



RESEARCH PAPER

An Empirical Review of Servant Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: A Case of Higher Education Institutes of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The education system plays a vital role in the development of any nation. This study aims to explain how the servant type of leadership will bring citizenship behavior among the faculty members of the higher education institutes of Pakistan by mediating organizational trust and employee recognition. A purposive sampling technique was used to the data from the 405 faculty members. SmartPLS was used to analyze data. From the findings of this study, it was concluded that servant leadership has a significant role in the organizational citizenship behavior of the faculty members by mediating organizational trust. While employee recognition doesn't channel this relationship in the context of higher education institutes in Pakistan.

KEYWORDS Employee Recognition, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Organizational Trust, Servant Leadership

Introduction

Higher education institutes are the institutes which produce skilled labor for the various sectors of the country (Gaur et al., 2020). Their network is spread throughout the country in all four provinces, almost equal the population (Qashou, 2021). More than 250 higher education institutes currently offer different higher-level degrees across Pakistan (Salmon, 2023). In other words, we can say that they are acting as the backbone of our skilled labor industry country-wise. A survey conducted by the higher education commission of Pakistan, the higher education institutions of Pakistan produce around 0.2 million skilled people for the national and international industries annually (Mudasser et al., 2022). Teacher plays a vital role in the progress of any higher education institute. Because they are the people who are responsible for the quality of skilled people being produced by the institutes (Ali, 2022). Several factors are responsible for the performance of educational institutes, where the faculty member's behavior is one of the main factors (Saraih et al., 2023). If the behavior of the faculty members in the educational institute is good, it will automatically lead towards a better and good performed organization (Ahmad, 2011). Educational organizations often try to find the factors and reasons responsible for their employees' behaviour development. Several researchers have discovered different factors that build up these (Awais & Ahmad, 2021).

This study examines the factors responsible for the organizational citizenship behavior of the faculty members of higher education institutions across Pakistan. This study also aims to determine how the leadership will boost this behavior and what leadership style is most effective in bringing citizenship behaviour among the faculty members. Furthermore, this study also explores the mediating channels that how leadership will affect the behaviour of the faculty members.

Literature Review

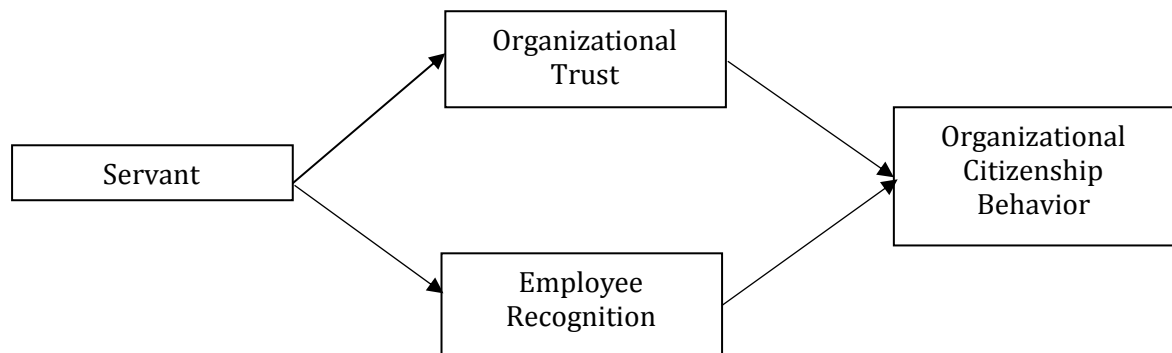
The foundation of servant leadership is the notion that leaders should put service to the common good first (Khan et al., 2022). This type of leader puts their people and organization first. They don't give their own goals priority (Heckel, 2022). Employees are more likely to feel heard in an environment of servant leadership. It is a type of leadership that supports its subordinates (Rehman et al., 2021). Several researchers have found that servant leadership is a leadership style that is most efficient and effective in the context of education institutes (Song, Zhao, Chang, Razi, & Dinca, 2022). Leadership plays a vital role in any organization's development, especially in the educational organization, which is the feeder of all organizations (Siyal et al., 2021). A leader is one of the main characters in the organization who is solely responsible for the behaviour of its followers (Pringle et al., 2022). Several researchers say the follower's behavior reflects the leader's behaviour. If the leadership behaves in a good manner with the follower automatically, that follower will start to behave in a good manner also (Irshad, 2022). There are several types of leadership which highly influence their follower behavior. Still, several researchers suggest that servant leadership is a behaviour which directly influences the follower citizenship behaviour in the educational organization (Irshad & Abro, 2022). Several researchers suggest that this mechanism is transferred to the follower directly without any mediating channel. Still, the current literature denies this argument that different factors are responsible for channelizing this mechanism (Okagbue et al., 2023). According to them, these factors may be organizational trust, employee recognition and employee hope. However, these mediating factors may vary from context to context (Singh, Singh, & Matthees, 2022).

Organizational trust can be defined simply as the staff's faith in the decisions made by the organization (Alkabaa, 2022). This might refer to trust in management or specific team members, but it also includes organizational aspects like the company's objective (Liu et al., 2022). The goal of senior leadership. The principles and culture of the organization. Organizational trust is an advanced level where employees build trust that the organization will own the employee like a family member at any cost. This level of trust takes years to develop in the mind of the employees (Khan et al., 2022). There are several factors which are responsible for building this level of trust. According to several researchers, the leader's behaviour is the main factor that built this trust (Mesmar & Badran, 2022). In those studies conducted in the educational context, it is often seen that the servant type of leadership was a prominent type that is majorly involved in building this trust. Once trust is developed, this will result in positive outcomes like good employee performance and citizenship behaviour (Asif, Khan, & Habib, 2022).

Employee recognition is the timely, informal or official acknowledgement of an individual's behaviour, effort, or business result that promotes the organization's aims and values and goes above and beyond what their superiors normally expect (Mhlanga, 2022). Recognition means acknowledging someone's progress (Sayed, Shahid, & Ahmad, 2020). If we look at the basic human, we can understand that recognition is a basic need of human beings if we want to promote their performance (Awan et al., 2011). The leader is the main character of any organization who is purely responsible for motivating its employees (Tlili et al., 2022). Recognition is a type of non-material motivation which brings a highly positive sense to the employee's heart. If the leadership continuously recognizes the efforts of their followers in the organization, this will, in the long term, fold up the employees' behaviour (M. Irshad, Hussain, Fahim, & Ghas, 2022). Organizational citizenship behaviour is a person's voluntary commitment inside a firm or organization that is separate from their contractual obligations, according to industrial and organizational psychology. Since the late 1970s, researchers have been studying organizational citizenship behaviour (Ibrahim, Shahid, & Ahmed, 2014). Several factors are responsible for the citizenship behavior of an employee in the organization, like leadership style, organizational trust and employee recognition (Ibrahim et al., 2015).

Based on the above literature discussion following research model and the hypothesis has been developed that the study will test.

Research Model



H1: Servant Leadership significantly impacts the organizational trust of the employees.

H2: Servant Leadership significantly impacts employee recognition of the employees.

H3: Organizational trust significantly impacts the organizational citizenship behavior of the employees.

H4: Employee recognition significantly impacts the organizational citizenship behavior of the employees.

Materials and Methods

The philosophical roots of this study are embedded with the positivism paradigm. The positivism paradigm is a paradigm which is solely based on the scientific method, where we assume a fixed and measurable reality. A quantitative approach was used to diagnose the problem in question. Because this approach will better diagnose and address a problem based on measurable reality. The reasoning method used for this study was deductive reasoning. Primary data was gathered from the faculty members of higher education institutes across Pakistan. A total of 405 faculty members' data was gathered by a non-probability sampling technique named purposive sampling. A closed-ended questionnaire was used as an instrument of data collection based on a five-point Likert scale. Where 1 denotes the lowest level of the agreement, and 5 denotes the highest level. While the gathered data was analyzed with the PLS-SEM technique with the help of the SmartPLS software.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Distribution of the Respondents

Table 1 of the demographic distribution of the respondents shows a total number of 405 respondents. This first part of the table shows the gender-wise distribution of the respondents, which shows that among the 405 respondents, 233 are males and 172 are females. The second section of the table shows the age group of the respondents, according to which 98 respondents are 21 to 30 years, 198 are 31 to 40 years, 85 are aged 41 to 50 years, and 24 are aged 51 and above. The third section of the table shows the designation of the respondents. This explains that 206 are lecturers, 123 are assistant professors, 54 are associate professors, and the rest of 22 are professors. The fourth and last section of the table shows the nature of the respondents' employment, which shows that among the 405 respondents, 324 are permanent, and 81 are contractual employees.

Table 1
Demographic Distribution of the Respondents

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Male | 233 | 57.5% |
| Female | 172 | 42.5% |
| Total | 405 | 100.0% |
| Age Group | Frequency | Percentage |
| 21 to 30 Years | 98 | 24.2% |
| 31 to 40 Years | 198 | 48.9% |
| 41 to 50 Years | 85 | 21.0% |
| 51 and Above Years | 24 | 5.9% |
| Total | 405 | 100.0% |
| Designation | Frequency | Percentage |
| Lecturer | 206 | 50.9% |
| Assistant Professor | 123 | 30.4% |
| Associate Professor | 54 | 13.3% |
| Professor | 22 | 5.4% |
| Total | 405 | 100.0% |
| Nature of Employment | Frequency | Percentage |
| Permanent | 324 | 80.0% |
| Contract | 81 | 20.0% |
| Total | 405 | 100.0% |

Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability is the measure of how the measure is accurate. Two types of basic reliability used in the structural equation modelling are item reliability and construct reliability. The measure used for the item's reliability is outer loading, while the measure used for the construct reliability is Cronbach alpha and composite reliability. The threshold value for both measures is 0.7 or above, but a value of 0.5 is also acceptable if the initial requirements of the convergent validity are established. Table 2 of the reliability shows that all the items and construct reliability values are above the threshold value, which indicates that all the items and the construct are reliable for further study.

Table 2
Reliability

| Construct | Items | Loadings | CA | CR |
|----------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Employee Recognition | ER1 | 0.886 | 0.702 | 0.812 |
| | ER2 | 0.632 | | |
| | ER4 | 0.779 | | |
| | ER6 | 0.542 | | |
| OCB | OC1 | 0.802 | 0.87 | 0.88 |
| | OC2 | 0.766 | | |
| | OC3 | 0.881 | | |
| | OC4 | 0.800 | | |
| | OC6 | 0.694 | | |
| | OC7 | 0.727 | | |
| Organizational Trust | OT1 | 0.817 | 0.888 | 0.89 |
| | OT2 | 0.824 | | |
| | OT3 | 0.760 | | |
| | OT4 | 0.850 | | |
| | OT5 | 0.794 | | |
| | OT6 | 0.756 | | |
| Servant Leadership | SL1 | 0.839 | 0.828 | 0.828 |
| | SL3 | 0.891 | | |
| | SL4 | 0.858 | | |

Note: SL2, SL5, OC5, FR3 and ER5 were removed from the model due to insignificant loading values.

Convergent Validity of the Instrument

Convergent validity explains how much the construct is related to their respective items. The measure used for the convergent validity is AVE. The threshold value for the AVE is 0.5 or above. The below table of the AVE shows that all the constructs have AVE values greater than the threshold value, which denotes that all the constructs are convergently valid.

**Table 3
Convergent Validity**

| Construct | AVE |
|----------------------|-------|
| Employee Recognition | 0.521 |
| OCB | 0.609 |
| Organizational Trust | 0.642 |
| servant Leadership | 0.744 |

Discriminant Validity of the Instrument

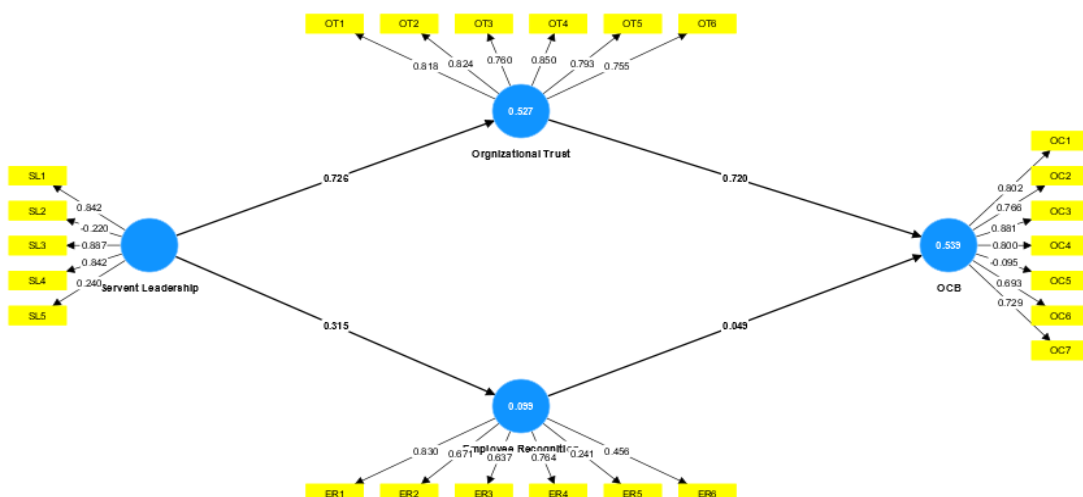
Discriminant validity explains how much one construct is theoretically different from another. The measure used for the discriminant validity is HTMT values. The threshold value for the HTMT value is 0.85 or below. Below, the table of the HTMT values shows that all the constructs have HTMT values lesser than the threshold value, indicating that all the constructs have achieved their discriminant validity.

**Table 4
HTMT Values**

| | Employee Recognition | OCB | Organizational Trust |
|----------------------|----------------------|-------|----------------------|
| OCB | 0.245 | | |
| Organizational Trust | 0.311 | 0.829 | |
| Servant Leadership | 0.374 | 0.654 | 0.839 |

Structural Model

Below figure 2 of the structural model represents the relationship among the variables of the model of the study.



Hypothesis Testing

Table 5 of hypothesis testing shows the structural model of the study. The table shows that there are several four hypotheses which are based on direct relationships. For the statistical significance of a hypothesis, two main measures The threshold value for the t-value is 1.96 and above, while the threshold value for the p-value is 0.05 or less. The table below shows that three of the four hypotheses are statistically significant, while the other is statistically insignificant and has insignificant threshold values. While the beta value of each relationship will explain the strength of the relationships.

Table 5
Hypothesis Testing

| Hypothesis | β | T statistics | P values | Results |
|--|---------|--------------|----------|---------------|
| H1: Servant Leadership -> Organizational Trust | 0.722 | 12.247 | 0.000 | Supported |
| H2: Servant Leadership -> Employee Recognition | 0.313 | 2.820 | 0.005 | Supported |
| H3: Organizational Trust -> OCB | 0.728 | 14.700 | 0.000 | Supported |
| H4: Employee Recognition -> OCB | 0.017 | 0.224 | 0.823 | Not Supported |

Model Fitness

For the model fitness, several measures are available in the SmartPLS, like SRMR, Chi-square, NFI, etc., but most of the researchers recommend the SRMR for the model fitness in the PLS-SEM. When applying PLS-SEM, a value less than 0.08 is generally considered a good fit. However, the table of model fitness shows that the SRMR value is 0.074, which is less than the threshold value of 0.08, which indicates that the model is fit.

Table 6
Model Fitness

| | Saturated model | Estimated model |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| SRMR | 0.074 | 0.074 |
| d_ULS | 1.351 | 1.343 |
| d_G | 0.593 | 0.595 |
| Chi-square | 300.365 | 300.505 |
| NFI | 0.724 | 0.724 |

Conclusion

This study explores how servant leadership will bring positive change in the higher education institutes of Pakistan by motivating the faculty members to show highly beneficial behaviour for the organization. Researchers named that behavior organizational citizenship behavior (Rahmat et al., 2021). According to the literature based on servant leadership, first, servant leadership will hit the organizational trust and employee recognition of the employee and, in the end, will change the employee's behaviour (Seetharaman, 2020). According to the findings of this study, servant leadership is a leadership style which is highly responsible for the organizational citizenship behavior of the faculty members at the higher education institutes of Pakistan. This result also argues that although servant leadership doesn't impact the OCB directly, it will first develop the employee trust and lead them to behave like OCB. However, the literature says that this process will be followed by employee trust and employee recognition, but here, only employee trust mediates this relationship, but employee recognition does not.

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