INVESTIGATING MODERATING EFFECT OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND CORE JOB CHARACTERISTICS

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ABSTRACT: *Servant leadership is not new in the literature of organizational behavior, however, the dynamics this style of leadership are still in debate. This study investigates the impact of servant leadership traits on core job characteristics by including the moderating role of perceived job characteristics. Authors analyzed a structural model whereby indirect effect of perceived organizational support is incorporated in influence of servant leadership on core job characteristics. Various hypotheses have been developed to measure the relationship of variables. Data has been gathered from 300 workers from banking sectors. It has been concluded that servant leadership has significant link to core job characteristics but without any moderating impact of perceived organizational support. Managers of banking organizations are recommended to adopt the traits of servant leadership in order to create desired perceptions about job characteristics.*

Keywords: servant leadership, core job characteristics, core job characteristics

INTRODUCTION

Yukl *et al*. [1] defined leadership as a process of encouraging and appreciating the employees to understand that how and why different tasks and objectives are needed to be achieved. The idea of servant leadership was presented by Greenleaf [2] and praised by many other researchers [3,4,5]. Servant leadership is considered as relatively a new concept in the field of leadership research [6, 7]). Being in its early stage of growth, it needed a strong body of empirical support for its validation, justification and success [1]. Thus, for better understanding and succeeding development of servant leadership concept, reliable efforts and support are being made by Greenleaf [7], Irving [8], Joseph and Winston [9], Laub [5], Patterson [10], Smith *et al*. [11], and Winston [12].

According to Greenleaf [2] servant leadership is based on strong moral support, which is more critical than their desire for power and status. Servant leadership can solve the dilemma of leadership, where leader's belief, ethics, and morals values are essential to overall achievement [5, 6]. Servant leadership is described as a humility, integrity and service [13]. Light [14] discovered that leadership has a quality of controlling selfish objectives and through such qualities and aims leader is able to give support to its employees. According to author, support behind a leader's personality encourages him to avoid and control the stimulus to capture power/authority, promotion and respect or other objects which could restrain commitment to moral values. According to Liden *et al*. [15] servant leaders as role model construct employees' behavior in a way that they become motivated and build their trust. Neubert *et al*. [16] described that servant leaders encourage their employees in decision making process and provide autonomy and help them to become creative and innovative. Servant leadership also recognize the attributes of vision, caring nature for other followers, altruism or loving attitude, humility, hope, honesty, integrity, trustworthiness and interpersonal acceptance [17]. According to Yukl [1], if a servant leader becomes expert to influence other leaders to become servant leaders as well, the outcome might be an employee-oriented

atmosphere that invites and recognize the employees who are talented and more committed with their job. Russell and Stone [6] focused on the important features of servant leadership and stated that if servant leadership is distinctive from other leadership then its characteristics should be different and empirically verifiable. Barbuto and Wheeler [18] discovered the eleven dimensions of servant leadership. Russell and Stone [6] and Sendjaya and Sarros [19] also examined the attributes of Greenleaf's servant leadership model and empirically studies these dimensions. Extant literature on leadership state that the desire to serve others should be a unique feature of leadership [1, 20, 21]. According to Northouse [21], there is lack of empirical evidence on the distinctive nature of servant leadership with other leadership styles. Yet, the construct of servant leadership seems to have little empirical evidence about its strength and the literature on leadership is not well established.

Perceived organizational support (POS) originated by Eisenberger *et al*. [22] is described as the degree to which an organization's employees observe that organization is more apprehensive and supportive to them. Initial research showed that perceived organizational support had substantial influence on employee's success and effectiveness. Rhoades and Wiesenberger [23] provided more than 70 studies' analysis regarding worker's trust about their workplace and concluded that workers feel respect, recognition and care when they perceive organizational support for them.

Problem Statement

Exceptionally technological and huge multi-dimensional challenges has generated evasively competitive environment. The overriding personalities of executives demand their personnel to be innovative [24]. It is important to study the dynamics of human behavior and its relation to workplace due to huge rise in economic uncertainty and competition among businesses [25]. According to Barrow [26] for achieving the effective and efficient objectives in all disciplines of life such as political, economic and organizational systems, a leader always perform a vital role. The debate on leadership is still in vogue as different

contextual factors (e.g., nature of business, type of market, culture, ethnographic factors etc.) need customized and more specific kind of leadership behavior. So, the understanding of leadership dynamics and its effects are still unclear and need more work in specific situations.

Research Question

This study intends to answer the following specific research questions:

1. What is the impact of servant leadership on core job characteristics among select banks in Pakistan?
2. What is the impact of servant leadership and perceived organizational support on core job characteristics among select banks in Pakistan?
3. What is the moderating role of perceived organizational control in the relation between servant leadership and core job characteristics among select banks in Pakistan?

Objectives of Study

The study has following objectives:

1. To measure the impact of servant leadership on core job characteristics among select banks in Pakistan
2. To measure the impact of servant leadership and perceived organizational support on core job characteristics among select banks in Pakistan
3. To measure the moderating impact of perceived organizational control in the relation between servant leadership and core job characteristics among select banks in Pakistan

Significance of Study

Leadership behavior and job characteristics are among main aspects to be considered for achieving organizational goals successfully. This study is equally important to academicians and practitioners. Theoretically, the study contributes to the literature on leadership with specific situation: employees of the banking sector of a frontier market (Pakistan). It helps to understand the effects of leadership and organizational control for perception about core job characteristics. Practically, it indicates how managers should change their leadership style and providing organizational support to employees, so that employees can work effectively and efficiently and in turn achieve organizational goals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Servant Leadership and Core Job Characteristics

Griffin [27] is known as a first researcher who analyzed that leaders/supervisors might impact on job perception without generating any alteration in the intentions of job characteristics. He analyzed that employees job perception depend on five basic source of information such as technology, organization structure, coworkers, job incumbent's characteristics and most important is employees immediate supervisor. Servant leadership is considered as people oriented leadership style and evidence shows that servant-leaders have more content, more devoted, and well performing personnel. Servant-leaders work on the way to positive job attitudes by appreciating the psychological needs of their workers. Servant-leaders activities may impact the job attitudes and behavior of followers and their etiquettes and nature may in turn have an impact on how they are treated [17]. The significant association between job attitudes and servant leadership behaviors were also found in a meta-analysis on leadership behavioral integrity in which a Research Modeperception associated to servant leadership

emphasis on a commitment of leader to beliefs and values and supporting arguments and activities [28]. Although core job characteristic's perception are clearly essential aspect of formal job description and it describes that leaders have a significant influence both subjective and objective behaviors of jobs [29, 30]. Leadership style is related to the social information processing which suggest that employees depend on informational cues which they find from their social network during making assessments about job for example leaders as an important part of a job condition and provide suitable information opinions when followers make analysis regarding to their jobs [31]. Servant leaders are to be found well to enable employees to derive meaning in their job. Griffin et al. [32] proposed that the perception of job does not depended on fully on the subjective and objective elements of jobs but also depend on social information which is important at the period of making decision to perform a job. Servant leaders establish an autonomy-supporting environment in the place of work in which employees will be more interested to create the shape of internal motivation which will be important to become self-motivated servant leaders in their own time [33].

H1: Servant leadership is significantly associated with Core Job Characteristics.

Role of Perceived Organizational Support

In current studies perceived organizational support has gain more popularity, it is about the confidence of an employees about well-being, organization value and their support. There is much empirical evidence which propose that perceived organization support has a great influence to needed results, and turnover intention [34]. Perceived organizational support appreciates employees to show care for the organization's well-being [22]. According to Tourangeau and Cranley [35] perceived organization support is a significant element that indirectly influences the intension to stay in a job. There is little evidence on association of organizational support perceived by employees and leadership attitude. It is of great importance for today's employees. The main characteristics of perceived organizational support include boosting and support to leaders and contributing and facilitative organizational environment. Griffin [27] claimed that leaders may have influenced employees to perceive job in a different way. According to Ahmad and Yekta [36] organizational support and leaders behavior is necessary for employee pleasure, devotion and to achieving the needed job outcome. Servant leadership behavior emphases that workers should be highly rewarded and supported by their loving attribute which is an important dimension of servant leadership behavior [37, 38]. According to Winston [38] servant leadership approaches are recognized to improve the leader's focus for the well-being of their employees through building an exemplary relationship to create the trustworthy environment. Furthermore, leaders of servant hood share power to their workers, which will in turn will generate higher level of performance for the organization. Previous research analysis has explored the moderating influence of organizational support in several organizational relationships such as discretionary treatment with job satisfaction [22]. Wallace et al. [39] discovered the moderating influence of organization support in relationship of work stressors with role based performance. Witt and Carlson [40] have checked the
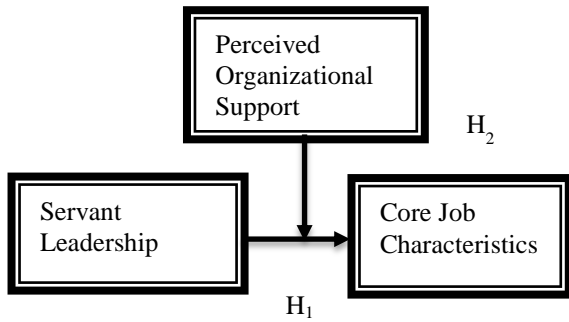
Research Model

moderating impact of perceive organizational support in reduction of work-family conflict. According to Turner and Müller [20] servant leadership has ability to consider that participation of every person is especially proficient of increasing to the whole good and to smooth them. Moreover, he describes that servant leader favors to workers conscientiousness and innovative usage of every person's potential. Therefore current study is going to establish a link between servant leadership with core job characteristics trough the moderating impact of perceived organizational support.

H2: Perceived organizational support moderates the association of Servant leadership and Core Job Characteristics. Following research model is formulated to test the desired relationships.

Formulated model asserts to tests the direct impact of servant leadership on core job characteristics and moderating role of perceived organizational support in this relationship.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Population and Sampling

Population of this study is constituted of banking sector employees in Pakistan. For selecting a representative sample, study used systematic random sampling. For all the commercial banks of Pakistan, the banks are assigned weights on the basis of their total number of branches. The number of employees to be surveyed from each bank were computed using above mentioned weight. A total of 415 employees were approached, however only 325 questionnaires were returned from the employees. Among 315 the 300 questionnaires were useable and remaining were excluded due to inappropriate and incomplete fill.

Data Collection and Measurement

Survey questionnaire is circulated to get the feedback of employees about the topic of this study. Both male and female workers are participated of my sample. Already developed questionnaire is used to conduct this research. Public, Private and Islamic banks are selected for this survey so that to get the mixture of result. Employees has been given brief introduction about how to fill the questionnaire to avoid the chances of error. Servant Leadership: Servant leadership has been measured by twenty three items scale and seven dimensions. These dimensions include Love, Empowerment, Vision, Humility, Trust, Altruism and Service. Dennis and Bocarnea [41] developed a multi item 5 point Likert scale to measure the first five dimensions of servant leadership. The scale ranges from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "Strongly

Agree". The scale consists on 22 items showing the representativeness of different dimensions of servant leadership i.e. Love, Humility, trust, Empowerment and Vision. Core job characteristics: In order to measure the core job characteristics, Hackman and Oldham [42] used an improved version of the job diagnostic survey designed by Idaszak and Drasgow [43]. Responses were measure on 7 point Likert scale representing 1 as strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree. Perceived Organizational Support: Esinberger *et al.* [22] measured the perceived organizational support by using 8 items scale. Originally there were 36 items which after factor leading technique only 8 items were selected for further processing.

RESULTS

Before processing for any quantitative analysis, authors ensured validity and reliability of the items chosen to measure the variables of study. For validity, initial results provided KMO value of 6.9 which is sufficient. The test for sampling adequacy showed p-value of less than 1% which led to the rejection of null hypothesis. Item selection process retuned all the items as useful on the basis of factor loadings. Reliability analysis provided Cronbach's Alpha of greater than 0.6. Regression results of the data analysis show that the relationship between servant leadership and core job characteristics is positive. The slope coefficient for this relation is 0.512, which is generalizable and significant as provided by probability value of less than 5%. The coefficient of determination is 21% and overall model is valid as shown by the probability value of less than 1%. As we introduced the other variable, perceived organizational support in the model the slope coefficient of servant leadership while impacting the core job characteristics reduced from 0.512 to 0.308, although statistically significant. Perceived organizational support has a slope coefficient of 0.455, the coefficient is significant at 1%. R-squared for this regression is increased from 21% to 35% and significance value of F-stat ensures overall model's validity. To test the moderating relationship, third regression includes interaction term which checks combined impact of servant leadership and perceived organizational support in defining core job characteristics. The slope coefficient for servant leadership is decreased further to 0.275 and lost statistical significance as coefficient is increased and now null hypothesis can be rejected at 10%. The regression shows that the reduced coefficient for the perceived organizational support is 0.417, significant at 1%.

Table-1: Results of Regression Analysis

Variable	CorJobCha	CorJobCha	CorJobCha
Constant	0.998*** (0.123)	0.469*** ((0.123)	0.549 (0.341)
SerLea	0.512*** (0.047)	0.308*** (.047)	0.275* (0.1410
PerOrgSup		0.455*** (.045)	0.417*** (0.156)
SerLea*PerOrgSup			0.015 (0.060)
R-Squared	0.211	0.358	0.358
F-Stat	118.059***	122.860***	81.754***

*** Significant at 1%, ** Significant at 5%, * Significant at 10%.
Values in the parenthesis are standard errors.

he coefficient of interaction of moderating term is very small (0.015) and not generalizable. It can be inferred that the introduced variable of perceived organizational support is able to determine the core job characteristics but it does not has a combined effect when multiplied with servant leadership. All the regression results were inspected for potential violations of CLRM assumptions (Classical Linear Regression Model). Reported regression results include any adjustment for violation of the assumptions.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Servant leaders promote the encouraging environment in which employees are ready to develop their level of performance. Servant leaders support the employees to improve the job perception which increase the employee's effectiveness. According to Bohlander and Snell [44] employee's performance can be increased by the change of job perception. Current study confirms the extant evidence as servant leadership plays a vital role in defining the core job characteristics. Study found that perceived-organizational-support has a moderating impact on the relationship among servant leadership and core-job-characteristics. This study contributes to the existing literature by analyzing perceived organizational support as a moderator in the relationship among servant leadership and core job characteristics. The result found no role of perceived organization support in this relationships. The association of perceived organizational support with servant leadership is important because servant leader can more support and strengthen through their attributes of honesty and empathy [45] and the ability to support their employees to help in the improvement of their skills and abilities [6]. To investigate the hypothesized relationships, a research framework is established in the current research. The framework asserts to gauge the impact of servant leadership on core job characteristics with a moderating role of perceived organizational support. This framework is tested statistically through the help of linear regression analysis. It is found that when servant leaders plays their role in defining core job characteristics and can change perception about job. A leader who feel employee's need and wants in a better way can improve their performance through changing their job perceptions, which in turn will yield high employee and organizational performance. However, data from Pakistan, do not support the moderating role of perceived organizational support which means that employees' perception about organizations' support for them does not facilitate leadership's role in defining core job characteristics. This study is based on small sample size based on one sector and measures variables of study on cross sectional basis. Further research should incorporate large samples from different sectors on longitudinal basis.

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