral Leadership. A six-item scale from Cheng et al. [3] was used to measure the moral standard of leaders. The original version of the measure was used in a Chinese context which it included "guanxi" meaning the network of relationships in the community. Although "relationship" is relevant in our society, we modified the item mentioning "guanxi", namely the term was replaced with "interpersonal relationship." One item was dropped due to a low loading score. A sample item is "My supervisor never avenges a personal wrong in the name of public interest when he/she is offended." Response options ranged from (1) *strongly disagree* to (5) *to strongly agree*. The loadings of five items were between 0.53 - 0.81. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.74.

Interpersonal Justice. A four-item scale from Colquitt [17] was used to assess interpersonal justice. A sample item is "My supervisor treated me in a polite manner." Response options ranged from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). The loadings of four items were between 0.72 - 0.85. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.81.

Informational Justice. A five-item scale from Colquitt [17] was used to assess informational justice. A sample question is "My supervisor has been candid in his/her communication with me." Response options ranged from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). The loadings of five items were between 0.75 - 0.85. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.82. **Job Satisfaction.** A five-item scale from Brayfield and Rothe [26] was used to assess job satisfaction. A sample question is "I feel fairly satisfied with my present job."

Response options ranged from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). The loadings of five items were between 0.79 - 0.89. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.90. *Control Variables.*

We

included gender (male=1, female = 0), age (< 30 = 1, 31 – 40 = 2, 41 – 50 = 3, > 50 = 4), education (Diploma = 1, undergraduate = 2, master's = 3, doctorate = 4) (e.g., [7]; [27]).

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C. Analytical Procedure

The AMOS statistical program was used to examine the significance of the proposed links. This programs was also used for evaluating the indirect effects of interpersonal and informational justice. To confirm with the results of the mediating effects, we performed Sobel's analysis.

IV. RESULTS

Table 2 shows means, standard deviations, and correlations

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender	2.70	1.05							
2. Age	1.52	.50	-.14						
3. Education	1.44	.65	.19**	.00					
4. Moral leadership	3.69	.67	.05	.08	-.13	(.74)			
5. Interpersonal justice	4.03	.55	.18**	-.02	.16*	.44**	(.81)		
6. Informational justice	3.96	.53	.07	-.04	.04	.44**	.73**	(.82)	
7. Job satisfaction	3.92	.62	.23**	.00	.20**	.44**	.69**	.61**	(.90)

Note. N = 205; SD = standard deviation; * p<.05, ** p<.01 (two-tailed). Alphas coefficients are given in the parentheses.

A. Testing for Direct Relationships

A path analysis was performed by using the AMOS statistical program. Three control variables were included in the model, namely gender, age, and education. As shown in Table 3, it is found that age ($\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$) and education ($\beta = 0.13$, $p < 0.01$) were positively related to job satisfaction. It indicates that older employees and employees with higher education perceived higher levels of job satisfaction. H1 proposes that moral leadership is positively related to job satisfaction. As expected, the results found that moral leadership was positively related to job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.01$). H1 was supported. H2 proposes that moral leadership is positively related to interpersonal justice. It was found that moral leadership was positively related to interpersonal justice ($\beta = 0.44$, $p < 0.001$). H2 was supported. H3 proposes that moral leadership is positively related to informational justice. As suspected, the results found that moral leadership was positively related to informational justice ($\beta = 0.44$, $p < 0.001$).

among variables. As shown, all study variables are significantly correlated one with each other at $p < 0.01$. The correlation between the two dimensions of justice was quite high (0.73, $p < 0.01$). First, because interpersonal and informational justice are inherently posited as two discrete dimensions of justice within the same construct [17]. Second, in the present model we evaluated the two separately. Based on these reasons we therefore performed a discriminant validity test to examine whether these dimensions were statistically different. By performing the AMOS program, a measurement model was formed that placed the dimensions as the first-order factors and their items as the second-order factors. The fit indices were = 88.92, CMIN/DF = 3.42, GFI = 0.91, IFI = 0.93, CFI = 0.93, and RMSEA = 0.11. An alternative measurement model was also formed that merged all items of the two dimensions on one latent factor. The fit indices for this model were = 109.92, CMIN/DF = 4.07, GFI = 0.89, IFI = 0.90, CFI = 0.90, and RMSEA = 0.12. The chi-square difference was 21.01 and significant at $p < 0.001$. The baseline measurement model was better than the alternative one, the discriminant validity of the two was thus demonstrated.

H3 was supported. H4a proposes that interpersonal justice is positively related to job satisfaction. As suggested, the positive impact of interpersonal justice on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.43$, $p < 0.001$). H4a was supported. Lastly, H5a proposes that informational justice is positively related to job satisfaction. The positive impact of informational justice on job satisfaction was also found ($\beta = 0.23$, $p < 0.01$). H5a was also supported. The results revealed that most of the fit indices were met (see Table 3), showing an acceptable good fit of the model.

B. Testing for Mediation Relationships

A Sobel test is operated under the Baron and Kenny's [28] four conditions for evaluating a mediating effect. First, the independent variable must significantly predict the dependent variable. Second, the independent variable must significantly predict the mediator. Third, the mediator must significantly predict the dependent variable. As shown in the previous testing the path moral leadership job satisfaction was significant, satisfying the first conditions for the mediating effects of interpersonal- and informational justice. H4b

proposes the mediating effect of interpersonal justice on the relationship between moral leadership and job satisfaction. The paths moral leadership interpersonal leadership and interpersonal job satisfaction were all significant. H5b proposes the mediating effect of informational justice on the relationship between moral leadership and job satisfaction. The paths moral leadership informational justice and informational justice job satisfaction were all significant. Therefore the second and third conditions for the mediating effects of interpersonal- and informational justice were reached. As shown in Table 4, the indirect effect of moral leadership on job satisfaction via interpersonal justice was 0.19 (0.44 x 0.43). The indirect effect of moral leadership on job satisfaction via informational justice

was 0.10 (0.44 x 0.23). Therefore, the total effect of moral leadership including the direct effect on job satisfaction was 0.47 (0.18 + 0.19 + 0.10). The results showed the mediating effect of interpersonal- and informational justice. To validate the results, a Sobel test was also performed. To find path coefficients and standard errors as required to perform the analysis, a regression analysis was conducted. All control variables were included. The Sobel test statistics for the mediating effects of interpersonal- and informational justice were significant. The results exhibited supports for H4b and H5b

Table 3: Results of Path Analysis

Path Estimated	Estimate (Sig.)	Model Fit Assessment		
		Index	Expected value	Results
Gender Job satisfaction	.02 (.06)	CMIN/DF	Less than 3	3.25
Age Job satisfaction	.12 (.03)*	GFI	More than .90	.97
Education Job satisfaction	.13 (.05)**	NFI	More than .90	.95
Moral leadership Job satisfaction	.18 (.05)**	IFI	More than .90	.97
Moral leadership Interpersonal justice	.44 (.05)***	CFI	More than .90	.97
Moral leadership Informational justice	.44 (.05)***	RMSEA	Less than .08	.11
Interpersonal justice Job satisfaction	.43 (.08)***			
Informational justice Job satisfaction	.22 (.08)**			

Note. N = 205; * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors.

V. RESULTS

Drawing on relational leadership theory and paternalistic leadership theory, this study tests the effects of moral leadership on job satisfaction by using educators (teachers and professors) of several high schools and universities in Indonesia. In addition, this study also includes interpersonal- and informational justice as mediators. As predicted, the relationships of moral leadership and job satisfaction, interpersonal-, and informational justice were significant. Both types of justice were also related to job satisfaction. The mediating effects of the types of justice were also discovered.

Table 4. Mediating Effects Results

Path Coefficient	Mediating Effect	
	Interpersonal Justice	Informational Justice
Moral leadership → Interpersonal Justice	.47 (.05)	
Interpersonal justice → Job Satisfaction	.66 (.06)	
Moral Leadership → Informational Justice		.45 (.06)
Informational justice → Job satisfaction		.59 (.06)
Test Statistic (Sobel test)	7.14 (.04)***	6.64 (.04)***

Note. N = 205, *** p < .001. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. For the ease of presentation, path coefficients of control variables to job satisfaction were not presented.

The current study contributes to theory in several ways. First, since extant research has put an important of the effect of leadership on job satisfaction [15], this study discloses the impact of a specific aspect of leadership, namely morality, on the job attitude. Second, this study theorizes the meaning of justice on the relationship between moral leadership and job satisfaction. Consistent with previous findings, the employees' perception on moral atmosphere should directly affected job satisfaction [7]; [16]. Because the atmosphere may affect various job attitudes [6], this study posits that the effect of moral leadership may pass through the perceived justice. This study validates that interpersonal- and informational justice may become important mediating variables. It also contributes to practice. Since morality is important aspect to be shown by leaders, because it can increase job satisfaction and perceived justice, managers may wish to consider to practice the aspects of morality in leadership process. In addition, systems that improve the ethical and moral practices are focal to maintain leaders' behaviors related to the aspects. This effort may be strongly related to maintaining the implementation of moral leadership.

Some limitations are noted. This study used a cross-sectional design in data collection. It may cause a significant common method variance. However, we can claim that the method was appropriate to our measures. For instance, our samples were competent to measure moral leadership (i.e., because they saw their leaders in everyday basis in term of morality), and their perceived justice, and job satisfaction. However, multiple times of data collection may be considered [29]. Second, a general job satisfaction is used to measure educators' job satisfaction. Future research may use a more specific job satisfaction measure which related to specific jobs of respondents.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that moral leadership is related to job satisfaction, interpersonal-, and informational justice.

Furthermore, interpersonal- and informational justice are positively related to job satisfaction. This study also demonstrates that the effect of moral leadership on job satisfaction can be mediated by interpersonal- and informational justice.

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