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Leadership types and whistleblowing intention in public sector: the mediation role of justice

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Abstract
Research aims: This study examines the effect of two leadership types, ethical leadership (EL) and servant leadership (SL), on whistleblowing intentions with three justice dimensions: distributive, interactional, and procedural, as mediators.
Design/Methodology/Approach: This research involved local government organizations (LGO) employees in several regencies in Indonesia, including Purworejo, Sumbawa, Pelalawan Riau, the Special Region of Yogyakarta, and Surakarta. The hypotheses were tested using the SEM-PLS technique.
Research findings: The results discovered that EL positively affected whistleblowing intention directly and through (mediated) procedural and interactional justice. Meanwhile, SL did not directly affect whistleblowing intention, yet it could affect it when mediated by procedural justice. Furthermore, distributive justice could not mediate the relationship between either SL or EL on whistleblowing.
Theoretical contribution/Originality: The novelty of the research is to explore and comprehensively analyze how a leadership style can influence someone to do whistleblowing in the government sector by paying attention to the crucial role of the justice dimension. The results of this study provide valuable insights for the government to increase employee motivation in whistleblowing.
Practitioner/Policy implication: Drawing from this insight, the leader of the LGOs must have the characteristic of EL since it can facilitate and motivate employees to blow the whistle when they find fraud in the organization. In addition, a leader with EL can create fairness in the organization. Thus, EL not only can affect employees to blow the whistle but also can raise the three-dimensionality of justice in the organization.
Research limitation/Implication: The implementation of leadership, either SL or EL, in the context of the public sector, whose primary purpose is to enhance government accountability, particularly in emerging countries, is still lacking. Moreover, the process underlying how leadership affects whistleblowing still holds critical gaps, particularly issues related to leadership dynamics.
Keywords: Ethical Leadership; Justice; Local Government; Servant Leadership; Whistleblowing

Introduction

Recently, many frauds have occurred in Indonesia, attracting public attention (Dianingsih and Pratolo, 2018). According to the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (2019), the most common fraud in 2019 that

caused the most significant disadvantage in Indonesia was corruption, which was 167 cases. . In addition, there were 50 cases of misuse of state and company assets/wealth and 22 cases of financial statement fraud. The endeavoring to suppress corruption can be achieved by reinforcing the implementation of the internal control system, one of which is implementing a whistleblowing system (Saud, 2016).

Whistleblowing is a mechanism that prevents fraudulent acts, such as corruption, bribery, manipulation, and other forms of fraud (Antinyan et al., 2020). Nevertheless, it is not easy to blow the whistle in practice as it will cause retaliation, such as social confrontation, threats, or even termination of employment (Lee and Xiao, 2018). Based on a survey conducted by the Institute of Business Ethics (IBE), it was uncovered that among three employees who were aware of a violation incident, more than one employee did not report it. The reasons not to blow the whistle included the employee believing that nothing would be done (28%), being threatened with their occupation if they reported fraud (27%) or feeling that it was none of their business (23%).

On the other hand, leadership has been recognized as one of the crucial factors for realizing whistleblowing (Gupta and Bhal, 2020). Cheng et al. (2019) suggested that outstanding leadership makes employees feel the potential for support and protection from leaders to blow the whistle. Nevertheless, Hechanova and Manaois (2020) found that ethical leadership (EL) had no significant effect on whistleblowing intentions. Drawing from inconsistent prior studies, whistleblowing might depend on the type of leadership applied within the organization. As such, Cheng et al. (2019) argued that the process underlying how leadership affects whistleblowing still holds critical gaps, particularly issues related to leadership dynamics, for example, what leadership style is the most contributive to whistleblowing practices. Gupta and Bhal (2020) contended that it would be tough to suggest which types and behaviors are the most appropriate for leadership. To answer these gaps and problems, this study examines EL as leadership and includes another leadership type, namely servant leadership (SL). To explain the process that underlies how leadership affects whistleblowing, this study included aspects of justice as mediation. This is because employee support for leaders is firmly based on an assessment of the justice that exists in the organization (Gupta and Bhal, 2020). Justice in organizations has the potential to contribute to effectively implementing the whistleblowing mechanism, as found by Kurniawan et al. (2018).

Furthermore, three forms of justice owned by a leader in an organization to support the leadership exist, i.e., procedural justice, interactional justice, and distributive justice (Kusumawati and Putra, 2015). Procedural justice is attentive to supporting procedures to empower and support the employees (Alkahtani, 2015). Interactional justice is related to the fairness of employees' interpersonal treatment (Lewis, 2013). This interpersonal treatment allows the leader to interact vertically with employees or subordinates, where a leader conveys information about trust and equality from the presence or absence of fair procedures. Herewith, it makes employees more likely to conduct pro-social activities

in an organization, such as blowing the whistle (Dwiyanti and Sariani, 2018). Distributive justice is likewise the main driver in result satisfaction and creates a sense of trust in the leadership to encourage employees to do positive acts for the organization (Alpkan et al., 2020). Setiawan et al. (2020) claimed that when distributive justice is perceived well, the potential for employee intentions to blow the whistle is greater than procedural justice and interactional justice. Based on the preceding discussions, this study used the three dimensions of justice as a mediating variable because each dimension of justice is distinct and has its characteristics in assessing justice. By doing so, this research will explain how leadership dynamics can influence employees to blow the whistle.

Explicitly, this study aims to examine the effect of leadership style on whistleblowing intentions through justice. The novelty of the research is to explore and comprehensively analyze how a leadership style can influence someone to do whistleblowing in the government sector by paying attention to the crucial role of the justice dimension. The results of this study provide valuable insights for the government to increase employee motivation in whistleblowing. It is acknowledged that this research replicates a study by Gupta and Bhal (2020). However, this study differs from the prior study in question as a minor modification was performed by adding distributive justice as a mediating variable. In addition, when Gupta and Bhal's study focused on technology companies setting, this research was conducted in the context of public sector organizations. The results of this study will provide empirical evidence of whether the model proposed by Gupta and Bhal (2020) also applies in the context of the public sector, not only in the private sector, given that the characteristics of employees from the two sectors differ due to their distinct nature.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Theoretical Underpinning

Earlier literature emphasized effective leadership as a requirement for moral and ethical conduct (Arain et al., 2019; Brown & Treviño, 2006). Servant leadership, authentic leadership, transformational leadership, and spiritual leadership are examples of leadership philosophies that stress the importance of ethical behavior as a fundamental component. For instance, authentic leadership emphasizes making ethical decisions (Brown and Trevino 2006), and transformational leadership describes how leadership acts as a role model and sets high standards of moral conduct. Spiritual leadership centers on the leader's integrity and followers' ethical behavior (Arain et al., 2019). However, all these leadership theories emphasized the value of morals for effective leadership, and none of them clarified how leaders' moral behavior affects followers' ethical behavior (Brown and Trevino 2006). Brown and Trevino (2006) presented the social learning theory (Bandura 1977) and the social exchange theory (Blau 1964) as two theoretical frameworks to fill this gap.

According to social learning theory, which focuses on the causes and effects of ethical leadership, people can acquire the standards of proper behavior in one of two ways: by watching others or by using their own experience. People generally listen to and model trustworthy, appealing mentors to develop such ethics (Bhal & Dadhich, 2011a). According to this theory, followers react appropriately to their leader's interests. When ethical leaders act ethically and uphold the highest moral standards, they become dependable and trustworthy role models (Gupta & Bhal, 2020). On the one hand, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) proposes that various social ties are based on the expectation of reciprocity or the norm of exchange. Additionally, when members perceive a leader to be interested in and concerned about their well-being, they are motivated to support that leader in return. Based on these concepts, Brown et al. (2005) propose that moral leaders foster member feelings of justice and trust and foster an environment where employees are more likely to respond with ethical behavior.

However, the literature on leadership and whistleblowing has shown that experts cannot agree on which leadership style is best for spotting wrongdoing and encouraging whistleblowing. For instance, studies on ethical leadership style (Bhal and Dadhich, 2011; Zhang, Liao, and Yuan, 2016) and transformative leadership (Caillier, 2013) imply that more research is needed to understand the connection between leadership and whistleblowing. In addition, studies related to leadership and whistleblowing relationships in the public sector context in developing countries with high levels of corruption, such as Indonesia, are still scarce. Therefore, closing this gap is crucial.

Servant Leadership (SL), Ethical Leadership (EL), and Whistleblowing

SL in an organization is shown by providing motivation and appreciation to employees for what employees have done well and following the organization's vision and mission (Sapengga, 2016). Dennis et al. (2006) describe five characteristics of SL: compassion, empowerment, vision, humility, and trust. SL develops employees' capabilities and then forms interactional leadership; the leader rewards employees for their achievements (Tanujaya and Tansil, 2016). Aligning with the social exchange theory, a leader's attention to employee welfare will be reciprocated by employees in terms of involving themselves in taking risks to create a quality performance. It will enhance the employee's desire to continue to do decent work, and employees will always report bad things to the organization (Cook and Hahn, 2021). In addition, SL is related to OCB (organizational citizenship behavior), which can affect the achievement of actual behavior from employees for the organization's good (Walumbwa et al., 2010). Given the previous discussion, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H_{1a}: *SL positively affects whistleblowing.*

The leader's behavior matters in an organization because the leader is a model for employees. The behaviors of a leader will affect the habits and actions taken by the employees they lead. In this regard, EL is a form of leadership that is beneficial for the organization. Yuki (2005) explains that a crucial aspect of EL is that the leader must show

ethical behaviors to his employees, such as discussing ethics and individual integrity, being responsible and providing solutions to problems, and helping everyone in the organization. Thus, it will impact employee participation in improving the quality of organizational governance practices, one of which is reporting fraud. Rabie and Malek (2020) and Gupta and Bhal (2020) found that EL could influence employees to blow the whistle. The behavior or ethics of a good leader will also increase the comfort felt by employees and the loyalty or pro-social form of employees towards the organization. Subsequently, it will encourage employees to blow the whistle (Gupta and Bhal, 2020). Based on the above discussions, the hypothesis below was formulated:

H_{1b}: EL positively affects whistleblowing.

Servant Leadership (SL), Procedural Justice, Interactional Justice, and Distributive Justice

SL has characteristics such as nurturing, giving, and maintaining the rights and authority of their employees (Herawati, 2015). SL also places ethical standards to encourage employees to speak up about their opinions, thereby increasing employee perceptions of fairness in the organization. A leader with SL in their daily life will treat employees interpersonally and be expected to enhance employees' perceptions of interactional justice by always maintaining the interaction between leaders and employees. In addition, when the leader serves employees, the leader will listen to the subordinates in making decisions for the organization, which can eventually enhance the sense of procedural justice for employees. On the one hand, distributive justice will be felt by employees when leaders implement SL in the form of always providing satisfactory service to achieve organizational goals and giving appreciation for what employees have done. Hasmarini and Yuniawan (2008) found that SL positively affected distributive justice. At the same time, Gupta and Bhal (2020) contended that SL positively affected procedural and interactional justice. Such situations align with the social exchange theory perspective that employees can assess appropriate behavior that is received and felt by individuals from superiors. As a result, employees can determine the fairness received from all kinds of justice. Based on the above arguments, three hypotheses were put forward:

H_{2a}: SL positively affects distributive justice.
H_{2b}: SL positively affects interactional justice.
H_{2c}: SL positively affects procedural justice.

Ethical Leadership (EL), Procedural Justice, Interactional Justice, and Distributive Justice

EL is believed to be sincere, truthful, respectful, and fair to the employees; as supported by Gupta and Bhal (2020), EL acts as a role model to influence them, which the followers can emulate. Bhal and Dadhich (2011) proposed that ethical leaders establish an ethical standard and link the equivalent to employees to reassure them that they connect ethically. Consequently, EL emphasizes obedience to policies and practices that draw

employees' attention to fair organizational procedures (Bhal and Dadhich, 2011). This behavior can trigger procedural justice, i.e., a proper leadership attitude toward all employees regarding performance appraisal (Dwi, 2017). Dwiyanti and Sariani (2018) explained that EL listens to employee concerns, provides adequate explanations about decisions, and shows empathy. This behavior triggers interaction between leaders and employees that reflect interactional justice. In addition to procedural justice and interactional justice, EL is also associated with distributive justice. It can be seen that the leader rewards employees for the job they accomplish (Cheng et al., 2019). A leader with good EL will take and establish ethical standards regarding fair organizational policies and practices that affect his employees' attitudes. Gupta and Bhal (2020) found that ethical leadership positively affected the justice perceived by employees. Based on the preceding discussions, three hypotheses were derived:

H_{3a}: EL positively affects distributive justice.
H_{3b}: EL positively affects interactional justice.
H_{3c}: EL positively affects procedural justice.

Servant Leadership (SL) and Whistleblowing: The Mediation of Procedural Justice, Interactional Justice, and Distributive Justice

SL style is related to providing motivation and rewards to enhance employee performance in achieving organizational goals (Sapengga, 2016). It aligns with distributive justice, where the leadership gives justice to reward employees who have worked well in their respective portions (Ghosh et al., 2014). As Alpkan et al. (2020) supported, when employees continue to be motivated and rewarded for working, they will feel satisfied. They will also continue to try to do a respectable job to achieve organizational goals and report fraud that can harm the organization. According to Walumbwa et al. (2010), SL follows ethical and moral standards and involves employees in every process in the organization. Maintaining interaction between employees and leaders and always involving employees in making decisions is an example of how SL leader acts (Mazzetti and Schaufeli, 2022). Hence, it leads to interactional justice and procedural justice felt by employees (Gupta and Bhal, 2020). With justice handled by employees, the employees will show a pro-social sense to the organization by reporting things that can harm the organization. In other words, the employees volunteer to become whistleblowers (Alpkan et al., 2020; Gupta and Bhal, 2020). Based on the preceding discussions, it can be concluded that SL will promote justice perceived by employees within the organization and subsequently encourage them to whistleblow. Thus, three hypotheses were drawn up:

H4a: SL positively affects whistleblowing with distributive justice as a mediator.
H4b: SL positively affects whistleblowing with interactional justice as a mediator.
H4c: SL positively affects whistleblowing with procedural justice as a mediator.

Ethical Leadership (EL) and Whistleblowing: The Mediation of Procedural Justice, Interactional Justice, and Distributive Justice

Ethics is the essence of leadership because if a leader is unethical, the leader will cause the collapse of the organization, which results in substantial social consequences (Roque et al., 2020). According to Krisharyuli et al. (2020), EL emphasizes honesty and implications in the values and behavior of a leader. A good leader is concerned not only with the current job but also with existing employees (Cheng et al., 2019; Gupta and Bhal, 2020). Alpkan et al. (2020) proposed that the main driver of employee job satisfaction in the organization is distributive justice. Distributive justice is a manifestation of one of the dimensions of EL behavior, which relates to the fairness felt by employees regarding the distribution of salaries, promotions, employee performance, and their commitment to the organization (Hasan, 2013). It will lead to employee satisfaction with what has been done. EL is also guided by the principles of openness and fairness that lead to procedural justice. Procedural justice emphasizes transparency and fairness regarding existing organizational procedures (Leventhal, 1980). In addition, one dimension of EL is altruism. It refers to the attitude of helping, daring to take risks for others, and prioritizing others (Yukl et al., 2013). Thus, EL is expected to grow employee perceptions of interactional justice. When subordinates feel there is interactional justice and protection from the leader, subordinates will feel responsible for the organization. Therefore, individuals will tend to do whistleblowing as they believe that their actions will not harm their careers and personal lives due to support from EL. Drawing from that insight, it can be deduced that when a leader has implemented all the dimensions of EL, justice in the organization (distributive justice, interactional justice, and procedural justice) will emerge and, it will make employees committed to the organization and create a sense of pro-social employees by reporting actions fraud or blowing the whistle. Based on the foregoing arguments, three hypotheses were built:

H5a: EL positively affects whistleblowing through distributive justice.
H5b: EL positively affects whistleblowing through interactional justice.
H5c: EL positively affects whistleblowing through procedural justice.

Based on the hypothesis development, this study constructed the research model illustrated in Figure 1.

Research Method

This quantitative study used a questionnaire survey distributed to Civil Servants in Local Government Organizations (LGO) in Indonesia. As such, the data of this study were primarily obtained directly from respondents using a Likert scale of 1 to 5, in which "1" indicates "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree." The research locations included the Local Governments of Purworejo, Sumbawa, Pelalawan Riau, Surakarta, and the Special Region of Yogyakarta. This study utilized a convenience sampling method with 759

respondents participating. However, only 684 responses could be processed. Table 1 depicts the respondent demographic.
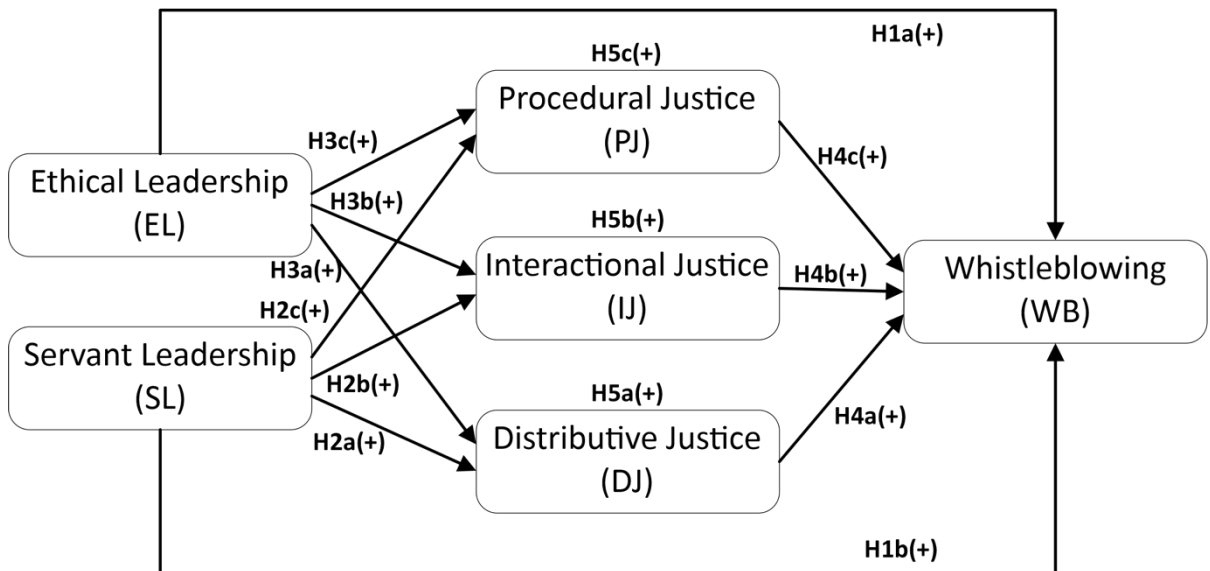

Figure 1 Research Model

The instrument used was adapted by Gupta and Bhal (2020) for whistleblowing with four indicators, servant leadership (SL) with nine indicators, and ethical leadership (EL) with ten indicators. Interactional justice had six indicators, and procedural justice had five indicators. For distributive justice, Niehoff and Moorman's (1993) instrument referred to which had five indicators. All indicators are presented in Table 3. It should be noted that the instrument adopted in this study came from a study in the private sector, while this research was conducted in the public sector, namely Local Governments. Thus, to adapt the instrument to the context of the public sector, which is the objective of this research, a discussion was held between researchers to validate the indicators of each variable.

Furthermore, testing data analysis employed Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS). PLS can avoid multicollinearity (Akbar et al., 2012) and expand the model's complexity (Nitzl, 2016). Astrachan et al. (2014) explained that applying SEM-PLS allows researchers to evaluate measurement models and structural pathways. Since this research had a complex model and the data were non-parametric, the Likert scale, SEM-PLS is appropriate for this research (Diamantopoulos et al., 2008).

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows that this study had a sample of 309 men (45.2%) and 375 women (54.8%). The average age of respondents 20-35 years was 205 (30.08%), 36-50 years old was 251

(36.7%) and >50 years old was 228 (33.3%). A total of 647 (94.6%) respondents had an academic degree either D3 – S3 and 37 (5.4%) did not have an academic degree. A total of 468 (68.4%) had an economic education background (Accounting, Management, Economics) and 216 (31.6%) respondents did not have an economic education background. While 10 (2.8%) respondents worked in organization for < 1 year, 214 (31.3%) respondents worked in organization for 1-5 years, 183 (26.8%) respondents worked in organization for 6-10 years and 268 (39.2%) respondents worked in organization > 10 years.

Table 1 Respondents Demographics

Characteristic	Sumbawa	Purworejo	Surakarta	Yogyakarta	Pelalawan	Total	(%)
Gender							
Man	65	62	61	77	44	309	45.2
Woman	80	71	68	75	81	375	54.8
Age							
20-35 Years	32	35	71	67	71	276	40.4
36-50 Years	74	27	53	26	0	180	26.3
>50 Years	39	71	5	59	54	228	33.3
The Latest Education							
S3	0	1	0	1	0	2	0.3
S2	17	23	9	32	25	106	15.5
S1	99	81	101	85	63	429	62.7
D3	20	13	17	23	37	110	16.1
Other	9	15	2	11	0	37	5.4
Educational Background							
Accountancy	35	35	57	57	32	216	31.6
Management	25	44	8	42	6	125	18.3
Economics	41	20	26	20	20	127	18.6
Other	44	34	38	33	67	216	31.6
Length of Work in Organization							
<1 Year	0	19	0	0	0	19	2.8
1-5 Years	55	29	45	63	22	214	31.3
6-10 Years	27	21	51	28	56	183	26.8
>10 Years	63	64	33	61	47	268	39.2
Length of Work in a Position							
<1 Year	0	27	0	0	0	27	3.9
1-5 Years	82	52	57	95	33	319	46.6
6-10 Years	37	25	39	34	60	195	28.5
>10 Years	26	29	33	23	32	143	20.9

There is a potential normative bias called Common Method Bias (CMB) in survey studies. Common Method Bias (CMB) issues can pose a risk to the consistency of the study. In this research, the researchers used Hermann's one-factor test to determine the threat of CMB. The test indicated that all elements could be characterized into five factors, and the first factor only explained 23.55% of the inconsistencies, which was much less than 50%. From these results, CMB was not a threatening problem in this study.

Table 2 reveals the descriptive statistical analysis results for this study's variables. The mean and standard deviation values of the variables were around $3.732 - 3.976$ and $0.700 - 0.968$. From these data, the variable with the highest mean value was ethical leadership, whereas Servant Leadership had the lowest mean value. All variables had a higher average than the standard deviation, indicating that the data variation was low or relatively homogeneous

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ethical Leadership	1.000	5.000	3.976	0.714
Servant Leadership	1.000	5.000	3.732	0.836
Distributive Justice	1.000	5.000	3.852	0.701
Procedural Justice	1.000	5.000	3.832	0.700
Interactional Justice	1.000	5.000	3.950	0.782
Whistleblowing	1.000	5.000	3.890	0.968
Total Samples	684	684	684	684

Before evaluating the structural model to test the hypothesis, the validity and reliability were assessed by testing the outer model (Sarstedt et al., 2014). According to Hair et al. (2010), indicators that do not meet the requirements of less than 0.7 should be eliminated. Therefore, indicators EL1, EL5, EL6, EL7, EL8, EL9, EL10, SL1, SL4, SL9, DJ3, DJ4, PJ2, PJ3, PJ4, IJ2, IJ3, and WB4 should be removed (Table 3).

Table 3 Outer Loading and AVE

Variables latent	Code	Indicators	Outer loading	AVE
Distributive Justice	DJ 1	The given work schedule has been distributed fairly.	0.808	0.690
	DJ 2	The level of salary payments is already fair.	0.771	
	DJ 5	The responsibility of the work done is fair.	0.830	
Ethical Leadership	EL 2	My leader behaved honestly.	0.808	0.751
	EL 3	My leader is trustworthy and keeps his promises.	0.760	
	EL 4	My leader can be trusted to serve the interests of his subordinates rather than himself.	0.724	
Interactional Justice	IJ 1	When decisions are made about my work, my leaders treat me kindly and wisely.	0.765	0.618
	IJ 4	When decisions are made about my job, my leader shows concern about my rights as an employee.	0.731	
	IJ 5	My leader explains very clearly every decision made about my job.	0.795	
	IJ 6	My leader is completely honest and frank with me.	0.751	
Procedural Justice	PJ 1	When decisions are made about my work, my leaders treat me kindly and wisely.	0.761	0.703
	PJ 5	My leader explains very clearly every decision made about my job.	0.752	

Table 3 Outer Loading and AVE (Count'…)

Variables latent	Code	Indicators	Outer loading	AVE
Servant Leadership	SL 2	My leaders make my career development a priority.	0.792	0.616
	SL 3	I will seek help from my leader if I have any personal issues.	0.708	
	SL 5	My leader allowed me to manage inconvenient situations in the best way I think.	0.749	
	SL 6	My leader will not compromise ethical principles to achieve success.	0.767	
	SL 7	My leader is more concerned with my success than his own.	0.732	
	SL 8	My leader sacrificed his interests to meet my needs.	0.787	
Whistleblowing	WB 1	I will report to my leader.	0.844	0.848
	WB 2	I feel comfortable reporting to my leader.	0.922	
	WB 3	I feel secure reporting to my leader.	0.915	

Furthermore, in PLS, discriminant validity is typically assessed using the Fornell-Lacker criterion (Table 4). In statistical terms, discriminant validity is established if the square root of AVE for a construct is higher than the correlations between it and any other construct in the model (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 4 Fornell-Lacker Criterion

Construct	DJ	EL	IJ	PJ	SL	WB	CA	CR
Distributive Justice	0.831						0.776	0.870
Ethical Leadership	0.235	0.866					0.833	0.900
Interactional Justice	0.198	0.318	0.786				0.793	0.866
Procedural Justice	0.602	0.290	0.262	0.831			0.579	0.826
Servant Leadership	0.457	0.215	0.121	0.418	0.785		0.876	0.906
Whistleblowing	0.166	0.294	0.271	0.239	0.183	0.921	0.910	0.943

From Table 4, it can be deduced that convergent and discriminant validity was fulfilled. In addition, the value of Cronbach's Alpha (CA) for each construct was more than 0.6, and the Composite reliability (CR) value for all constructs showed results appropriate with the rule of thumb (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). All constructs met the criteria of validity and reliability. Thus, testing for hypotheses could be conducted

Base on the Table 5 can be concluded that H1b, H2a, H2c, H3a, H3b, H3c, H4c, H5b and H5c in this research were supported. Thus, ethical leadership had positive direct effect on whistleblowing. Then, servant leadership positively affected distributive and procedural justice. Furthermore, etical leadership had positive influence on distributive, interactional and procedural justice. Lastly, this result showed that procedural justice was pure mediation in relationship between servant leadership and whistleblowing. In addition, Interactional and procedural justice were partial mediation in relationship between ethical leadership and whistleblowing.

Table 5 Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

	Hypothesis	Original Sample (β)	P-Values	Note
Direct Effect				
H$_{1a}$	Servant Leadership → Whistleblowing	0.082	0.067	Not Supported
H$_{1b}$	Ethical Leadership → Whistleblowing	0.192	0.000	Supported
H$_{2a}$	Servant Leadership→ Distributive Justice	0.426	0.000	Supported
H$_{2b}$	Servant Leadership → Interactional Justice	0.055	0.175	Not Supported
H$_{2c}$	Servant Leadership →Procedural Justice	0.373	0.000	Supported
H$_{3a}$	Ethical Leadership →Distributive Justice	0.143	0.000	Supported
H$_{3b}$	Ethical Leadership → Interactional Justice	0.307	0.000	Supported
H$_{3c}$	Ethical Leadership → Procedural Justice	0.209	0.000	Supported
Indirect Effect				
H$_{4a}$	Servant Leadership → Distributive Justice → Whistleblowing	-0.009	0.694	Not Mediation
H$_{4b}$	Servant Leadership → Interactional Justice → Whistleblowing	0.009	0.219	Not Mediation
H$_{4c}$	Servant Leadership → Procedural Justice → Whistleblowing	0.044	0.033	Pure Mediation
H$_{5a}$	Ethical Leadership → Distributive Justice → Whistleblowing	-0.003	0.705	Not Mediation
H$_{5b}$	Ethical Leadership → Interactional Justice → Whistleblowing	0.053	0.000	Partial Mediation
H$_{5c}$	Ethical Leadership → Procedural Justice → Whistleblowing	0.024	0.03	Partial Mediation

SL, EL, and Whistleblowing

This study discovered that leaders with SL could not influence employees to blow the whistle (H1a was unsupported). This result contrasts with EL, which could cause employees to blow the whistle, so H1b was supported. The H1b testing results corroborate with Gupta and Bhal (2020) and Bhal and Dadhich (2011). In this case, leaders with good EL are honest, trustworthy, and fair to their employees. Aligning the social learning theory, employees watch a leader with actual good behavior, such as having ethics, integrity, and responsibility, providing solutions to problem-solving, and helping employees fairly. Employees will also emulate how EL behaves (Klebe et al., 2015). Thus, it is why EL can be a role model for employees. Consequently, employees can be motivated through the style of an EL to become a person of ethics and integrity (Klebe et al., 2015). Therefore, if employees find fraudulent acts, they will have the intention to blow the whistle.

SL and Justice

The study results indicated that SL had a positive effect on distributive justice. Thus, H2a was supported. It confirms Rahman et al. (2016) that leaders with SL characteristics give fair rewards for what employees have achieved to increase commitment to the organization. Furthermore, SL was also found to affect procedural justice, and H2c was supported. This result verifies Gupta and Bhal (2020) and Walumbwa et al. (2020). Leaders with compassion, empowerment, vision, humility, and trust can encourage employees in the organization to voice their opinions and increase perceived fairness. This result authenticates Graham (1991) that SL is more inclined toward the satisfaction of the needs and preferences of their followers by providing a respectful work environment, because of which a sense of justice is developed among them.

Nevertheless, this research uncovered that SL did not affect interactional justice or H2b was not supported. The results of this study contrast with those of Gupta and Bhal (2020) and Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011), who found that SL positively affected interactional justice in the organization. The likelihood of contradictory results occurred because the research setting was distinct. Studies by Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) and Gupta and Bhal (2020) were conducted in the private sector, whereas this research was done in the public sector – Local Governments. Previously, Graham (1991) emphasized that SLs are more inclined toward the satisfaction of the needs and preferences of their followers by providing a respectful work environment. However, it is well-known that interactions in the public sector are more bureaucratic than initiatives like what happened in the private sector. Thus, although the characteristics of leaders in the public sector are SL, for work matters within the unit, division, or department, it seems more rigid because of the hierarchical relationship of the bureaucracy.

EL and Justice

It was found that EL positively affected distributive, interactional, and procedural justice. Therefore, H3a, 3b, and 3c were supported. These results confirm Gupta and Bhal (2020) and Charoensap et al. (2019) that organizational justice is influenced by the form of support from the organization felt by employees, in this case, EL. Distributive justice in this study focused on the equality of what employees have done with what employees get as a form of organizational support (Cohen-charash and Spector, 2001). These results also verify Brown et al. (2005) that moral leaders foster member feelings of justice and trust and foster an environment where employees are more likely to respond with moral behavior.

One of the highlights of the findings of this study is that EL could positively affect interactional justice, which was different from SL. This finding inspires that interactional justice in the public sector is more likely to be promoted by the characteristics of EL public managers than SL. Charoensap et al. (2019) revealed that a leader who treats his employees well communicates well, gives a warm welcome, and shows concern for employees, fostering a good perception of interactional justice. In addition, EL has a strong respect for values related to ethics and morals, setting an example of ethical

behavior in acting and treating others appropriately. Consequently, employees will perceive their leader as fair interpersonally when a leader has such behavior. Interpersonal communication encourages vertical interaction between leaders and subordinates (Bhal & Dadhich, 2011). EL can also provide open communication and coordination to their employees; thus, all the ethical issues can be conveyed and resolved to build a justice-based environment (Toor and Ofori, 2009). This behavior is likewise related to the behavioral theory of leadership. In an organization, the leader should be able to pay attention to employees and existing jobs by always maintaining two-way communication between leaders and employees. Furthermore, the results of this study also strengthen Dwi (2017) that EL-characterized management will tend to be fair to employees in making decisions, for example, in measuring performance and selecting outstanding employees based on performance achievements. This kind of justice is called procedural justice. Thus, EL will be able to encourage the creation of a perception of procedural justice within the organization.

The Role of Justice as Mediation

This study revealed that SL and EL had no indirect effect on whistleblowing through distributive justice, so H4a and H5a were rejected. The results of this study disclosed that distributive justice could not mediate the leadership of both SL and EL on whistleblowing intentions. On the other hand, H1a and H1b of this study indicated that leadership style had a positive effect on whistleblowing intentions, and H2a and H3a of this study denote that leadership had a positive effect on distributive justice. Therefore, this study exposed that although the perception of distributive justice was high and could be felt by employees, it could not influence employees to blow the whistle. In this case, distributive justice is a concept of justice that requires everyone to get what is their right proportionally (Anwar et al., 2021). Even though organizational leaders have SL or EL and employees feel they get distributive justice from leaders, it does not make employees intend to blow the whistle when they find fraudulent acts. Greenberg (1987) emphasized that theories of distributive justice have been classified as either reactive or proactive. Proactive theories intend to aim to ensure that decisions are just from the very beginning, using appropriate decision rules (Greenberg, 1987; Harcourt et al., 2013). Furthermore, Harcourt et al. (2013) stated that various allocation rules of distributive can be used to achieve different organizational goals. In this study conducted in the Local Governments of Indonesia, they have rules to allocate resources to employees. Consequently, distributive justice is a right that employees should get from their leaders and to be protected by the rules of government. Therefore, employees are not motivated to blow the whistle because distributive justice is the right of employees regardless of whether employees report the wrongdoings or not.

Next, this study found that SL had no indirect effect on whistleblowing through interactional justice, whereas EL had a positive indirect effect on whistleblowing through interactional justice, so while H4a was rejected, H5a was supported. This study revealed that interactional justice was only able to mediate EL on whistleblowing intentions. Interactional justice is the interpersonal treatment that a person receives when a procedure is conducted. Referring to H2b of this study, SL was not able to make

employees feel interactional justice, so employees were reluctant to blow the whistle. It occurred because the SL could not perform interpersonal interactions with employees for what employees have done. Consequently, employees will be reluctant to blow the whistle. If employees cannot feel interactional justice, when employees blow the whistle, they will feel frightened because they do not get interpersonal interaction from the leader. As supported by Saud (2016), the whistleblowing system will be effective if all elements, from the lowest level to the top management of the organization, support and protect employees who blow the whistle, considering the various threats and risks that the whistleblower can receive. Moreover, servant leadership [SL] must provide a sense of security and a good environment in the organization (Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011).

Based on H2b, the interactional justice of this study was a partial mediation because EL could directly affect whistleblowing. EL can establish a sense of interactional justice for employees to facilitate through the ethical attitudes and values that EL leaders provide; employees will feel interactional justice. Furthermore, Brown et al. (2005) explained that ethical leadership [EL] will create an environment of inclusiveness, respect, trust, authenticity, and open communication in decisions that are considered reasonable by employees. When employees are treated with dignity, cared for, and respected, it will foster employee confidence in their leaders and be able to create perceptions of fairness. The perception of fairness obtained gives a signal to employees that the leader appreciates them, and they will be willing to engage in pro-social behavior or actions for the organization. Through interactional justice, employees feel they obtain interpersonal interaction from leaders and make employees feel secure in blowing the whistle. EL can produce interactional justice, which, in time, will be able to encourage someone's intention to blow the whistle.

Finally, this study unveiled that SL and EL had an indirect positive effect on whistleblowing through procedural justice, so H4a and H5a were supported. The results of this study revealed that procedural justice could mediate the leadership style of both SL and EL on whistleblowing intentions. SL and EL can make employees feel procedural impartiality. Procedural justice is a perception of fairness towards the procedures used to make decisions so that every member of the organization feels involved in it. Thus, the procedural fairness that employees feel in involvement when making decisions can make them recognized within an organization. The fairness felt by employees also creates a sense of trust in the leadership, which makes the emergence of a pro-social sense in employees. Hence, procedural justice can mediate between servant leadership and whistleblowing.

On the other hand, this study showed that SL did not have a direct effect on whistleblowing; therefore, procedural justice is pure mediation. It can be concluded that SL could influence employees to blow the whistle if and only through procedural justice. In addition, this study uncovered that EL had a direct effect on whistleblowing, so procedural justice was partial mediation. Furthermore, the behavioral theory of leadership states that a good leader is seen from how they involve their employees in various things in the organization, communication, and decision-making. Further, a good leader is seen from the characteristics of how to build good relationships with employees.

The better the behavior of the leadership towards employees is marked by the fairness felt by employees, making employees feel comfortable in an organization and increasing commitment to the organization. It will trigger a pro-social sense in employees by reporting whistleblowing fraudulent acts that occur within the organization.

Whistleblowing has been widely discussed in business organizations, particularly in emerging countries (Cheng et al., 2019; Gupta and Bhal, 2020). Nevertheless, most prior studies were focused on one type of leadership (Cheng et al., 2019). In contrast, the implementation of leadership, either SL or EL, in the context of the public sector, whose primary purpose is to enhance government accountability, particularly in emerging countries, is still lacking. Moreover, the process underlying how leadership affects whistleblowing still holds critical gaps, specifically issues related to leadership dynamics (Cheng et al., 2019). Thus, this study addresses the gap by investigating both SL and EL on the whistleblowing intention in Local Governments through justice.

Conclusion

This study examined the mediating effect of organizational justice (distributive, interactional, and procedural) on the relationship between leadership, namely SL and EL, and whistleblowing intention by public sector employees in Indonesia. Based on the results, it can be concluded that distributive justice could not mediate the relationship between SL, EL, and whistleblowing intention. Moreover, interactional justice could only mediate EL on whistleblowing intention, not for SL. In addition, procedural justice could mediate SL and EL on whistleblowing intention. Procedural justice was a pure mediation between SL and whistleblowing intention. In contrast, interactional and distributive justice partially mediated the relationship between EL and whistleblowing intention.

Theoretically, this study implies that justice can mediate the relationship between leadership style (SL and EL) and whistleblowing intention. Drawing from this insight, it is suggested that the leaders of the public sector organizations must have the characteristics of EL and SL as they can facilitate and motivate employees to blow the whistle when they find fraud that occurs in the organization. In addition, EL and SL leaders can also promote the creation of three dimensions of justice: distributive, interactional, and procedural, which in turn become prerequisites (mediators) that motivate employees to do whistleblowing.

This study has several limitations. Among others, this study did not consider the work environment and social environment because, as suggested by the theory of planned behavior, social norms may influence someone to have the intention to blow the whistle. Then, the population of this study was only five Local Governments. Consequently, the study did not provide a sufficient generalization of the results. Based on the limitations of this study, further research can include aspects of the work environment or society as a variable. Additionally, the research population should be enlarged to have strong generalizations.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest. The funders had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript, or in the decision to publish the results.