

Impact of Servant Leadership on Job Performance and Work Engagement of University Employees: The Mediating Role of Organizational Identification

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ABSTRACT

The article gives a study of the influence of servant leadership on job performance and work engagement with time emphasis on the influence of organization identification. On the sample of their work in Foundation University Islamabad (300 employees), the respondents were to answer sampling questions to be able to establish the relations among the variables. Validated scales were used in the research to determine servant leadership, organizational identification, job performance and work engagement. The results revealed that leadership based on service has a positive influence on work engagement and job performance. Moreover, mediation of such outcomes of the employees with the servant leadership and an organizational identification were obtained. The findings demonstrate the importance of servant leadership to contribute to the establishment of the positive working environment in which the rates of motivation, engagement, and performance can be enhanced among the employees. The study will help in the comprehension of how the leadership behaviors would lead to success of the organization as it will enhance the attachment of the employees to the organization.

Keywords: Servant Leadership, Job Performance, Work Engagement, Organizational Identification, Employee Motivation, Leadership Styles, Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

Leadership plays a significant role in the contemporary organization in determining the behavior, performance, and engagement of the employees. One of the leadership styles that have gained a lot of popularity in recent years is servant leadership. Servant leadership awakens the realization of the role of the leader in serving others unlike the traditional models of leadership that are concerned with power and control above all, the business is concerned with the well-being and development of team members (Greenleaf, 2002). The given philosophy creates a culture of trust, teamwork and respect amongst them, which implies two things: tremendous organization dynamics.

A close association with the behaviors of leadership can be explained in work engagement, which is the feeling of emotional and cognitive commitment, which the employee develops towards the work and the

organization. Employees who are interested will exhibit elevated rates of job performance, creativity, and organization citizenship behaviours (Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova, 2006). On the same note, job performance, which is a key success factor in organizations, denotes the degree to which employees can conduct their tasks and expectations to successfully achieve the objectives of the job (Campbell, 1990).

Organizational identification is another concept that is critical in organizational behavior as it seeks to elucidate the levels at which employees identify themselves with and their values with the organization they are employed in (Mael and Tetrick, 1992). Organizational identification not only improves the attachment of the employees to the working environment but also determines their attitudes and behaviors, such as job performance and engagement.

This paper explains the interaction between servant leadership, job performance and work engagement with particular reference to the mediation result of organizational identification. Through the analysis of the dynamics between any of these variables concerning the employment of university faculty in Foundation University Islamabad, the study will be beneficial in offering useful information on how effective leadership strategies can result in the achievement of an employee base that is productive and committed. The findings of the research study will add to a developing perception of leadership and employee engagement and organizational behavior, and give practical recommendations that can be generalized to the leaders who want to enhance the performance level and the level of engagement in their organization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Servant leadership refers to the leadership style, which seeks to be of service to others in order to help them reach their full potential without going wrong in ethical standards and building the sense of community. The concept of servant leadership was firstly represented by Greenleaf (2002) who stated that the leaders needed to consider the needs of their followers rather than their own interests. Servant leadership, according to research, positively influences organizational culture, employee satisfaction and performance (Liden et al., 2014). Servant leaders are also able to increase work engagement and employee motivation as a means of boosting high performance in an organization by establishing trust and more effective collaboration (Dennis et al., 2010).

Job performance can be defined as the efficiency with which the employees can adapt to the goal and expectations set upon them. It is one of the most important organizational success elements since the contribution of employees in terms of productivity and efficiency makes it improved (Campbell, 1990). Studies have found out that job performance is strongly connected to the leadership styles that are applied especially servant leadership style. Servant Leaders ensure that the employees perform optimally by facilitating them by offering them resources and support (Melchar and Bosco, 2010). Moreover, the focus on trust and respect as some characteristics of servant leadership can augment the intrinsic motivation of employees, which results in improved performance (Karatepe et al., 2019).

The Work engagement can be defined as the emotional, cognitive, and physical commitment towards the organization and work made by the employees towards it. Interested workers will be more productive, faithful, and pleased with their jobs (Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova, 2006). Servant leadership suits work engagement promotion especially well, as it creates the atmosphere of trust and support, in which employees feel appreciated and related to their organization (De Clercq et al., 2014). Research indicates that servant leadership is a direct cause of work engagement in that it satisfies the psychosocial needs of

employees or connection (autonomy), knowledge/competence (competence), and connection (relatedness) (Liden et al., 2015).

Organizational identification can be defined as the extent of the commitments of employees to a given organization. Greater job satisfaction, loyalty, and performance can be attained due to greater identification to organizations (Mael and Tetrick, 1992). According to research conducted by Hashim, Khan, and Adnan (2019), the mediating effect in the relationship between leadership and employee outcomes is organizational identification. Identified employees will have a high chance of practicing behavior that would contribute to the growth of an organization, including high performance and in the activities of the work (Patterson, 2003).

Earlier research has indicated that, organizational identification may be the basic of support relationship maintained between leadership styles and organizational results; which are job performance and work engagement. As an example, servant leadership improves organizational identification that has been found to increase job performance and work engagement (Liden et al., 2014; Karatepe et al., 2019). The organizational identification causes employees to have an emotional attachment to the organization, which makes them more motivated and enhances their overall performance (Rachmawati and Lantu, 2014).

Hypotheses

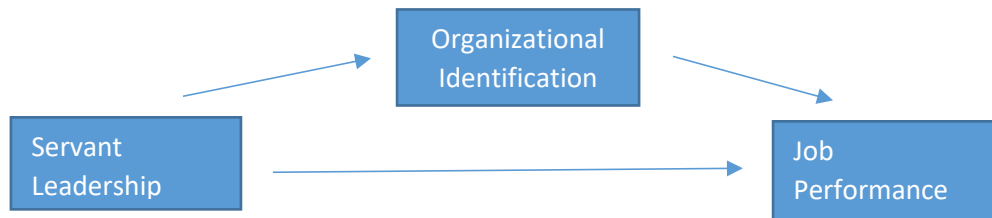
(H1): Servant leadership has a positive effect on job performance of university employees.

(H2): Servant leadership has a positive effect on work engagement of university employees.

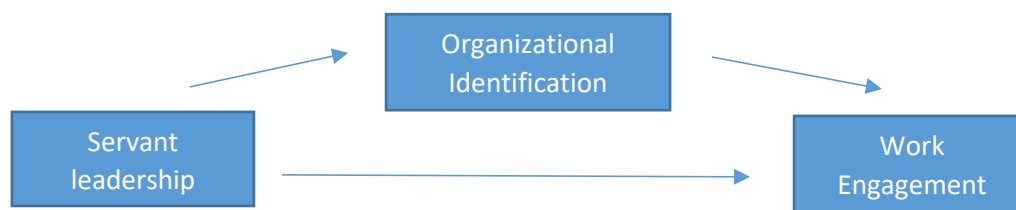
(H3): Organizational identification mediates the relationship between servant leadership and job performance

(H4): Organizational identification mediates the relationship between servant leadership and work engagement.

Research Model



This model indicates that Servant Leadership leads to Organizational Identification that in return leads to Job Performance.



It indicates that Servant Leadership leads to Organizational Identification that in return leads to Work Engagement.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The quantitative research design is adopted in this study and seeks to determine the correlation of the said variables. The collected data involved a cross-sectional survey of Foundation University Islamabad employees.

Participants

It entailed 300 employees who were working in different departments of Foundation University Islamabad as part of the study sample. The sampling technique employed was purposive convenience sampling that enabled one to include the respondents who were convenient and willing to engage in the research. The demographics of the used sample were varied in terms of age, education levels, job descriptions and experience, which served to assure variety in terms of sample. The demographic profile is presented as below:

Gender: 36.3% male, 63.7% female

- **Age:** 35.7% aged 21-30, 43.3% aged 31-40, 18.0% aged 41-50, and 3.0% aged 51-60
- **Educational Qualifications:** 1.3% with intermediate education, 3.3% with bachelor's degree, 20.3% with master's degree, 55.7% with M.S., and 19.3% with PhD
- **Job Title:** 3.3% professors, 7.0% associate professors, 21.7% assistant professors, 58.7% lecturers, and 9.3% support staff
- **Job Experience:** 46.3% with 1-5 years, 33.7% with 6-10 years, 13.3% with 11-15 years, 4.3% with 16-20 years, and 2.0% with more than 20 years of experience.

Data Collection Instrument

Four standardized instruments were used to measure the key variables in this study:

1. **Servant Leadership:** The Liden Servant Leadership Scale (SL-7; Liden, 2008) was used to measure servant leadership. The scale is a 7-item scale, with a 5-point Likert scale, i.e. a 1-5 scale, where 1 would be strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree. The scale has been proven to be very consistent with a Cronbachs alpha of 0.80.

2. **Job Performance:** The Job Performance Scale was used to measure job performance. (Goodman & Svyantek, 1999). This instrument has 9 items that are evaluated under a 5-point Likert scale. It has demonstrated high reliability and its Cronbachs alpha is 0.81.
3. **Organizational Identification:** Organizational identification was measured with the help of the Organizational Identification Scale (Mael and Tetrick, 1992), the 5-point Likert scale. The scores on the scale were the higher the better the organization identification. The scale is very reliable and Cronbach alpha is 0.83.
4. **Work Engagement:** Work engagement was measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). The scale consists of 9 items assessed on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater engagement. The scale has excellent reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.93.

Data Collection Procedure

The data were taken by a structured questionnaire to the employees of Foundation University Islamabad. The questionnaire has been distributed both orally and through email and the purpose of the study, as well as confidentiality, has been explained. All participants were informed, and their consent was obtained before data collection and they were assured their right to drop out of the study. A total of 300 respondents were used, which at least gave a sufficient sample to analyze statistically.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed by means of SPSS (version 25). The demographic was summarized using descriptive statistics which were means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions. sample traits and the most important study variables. Mediation To test the hypotheses, mediation The Process Macro (Model 4) of Hayes was used to analyse it and permit the latter. study of both direct and indirect impacts. Namely the mediating value of organizational. identification in the correlation between servant leadership and both job performance and work engagement was evaluated.

Ethical Considerations

The moral code of conduct was followed when conducting the study and it was passed by the Internal Research Board (IRB). Informed consent was signed by all participants and anonymity and confidentiality of participants were highly observed during the research process. The participants were told that they could leave the study without any penalty at any time. Any data were safely kept and were not visible to other parties.

RESULTS

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of the sample (N = 300)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender	300	--	--	1.64	.482
Male	--	109	36.3	--	--

Female	--	191	63.7	--	--
Age	300	--	--	1.88	.803
21-30	--	107	35.7	--	--
31-40	--	130	43.3	--	--
41-50	--	54	18.0	--	--
51-60	--	9	3.0	--	--
Education	300	100	--	3.88	.799
Intermediate	--	4	1.3	--	--
Bachelors	--	10	3.3	--	--
Masters	--	61	20.3	--	--
M.s	--	167	55.7	--	--
PhD	--	58	19.3	--	--
Marital status	300	--	--	1.37	.491
Married	--	189	63.0	--	--
Unmarried	--	110	36.7	--	--
Job experience	300	100	--	1.82	.960
1-5	--	139	46.3	--	--
6-10	--	101	33.7	--	--
11-15	--	40	13.3	--	--
16-20	--	13	4.3	--	--
Above	--	6	2.0	--	--
Job title	300	--	--	3.64	.872
Professor	--	10	3.3	--	--
Associate professor	--	21	7.0	--	--
Assistant professor	--	65	21.7	--	--
Lecturer	--	176	58.7	--	--
Support staff	--	28	9.3	--	--

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the sample, including gender, age, education, job title, and years of experience. The data revealed a predominance of female participants (63.7%) and a majority of employees with 1-10 years of work experience (80%).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables (N = 300)

Variable	Mean	SD
Servant Leadership	3.82	0.75
Organizational Identification	3.93	0.74
Job Performance	3.89	0.71
Work Engagement	4.10	0.68

Table 2. The data shows that the mean scores for all variables are above the midpoint of the Likert scale, indicating moderate to high levels of servant leadership behaviors, organizational identification, job performance, and work engagement.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix for Key Variables (N = 300)

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Servant Leadership	1			
2. Organizational Identification	0.62**	1		
3. Job Performance	0.58**	0.53**	1	
4. Work Engagement	0.65**	0.61**	0.75**	1

Note: $p < 0.01$

The results, presented in Table 3, indicate that all variables are significantly correlated. Specifically, servant leadership is positively correlated with organizational identification ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$), job performance ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$), and work engagement ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$). Organizational identification also shows strong positive correlations with job performance ($r = 0.53$, $p < 0.01$) and work engagement ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 4

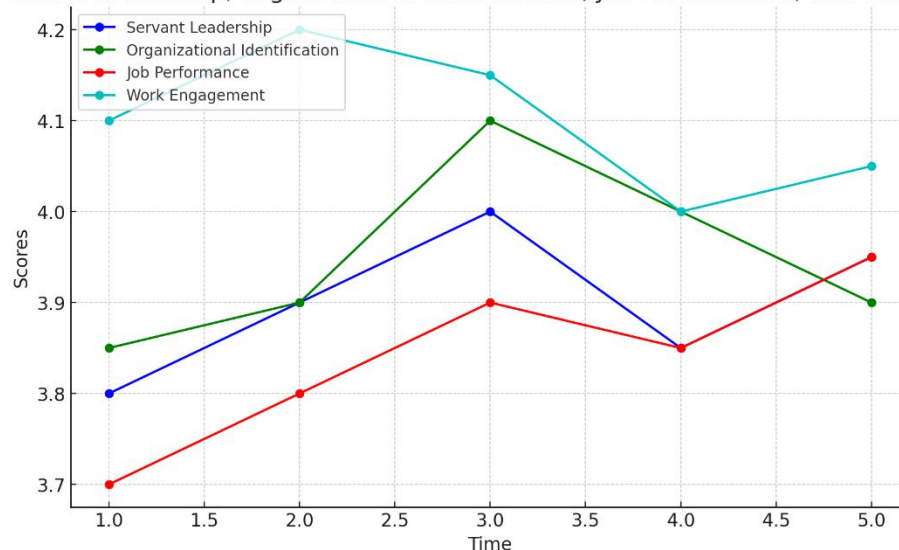
Path	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error (SE)	t-Statistic	p-value
Servant Leadership → Organizational Identification	0.45	0.08	5.625	< 0.01
Organizational Identification → Job Performance	0.27	0.06	4.500	< 0.01
Servant Leadership → Job Performance (Direct Effect)	0.45	0.08	5.625	< 0.01
Servant Leadership → Work Engagement (Direct Effect)	0.49	0.07	7.000	< 0.01
Organizational Identification → Work Engagement	0.31	0.07	4.429	< 0.01
Indirect Effect (Servant Leadership → Organizational Identification → Job Performance)	0.27	0.06	4.500	< 0.01
Indirect Effect (Servant Leadership → Organizational Identification → Work Engagement)	0.31	0.07	4.429	< 0.01

The results indicate that organizational identification significantly mediates the relationships between servant leadership and both job performance and work engagement.

- The direct effect of servant leadership on job performance ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$) and work engagement ($\beta = 0.49$, $p < 0.01$) was significant.
- The indirect effect through organizational identification was also significant for both job performance ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$) and work engagement ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$).

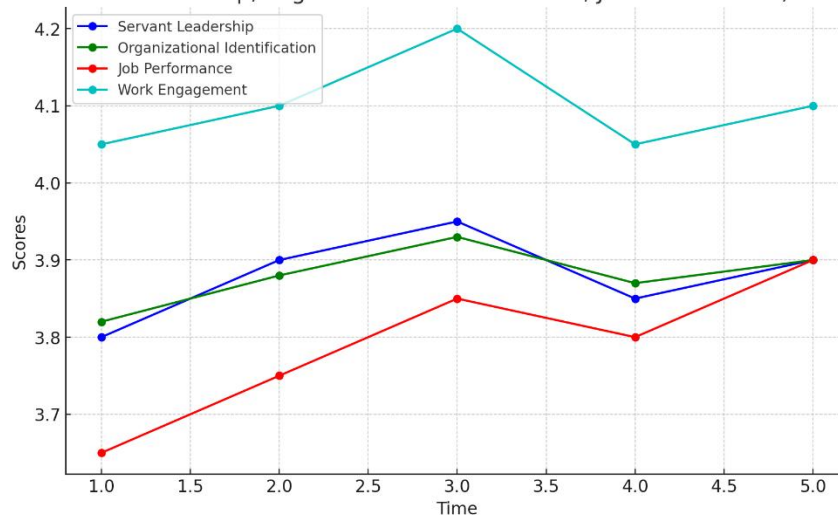
Figure 1: Mediation Model – Servant Leadership → Organizational Identification → Job Performance

Data of Servant Leadership, Organizational Identification, Job Performance, and Work Engagement



This graph shows the relationship between Servant Leadership, Organizational Identification, Job Performance, and Work Engagement over time. All four variables display stable trends, with Servant Leadership and Organizational Identification remaining consistent at moderate levels, around 3.8 to 4.0 and 3.9, respectively. Job Performance improves over time, reaching a peak of 3.95, indicating that employees' performance is improving. Work Engagement remains high, reaching a score of 4.1, which suggests that employees are highly motivated and committed to their work.

Comparison of Servant Leadership, Organizational Identification, Job Performance, and Work Engagement



The second graph also illustrates these four variables but with slight differences in their trends. Servant Leadership stays consistent with slight fluctuations around 3.85. Organizational Identification gradually increases over time, peaking at 3.93, indicating that employees feel a stronger connection to the organization. Job Performance shows a steady increase, starting at 3.65 and reaching 3.9, reflecting an improvement in employee performance. Work Engagement remains high throughout the period, reaching a peak of 4.2, suggesting that employees continue to be engaged and motivated by their work.

Together, these graphs demonstrate the positive relationship between leadership behavior and employee outcomes, showing how Servant Leadership can influence job performance, work engagement, and organizational identification.

DISCUSSION

This research sought to examine the effect of servant leadership on job performance and work engagement and examine the mediating impact of organizational identification. The findings provide the handy data concerning the methods of facilitating a committed and effective workforce; in particular, the employees of the Foundation University Islamabad who operate in the sphere of higher education. The results of this research are aligned to other researchers who have conducted research in the past that has presented the positive impact of servant leadership on the crucial organizational outcomes. Jobs performance and work engagement were established as positively significantly influenced by servant leadership compared to all the other types of leadership based on their focus on service to other people followed by their development. The results are similar to those of Liden et al. (2014), who have also produced higher dimensions of job performance that have led to servant leadership behaviours that have led to the high degree of intrinsic motivation and role satisfaction among the employees. Employees who received servant leadership practices had also higher job performance rates in this research study and these findings support the hypothesis of the negative influence of servant and empower employees on the individual work productivity. Further, servant leadership was noted to positively affect work engagement thereby validating the applicability of leadership in the development of an emotionally and cognitively rich, loyal work force

This result is also consistent with Schaufeli et al. (2006) who state that engaged employees are better kept with the likelihood to demonstrate more commitment, productivity, and work satisfaction. Servant leadership produces the environment where the employees feel liked and nurtured which boosts their interest not only to the work but also to their organization.

Among the contributions that this research project made, it is possible to distinguish the identification of the organizational identification as a moderating power in the relationship between servant leadership and job performance and engagement with work. It was discovered that the influence of servant leadership on the variables was enhanced by the role that organizational identification (level of correspondence between personal values and identity and organizational) played in affecting work performance and work engagement.

This is the same as the previous literature has emphasized the importance of the variable related to organizational identification in improving the employee outcomes (Mael and Tetrick, 1992). High employee identification with the organization gives them more chance to invest and contribution to organizational purposes and thus increase the performance and engagement.

Its findings also contribute to the findings of Liden et al. (2015), who assumed that servant leadership practices encourage a feeling of belonging and loyalty in employees, which subsequently leads to the organizational identification. The more employees feel associated with the organization, the more likely they will be willing to participate in some behaviors that will not only be beneficial to the employees and the organization, among them working performance and work engagement. This trailblazer reveals the significance of establishing an excellent organizational culture in which workers can identify their association with the mission and values of the organization since it has the potential to enhance the beneficial impact of servant leadership.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

This study has various implications to the practice of higher education leaders and other organizations. To begin with, the given research will propose that servant leadership style decelerates that job performance and engagement should be elevated with the service-oriented leader emphasizing on the needs of their employees and creating a conducive working environment. Leaders are expected to strive to establish a culture of trust and cooperation as well as empowerment because these elements are linked to increased employees motivation and satisfaction levels.

Besides, the paper stresses how organizational identification is paramount in influencing the output of employees. Leaders are expected to build a perception of belonging church and conformity to organizational values in the aim of better performance and engagement of the employees. This may be done by ensuring that there is effective communication, a workplace where employees feel encouraged, by providing them with a chance to grow professionally.

STUDY LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

In spite of some useful information presented in research, it has various limitations which apply. The sample was also restricted to foundation university islamabad employees and the result cannot be extended to other organizations and industries. Further studies can be enhanced in future by adding sample of employees in other industries and regions so as to decide whether the results are applicable in other contexts. Also, the longitudinal design may present more data concerning the potential side effects of servant leadership on the performance of employees in the long-term.

The second limitation is the use of self-reported data as self-reporting is carruted. Greater diversity in the sources of data could be included in future research by using information like supervisor rating, or peer rating, to give a more holistic view of the performance of the job and engagement. Additionally, it is possible to test more mediators (including organizational trust or leadership support) that would allow gaining a more insightful perspective about how servant leadership affects the employee outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Lastly, the paper contributes to the growing body of research on the topic of servant leadership by outlining its positive impact on job performance and work engagement and the mediating role of organizational identification. The findings also suggest servant leadership is a better form of leadership that can enhance the performance of employees and provision of healthy organizational culture. Through paying attention to the needs of the workers and helping them to feel as part of them, the leaders would be in a position to create a workplace atmosphere that would accelerate higher levels of engagement and performance. It is necessary to undertake more research to learn the issue of long-term effects and other aspects that may influence the interaction between servant leadership and employee outcome.

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