

Does Servant Leadership Enhance Employee Creativity and Performance? Mediating Role of Knowledge Sharing and Moderating the Role of Self-Efficacy

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ABSTRACT

Grounding on social learning theory, this study investigates the link between servant leadership, employee creativity, and work role performance. To examine the proposed model, the authors collected data from 289 nurses and doctors through a multi-wave (i.e., a time-lag) survey. In this study, servant leadership positively affects employee creativity and work role performance, and knowledge sharing partially mediates the relationship between servant leadership, employee creativity, and work role performance. The results show that self-efficacy directly moderates the positive relationship between servant leadership and knowledge sharing, and indirectly affects the link between servant leadership, employee creativity, and work role performance via knowledge sharing.

KEYWORDS

Employee Creativity, Work Role Performance, Knowledge Sharing, Self-Efficacy, Servant Leadership

INTRODUCTION

Leadership plays an important role in the success or failure of an organization. Good leadership can inspire and motivate employees, create a positive work environment, and foster collaboration and innovation (Oc, Chintakananda, Bashshur, & Day, 2023). On the other hand, poor leadership can lead to communication breakdowns, low morale, and a lack of direction and purpose (Tigre, Curado, & Henriques, 2023). Ultimately, it is up to the leader to ensure the success of an organization. There are different leadership styles based on varying concepts and meanings that can support organizational success. One is servant leadership, an effective leadership style for critical situations because it encourages collaboration and results in collective decision-making (Chi & Hoang Vu, 2022; Russell, 2001). It also focuses on the needs of those being led, which can be beneficial in

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uncertain times. Servant leadership creates an environment where everyone's opinions and ideas are valued and encourages people to work together to create creative solutions to challenging problems (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Additionally, servant leadership fosters trust and respect among leaders and followers, which can help prevent conflict and ensure everyone is aligned (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). Finally, servant leadership emphasizes the importance of developing relationships and helping people to reach their fullest potential, which can be especially important during difficult times.

Servant leadership can be incredibly beneficial in a global pandemic, such as the COVID-19 crisis (Zada et al., 2022a). In times of uncertainty and upheaval, servant leadership provides a framework for effective and compassionate leadership. Servant leaders put the needs of their team members first, which can be invaluable during a crisis. They focus on understanding the needs of their team and resolving issues promptly, while providing support and guidance (Yarberry & Sims, 2021). By understanding their team members' needs, they can better lead with empathy and understanding, helping to reduce stress and anxiety during an already difficult time (Sigahi, Kawasaki, Bolis, & Morioka, 2021). Leaders in health care and global development might consider compassion and service to others as essential in the fight against the pandemic (Dwivedi et al., 2020). Unfortunately, this is not the case for all leaders. Leaders in the caring professions can lose sight of their altruistic ideals because of money, power, or the demands of day-to-day decision-making, where servant leaders always serve others first (Esteso-Blasco, Gil-Marqués, & Sapena, 2021).

Servant leadership is important in the health care sector because it encourages collaboration, trust, and respect between health care professionals and their patients (Mostafa & El-Motalib, 2019). It also encourages health care professionals to act as a team to provide the best possible care for their patients (Khan et al., 2021). Healthcare organizations need to employ the servant leadership paradigm since care "has an intrinsic servant aspect" (McCann, 2015). The concept of servant leadership has been studied in-depth for many years in other organizational contexts (Liu, 2019). Despite this, little attention has been paid to leadership in the healthcare context, and less is studied about how medical professionals lead their personnel in healthcare systems (Zada et al., 2022a). According to previous research, practitioners who adopt a servant and people-oriented attitude are more likely to be successful in their careers (Khatri, Dutta, & Kaushik, 2021; Verma, Kumari, Anand, & Yadavalli, 2022). Servant leadership seems to be an effective leadership style in healthcare, and further study is required to establish how it is regarded by healthcare workers (Garber, Madigan, Click, & Fitzpatrick, 2009). When healthcare professionals demonstrate servant leadership, it is critical to acknowledge this behavior and reward them for their efforts (Barbuto Jr, Gottfredson, & Searle, 2014). Another benefit of having effective servant leadership is that it may help healthcare practitioners function in a way that exhibits servant behavior for their patients and fellow employees (Trastek, Hamilton, & Niles, 2014). Furthermore, servant leadership can help improve employees' creativity by creating an environment of trust and collaboration. This form of leadership fosters creativity and encourages employees to adopt an innovative approach to problem-solving (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). Employees are given more freedom to express their ideas and explore new work approaches. Servant leaders, through their emphasis on employee growth, cultivate a culture of innovation and imagination, potentially resulting in the development of new products, services, and procedures (Williams, Brandon, Hayek, Haden, & Atinc, 2017).

Employing servant leadership techniques such as empowering workers, emphasizing fulfilling employees' needs, and stimulating their maximum potential may encourage and support their followers (Batool, Mohammad, & Awang, 2021). In addition, they may contribute to a rise in workers' intrinsic motivation and involvement in creative activities (Khan et al., 2021). According to previous studies, employee creativity is positively connected with servant leadership (Yang, Gu, & Liu, 2019; Zada et al., 2022a). While some empirical studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between servant leadership and employee creativity, other research has indicated that this connection is not statistically meaningful (Yoshida, Sendjaya, Hirst, & Cooper, 2014). These unsatisfying results motivate scholars to re-examine the link between servant leadership and employee creativity, which they believe is

oversimplified (Lemoine, Hartnell, & Leroy, 2019). Since servant leadership and employee creativity may have a logical connection, exploring the processes and situations that best explain their relationship (J. Khan, Saeed, Ali, & Nisar, 2021).

The definition of work performance has transformed because of changes in the work environment. As work has become more interconnected, the focus has moved away from specific duties to encompass broader, less structured responsibilities that are harder to anticipate and standardize (Roberson, Ryan, & Ragins, 2017). A more expansive and change-oriented perspective on work performance has emerged considering this, instead of the more conventional approach that focused only on task proficiency (Hernandez, Eberly, Avolio, & Johnson, 2011). In previous studies, personnel and environmental factors have been acknowledged as affecting employees' job performance, with leadership being deemed one of the most crucial contextual factors (Blumberg & Pringle, 1982). Studies have demonstrated that servant leadership affects work engagement, job satisfaction of employees, team accomplishment, and organizational citizenship behavior (Zada et al., 2022a). Additionally, limited information is available regarding the effect of servant leadership on proactive and adaptive work behavior and how it affects employee job performance (WRP) (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2017). From the perspective of previous findings, this study is motivated to explain and demonstrate the significance of servant leadership on employee well-being and productivity in today's fast-paced, unpredictable, and complicated workplace. There is also a lack of research on how servant leadership affects employee WRP. In knowledge sharing, workers exchange newly acquired information to be more creative. For this aspect, servant leaders foster a sense of empowerment among their followers, encouraging them to share information to enhance creativity and job performance. The sense of pride and accomplishment that subordinates feel as a result of their leader's professional activities may inspire them to give back by participating in a worthwhile cause (Raelin, 2003). Alshwayat, MacVaugh, and Akbar (2021) apprehended knowledge sharing as a social activity that helps in increasing employee creativity and work role performance. According to the social exchange theory (SET), people's social actions are determined by their perceptions of participating in a particular social exchange system. It may thus be concluded that leaders who are helpful and contributive (servant leadership) may encourage their workers to reciprocate in good social behavior (knowledge sharing), which may eventually contribute to employee creativity and work role performance (Yang et al., 2019).

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on servant leadership in emergency and crisis situations, exploring its impact on employee outcomes during such times of crisis. It is unique in examining the relationship between servant leadership, employee creativity, and job performance during emergencies, using knowledge sharing as a mediating factor and self-efficacy as a moderating variable. Furthermore, we also collect data from medical personnel operating in the South Asian region (Pakistan). According to Wang, Wang, Abbas, Duan, and Mubeen (2021), the Pakistan healthcare system is experiencing a series of crises. Further research is urgently need to understand the variables affecting healthcare quality. Moreover, Iqbal, Ahmad, and Latif (2021) empirically demonstrated how the health industry is characterized by a hierarchical culture and leadership methods to accomplish corporate objectives in Pakistan. Such organizational culture may help handle crises where people must be empowered, listened to, and cared for. Therefore, the purpose of our research is to understand how servant leadership style is important in the healthcare sector during the COVID-19 crisis by empowering employees, acting in good faith, and prioritizing the needs of employees.

Second, this study is critical since today's dynamic, demanding, and complicated work environment causes the development of constructive organizational behavior among workers. The third objective of this study was to scientifically investigate the structural factor that affects individual behavior and motivation concerning work performance through leadership. Additionally, this study aimed to contribute to the existing literature by examining self-efficacy (SE) as a moderating variable. Individuals who possess self-efficacy believe in their ability to find innovative solutions to existing problems and challenges. They are more likely to engage in creative and productive behaviors. Thus, our research proposes that SE may be the sole moderating factor.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Servant Leadership and Employee Creativity

Servant leadership emphasizes the importance of a leader's ability to "serve" the company's workers by assisting them with their professional growth and development to be more productive (Spears, 1995). The primary goal of servant leadership is to "service" those around you. Previous study results show that servant leadership has a favorable impact on the productivity of staff and overall success (Abbas, Saud, Suhariadi, Usman, & Ekowati, 2020). Researchers have recently paid more attention to the benefits of servant leadership on employee creativity, particularly in the workplace (Neubert, Kacmar, Carlson, Chonko, & Roberts, 2008). Employee creativity refers to workers' ideas concerning goods, activities, processes, or innovative procedures that benefit the organization (Baer, 2012). According to the principle of servant leadership, servant leaders may encourage and assist their subordinates by prioritizing fulfilling their wants and helping them realize their potential (Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser, 2014). Additionally, it improves workers' work performance and engagement in innovative activities. Hale and Fields (2007) state that servant leadership focuses on developing subordinates to exercise creativity and take on more responsibility in the workplace.

Social Learning Theory suggests that individuals learn and adopt new behaviors and attitudes by observing and imitating the behavior of others, and by receiving reinforcement and feedback from their environment. Applying this theory to the relationship between servant leadership and employee creativity, we can explain how a servant leader's behavior can promote employee creativity (Rollins, Nickell, & Wei, 2014). Servant leaders, by nature, tend to create a supportive and empowering work environment that encourages employees to take risks, experiment with new ideas, and learn from their mistakes. This environment emerges because servant leaders prioritize the needs of their employees and help them develop their skills and competencies. In doing so, servant leaders allow employees to observe and imitate behaviors conducive to creativity, such as open communication, collaboration, and risk-taking (Liden et al., 2014). Therefore, based on Social Learning Theory, we can argue that servant leadership can positively affect employee creativity by creating a supportive work environment that promotes learning, experimentation, and positive reinforcement. By observing and imitating the behavior of their servant leaders, employees can develop the skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for creative thinking and problem-solving (Suhartanti & Prasetyanto, 2021). Servant leaders show gratitude to their workers who perform well (Baykal, Zehir, & Mahmut, 2018). Employees are encouraged to express their goals and apprehensions through this medium. It is believed that assuming a managerial role will increase the accountability of staff members. These actions alleviate the stress of meeting deadlines (Zada et al., 2022a). Those working for an organization must be creative and loyal to their employer. Service-oriented leadership encourages workers to provide and receive assistance from one another, increasing their psychological well-being (Chan & Mak, 2014). Thus, the risk associated with employing creative solutions to address challenges is reduced, promoting increased creativity among followers (Yoshida et al., 2014). The connection between servant leadership and follower creativity has been asserted. However, servant leadership may also have an indirect effect on staff creativity. For instance, Neubert et al. (2008) revealed that a promotion focus was closely linked servant leadership and can enhance employee creativity. Liden (2014) found that servant leadership has a positive relationship with a service-oriented culture and employee identification, both of which are linked to heightened creativity among employees. The research has thus demonstrated that we should give mediating elements in the relationship between servant leadership and employee creativity a strong emphasis.

H1: Servant leadership is positively associated with employee creativity.

Servant Leadership and Work Role Performance

Servant leaders can shape employees' attitudes and behaviors, inspiring them to challenge the status quo for their personal growth and the betterment of the organization (Wu, Liden, Liao, & Wayne,

2021). Serving others is more about how individuals want to do things and whether they can be done on their initiative. It is thus possible to use servant leadership as an effective way to motivate and inspire employees. Formalizing work responsibilities and predicting future outcomes are becoming more difficult in today's increasingly interdependent workplace. Griffin, Neal, and Parker (2007) developed the work role performance model, differentiating between predefined and emergent roles. It gives three sub-dimensions of WRP: "Task proficiency" pertains to an individual's ability to satisfy the formal criteria of their job function, "adaptivity" describes how well an individual adjusts to changes in their work role's requirements, and "proactivity" describes how well an individual anticipates changes in their work role's requirements and takes self-directed action to meet those changes (van der Baan, Raemdonck, Bastiaens, & Beusaert, 2022). Employees attain their full potential, inspire a desire to serve others, and work for their overall success; servant leaders value employee development and professional growth (Carter & Baghurst, 2014). This people-focused approach assists service leaders in gaining the trust and support of their employees to establish strong and positive relationships within an organization, enabling their participation in decision-making, and delivering value to all stakeholders in the organization (Press et al., 2021). Leaders have both a direct and indirect impact on performing their subordinates while doing their professional obligations. According to Ehrhart (2004), such a leadership style favors individual outcomes, such as increased effort, satisfaction, and commitment within the organization. Productivity in the workplace may positively influence employee attitudes and behavior; workers learn to follow their leaders' approach and have a more optimistic outlook on life (Khuwaja, Ahmed, Abid, & Adeel, 2020; B. Zhou et al., 2022). We predict servant leadership to positively impact the three elements of work role performance listed above in work role performance (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016). The theoretical foundation for this approach is the self-determination theory, which proposes that fulfilling fundamental human needs, such as autonomy and competence, may motivate workers to participate in work performance (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2009). Workers' autonomy and competence are developed due to servant leaders' efforts to create a positive social environment via empowerment, delegating, and development of employees. This increases employee engagement and work-related performance (Khan et al., 2021). Servant leaders improve workers' work performance because they meet three psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and a sense of belonging (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016). Employees thrive on autonomy, in which servant leaders give them responsibility and delegate decision-making authority (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016). Helping subordinates to develop and flourish fulfills the demand for competence by providing them with chances and support (Ruiz-Palomino, Gutiérrez-Broncano, Jiménez-Estévez, & Hernandez-Perlines, 2021). Servant leaders meet the demand for closeness when they build long-term, trusting relationships with their teams (Ruiz-Palomino & Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara, 2020). Serving leaders put their workers' needs first and help them gain the skills they need to adapt to a changing work environment (Reed, Vidaver-Cohen, & Colwell, 2011; MZada et al., 2022a). Furthermore, they cultivate an environment that fosters taking risks, instills a sense of empowerment, and motivates individuals to take ownership of their roles. Under servant leadership, employees have the freedom and support to be innovative, self-directed, and proactive in their jobs. Employers may aid their employees in developing a sense of competence in various ways, including delegation of power, involvement in decision-making, and support for professional growth (Chen, Zada, Khan, & Saba, 2022; Zada et al., 2022b).

H2: Servant leadership and work role performance is positively linked.

Knowledge Sharing as a Mediator Between Servant Leadership and Employee Creativity

Leadership within the organization is crucial for organizations to manage their knowledge management processes related to their organizational goals (Islam, Jasimuddin, & Hasan, 2015). Servant leadership

promotes information and knowledge sharing in an organization's culture (Al-Kurdi, El-Haddadeh, & Eldabi, 2020). Knowledge-sharing strategies may help strengthen the organizational core competencies if handled wisely by the leader (Debnath, Roy, Namasudra, & Crespo, 2022; Saeed et al., 2022). There is an urgent need for a creative leadership style that can maximize benefits by being creative and steer the road to innovation is chaotic, complicated, and unpredictable health sectors (Khan & Khan, 2019). As a result, the term "Servant Leader" was coined to describe a new kind of leader who takes a servant attitude to seizing new business opportunities before their rivals do to stay up with the fast-paced business climate. Risk-taking servant leadership develops a culture of learning inside a business via the knowledge management process (Parris & Peachey, 2013). While knowledge is recognized as a firm's most significant strategic asset, servant leadership is concerned with continuously seeking out strategic possibilities that produce value in the company's best interest (Islam & Asad, 2021). Knowledge-based resources must be properly used, and we must implement a design approach that includes knowledge sharing to enhance organizational performance (Muhammed & Zaim, 2020). Employees' knowledge, experiences, and abilities are shared across departments and organizations via a culture of knowledge sharing (Lin, 2007). Servant leadership encourages people to seek new possibilities and make smart choices to address challenges, which they reciprocate by sharing their expertise (Tripathi, Priyadarshi, Kumar, & Kumar, 2020). Information is exchanged through interaction between those who know that share with others who receive it (Lu, Zhang, & Jia, 2019). We refer to the exchange of information that leads to the creation of new knowledge as knowledge sharing (Van Den Hooff & De Ridder, 2004). An increasing amount of research has emphasized the significance of information sharing in enhancing organizations' and individuals' creative and innovative abilities. According to Ruiz-Palomino, Yáñez-Araque, Jiménez-Estévez, and Gutiérrez-Broncano (2022), highlight that an organization's ability to harness the creative potential of its employees is one of the most critical aspects of its success.

Therefore, this research focuses on how knowledge sharing improves workers' creativity. According to Uddin, Priyankara, and Mahmood (2019), a person's cognitive structure, which is connected to creativity, is directly impacted by their knowledge capacity, which is a factor in their ability to innovate. Individuals with a solid knowledge base are likelier to engage with one another. They are more responsive to new ideas, which generate creativity from this phenomenon (Taylor & Greve, 2006). Therefore, we posit that knowledge sharing can serve as a link between servant leadership and employee creativity. The Social Exchange Theory supports the notion that employees' creative responses are stimulated when they perceive their leaders as providing information that enables them to seek opportunities. Thus, it is proposed that:

H3: Knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between servant leadership and employee creativity.

Knowledge Sharing as a Mediator Between Servant Leadership and Work Role Performance

Knowledge sharing is defined as facilitating or receiving task-related information, feedback, and knowledge to help others and work together to overcome difficulties or produce new ideas, products, or procedures (Park & Kim, 2018). Leadership is a prerequisite for knowledge sharing since it promotes collaboration, trust, and communication among employees, all of which help the company gain an edge (Memon, Qureshi, & Jokhio, 2020). According to the study conducted by Anantatmula and Kanungo (2008), leaders may establish an environment of openness and transparency in the workplace by speaking effectively with their staff. Leaders cultivate a knowledge-sharing culture by directing and rewarding their employees' efforts. Jain and Jeppesen (2013) state that knowledge sharing is encouraged by leaders who demonstrate their dedication to it and persuade others to do the same through their actions. According to Trong Tuan (2017), servant leaders show compassion and empathy for their workers and act in their best interests, motivating them to share their expertise and

experience with others, and enhancing employee creativity. As a result, workers follow in the footsteps of their superiors and participate in other selfless acts, such as sharing information and expertise with colleagues. Studies show that knowledge sharing improves the performance of individuals and an entire organization (Chen, 2022; Qiu & Dooley, 2022). This study suggests that knowledge management influences a person's ability to learn, which affects how they engage with their environment's social and cultural systems, allowing them to learn and develop their abilities (Trong Tuan, 2017). When employees know new ways of doing things, respond to inquiries more quickly, and minimize the time it takes for departmental projects to be completed because of information sharing, the efficiency of public sector organizations improves (Massingham, 2018). According to Henttonen, Kianto, and Ritala (2016), three grounds support their argument that information sharing is connected with individual job success in their work position.

1. Sharing information opens up new avenues for using current knowledge in new and innovative ways.
2. With the support of their networks, workers can become influential and visible in the company.
3. It promotes reciprocity in the workplace, which increases the likelihood, and in return for sharing their expertise, workers will boost their productivity.

Individual and organizational performance may be enhanced by sharing unique information and adopting innovative practices. Better information sharing can improve employee performance, which may be achieved through better leadership (Hu, Erdogan, Jiang, Bauer, & Liu, 2018). According to Lee, Gillespie, Mann, and Wearing (2010), leaders who encourage knowledge-sharing take on the role of knowledge builders, bringing new ideas, challenging traditional working methods, and facilitating team debates. Increased collaboration among workers leads to new and creative ways of executing the same task (Ganguly, Talukdar, & Chatterjee, 2019). Hence, we hypothesized that:

H4: Knowledge sharing serves as a mediator between servant leadership and work role performance.

Self-Efficacy as a Moderator

Service-oriented leadership adds to the prediction of efficacy beliefs because it helps define responsibilities and give social support for workers to assist other employees by sharing their expertise with them (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016). Several studies have shown that a servant leader's style considerably and positively influences individual workers' beliefs about their ability to do their jobs (Wang, Guan, Cui, Cai, & Liu, 2021). Servant leaders influence employees' self-efficacy by enabling them to feel capable and competent in performing their job duties effectively (Newman, Herman, Schwarz, & Nielsen, 2018). This confidence makes an employee learn new skills and information and share it with others (Newman, Schwarz, Cooper, & Sendjaya, 2017). Self-efficacy is a motivational concept that centers on an individual's belief in their capabilities. Additionally, studies have shown that individuals with high levels of self-efficacy are more inclined to share knowledge as they have greater confidence in their knowledge and skills (Jiang & Gu, 2017; Sarkar, Saha, Namasudra, & Roy, 2015). When it comes to coming up with new ideas and executing them, workers with a high level of self-efficacy are better able to deal with uncertainty and anxiety. Additionally, previous research has shown associations between self-efficacy and an individual's proclivity to share information (Parhamnia, Farahian, & Rajabi, 2021). Employees are more likely to share their expertise if they feel more confident in their own ability to develop new ideas (Jha & Varkkey, 2018). Because servant leaders inspire their followers to feel confident, competent, and able to share their knowledge with others, they positively affect their followers' well-being. A servant leader's encouragement and support of workers' self-efficacy encourages them to take part in knowledge-sharing activities. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H5: Self-efficacy moderates the relationship between servant leadership and knowledge sharing.

Integrated Model

Servant leaders emphasize knowledge sharing among hospital personnel to improve employee creativity and work role performance (Nauman, Bhatti, Imam, & Khan, 2021). When employees share their expertise with their coworkers, they help spur the development of new ideas and, consequently, increase creativity inside the organization (Sheikh, Ishaq, & Inam, 2019). Employees with a strong sense of self-efficacy may exhibit higher levels of creativity, particularly if they will share their knowledge. This relationship is because individuals with high self-efficacy, operating in an environment that encourages knowledge sharing, have access to vast information regarding their customers' concerns (Rahman, Mannan, Hossain, Zaman, & Hassan, 2018). Due to these problems, they can develop innovative ideas and increase their work role performance (Teng & Chen, 2019). Employees who have a strong sense of self-efficacy and can learn from colleagues may generate more innovative ideas and concepts (Teng, 2021). It has been shown that employee creativity and work role performance increase significantly when servant leadership promotes self-efficacy and knowledge sharing. Therefore, it is proposed:

H6: The strength of the mediated relationship between servant leadership and employee creativity (through knowledge sharing) will depend on self-efficacy; the indirect effect of servant leadership on employee creativity will be higher when the self-efficacy is high.

H7: Self-efficacy will determine the strength of the relationship between servant leadership and work role performance (via knowledge sharing); the indirect effect of servant leadership on work role performance will be higher when self-efficacy is high.

METHOD

Sample and Procedure

A multi-wave (i.e., a time-lag) survey was designed to study the proposed model. The study population consisted of nurses and doctors in a public hospital in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. All nurses and doctors who worked throughout the data collection period (excluding those on leave) were given questionnaires and returned to the authors after they were finished. Hospital administration refused to provide the number of nurses and doctors on duty during the data collection; thus, convenience sampling was used. The study sample consisted of 289 nurses and doctors who participated. All participants in the current study were full-time employees. The data was collected through a time-lagged approach (Time 1 & 2). At Time 1, 322 nurses and doctors were contacted; we received 309 responses (95.96%). At time 2, we got those nurses and doctors that responded at time one and received 289 complete responses (93.52%). Of the participants, 77% were female. Tenure in the hospitals varied from 1 to 15 years ($M = 11.81$, $SD = 8.83$), and 57% of participants had five years of term or less. 72% were less than 40 years old. Most participants (i.e., 77%) held an associate's degree or higher.

Measures

Servant Leadership

We measured servant leadership using seven items developed by Liden et al. (2015). Sample items include "my supervisor drives my career development as the first goal in every job" and "my supervisor priorities meeting employees' needs before meeting their own needs."

Employee Creativity

We adopted the 13-item scale from Zhou and George (2001) to measure employee creativity. A sample item is "I often suggest new ways to achieve goals or objectives."

Knowledge Sharing Behavior

Knowledge sharing was measured with six items adapted from Schepers and Van Den Berg (2007). An example of the item is “Experienced colleagues’ coach inexperienced newcomers.”

Work Role Performance

Griffin et al. (2007) measured work role performance with nine items. A Sample item is, “Learned new skills to help you adapt to changes in your core tasks.”

Self-Efficacy

Spreitzer (1995) developed a scale with three items-scale to measure Self-efficacy. A sample item is: “I am confident about my ability to do my job.”

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the key variables’ means, standard deviations, correlations, reliability, and rh_A values. The results indicate that servant leadership has a positive and statistically significant effect on both employee creativity ($r = 0.34, p < 0.01$) and work role performance ($r = 0.25, p < 0.01$). We assessed the data reliability using the Cronbach’s coefficient alpha test, and all values were above the recommended threshold of 0.70. Additionally, the reliability of the data was confirmed through the evaluation of another indicator, rho_A, with all values surpassing 0.7 (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015).

Measurement Model

To assess the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, we employed Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The validation test reveals that all indicators have a loading factor value greater than 0.5, signifying their acceptability (see Table 3). Employee creativity varied from 0.87 to 0.75; knowledge sharing varied from 0.83 to 0.73; work role performance ranged from 0.68 to 0.83; and self-efficacy ranged from 0.78 to 0.82. The loading factor values for servant leadership ranged from 0.87 to 0.79 (Kerlinger, Lee, & Bhanthumnavin, 2000). The composite reliability in Table 3 display the item reliability. The composite reliability ratings of all constructions ranged from 0.84

Table 1. Correlations, mean, standard deviation and Rh_A

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Rh_A
1. Gender	1.35	.48	-									-
2. Age	2.87	.93	.078									-
3. Education	2.88	.55	.024	.099								-
4. Service	1.75	.85	.028	.079	-.067							-
5. Servant Leadership	3.99	.57	-.053	.067	.002	.098	(0.87)					0.88
6. Employee Creativity	3.62	.59	-.101	-.044	.023	-.090	.345**	(0.81)				0.83
7. Knowledge Sharing	3.71	.61	.005	.019	.054	-.024	.168**	.410**	(0.83)			0.84
8. Workrole Performance	3.81	.56	.014	.076	.032	.044	.254**	.306**	.417**	(0.78)		0.80
9. Self Efficacy	3.05	.70	.021	.046	-.002	.040	.284**	.174**	.194**	.274**	(0.85)	0.86

Note: **P< 0.01.

to 0.96, above the acceptable minimum value of 0.6 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). These results imply that the construction's standards for validity and reliability have been met. A fair match for the data is provided by the measurement model $X^2(df) = [206.34^{***} (79)]$, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = 0.92; Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.91; Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.90; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.03], with all conformity indicators within an acceptable range (Hair et al., 2010) as compared to series of other models as shown in table 2. The discriminant validity of each variable was also examined to identify the magnitude of the difference between them (Voorhees, Brady, Calantone, & Ramirez, 2016). Table 3 presents the correlation between each dependent and independent construct, which is lower than the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) in each dependent and independent construct. This result supports the discriminant validity of the model effectively, as demonstrated by the study. According to Hair et al. (2010), discriminant validity is present if all ASV and MSV values are fewer than the relevant AVE values. Based on Table 3, it is possible to determine that all circumstances are consistent with the discriminant validity of the test. We conducted Harman's one-factor test to check for common-method bias issues (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Lee, 2003). Podsakoff and Organ (1986) applied Harman's one-factor analysis concept to assess the potential for common method bias. The total variance accounted for by one factor should be less than 50%. The data does not exhibit an issue with common method bias, as the total variance extracted by one factor is 26.23%, which is below the prescribed limit of 50%.

Hypotheses Testing

After controlling for age, gender, education, and service tenure, the results of hierarchical regression are shown in Table 4, where servant leadership had a significant positive effect on employee creativity (Model 2, $\beta = 0.3555^{***}$, $SE=.057$) hypotheses 1, and work role performance (Model 3, $\beta = 0.350^{***}$, $SE=.055$) hypotheses 2. The findings support hypotheses 1 and 2. Using a bootstrap test based on the process plug-in created by Hayes (2013) Model 4, we investigated the mediating effect. We performed 5000 iterations of the random sample with a 95% confidence level. As indicated by the proposed model, knowledge sharing mediated the association between servant leadership and employee creativity, with $\beta = 0.062^{***}$, $SE= .023$, 95% CI [0.0180, 0.1094] and between servant

Table 2. Measurement model comparisons

Models	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	X2(df)	$\Delta X^2 (df)$
Model-5 (SL, KS, EC, WRP, and SE)	0.05	0.92	0.91	0.90	0.03	206.34***(79)	-
Model-4 (SL&KS, EC, WRP, and SE)	0.10	0.65	0.83	0.78	0.11	511.22***(83)	204.23***(3)
Model-4 (KS&WRP, SL, EC, and WRP)	0.16	0.53	0.74	0.70	0.15	624.41***(85)	434.11***(3)
Model-4 (SE&KS,SL, WRP, and EC)	0.24	0.49	0.27	0.43	0.37	713.45***(86)	512.15***(5)
Model-3 (SL&WRP, and KS&EC, and KS)	0.29	0.45	0.49	0.57	0.27	822.54***(87)	579.35***(6)
Model-3 (SE&EC and KS&WRP, and SL)	0.31	0.32	0.44	0.32	0.31	955.62***(88)	654.33***(7)
Model-2 (SE&WRP&KS&EC, and SL)	0.36	0.21	0.22	0.28	0.25	1021.32***(90)	723.22***(9)

Note: ***p < .001, SL: Servant Leadership, SE: Self Efficacy, EC: Employee Creativity, WRP: Work Role Performance, KS: Knowledge Sharing, CFI: Comparative fit index, RMSEA: root mean square error of approximation, SRMR: standardized root mean square residual; TLI: Tucker-Lewis index.

Table 3. Factor loadings

Items	CR	AVE	ASV	MSV	Loadings
Servant Leadership	0.93	0.67	0.263	0.368	
SL 1					0.79
SL 2					0.82
SL 3					0.87
SL 4					0.86
SL 5					0.82
SL 6					0.79
SL 7					0.81
Employee Creativity	0.96	0.65	0.262	0.342	
EC 1					0.75
EC 2					0.79
EC 3					0.81
EC 4					0.79
EC 5					0.79
EC 6					0.82
EC 7					0.87
EC 8					0.86
EC 9					0.82
EC 10					0.79
EC 11					0.81
EC 12					0.82
EC 13					0.76
Knowledge Sharing	0.91	0.63	0.238	0.356	
KS 1					0.82
KS 2					0.79
KS 3					0.73
KS 4					0.83
KS 5					0.78
KS 6					0.83
Work Role Performance	0.92	0.58	0.246	0.332	
WRP 1					0.79
WRP 2					0.73
WRP 3					0.83
WRP 4					0.78
WRP 5					0.83
WRP 6					0.73
WRP 7					0.72
WRP 8					0.68
WRP 9					0.77

continued on following page

Table 3. Continued

Items	CR	AVE	ASV	MSV	Loadings
Self-Efficacy	0.84	0.64	0.262	0.375	
SE 1					0.82
SE 2					0.78
SE 3					0.81

Table 4. Structural equation modeling results (n=289)

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Knowledge Sharing		Employee Creativity		Work Role Performance	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Age	0.03	0.05	-0.13	0.04	0.03	0.04
Gender	-0.07	0.04	-0.13	0.03	0.04	-0.11
Education	-0.03	0.02	-0.06	-0.11	0.03	-0.06
Service	0.09	0.06	-0.11	-0.01	0.02	0.03
Servant Leadership			.355***	.057	.350***	.055
Mediator						
Knowledge Sharing			.062***	.023	.112***	.038
Moderator						
Self-Efficacy	.331**	.084				
Interaction Effect						
Servant Leadership x Self-Efficacy			.1091**	.034	.1963**	.0528

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). ***. Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

leadership and work role performance with $\beta = 0.112^{***}$, $SE = .038$, 95% CI [0.0353, 0.1850]. The results provide empirical support for Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4, conforming a partial mediation of knowledge sharing. In addition, the coefficient of the interaction term ($\beta = 0.331$, $p < 0.01$, CI [.2411, .5464]) was significant, implying that self-efficacy as a moderator in the association between servant leadership and knowledge sharing. Employees with high self-efficacy have a stronger positive connection with servant leadership and knowledge sharing than employees with low self-efficacy, as shown in Figure 2. In order to further investigate the nature of the interaction and validate hypothesis 5, we plotted the relationship between servant leadership and self-efficacy interaction on knowledge sharing. Hypotheses 6 and 7 revealed a moderated mediation effect, showing that self-efficacy moderates the relationship between perceived servant leadership and employee creativity through knowledge sharing. As depicted in Table 5, the indirect effect of servant leadership on employee creativity through knowledge sharing was stronger when self-efficacy was high (indirect effect with high self-efficacy = 0.138, CI [.777, .2016]; indirect effect with low self-efficacy = -.0153, CI [-.887, .0528]). The difference in indirect effects between high and low levels of self-efficacy was 0.15333, with a 95% confidence interval of [.1664, .1488]. Further, moderation mediation index results confirm and support Hypothesis 6 [Index=.1091, BootSE=.0343, BootLLCI=.0467, BootULCI=.1833].

As shown in Table 6, the connection between servant leadership and work role performance through knowledge sharing was more pronounced when self-efficacy was high (indirect effect with

Table 5. Moderated mediated results: employee creativity

Moderator	Level	Conditional Indirect Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Self-Efficacy	Low	-.0153	.0367	-.0887	.0528
	High	.1380	.0313	.0777	.2016
	Difference	.1533	-0.005	.1664	.1488

Note: Moderator values are the mean and ± 1 SD.

Table 6. Moderated mediated results: work role performance

Moderator	Level	Conditional Indirect Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Self-Efficacy	Low	-.0276	.0653	-.1547	.1025
	High	.2483	.0445	.1593	.3336
	Difference	.2759	-0.020	.3140	.2311

Note: Moderator values are the mean and ± 1 SD.

high self-efficacy = 0.2483, Confidence Interval [0.1593, 0.3336]; indirect effect with low self-efficacy = -0.0276, Confidence Interval [-0.1547, 0.1025]). The discrepancy between the indirect effects at high and low self-efficacy levels was 0.2759, with a 95% Confidence Interval of [0.3140, 0.2311]. Further, moderation mediation index results confirms and support Hypothesis 7 [Index=0.1963, BootSE=.0920, BootLLCI=.3010 BootULCI=.1833].

DISCUSSION

The goal of this research is to get a better understanding of the role of servant leadership in fostering creativity and performance among healthcare workers. Furthermore, how employee knowledge-sharing behavior plays a key role in employee creativity and work role performance by integrating relational identity and social learning theories. Our results demonstrate that (1) servant leadership fosters employee creativity and work role performance, (2) knowledge sharing partially mediates the relationship between servant leadership, employee creativity, and work role performance, (3) self-efficacy moderates the relationship between servant leadership and knowledge sharing, and (4) self-efficacy with servant leadership affects employee creativity and work role performance through knowledge sharing (see 3).

Theoretical Implication

This research adds to the increasing knowledge on servant leadership in several ways. It has been postulated that servant leadership roles in health care encourages employees' creativity and work role performance. Servant leadership focuses on the needs of the followers and provides constructive solutions to the specific requirements of their followers (Liao, Lee, Johnson, & Lin, 2021). First, previous research has demonstrated the positive impact of servant leadership styles on employee attitudes, behavior, and performance in the healthcare industry (Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck, & Liden, 2019; Liden et al., 2014; Yang et al., 2019). New empirical data from our research suggests that servant leadership positively and substantially affects employee creativity and work role performance during the COVID-19 epidemic and overall organizational performance. Moreover, these findings not only contribute to further validating the application of servant leadership

styles in the context of the health sector, but they also give a novel viewpoint on the elements that motivate employee creativity and work role performance (Kim & Shim, 2018; Zada et al., 2022a).

Second, according to the study results, employee creativity and performance in their work responsibilities may be influenced by servant leadership. Knowledge sharing is critical to this impact (Saeed et al., 2022). It may act as a mediating factor, thus contributing to a more comprehensive theoretical understanding of “how servant leadership can influence employees’ positive attitudes in the healthcare sector.” There are new studies, results, and advancements every day in the healthcare industry. To practice evidence-based medicine, medical practitioners must exchange, update, and iterate on collective medical knowledge. Searchable databases are the best way to keep up with and organize the constant stream of new health information. Advanced and organized knowledge bases can track patients’ electronic health data may, allowing medical practitioners to swiftly and easily search for symptoms, treatments, and results that will help them offer the best possible care. This study’s findings, consistent with earlier research, further demonstrate the importance of knowledge sharing as a mediating factor. Using these findings, researchers might further investigate additional factors that relate leadership style to employee creativity and work role performance.

Third, the findings of this research show that self-efficacy might modify the link between servant leadership and knowledge sharing. Hospitals and many physicians and crucial staff members are facing increasing difficulties. They have been involved in response to the Covid-19 outbreak to cope as the problem grows. The gravity of the crisis has necessitated hospitals to adjust, and the healthcare industry is gaining valuable insights. In such a challenging environment, nursing and medical students’ and doctors’ self-efficacy is crucial for free communication of knowledge that enhances creativity and work performance. A further explanation of this concept is that it illustrates how an organization’s service culture may enhance the effect of self-efficacy on individual workers’ knowledge-sharing behavior, which further increases employee creativity and work performance. Moreover, this conclusion aligns with the principles of social learning theory (Bandura & Hall, 2018), which holds that the impact of servant leadership-driven service culture on the association between self-efficacy and employee creativity, and work role performance can be significant.

Hospital administrators in Pakistan are searching for leaders who will lead from the front, produce second-line managers with creative talents, and build a culture of knowledge-sharing and self-efficacy among their staff as the healthcare industry grows fast. As examined in this study, servant leadership can facilitate knowledge sharing and self-efficacy, increasing employee creativity and work role performance as desired, which is extremely important in today’s hospital environment to achieve sustainable competitive benefits (Suhartanti & Prasetyanto, 2021). This research contributes to the literature by establishing and testing the link between servant leadership, knowledge sharing, self-efficacy, employee creativity, and hospital work role performance.

Practical Implications

Several major practical consequences for organizations are brought to light by this research. First, one of the most important servant leadership roles, which has received little attention, is shaping employee attitudes. Given the collaborative and supportive nature of the presented work (Health Sector), a servant leadership approach was needed. Serving others, fostering their growth, and creating tangible benefits for the community are all hallmarks of servant leadership (Liden et al., 2014). Individuals respond positively to servant leadership by exhibiting commitment, empowerment, and involvement in their work. In addition, because of servant leadership practices, organizations are more adaptable to the changing demands of the market (Eva et al., 2019; Van Dierendonck, 2011). As a result, organizations should begin employing leaders who exhibit servant leadership qualities and developing, nurturing, and promoting servant leadership characteristics via training and development programs. Second, since it is challenging to predefined job responsibilities for every role with the changing work demands, this study’s findings suggest hospitals rethink their performance management strategies and make sure that emergent behaviors like adaptability and proactivity are

considered when evaluating employee performance besides proficient behavior (Covid-19). There are many distinct types of employee behavior that we should educate leaders to recognize and control. There are a lot of difficulties in the healthcare sector. We expect leaders in the healthcare system to provide efficient and high-quality care despite working long hours in challenging and changing conditions. It is incumbent upon healthcare servant leaders to surmount several hurdles in order to attain success. These individuals are responsible for designing, administering, and harmonizing healthcare services, potentially ranging from overseeing a single department to presiding over the entire operation of an organization.

Third, to encourage the sharing of information and knowledge among employees, organizations should establish mechanisms such as fostering trust and social connections and offering moral and technical support to motivate employee participation in acquiring knowledge (Tangaraja, Rasdi, Ismail, & Samah, 2015). Afterwards, employers should create a work atmosphere that promotes access to information and resources, encourages active participation, and recognizes individual contributions to enhance employees' self-efficacy (Zhu, Law, Sun, & Yang, 2019).

The findings of this study confirmed the importance of promoting servant leadership in the workplace. Specialized training and development programs might assist supervisors in developing the abilities that would allow them to display servant leadership characteristics. After training sessions, they might conduct employee feedback surveys to submit their supervisors' servant leadership performance (Schwarz, Newman, Cooper, & Eva, 2016). Incorporating this feedback would be advantageous for the future advancement of leadership in management. We found that servant leadership may boost follower knowledge sharing and self-efficacy and contribute to developing creative behaviors and work role performance in the workplace. For managers, it would be helpful to have a deeper understanding of the practical role of servant leadership in creating an empowering workplace environment, as it could stimulate employee creativity. Managers should foster trust and respect among their subordinates by employing an empowering leadership style. By offering support and guidance to their employees to help them acquire new skills and achieve creative objectives, they can increase the opportunities for participation and independence. Therefore, incorporating training that emphasizes servant leadership skills within leadership development programs aimed at creating an empowering atmosphere may further enhance the success of these programs. Finally, the results should assist managers in gaining a heightened understanding of the contextual factors that impact their decisions, and that may make some methods more effective than others when striving to cultivate their employees' psychological empowerment, as well as a deeper awareness of the factors that affect their decisions.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are several limitations to this study. First, in this study, we used self-reported questionnaire data, which could have resulted in bias because of common source bias despite the administration of confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis. We showed that common method bias did not significantly affect the findings, which validated the use of multiple component structure analysis. Including other data sources (e.g., data from workers' supervisors) for comparison in future research might help ensure better impartiality and eliminate any bias in the data collected. Second, just the model's individual level was considered throughout the model's investigation. A multi-level model would give more insight into the operation of the constructs than a single-level model. Furthermore, recent research has urged further studies to examine the influence of leaders at various levels of authority (Yoshida et al., 2014). Therefore, a multi-level approach should be used in future studies to deepen the analysis. Third, although most of the concepts studied in this research originated in the United States and other Western countries, they have a global presence. Many academics have verified and applied these principles to other samples collected in Pakistan to examine these principles further. Additionally, we modified the measuring tools to make them more appropriate for usage in a Pakistani environment. However, given Pakistan's distinct cultural and economic characteristics,

researchers should proceed with care when applying these findings to people in other nations or areas. Fourth, the examination was limited to the role of knowledge sharing as a mediating factor. Future research might incorporate other mediators that could play a significant role in the COVID-19 to increase employee creativity and work role performance (i.e., psychological safety and work engagement). Finally, self-efficacy plays an important moderating role. Further, we recommended that other moderating variables be investigated as they may strengthen the positive role of the servant leadership effect (i.e., harmonious passion and job crafting).

CONCLUSION

Leaders must strengthen organizations' ability to build a better, more adjustable, and more compassionate society where individuals have more chances to grow. By examining an organization's abilities, leaders can enhance employee's "serving" performance. Organization can serve the community, and businesses can influence society, but first and foremost, they must invest in building their capacity and developing their people. They must also provide the environment in which servant leadership may flourish. Many people feel that the present healthcare system is dysfunctional and unsustainable in its current form due to COVID-19. Healthcare providers face many difficulties in satisfying the increasing expectations for better healthcare value from patients and stakeholders, such as escalating costs, deteriorating nursing care standards, high employee turnover rates, and a rise in medical mistakes. To address these issues, healthcare professionals must have strong leadership abilities to initiate positive change successfully. The healthcare sector also grapples with substantial nurse exhaustion and departure. Inadequate leadership in healthcare organizations can lead to harmful effects that negatively affect the work environment and employee satisfaction. This outcome can lead to employee burnout, high staff turnover, unhappy employees, serious medical mistakes, and conflicts among workers. When leaders help their coworkers, they exhibit servant leadership behavior. People are developed and flourish under the guidance of servant leaders. Some proponents of servant leadership believe that leaders should "love" their subordinates, colleagues, superiors, and rivals, a concept rarely associated with today's competitively oriented corporate environment. Ample empirical research has shown how servant leadership is associated with a range of positive outcomes for employees, such as enhanced psychological well-being (by boosting employees' self-efficacy), positive job attitudes (by fostering employee creativity and work role performance), and improved knowledge management (by promoting effective knowledge sharing). By adopting a servant leadership approach, healthcare professionals can play a key role in effecting change within their organizations and enhancing the provider-patient relationship, leading to an improved standard of care for patients.

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APPENDIX

Figure 1. Conceptual model

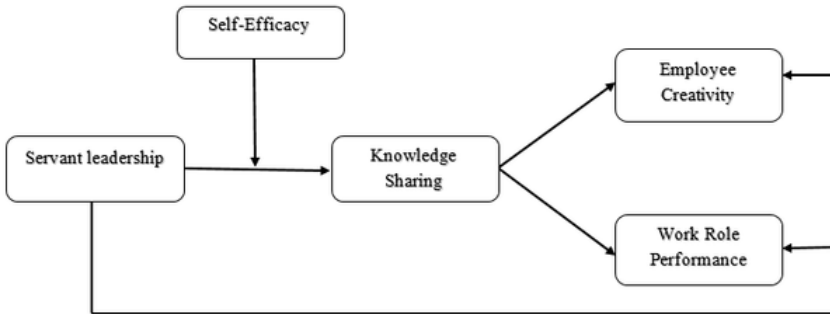


Figure 2. Interaction effect

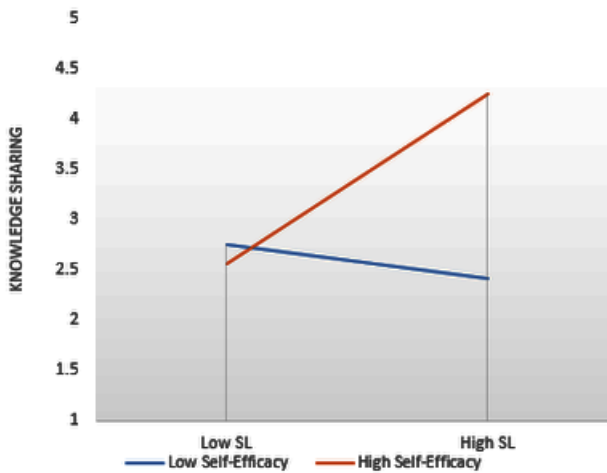


Figure 3. Final model and results

