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Organizational Citizenship Behavior Mediation towards Leadership Styles and Employees Engagement at Workplace

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Abstract

Leadership has an essential role in employee engagement but this relationship is influenced by underlying mechanisms which is usually ignored in previous studies. Due to this reason, this research study explores the role of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) between leadership and employee engagement. For testing the hypotheses, the primary data was collected through a closed-ended questionnaire distributed among the teaching faculty of universities in Pakistan. The Bivariate correlation and multiple regressions were used in this study. The results show a significant positive correlation among study variables. This research study found partial mediation of OCB between leadership and work engagement. The results of this study would be beneficial for management to understand the role of leadership and OCB in the employee's engagement at the workplace, which could help to improve the performance of an organization.

Keyword; Employees Engagement; Leadership; Organizational Citizenship Behavior

INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement is critical because if they are not adequately involved in the affairs of organizations, it will bring boredom and frustration among them and adversely affect their performance. It is recommended that to engage employees in an organization they should be involved in the strategies development meetings and challenging work should be assigned to them (Khan, Busari, Abdullah & Mughal, 2018). Engaged employees can perform better through their positive attitude and affirmative action. Engaged employee often performs their work with confidence and are also committed to their work and believe that can perform

differently from other for the success of the organization with their skills knowledge and other abilities (Khan, Mughal, Khattak, 2017). An engaged employee is a powerful resource that improves the organization's capacities, such as production.

Leadership has a central role in the engagement of employees. Bass and Avolio (1997) introduced a full-range leadership theory, which consists of three main categories, i.e., transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire. The engaged employee makes a difference in the organization if a leader creates a pleasant and positive environment in the organization such as by providing better job resources and other supporting facilities to the employee. This can improve employees' motivation and inspire them to perform effectively and efficiently and enhance their overall performance (Busari, 2011). In addition, engaged employees perform better when they experience positive practices during work. For example, a manager should provide better opportunities such as career, and climate, give respect and appreciation if they perform better, and provide reward & recognition, when employees perceive such an environment they give their full attention and engagement because they feel secure about their job. (Bakker et al., 2011). Since, employee engagement is the most useful for the success of the organization (Bhatnagar, 2012), the motivation of employees about engagement plays a significant role in the organization, such as high productivity.

Interestingly, organizational citizenship behavior has a role in leadership and employee engagement because it is cooperative behavior that is non-obligatory and goes beyond the set of job requirements which keeps employees engaged with their organization. According to Khan (1990), behavior does not influence the organization's activities such as high production or other tasks; it means that social and psychological behavior does not affect the organization's performance but plays a supporting role in task accomplishment (Khan, 1990). This implies that OCB can be an underlying mechanism between leadership and employee engagement. In other words, OCB can mediate the effect of leadership on employee engagement (See Figure 1 for proposed framework). So, this study will answer the following research question.

Research question: Does OCB mediate the leadership and employee engagement nexus?
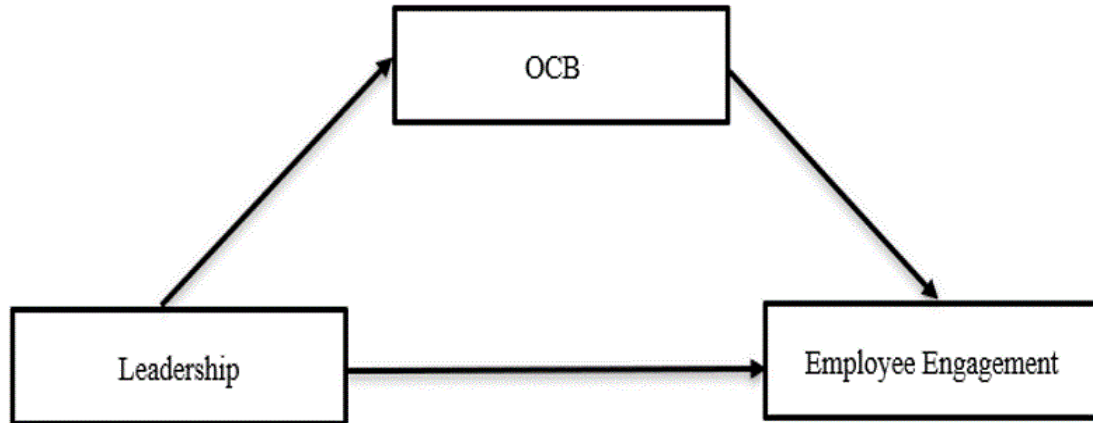
Figure 1: Proposed framework

Based on Figure 1, the following four hypotheses are proposed.

H1: Leadership positively affects employee engagement.

H2: Leadership positively affects OCB.

H3: OCB positively affects employee engagement.

H4: OCB mediates leadership and employee engagement nexus.

Methodology

In this research project, the survey approach was used by distributing a close-ended questionnaire between December 2022 and February 2023 among 200 teachers of two large universities (Gomal and Qurtuba) in Pakistan using random sampling. Out of 200, 168(84%) were returned and correctly filled. The scales of the constructs were adopted from the literature. For example, a leadership was adopted from the MLQ short version developed by Bass and Avolio (1997). Employee engagement and OCB scales were adopted from Mughal et al. (2018). All the items of the scales were measured on a 5-point Likert scale.

From the collected sample, 59.5% were male and 40.47%. were female faculty members who participated in the survey. With regards to education, 87.24% had master's degrees and the remaining 12.76% had doctorate degrees. On the question of work experience, 49.5% had six to ten years of experience, 21.8% had eleven to fifteen years of experience, 17.3% had less than five years of experience, and the remaining

11.4% had more than fifteen years of experience.

Results and Discussion

Data has been examined by using "Statistical Packages for Social Sciences SPSS V.25 and Hayes PROCESS was used to examine the mediating hypothesis. In the analysis, we calculated Cronbach Alpha (α), correlation (r), and regression. Firstly, we checked the α for the reliability of data and scale. The results in Table 1 show that α for leadership (0.827), employee engagement (0.854), and OCB (0.799) were above 0.7, confirming the reliability of the scales. Secondly, the correlation among the variables was assessed.

Table 1: Internal reliability

Variable	Items	Alpha
Leadership	9	0.827
Employee Engagement	10	0.854
OCB	10	0.799

In Table 2, the correlation results demonstrate a significant and positive relationship between all three variables. For example, leadership positively correlated to employee engagement (r = 0.488 and p-value = 0.01) and OCB (r = 0.673 and p-value = 0.01). Similarly, OCB has a significant positive correlation with employee engagement (r = 0.546 and p-value = 0.01). These results indicate that all three variables are connected to each other.

Table 2: Correlation

Variable	Mean	SD	Employee Engagement	OCB	Leadership
Employee Engagement	3.78	0.84	1		
OCB	4.05	0.78	0.546**	1	
Leadership	3.45	0.93	0.488**	0.637**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Lastly, we executed regression using Hayes PROCESS macro program to check the proposed direct and indirect relationships. The results in Table 3 indicate that leadership is positively related to employee engagement (Beta = 0.534 at p = 0.01) and OCB (Beta = 0.534 at p = 0.01). We also found a positive influence of OCB on employee engagement (Beta = 0.489 at p = 0.01). Finally, we examined the mediation effect using a bootstrapping procedure. The results confirm that OCB indirectly affects the positive relationship between leadership and employee engagement (Beta = 0.261 at p = 0.01: LLCI-ULCI 0.184-0.249). These results confirm the acceptance of all four proposed hypotheses. In addition, the R-square value of our model was 0.558 which shows that a 55.8% variance in employee engagement occurs due to leadership

and ocb.

Table 3: Hypothesis results

Relationship	Beta	t-value	Bootstrapping	
			LLCI	**ULCI**
Leadership → Employee engagement	0.227**	4.185	0.124	0.241
Leadership → OCB	0.534**	6.437	0.336	0.487
OCB → Employee engagement	0.489**	5.344	0.202	0.318
Leadership → OCB→ Employee engagement	0.261**	4.887	0.184	0.249
R-square = 0.558				

**.significant at 0.01 level; ULCI: upper level confidence interval; LLCI: lower level confidence interval

Conclusion

Leadership is getting the attention of the researchers for three decades. Due to changes in organizations and changes in business structure, the hierarchy of organizations needs rapid changes. Different leadership styles are emerging nowadays. But the most effective leadership theory that is tested and applied in almost all parts of the world is Bass and Avolio's (1997) theory. This study has also used the same method to test the mediating effects of OCB in the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement. With a sample of 168 university faculty members, it is found that leadership and OCB positively affect employees work engagement. This implies that leaders can bring positive change in organizations as well as in employees (Khan et al., 2018), and OCB fosters employees work engagement. This research study also found the mediating role of OCB between leadership and employee engagement. These results are in agreement with previous studies (Aftab et al., 2022; Khan, Mughal, & Khattak, 2017).

This study contributes to leadership, OCB, and employee outcome literature in twofolds 1). The study was conducted in the education sector of Pakistan which is an extremely underexplored sector. So, the results provide new insights to researchers and policymakers, and 2). This study shows the significant role of OCB in employee outcomes (e.g., engagement). The results confirm that OCB can play the role of a bridge between leadership and employee engagement.

Despite the contribution, the study has some limitations including a small sample size and target population (employees of two universities). Therefore, future researchers can target other universities for generalizability of results. In addition, future scholars can focus on other leadership styles like servant leadership, ethical leadership, and spiritual leadership. Furthermore, future researchers can collect qualitative data to understand in-depth about leadership, OCB, and employee engagement relationships.

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