

Center for Management Science Research

ISSN Online: 3006-5291

ISSN Print: 3006-5283

Vol.2 No.3 (2024)



The Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment between Perceived Supervisor Support and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Evidence from HEI's, KP, Pakistan

Dr. Adnan Khan¹

Assistant Professor, Institute of Business Administration, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Email: adnankhan@gu.edu.pk

Dr. Khalid Rehman^{2*}

Assistant Professor, Institute of Business Administration, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Corresponding Author Email: khalidrehman@gu.edu.pk

Dr. Ahmad Ali³

Assistant Professor, Institute of Business Administration, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, KP, Pakistan

Email: ahmad.iba@gu.edu.pk

Dr. Farhat Ullah Khan⁴

Assistant Professor, Institute of Business Administration, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Email: farhatullah@gu.edu.pk

Dr. Nafid Khan⁵

Assistant Professor, Institute of Business Administration, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, KP, Pakistan

Email: nafidkhan39@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between perceived supervisor support and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) by examining the mediating role of psychological empowerment, drawing on social exchange theory as its theoretical framework. A cross-sectional study methodology was employed to distribute self-report survey questionnaires to 285 employees from diverse higher education institutions. The research findings suggest a favorable impact of perceived supervisor

support (PSS) on psychological empowerment and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Additionally, the analysis demonstrates a partial mediation of psychological empowerment in the association between PSS and organizational citizenship behavior. The findings of this study establish a theoretical framework for organizational representatives in service sectors to effectively increase individual psychological empowerment and organizational citizenship behavior by providing support to psychologically empowered individuals.

Introduction

Based on the theoretical perspective of social exchange theory, this study proposes that psychological empowerment is crucial in influencing employees' behaviour since it allows them to develop and maintain connections of superior quality. Our proposition posits that psychological empowerment is a mediating factor that creates a linkage between Perceived supervisor Support (POS) and OCB. Psychological empowerment refers to the subjective perception of employees regarding their level of ability, influence, autonomy within the work environment, and the meaningfulness of their jobs (62). The statement above elucidates that employees acquire expertise and authority in their personal and professional lives, cultivating a discerning comprehension of navigating their situations effectively [12, 55]. According to scholarly sources, like Chang and Liu (17), Savery and Luks (63), and Laschinger and Finegan (50), it is said that people who are empowered in the workplace tend to experience increased personal, political, and interpersonal powers. As a result, these individuals often observe enhancements in their physical and mental well-being.

The global economic downturn has ushered in an era of intense competition across all industries, irrespective of origin or nature. Survival in this challenging landscape is reserved for organizations that possess cutting-edge technology and cultivate a genuinely content workforce (Teyfik, 2018). Given the universal significance of the education sector, being the primary source of professional human resources, education's role, particularly that of higher education institutions (HEIs), holds paramount importance in the socio-economic milieu. The academic staff within HEIs must be actively engaged in competitive endeavours (Akram et al., 2018). Furthermore, top management in organizations encourages employees to take on

additional roles that may not be explicitly outlined in their job descriptions, allowing for discretionary actions, an aspect termed organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Thompson et al., 2020). Research by Abdullah et al. (2020) and Kao (2017) indicates that fostering OCB can enhance organizational productivity by affording employees autonomy and recognizing their contributions. Conversely, in organizations characterized by a centralized and autocratic culture, employees may experience low empowerment, lack independence, and lag in achieving organizational goals. The terms “organizational justice” and “psychological empowerment” are employed to capture employees’ perceptions of fairness within organizations (Sultana et al., 2016).

Good social exchange dynamics distinguish an enduring job relationship through the contact between employees and employers, wherein the demands of both sides are duly acknowledged [40]. In this reciprocal dynamic, employers express concerns regarding their employees’ dedication, engagement, and trustworthiness. At the same time, individuals remain watchful in assessing if their employer upholds commitments by prioritizing their overall welfare [48, 61]. Eisenberger and colleagues developed the idea of organizational support and introduced the concept of perceived supervisor support (PSS) in their works cited [26, 27]. These works were influenced by social exchange theory, as referenced in [15, 37, 40].

Perceived supervisor support (PSS) refers to the subjective evaluation by employees of the degree to which their contributions to the organization are acknowledged, reflecting the level of consideration given to their overall well-being [5, 26, 61]. The organizational support theory posits that individuals form perceptions of supervisor support (PSS), which refers to a prevailing view regarding the extent to which their employer has a favourable or unfavourable attitude toward them [40, 61]. The literature also supports the notion that an individual’s perception of supervisor support (PSS) plays a significant role in their commitment to the organization, promoting a positive reciprocal reaction. Furthermore, it is seen that individuals strive to satisfy their socioemotional demands and incorporate their organizational membership into their social identity (21, 29). Furthermore, the extant literature suggests that individuals’ perception of supervisor support (PSS) positively influences their in-role performance, such as achieving goals, and their

extra-role performance, such as offering aid and support to colleagues (29). The primary aim of this study is to investigate the correlation between perceived supervisor support and OCB, specifically examining the potential mediating effect of employees' psychological empowerment. The practical and theoretical ramifications of comprehending the work setting that enables empowerment are substantial [16]. However, the precise processes that elucidate the process and rationale behind this phenomenon are still uncertain.

Problem Statement

Presently, higher education institutions (HEIs) are confronted with a combination of academic and financial difficulties, necessitating a reevaluation of their rules and regulations and an increased emphasis on the well-being of their employees. An organization's success and future trajectory, particularly within the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) framework, relies heavily on the teaching faculty. Nevertheless, a sense of dissatisfaction is prevalent among faculty members due to alleged exploitative behaviours exhibited by their superiors. The expression of discontent can detrimentally influence scholarly pursuits and cultivate interpersonal power dynamics among peers and within the institution. The significance of supervisors in higher education institutions (HEIs) is paramount, as they play a significant role in implementing policies. Therefore, it is reasonable to propose that providing positive supervisor support may shift employees' attitudes toward the organization. The primary objective of this study is to examine the relationship between perceived supervisor support (PSS) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) in teaching faculties of public sector higher education institutions. The study focuses on exploring the role of psychological empowerment as a mediating factor in this relationship.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Perceived Supervisor Support and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

According to Jain (2016), engaging in Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) entails employees making a deliberate choice to assist their colleagues, hence making a positive contribution to the general welfare of the organization. According to Wang's (2014) study, this behaviour is regarded as productive. The likelihood of achieving organizational goals effectively is increased when supervisors place

importance on the contributions of their employees and actively provide assistance for the development of their skills and competencies (Liu, Cho & Seo, 2011; Purba et al., 2015; Chenevert, Vandenberghe, & Tremblay, 2015). According to Deniz, Noyan, and Ertosun (2015), providing support to employees has been found to increase their level of engagement and foster a stronger sense of alignment with the firm. Additionally, this practice has cultivated a sense of trust among employees and their supervisors (Ismail et al., 2010) while effectively mitigating job-related stress (Yang et al., 2016). The relationship between organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and supervisor support is based on the principles of social exchange, as highlighted by Tremblay and Gibson (2016).

H1: A significant correlation exists between perceived supervisor support and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB).

Psychological Empowerment as a Mediator

Turnipseed and Vandewaa (2020) conducted a study that examined the relationship between several dimensions of Psychological Empowerment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior within a given industry. Their study demonstrated a significant correlation between the essential aspects of psychological empowerment and three specific components of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB): conscientiousness, benevolence, and sportsmanship. Furthermore, conscientiousness and competence have a favourable association, a crucial indicator of psychological empowerment. According to Vigoda-Gadot and Beeri (2012) proclamation, it may be posited that employees who perceive a sense of freedom and autonomy are inclined to demonstrate favourable responses towards the business, hence explaining Organizational Citizenship Behavior. Jose and Mampilly (2015) conducted an independent study in India's service industry to examine the correlation between perceived supervisor support and psychological empowerment. The regression analysis determined that perceived support from supervisors is significant in promoting increased levels of empowerment, cultivating employees' heightened sense of autonomy. The study's findings indicate that employees who experience psychological empowerment demonstrate a higher level of effectiveness in fulfilling their job responsibilities.

Employees who perceive support from their supervisors in their work environment are more likely to experience a heightened sense of psychological empowerment (Reference 32). Psychological empowerment refers to a collection of circumstances that facilitate individuals or groups in perceiving a sense of control over their work [39]. There is empirical research that establishes a direct correlation between Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) [76]. When individuals undergo the process of empowerment, they develop an awareness of the importance of their position and their capacity to exercise autonomy in decision-making. Individuals recognize that their efforts influence the organization's effectiveness, improving job performance [18] and job satisfaction. The proposition suggests that organizations with keen insight enable their workforce by engaging them in decision-making processes, cultivating a perception that their job possesses significant worth (49). Recent studies have provided evidence suggesting that the psychological empowerment of employees can confer a competitive advantage to organizations [56].

Furthermore, it is worth noting that psychological empowerment plays a crucial role in driving individuals' Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB). Previous studies consistently show a favourable association between OCB and psychological empowerment [46]. The hypothesis suggests that individuals who see their organizations recognizing their contributions would experience increased psychological empowerment, resulting in higher organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) [32, 49].

H2: Psychological empowerment is a mediating factor in the relationship between perceived supervisor support (PSS) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).



Methodology

Data for this study were gathered from teaching faculties of all cadres, i.e., lecturers, Assistant Professor, Associate Professors, and Professor of public sector higher education institutes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) through an online questionnaire 7 point Likert scale ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree. Out of 350 questionnaires, 285 were found correct in all respects. SPSS version 26 and AMOS software were used to analyze data. Correlation, regression, reliability, and data validity were analyzed to check the current study hypothesis. A different-item scale was applied to measure the variable used in this study, which was extracted from the literature. Psychological empowerment was measured by four dimensions: impact, meaning, self-determination, and competence (Spreitzer, 1995). Organizational citizenship behavior was measured by its five dimensions: altruism, courtesy, civic virtue, sportsmanship, and conscientiousness (Niehoff & Moorman, 1993), while perceived supervisor support was covered by six questions derived from the study (House & Dessler, 1974).

Result

Table 4.1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2 / df	CFI	GFI	TLI	RMSEA
Null model	3147.73	216					
Three – factor model	478.434	197	2.43	0.97	0.94	0.96	0.05
Two – factor model A	755.78	196	3.86	0.77	0.81	0.83	0.06
Two – factor model B	538.43	196	2.74	0.83	0.80	0.82	0.07
Two – factor model C	872.76	196	4.45	0.82	0.76	0.80	0.11
One factor model	1487.54	198	7.51	0.72	0.64	0.67	0.12

Table 4.1 reveals that all constructs' discriminant validity was tested by maximum likelihood confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) using AMOS 21. Based on this confirmatory factor analysis, which contains the results of the factorial analysis of the data, a significant factorial fit was obtained for a three-factor model hypothesized in the above table. i.e., $\chi^2 = 478.434$, $df = 197$, $\chi^2 / df = 2.43$, $CFI = 0.97$, $GFI = 0.94$, $TLI = 0.96$ and $RMSEA = 0.05$. Hence, the results demonstrate that the

discriminant validity of the experiment is satisfied.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Matrix

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	SS	PE	OCB
SS	4.8520	1.1718	1	.427**	.283**
PE	5.8010	.52584	.427**	1	.293**
OCB	5.1441	48951	.283**	.293**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 – tailed).

Note: Supervisor Support (SS), Psychological Empowerment (PE), Organizational Citizenship behaviour

Table 4. 2 shows a statistically significant positive association between predictor variables (SS and PE) and the outcome variable (OCB). The link between Supervisor support and PE ($r = .427^{**}$), Supervisor support and OCB ($r = .283^{**}$), and PE and OCB ($r = .293^{**}$).

Table 4.3: Regression Outcomes

Variables	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-statistic	Prob.
C	3.617	0.304	11.895	0.000
PE	0.196	0.058	3.400	0.001
SS	0.118	0.024	4.955	0.002
R-squared	0.116	Sum squared residual		60.154
Adjusted R-squared	0.110	F-statistic		37.384
S.E. of regression	0.46186	Prob (F-statistic)		0.000
Durbin-Watson	1.842			

Dependent Variable: OCB

Predictors: (Constant), SS, PE

Table 4.3 illustrates the regression outcomes of the variables. The above table shows that the value of R² explains the change or variation. The value of R² is 12% (0.116), which demonstrates that the independent variables (PSS and PE) bring a 12% variation in the outcome variable (OCB). The study shows that PSS has a statistically positive significant influence on OCB ($\beta = .118$, $p = 0.002 < 0.05$). Further, the current study results also specify that PE significantly positively affects OCB ($\beta = 0.196$, $p = 0.001 < 0.05$). Furthermore, the value of F-statistics is greater than 10, which reveals that the overall model is fit. Moreover, there is no autocorrelation issue in the above table as the value of Durbin Watson is in the range, i.e., 1.842 (1.5 to 2.5).

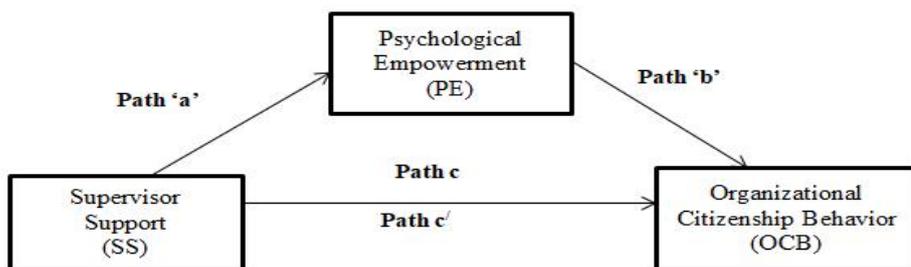


Table 4.4: Mediation Analysis

Model Summary		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>F stat</i>		24.5562***	63.1504***	18.5146***	18.5146***
<i>R</i> ²		0.0798	0.1824	0.1161	0.1161

Model	IV.	DV	Beta	t-statistic	Prob.
Path c	SS	OCB	.1180	4.9554	0.000
Path a	SS	PE	.1917	7.9467	0.000
Path b	PE	OCB	.1960	3.3996	0.0008
Path c/	SS	OCB		3.1114	0.002
	PE		.0805		

Sobel Test	Effect	se	z	Prob.
	.0376	.0121	3.1049	.0019

Table 4.4 presents the mediation analysis results performed using the Process macro, a statistical tool developed by Hayes (2013). As illustrated in the table above, the results indicate that Psychological Empowerment (PE) acts as a partial mediator in the association between Supervisor Support (SS) and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). Furthermore, a regression analysis was conducted in the fourth stage, which included the predictor variable (SS) and the outcome variable (OCB), with the mediator variable (PE) incorporated into the model. A notable reduction in the influence of social support (SS) on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) was discovered. The researchers utilized the Sobel test to determine the importance of the indirect effects in the study (Sobel, 1982). The study's findings indicate that psychological empowerment played a significant role as a mediator of supervisor support ($z = 3.1049, p = 0.0019 < 0.05$).

Discussion and Conclusion

The study's primary goals were to investigate the relationship between supervisor support and organizational citizenship behavior and to shed light on the intricate mediation process. Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Supervisor Support (SS) are mediated by psychological empowerment. The following results from the current investigation lend credence to the proposed model:

The findings showed a substantial relationship between Organizational Citizenship Behavior and perceived supervisor support, which is in line with Hypothesis 1. The findings of Rahman and Karim (2022) and Sarwar et al. (2023) were corroborated by our findings. The findings demonstrate that when people believe their organization values their involvement in the organization's objectives and cares about their well-being, PSS's beneficial effects on OCB endure. The OCB rises in tandem with the PSS. Additionally, the study by Siyal et al. (2023) found that supervisory support enhances job satisfaction, which in turn promotes helpful conduct. The ratio of the number and quality of the contributions and exchanges between coworkers and supervisors determines how satisfied both parties are (Soleimani et al., 2023). Employees are happy when their supervisors provide them benefits and assistance, and they reciprocate by giving them OCB, which meets the supervisor's needs (Soleimani et al., 2023). OCB rises in tandem with the quality of these exchanges. Giving insightful performance reviews, promoting best practices, and making promotions accessible are examples of high-quality interactions that foster loyalty, support, and trust between parties (Thelen and Yue, 2021). In return, workers exhibit greater levels of dedication, proficiency, and OCB (Ullah et al., 2021). Conversely, low-quality exchanges include the establishment of formal organization authority and standard perks, which result in repetitive performances and eventually breed resentment and a sense of unfairness.

Supporting Hypothesis 2, the results of this study demonstrate mediated linkage, confirming the degree to which psychological empowerment explains the positive relationship between perceived supervisor support (PSS) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). In organizational settings where people feel empowered to actively engage in sustainable behaviors, PSS aids employees in moving forward. Employees therefore need perceived supervisor support (PSS) since they influence

and create favorable work circumstances on their own without assistance from the organization. Thus, the connection between PSS and OCB is mediated by psychological empowerment. The study's conclusions also align with those of Ullah et al. (2021), Wang et al. (2023), Yao et al. (2024), and Younas et al. (2023). The hypothesis is supported by the results of the current data, which show partial mediation since some of the influence travels through direct paths while others travel through indirect paths.

Theoretical Contributions

This study makes a significant addition to the literature by connecting and integrating the earlier findings in a number of ways. Organizational Citizenship Behavior focuses on a small number of attitudes relevant to the workplace. According to research on organizational citizenship behavior, there is a reciprocal interaction between individuals and organizations. The current study will contribute in a number of ways to the establishment of the suggested links in the mediation model.

First, among other well-researched constructs in management research/organizational behavior, we added to the body of knowledge on PSS by proposing and verifying the positive correlation between PSS (a trait where people's working behavior and attitudes are influenced by an individual's perception of the main phenomenon that describes their organization) and psychological empowerment. We argue, using social exchange theory, that psychological empowerment can mediate the relationship between Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and PSS.

Psychological empowerment gives workers autonomy and control by assisting them in making decisions and addressing problems. These findings are extremely important because they provide insight into how workers or individuals may impact the psychological insights, learning, and vitality of others at work, which in turn impacts their behavior. We expanded the literature on perceived supervisor support (PSS) as an independent variable and psychological empowerment as a mediator, despite the fact that previous research has not sufficiently demonstrated the relationship between psychological empowerment and PSS.

Practical Implications

In addition to offering managers and practitioners useful insights, the findings aid in resolving issues faced by workers in the manufacturing and service industries. Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), psychological empowerment, and PSS were all well understood as a result of this study.

To reduce employee turnover, managers in the manufacturing and service sectors should concentrate on developing and strengthening employee support and a sense of belonging. Companies might make an effort to offer advocates who are tailored to each employee's needs. If a person has a high level of supervisory support (in terms of social and emotional support), they stay with the company. Employees will view supervisor support as a positive aspect of a company if they receive it. Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is a crucial component that helps firms assess how well employees are performing in relation to their work. Every employee has unique needs and expectations that must be met, and managers need to be aware of this. In order to improve Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), they should assist their employees by offering them flexible work schedules, motivating working circumstances, and a fair wage.

Since psychological empowerment can lead to increased productivity and job satisfaction without incurring additional costs, management should maintain and enhance current levels of psychological empowerment and develop plans to raise them. Through participation, support networks, information exchange, incentives, task delegation, and decision-making chances, management should empower staff members.

Limitations and Future Directions

First, by looking at the relationships between the variables, the study found a significant correlation between PSS, psychological empowerment, and OCB, but it also stated that this link requires a more thorough explanation. According to a hypothesis about their association, when supervisors are viewed as supporting employees, the organization empowers them. The relationship between these characteristics should be further investigated in future research in settings other than educational institutions, such as manufacturing companies.

The second possible drawback is that this study only looked at HEIs from KP;

however, people with different identities and cultures can have different psychosomatic insights. Therefore, by accounting for cultural and demographic variations, similarities can be seen.

The third drawback is that the cross-sectional research methodology makes it impossible to determine a causal relationship between the studied variables. In order to find potential reciprocal interactions, it is advised that experimental and longitudinal approaches be used in future research.

This study found a direct and indirect relationship between Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), psychological empowerment, and perceived supervisory support. Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and psychological empowerment may eventually have a moderating connection.

To prevent confounding effects on the relationships under study, researchers adjusted for employee age, gender, marital status, educational attainment, job type, and work experience. These might be included as study variables in further research with various demographic traits that have distinct components or outcomes of PSS, psychological empowerment, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).

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