

AAMC 2019
The 13th Asian Academy of Management International
Conference 2019

LINKING SERVANT LEADERSHIP WITH INNOVATIVE WORK
BEHAVIOUR: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.

Ghulam Jan (a, b), Siti Rohaida Mohamed Zainal (a)*

*Corresponding author

(a) School of Management, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia

(b) Department of Management Sciences, University of Turbat, Turbat, Pakistan.

Abstract

Servant leadership has gained significant attention among academic researchers for the positive role it has played in organizational settings. Missing from research has been the role of servant leadership in promoting positive outcomes of frontline employees in hospitality research. Therefore, this paper proposes a conceptual model in which servant leadership via harmonious passion for work (HPW) can impact IWB among frontline employees in the hotel industry of Pakistan. Using self-administered questionnaire, data in this study will be obtained from the full-time frontline employees working in hotels located in four states of Pakistan. Structural equation modelling will be used for assessing the direct and indirect effects for this study. This is one of the first studies that discusses an under-researched mediating mechanism such as HPW in the linkage between servant leadership and IWB. This study emphasizes the potential role of HPW as a strong motivational factor for employees' critical outcomes such as IWB. Similarly, this study argues that servant leadership has the potential to create such a climate in the workplace that can enhance employees' HPW thus increasing their IWB in the hotel industry.

2357-1330 © 2020 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: Servant leadership, innovative work behaviour, harmonious passion for work.



1. Introduction

The high growth, rising number of visitors and their diversified demands have created challenges to improve services for hotels (Johnson et al., 2018). The new millennial generation of traveller's demand for better customer experience and personalized services. And innovation is the one-click solution to fulfilling customer needs and wants. In this context, hotels are required to proactively involve in innovation to improve their services. Lack in the implementation of innovative services to cater the changing customer preferences, there are more chances of competitors coming up with innovative ideas and taking away their customers (Singh, 2018). These arguments are based on the basic premises that; it is very demanding to maintain the level of innovation longer in the hotels because of no barriers that hotels can use to protect their innovative ideas from imitation (Nieves & Diaz-Meneses, 2018). Against these backdrops, scholars have suggested hotel firms to encourage employees to generate, promote and implement novel ideas for the sake of meeting customers' expectations and contributing for service innovation in the hotel setting (Baradarani & Kilic, 2018; Chang et al., 2017). In line with the above suggestions and arguments, this study proposes to investigate servant leadership's impact on IWB via mediating mechanism of employee's HPW.

Servant leadership has been regarded one of the most idealized and influential leadership styles to be studied in hospitality firms which can influence employee performance and behaviours (Bavik et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2018). Moreover, this emerging and new leadership style plays an important role by helping their employees to display IWB by being caring, helpful and compassionate and creating more positive work environment to enhance their creativity and innovative behaviour (Liden et al., 2014). Specially, these leaders play an important role in employees' IWB by influencing their motivational factors (Wang et al., 2019). Considering the worth of servant leadership to be a potential leadership style in hospitality industry, and a significant factor for boosting employees' behaviour via influencing their motivational mechanism, this study proposes to investigate its impact on IWB via underlying mechanism of HPW among frontline employees in the hotel industry of Pakistan.

1.1. Innovative Work behaviour

IWB in this study refers to frontline employees in creatively generating innovative ideas for solutions during their interaction in service counter with customers (Stock, 2015). Research interest in IWB recently has attracted numerous scholars for conducting research in this potential and attractive area. Besides, it has become an interesting research topic among academicians because of its several positive employee and organizational outcomes (Fatima et al., 2017). Scholars argue that there could be several reasons for the far-reaching interest in the field of IWB, such as the high competition prevailing in hospitality industry (Chen, 2011; Ottenbacher, 2007), substitutable service offerings (Su, 2011), gaining competitive advantage, long term survival (Fan et al., 2011; Liu, 2017), increasing firms revenue, adding value to existing firms service offerings (Chen, 2017), instability of economy, and changing needs of customers' demands and expectations (Slatten, 2014).

1.2. Mediating Role of Harmonious Passion

Recent researchers reveal that passion has a potential to be developed and can be fostered by effective leadership and providing the supportive environment (Landry et al., 2018). For example, Egan et al. (2017) in their recent study argued that leadership has received limited attention so far that can influence in enhancing employee passion, but it is yet unclear which leadership behaviours encourage or discourage employee work passion and such outcomes remain unsolved in academic research. More a leader supports employees by creating an ethical, caring and supportive environment in an autonomous (self-determined manner), the greater the chances of employees will experience HPW. But very few attempts have been made till date to identify factors that affect passion at workplace and its possible outcomes. Therefore, Chen et al. (2015) called for leadership behaviours which delegate and empower followers can enhance their HPW and future research need to address this gap.

Servant leaders encourage their followers to make important and critical decisions during their work by giving them more autonomy (Wong & Davey, 2007). These leaders support their followers in taking initiatives, enable them to handle tough situations in their own way (Bouzari & Karatepe, 2017). Obviously, such practices from servant leadership remove the obstacles and help employees gain pleasure from the work, resulting in helping them satisfy their need for autonomy (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016). Second, servant leaders endeavour to get an understanding of followers abilities, needs and goals by creating a one-to-one communication channel (Liden et al., 2008). Given the understanding and know-how of followers needs, abilities and goals, it becomes easy for servant leaders in helping them achieve their full potential, helping them satisfy their need for competence. Third, the quintessence of servant leaders lies in their care and support for their followers (Tuan, 2017), thus building strong relationships with their followers by creating an honest climate (Schaubroeck et al., 2011). In such situation servant leaders satisfy their need for relatedness by being connected with them (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016). Taken together, servant leaders satisfy their need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Bouzari & Karatepe, 2017), allowing employees to more be autonomously internalized rather than controlled internalization (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Thus, employees can achieve high HPW under the supervision linkage with servant leaders.

Innovation and innovative behaviour results with the creative, unique and novel ideas generated by the individuals (Amabile et al., 1996). With that stated, employees with high passion are more involved in creative behaviour at workplace (Liu et al., 2011). More importantly, studies have supported the positive relationship between harmonious passion and employee creativity in the very recent studies (Hao et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2011). Such valid and reasonable justifications and empirical findings depict that employee harmonious passion is a very critical and essential factor driving employee creativity. Thus, this study proposes that:

P1: Servant leadership has a positive relationship with HPW

P2: HPW has a positive relationship with IWB

P3: HPW mediates the relationship between servant leadership and IWB

2. Problem Statement

Although Pakistan hotel industry is growing and emerging as a potential place for investment (Ahmad & Sattar, 2018; Yasmin et al., 2016), which represents a remarkable part of Pakistan's economy

for revenue generation (JCR-VIS, 2016), meeting customer's expectations, providing better services remains unsatisfactory and implementing quality services remains poor (Arshad et al., 2018; Khattak & Rehman, 2014). Empirical research has provided evidence that providing innovative services to customers would result in their satisfaction and meeting their expectations in hotel industry of Pakistan (Saleem & Raja, 2014). Such situations require employees to satisfy their customers by coming up with unique ideas regarding improving existing services. Irrespective of above mentioned problems, little progress has been made to improve IWB at the individual level of Pakistani firms (Bhatti et al., 2013; Haider & Akbar, 2017). Considering such paucity such as, lack of innovative behaviour, and lack of meeting customer's expectations, requires more investigation of the factors as how to influence employees to display IWB.

3. Research Questions

- To explore the proposition that servant leadership has an impact on HPW.
- To explore the proposition that HPW has an impact on IWB.
- To explore the proposition that HPW mediates the relationship between servant leadership and IWB.

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to propose a conceptual model to highlight the role of servant leadership in enhancing IWB among frontline employees in the hotel setting via HPW. This new research model is expected to be implemented in many other organizations to help managers understand the role of servant leadership and HPW for the purpose of increasing their employees' IWB.

5. Research Methods

The participants of this study will be the full-time frontline employees working in four and five-star hotels of Pakistan. The rising and intense competition among hotels in Pakistan requires the workforce to meet high expectations of the customers by giving them satisfactory performance (Malik et al., 2018). Therefore, the frontline employees working in high star hotels will be chosen for this study. Judgement sampling is a non-probability, part of purposive sampling technique will be considered as the most appropriate to select frontline employees for this study. The main purpose to use this sampling technique is because of the unavailability of complete list of frontline employees. Sekaran and Bougie (2010), suggested judgmental sampling in the absence of a detailed list of the population. According to Karatepe and Yilmaz (2018), this sample occurs when a researcher uses the sample to confirm to some criteria which is assumed to represent the population.

5.1. Instruments

Servant leadership scale of 14-item developed by Ehrhart (2004) will be used for this study. A 7-item scale established by Vallerand et al. (2003) will be adapted to measure harmonious passion. Frontline employees' IWB will be measured by 6-item scale developed by Hu et al. (2009). Items of all constructs will be scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from '1' "strongly disagree" to '5' "strongly agree".

6. Findings

Based on previous studies and extant literature, it is found that servant leadership has the potential to enhance employees' harmonious passion, and harmonious passionate employees are more involved in innovative outcomes (Figure 01).

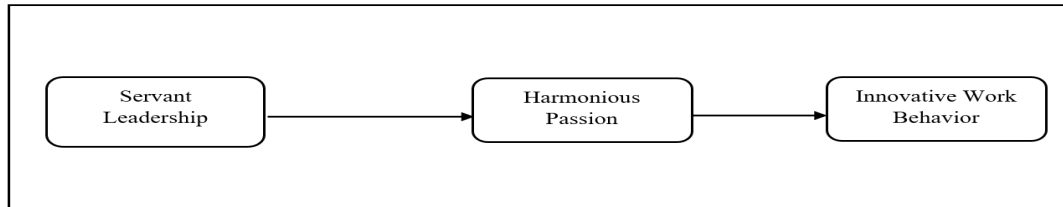


Figure 01. Conceptual Model

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study proposed a conceptual model on servant leadership, harmonious passion and IWB. This study provides novel insights about the role of servant leadership, harmonious passion in the advancement of IWB in the hotel industry among frontline employees. We hope this conceptual model will serve as a direction for future research to further clarify the effects of servant leadership on employees' IWB via HPW in different studies.

References

- Ahmad, M., & Sattar, A. (2018). Factors influencing customer satisfaction in hotel industry: A Case study of Pakistan. *Pyrex Journal of Business and Finance Management Research*, 4(2), 5-11.
- Amabile, T. M., Conti, R., Coon, H., Lazenby, J., & Herron, M. (1996). Assessing the work environment for creativity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39(5), 1154-1184.
- Arshad, M. I., Iqbal, M. A., & Shahbaz, M. (2018). Pakistan tourism industry and challenges: a review. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 23(2), 121-132.
- Baradarani, S., & Kilic, H. (2018). Service innovation in the hotel industry: culture, behavior, performance. *Service Industries Journal*, 38(13/14), 897-924.
- Bhatti, S. H., Nauman, S., & Ehsan, N. (2013). The dominant patterns of innovative behavior of developing country. *Journal of Quality and Technology Management*, IX(1), 31-55.
- Bavik, A., Bavik, Y. L., & Tang, P. M. (2017). Servant leadership, employee job crafting, and citizenship behaviors: A cross-level investigation. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 58(4), 364-373.
- Bouzari, M., & Karatepe, O.M. (2017). Test of mediation model of psychological capital among hotel salespeople. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29(8), 2178-2197.
- Chang, S., Way, S. A., & Cheng, D. H. K. (2017). The elicitation of frontline, customer-contact, hotel employee innovative behavior: Illuminating the central roles of readiness for change and absorptive Ccapacity. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 59(3), 228-238.
- Chen, B. T. (2017). Service innovation performance in the hospitality industry: The role of organizational training, personal-job fit and work schedule flexibility. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, 26(5), 474-488.
- Chen, W. (2011). International Journal of Hospitality Management Innovation in hotel services: Culture and personality. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30(1), 64-72.
- Chen, X. P., Liu, D., & He, W. (2015). Does passion fuel entrepreneurship and job creativity? A review and preview of passion research. In *The Oxford handbook of creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship: Multilevel linkages* (pp. 159-176). Oxford University Press.

- Chiniara, M., & Bentein, K. (2016). Linking servant leadership to individual performance: Differentiating the mediating role of autonomy, competence and relatedness need satisfaction. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(1), 124–141.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268.
- Egan, R., Turner, M., & Blackman, D. (2017). Leadership and employee work passion: propositions for future empirical investigations. *Human Resource Development Review*, 16(4), 394–424.
- Ehrhart, M. G. (2004). Leadership and procedural justice climate as antecedents of unit-level organizational citizenship behavior. *Personnel Psychology*, 57(1), 61–94.
- Fan, H., Hou, S., & Fan, H. (2011). Creative self-efficacy and innovative behavior in a service setting: Optimism as a moderator. *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, 45(4), 258–272.
- Fatima, T., Majeed, M., & Saeed, I. (2017). Does participative leadership promote innovative work behavior: The moderated mediation model. *Business and Economic Review*, 9(4), 141–158.
- Haider, M. H., & Akbar, A. (2017). Internal marketing and employees innovative work behavior: The mediating role of job embeddedness. *NICE Research Journal*, 39(1), 291–313.
- Hao, P., He, W., & Long, L. R. (2018). Why and when empowering leadership has different effects on employee work performance: The pivotal roles of Passion for work and role breadth self-efficacy. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 25(1), 85–100.
- Hu, M. L. M., Horng, J. S., & Sun, Y. H. C. (2009). Hospitality teams: Knowledge sharing and service innovation performance. *Tourism Management*, 30(1), 41–50.
- JCR-VIS. (2016). Hotel industry demand for the sector is primarily dependent on the growth in the tourism sector (September), 2–4. <http://www.jcrvis.com.pk/docs/Hotels201609.pdf>
- Johnson, K. R., Park, S., & Bartlett, K. R. (2018). Perceptions of customer service orientation, training, and employee engagement in Jamaica's hospitality sector. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 42(3–4), 191–209.
- Karatepe, Ç., & Yilmaz, D. (2018). Promoting Structured Reflectivity in Teacher Education: An Innovative Approach. *Journal of Teacher Education and Educators*, 7(1), 57–74.
- Khattak, A., & Rehman, S. (2014). Organizational success through corporate trainings: A Case Study of hotel industry of Pakistan. *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, 6(1), 167–183.
- Landry, A. T., Egan, R., Crevier-Braud, L., Manganelli, L., & Forest, J. (2018). An Empirical Investigation of the employee work passion: Appraisal model using self-determination theory. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 20(2), 148–168.
- Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., Liao, C., & Meuser, J. D. (2014). Servant leadership and serving culture: Influence on individual and unit performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57(5), 1434–1452.
- Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., Zhao, H., & Henderson, D. (2008). Servant leadership: development of a multidimensional measure and multi-level assessment. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 19(2), 161–177.
- Liu, C. (2017). Creating competitive advantage: Linking perspectives of organization learning, innovation behavior and intellectual capital. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 66, 13–23.
- Liu, D., Chen, X. P., & Yao, X. (2011). From autonomy to creativity: A multilevel investigation of the mediating role of harmonious passion. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(2), 294–309.
- Malik, S. A., Akhtar, F., & Raziq, M. M. (2018). Total Quality Management & Business Excellence Measuring service quality perceptions of customers in the hotel industry of Pakistan. *Total Quality Management*, 0(0), 1–16.
- Nieves, J., & Diaz-Meneses, G. (2018). Knowledge sources and innovation in the hotel industry: Empirical analysis on Gran Canaria Island, a mature mass-tourism destination. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(6), 2537–2561.
- Ottbacher, M. C. (2007). Innovation management in the hospitality industry: Different strategies for achieving success. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 31(4), 431–454.
- Saleem, H., & Raja, N. S. (2014). The impact of service quality on customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and brand image: Evidence from hotel industry of Pakistan. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*, 19(5), 706–711.
- Schaubroeck, J., Lam, S. S., & Peng, A. C. (2011). Cognition-based and affect-based trust as mediators of leader behavior influences on team performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(4), 863.

- Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2010). *Research methods for business: A skill building Approach* (5th Edition). John Wiley & Sons.
- Singh, N. (2018). Strategic human resource practices for innovation performance: An empirical investigation. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, 25(9), 3459-3478.
- Slatten, T. (2014). Determinants and effects of employee's creative self-efficacy on innovative activities. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, 6(4), 326-347.
- Stock, R. M. (2015). Is boreout a threat to frontline employees' innovative work behavior? *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 32(4), 574–592.
- Su, C. S. (2011). The role of service innovation and customer experience in ethnic restaurants. *Service Industries Journal*, 31(3), 425–440.
- Tuan, L. (2017). Knowledge sharing in public organizations: The roles of servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 40(4), 361-373.
- Vallerand, R. J., Mageau, G. A., Ratelle, C., Léonard, M., Blanchard, C., Koestner, R., ... Marsolais, J. (2003). Les Passions de l'Âme: On Obsessive and Harmonious Passion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(4), 756–767.
- Wang, Z., Meng, L., & Cai, S. (2019). Servant leadership and innovative behavior: a moderated mediation. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 34(8), 505-518.
- Wang, Z., Xu, H., & Liu, Y. (2018). Servant leadership as a driver of employee service performance: Test of a trickle-down model and its boundary conditions. *Human Relations*, 71(9), 1179–1203.
- Wong, P., & Davey, D. (2007). Best practices in servant leadership. *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable*, 7(1), 1-15.
- Wu, L. Z., Tse, E. C. Y., Fu, P., Kwan, H. K., & Liu, J. (2013). The Impact of Servant Leadership on Hotel Employees' "Servant Behavior". *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 54(4), 383–395.
- Yasmin, M., Sarkar, M., & Sohail, A. (2016). Exploring English language needs in the hotel industry in Pakistan: An evaluation of existing teaching material. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education*, 28(4), 202–213.