# Servant Leadership and Proactive Personality as Impetus for Teachers' Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

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**Abstract**

Transformation in the national education, a dynamic education environment, and limited resource capability do not allow schools to function effectively if teachers are solely working on their own tasks. Hence, the educational sector greatly depends on teachers who are willing to exhibit organizational citizenship behaviour which is discretionary behaviour beyond their own tasks. Particularly, this study aims to investigate the influence of servant leadership and proactive personality on organizational citizenship behaviour. In this research, a total of 610 questionnaires were distributed to the public secondary school teachers in Perlis, Kedah, Penang, and Perak. From the total, only 466 samples were used for analysis purposes. The partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique was employed to analyse the relationships between the variables. The result revealed that servant leadership and proactive personality have a positive and significant direct influence on organizational citizenship behaviour. Therefore, the findings suggested that school leaders and policymakers to emphasise the servant leadership practice among the principals and encourage teachers to be more proactive in improving the organizational citizenship behaviour.

**Keywords**: Organizational Citizenship Behaviour, Proactive Personality, Servant Leadership, Social Exchange Theory, Teachers

**Introduction**

The challenges of an uncertain and ever-changing environment force organizations to rely more on employees as a resource to gain a competitive advantage. Organizations are no longer interested in employees who are only interested in retaining their membership. Organizations, on the other hand, require employees who are willing to go above and beyond their formal duties in order to function more effectively (Kaur & Kang, 2022). Employee behavior that extends beyond formal duties and is not explicitly recognized by the reward system is referred to as organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) (Organ, 1988). The previous study stated that OCB is one of the most important means of increasing organizational efficiency (Yusnita et al., 2021). OCB can provide additional resources such as time, energy, knowledge, and the ability to save existing resources while reducing layoffs and retaining customers.

In the school context, teacher OCB is defined as the behaviour of teachers who go above and beyond their formal responsibilities to the school, colleagues, and students in order to help the school achieve its goals (Abu Nasra & Heilbrunn, 2016). Teachers who consistently exhibit OCB contribute significantly to the school's success and effectiveness (D'souza, 2014; Somech & Oplatka, 2014). Furthermore, teachers are the main driver of educational institutions. However, not all teachers are willing to do extra work outside of their core responsibilities. There are times when teachers are under pressure to meet students' academic needs, which may be required during or after work hours (Van der Hoven et al., 2021). This phenomenon is explained by various teacher complaints about their increasingly demanding and complex workload. According to the National Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP), more than 10,000 teachers choose to retire early each year (Rosli, 2022). Furthermore, previous research has identified four factors as the main contributors to job stress, namely workload, work environment, internal relationships, and principal leadership, and workload is the main contributing factor that can influence teachers' intention to quit (Abd Karim & Nordin, 2022). As a result, identifying factors that can motivate teachers to exhibit OCB on a consistent basis is seen as important as providing support for schools to function more effectively.

In the field of education, leadership behaviour is one of the factors that have a significant relationship with teacher OCB (Febriantina et al., 2021; Kumar et al., 2022; Shie & Chang, 2022; Shofiyuddin, 2021). However, research on the relationship between servant leadership and teacher OCB was found to be lacking (Shamsuddin et al., 2020), despite the fact that this leadership style was found to be preferred by teachers and more effective than authoritative leadership due to the better use of the leader's power (Zhang et al., 2012). Furthermore, servant leadership has an advantage over transformative leadership in that it provides more opportunities for passive followers (Shamsuddin et al., 2020). In addition to leadership, dispositional factors such as individual differences play an important role in predicting employees' proclivity to exhibit OCB (Organ, 1990). Previous research has shown that proactive personality can influence employee OCB (Farooq et al., 2019; Nadeem et al., 2021; Zaman & Bilal, 2021). However, in the field of education, the impact of proactive personality on teachers' OCB is still being researched. Teachers with a proactive personality are seen as agents of change, capable of driving the transformation of the country's education by attempting to translate all of the country's policies and aspirations through education. Indeed, studies in the context of education have discovered that proactive personality has a relationship with job satisfaction, innovative behavior, and OCB (Li et al., 2017; Pan et al., 2021; Zaman & Bilal, 2021). More research, particularly in the context of education, is needed to improve understanding of the influence of servant leadership and proactive personality on OCB. As a result, this study focuses on two main objectives: (1) identifying the relationship between servant leadership and OCB; and (2) identifying the relationship between proactive personality and OCB.

## Literature Review
### Servant Leadership
Servant leadership is a follower-oriented leadership style, so it is expected to increase employee satisfaction, commitment, and performance (Van Dierendonck, 2011). According to Greenleaf (1998), employees strongly support servant leadership because the leader is a committed and trustworthy individual, and as a result, employees strive to be the best employees. Furthermore, servant leaders work to meet followers' psychological needs, well-

being, and career development so that followers not only have a positive attitude toward work but are more proactive and work more effectively (Eva et al., 2019; Sendjaya et al., 2008; van Dierendonck, 2011).

The empirical study of servant leadership is based primarily on social-based theory. Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) is based on the reciprocity norm (Gouldner, 1960), in which servant leaders and their followers provide support and valuable resources in exchange for support and resources received by both parties (Eva et al., 2019). For example, when servant leaders focus on the development of their followers, followers feel obligated to respond to their leader's positive behaviour by demonstrating positive attitudes and behaviours such as intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction, innovative work behaviour, task performance, and OCB (Al-Asadi et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2022; Saleem et al., 2020). Employees who are motivated by extrinsic and intrinsic satisfaction can be encouraged to respond by exhibiting OCB (Blau, 1964). The desire to repay the assistance received stems from a sense of responsibility to respond positively to the desired treatment (Gouldner, 1960).

Previous research has shown that servant leaders can significantly influence the work behaviour of secondary high school teachers in Zahedan city to go above and beyond their essential duties by exhibiting OCB (Ghalavi & Nastiezaie, 2020). Another study in the Western Cape Province of South Africa found a positive relationship between servant leadership, psychological empowerment, and teacher OCB (Van der Hoven et al., 2021). Other researchers discovered a relationship between servant leadership and OCB and in-role behaviour through the mediation of felt obligation among teachers working in private franchise schools in Pakistan (Kumar et al., 2022). The result of this study revealed that servant leadership is associated with OCB and teacher in-role behavior. In fact, servant leadership has a greater impact on OCB than it does on in-role behaviour. A study on teacher OCB in Indonesia also demonstrates a significant direct relationship between servant leadership and OCB (Rosnani, 2018). Another study, which included teachers in Indonesia, specifically in Bogor, West Java, discovered a moderately positive relationship between servant leadership and OCB (Wulandari et al., 2021). Based on previous research findings, it is possible to conclude that servant leadership is more appropriate for school organizations in Malaysia because the organizational environment now requires leaders who can serve followers. The teacher models the principal's servant leadership behaviour and encourages the teacher to reciprocate by engaging in OCB. Based on these considerations, this research proposes the following hypothesis:

$H_1$: Servant leadership is positively related to OCB.

**Proactive Personality**
Scholars are becoming more interested in studies on proactive personality because of its importance as a critical factor in organizational performance (Crant, 2000; Fuller et al., 2010; Grant & Parker, 2009) and its strong positive impact on workplace behaviour (Zaman & Bilal, 2021). Furthermore, work structures are now highly dependent on teamwork, are temporary, and require employees to be more independent and take initiative in order to work effectively in such an environment (Ilgen & Pulakos, 1999). As a result, most organizations view proactive personality as a requirement rather than an option (Seibert et al., 2001; Thomas et al., 2010). Proactive personality is defined as individual behaviour that identifies opportunities and

mobilises situations to capitalise on those opportunities (Newman et al., 2017). Proactive personality is also defined as an individual's tendency to make changes to their environment while remaining unaffected by situational pressure (Crant, 2000).

Previous research has found that individuals with a high level of proactive personality are involved in activities that go beyond their core responsibilities (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Parker, 1998). For example, a study involving 492 faculty members from 69 research universities in the United States discovered that individuals with a high proactive personality engage in OCB more frequently and work longer hours per week than those with a low proactive personality (Bergeron et al., 2014). While Kisamore et al (2014) found that personality proactivity was significantly and positively related to OCB involvement in 165 subordinate-supervisor dyads. A study of the direct relationship between proactive personality and OCB on public sector employees in Pakistan found a significant positive relationship between the two variables (Farooq et al., 2019). Another study looks at the role of work engagement in mediating the relationship between proactive personality and OCB among textile workers in Pakistan (Zaman & Bilal, 2021). The finding of the study indicates that proactive personality, OCB, and work engagement have a significant positive relationship. Furthermore, there is a study that identifies the mediating effect of thriving at work on the relationship between proactive personality and OCB in the textile sector in Pakistan (Nadeem et al., 2021). The results show that there is a direct relationship between proactive personality and OCB, and it is suggested that similar studies be conducted in other fields, including education.

Since the education sector is constantly changing, schools require teachers who are proactive in order to adapt to the changes. Teachers with a proactive personality are more likely to make changes to the school environment and are less likely to be influenced by the pressures of the situation. Furthermore, teachers with a proactive personality are expected to always look for opportunities to show initiative, take responsibility, and continue to make changes until they achieve their desired goals. Based on the preceding discussion, the following hypothesis is developed:

$H_2$: Proactive personality is positively related to OCB.

## Methodology

This study used a cross-sectional survey design. A questionnaire was used as a research instrument to survey respondents' perceptions of the constructs that comprise the research hypothesis model. This study uses individuals as its unit of analysis. The sampling technique is a combination of simple random sampling and purposive sampling. The sample for this study is made up of teachers who work in secondary schools under the Malaysian Ministry of Education in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia, which includes the states of Perlis, Kedah, Penang, and Perak. The minimum sample size required by the structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) technique is 115. (Cohen, 1988; Hair et al., 2014). It aims to achieve a statistical power level of 80% at an $R^2$ value of at least 0.25 at a significant level of 0.05. Data was collected over three months, with a total of 466 questionnaires used for analysis.

The questionnaire asked about demographics, OCB, servant leadership, and proactive personality. OCB was measured using a seven-level Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 =

strongly agree).  While each item for the constructs of servant leadership and proactive personality was measured using a five-level Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).  In this study, the three constructs, namely OCB, servant leadership, and proactive personality, were measured as a single dimension with 14, 7, and 10 items, respectively (DiPaola & Neves, 2009; Liden et al., 2015; Seibert et al., 2001).  The demographic information of the respondents was described using descriptive statistical analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics 20.0 software.  The inferential statistical analysis was carried out with the help of SmartPLS software using the PLS-SEM advanced analysis technique.  It examines both the measurement model and the structural model.

**Results**

The analysis of 466 respondents revealed that the majority were female (74.5%), over 45 years old (36%), Malay (96.1%), and married (89.1%).  Furthermore, 85.6% of respondents have a Bachelor's Degree, and more than 90% have more than five years of teaching experience.  The majority of respondents have been in their respective schools for between 2 and 10 years, and 59.2% do not hold any position other than regular academic teachers. Descriptive analysis reveals that the proportion of study respondents working in urban and rural schools is nearly balanced, with 50.4% working in rural schools and 49.6% working in urban schools.

**Assessment of the Measurement Model**

Table 1 summarises the assessment of the measurement model.  Ramayah et al. (2018) suggested several guidelines to appraise the validity of the measurement model: internal consistency via composite reliability (CR) > 0.7; indicator reliability via indicator loadings > 0.7 and significant at least at the 0.05 level; convergent validity via AVE > 0.50; discriminant validity via cross-loadings and the Fornell-Larcker correlation where the square root of the AVE of a variable should be greater than the correlations between the variable and other variables in the model.  All constructs were found to meet the required criteria well. Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR) values for each construct were found to be greater than the required minimum level of 0.7.  However, some items from the OCB and proactive personality constructs must be discarded because the average variance extracted (AVE) value for both constructs does not meet the minimum level of 0.5.  Among the discarded items are OCB1, OCB2, OCB3, OCB4, OCB5, OCB8, OCB12, and OCB13. PP2, PP6, PP7, and PP10 are the discarded items for the proactive personality construct.  After the items were removed, all constructs were found to have convergent validity based on AVE values greater than 0.5.

Table 1
*Assessment of the Measurement Model*

| Construct | Items | Loading | CA | CR | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OCB | OCB6 | 0.644 | 0.813 | 0.866 | 0.520 |
| | OCB7 | 0.779 | | | |
| | OCB9 | 0.769 | | | |
| | OCB10 | 0.819 | | | |
| | OCB11 | 0.642 | | | |
| | OCB14 | 0.653 | | | |
| Servant Leadership | SERV1 | 0.669 | 0.840 | 0.878 | 0.507 |
| | SERV2 | 0.686 | | | |
| | SERV3 | 0.763 | | | |
| | SERV4 | 0.769 | | | |
| | SERV5 | 0.747 | | | |
| | SERV6 | 0.642 | | | |
| | SERV7 | 0.699 | | | |
| Proactive Personality | PP1 | 0.721 | 0.805 | 0.860 | 0.506 |
| | PP3 | 0.670 | | | |
| | PP4 | 0.687 | | | |
| | PP5 | 0.734 | | | |
| | PP8 | 0.753 | | | |
| | PP9 | 0.697 | | | |

The assessment of discriminant validity based on cross-loading is shown in Table 2. Validity was achieved because all items loaded on their true constructs.

Table 2
*Cross-loadings*

| | OCB | Servant Leadership | Proactive Personality |
|---|---|---|---|
| OCB6 | **0.644** | 0.206 | 0.280 |
| OCB7 | **0.779** | 0.268 | 0.347 |
| OCB9 | **0.769** | 0.187 | 0.398 |
| OCB10 | **0.819** | 0.257 | 0.433 |
| OCB11 | **0.642** | 0.200 | 0.327 |
| OCB14 | **0.653** | 0.309 | 0.430 |
| SERV1 | 0.228 | **0.669** | 0.284 |
| SERV2 | 0.213 | **0.686** | 0.336 |
| SERV3 | 0.301 | **0.763** | 0.341 |
| SERV4 | 0.234 | **0.769** | 0.311 |
| SERV5 | 0.280 | **0.747** | 0.420 |
| SERV6 | 0.105 | **0.642** | 0.181 |
| SERV7 | 0.225 | **0.699** | 0.272 |
| PP1 | 0.398 | 0.336 | **0.721** |
| PP3 | 0.321 | 0.286 | **0.670** |
| PP4 | 0.310 | 0.268 | **0.687** |
| PP5 | 0.360 | 0.326 | **0.734** |
| PP8 | 0.437 | 0.334 | **0.753** |
| PP9 | 0.377 | 0.343 | **0.697** |

The Fornell-Larcker criteria for discriminant validity are met when the value of the square root of AVE for each construct exceeds the value of the correlation coefficient between constructs (AVE > r) (Hair et al., 2017). This explains why the constructs are unique and distinct from one another. Table 3 shows that the square root AVE value of each construct met the discriminant validity condition with a value greater than 0.5.

Table 3
*Fornell-Larcker Criterion*

|  | (1) | (2) | (3) |
|---|---|---|---|
| OCB (1) | **0.721** |  |  |
| Servant Leadership (2) | 0.335 | **0.712** |  |
| Proactive Personality (3) | 0.522 | 0.446 | **0.711** |

Note: The values in bold are the square root of AVE.

Furthermore, heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) is used to obtain discriminant validity, where constructs are assumed to be unique when the correlation value between constructs is less than 0.85. (Henseler et al., 2015). Table 4 shows that the HTMT value has achieved discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 4
*Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio*

|  | (1) | (2) | (3) |
|---|---|---|---|
| OCB (1) |  |  |  |
| Servant Leadership (2) | 0.378 |  |  |
| Proactive Personality (3) | 0.627 | 0.518 |  |

Note: $HTMT_{.85}$ ,0.85

**Structural Model and Hypothesis Test**
Table 5 displays the collinearity assessment based on the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value. The analysis discovered that all predictor variables have a VIF value of less than 5. This finding demonstrates that there is no collinearity between the constructs in the structural model.

Table 5
*Construct Collinearity Assessment*

| OCB |  |
|---|---|
|  | VIF |
| Servant Leadership | 1.249 |
| Proactive Personality | 1.249 |

Note: VIF < 5

Table 6 shows the results of the hypothetical testing of studies that show the degree of significance of the path coefficient between constructs. The results of the analysis found that both predictors had a positive and significant effect on endogenous constructs. Servant leadership shows positive and significant impact on teacher OCB (β=0.127, t=3.064, p=0.002, CI[0.049, 0.212]). The value of the β-coefficient of servant leadership on OCB was 0.127. The

research hypothesis was confirmed because the obtained t-value was 3.064 and was greater than the standard value of 1.96. So it can be accepted that servant leadership has a positive and significant effect on OCB. As shown in Table 6, the value of the β-coefficient of proactive personality on OCB was 0.465. The research hypothesis was confirmed because the obtained t-value was 11.891 and was greater than the standard value of 1.96. As a result, it is possible to conclude that proactive personality has a positive and significant effect on OCB (β=0.465, t=11.891, p=0.001, CI[0.391, 0.543]).

Table 6
*Path Coefficient and Hypothesis*

| Hypothesis | Paths | Beta | T Statistics | P Values | Lower | Upper | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $H_1$ | SERV → OCB | 0.127 | 3.064 | 0.002* | 0.049 | 0.212 | Supported |
| $H_2$ | PP → OCB | 0.465 | 11.891 | 0.001* | 0.391 | 0.543 | Supported |

Note: Significant at the 0.05 level (p<0.05)

Figure 1 shows that servant leadership and proactive personality have a significant positive influence on OCB. The finding of this study also shows that the proactive personality construct is the most important predictor of teacher OCB, with a path coefficient value (β=0.465) that is higher than the servant leadership construct (β=0.127). Furthermore, as shown in Figure 1, the combination of both constructs, servant leadership and proactive personality, can only explain 28.6% of the total variance of OCB. Although the $R^2$ value in this study is moderate (Muijs, 2004), the findings are still considered satisfactory. According to Onditi (2013), the $R^2$ value for psychological studies is around 20% because human behaviour is difficult to predict when compared to physical processes.
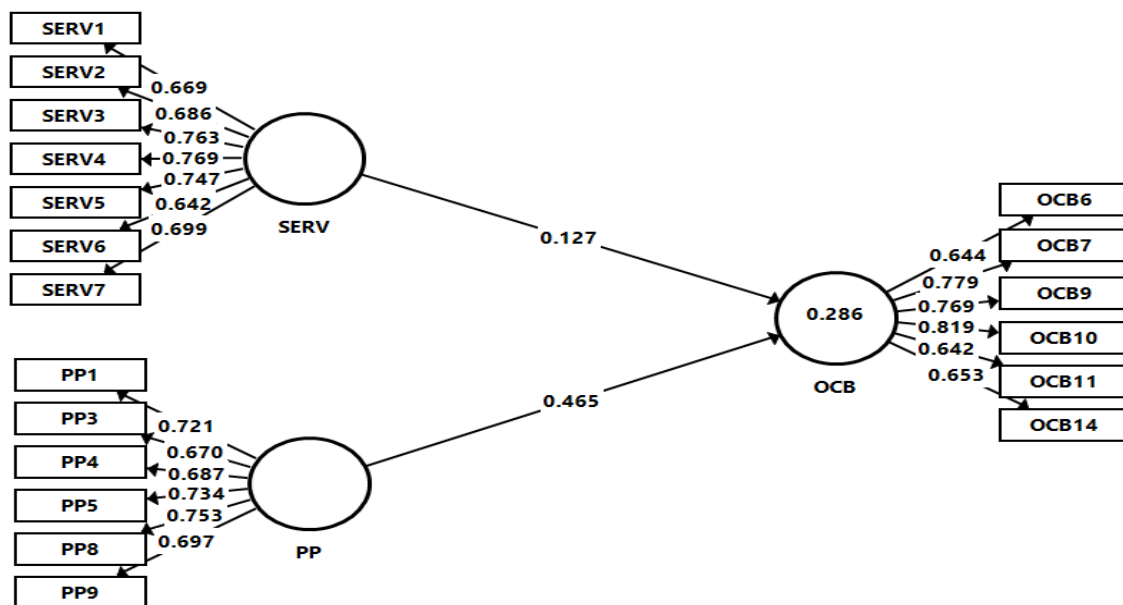


Figure 1. Structural Model

**Discussion**
The purpose of the study is to test a theoretical model about the relationship between proactive personality, OCB, and servant leadership on a sample of teachers working in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia. The specific objective is to determine the relationship between servant leadership and proactive personality and OCB. The findings revealed a

significant and positive relationship between servant leadership and teacher OCB. The finding of this study is expected to be in line with those of previous studies such as (Ghalavi & Nastiezaie, 2020; Kumar et al., 2022; Rosnani, 2018; Van der Hoven et al., 2021; Wulandari et al., 2021). At the school level, teachers are more likely to collaborate with principals who care about their personal development and treat them with a positive and humble attitude. This evoked emotion is likely to encourage teachers to display OCB as a form of appreciation. Following the premise of social exchange theory, principals' servant leadership behaviour influences teachers in a way that creates a sense of obligation in the teachers, who then reciprocate by demonstrating OCB in their schools. Furthermore, servant leaders model servanthood for teachers through their actions. Because the principal holds the highest position in the school's organisational hierarchy, their behaviour becomes the focus and attention of all teachers. Even servant leadership principals can communicate their expectations through formal processes (for example, rewards and policies) and personal examples such as how school members and visitors are treated at school.

Next, the findings of this study support previous studies that show a positive and significant direct relationship between proactive personality and OCB (Farooq et al., 2019; Zaman & Bilal, 2021; Nadeem et al., 2021). Indeed, when compared to servant leadership, proactive personality is the most important predictor of teacher OCB. Teachers with a proactive personality always look for opportunities and try to obtain resources that will help them achieve their goals. They may use some of their resources to perform essential tasks and the rest to participate in OCB. Teachers who are proactive and have more resources may believe they are more competent, which encourages them to exhibit OCB. Furthermore, teachers with a proactive personality are perceived to be more confident in making their ideas a reality. They may have a high level of self-efficacy, which makes them more courageous to face various global educational challenges in order to make meaningful changes to the school. As a result, proactive teachers are willing to go above and beyond to ensure the success of the activities or programmes they implement.

Theoretically, by examining the factors that predict teacher OCB, this study adds to the literature on leadership, individual characteristics, and human resource management. Understanding the needs of teachers is necessary to improve teacher OCB because the education sector is constantly changing. Indeed, it is critical to identify the leadership styles and individual characteristics that increase school effectiveness and are highly dependent on teacher OCB. Thus, this study fills a gap by linking the servant leadership style and proactive personality with OCB, which is critical for implementation in school organizations. Practically, this study benefits school administration, particularly in terms of policy development and human resource management. The study's findings indicate that leaders who use the servant leadership style can increase teachers' proclivity to exhibit OCB. To improve OCB, principals should use a servant leadership approach when dealing with teachers. Leadership training should focus on skills that foster empathy, insight, putting employees first, and selflessness. The findings of this study indicate that proactive personality is a strong predictor of OCB, particularly in the context of education. Teachers with a proactive personality are more likely to exhibit OCB. As a result, the findings suggest that teacher selection criteria should take proactive personality into account in order to improve teacher OCB. Furthermore, the education sector, which is constantly changing, is in desperate need of teachers who are more innovative, creative, and adaptable to environmental changes.

However, this study is also subject to several limitations. A cross-sectional study design, in which data is collected only once, provides only a current picture of the phenomena

associated with servant leadership and proactive personality toward OCB. A longitudinal study using data collection activities over a long period of time is more appropriate for understanding the relationship being studied in depth. Indeed, qualitative methods can be used to delve deeper into OCB issues among teachers. Future research can take into account other factors such as organizational characteristics and job design characteristics to get a more complete picture of the factors that motivate teachers to exhibit OCB.

**Conclusion**
Overall, this study achieved its objective of understanding the relationship between servant leadership and proactive personality and teachers' OCB. The findings show a significant and positive relationship between servant leadership and teacher OCB. Similarly, proactive personality was discovered to have a positive significant relationship with teachers' OCB. In fact, proactive personality is a stronger predictor of teacher OCB than servant leadership. The findings of this empirical study have contributed to a better understanding of the need for servant leadership and proactive personality in managing school organizations because understanding teachers' needs and motivations is critical to promoting teacher OCB. Teachers with proactive personalities are obviously more willing to exhibit OCB. As a result, in order to improve OCB among teachers, the selection criteria for prospective teachers must also consider proactive personality traits. Furthermore, school organizations should adopt a servant leadership style, and principals should receive appropriate training to develop the characteristics of servant leaders. This will assist principals in being more servant-like toward teachers, and in turn, teachers will exhibit OCB.

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