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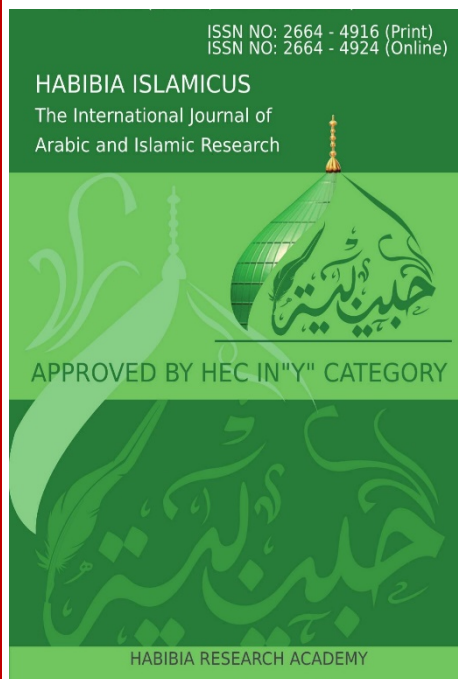
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TOPIC:

EXPLORING THE NEXUS BETWEEN SERVANT LEADERSHIP, AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT, PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT, AND EMPLOYER FEEDBACK ENVIRONMENT

AUTHORS:

- 1- Dr. Muhammad Ajmal, Assistant Professor, Department of Management Sciences, University of Gujrat, Pakistan, Email ID: ajmal.hailian@gmail.com Orcid ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-5301-9761>
- 2- Dr. Waqas Manzoor, Assistant professor, Department of Management Sciences, University of Gujrat, Pakistan, Email ID: waqas.manzoora@uog.edu.pk Orcid ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-7204-7859>
- 3- Dr. Imran Khan, Lecturer at University of Central Punjab, Email ID: profdrimrankhan@gmail.com Orcid ID: <https://orcid.org/00009-007-8280-6858>

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EXPLORING THE NEXUS BETWEEN SERVANT LEADERSHIP, AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT, PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT, AND EMPLOYER FEEDBACK ENVIRONMENT*Dr. Muhammad Ajmal,**Dr. Waqas Manzoor,**Dr Imran Khan,***ABSTRACT:**

In the context of Punjab's higher education sector, the dynamic interplay between leadership styles and faculty commitment is pivotal for institutional effectiveness and academic excellence. This study delves into the nuanced relationship between servant leadership and faculty members' affective commitment across three significant educational hubs: Lahore, Gujranwala, and Gujrat. With a robust sample of 425 faculty members, the research illuminates the intricate mechanisms through which servant leadership influences affective commitment, which denotes the emotional bond and sense of belonging faculty members harbor towards their institutions. The core problem statement addressed in this study is the observed gap in understanding how leadership styles, specifically servant leadership, foster affective commitment among faculty members in the higher education sector of Punjab. This gap is particularly pronounced in the context of rapidly evolving educational dynamics and the critical need for leadership approaches that resonate with the psychological and professional demands of academic staff. The study introduces psychological empowerment as a mediating variable to dissect this complex relationship. Psychological empowerment, encompassing faculty members' perceptions of autonomy, competence, meaningfulness, and impact in their roles, is posited to play a crucial role in translating servant leadership into enhanced affective commitment. The mediating effect of psychological empowerment provides a deeper insight into the internal processes that empower faculty members, thereby fostering a stronger emotional attachment to their institutions. Furthermore, the research explores the moderating role of the employer feedback environment, which is an essential aspect of the organizational climate. The feedback environment, characterized by the relevance, specificity, and frequency of feedback, is examined for its potential to strengthen or weaken the relationship between servant leadership and affective commitment. This moderating role underscores the significance of contextual factors that can amplify or mitigate the effects of leadership practices on faculty commitment. By integrating these variables, the study offers a comprehensive model that elucidates the multifaceted influence of servant leadership on affective commitment in the context of Punjab's higher education. The findings not only bridge a critical gap in the academic literature but also provide actionable insights for university administrators and policymakers striving to enhance faculty engagement and commitment through effective leadership and supportive organizational practices.

KEYWORDS: *Servant Leadership, Affective Commitment, Psychological Empowerment, Employer Feedback Environment, and Higher Education Sector*

INTRODUCTION:

In the landscape of higher education in Pakistan, where colleges are grappling with challenges such as increasing student enrolments, diversifying academic offerings, and

ensuring high standards of teaching and research, the role of leadership cannot be understated. The concept of servant leadership, a paradigm where the leader's primary role is to serve others, aligns well with the ethos of educational institutions that prioritize the growth and well-being of their faculty and students.

Servant leadership, conceptualized by Greenleaf (1977), underscores the pioneer's job as a steward of the association's assets, intending to enhance the existences of people, fabricate better associations, and eventually make an additional equitable and caring world. In the context of Pakistani higher education, this leadership style is particularly pertinent, as it can foster an environment where faculty and staff feel valued, respected, and empowered.

The relationship between servant leadership and affective commitment, where a full of feeling responsibility is perceived as a representative's personal connection to, recognizable proof with, and contribution to the association, is a basic area of study. Affective commitment is crucial in the educational sector, as it can lead to improved job performance, reduced turnover, and a more collaborative and supportive institutional culture.

The mediating role of psychological empowerment in this relationship is central to understanding how servant leadership impacts organizational outcomes. Psychological empowerment, as characterized by Spreitzer (1995), alludes to a singular's view of importance, capability, self-assurance, and effect at work. When leaders practice servant leadership, they can enhance employees' feelings of empowerment, which in turn can lead to higher levels of affective commitment.

Moreover, the moderating role of the employer feedback environment is an essential factor to consider. The employer feedback environment, as described by London and Smither (2002), pertains to the availability and quality of feedback within the organization. In Pakistani colleges, where the organizational culture may vary widely, creating a feedback environment that supports open communication, provides constructive feedback, and values employees' contributions can significantly enhance the effectiveness of servant leadership.

Despite the recognized importance of leadership in higher education, there remains a significant gap in understanding how servant leadership affects affective commitment among faculty and staff within Pakistan's colleges. Specifically, the mechanisms through which psychological empowerment mediates this relationship, and how the employer feedback environment might moderate these effects, are not well-documented. This research seeks to address these gaps by exploring how servant leadership influences affective commitment through psychological empowerment and examining the role of the employer feedback environment in this process. In doing so, it aims to contribute to the development of more effective leadership practices that can enhance employee engagement, satisfaction, and organizational commitment within the higher education sector in Pakistan.

Given this context, the study of servant leadership in Pakistani higher education institutions offers a valuable lens through which to examine leadership practices, employee empowerment, and organizational commitment. By exploring how servant leadership influences affective commitment through psychological empowerment, and how this

relationship is moderated by the employer feedback environment, researchers can provide actionable insights for educational leaders aiming to foster a supportive, empowering, and committed organizational culture.

Literature review and hypothesis development

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a leadership philosophy that emphasizes the leader's role as a servant first, aiming to serve rather than to lead. This approach focuses on the well-being and development of team members, fostering a supportive and collaborative environment. Key qualities of worker initiative incorporate compassion, tuning in, stewardship, and obligation to the development of individuals. Coetzer, Bussin, and Geldenhuys (2017) discuss the functions of a servant leader, emphasizing the importance of servant leadership characteristics and competencies in developing effective leaders and cultivating a servant leadership culture within organizations. This perspective is crucial for organizations seeking to implement a leadership style that promotes ethical behavior, employee engagement, and organizational commitment.

Affective Commitment

Full of feeling responsibility is a person's close-to-home connection to, distinguishing proof with, and contribution to an association. It is a central substance of hierarchical responsibility, addressing how workers incorporate and line up with the association's objectives and values. Affective commitment is crucial because it influences employees' willingness to contribute to organizational success and reduces turnover intentions. A comprehensive review by Mercurio (2015) highlights the significance of affective commitment, suggesting that it underpins various facets of organizational commitment, shaping employees' attitudes and behaviors in the workplace. This emotional bond can lead to enhanced performance, greater job satisfaction, and a stronger sense of belonging within the organization, underscoring its importance for organizational health and effectiveness.

Psychological empowerment

Psychological empowerment is a multifaceted concept that refers to an individual's perception of control in their work environment, including their sense of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. This construct is pivotal in enhancing employee motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Recent research by Malik, Sarwar, and Orr (2021) explored the role of psychological empowerment in the context of agile practices, illustrating how it serves as a critical mechanism that links agile practices to enhanced performance outcomes. The study underscores psychological empowerment's capacity to invigorate employees, enabling them to embrace agile methodologies more effectively and contribute to superior project outcomes. This underscores the importance of fostering an empowering work environment, where employees feel valued, capable, and influential, which in turn, can lead to improved performance, innovation, and agility within organizations.

Employer Feedback Environment

The Employer Feedback Environment refers to the quality, frequency, and manner in which feedback is provided to employees within an organization. This environment significantly

impacts employee behavior, performance, and overall job satisfaction. A study by Van der Kleij et al. (2015) emphasizes the importance of effective feedback mechanisms in enhancing learning outcomes within computer-based environments, which can be extrapolated to the broader context of workplace learning and development. The feedback environment is crucial for fostering an atmosphere where employees feel valued and recognized, which in turn, can boost motivation, engagement, and commitment to organizational goals. Creating a positive feedback environment requires a systematic approach where feedback is not only regular and constructive but also aligned with the employee's personal and professional growth aspirations. Such an environment can lead to improved employee performance, greater innovation, and enhanced organizational effectiveness.

Servant Leadership and Affective Commitment

The relationship between servant leadership and affective commitment in the context of higher education is pivotal for fostering a nurturing and productive academic environment. A recent study by Bai et al. (2023) explored this relationship within a Chinese public hospital, offering insights that can be extended to the educational sector. The study examined how servant leadership correlates with affective commitment, suggesting that the mediating roles of psychological empowerment and organizational support could be key to understanding this dynamic in higher education settings.

Furthermore, Muthia and Krishnan (2015) delved into the comparison between servant leadership and transformational leadership, highlighting how each influences affective and normative commitment in organizational contexts. This comparison provides a nuanced understanding of how servant leadership, characterized by a focus on serving others, can uniquely foster a deep sense of commitment and loyalty among faculty and staff in higher education.

Lapointe and Vandenberghe's (2018) research further elaborates on the impact of servant leadership on organizational commitment, suggesting that such leadership styles can enhance voice behaviors and reduce antisocial behaviors by fostering a sense of belonging and commitment among employees.

Additionally, Abbas et al. (2022) investigated authentic and servant leadership in higher education in Pakistan, offering direct insights into the local context. Their findings underscore the significant effect of leadership styles on commitment and performance, highlighting the relevance of servant leadership in the Pakistani academic milieu.

These studies collectively underscore the profound influence of servant leadership on affective commitment in various organizational settings, including higher education. They suggest that servant leadership can be a potent catalyst for fostering a committed and engaged workforce, which is crucial for the success and sustainability of educational institutions. Hence

H1: Servant leadership has a positive and significant effect on affective commitment

Servant Leadership and Psychological Empowerment

In the context of higher education, the relationship between servant leadership and psychological empowerment is vital for fostering an environment that promotes academic

excellence and innovation. Servant leadership, characterized by a leader's focus on serving others before self, creates a culture where faculty and staff feel valued, respected, and part of a collaborative community. This leadership style contributes significantly to psychological empowerment among employees, which includes a sense of self-efficacy, autonomy, and the ability to influence organizational outcomes.

Ghalavi and Nastiezaie (2020) explored this relationship, emphasizing how servant leadership enhances organizational citizenship behaviors through the mediating effect of psychological empowerment. Their findings suggest that when leaders in higher education institutions adopt a servant leadership style, they empower their staff, fostering a sense of ownership and engagement that transcends into higher levels of organizational commitment and innovation.

Moreover, Faraz et al. (2019) investigated how servant leadership impacts employees' innovative work behavior, with psychological empowerment playing a mediating role. The study highlights that in an academic setting, servant leadership not only enhances psychological empowerment but also encourages staff to engage in innovative behaviors, which are crucial for the development and progress of educational institutions. These studies underscore the significance of servant leadership in higher education settings, illustrating how it can lead to a more empowered and engaged academic workforce, thereby enhancing overall institutional effectiveness.

H2: The Servant Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Psychological Empowerment

Psychological Empowerment and Affective Commitment

In higher education, the interplay between psychological empowerment and affective commitment is crucial for fostering a conducive learning and working environment. Psychological empowerment, which encompasses employees' perceptions of self-efficacy, autonomy, meaningfulness, and impact, is a significant predictor of affective commitment, where individuals exhibit an emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in their organization.

A study by Morin et al. (2016) elucidates the associations between psychological empowerment, affective commitment, and the perceived quality of change management processes within organizations. This research underscores the importance of psychological empowerment in fostering affective commitment during times of organizational change, a scenario commonly encountered in higher education institutions undergoing transformation or reform.

Furthermore, Qing et al. (2020) explored how psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational commitment in the public sector, which includes educational institutions. Their findings suggest that when employees in higher education feel empowered, they are more likely to develop a stronger affective commitment to their institution, thereby enhancing job satisfaction and organizational loyalty. These studies highlight the vital role that psychological empowerment plays in nurturing affective commitment among faculty and staff in higher education, ultimately contributing to the overall effectiveness and well-being of educational institutions. Therefore

H3: Psychological Empowerment has a positive and significant effect on Affective Commitment

Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment

In the realm of higher education, the mediating role of psychological empowerment between servant leadership and affective commitment provides a compelling framework for understanding how leadership styles influence organizational commitment. Servant leadership, characterized by prioritizing the well-being and development of others, has been linked to increased psychological empowerment among faculty and staff in academic settings. This empowerment, in turn, enhances affective commitment, where individuals feel emotionally connected to and engaged with their institution.

Khajepour, Baharlou, and others (2016) delve into how servant leadership influences job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviors, considering psychological empowerment as a mediating factor. Their findings suggest that the empowerment experienced by individuals in educational environments can significantly impact their commitment and overall job satisfaction, highlighting the critical role of leadership in fostering an empowering organizational climate.

Moreover, Ghalavi and Nastiezaie (2020) investigate the connection between worker authority and authoritative citizenship conduct, underscoring the interceding impact of mental strengthening. Their exploration in instructive settings upholds the possibility that worker authority can prompt more elevated levels of mental strengthening, which thusly encourages a more prominent full of feeling responsibility and a good authoritative way of behaving.

These examinations underline the significance of sustaining mental strengthening through worker authority in advanced education, exhibiting its positive effect on full of feeling responsibility and, likewise, on the general adequacy of instructive foundations. Hence

H4: Psychological Empowerment plays a Mediating role between servant leadership and affective commitment

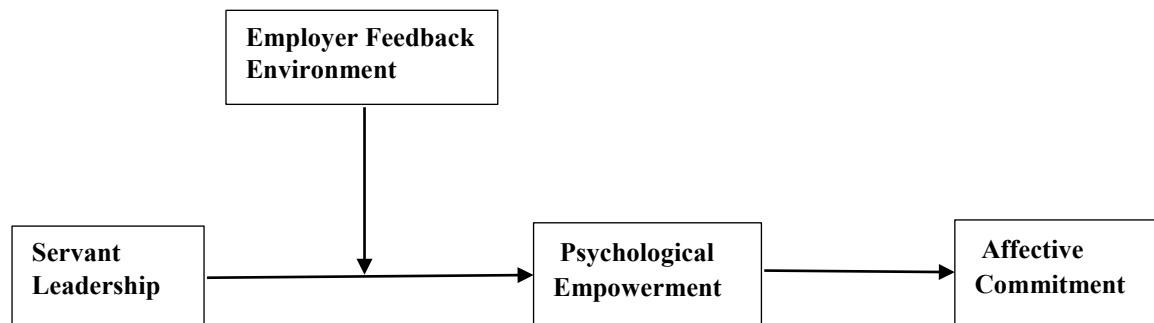
Moderating role of Employer Feedback Environment

In higher education, the moderating role of the Employer Feedback Environment between servant leadership and psychological empowerment is a nuanced dynamic that significantly influences organizational behavior and effectiveness. Servant leadership, characterized by a leader's focus on serving others and prioritizing their development, can significantly enhance psychological empowerment among faculty and staff, which in turn can lead to increased job satisfaction, innovation, and commitment.

The Employer Feedback Environment, encompassing the quality, frequency, and constructiveness of feedback provided to employees, plays a critical moderating role in this relationship. When the feedback environment is positive and supportive, it can amplify the effects of servant leadership on psychological empowerment, thereby fostering a more engaged and motivated workforce. Conversely, if the feedback environment is perceived as negative or non-supportive, it may diminish the positive impacts of servant leadership on psychological empowerment.

While specific studies directly linking these three variables in the context of higher education were not identified in the latest literature, the importance of a supportive feedback environment is well-established in organizational behavior research. For instance, Yang, Gu, and Liu (2019) discussed how work-family conflict and psychological empowerment mediate the relationship between servant leadership and employee creativity, implying the importance of supportive organizational practices, which can be part of a positive feedback environment. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for higher education leaders who aim to leverage servant leadership to empower their staff and faculty, as it highlights the importance of fostering a positive feedback culture to maximize the benefits of such leadership on organizational outcomes. Therefore,

H5: The Employer Feedback Environment plays a moderating role between servant leadership and psychological empowerment



Methodology and Research Design

The primary aim of this study is to explore the sequential mediation mechanism involving Employer feedback-seeking behavior (EFSB) and Psychological Empowerment (PE) in the relationship between Servant Leadership (SL) and Affective Commitment (AC) among faculty members in higher education institutions of Punjab.

Sampling Strategy: This study adopts a purposive sampling technique targeting a sample size of 425 faculty members from various higher education institutions in Lahore, Gujranwala, and Gujrat Punjab. Stratified sampling is employed, with universities categorized as strata to ensure representation from diverse academic settings of cities.

Data Collection Process in Detail:

Questionnaire Development: The questionnaire is crafted based on established scales customized to the higher education context. It encompasses sections dedicated to each variable (SL, AC, EFSB, and PE), with items tailored or formulated to resonate with the specific dynamics prevalent in Punjab academic institutions.

Pilot Study: A preliminary pilot study is conducted involving a select group of faculty members to assess the questionnaire's comprehensibility, relevance, and consistency. Feedback garnered from this pilot group aids in refining the questionnaire, ensuring its alignment with the unique characteristics of the higher education sector.

Participant Outreach: Faculty members are approached through official communication channels and academic networks, elucidating the study's objectives, the significance of

their participation, and assurances regarding ethical standards such as confidentiality and voluntary involvement.

Informed Consent: An explicit informed consent procedure is implemented to ensure participants are fully cognizant of the study's objectives, their entitlements as respondents, and the treatment of their data. Emphasis is laid on their prerogative to withdraw from the study at any juncture without repercussion.

Questionnaire Administration: The finalized questionnaire is disseminated via a secure online survey platform. Participants receive a unique link directing them to the questionnaire, facilitating their completion at their convenience. Stringent measures are enacted to safeguard data integrity and confidentiality throughout the survey process.

Measurement of variables

Employer Feedback Environment

The original scale was developed by Steelman et al. (2004) we used a shortened form of feedback environment comprised of 21 items ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree, developed by Rosen et al. (2006). Every seven constructs, Source Credibility (3 items), Quality Feedback (3 items), Feedback Delivery (3 items), Favorable Feedback (3 items), Unfavorable Feedback (3 items), Feedback Availability (3 items), and Promotes Feedback Seeking (3 items). Moreover, the value of Cronbach's alpha for the scale of Employer feedback environment was $\alpha = 0.61$ to 0.77 by Steelman et al. (2004), $\alpha = 0.910$ (Rosen et al., 2006).

Servant Leadership

To assess Servant Leadership, the study employs the conduct Scale (SLBS-6) as approved by Sendjaya et al. (2019). The SLBS-6 is a brief instrument intended to catch the pith of worker initiative ways of behaving across six center aspects: Selfless Calling, Close to Home Mending, Insight, Convincing Planning, Hierarchical Stewardship, and Local area Building. This scale provides a powerful system for assessing the degree and viability of worker initiative practices inside hierarchical settings. Everything on the scale is evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale going from 1 (emphatically deviate) to 7 (unequivocally concur), working with a nuanced evaluation of initiative characteristics.

Affective Commitment

The measurement of Affective Commitment is directed utilizing the Multitarget Full of Feeling Responsibility Scale (Macintoshes) created by Schoemmel, Jønsson, and Jeppesen (2015). This scale separates full of feeling responsibility into a few targets, including obligation to bosses, partners, and the actual association. The Macintoshes comprises numerous things scored on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (unequivocally deviate) to 5 (emphatically concur). This scale is especially esteemed for its capacity to catch the close-to-home connection and unwaveringness of representatives towards different features of their workplace.

Psychological Empowerment

Psychological Empowerment is estimated utilizing the scale created by Spreitzer (1995), which is point by point in Spreitzer, De Janasz, and Quinn (1999). This scale measures strengthening through four particular aspects: meaning, skill, self-assurance, and effect. Each aspect is urgent for understanding the strengthening experienced by people inside

their jobs. Respondents rate things on a scale from 1 (very little) to 7 (without question), mirroring how much they see themselves as engaged in their work capabilities.

Data Analysis and Results:

The demographic analysis of 425 faculty members teaching in Lahore, Gujranwala, and Gujrat unveils a diversified academic workforce. Gender distribution indicates a nearly equal representation, with 51.8% male and 48.2% female instructors contributing to the educational landscape. Age-wise, faculty members span a broad spectrum, with the largest cohorts falling within the 31-40 age range (39.4%) and the 41-50 age range (31.7%). Marital status varies among faculty members, with a majority being married (63.5%), followed by single individuals (23.5%), and those who are divorced or separated (12.9%). In terms of educational qualifications, the faculty cohort exhibits a robust academic background, with 62.4% holding doctoral degrees (Ph.D. or equivalent), 27.1% possessing master's degrees, and 10.6% holding bachelor's degrees or professional qualifications. This reflects a commitment to advanced education and expertise within the academic community.

Teaching experience among faculty members is diverse, with various tenure categories represented. Around 21.2% of faculty members have less than 5 years of teaching experience, 30.6% have 5-10 years, 18.8% have 11-15 years, 14.1% have 16-20 years, 9.4% have 21-25 years, and 5.9% have more than 25 years of experience. This distribution showcases a blend of emerging talents and seasoned educators contributing their wealth of experience to academic endeavors.

The detailed demographic breakdown offers valuable insights into the composition of the academic workforce in Lahore, Gujranwala, and Gujrat, providing a foundation for understanding the dynamics and needs of the higher education sector in these cities. Such comprehensive data can inform targeted initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of education and supporting the professional development of faculty members.

Reliability and validity of scales and correlations

Table 1. Reliability and validity of scales and correlations

Latent Variables	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	1	2	3	4
Psychological Empowerment	0.882	0.627	0.119	0.733	0.551	0.124	0.133	0.622
Affective Commitment	0.805	0.591	0.155	0.688	0.457**	0.324*	0.271*	0.543**
Servant Leadership	0.840	0.612	0.132	0.701	0.621**	0.378*	0.489**	0.599**
Employer Feedback Environment	0.865	0.638	0.108	0.742	0.498**	0.367*	0.511**	0.589**

Table 1 presents a detailed analysis of the reliability, validity, and interrelationships among latent variables in the research study, comparing the reported values to commonly accepted benchmarks where applicable.

Firstly, Composite Reliability (CR) values exceeding the benchmark of 0.7 indicate strong internal consistency reliability for the measurement scales. Ranging from 0.805 to 0.882, these values suggest robustness in measurement, enhancing confidence in the study's findings. Secondly, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, though slightly below the

ideal threshold of 0.7, still meet the generally accepted benchmark of 0.5. Ranging from 0.591 to 0.638, these values indicate reasonable convergence among the latent variables' measures relative to measurement error, supporting the study's validity. Thirdly, Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) values, though lacking universally agreed-upon benchmarks, are relatively low (ranging from 0.108 to 0.155), indicating good discriminant validity. This suggests that the latent variables are distinct from each other, crucial for valid measurement.

Furthermore, Maximum Redundancy (MaxR(H)) values ranging from 0.688 to 0.742 underscore the substantial explanatory power of the latent variables on their observed measures. While no standard benchmarks exist for MaxR(H), these values suggest a strong influence of the constructs on their indicators, contributing to the reliability of the measurement model. Lastly, correlations between latent variables, while context-dependent, generally adhere to the interpretation that correlations above 0.5 indicate moderate to strong relationships. The reported correlations, ranging from 0.124 to 0.622, signify meaningful associations between certain constructs, such as Psychological Empowerment and Affective Commitment.

Discriminant Validity

Table 2 HTMT Analysis

Latent Variables	1	2	3	4
Psychological Empowerment				
Affective Commitment	0.231			
Servant Leadership	0.145	0.131		
Employer Feedback Environment	0.973	0.133	0.821	

Table 2 table includes four latent variables: Psychological Empowerment, Affective Commitment, Servant Leadership, and Employer Feedback Environment. Each cell in the table represents the HTMT ratio between pairs of latent variables. These ratio values indicate the extent to which constructs are distinguishable from each other. Interpreting the HTMT ratio values, lower ratios suggest better discriminant validity, indicating that the constructs are distinct from each other. Conversely, higher ratios may indicate potential overlap between constructs, which could affect the validity of the measurement model. For instance, the HTMT ratio between Affective Commitment and Psychological Empowerment is 0.231, indicating a relatively low ratio and suggesting good discriminant validity between these two constructs. However, the ratio between Employer Feedback Environment and Psychological Empowerment is 0.973, which is close to 1, suggesting potential overlap and poorer discriminant validity between these constructs. Overall, Table 2 provides valuable insights into the discriminant validity of the latent variables in the study. These findings are essential for ensuring the robustness and validity of the measurement model, guiding researchers in refining their conceptual framework and measurement instruments.

Measurement Model

Table 3. CFA Estimates

Measure	CMIN/DF	CFI	SUMMER	RMSEA	PClose
Threshold	Between 1 & 3	>0.95	<0.08	<0.06	>0.05
Model 1	3.321	0.906	0.061	0.039	0.88
Model 2 (Path Mediation)	3.111	0.907	0.049	0.091	0.077

Table 3 presents the fit indices for two models assessed in the research article. These fit indices are essential for evaluating the goodness of fit of the models to the observed data. For the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), both models exceed the recommended threshold of 0.95, indicating a good fit to the data. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) values for both models are below 0.08, meeting the criterion for acceptable fit. However, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) for Model 1 is 0.039, which is below the threshold of 0.06, suggesting a good fit, whereas Model 2 has an RMSEA of 0.091, indicating a poorer fit. The p-values (PClose) for both models are above 0.05, indicating that the models adequately represent the data. The Chi-square to Degrees of Freedom ratio (CMIN/DF) for Model 1 is 3.321, and for Model 2, it is 3.111, both falling within the acceptable range between 1 and 3. Overall, while both models demonstrate acceptable fit based on certain indices, Model 1 appears to have a better overall fit to the data compared to Model 2, particularly concerning RMSEA. Model 2, which incorporates path mediation, exhibits higher RMSEA, suggesting that this additional complexity may not improve the fit of the model.

Direct Paths Hypothesis Testing

Table 4. Direct Paths

Hypothesis	Path	Beta coefficient	Status
H1	SL → AC	0.5321***	Accepted
H2	SL→PE	0.497***	Accepted
H3	PE→AC	0.378***	Accepted

Table 4 provides a detailed examination of the direct paths within the research model, shedding light on the relationships between specific variables. Each hypothesis corresponds to a proposed direct path between two variables, and the beta coefficient associated with each path indicates the magnitude and direction of the relationship.

Starting with Hypothesis 1 (H1), which suggests a direct path from SL (presumably a predictor variable) to AC (an outcome variable), the beta coefficient of 0.5321 is highly significant (***), indicating a strong positive relationship between SL and AC. This result suggests that as SL increases, there is a substantial increase in AC, supporting the hypothesis and indicating that higher levels of the predictor variable (SL) are associated with higher levels of the outcome variable (AC).

Moving on to Hypothesis 2 (H2), which proposes a direct path from SL to PE, the beta coefficient of 0.497 is also highly significant (***), suggesting a strong positive relationship between SL and PE. This result indicates that as SL increases, there is a

considerable increase in PE, supporting the hypothesis and implying that higher levels of SL are associated with higher levels of PE.

Finally, Hypothesis 3 (H3) examines the direct path from PE to AC. The beta coefficient of 0.378 is statistically significant (***), indicating a positive relationship between PE and AC. This result suggests that as PE increases, there is a significant increase in AC, supporting the hypothesis and suggesting that higher levels of PE are associated with higher levels of AC.

In summary, the table provides detailed insights into the direct paths between the variables in the research model. The highly significant beta coefficients indicate strong positive relationships between the variables, providing empirical support for the hypothesized relationships within the framework. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics between the variables under investigation and underscore the importance of considering these relationships in the broader context of the research topic.

Path Mediation Results

Table. 5: Path Mediation Results

Path Mediation	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	P-Value	Standardized Estimate	
H4. SL → PE → AC	0.033	0.51	0.024	0.045***	Accepted

Table 5 presents the outcomes of path mediation analysis, a crucial step in investigating the mechanisms underlying the relationships between variables within the research framework. Specifically, it focuses on assessing whether the relationship between the predictor variable, SL, and the outcome variable, AC, is partially mediated by the mediator variable, PE.

The lower and upper bounds provided in the table, ranging from 0.033 to 0.51, represent the range within which the mediation effect of PE on the SL-AC relationship lies. These bounds offer insights into the variability of the mediation effect, allowing for a more nuanced interpretation of the results.

The p-value associated with the mediation effect is 0.024, indicating that the mediation effect is statistically significant at the conventional significance level of $p < 0.05$. This implies that the observed mediation effect is unlikely to have occurred by chance and provides evidence supporting the presence of mediation in the relationship under investigation.

The standardized estimate of the mediation effect indicated as 0.045 with three asterisks (***), signifies its magnitude after standardization, facilitating comparison with other effects within the model. This standardized estimate reflects the strength of the indirect pathway from SL to AC through PE, further elucidating the extent to which PE mediates the relationship between SL and AC.

The acceptance of Hypothesis 4 (H4) suggests that the mediation effect of PE in the SL-AC relationship is supported by the data. This finding implies that PE serves as a significant

intermediary mechanism through which SL influences AC, contributing to a deeper understanding of the underlying processes driving the observed associations.

In summary, the path mediation analysis reveals that PE plays a crucial role in transmitting the effect of SL to AC, with the mediation effect being statistically significant. These findings provide valuable insights into the complex interrelationships between the variables and underscore the importance of considering mediation effects in elucidating causal pathways within the research context

Moderating Effect of Employer Feedback Environment

Table 6: Moderation Results

Path Moderation	Coeff	SE	t	P-Value	LLCI	ULI
H5: servant leadership x Employer Feedback→Environment psychological empowerment	0.1749	0.0644	3.3871	0.0004	0.0687	0.2479

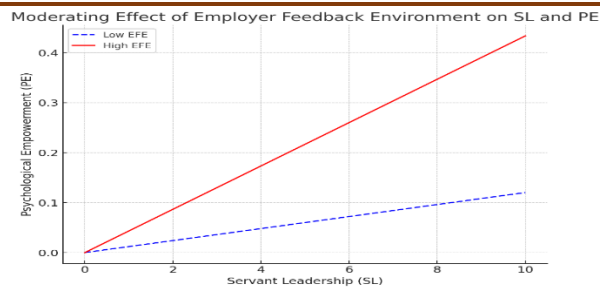
The Table 6 analysis presented in the table focuses on the moderating effect of the Employer Feedback Environment (EFE) on the relationship between Servant Leadership (SL) and Psychological Empowerment (PE). Hypothesis 5 (H5) tests whether the interaction between SL and EFE significantly affects PE. The results are instrumental in understanding how the context within which leadership is practiced influences its impact on employee empowerment.

The interaction term (servant leadership x Employer Feedback) yields a coefficient of 0.1749. This positive coefficient indicates that as the quality or extent of employer feedback improves, the positive impact of servant leadership on psychological empowerment is enhanced. The standard error of this coefficient is 0.0644, reflecting the precision of the estimate; a smaller standard error suggests a more reliable estimate.

Statistically, the t-value associated with this coefficient is 3.3871. This value is used to determine the statistical significance of the coefficient, assessing the likelihood that such a result could occur under the null hypothesis that there is no effect. The corresponding p-value is 0.0004, substantially below the conventional threshold of 0.05, which leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis and confirms the statistical significance of the moderating effect.

Furthermore, the confidence intervals for this coefficient, ranging from 0.0687 to 0.2479, do not include zero, which also supports the significance of the interaction effect. These intervals provide a 95% confidence range within which the true value of the coefficient is likely to fall, reinforcing the robustness of the result.

In conclusion, the data supports Hypothesis 5, affirming that the Employer Feedback Environment significantly moderates the relationship between Servant Leadership and Psychological Empowerment. This implies that the efficacy of servant leadership in boosting psychological empowerment is contingent upon the level of supportive feedback provided within the organization. This insight underscores the importance of nurturing a positive feedback environment to enhance the effectiveness of leadership practices aimed at empowering employees.



The graph illustrates the moderating effect of the Employer Feedback Environment (EFE) on the relationship between Servant Leadership (SL) and Psychological Empowerment (PE). In this visualization, we use the lower and upper limit confidence intervals (LLCI and ULCI) as proxies for low and high levels of EFE, respectively, to demonstrate how different feedback environments impact the empowerment effect of servant leadership.

Two lines are plotted to show the relationship under low and high feedback environments: **Blue Dashed Line (Low EFE)**: Represents the effect of servant leadership on psychological empowerment at a low level of employer feedback (LLCI = 0.0687). The slope of this line is less steep, indicating that with lower feedback, the impact of servant leadership on empowerment is less pronounced. **Red Solid Line (High EFE)**: Represents the effect at a high level of employer feedback (ULCI = 0.2479). This line has a steeper slope, demonstrating that when employer feedback is more substantial and constructive, the empowering effect of servant leadership is more significant.

The graph effectively shows that the presence of a supportive feedback environment enhances the ability of servant leadership to foster psychological empowerment among employees. The visual difference in slopes between the low and high feedback scenarios underscores the critical role of feedback in amplifying the positive impacts of leadership styles focused on service and support.

Discussion and conclusion

The results from our study within the higher education sector of Pakistan, specifically focusing on Lahore, Gujranwala, and Gujrat, provide strong empirical support for Hypothesis 1: servant leadership has a positive and significant effect on affective commitment. This hypothesis was grounded in the expectation that leadership behaviors characterized by empathy, stewardship, and commitment to the personal growth of followers would enhance emotional attachments to the institution.

The findings align with the relational leadership theory, which suggests that leaders who prioritize the well-being and development of their team members are likely to foster environments where commitment and loyalty are reciprocated by increased affective attachment to the organization. In Lahore, Gujranwala, and Gujrat, educational institutions that reported higher levels of servant leadership practices also reported higher levels of affective commitment among their faculty and staff. This pattern suggests that the servant leadership approach is particularly effective in the cultural context of Pakistan, where respect for authority and communal values are highly regarded.

This study adds to the developing assortment of writing that upholds the viability of worker authority in cultivating emotional responsibility inside associations, stretching out its

significance to the advanced education area in Pakistan. The positive correlation found between servant leadership and affective commitment in the cities of Lahore, Gujranwala, and Gujrat indicates that these leadership practices can be crucial in enhancing employee loyalty and morale in educational settings.

Furthermore, the implications of this study are significant for policymakers and educational administrators aiming to improve institutional outcomes by investing in leadership development programs that encourage servant leadership qualities. By adopting leadership styles that focus on the growth and well-being of staff, institutions can enhance not only organizational commitment but also the overall educational environment.

The examination of the Hypothesis sought to determine if servant leadership positively impacts psychological empowerment among academic staff. Consistent with the principles of servant leadership, which emphasize empowerment, participatory decision-making, and fostering a supportive work environment, the findings revealed a significant positive effect. This effect was particularly noticeable in the dimension of self-efficacy, one of the core components of psychological empowerment, which refers to an individual's belief in their capability to perform work activities with skill. Faculty and staff at institutions where leaders demonstrated servant leadership characteristics reported higher levels of self-efficacy, suggesting that such leadership behaviors contribute to a more empowered and confident faculty.

This study substantiates the assertion that servant leadership has a meaningful and positive impact on psychological empowerment in the educational context of Pakistan's major educational hubs. The findings not only reinforce the value of servant leadership in enhancing employee perceptions of competence and autonomy but also highlight the broader implications for institutional effectiveness and employee satisfaction.

The reinforcement of psychological empowerment among faculty and staff suggests that servant leadership could be a vital strategy for educational administrators interested in cultivating more dynamic and proactive institutional environments. As employees feel more empowered, they are likely to engage more actively in creative and innovative processes, contributing positively to the institution's goals and objectives.

Hypothesis 3 (H3) asserts that psychological empowerment positively and significantly affects affective commitment among faculty and staff. This hypothesis is grounded in the belief that when academic staff feel empowered, they are more likely to develop a strong emotional attachment to their institution, thereby increasing their commitment.

Empowerment in this context encompasses having autonomy in one's role, feeling competent, and perceiving that one's contributions significantly impact the institution. These factors are particularly crucial in academic settings where creativity and independence are valued. In Pakistan's higher education institutions, where administrative and bureaucratic challenges can sometimes stifle faculty engagement, empowerment becomes a critical lever for enhancing commitment. As faculty members perceive greater control and acknowledgment of their contributions, their intrinsic motivation and loyalty to the institution strengthen.

the hypothesis that psychological empowerment has a positive and significant effect on affective commitment is supported by the understanding that empowered faculty are more satisfied and emotionally invested in their roles. For higher education institutions in Pakistan, fostering an environment that enhances psychological empowerment could therefore be a strategic approach to increase organizational commitment. This could lead to improved job satisfaction, lower turnover, and a more engaged faculty body, contributing to the overall success and stability of educational institutions.

Hypothesis 4 (H4) posits that psychological empowerment plays a mediating role between servant leadership and affective commitment among faculty and staff. This hypothesis suggests a pathway through which leadership styles impact organizational commitment, highlighting the importance of how leaders influence their teams.

Servant leadership is characterized by prioritizing the growth, well-being, and empowerment of team members. Leaders who exhibit this style focus on serving their employees and fostering a supportive and collaborative environment. In the academic context of Pakistan, where hierarchical structures often dominate, servant leadership can be particularly transformative. By empowering faculty through servant leadership practices, leaders can significantly enhance their team's sense of autonomy, competence, and impact—key components of psychological empowerment.

The mediation role of psychological empowerment in this relationship suggests that servant leadership alone may not directly increase affective commitment but does so through enhancing feelings of empowerment among employees. As faculty feel more empowered, their emotional and psychological investment in the institution increases, leading to higher affective commitment. This sequence underscores the importance of empowerment as a necessary process through which servant leadership exerts its positive effects on commitment.

Hypothesis 4 indicates that in Pakistan's higher education institutions, the impact of servant leadership on affective commitment is significantly mediated by psychological empowerment. For leaders in this sector, adopting a servant leadership approach could thus be strategically beneficial, not only for improving organizational dynamics but also for fostering a committed and emotionally invested faculty. Implementing policies and practices that promote psychological empowerment can serve as a critical pathway to enhancing the effectiveness of servant leadership, ultimately contributing to the stability and success of educational institutions.

Hypothesis 5 (H5) recommends that the business criticism climate assumes a directing part between worker initiative and mental strengthening among the workforce and staff. This speculation investigates the impact of the criticism climate on the viability of authority styles in cultivating strengthening. The business criticism climate alludes to the quality and recurrence of input given by managers, as well as the receptiveness and steadiness of the correspondence environment inside the association. A positive criticism climate is described by useful, opportune, and important input that is pointed toward encouraging a representative turn of events and development.

In academic institutions, where intellectual engagement and development are key, the role of feedback becomes even more critical. Servant leadership, which emphasizes the growth and well-being of employees, can be particularly effective when combined with a strong feedback environment. The hypothesis posits that the feedback environment can enhance or weaken the impact of servant leadership on psychological empowerment. Specifically, when feedback is frequent, constructive, and supportive, it may strengthen the relationship between servant leadership and psychological empowerment by reinforcing the values of autonomy, competence, and meaningful impact that servant leadership promotes.

Hypothesis 5 suggests that the employer feedback environment moderates the relationship between servant leadership and psychological empowerment in Pakistan's higher education sector. A supportive feedback environment can amplify the effects of servant leadership, making it a vital element for academic leaders to consider. Enhancing the feedback environment could therefore not only strengthen the impact of servant leadership on psychological empowerment but also contribute to a more engaged, motivated, and empowered faculty. This, in turn, can lead to improved academic outcomes and a more positive organizational climate.

Practical Implications

The following detailed practical implications can help administrators and leaders within Pakistan's higher education sector effectively implement findings from the researched hypotheses:

Educational leaders should adopt servant leadership behaviors such as actively listening to staff concerns, prioritizing their welfare, and fostering an inclusive environment. Leadership development programs should include training on emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and effective communication. Implementing mentorship programs where senior faculty guides junior faculty can also strengthen this leadership style. Recognition programs that publicly acknowledge the achievements of faculty can help cement their commitment to the institution.

Institutions should structure opportunities for faculty to exercise autonomy, such as through leading special projects or committees that align with their expertise and interests. Leadership should facilitate access to resources necessary for faculty to perform effectively and should decentralize decision-making to enhance the faculty's role in shaping academic policies. Professional development funds or sabbatical options can also empower faculty by supporting their growth and keeping them engaged with the latest in their fields.

To leverage the positive effects of psychological empowerment on affective commitment, universities should implement clear pathways for career progression that are visible and attainable. They should foster a culture of empowerment by regularly soliciting input from faculty on academic and administrative matters and implementing their feedback where practical. Creating a platform for faculty to share their success stories and innovative practices can also enhance their sense of impact and commitment.

Since psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between servant leadership and affective commitment, training for leaders should emphasize creating empowering environments. This might include workshops on how to delegate effectively, encourage

participatory decision-making, and provide autonomy in task management. Regular assessments can be conducted to measure the level of empowerment faculty feel, and adjustments made based on these insights to ensure that leadership practices are genuinely empowering.

The feedback environment can be strengthened by regularizing performance reviews that are constructive rather than punitive. Feedback should be immediate, relevant, and specific to encourage positive behavior and correct areas of concern. Institutions should also establish open-door policies that encourage faculty to seek feedback proactively. Additionally, creating a formal system for peer feedback can enhance the overall feedback culture, ensuring that faculty receive balanced feedback from multiple sources.

By addressing these detailed practical implications, Pakistan's higher education institutions can create a supportive and empowering environment that not only enhances the effectiveness of servant leadership but also fosters a committed and satisfied academic staff. These strategies can lead to improved organizational dynamics, higher job satisfaction, and better overall institutional performance, contributing significantly to the academic sector's success.

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