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Promoting Leadership Effectiveness in HEC Organizations of Southern Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the function of psychological safety as a mediator in the connection between servant leadership and voice behavior (promotive and prohibitive). Psychological safety partially mediates (beta value of IV-DV reduced to 0.505) and positively impacts the servant leadership. The results showed that servant leadership positively impacts psychological safety ($\beta = 0.487^{**}$) and voice behavior ($\beta = 0.664^{**}$). The sample consisted of 176 full-time employees of private HEC institutes in South Punjab. Both the theoretical and practical ramifications of the findings were explored.

Keywords: psychological safety, prohibited voice behavior, promotive voice behavior, servant leadership, voice behavior

Introduction

The presented study "Promoting leadership effectiveness in HEC organizations of Southern Punjab, Pakistan" concept originated from Kwon and Farndale (2020), who suggested that this could be one of the ways by which the employees could express their dissatisfaction with the procedures of the organization. However, it has the risk that peers might misjudge one's views (Brinsfield & Edwards, 2020). Because of this reason the employees first costs analyze before speaking. A model organization is one that would create an environment in which employees feel secure and can take up challenging tasks and career opportunities. When the employees perceive their managers as authentic, they exert extraordinary efforts with engagement (Burnett & Lisk, 2019).

Previous studies were an attempt to examine the gap by investigating the impact of servant leadership on two factors, namely voice behavior and psychological safety. No significant research was conducted to explore the

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empirical servant leadership's influence on voice behavior and psychological well-being so far. However, the current study also helped to introduce new theoretical instruments into the concepts which may be used as a critical driver for the success of an organization. The citation and discussion of the current research was carried out by Carton (2022) which showed that the servant leadership behaviors could directly up-shoot the psychological safety. It may also increase psychological safety and the proof of identity along with strengthening the mutual association as cited by Kruse et al. (2019), combined with secure and stable organization's identification. For instance, as cited by Marri et al. (2021) the results projected that the psychological safety mediates the relationship between servant leadership and voice behavior. Servant leadership among the other leadership styles tend to explain the psychological safety and the voice behavior in job attitudes in a more clear way. Le (2020) discussed that the findings published in their meta-analytical research asserted more work on servant leadership.

Kleshinski et al. (2021) discussed in literature that critical research is necessary to determine how servant leadership affects the voice behavior and psychological safety. It is also helpful to identify how to take risky decisions, share ideas, opinions, and act with sovereignty on such imperative decisions. Therefore, the current study claimed that the psychological safety of the employees is developed by servant leadership. It is also linked with the examination of the psychological safety under the effects of leadership style and the behavior that may influence psychological safety.

Psychological safety plays a significant role in work environments where employee and customer safety are dominant, such as the SMEs. The implementation of servant leadership would provide staff with an intellect of psychological safety. SMEs play a key role to strengthen the economy of country. They comprise almost 90% of all the enterprises of Pakistan and make up 40% of the GDP. SMEs are often pressurized due to significant rivalry among their trades and also at the international level. In order to reach the goals affording to the international market, SMEs need to experience extreme variations for instance, to be more commercial or go towards empire-building, encourage voice behavior, and have effective leadership (Namankani, <u>2019</u>). Applying servant leadership in SMEs and other organizations would arouse a feeling of psychological safety in the employees. Thus, they would feel obligated to voice their views which consequently contributes to the success of the organizations. Hence, the managers and leaders from the corporate sectors may attain benefit from the current research as the main objective of the organizations is to make a profit organization rise. Thus, they may opt this leadership style which could improve their commitment with the organization (Le, 2020).

Literature Review

The current study is an important contribution to the existing body of literature as it explored the unique relationship between servant leadership and its outcomes. There has been little research on the specific outcomes of servant leadership therefore; the current study augments the existing literation on this relationship. The findings would be beneficial for the organizations in order to draw attention to their employee's behavior and reciprocally get the benefit through servant leadership. As the research work in this context was very much limited therefore, the current study helped to propose to find individual factors, psychological safety, and the antecedents. These factors are helpful in the decision making process along with the provision of challenging and innovative ideas. Moreover, no past researches were conducted on different factors, affecting the involvement of the employees, decision making, and the voice behaviors.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership mainly emphasizes other factors instead of being self-centered and it also recognizes the character of the leader as a servant according to Eva et al. (2019). This ability of servant leaders to forego their own needs for the sake of their followers marks the distinction between servant leadership and other leadership styles. Therefore, selfishness cannot overwhelm a servant leader (Lockhar, 2021). These leaders are inspirational and they obtain inspiration in a way similar to that of servanthood. In many present organizations, a leadership that brings the well-being of the followers is focused more than the exaltation of the leader and is being greatly valued Akanji et al (2019). Servant leadership embarks on various behavioral and emotional traits. Moreover, it is important for those leaders who obtain their opportunity to provide service to employees and customers. The aim of such a leader is to serve in order to outstand the need for obtaining organizational objectives, which is his main stress.



Research conducted and reviewed by Bensaid (2021) explained the six basic and fundamental dimensions that also demonstrated and exhibited humility, authenticity, and purity. It also helped to accepts people as who and what they are as they work for the betterment of the community. Moreover, it also helped to guide and provide directions in order to achieve their goals and targets. There exist some other discriminating and analytical reviews regarding the servant leadership theory among other leadership styles that are also discussed in the theory named as ethical leadership.

Psychological Safety

In a psychologically safe environment, unit individuals don't hesitate to express their problems, self-question, and their necessity of learning, keeping in mind the end goal, they perform productively (Chen et al., 2019; McNamara et al., 2019). Individuals trust that they could talk up and ask about a disappointment without retaliation from other unit individuals or the leader and this is basic for them to gain from their failures. Hennel and Rosenkranz (2021) identified that the psychological safety is based on an overall trust that the organization is secure for risky actions. The behavior of the manager is pivotal across the life cycle of the employees which plays a very much important role. It also helps to go across the affectionate relation by being in a more supportive atmosphere which increases the positive voice behavior that may affect the psychological safety of the subordinates. Bari et al. (2020) cited that the tacit knowledge is usually focused on by the employees to ensure the psychological safety of the voice behavior. Therefore, through an explanatory mechanism, the perceived psychological safety was tested in the context of voice studies of the employees. Employees were motivated to present their opinions on rational issues which led to a psychologically safe atmosphere in an organization. Another study also reported from the telecom organization in China and its results showed that the transparency of the leader positively affects the creativity with the help of cognitive mechanisms and the psychological safety of the employees (Mehmood et al., 2021).

Voice Behavior

According to Khan (2020), followers' voice alludes to the optional verbal correspondence of thoughts, proposals, or feelings with the purpose to enhance structural or component working (Brinsfield & Edwards, 2020). Follower's voice behavior, characterized as the correspondence of valuable

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and testing proposals along with thoughts has appeared to encourage organizational efficiency and presentation (Varela et al., 2019). However, researchers suggested that a few individuals feel hesitant to talk up even when they have something valuable to state. Voice behaviors challenge the existing conditions and try to take a productive variation inside the organization which may encourage the successful working of the entity (Wang & Wu et al., 2019). The behavior of employees inside the organizations goes far beyond compliance for safety which also supports risk management and accident prevention as overall safety. Li et al. (2020) discussed the behavior of the employees and concluded that the working conditions. Bian et al. (2019) also conducted a study about the relationship between safety behaviors, leadership theories, and the safe atmosphere for work in the organization.

Research Methodology

The current study used a survey methodology therefore, the objectives of this research were investigated via using research instruments rather than human verdict (Wang & Berzin et al., 2019). A quantitative cross-sectional and correlational survey was used to identify and examine the impact of servant leadership on voice behavior with the mediating effect of psychological safety, a study from the Higher Education Sector of Pakistan. The questionnaire was used for data collection. Whereby, the sample comprised the employees of the University of Central Punjab, the National College of Business Administration and Economics, and the Superior University, private institutes of South Punjab, Pakistan. In the research understudy, four different questionnaires were adapted with seven items to measure the servant leadership which were distributed to the selected sample. Probability sampling showed that the population was known which was 360 and the sample size comprised of 186 employees out of which 176 filled responses.

The researcher collected data from the selected sample in order to conduct the current study. Participants were asked to fill up the questionnaire therefore, it was a self-administered survey. The adapted instrument for data collection consisted a semi-structured questionnaire. Table 1 shows number of items of each variable used in the questionnaire.



Table 1

Number of Items According to Variables

Variables	No. of items
Leadership	12
Voice Behavior Promotive Voice Behavior	5
Prohibitive Voice Behavior	5
Psychological Safety	5

The instrument used to gather the information alludes to gadgets utilized to collect the data. In this way, the questionnaire was intended to gather information to recognize the relationship of variables.

Table 2

Research	Methodology	Summarized
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0,		
Research Questions	Quantitative Methodology	Hypotheses
Does servant leadership have an impact on psychological safety?	Correlation and regression	H1. Servant leadership has a positive impact on psychological safety.
Does servant leadership have an impact on voice behavior?	Correlation and regression	H2. Servant leadership has a positive impact on voice behavior
Does Psychological safety have a positive impact on voice behavior?	Correlation and regression	H3. Psychological safety has a positive impact on Voice behavior.
Does psychological safety mediate between the relationship of servant leadership and voice behavior?	Correlation and regression	H4. Psychological safety mediates between servant leadership and voice behavior.

In the current study, the associational research design was used to measure the extent of the effect of an autonomous variable on a dependent

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variable so that the statistical significance of the relationship could be assessed (Naeem & Ali, 2022). This study was conducted at a distinct level of analysis. The relationship among dependent, independent, and mediating variables were examined through regression and correlation. Statistical techniques also varied based on the type of data collected. Servant leadership was measured by using 12 items, voice behavior was measured by using two dimensions, and 10 items respectively. Similarly, psychological safety was measured through 4 items.

Results

The work demographic profile of the respondents was determined by a descriptive analysis of data acquired through a questionnaire survey. It included age, gender, and monthly salary. It was observed that most of the participants were males. Additionally, the age group that responded the most was 18-30. The maximum number of respondents falling within the monthly salary ranged from PKR 20,001-40,000. The detailed analysis is as below. Table 3 shows the age profile of the respondents. Table 4 shows the salary statistics of the respondents. Table 5 shows the gender of the respondents.

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-30	111	63.1	63.1	63.1
31-40	49	27.8	27.8	90.9
41-50	12	6.8	6.8	97.7
51-60+	4	2.3	2.3	100.0
Total	176	100.0	100.0	

Table 3

Age	of I	Respondents

Table 4

Salary of Respondents							
Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent				
55	31.3	31.3	31.3				
54	30.7	30.7	61.9				
33	18.8	18.8	80.7				
34	19.3	19.3	100.0				
176	100.0	100.0					
	Frequency 55 54 33 34	Frequency Percent 55 31.3 54 30.7 33 18.8 34 19.3	FrequencyPercentValid Percent5531.331.35430.730.73318.818.83419.319.3				

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Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	122	69.3	69.3	69.3
Female	54	30.7	30.7	100.0
Total	176	100.0	100.0	

Table 5Gender Statistics

Reliability Analysis

The Cronbach Alpha values were higher than suitable and suggested value of 0.50 by 0.60 (Abu-Rumman et al., 2021). This shows that all the 26 items were dependable and suitable to measure the influence of servant leadership on employee voice behavior and the significance of psychological safety as a mediating factor. The Cronbach Alpha value for the servant leadership, psychological safety, and voice behavior can be seen in the following table which shows that the reliability of items is at an acceptable level as suggested by Abu-Rumman et al. (2021). The following table 5 shows the gender of the respondents.

Table 6

Reliability of Measurements Instrument (Main Study)

Name of the Factor	Cronbach Alpha	No. of Items
PS	0.712	4
VB	0.826	10
SL	0.810	12
Total	.783	26

Normality Test & Multicollinearity Test

The normality test was performed using Skewness and kurtosis whose values were found between ± 1.00 and ± 3.00 which showed that the data was distributed normally. Table 7 shows the results of the normality test whereas, table 8 shows the results of the Multicollinearity test which determines whether the variables are not very much correlated.

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Descriptive Statistics					
Variables	Ν	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error
SL	176	733	.183	1.291	.364
VB	176	-1.016	.183	2.261	.364
PS	176	403	.183	127	.364

Table 7Descriptive Statistics

Table 8

Multicollinearity Table

Model	Collinearity	Collinearity Statistics		
Widder	Tolerance	VIF		
VB	1.000	1.000		
SL	1.000	1.000		

Table 8 reveals a tolerance value close to 1 and a VIF value of less than 5, which is the indication of the non-existence of Multicollinearity.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation coefficient spans from +1 to -1, with both values indicating significant positive and negative correlations (Ali & Naeem, 2022). The number 0 indicates that there is no association. Pearson correlation was used in this investigation to assess the relationship between variables and if any observed variable had perfect covariance with any other variables observed in the study. The correlation analysis is shown in table 9.

Table 9

		Servant	Voice	Psychological
		Leadership	Behavior	Safety
	Pearson Correlation	1	.664**	.487**
Servant_Leadership	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	Ν	176	176	176
	Pearson Correlation	.664**	1	.571**
Voice_Behavior	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	Ν	176	176	176

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		Servant	Voice	Psychological
		Leadership	Behavior	Safety
Psychological_Safety	Pearson Correlation	.487**	.571**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	Ν	176	176	176

The correlation analysis between the independent and dependent variables is summarized in the table above. Servant leadership has a good and significant association with voice behavior according to the findings. There is a favorable and strong association between servant leadership and psychological safety. The association between psychological safety and voice behavior is good and strong (Wajuihian, 2019).

Measuring the Mediator Effect Using Regression Analysis

The correlation analysis showed that there was a significant relationship in all links of the variables. Therefore, all the conditions to pursue the mediation analysis were fulfilled. Sarstedt et al. (2019) described that in order to determine the mediation effect they proposed four steps. Firstly, the independent variable (IV) should significantly forecast the dependent variable (DV). Secondly, the independent variable should significantly forecast the mediating variable (MV). Similarly, in the third step the mediating variable should significantly foresee the dependent variable (DV). Finally, the independent and mediating variables combined should forecast the dependent variable. For mediation to occur, the criteria of these four steps must be fulfilled. The researcher followed the above procedure to analyze the mediation. In the first step, the impact of servant leadership (IV) on voice Behavior (DV) was investigated. In the second step, the impact of servant leadership (IV) on psychological safety (MV) was examined and in the third step, the effect of psychological safety (MV) on voice behavior (DV) was measured. In the final step, the collective effect of servant leadership (IV) and psychological safety (MV) on voice behavior (DV) was measured. Due to the mediator, if the IV's impact on DV was reduced it showed the occurrence of the mediation. The following table 10 shows the overall results of all the steps of regression analysis for mediation. The regression results in the above table showed that the beta coefficient value of IV-DV reduced to 0.505 from the beta coefficient value of 0.664 of direct IV-DV analysis. Whereas, the beta coefficient value of MV-DV also reduced to 0.325 from the value of 0.571 of MV-DV direct analysis.

The results of the above table showed that the partial mediation occurred as the beta coefficient value reduced, however, these relationships showed significant links. From the above table, it is inferred from the values of R2 and ANOVA that a significant relationship exists between all independent and dependent variables.

Steps	Model	В	SE	β	R^2	Sig.
Step 1	IV-DV	0.641	0.055	0.664	0.440	0.000
	(Constant)	1.465	0.192			
Step 2	IV-MV	0.538	0.073	0.487	0.237	0.000
Step 3	MV-DV	0.500	0.054	0.571	0.326	0.000
Step 4	IV-DV	0.448	0.058	0.505	0.521	0.000
	MV-DV	0.284	0.053	0.325		0.000

Table 10

Regression Analysis for Mediation

The results of step 1 showed a good association between servant leadership and voice behavior. The beta value of the independent-dependent variable link was observed to be 0.664 which showed a positive relationship being highly significant at 0.000 levels. The results of step 2 and R2 revealed that the servant leadership contributed 23.7% in the psychological safety with the same highly significant value of 0.000. Here the beta value was 0.487 which showed a positive significant relationship between the above two. The regression results of step 3 for the mediating-dependent link (psychological safety- voice behavior) showed a 32.6% change in voice behavior due to the psychological safety. The significance value also appeared to be 0.000 which showed the goodness of the model. In step 4, when the regression analysis of the independent-dependent (servant leadership-voice behavior) link was carried out with the due effect of the mediator (psychological safety), the R2 results showed the combined effect of the variables which proved to be significant. However, the value of beta was observed to be reduced. This lowering of beta value from the original independent-dependent (servant leadership-voice behavior) value and mediating-dependent value (psychological safety-voice behavior) showed that the independent variable's (servant leadership) direct effect reduced with the incorporation of the mediator (psychological safety). Therefore, the results of the analysis from step-1, step-2, step-3, and step-4 showed that

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the conditions to test the mediator's impact at the bivariate level were met. Due to the inclusion of a mediator, the link between independent and dependent variables reduced which showed a partial mediation impact.

Conclusion

The current research examined and revealed the answers of several types of studies and theoretical implications as well as supported the results significantly. For instance, employee outcomes could be increased by focusing on servant leadership with the meditating role of psychological safety as they have a significant impact on voice behavior.

The hypotheses revealed that the servant leadership and a psychologically safe atmosphere influences the voice behavior of employees. It also depicted that with the development of servant leadership inside the work environment, the society could retain its employees and improve voice behavior. It also depicted that the more the employee is engaged or involved in his/her jobless the chance of their changing behavior. It was also shown that the psychological safety moderates the influence of servant leadership on voice behavior to some extent.

Psychological safety, which could be structured through building a group, building up a feeling of having a place, setting up profound ties among representatives, and deepening the social capital, may help to expand retention and work. It may also be concluded that psychological safety is a mediator in the relationship between mental health, physical health, servant leadership, and voice behavior. Therefore, voice behavior may be increased by strengthening the psychological safety of the workers by enhancing servant leadership. Discoveries additionally expressed that the servant leadership is associated with the diminished intent to leave and lessen the real turnover too with increasing voice behavior.

Hence, the validation of all the hypotheses and the findings concluded that the objectives were achieved regarding voice behavior and servant leadership. Most importantly the objectives pertaining to psychological safety's mediation function in servant leadership and employee voice behaviors of the University of Central Punjab, "National College of Business Administration and Economics", and the Superior University, private institutes of South Punjab, Punjab, Pakistan were also achieved.

Limitations

- The data was collected by a questionnaire survey which included interviews or group discussions to get the more useful feedback with reasons.
- Secondly, the responses were collected from the limited institutes from the South Punjab region of the Higher Education Commission sector. The respondent's population did not fully represent all Higher Education Commission employees and the findings and implications should be made carefully.
- The current study focused on the employees of private services sector, however, a comparative study could be conducted among the public and private sector employees of Pakistan. Moreover, through qualitative study and mixed methods the servant leadership needs to be established.

Delimitations

- The current research studied the psychological safety's role as a mediator. The future researcher may also check the moderating impact of psychological safety on servant leadership and voice behavior. The results were generated using cross-sectional data thus, the forthcoming study should repeat and outspread the results via longitudinal research design.
- Time and other resources were limited therefore, a comprehensive study was not conducted. Additionally, the administrative impact as a mediator may be consolidated. The executive's transparency urged representatives to be involved. It also impacted the representatives' support regarding issues of the association. Future reviews may consider this element while estimating voice patterns. By gathering information from the wide scope of dyads of associations more vigorous outcomes may be closed.
- It would be interesting to research the voice behavior amongst unlike genders because usually males and females possess different career goals and have different comfort zones with several priorities. Being in a developing country and a little bit conservative society, it would be interesting to study the pressure level on females regarding leaving the job after marriage.



• The current study only focused on the 'the psychological safety, whereas the future researcher may study these variables with 'off the psychological safety too.

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