The mediation effect of trust and justice on the relationship between servant leadership and employee job satisfaction: an empirical findings from private universities in Kuwait

Nourhan ElBayaa
Holy Spirit University of Kaslik, Jounieh, Lebanon, and
Yehia Ibrahim Alzoubi and Elsa Abboud
American University of the Middle East, Egaila, Kuwait

Abstract
Purpose – Higher education institutions now place a greater emphasis on servant leadership, organizational trust, and justice. This study evaluates the function of organizational and leader trust and justice in mediating the relationship between employee job satisfaction and servant leadership in Kuwait’s private universities.

Design/methodology/approach – Employees from two private higher education sectors in Kuwait provided 205 valid responses to the study’s closed-ended survey, which was given to 240 workers. The job satisfaction and servant leadership, leader’s trust and justice and servant leadership, leader’s trust and justice and job satisfaction, and the mediating effect of trust and justice on the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction among employees in Kuwait’s private universities—all four variables—were examined using the simple random procedure method. Partial least squares structural equation modeling was used for data analysis.

Findings – The findings provide evidence supporting the positive effects of servant leadership on employee job satisfaction. Moreover, it provided evidence supporting the positive relationship between servant leadership and organizational trust and justice. The findings also showed a positive correlation between organizational trust and justice and job satisfaction among staff members working in Kuwait’s private higher education sector. Additionally, the results provided a partial mediation effect of organizational trust and justice on the relationship between servant leadership and employee job satisfaction.

Originality/value – Employee job satisfaction, performance, engagement, and outcomes within Kuwait’s private higher education sector are significantly improved by the adoption of a servant leadership style, together with organizational and leader’s trust and justice. The findings demonstrate the significance of the servant leadership style in this industry’s leadership habits for raising worker job satisfaction.

Keywords Job satisfaction, Trust, Servant leadership, Justice, Mediation

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction
Many studies have examined how leadership affects job satisfaction (JS), motivation, retention, employee effectiveness, and corporate culture (Amussah, 2020). The most important component of servant leadership (SL) is the emphasis on serving others before seeking to lead. There has been an increase in interest in leadership during the past few decades (Abbas et al., 2022). A servant leader functions at a higher level, with their primary focus being on serving others (Dahleez and Aboramadan, 2022). The idea of leadership has
changed as a result of shifts in technological advances, employment patterns, demography, and globalization. Research has investigated how leadership may influence the culture of a business, as well as employee retention, motivation, effectiveness, and JS. The emphasis that SL places on assisting others before aiming to lead is its most important feature. For a company to succeed and expand, the two SL components of managing and supporting are essential (Alazmi and Alenezi, 2023).

The SL approach prioritizes the team members’ emotional needs, personal development, and physical health. When an individual possesses SL leadership qualities such as perception, vision, enthusiasm for others’ growth, empathy, persuasion, paying attention, community building, and knowledge, the style of leadership becomes a tool for creating relationships that last and encourage, according to the organizational charter (Kumar, 2020). Based on that, SL can have an indirect impact on task performance, supporting self-sufficiency and autonomy in subordinates, which leads to higher levels of performance (El-Bayaa and Elsaman, 2022). Two non-leader-centered styles have been the focus of recent research: SL and transformative leadership (Abbas et al., 2022).

Since there is not much research on SL in the Gulf region (El-Bayaa et al., 2023), especially in Kuwait, this field of research is crucial (Alazmi and Alenezi, 2023). This study is significant because, on one hand, it investigates how the adoption of the SL style and its features might increase the authority of private higher education institutions in Kuwait, encourage employee involvement, and create a thriving academic community. Colleges and universities pose a complex and intricate challenge when it comes to efficient management. In terms of governance and administration, leadership opportunities typically extend to three main groups: the faculty, the administrators, and the board. It is unlikely to yield positive outcomes if each group solely focuses on its own authority and rights. Conversely, substantial and enduring progress can be achieved when all three groups collaborate to identify and address the top priorities of the institution and its stakeholders (Hermanto and Srimulyani, 2022). Moreover, private higher education institutions aspiring to thrive in the global economy need to promote SL among their leaders, replacing traditional leadership with a more contemporary approach. SL appears to offer a promising model for addressing leadership challenges. On the other hand, the importance of organizational trust and justice (TJ) has surged in the contemporary era due to the increasing demand for collaboration and adaptability, the organization’s heightened trust in its employees, and the continuous shifts in environmental and economic dynamics (Dahleez and Aboramadan, 2022).

Accordingly, this study’s main objective is to assess the working relationship between JS and employee SL in Kuwait’s private sector. To delve into the influence of SL on JS from various perspectives, the study will specifically examine the mediating role of TJ within private universities in Kuwait. Accordingly, a survey of 240 employees in Kuwait’s private higher education sector was performed to address the aforementioned shortage. Out of all the surveys received, 205 were analyzed. The survey’s findings showed a strong relationship between JS and SL, TJ and SL, and TJ and JS. The results also provided some evidence in favor of the theory that TJ mediates the link between SL and JS.

This study contributes to the body of literature by offering empirical evidence of the positive links between SL and JS and a partial moderating effect of the TJ on the relationship between SL and JS. These discoveries contribute to theoretical knowledge while also having real-world consequences for organizational growth and approaches to leadership in the private higher education sector. The rest of the article follows this structure: Section 2 provides the context for the study; Section 3 discusses the research model and hypothesis; Section 4 explains the research method; Section 5 presents the study results; Section 6 discusses the implications of the findings; and Section 7 concludes the paper.
2. Theoretical background

2.1 Servant leadership
The phrase SL was first used in 1970 by Robert K. Greenleaf, who defined it as serving before leading (Greenleaf, 2002). The two SL components of serving and leading are essential to the development and success of any company (Amussah, 2020). As stated by Greenleaf, servant leaders want to see their people become more wholesome, intelligent, self-reliant, and inclined to serve others. In SL, the primary focus is on fostering personal development and leadership, as individuals are encouraged to prioritize serving others first. This approach places significant emphasis on the growth and well-being of both individuals and the communities they are part of (Alshammari et al., 2019). A servant-leader goes beyond mere leadership to ensure that those they serve experience growth, wisdom, improved health, and, most importantly, increased self-reliance (Hermanto and Srimulyani, 2022). The emphasis in recent leadership studies has transitioned from solely focusing on leading to recognizing and managing the inherent contradiction of simultaneously serving and leading (El-Bayaa and Elsaman, 2022). Several scholars agree that the SL theory can be used as the basis for several studies about organizational management and leadership (El-Bayaa and Elsaman, 2022).

2.2 Trust
The degree of confidence, faith, and belief that members of an organization have in the dependability, honesty, and competency of the organization as a whole describes organizational trust (Pathardikar et al., 2023). Strong organizational trust is linked to favorable results, including higher employee engagement, commitment, and satisfaction. The emphasis on the importance of trust was reported in a range of institutions, including social, political, and commercial ones (Alazmi and Alenezi, 2023). It fosters connections with clients, partners, and the larger community in addition to improving internal teamwork and helping to establish a great reputation outside (Pathardikar et al., 2023).

2.3 Justice
Considering fairness in management and the distribution of tasks to various persons is what defines organizational justice (Greenberg and Baron, 2003). There are four different types of organizational justice: distributive justice, procedural justice, informational justice, and interpersonal justice. Regarding organizational trust, it represents how employees feel about an organization’s trustworthiness (Greenberg and Baron, 2003). TJ in the workplace is a big motivator. When workers don’t trust the organization and face injustice, employee morale will suffer, and they may likely leave their jobs (Hermanto and Srimulyani, 2022).

2.4 Job satisfaction
JS is simply a combination of intricate and diverse, and different people may interpret it differently (Pathardikar et al., 2023). Although JS and motivation are frequently linked, the fundamental causes of this association are not fully understood. A happy or pleasant feeling that results from assessing one’s work or work-related events is recognized as JS. Fulfillment, discrepancy, equity, and two-factor theories are the four basic theories that Lawler uses to classify JS (Lawler III, 1973). The disparity between what workers suppose and what they obtain is the focus of the discrepancy theory. The notion highlights that an employee’s prospects, assessments, and expectations for their work are more significant than what they already possess. Lawler recommends three inquiries that should be taken into consideration in order to comprehend the discrepancy between expectations and reality: What goals do the workers have? In what sense are they thinking? What alternatives do they have?
3. Literature and hypotheses development

Examining the connections between SL and JS, TJ and SL, and the effect of TJ on JS are the three main goals of this study. Moreover, the investigation of TJ’s mediating role in the interaction between SL and JS is another goal of this study.

3.1 Relationship between SL and JS

The variables that affect an individual’s JS have been examined in several studies. Though it has no direct bearing on TJ, it’s important to note that JS and the desire to quit a job are connected with the lack of adequate job responsibilities (Dahleez and Aboramadan, 2022). Moreover, employees who have worked with the company for a long time are generally less likely to tend to resign from their positions (Vrcelj et al., 2022). Furthermore, (Aboramadan et al., 2019; Vrcelj et al., 2022), among others, have also discovered a substantial correlation between JS and SL in a variety of firms. A significant positive link between the JS and SL characteristics of growing people, respecting people, fostering community, providing leadership, displaying authenticity, and sharing leadership was identified in Aboramadan et al. (2019). Additionally, several studies have compared SL methods with other organizational dynamics and found a positive impact of SL and JS. Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016) explored the interplay between various leadership models and organizational behavior within academic settings. The findings revealed a positive influence of leadership style on JS (Alonderiene and Majauskaite, 2016). The TJ and empowerment elements of Patterson’s SL model are in line with these characteristics, which makes SL the best option for enhancing employee JS. Aboramadan et al. (2019) discovered a substantial association between SL and JS in universities, suggesting that SL has a great positive impact on JS and eventually improves educational outcomes (Aboramadan et al., 2019). Accordingly, we suggest

\( H1. \) SL positively affects the JS in private higher education institutions in Kuwait.

3.2 Relationship between SL and TJ

Recent years have seen an increase in knowledge of the SL paradigm (Alazmi and Alenezi, 2023). Many investigations on organizational leadership and management have been built around the SL theory (El-Bayaa et al., 2023). In parallel, in every organization (economic, political, and social), the value of TJ is recognized. To satisfy the increasing need for adaptability and collaboration and the high level of confidence in the company and its employees, the relevance of TJ has increased (Almutairi et al., 2020). Previous studies proved the positive impact of SL on organizational TJ (Karatepe et al., 2019). According to Greenleaf, organizational TJ can be said to start with SL and grow from it (Blickle et al., 2014). The finest role-play of SL in an organization is providing vital context, such as motivating the members in a good way, treating them equally, expressing support and care for their entire staff, giving regard to their status, and building TJ among the subordinates. Therefore, firms must build TJ among their workforces since TJ is increasingly recognized as a key characteristic (Dahleez and Aboramadan, 2022). Accordingly, we suggest

\( H2. \) SL positively affects the TJ in private higher education institutions in Kuwait.

3.3 Relationship between TJ and JS

Several recent studies have investigated the link between organizational TJ and JS. These studies have consistently demonstrated a positive impact of TJ on JS (Ozel and Bayraktar, 2018). Mutual trust grows as members of firms with diverse backgrounds cooperate more successfully, which will lead to employee JS. Furthermore, when servant leaders apply TJ
through their behavior, workers’ trust increases in their company, which may lead to higher JS (Dahleez and Aboramadan, 2022). According to Ozel and Bayraktar (2018), when expectations are not met, JS occurs. Their study found that when leaders can relate to their employees, are approachable, recognize their accomplishments, pay attention to their accomplishments, treat them equally and fairly, and take a genuine interest in their concerns, JS increases. They proved that organizational TJ affects JS positively and significantly (Ozel and Bayraktar, 2018). Accordingly, we suggest

\[ H3. \text{TJ positively affects the JS in private institutions in Kuwait.} \]

3.4 Mediating effect of TJ between SL and JS
In Hermanto and Srimulyani (2022), the authors investigated the mediation role of TJ on the relationship between SL and work engagement among Indonesian high school teachers. The findings showed a significant correlation between TJ and SL. The study also showed that TJ mediated the relationship between engagement and SL. Another study by Dahleez and Aboramadan (2022) reported a significant link between SL and TJ, and TJ partly mediated the correlation between SL and JS. In the context of higher education ministry employees in Kuwait, Almutairi et al. (2020) investigated the association between SL and TJ. They also tested the mediation impact of organizational culture on the relationship between SL and TJ. They reported a significant impact of SL on TJ, and organizational culture mediated this relationship (Almutairi et al., 2020). Accordingly, we suggest

\[ H4. \text{TJ mediates the relationship between SL and JS in private institutions in Kuwait.} \]

4. Research method
4.1 Survey preparation
This study tested the association between SL, JS, and TJ using a quantitative method. Following advice to employ survey methods for evaluating linkages among multiple factors among a significant number of people, a survey instrument was created to evaluate these linkages (Dinc et al., 2022). This is because the survey provides more thorough data than other approaches and because it can aid in extrapolating the results to the full target society. Faculty members at Kuwait’s private institutions were polled for the study utilizing a standardized questionnaire that had two main sections: JS and demographic information. The demographics part included information on age, gender, education level, time worked for the current employer, and time worked at the university. We employed a five-point Likert scale (i.e., 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, neutral: 3, 4: agree, and 5: strongly disagree) (Dinc et al., 2022). We tested the validity of the survey by sending it to four business professors and five Ph.D. candidates to have them answer it to determine the survey’s face and content validity. Based on the feedback received, we updated and modified the survey items (Said et al., 2023).

4.2 Participants
Because only two private higher education universities in Kuwait were willing to take part in the study, participants were chosen from these universities using a convenience sample method. As the most practical sampling technique available for this investigation, convenience sampling was deemed adequate in this situation (Hair et al., 2010). 250 instructors received the survey overall, of which 207 responses were received back, making an 82.8% response rate. This study targeted the advertising, economics, sales, operations, and information technology divisions and featured full-time workers who put in 32 h each week.
4.3 Survey items

For the study’s data collection on JS, SL, and TJ, three survey tools were used. The JS instrument (MCMJS) was adapted from (Mohrman Jr et al., 1978), the SL instrument (Liden et al., 2008), and the TJ instrument (Ambrose and Schminke, 2009). Appendix contains the entire set of items. All items with outer loadings <0.7 were deleted during the analysis following the most recent PLS-SEM recommendations, so eliminating them had no impact on the content validity (Hair et al., 2010). Following the first loading assessments, the following SL versions received scores above 0.7: SL2, SL5, SL6, SL8, SL17, SL18, SL19, and SL20. The removal of 18, which scored lower than SL17, was necessary due to the collinearity between SL17 and SL18. All of the JS models—JS1, JS2, JS3, JS4, JS5, and JS6—scored higher than 0.7. But because JS2 and JS3 were correlated, we eliminated JS3, which had a lower score than JS2. All TJ items scored greater than 0.7, except TJ7 and TJ8, which were excluded from further analysis. We tested the model fit after excluding these items, and the results showed an ignorable effect.

5. Findings
5.1 Demographic profile of respondents

The demographic factors taken into account for the survey respondents were their gender, age, employment history, and qualifications. Of those who participated, 51.2% were female and 48.8% were male. A significant proportion of respondents, 70%, fell within the age range of 29–35, followed by 21.9% who were below 28 years old, 9.8% who were aged between 36 and 45 years old, and 4.4% who were above 46 years old. The majority of the sample, 74.1%, had between one and five years of experience, while 13.7% had 6–10 years, 10.7% had 11–20 years, and only 1.5% had more than 20 years. The majority of the sample, 80%, held a bachelor’s degree, followed by 15.1% who had a post-graduate degree, 4.4% who had a high school degree, and only 0.5% who had completed the tenth grade. We divided the sample into two clusters: an early cluster and a late cluster. The replies from the two groups were contrasted, utilizing demographics to make sure that non-response bias had no impact on the analysis of the data. The lack of significant differences between the two clusters shows that nonresponse bias is not regarded as a significant issue (Dinc et al., 2022).

5.2 Measurement validation

The SmartPLS 4.0 tool was deployed to test the validity and reliability of the variables. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was utilized in data analysis to evaluate the strength of the relationship between the components. The choice of using PLS-SEM is because of the small sample size, the exploratory nature of the work, and the lack of preconceptions on data normality (Hair et al., 2010). Several measures, including outer loadings, item reliability, factor reliability, discriminant validity, and convergent validity, were evaluated in order to test the measurement model. Every item in the list had outer loadings of more than 0.7, all of which were significant at \( p < 0.001 \) (Hair et al., 2021), as shown in Figure 1.

We used two key metrics to gauge the reliability: Cronbach’s Alpha (\( \alpha \)) and Composite Reliability (CR). We used a value of 0.7 as a threshold value for reliability (Hair et al., 2021). Both these measures surpassed the 0.7 threshold, giving us good evidence that our factors are consistently measured. To check the validity, we looked at the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Again, we used a cut-off value of 0.7, and once again, Table 1 reveals that each factor’s AVE exceeded this benchmark. This translates to saying that our factors exhibit internal consistency and align well with the expected patterns, much like a team aligning their actions with a shared vision (Hair et al., 2021).
To check the discriminant validity, which ensures that different factors are truly distinct, we employed four trusty tools: cross-loadings, the Fornell-Larcker rule, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, and AVE. First, we looked at cross-loadings. Our cross-loading investigation confirmed that no item felt a stronger pull towards a rival factor than its own, ensuring each stayed in its rightful place. Next, we used the Fornell-Larcker rule to check each factor’s inner strength. Table 1 shows the AVEs nestled diagonally. As shown in Table 1, each factor’s inner strength surpasses any external relationship, confirming their distinct identities. We also employed the HTMT ratio, which investigates whether the correlations between factors are truly worrisome. Table 2 reveals the HTMT scores for each pair of factors, all staying comfortably below the 0.9 cut-off point, which proves their distinctness. By passing these rigorous tests, our factors have confidently established their individuality.

5.3 Test of the structural model
The study employed the PLS-Bootstrapping function to determine the significance of relationships or hypotheses (path coefficients) among the three factors that were tested. Once we have a sense of which relationships are significant, we need to check the structural model. We used the following measures to assess the structural model (Hair et al., 2021), and the findings are summarized in Figure 1 and Table 2:

(1) Model fit: This is a broad evaluation of how well the model fits the data. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), which looks for differences between the model and the data, is one very significant measure of fit. The SRMR score in this study was 0.077, which is less than the 0.08 suggested level. This indicates how well the model fits the data.
<table>
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<th>Source(s): Authors own work</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>SL $\rightarrow$ IS (H1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL $\rightarrow$ TJ (H2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TJ $\rightarrow$ JS (H3)</td>
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*Source(s): Authors own work*

**Table 2.** Path coefficient, HTMT, effect size ($f^2$), and direct and indirect effects.
(2) Multicollinearity: This verifies whether any variables are overly correlated, which might skew the findings. To look for multicollinearity, we employed a method called the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). Every VIF value that we discovered was below the suggested limit of 3. This indicates that the data can accurately evaluate the correlations among the variables.

(3) Path coefficients: Using statistical tests, we looked at these route coefficients and discovered that all of the proposed correlations were significant at a very high level ($p < 0.01$). Here are the key findings:

- SL significantly affects JS (H1) ($B = 0.256, p < 0.01$). This means that having a strong sense of SL leads to greater JS.
- SL significantly affects TJ (H2) ($B = 0.770, p < 0.01$). This means that having a strong sense of SL also leads to higher TJ.
- TJ significantly affects JS (H3) ($B = 0.534, p < 0.01$). This means thigh TJ also contributes to greater JS.

(4) $R^2$ and $f^2$ values: These indicate the extent to which other factors may account for the variance in one element.

- $R^2$ indicates how well the model predicts the real results we're attempting to forecast. Better accuracy is indicated by higher ratings, which range from 0 to 1. The $R^2$ values in this investigation were 0.594 and 0.562 for TJ and JS prediction, respectively. The model can explain a moderate portion of the variation in these outcomes.

- The $f^2$ effect size can be used to assess the effect of one variable on another in this situation. In this investigation, we evaluated the impact of two parameters using $f^2$: TJ and SL on JS. (1) Impact of SL on TJ ($f^2 = 0.460$): this high $f^2$ value (0.460) indicates that a strong SL has a significant effect on TJ. (2) Impact of SL on JS ($f^2 = 0.061$): the $f^2$ value for the influence of SL on JS is much lower (0.061), indicating a minor impact. (3) Impact of TJ on JS ($f^2 = 0.265$): the $f^2$ value for the effect of TJ on JS falls in the middle at 0.265, signifying an average impact.

5.4 Test of the mediation of TJ on the relationship between JS and LS

In mediation analysis, the objective is to dissect the impact of an intervention on a specific outcome into two components: direct effects and indirect effects, as shown in Table 2. Direct effects are the consequences resulting from different mechanisms, while indirect effects are attributable to mediators of interest. In our research, we wanted to dig deeper into the relationship between having a strong SL and enjoying JS. We suspected that TJ might be playing a hidden role. As a result, we looked at TJ’s mediating role to better understand the link between SL and JS (H4). To do this, we adopted the strategy suggested by Dinc et al. (2022), in which the importance of the indirect effects (i.e., SL * TJ) reveals whether TJ mediates the effect of SL on JS. If the indirect impact is significant, we should continue to look at the direct effect (Dinc et al., 2022). A significant direct effect implies partial mediation, whereas a negligible direct impact implies indirect, complete mediation. The impact of SL on JS ($B = 0.668, p < 0.01$) and the indirect impact ($B = 0.412, p < 0.01$) are significant. These findings show that TJ is partially mediating the link between SL and JS.
6. Discussion
This section explores the study’s findings, provides guidance for future research dimensions, and acknowledges the study’s limits. It discusses both the practical and theoretical implications of the findings.

6.1 Theoretical implications
This research gave a more thorough understanding of the relationship between organizational TJ and affective commitment, as well as the significance of servant leadership in this regard. The purpose of this study was to look at TJ’s role as a mediator in the interaction between SL and JS in Kuwait’s private institutions. The study focused on four hypotheses: TJ’s mediating function in the relationship between SL and JS (H4), as well as the interactions between SL and JS (H1), SL and TJ (H2), and TJ and JS (H3). The results indicated a strong correlation between JS and SL. SL practitioners foster a better workforce, which can raise employee happiness. These findings highlight the need to find a balance between leadership, service, and learning, as well as the potential benefits of adopting SL (Aboramadan et al., 2019). This supports the earlier studies’ findings that demonstrated the positive impacts of SL on JS (e.g., Vrcelj et al., 2022). It has become clear that views of TJ in the context of Servant leadership are essential for promoting affective commitment and employee identity. Using the moderating function of TJ, this leadership style is examined as a critical antecedent of affective commitment, drawing on Servant leadership theory. Subsequent investigations may explore subtle contextual elements that might impact these connections.

The findings also showed a significant link between SL and TJ (H2), which supports previous findings (e.g., Almutairi et al., 2020). This means that SL and TJ affect each other positively when servant leaders are trusted, treat their subordinates fairly, and reward their employees. This research has demonstrated the efficacy of servant leadership in cultivating a positive perception of TJ among staff members. This relationship can be explained by its openness and sincerity, which can help workers see decision-making procedures as more equitable, which in turn affects how equitable they believe incentives and workloads are distributed, which is consistent with the result of Almutairi et al. (2020). Thus, this research indicates that higher education institutions must seek out and choose executives who possess servant leadership qualities. Private higher education institutions can also concentrate on providing additional training and coaching, as this can strengthen employees’ sense of belonging to the institution. In this regard, a low degree of affective commitment may also be a sign that a supervisor should be replaced.

In addition, the findings provide evidence that TJ will significantly and positively affect employee JS (H3). The complicated, highly volatile, and uncertain organizational contexts of today are encouraging employees to place a high weight on perceptions of justice and trust in their leaders. In fact, a tacit understanding of reciprocity between the company and its workers underpins their efficacy. Therefore, supervisors are essential in fostering trustworthy settings, which can raise employees’ sense of loyalty and identification with the companies they work for, which supports the earlier findings (e.g., Lambert et al., 2020). Based on the findings, employees who experience fair treatment tend to exhibit higher JS. Additionally, this fair treatment contributes to a greater alignment with the firm’s goals and values, an increased willingness to exert additional effort for the firm, and a strong desire to remain a part of the firm. This study also proved that TJ is a partial mediator in the relationship between SL and JS (H4), which is consistent with Dahleez and Aboramadan (2022) findings. Studies with a longer period of time may give a temporal viewpoint on the dynamics at play and a more thorough comprehension of the long-term effects of SL on the higher education industry.
6.2 Practical implication
The results uncovered a significant correlation between SL and JS. Leaders adopting the principles of SL contribute to cultivating a more positive and effective staff, ultimately enhancing employee JS. These findings provide valuable insights into the potential advantages of implementing SL, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a harmonious equilibrium between leadership, service, and continuous learning (Aboramadan et al., 2019). Drawing from this research, team leaders, supervisors, managers, and the human resources management department in private higher education institutions are encouraged to consider new strategies and policies that can leverage the practical implications of these findings.

The study’s findings emphasize the crucial role of leadership in shaping and enhancing employees’ JS. The study suggests that leadership effectiveness is contingent upon the appropriate utilization of leadership methods and styles in different contexts, emphasizing the need for continuous growth and development of leadership skills. Human resources management departments of higher education institutions are encouraged to provide leadership-style training and development for all managers and leaders within the institution. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of human resources management departments being attuned to the impact of employee JS on overall work performance. Human resource experts are urged to foster a culture of motivation and dedication among employees, recognizing the manifold benefits of such behavior at both individual and organizational levels.

6.3 Study limitations and research future directions
It is important to recognize the limits of this study, even if it offers insightful information about the benefits of SL and organizational TJ on worker JS at private universities. The study solely focused on two private universities in Kuwait, and thus this study’s outcomes may not apply to other contexts. Furthermore, using a closed-ended survey method can limit the breadth of knowledge, and additional qualitative investigation could improve the thoroughness of subsequent research. Our knowledge might be further enhanced by examining possible variances across other academic areas and the persistence of the reported favorable effects over time. Furthermore, there is potential to explore how individual differences—such as personality traits—affect how SL and TJ affect workers’ JS.

7. Conclusions
In the private universities in Kuwait, this study aimed to investigate how SL affects employees’ levels of JS and to examine the connection between TJ and SL, TJ, and JS. The study is also intended to examine TJ’s mediating effects on the link between JS and SL. PLS-SEM was used in the study to examine these hypotheses. The results showed that SL and JS, SL and TJ, and TJ and JS all had significant and positive associations. TJ’s role as a mediator in the interaction between JS and SL, however, was only partially supported. Also, it was discovered that no differences existed between females and males across this mediation.

According to these results, SL, TJ, and JS are connected notions that could influence each other. Through SL activities like compassion and encouragement, followers may be more likely to form strong TJ connections and exhibit higher levels of JS. Workers with high JS may be more likely to build positive TJ ties and view their leaders as servant leaders. Further studies could be carried out in additional Middle Eastern nations with a larger sample and more universities to further validate the results.
References


(The Appendix follows overleaf)
### Leadership & Satisfaction

#### Respondent’s Information:

1. **Gender:**  
   - ☐ Male  
   - ☐ Female  

2. **Age:**  
   - ☐ 18-24  
   - ☐ 25-30  
   - ☐ 31-35  
   - ☐ 36-40  
   - ☐ 41-45  
   - ☐ 46-50  
   - ☐ 51-55  
   - ☐ 56-60  
   - ☐ 61-65  
   - ☐ 66 or older  

3. **What is your highest level of education?**  
   - ☐ Less than a High School Degree  
   - ☐ High School Degree  
   - ☐ University Graduate  
   - ☐ Master’s or Post-Graduate  
   - ☐ Doctorate  

4. **How long have you worked under your current immediate supervisor?**  
   - ____ Year(s)  
   - ____ Month(s)  

5. **How long have you been with your current employer?**  
   - ____ Year(s)  
   - ____ Month(s)  

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*Please circle the number by each statement that best represents the extent to which you agree with the given statements. Your honest opinions are key to the success of this research endeavor.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<td>1. I would seek help from my immediate supervisor if I had a personal problem</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. My immediate supervisor cares about my personal well-being</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3. My manager takes time to talk to me on a personal level</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4. My immediate supervisor can recognize when I’m down without asking me</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. My immediate supervisor emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. My immediate supervisor is always interested in helping people in our community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. My immediate supervisor is involved in community activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. I am encouraged by my immediate supervisor to volunteer in the community</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. My immediate supervisor can tell if something is going wrong</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. My immediate supervisor is able to effectively think through hard problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. My immediate supervisor has a very good understanding of our organization and its goals</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. My immediate supervisor can solve work problems with new or creative ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. My immediate supervisor gives me the responsibility to make important decisions about my job</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. My immediate supervisor encourages me to handle important work decisions on my own</td>
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<td>15. My immediate supervisor gives me the freedom to handle hard situations in the way that I feel is best</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. When I have to make an important decision at work, I do not have to consult my immediate supervisor first</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. My career development (my improving and progressing in my career) is very important to my immediate supervisor</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. My immediate supervisor is interested in making sure that I</td>
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<tr>
<td>achieve (reach) my career goals</td>
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<td>19. My immediate supervisor provides me with work experiences</td>
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<td>that enable me to develop new skills</td>
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<td>20. My immediate supervisor wants to know about my career goals</td>
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<td>21. My immediate supervisor seems to care more about my</td>
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<td>success than his/her own</td>
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<td>22. My immediate supervisor puts my best interests ahead of</td>
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<td>his/her own</td>
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<td>23. My immediate supervisor sacrifices his/her own interests to</td>
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<td>meet my needs</td>
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<td>24. My immediate supervisor does what she/he can do to make</td>
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<td>my job easier.</td>
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<td>25. My immediate supervisor holds high ethical (moral) standards</td>
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<td>26. My immediate supervisor is always honest</td>
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<td>27. My immediate supervisor would not compromise ethical (moral)</td>
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<td>principles (standards/values) (give in to wrong values or behavior)</td>
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<td>in order to achieve (reach) success</td>
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<td>28. My immediate supervisor values honesty (telling the truth)</td>
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<td>more than profits (money)</td>
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</table>
This part contains items that ask you to describe your relationship with either your leader or one of your subordinates. For each of these items, indicate the degree to which you think the item is true for you by circling one of the responses that appear below the item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Leader – Member Exchange
1. I know where I stand with my leader (follower) ... [and] I usually know how satisfied my leader (follower) is with what I do?  
2. My leader (follower) understands well my job problems and needs  
3. My leader (follower) recognizes well my potential  
4. Regardless of how much formal authority my leader (follower) has built into his or her position, I have high chances that my leader (follower) would use his or her power to help me solve problems in my work  
5. Regardless of the amount of formal authority my leader (follower) has, I have high chances that my leader would “bail me out” at his or her expense  
6. I have enough confidence in my leader (follower) that I would defend and justify his or her decision if he or she were not present to do so  
7. I would characterize my working relationship with my leader (follower) as extremely effective

### Trust and Justice
1. I fully trust my leader  
2. Rewards I receive reflect the efforts I have put into my work  
3. My leader has been candid in his/her communications with me  
4. My leader communicated details in a timely manner  
5. My leader seemed to tailor his/her communication to my specific needs  
6. My leader has explained the procedures thoroughly  
7. My leader’s explanations regarding the procedures were reasonable  
8. My leader treated me with respect  
9. My leader refrained from improper remarks or comments

### Intrinsic Satisfaction
1. The feeling of self-esteem or self-respect you get from being in your job  
2. The opportunity for personal growth development in your job  
3. The feeling of worthwhile accomplishment in your job

Table A1.
Questionnaire  
(1-totally disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-total agree)  
(continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Your present job when you consider the expectations you had when</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>you took the job</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extrinsic Satisfaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. The amount of respect and fair treatment you receive from your</td>
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<td>supervisors</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. The feeling of being informed in your job</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. The amount of supervision you receive</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The opportunity for participation in the determination of</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>methods, procedures, and goals</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source(s): Authors own work

Table A1.

Corresponding author
Nourhan ElBayaa can be contacted at: noorhan.elbayaa@usek.edu.lb