

Servant Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior: The Mediating Role of Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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Abstract

Innovative work behavior is a vital for organizational profitability, competitive advantage, and long-term success. Extant literature calls for a better understanding of the factors which influence individuals' innovative behavior at work and underlying mechanism for servant leadership to positively influence employee innovation behavior within an organization. Drawing insight from social exchange theory, this paper investigates the effect of servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior as antecedents of innovative work behavior as well as the mediating effect of organizational citizenship behavior in linking servant leadership and innovative work behavior. A sample of 503 full-time workers, mainly from Saudi Arabia, participated in the study. The hypotheses were tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results showed that servant leadership and organizational citizenship behavior predict innovative work behavior, and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) partially mediated servant leadership's effect on employees' innovative behavior. The implications of these findings for theoretical development and future research are discussed.

Keywords Servant leadership, Innovative Work Behavior, Organizational Citizenship Behavior.

Introduction

Firms that want to sustain superior performance in increasingly complex and dynamic environments need to become more innovative in order to identify those opportunities (Shalley and Gilson, 2004). Innovation initiatives are associated with employees' human capital and work behavior (Chen and Huang, 2009). In today's dynamic and hyper-competitive corporate world, innovation is a critical source of organizational profitability, competitive advantage, and long-term success (Amankwaa et al., 2019; Hughes et al., 2018; Newman et al., 2018; Yuan and Woodman, 2010). In response to the dynamic corporate world, employees are encouraged to strive for innovation by engaging in innovative behavior (Hong et al., 2016).

Innovative work behavior refers to employee creation and implementation of innovative ideas while performing their jobs to improve their performance on tasks, in groups, or within their organization (West et al., 1990).

Organizations need to instill an innovative mentality in their employees in order to generate more value creation and ensure their long-term survival and success (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2003). According to Javed et al (2018), leadership is critical in encouraging and supporting employees' innovative behavior. Servant leadership is one leadership style that has a strong foundation for encouraging employees to be more innovative (Zhu and Zhang, 2020). Servant leaders are those whose primary concern is their followers, with organizational concerns on the periphery (Patterson, 2003). Such leadership is crucial in facilitating innovative employee behaviors, which are discretionary actions that are not part of formal job tasks or organizational reward systems (Janssen, 2000; Liden et al., 2014).

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) has been highlighted as one of the most desired employee-level outcomes in the workplace (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Capaldi (1992) defines OCB as a form of informal behavior outside of expectations. In other words, OCB is not listed directly in the employee's job description. OCB is desirable because it has a positive effect on the sustainability of the organization (Utami et al., 2021). Employee OCB contributes to the effective functioning of any organization (Organ, 1988) and is critical to creating better social relations and higher effectiveness at the individual, group, and organizational levels (Podsakoff et al., 2014). According to Smith et al (1983); Vandyne et al (1995), OCB fosters employees to make innovative suggestions to their colleagues. Turnipseed and Turnipseed (2013) suggest that OCB is based on inventive behavior that has the potential to stimulate creativity.

Some scholars have focused on the aspects that affect employees' innovative behavior and how to support that innovation (Yuan and Woodman, 2010). According to Li and Zheng (2014), there is a lack of comprehensive research on factors affecting employee innovation behavior. Consistent with this, management scholars have been interested in understanding what factors influence individuals' innovative behavior at work (Scott and Bruce, 1994; Woodman et al., 1993). Moreover, empirical evidence about the role of servant leadership on employees' innovation is still scarce (Cai et al., 2018; Jaiswal and Dhar, 2017; Newman et al., 2018; Yoshida et al., 2014). Furthermore, scholars indicate that there might be other mediating mechanisms in the relationship between servant leadership and employees' innovative behavior (Faraz et al., 2019; Iqbal et al., 2020; Jan et al., 2021; Su et al., 2020). The literature has emphasized the importance of testing the relationship between servant leadership and innovative behavior among different cultures and countries, which may yield different results (Cai et al., 2018; Su et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2019).

This research has responded to the literature call by developing and testing a model that aims to investigate the effect of servant leadership and OCB as antecedents of innovative work behavior. Also, examine OCB's mediating role in linking servant leadership and innovative work behavior. In terms of practice, this research will be beneficial to the literature on innovative behavior, especially in examining OCB's mediating role on the relationship between servant leadership and employees' innovative work behavior. Moreover, this study

will provide companies and leaders with practical implications for enhancing employees' innovative behavior in general and in Saudi Arabia specifically.

The next section describes the literature review and the model's hypotheses. The method section provides details about the sample and data collection, as well as the development and validation of the measurement instrument. The paper next presents the empirical findings with a discussion of the results. Finally, the main results and conclusions are presented, including implications, limitations, and future research directions.

Literature Review

The foundational theory for the present study is social exchange theory. Social exchange theory is a widely used theoretical framework that underpins the relationship between perceptions of leadership and employees' attitudinal and behavioral reactions (Choi et al., 2016; Madison and Eva, 2019). According to Blau (1964), social behavior is a result of an exchange process. This exchange refers to a reciprocal behavior (Gouldner, 1960). Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) state that a social exchange relationship is formed when employers look after their employees, producing benefits. Consequently, when an individual is cared for and positively perceived by a leader, he or she will practically and efficiently return and reciprocate the favor out of gratitude to the leader and the organization (Chia-An Tsai and Kang, 2019; Gouldner, 1960). Accordingly, a meta-analysis of existing literature by Eva et al. (2019) shows that servant leadership could effectively encourage employee behaviors that positively affect organizational citizenship, innovative behavior, and helping behavior.

Servant Leadership

Greenleaf (1979) was the first to introduce the term "servant leadership" in the literature. He stated that this leadership style stems from a desire to serve others. Servant leadership differs from other types of leadership, which focuses on enhancing the organization's performance and well-being; a servant leader is genuinely interested in helping and meeting the needs of his or her followers (Hoch et al., 2018; Liden et al., 2008). According to Van Dierendonck (2011), servant leadership is comprised of six behaviors: 1) empowering and developing people by fostering a self-confident attitude toward followers and giving them the power to recognize and solve organizational problems; 2) humility, which indicates how well a leader puts others' interests first, supporting them, facilitating their performance, and retreating when necessary; 3) authenticity, the ability to express oneself in ways that are compatible with one's inner sentiments and beliefs; 4) interpersonal acceptance, the ability to understand, experience, and recognize the cause of others' sentiments; 5) providing direction through instructions that ensures that followers understand expectations about their roles and obligations; and 6) stewardship, the ability to assume higher responsibilities and serve as role models for others. Servant leadership is linked to beneficial outcomes at the corporate, team, and individual levels (Eva et al., 2019). Empirical evidence suggests that servant leaders foster satisfaction, commitment, engagement, innovativeness, and performance among followers (Carter and Baghurst, 2014; Hammond et al., 2011; Liden et al., 2008; Mayer et al., 2008; Neubert et al., 2008; Yidong and Xinxin, 2013).

Innovative Work Behavior

The concept of innovative work behavior refers to promoting new creative ideas, processes, procedures, and products by accelerating the initiation and establishment of new

creative work (Farr and Ford, 1990). Innovative behavior is the result of an individual's initiative (Janssen, 2000). It generates solutions to the problems encountered within the organization (Widodo and Mawarto, 2020). According to Scott and Bruce (1994), employee innovative work behavior consists of three interrelated behavioral tasks: idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization. A study by De Jong and Den Hartog (2010) comprehensively explains innovative behavior. In the first phase of this process, the employee comes up with new and valuable ideas to help their organization address problems and provide innovative services. In the second stage, the employee seeks to offer these new ideas and solutions to his or her coworkers and leaders. At the last stage, implementation within the organization enables the employee to realize their solutions and ideas. Innovative work behavior is beneficial for the employees and the organization (Khan et al., 2021).

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organ (1988) defines the concept of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) as individual action that is discretionary, not immediately or openly recognized by the formal reward system, and contributive to the organization's overall effectiveness. Farh et al (2004) view OCB as activities that aren't explicitly stated in the employee's job description. This is in line with Organ's five dimensions of OCB: (1) altruism, behavior that assists persons in an organization with their tasks; (2) courtesy, which provides consultation and information to coworkers and respects their needs in order to avoid conflicts at work; (3) sportsmanship, the ability to accept less-than-ideal conditions without complaint; (4) civic virtue, participation in organizational operations and concern for the organization's survival; and (5) conscientiousness, which involves taking actions for the advantage of the organization. This definition shows that OCB has a positive impact on job performance and employee behaviors (Trong Tuan, 2017). OCBs are voluntary activities that are important and crucial for an organization's survival, success, effectiveness, and sustainability (Organ, 1997; Somech and Oplatka, 2014; Utami et al., 2021). OCB negatively affects turnover intention, absenteeism, and turnover (Podsakoff et al., 2000).

Research Framework

Figure 1 represents the conceptual framework of the study. It shows the mediating effects of OCB on the relationship between servant leadership and innovative work behavior. Based on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958) and empirical investigations (Elche et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2021; Xerri and Brunetto, 2013), it is predicted that employee innovative behavior will be maximized by the effects of servant leadership and OCB. Also, it is predicted that servant leadership triggers employee innovative behavior through OCB.

Servant Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Employee OCB is one of the most significant outcomes of servant leadership (Bavik et al., 2017; Chiniara and Bentein, 2016; Newman et al., 2017; Zhao et al., 2016). One of the antecedents of OCB has been identified as leadership styles (Trong Tuan, 2017), In particular, servant leadership (Hunter et al., 2013; Ilies et al., 2007; Neubert et al., 2008). The literature shows that servant leaders inspire their followers to go above and beyond their work responsibilities to demonstrate OCB (Ehrhart, 2004; Reed, 2016; Walumbwa et al., 2010). Similarly, (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002) state that there is a relationship between servant leadership and OCB. According to social exchange theory and a prior study by Pekerti et al. (2009), which proved the reciprocal nature of servant leadership, those who receive it are voluntarily willing

to reciprocate the favor. Accordingly, servant leadership is considered a leadership style that encourages subordinates to behave beyond expectations, or OCB (Amir, 2019). On the basis of this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Servant leadership is positively associated with high levels of OCB.

Servant Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior

Servant leadership encourages followers to achieve their goals by maintaining their focus and enhancing their motivation to innovate (Parris and Peachey, 2013; Van Dierendonck and Rook, 2010). Employing the theoretical lens of social exchange theory is useful in understanding the impact of servant leadership on employees' innovative work behavior (Faraz et al., 2019). From a social exchange point of view, Faraz et al (2019) note that servant leaders believe in forming a close relationship with subordinates by prioritizing them, helping them, and always being honest with them; as a result, followers become grateful and feel obligated to reciprocate. Numerous sources of empirical evidence show that servant leadership is effective in influencing employees' innovative work behavior (Cai et al., 2018; Khan, Mubarik, and Islam, 2021; Krog and Govender, 2015; Newman et al., 2018; Rasheed et al., 2016). In the presence of the discussed evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Servant leadership is positively associated with innovative work behavior.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Innovative Work Behavior

Previous literatures have established that employee innovative behavior is linked to other employees' work behaviors. A relationship exists between an employee's innovative behavior and organizational citizenship behavior (De Muylder et al., 2021). It is well established from a variety of studies that employee innovative behavior is linked to OCB (Podsakoff et al., 2000; Sharma and Bhatnagar, 2014; Xerri, 2013). According to Smith et al (1983), employees' OCB allows them to make innovative suggestions. In the same vein, Vandynne et al (1995) found that OCB enables employees to make innovative suggestions to their colleagues. According to social exchange theory, employees who have strong workplace relationships are more likely to reciprocate behavior to their colleagues and leaders (Constance et al., 2019). In a study by Gilmore et al. (2013), creative performance of employees and OCB are identified as advantageous for organizations. In light of the above theoretical discussion and empirical evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

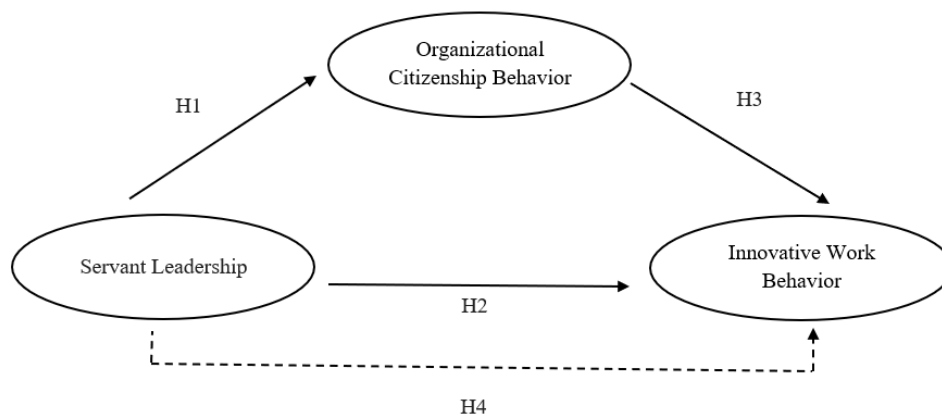
H3: OCB is positively related to innovative work behavior.

The Mediating Effects of Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Many fields and organizations have recognized the importance of leadership in OCB (Bottomley et al., 2016). According to (Greenleaf, 1979), leaders who implemented a servant leadership style led their subordinates to serve others. Based on social exchange theory, when employees receive favorable treatment from employers, they sometimes display voluntary behavior in return (Organ, 1990). From a social exchange perspective, employees respond to organizational support by engaging in extra-role behaviors (Blau, 1964). In general, OCB and innovative work behavior are interconnected. They affect each other because both are discretionary extra behavior (Khaola and Sephelane, 2013). The literature review shows that servant leadership style positively influences OCB and innovative behavior, among other leadership styles (Cai et al., 2018; Chiniara and Bentein, 2018). In the presence of the discussed evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Organizational citizenship behavior mediates the positive relationship between servant leadership and innovative work behavior.

Figure 1: The Research Model



Note: The dashed line represents the indirect effect of servant leadership on innovative work behavior once the mediator has been introduced in the model.

Methodology

Sampling

An empirical analysis was based on a sample of participants who work full-time in Saudi Arabia, including both public and private sectors. A non-probability sampling strategy, convenience sampling, was adopted, and the data were collected over a one-month period from October to November 2021 through an electronic survey link. The questionnaire was originally prepared in English; however, to ensure that the respondents understood the content of the survey, it was translated into Arabic, and the data was collected utilizing both languages integrated into one survey. To ensure the accuracy of the translation, a back-translation procedure was applied (Brislin, 1970). A total of 503 usable questionnaires were returned and considered for further analysis. The final sample consists of 38.8% male and 61.2% female participants. The mean age of the participants is 33 years. Among the participants, 86.5% have higher education degrees, with average overall experience being a little less than three years. Table 1 is a demographic breakdown of the sample. The high percentage of female representation reflects the researcher's network.

Table 1
Demographic Profile of Respondents — Survey

Variables	Frequency (N = 328)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	195	38.8%
Female	308	61.2%
Age		
22-29	222	44.1%
30-37	141	28%
38-45	88	17.5%
46-53	34	6.8%
54-60	18	3.6%
Education		
No schooling completed	1	.2%
High School	34	6.8%
Associate Degree	33	6.6%
Bachelor's Degree	329	65.4%
Master's Degree	88	17.5%
Ph.D. Degree	18	3.6%
Organizational Tenure		
Less than 6 months	101	20.1%
6-18 months	97	19.3%
18 months - 3 years	61	12.1%
3-5 years	77	15.3%
5+ years	167	33.2%
Supervisor Tenure		
Less than 6 months	143	28.4%
6-18 months	141	28%
18 months - 3 years	72	14.3%
3-5 years	69	13.7%
5+ years	78	15.5%
Sector		
Private	329	65.4
Public	174	34.6

Measures

All measures used in this study were derived from the literature and had high Cronbach's α scores and validity. A five-point Likert type scale anchored in (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree was employed for participant response. *Servant Leadership* was assessed with a Liden et al. (2015) 7-item scale, where two items were removed due to having low item loadings. *Innovative Work Behavior* was assessed with (Scott and Bruce, 1994) a 6-item scale, where two items were removed due to having low item loadings.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior was assessed with Lee and Allen (2002) 8-item scale of organizations (OCB-O), where two items were removed due to having low item loading.

OCBO was used due to its association in predicting job cognitions more than OCBI (Skarlicki and Latham, 1996, 1997). The summary of constructs and their respective item loadings are presented in Table 2. Some of the items were removed due to having low loadings and increasing the model fit. For items to be retained, each scale had to have an item loading above .50 (Hair et al., 2018).

Data Analysis and Findings

Table 2

Measurement Items Loading and Variance Inflation Factor

Measurement items	OL	VIF
Servant Leadership		
My leader makes my career development a priority.	0.82	1.98
My leader emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community.	0.85	2.11
My leader puts my best interests ahead of his/her own.	0.75	1.73
My leader gives me the freedom to handle difficult situations in the way that I feel is best.	0.81	1.88
My leader would NOT compromise ethical principles in order to achieve success.	0.71	1.52
Innovative Work Behavior		
I search out new technologies, processes, techniques, and/or product ideas.	0.72	1.40
I generate creative ideas.	0.83	1.76
I develop adequate plans and schedules for the implementation of new ideas.	0.75	1.35
I am innovative.	0.73	1.47
Organizational Citizenship Behavior		
I defend the organization when other employees criticize it	0.72	1.70
I am proud when representing the organization in public	0.82	2.35
I offer ideas to improve the functioning of the organization	0.83	2.27
I express loyalty toward the organization	0.85	2.47
I take action to protect the organization from potential problems	0.79	2.04
I demonstrate concern about the image of the organization	0.83	2.33

Notes: OL = Outer Loadings; VIF = Variance Inflation Factor

Any model has two components: the measurement model and the structural model. Through the measurement model, the study ran the preliminary analysis, including the descriptive analysis, using the Statistical Package for Social Science software (SPSS; version 26). For the structural equation modelling, to test the hypotheses and the mediation effects, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM; version 3) was conducted. Since the research constructed a reflective model, the research used the consistent PLS algorithm and the consistent bootstrapping methods in the calculations. The bootstrapping results of 5,000 sample cases were utilized for measuring the path significance.

Common Method Bias

As all measures were self-reported, the impact of Common Method Bias (CMB) should be analyzed. Established recommendations were followed to ensure that CMB was eliminated or minimized (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In order to control for CMB, we assured respondents that the data would be confidential and their identities would remain anonymous. Further, Harman's single factor test (Harman, 1976) was performed using IBM SPSS. The results indicate that the first factor shows a variance of 32.25%, which is below the specified limit of 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2012), demonstrating that CMB was not a concern in our model.

Measurement Model

The reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were all tested in assessing the measurement model of the reflective constructs. The values of Cronbach's alpha consistently exceed 0.7, as recommended by the literature (Cortina, 1993; Hair et al., 2019). The internal consistency of the variables was checked using composite reliability. The values of composite reliability must also exceed 0.7 (Chin, 2010; Hair et al., 2019); in the current study they fell between 0.84 and 0.92, ensuring the reliability of the constructs. The convergent validity of the scales was assessed with Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extraction (AVE) (Table 3). The values of the AVE were between 0.57 and 0.66, conforming to the expected minimum of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2014). The results indicate that the values are within the threshold range.

Table 3

Convergent Validity

Latent Variables	M	SD	CA	CR	AVE
Innovative work behavior	4.18	.57	0.75	0.84	0.57
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	4.17	.66	0.90	0.92	0.66
Servant Leadership	3.45	.86	0.85	0.89	0.62

N = 298. M= Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; CA = Cronbach's Alpha; CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted.

The discriminate validity of the scales was assessed with Fornell–Larcker criterion (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratios (Henseler et al., 2015). In the case of the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the results showed that the square root of AVE scores exceeds the correlation coefficient among the variables (Table 4). As shown in Table 5, the values of discriminant validity are within the threshold limit of HTMT.85 which indicates that multicollinearity is not a problem between the constructs (Kline, 2015). Thus, both convergent and discriminant validity were supported.

Table 4

Latent Variables	IWB	OCB	SL
IWB	0.76		
OCB	0.49	0.81	
SL	0.30	0.45	.79

Notes: SL = Servant Leadership; IWB = Innovative Work Behavior; OCB = Organizational Citizenship Behavior.

Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker)

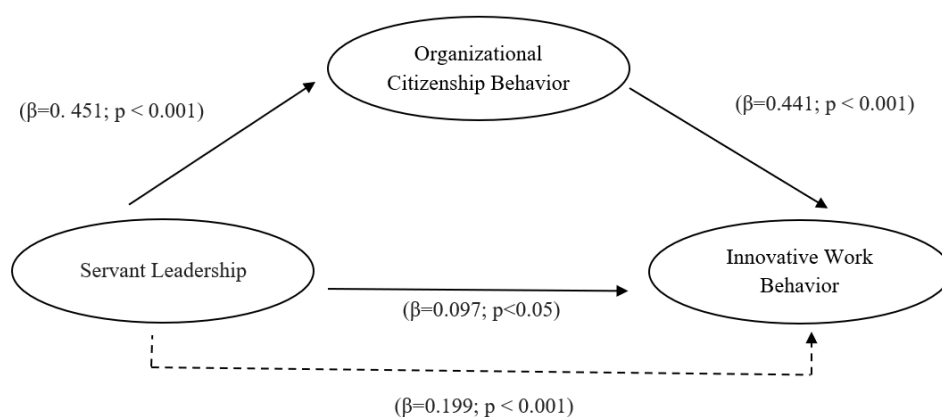
While all measurement items showed significant loadings, the initial measurement model yielded a significant goodness of fit to the data. Results of the structural model indicate that the fit indices provide a close fit to the model, with the data showcasing that $\chi^2=140.85$,

df=82, RMSEA=0.038, NFI= 0.96, GFI=0.96, and CFI=0.98. Overall, the model showed a good fit with all the fit indices deemed acceptable (Kline, 2015).

Table 5
Discriminant Validity (Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT))

Latent Variables	IWB	OCB	SL
IWB	1		
OCB	.58	1	
SL	.36	.51	1

Figure 2. Results for the Hypothesized Model



Structural Model

The study's hypotheses were tested by employing a structural path coefficient (Figure 2). The structural equation modelling tested both direct and indirect relations between the constructs (Table 6). The first hypothesis, that servant leadership is related to OCB, was found to be significant ($\beta=0.451$; $p < 0.001$). Thus, H1 is supported. Similarly, the second hypothesis, predicting a relationship between servant leadership and innovative work behavior, was found to be insignificant ($\beta=0.097$; $p < 0.05$). Hence, H2 is supported. The relation between OCB and innovative work behavior, as proposed in hypothesis 3, was found to be significant ($\beta=0.441$; $p < 0.001$). Thus, H3 is supported. The model proposed a mediating path relating to servant leadership and innovative work behavior through OCB. The mediating relation was found to be significant ($\beta=0.199$; $p < 0.001$), showing that OCB partially mediates servant leadership and innovative work behavior. Therefore, H4 is supported.

Table 6

Structural Path Estimates

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient	SD	t-statistics	p-value	Decision
H1	SL -> OCB	0.451	0.044	10.161	0.000***	Supported
H2	SL -> IWB	0.097	0.043	2.240	0.025*	Supported
H3	OCB -> IWB	0.441	0.046	9.673	0.000***	Supported
H4	SL -> OCB -> IWB	0.199	0.03	6.618	0.000***	Supported

*** $p < 0.001$.

* $p < 0.05$.

Discussion

Utilizing social exchange theory, this paper examines the factors that foster employees' innovative work behavior. More specifically, this paper has three objectives in mind: the first is to unravel the role of servant leadership in triggering innovative employee work behavior; the second is to reveal the relation between OCB and employees' innovative work behavior; third, this paper intends to ascertain the indirect effect of servant leadership on innovative work behavior through OCB. First of all, the findings align with the claim that servant leadership is related to innovative work behavior. Servant leadership, which empowers, supports, cares for, and fosters self-confidence among followers enables engagement in innovative work behavior. The study's findings are in line with the findings of earlier studies that relate servant leadership with innovative work behavior (Cai et al., 2018; Krog and Govender, 2015; Newman et al., 2018). Second, the study found that employees' OCB succeeded in enhancing their innovative work behavior, as expected. This finding corroborates earlier findings that suggest that OCB affects employees' innovative work behavior (Podsakoff et al., 2000; Xerri and Brunetto, 2013). Finally, apart from the above discussed direct relationships, the study also tested the mediating role played by OCB. The paper found support for the indirect effect of servant leadership on innovative work behavior through OCB, shedding light on servant leaders' influence on employees' positive behaviors to maximize citizenship and innovativeness for the organization. According to social exchange theory, employees who receive favorable treatment from their leaders are likely to return this favor by engaging in extra-role behaviors out of gratitude to the leader and the organization (Blau, 1964; Chia-An Tsai and Kang, 2019; Gouldner, 1960). Employees working for supportive leaders tend to develop citizenship behavior and therefore engage in innovative work behavior; this paper's findings support such argument. Consequently, supporting the hypothesized mediation model, this paper's main finding revolves around the ability of servant leaders to influence their employees' citizenship behavior and foster innovative work behavior.

Theoretical Contribution

The current study has multiple theoretical contributions. It sheds light on possible explanations for the interplay between leadership style and positive employee behaviors in the workplace. Even though this paper has discussed different social and contextual factors influencing the emergence of innovative behaviors, there remains a great deal of research to be done. With more evidence pointing to a link between servant leadership and innovative

work behavior, the need to understand this linking mechanism is even more pressing. Additionally, the study adds to existing empirical evidence related to the relationship between servant leadership and innovative work behavior. Moreover, the study highlights the factors that foster employees' innovative behavior, which can be considered antecedents. First, the research explicates the role of servant leadership and OCB as antecedents to fostering employees' innovative work behavior. The first antecedent is servant leadership that triggers innovative work behavior. The second antecedent is OCB's maximization of innovative work behavior. Servant leadership, which supports employees by giving them autonomy, involving them in decision making, and sharing information, leads to innovative behavior among employees. With OCB, employees engage in voluntary activities that are not listed directly in their job descriptions, promoting effective functioning of the organization. As employees receive positive feedback and increased support, they gain the necessary motivation to generate and promote new ideas and solutions for identified problems within the organization. As a result, employees become encouraged and engaged toward innovative work behavior. Second, the study revealed OCB's mediating role between servant leadership and innovative work behavior. Through its employee-centered philosophy, servant leadership adopts practices such as empowering employees, fostering growth and development, and recognizing abilities, needs, goals; this has the potential to provide employees with the required intrinsic motivation to engage in innovative behavior. As discussed earlier, perceiving this favorable treatment from their leader increases employees' attachment and loyalty for the organization, and engaging in extra-role behavior extends beyond normal role expectations, leading to innovative work behavior. Third, this paper contributes to social exchange theory by examining the proposed relationships between servant leadership, OCB, and employees' innovative work behavior. Simply put, servant leaders can enhance their employees' well-being through OCB, making them more motivated and attached to the organization; as a result, through reciprocity, employees become obligated to return favors and are more likely to generate and promote new ideas through innovative work behavior. Finally, the current study provides additional support for the effectiveness of servant leadership and OCB, in promoting innovative work behavior among employees from Saudi Arabia.

Practical Implications

The present study has multiple practical contributions. First, the study confirms the findings of earlier studies which found that servant leadership and OCB promote innovative work behavior. By showing strong concern for followers' growth, needs, and welfare, servant leaders may establish a trust-based relationship that enables the employees to pursue innovative work behavior. Employees' intrinsic need for achievement, belonging, and affiliation emerge from their OCB, which is positively related to work outcomes, such as innovative behavior. Second, the business industry, which is highly competitive and technologically advanced, makes employees' innovative work behavior more crucial, and servant leadership can promote employees' innovative work behavior. Additionally, organizations should recruit and hire servant leaders or train current leaders to embrace servant leadership. Through training programs, organizations can provide their managers with the skills and understanding needed to practice servant leadership. This is due to the managers tendency to generally provide employees with the necessary support to be motivated and adopt innovative behavior at the workplace. The final important practical implication arising from the study is the organizational benefits of employees' innovative

behavior. Employee innovativeness is considered one of the most effective strategies to promote organizational success, competitiveness, and sustainability. Companies need to provide employees with the necessary support, involvement, and empowerment to facilitate innovative behavior. When employees become more knowledgeable, they gain their own vision and abilities to achieving it. Consequently, they only need support from leaders to attain their own vision.

Limitations and Future Studies

Like any other study, this study has some limitations. One limitation is that all the data in this study were collected using self-report surveys, which might have had common method bias. Although the empirical results of the VIFs and Harman single factor test show that CMB was not influential, researchers are advised to employ multi-sources for data collection. It is better to minimize common method bias by using employees' provided data to measure leadership style, while the data from the immediate supervisor to measure employee behavior such as citizenship behavior and innovative work behavior. Second, this study is a cross-sectional survey, a method that is subject to certain disadvantages, as the data was collected at a specific point in time. Future research can mitigate such limitations by using a longitudinal survey. Another limitation is that the study collected data from both the private and public sectors. Therefore, future studies should be conducted to compare those two sectors. Also, future studies could be conducted in one specific sector, such as the hospitality or manufacturing industry, which could reinforce the validity of this study. Lastly, there is the difficulty of generalizing the results to other contexts, as this study was conducted in a single country, mainly consisting of participants from Saudi Arabia. That notwithstanding, there is room for future research to collect data from different cultures and countries.

Conclusion

The proposed model has examined the relationships among innovative work behavior antecedents, such as servant leadership and OCB. This study provides insights into employees' innovative work behavior, which organizations need to maintain their profitability, competitive advantage, and long-term success. Drawing insight from social exchange theory, this study has described the direct impact of servant leadership on employees' innovative work behavior, as well as the mediated impact of OCB between these constructs. The study's findings indicate that servant leadership and OCB can significantly predict innovative work behavior. Also, the paper found that servant leaders can influence their employees' innovative work behavior through OCB.

Statement of Declaration

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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Appendix

Survey Instruments

Q1: The following statements are about your behavior in the workplace. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I search out new technologies, processes, techniques, and/or product ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I generate creative ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I promote and champion ideas to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I investigate and secure funds needed to implement new ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I develop adequate plans and schedules for the implementation of new ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am innovative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q2: The following statements are about your behavior in the workplace. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I attend functions that I am not required to but that help the organizational image	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I keep up with developments in the organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I defend the organization when other employees criticize it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud when representing the organization in public	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I offer ideas to improve the functioning of the organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I express loyalty toward the organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I take action to protect the organization from potential problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I demonstrate concern about the image of the organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q3: The following survey items refer to your leader's style, as you perceive it. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
My leader can tell if something work-related is going wrong.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My leader makes my career development a priority.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would seek help from my leader if I had a personal problem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My leader emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My leader puts my best interests ahead of his/her own.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My leader gives me the freedom to handle difficult situations in the way that I feel is best.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My leader would NOT compromise ethical principles in order to achieve success.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>