



Effect of Servant Leadership Style on Job Satisfaction of Employees of Public Sector Universities

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Abstract

The current study examines the effects of the servant leadership style of university heads on the job satisfaction of employees of public sector universities. The population of this study was 04 public sector universities in the Multan district. Data were collected from 200 administrative staff working in four public sector universities of the Multan district. The servant leadership style of university heads was determined by the servant leadership scale. The job satisfaction measure was used to determine the job satisfaction of the administrative personnel. Data analysis methods included the use of means, standard deviations, correlations, and multi-regression tests. The servant leadership style of university leaders was found to have a strong positive association with administrative staff work happiness, and it was a substantial predictor of employee job satisfaction.

Keywords: servant leadership, job satisfaction, higher education



Introduction

Numerous scientific fields, including human resources, economics, and psychology, have expressed interest in the subject of job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2012). One of the most common attitudes related to work that has received the greatest attention in organization and management research is job satisfaction (Nghah, N. S. et al., 2022). The main reason is that having a high level of job satisfaction has benefits like increased lower levels of turnover (Daly & Dee, 2006), more involvement in work (Aboramadan et al., 2021), lower absenteeism (Ybema et al., 2010), interacting behavior of staff within the organization (Indarti et al., 2017).

Self-esteem and satisfaction in a job are seen as the foundation of academic and administrative work in universities (Byrne et al., 2012) because those employees who are not satisfied have more inclination towards leaving their concerned tasks (Dahleez & Aboramadan, M. 2022). The authors further explained that the high output of staff due to discontent may be detrimental to universities as it leads to the transfer of priceless intellectual capital through very expensive staff replacements. By improving student learning outcomes, satisfied academic staff not only performs better but also improves the act and status of academic institutions (Katitas, S et al., 2022).

The research has also proposed a number of additional elements that affect university staff members' job satisfaction. These include the following: job security (Cerci & Dumludag, 2019); support for research expectations (Ababneh, 2020), the productivity of the research (Albert et al., 2018), procedural and distributive justice, perceptions of the pay (Bozeman & Gaughan, 2011), work-life balance (Dorenkamp & Ruhle, 2019). Along with these elements that influence university staff work satisfaction, leadership is a crucial motivator.

Support from leaders is essential for staff because it sends a sign of positivity that boosts output and fulfillment (Park, 2018). A distinctive leadership stance known as servant leadership has arisen, emphasizing the growth and service of followers. This style of leadership is a critical organizational component that influences staff actions and attitudes because of its distinctive



ideology of "serving others" Therefore, a dire need is felt how servant leadership is impacting the university staff (Aboramadan et al., 2021).

Problem Statement

It is evidenced through the literature that no significant amount of research on leadership at the university level is done. Furthermore, there is little study on servant leadership at the university level, with a few outliers So, this calls for additional attention. There is very little research on the connection between university work happiness and servant leadership (Latif & Marimon, 2019).

This current research study will try to present how a servant leadership model impacts the job satisfaction of the university staff in light of the previous discussion. Among the relationships mentioned above, this model will use two mediating variables like justice and trust in an organization. By doing this, the researcher will add the following to the literature on the university level. Since research on the topic of servant leadership is in rudimentary stages, the researchers generally contribute to the literature in this area. Although the majority of the work is done in the field of management research in the United States, the researcher will also add the slight literature on management and leadership research at the university level outside Europe and the United States.

It is evidenced through the literature that no significant research has been done in Pakistan regarding servant leadership. Furthermore, they contended that servant leadership has received little attention in Pakistani universities. While other leadership styles have been studied there. This study will extend the understanding of the relationship between satisfaction during work and servant leadership in a public-sector university in Punjab, Pakistan.

Research Objective

Following was the research objective of the study;



- To find out the relationship between a public university's servant leadership style and job satisfaction.

Hypotheses

On the basis of research objectives following hypotheses have been formulated;

H01: There is no relationship between Servant Leadership and job satisfaction of employees at the university level.

H1: There is a relationship between the Servant Leadership style and the job satisfaction of employees at the university level.

Theoretical Framework

In terms of the connection between the leadership style of a servant and job satisfaction, the researcher hypothesized that such a leadership approach would help increase staff's job satisfaction for the succeeding reasons. Number one, it is asserted that the degree of influence on job satisfaction depends on the association between the leader and the follower. As a result, using the perspective of relational theory, work can be seen as primarily a social act that is motivated by relationships. The connection between the leader and the follower is an essential component of this social aspect since it ensures the supply of the required resources which are essential to complete the given task (Settoon & Mossholder, 2002).

By encouraging positive relationships with followers, the servant leader eventually meets their requirements. Additionally, servant leaders offer followers the chance to voice their worries (Eva et al., 2019), which fosters a trusting association between them. When servants believe their leaders are willing to support their personal development, it increases their sense of job satisfaction and inclination towards the job. On the second spot, the self-determination theory may help to understand the nexus between these two variables (Page & Wong, 2000).



Last but not least, through successful servant leadership techniques, Employees are more likely to notice these positive actions and procedures as focused on their interests and directed toward employee growth and development. According to these circumstances, and by using the social exchange theory, the followers are more likely to have favorable judgments of organizational justice due to the employer's high-quality and trustworthy relationships. Therefore, these workers may demonstrate higher levels of job satisfaction (Ilkhanizadeh & Karatepe, 2018).

Significance of the Study

The researcher could not find any empirical evidence that studied how these two variables are correlated at the public sector university level in Pakistan. To fill this gap the researcher intends to inspect the relationship among these variables i.e servant leadership and job satisfaction. This will be the theoretical contribution to the existing literature. The practical implications of the current research work will be that the staff at the university level have three core needs: relatedness, competence, and autonomy. The personnel will experience a state of strength after these demands are met. The researcher content that a servant leader's empowering action might satisfy a follower's yearning for autonomy. Servant leaders can satisfy their need for competence by fostering relationships with their followers and by assisting their followers in growing and developing. It is said that fulfilling these requirements will boost the satisfaction of employees during their job (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

Literature Review

Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction

Because of the effects, it has on both people and businesses, servant leadership is acknowledged as a crucial field for researchers. However, servant leadership remains a process of relative ambiguity and is occasionally disregarded in favor of more conventional styles of leadership. Empathy, listening, healing, foresight, persuasion, awareness, stewardship, conceptualization, and a commitment to progress are characteristics of servant leadership (Russell, 2016).



Literature indicates that the concept of this style of leadership is described as "an other-oriented approach to leadership, manifested through one-on-one prioritizing of follower individual needs and interests, and outward reorienting of their concern for self toward concern for others within the organization and larger community". However, in contrast to transformational, ethical, and authentic leadership, this leadership style is a different concept from these styles of leadership. For instance, transformational leaders are motivated by achieving organizational advantages, whereas servant leaders are motivated by a vision focused on giving positive favor to organizational personnel (Aseanty & Lutfiyani, 2022).

According to Andersen (2018), leadership styles like ethical place significant stress on ethical and moral values, whereas servant leaders emphasize helping others through the concept of stewardship. Last but not least, reliable leaders strive to manage the organization via self-authenticity, whereas servant leaders have the tendency to put others before themselves. The organizational behavior area considers job satisfaction to be the work-related attitude that has been most thoroughly investigated.

Akehurst et al (2009) argued that if an employee shows a positive attitude toward his work then it is most probable that he is satisfied with his job. Similar to this argued that job satisfaction is a favorable evaluation a person makes of his or her employment. Additionally, psychological circumstances help to explain how one feels about their profession. Employee commitment increases when they are happy in their work, which can lead to lower absenteeism and turnover rates, higher productivity, and greater performance. For this reason, job happiness is crucial to investigate.

Research Methodology

Population and Sampling

In this study, the current administrative staff of four universities of the district, Multan, is taken as population. Stratified random sampling techniques have been used for the collection of data. Van Voorhis and Morgan (2007) suggested that to find out the sample size, the number of



variables is multiplied by 30. In this way the initial estimate $30 \times 3 = 90$. The researcher collected data from 200 administrative staff working in four universities in the Multan district.

Measurement of Variables

All the scales were adopted by the researcher for the measurement of variables. The scales consisted of demographic variables.

1. Servant Leadership

For this, a seven-item scale was adopted. The questionnaire being used was established and authenticated by Liden et al. (2015).

2. Job Satisfaction

For job satisfaction, a six-item scale was adopted. This scale was developed and validated by Dahleez and Aboramadan (2022). Both the validity and reliability of the scales were ensured.

Reliability and Validity of Scales

The reliability of scales was measured through Cronbach alpha. The value of internal consistency was 0.7. Three experts were also contacted for the validity of the scales. The scales were improved after incorporating the suggestions given by the experts.

**Data Analysis****Table 1 Descriptive statistics for variables**

Factors	Mean	Stand. error
respect for people	2.47	0.48
the growth of people	2.44	0.56
creation of a community	2.50	0.51
Displaying genuineness	2.50	0.58
assuming a leadership role	2.61	0.45
distributing leadership	2.59	0.64
wholehearted servant leadership	2.50	0.37
internal fulfillment	2.54	0.45
External fulfillment	2.21	0.60
contentment at work	2.38	0.44

The above Table shows the mean and standard deviation of the levels of servant leadership behaviors displayed by university leaders and the job satisfaction of their administrative personnel.



Table 2. *Correlations between Several Factors*

Variables	Internal fulfillment	External fulfillment	Contentment at work
respect for people	0.318**	0.231**	0.313**
the growth of people	0.302**	0.250**	0.337**
creation of a community	0.347**	0.332**	0.413**
Displaying genuineness	0.262**	0.316**	0.358**
assuming a leadership role	0.431**	0.343**	0.461**
distributing leadership	0.395**	0.361**	0.401**
wholehearted servant leadership	0.478**	0.458**	0.558**

According to the correlation matrix in Table 2, there is a significant and positive association between servant leadership subscales and employees' intrinsic job satisfaction ($r = 0.318$ to 0.478 ; $p < 0.01$).



Table 3. Analysis of the Relationship between Servant Leadership Factors and Internal Job Satisfaction

Variables	B	Stand. error	β	T	P	Tolerance	VIF
Constant	0.650	0.005	—	5.451	0.000		
Valuing of people	0.106	0.070	0.100	1.694	0.006	.687	0.141
Development of people	0.142	0.076	0.135	1.891	0.003	.369	1.029
Building of community	0.044	0.063	0.037	1.099	0.025	.300	1.325
Displaying of authenticity	0.148	0.078	0.150	1.814	0.003	.216	2.050
Providing of leadership	0.123	0.071	0.107	1.765	0.003	.266	1.543
Sharing of leadership	0.003	0.063	0.033	0.453	0.462	.310	1.264

Notes: $R = 0.724$; $R^2 = 0.523$; $F(6,588) = 107.662$; $p < .000$



All other characteristics had a substantial impact on staff members' intrinsic job satisfaction, with the exception of shared leadership, according to the analysis of t-test results on the significance of regression coefficients.

Discussion

According to the study's findings, there was a strong and positive correlation between administrators' servant leadership behaviors and employees' job satisfaction. The extent of servant leadership factors' effects on employees' job satisfaction varies. The factors of appreciating employees, demonstrating authenticity, fostering a sense of community, and supporting their professional growth have a favorable and significant impact on intrinsic, extrinsic, and overall job satisfaction. While exercising leadership does not significantly affect one's outward job satisfaction, it does not significantly affect intrinsic or overall job contentment. Additionally, servant leadership significantly and favorably impacts job satisfaction.

The idea is that showing honesty and respecting employees positively affects job satisfaction and is positively related to employees' intrinsic, extrinsic, and overall workplace happiness. This finding may be interpreted as personnel placing more value on personal traits like feelings than on their ability to perform their jobs in a trustworthy atmosphere. These findings are supported by a study done by Hebert (2003), who found that these two criteria have a beneficial impact on job satisfaction. Additionally, it was discovered that staff looked for principals to be trustworthy and that effective leaders were those who cared about and acknowledged others (Gordon & Patterson, 2006), valued people, and displayed understanding.

Conclusion

Since the Hawthorne trials, researchers have studied various aspects of leadership, including meeting the needs of employees to boost productivity. Due to its characteristics, including staff development, support, assistance, and service, servant leadership may improve staff's job happiness. Given that servant leadership has a positive effect on job happiness, it can be deduced that university authorities should make an effort to be servant leaders in order to boost staff members' job contentment.



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Direction for Future Research

We recommend that in the future the relationship between servant leadership style and job satisfaction may be assessed with the mediating roles of variables i.e. organizational justice and psychological ownership etc. We also recommend that a qualitative research method may be applied to know the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction.



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