

## **LEADING WITH DEMOCRACY: UNPACKING THE PATHWAYS FROM DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP TO ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

**Muhammad Bilal**

M.Phil. Business Administration at The Superior University Lahore, Pakistan.

Email: [Bilalayub47@gmail.com](mailto:Bilalayub47@gmail.com)

**Dr. Maria Saleem**

Assistant professor at The Superior University Lahore, Pakistan.

Email: [Mariasaleem.fsd@superior.edu.pk](mailto:Mariasaleem.fsd@superior.edu.pk)

**Maria Maqsood**

M.Phil. Business Administration at The Superior University Lahore, Pakistan.

Email: [maria8958472@gmail.com](mailto:maria8958472@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

*The current research examined the connection between democratic leadership and the organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Pakistan and organizational commitment was put forward as the mediator. Despite the fact that most studies on leadership in the education sector have focused mainly on transformational and transactional paradigm, little empirical analysis has been given to the democratic leadership as a participative form of governance. Considering the mounting level of performance expectations and the bureaucracy of governance that Pakistani universities face, demystifying the way participative leadership leads to discretionary faculty action is of theoretical and practical importance. The study had a quantitative design which used cross sectional survey studies design. The academic personnel of both public and private HEIs in Pakistan were used as the sources of information. Democratic leadership, organizational commitment and OCB were measured using established measurement scales. The structural equation modeling (SEM) was adopted to analyze the measurement model and test the hypothesized structural relationships, including mediation effects. The methodological rigor*

and strong validity of the findings were assessed by reliability, convergent axiom, discriminant axiom and bootstrapped indirect effects. Results indicated that OCB had a positive relationship with democratic leadership in faculty members. In addition, democratic leadership showed positive relation with organization commitment which in turn significantly forecasted OCB. The mediation analysis reflected that the organizational commitment partly mediated the relation between democratic leadership and OCB, which implies that participatory leadership positively influences discretionary behaviors directly and indirectly through the enhancement of psychological attachment to the institution. The findings are of great benefits to university administrators and policy makers. Academic leadership can strengthen the commitment of the faculty and voluntary participation of the faculty by promoting shared decision-making practices, faculty voice, and transparent administrative governance. As a result, the democratic leadership practices could serve as a strategic tool to enhance institutional effectiveness, cooperation and sustainable performance in higher education institutions. Participative governance competencies should thus be integrated into leadership development programs in the universities to produce committed and citizenship-oriented academic communities. The research can contribute to the literature on leadership and organizational behavior in three major ways. To begin with, it contributes to the development of the knowledge about democratic leadership as a specific and contextually-focused style in higher education. Second, it determines organizational commitment as a central mediating variable between participative leadership and discretionary faculty behavior. Third, it has enhanced research on global leadership as it is an empirical study of the higher education sector in Pakistan, where the context is underrepresented by other studies in the field of organizations.

**Keywords:** Democratic leadership Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Organizational Commitment.

## INTRODUCTION

Universities and colleges are increasingly facing the pressure, which are related to quality assurance, research output, accreditation requirements, and accountability to the stakeholders. In this context, institutional effectiveness does not only depend on performance of formal roles but also on discretionary behaviors that enable the process of coordination,

## **LEADING WITH DEMOCRACY: UNPACKING THE PATHWAYS FROM DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP TO ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

---

*collaboration, and responsiveness. These additional actions that help to strengthen organizational operations beyond the designated tasks are contained in organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Empirical studies in the field of higher education are constantly pointing to leadership as a crucial factor behind OCB as leadership has been found to have a significant impact on employee engagement and willingness to be involved in activities beyond the mandate of the contract (Abuowda et al., 2024).*

*Pakistan is a both theoretically and practically relevant setting in the study of leadership driven OCB in higher learning institutions. Statistics in the Pakistani higher education sector show that the system has more than 250 institutions and produces about 0.2million skilled people on average each year thus providing a reflection of the scale in which faculty habits can influence the national development outcomes (Khan et al., 2023). However, the governance models in most of the HEIs are highly centralized and faculty are usually faced with less power when it comes to making decisions concerning teaching, service and academic activities. In this case, the role of the leadership style gains a greater value in determining the desire of the faculty to participate in voluntary service, committee services, peer support, and student service than will be the case with formal conditions (Khan et al., 2023).*

*The concept of democratic leadership is highly relevant due to the ability to predict participation, consultation, transparency, and joint decision-making. With the unlike leadership styles where leaders focus on charisma or top-down authority, democratic leadership lays the voice in the center of governance hence allowing staff to play their key roles in making institutional decisions. The current studies have shown that OCB is correlated with democratic leadership and other positive work performance, which indicates that democratic leadership could be effective in promoting discretionary behaviours (Ghraiiri, 2024). Participative governance has a particularly significant impact in university cases since the academic activity is based on collegiality and professional autonomy, which makes the idea of democratic leadership conceptually aligned with the preferences of*

*International Research Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vol.:04, Issue: 04, Oct-Dec, 2025*  
faculty members regarding participating in institutional life (Abuowda et al., 2024).

However, psychological and attitudinal mediation processes often affect leadership influence on OCB instead of pure influence. The theorized pathway of leadership to discretionary effort has been organizational commitment, which is a psychological attachment to the institution. More recent structural equation modelling (SEM) findings show that organizational commitment may also act as a mediator between leadership variables and the OCB-related outcomes, thus supporting the plausibility of a mediation model (Hermanto et al., 2024). Subsequently, democracy as leadership can positively impact faculty OCB through participative, equitable, and voice leadership, which will improve faculty loyalty to the institution; loyal faculty, on the other hand, would be more likely to be reciprocated with voluntary contributions (Ghraiiri, 2024; Hermanto et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, empirical studies that directly examine the relationships between democratic leadership and OCBs that include the role of organizational commitment as a mediating variable are also few in Pakistani HEIs. A considerable portion of the literature on higher education leadership has explored alternative methodologies of leadership and less literature has placed democratic leadership as a specific method of participative governance with specific explanatory value in hierarchical settings. In order to close this gap, the current research suggests and validates a mediation model where the democratic leadership is correlated with OCB directly and indirectly via organizational commitment (Hermanto et al., 2024). Such emphasis makes leadership research more contextualized and comprehensive in its comprehension of the mechanisms of participative leadership in a South Asian system of higher education, as well as provides practical advice to university administrators willing to increase discretionary faculty engagement (Khan et al., 2023).

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

*This research aims to achieve the following:*

- 1. To investigate the contribution of democratic leadership to organizational commitment:*

## **LEADING WITH DEMOCRACY: UNPACKING THE PATHWAYS FROM DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP TO ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

---

2. *To examine the effects of democratic leadership on organizational commitment.*
3. *To determine the connection between organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).*
4. *To examine the mediating effect of organizational commitment in the correlation between democratic leadership and OCB.*

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. *What is the contribution of democratic leadership to organizational commitment?*
2. *What are the effects of democratic leadership on organizational commitment?*
3. *What is the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)?*
4. *Does organizational commitment mediate the relationship between democratic leadership and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)?*

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT.**

#### **DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP**

*Democratic leadership is a style of participative leadership in which leaders consult subordinates in decision making, promote voice, open-ended communication, and decentralize power, as opposed to centralizing it (Gastil, 1994). Similar to classical leadership theory, consultative leadership and group participation were identified as a difference between democratic and autocratic leadership approaches to leadership. In modern organizational studies, the concept of democratic leadership is usually operationalized with the help of participative decision-making and transparency and empowerment practices that establish an atmosphere of inclusion and equality (Haskasap et al., 2022; Ghrairi, 2024).*

*Academic work in higher education institutions (HEIs) is especially sensitive to style of leadership since it is professionalized and inherently guided by autonomy, collegiality, and shared governance. Democratic leadership is theoretically aligned with universities because faculty usually seek consultation in departmental affairs, curriculum, and committee*

*decision-making (Abuowda et al., 2024). When a system has bureaucratic regulations, this style of leadership may amplify a sense of ownership among faculty members and decrease psychological distance between the administration and the academic personnel (Xu, 2023).*

*The case of Pakistan provides further applicability since management of much of the HEIs may be founded on centralized decision making and high-power distance standards that may result in the inhibition of voice and participation. In institutions where the faculty feels less procedural fairness or has less influence, motivational gains of participative leadership can particularly be eminent (Khan et al., 2023). A developing literature on education-centered leadership studies emphasizes that joint leadership behaviors enhance faculty attitudes and collaborative behavior, indicating that democratic leadership may be used as a lever to enhance the institutional activity in the conditions of hierarchical restriction (Haskasap et al., 2022).*

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR (OCB) AT ACADEMICS**

*Organizational citizenship behavior refers to optional and non-essential activities not entirely represented in job descriptions but which are beneficial to organizations. OCB in universities is often characterized by mentoring younger colleagues, promoting departmental efforts, and holding non-office hours and other committees, providing services to students, and voluntarily participating in quality assurance efforts (Organ, 1988). These are the behaviors that lie at the center of institutional effectiveness since academic performance is not only tied to the performance, in terms of teaching and research but also cooperative and citizen-like behaviors that uphold the academic communities (Abuowda et al., 2024).*

*The OCB empirical studies have repeatedly revealed that the leadership and organizational climate can influence the discretionary behavior by creating the feelings of social exchange and motivational state in the employees. Within the context of education, OCB has been conceptualized as a major source of institutional flexibility and quality of services especially in situations where there is a shortage of resources (Podsakoff et al., 2009). Thus, leadership styles that would increase trust, autonomy, and shared*

## **LEADING WITH DEMOCRACY: UNPACKING THE PATHWAYS FROM DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP TO ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

---

*responsibility are likely to increase citizenship behaviors (Ghrai, 2024).*

*The faculty OCB is also receiving emerging empirical focus within the HEI landscape of Pakistan, with some studies that focus on understanding how the contextual conditions and the leadership impact the discretionary behaviors of the university teachers (Khan et al., 2023). The reason behind this is that HEIs are progressively becoming more dependent on faculty citizenship (e.g., committees, accreditation willingness, mentorship, involvement in students) to fulfill accountability demands.*

### **ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

*Organizational commitment is the psychic attachment of employees to their organization, which is usually understood as affective attachment, organizational goal identification, and an urge to continue to be affiliated to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Within a university setting, commitment can be the identification with the university mission, pride with affiliation, and goodwill to put in effort in the institutional initiatives that are not stipulated in the contract. The concept of commitment has been widely hypothesized as a proximal predictor of discretionary behaviors since employees who feel committed to an institution have the propensity to be returned in citizenship behavior (Hermanto et al., 2024).*

*Modern research still emphasizes the fact that commitment is not merely an attitude but also a behavioral force that may be used to describe why workers "decide to make a contribution beyond formal capacities, in the event where no extrinsic incentive exists (Hermanto et al., 2024). Leadership practices (e.g., distributed, authentic, empowering) in teacher-focused research have been connected to commitment that, in its turn, predicts positive outcomes in work. These results prove the rationale that the concept of commitment can act as an intermediary between leadership and OCB relationships (Xu, 2023).*

*Demonstrating commitment could be especially effective within the context of the Pakistan HEI setting, since the structural constraints (work overloads, resource constraints, bureaucratic pressures) would otherwise decrease the level of voluntary engagement (Khan et al., 2023). Such*

*constraints can be compensated by a leadership approach that enhances faculty commitment in terms of identification and readiness to work discretionary effort.*

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

*According to Social Exchange Theory (SET), workplace relations are controlled by reciprocity; when leaders are supportive, fair and inclusive, employees become compelled to respond with good attitudes and behaviors. Democratic leadership brings socioemotional resources (respect, voice, fairness) which reinforce relationship of exchange, which augment commitment and citizenship behaviors (Podsakoff et al., 2009). SET can thus offer such a direct mechanism: democratic leadership instils the sense of perceived obligation and trust, which will render OCB in a reciprocal response.*

*Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a supplement of SET describing the quality of motivation. SDT suggests that satisfaction of the autonomy, competence and relatedness needs forecasts an increased quality motivation and adaptive work outcomes (Deci et al., 2017). Democratic leadership is autonomy-supportive in that it equally involves decision power and encourages voice; it also facilitates relatedness in the inclusive interpersonal interactions. These needs can be met through democratic leadership so as to increase internalization of organizational goals and affective commitment, which in effect boosts discretionary behavior such as OCB (Xu, 2023).*

*The combination of SET + SDT enhances the level of theoretical sophistication: SET describes the social obligation and reciprocity pathway, and SDT describes the internalization and intrinsic motivation pathway. Universities are a particular field where autonomy and professional identity are core factors, and the participative form of democratic leadership is likely to encourage the need satisfaction and reinforce commitment-oriented citizenship.*

## **HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT**

### **DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP AND OCB**

*Democratic leadership is also likely to have a positive impact on OCB since participation and voice enhance the psychological sense of ownership*

## **LEADING WITH DEMOCRACY: UNPACKING THE PATHWAYS FROM DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP TO ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

---

*and readiness by the faculties to contribute towards institutional operations. Involving faculty and consulting them when it is necessary and treating staff as colleagues encourage employees to respond in extra-role behaviors that assist co-workers and contribute to the organization. This is aligned to SET where any inclusion leadership behaviors generate social exchange obligations that motivate citizenship (Blau, 1964).*

*Cooperative behaviors and commitment-oriented outcomes are associated with leadership practices that strengthen voice and collegial decision-making in educational systems (Haskasap et al., 2022). The current evidence among teacher samples states that the leadership affects teacher outcomes due to the cue that it effects the workplace climate to facilitate collaboration and discretionary engagement. Thus, the application of democratic leadership is expected to make faculty in the HEIs in Pakistan more likely to exhibit higher levels of OCB.*

### **HYPOTHESIS 1: DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP HAS A POSITIVE IMPACT ON OCB**

#### **DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

*Democratic leadership is expected to improve the level of organizational commitment since a sense of inclusion in the decision-making process is an indication of respect and fairness, which boosts the perceived organizational support and the level of relational trust (Xu, 2023). In SET, employees understand participative governance as a reward that should be reciprocated, which is manifested, in part, in greater commitment to the institution. Within the framework of SDT, participative leadership promotes autonomy and relatedness and makes internalization of organizational objectives easier as well as enhances affective commitment.*

*Teacher research indicates that leadership styles that focus on shared leadership and authenticity are linked to greater teacher commitment in most cases through trust and motivational mechanisms (Deci et al., 2017). This implies that commitment of HEIs can be enhanced through democratic leadership which bolsters faculty identity, voice, and belongingness. Such a*

*relation can be especially significant in Pakistan where the hierarchy of administration can otherwise undermine perceptions of inclusion (Hermanto et al., 2024).*

## **HYPOTHESIS 2: DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP HAS A POSITIVE IMPACT ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND OCB**

*The organizational commitment is likely to be the forebears of OCB since employees who have a sense of commitment tend to do acts that are likely to sustain organizational operations even when they are not obligated (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Commitment enhances the disposition of employees to invest discretionary effort and guard reputation of the organization and assist fellow organizational members, which are congruent with both exchange-based and identity-based accounts of citizenship (Hermanto et al., 2024).*

*Empirical studies centered on teachers also endorse the presence of commitment as a precursor of desirable results in the workplace and collaborative actions, which postulate that faculty will be more willing to indulge in voluntary actions that improve the performance of their institutions, when they experience a psychological attachment to the institution (Xu, 2023). This process is especially applicable in HEIs, where committee service and collegial support are the necessities that, however, are frequently uncompensated.*

## **HYPOTHESIS 3: ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT HAS A POSITIVE IMPACT ON OCB**

### **ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT MEDIATES THE DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP AND OCB RELATIONSHIP**

*The mediation argument is anchored on the fact that the democratic leadership has an effect on OCB through its role in amplifying faculty commitment. Democratic leadership offers support of inclusion and autonomy, which enhance psychological attachment and internalization and this attachment is the proximate factor in the cause of citizenship behavior. This is in line with mediation logic that is commonly applied in leadership studies whereby leadership effects are mediated through attitudes (commitment) to behavior (OCB) (Deci et al., 2017; Hermanto et al., 2024).*

*Recent studies on education show that leadership is able to impact*

**LEADING WITH DEMOCRACY: UNPACKING THE PATHWAYS FROM DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP TO ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

results based on organizational commitment and other psychological processes like empowerment and trust (Hermanto et al., 2024). This evidences the mediation suggested by the proposed mediation in Pakistan HEIs: democratic leadership enhances commitment and consequent faculty behavior is more OCB to reciprocate contribution and offer identity-consistent behavior.

**HYPOTHESIS 4: ORGANIZATION COMMITMENT MEDIATES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP AND OCB**

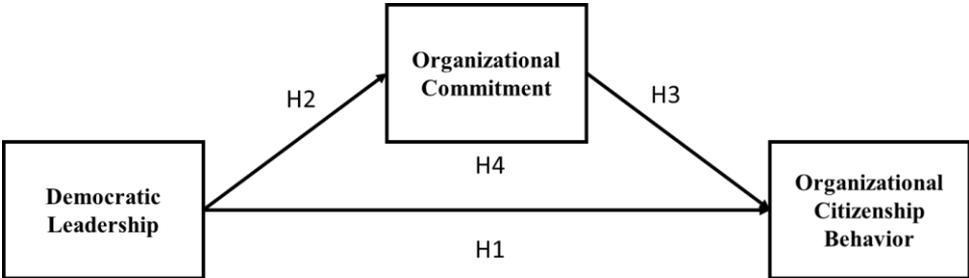


Figure 1 Conceptual Model

**METHODOLOGY**

The current study is a quantitative, cross-sectional survey study that is going to test the hypothesized relationships between the democratic leadership, the organizational commitment, and the organizational citizenship behavior among the population of faculty that works in the higher education sector in Pakistan. A cross-sectional design is appropriate when the major aim is theory testing and structural equation modeling (SEM) methods to determine structural relationships among latent variables and causal results are to be viewed with a grain of salt and interpreted as associations, but not causations (Hair et al., 2022).

The intended population group is academic employees of all the higher education institutions (HEIs) in Pakistan, both public and private. The stratified sampling plan will be suggested as it will ensure that the sample is representative in terms of the institutional type (public/private), faculty level (lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, professor) and

*disciplinary categories (social sciences, business, sciences, and engineering) (Khan et al., 2023). These layers are bound to have an impact on the experience of governance and citizen standards. The participants must meet inclusion criteria, that is, at least six months of tenure, so that they get to be exposed to departmental leadership behaviors.*

*The collection of the data should follow the set ethical guidelines, such as informed consent, confidentiality promises, voluntary involvement, and anonymity of the replies. In order to counteract common method bias which is an endemic problem with the self-report designs, procedural remedies must be used, including maintaining respondent anonymity, keeping predictor and criterion blocks psychologically independent, using clear scale anchors, and reducing assessment anxiety (Podsakoff et al., 2023). The method bias can also be evaluated using statistical tools that are suitable in the SEM and partial least squares SEM (PLS-SEM) analysis, where no single diagnosis test can make conclusive findings (Kock, 2023).*

*The operationalization of democratic leadership will be done by a validated participative or democratic leadership scale that will measure the dimensions of voice, consultation, openness, and shared decision-making behaviors (Haskasap et al., 2022). The main conceptualization of organizational commitment will be affective commitment to correlate with the psychological process of the study (Meyer et al., 2022). Whereas organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) will be assessed with the help of a multidimensional scale (e.g., altruism, conscientiousness, civic virtue) that would be appropriate in the professional context (Podsakoff et al., 2009). The items will be rated using a five-point Likert scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree with some modifications including pilot testing and content validity checks to be adopted in case the items are contextualized to the HEIs of Pakistan (Hair et al., 2022).*

*Data analysis will be conducted in two phases, which are the evaluation of the measurement model and the evaluation of the structural model. In using PLS -SEM, measurement quality will be assessed based on internal consistency (composite reliability), convergent validity (average variance extracted, AVE), indicator reliability (factor loadings), and discriminant validity (heterotrait-monotrait ratio, HTMT) (Kline, 2023). In the case of*

**LEADING WITH DEMOCRACY: UNPACKING THE PATHWAYS FROM DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP TO ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

*covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM), confirmatory factor analysis will be applied and evaluation of the model fit indices and standardized loadings will be evaluated. The reporting will be aligned with the current SEM/PLS-SEM best-practice such as bootstrap procedures in making inferences and the transparent documentation of all the decisions (e.g. item-removal criteria) (Hair et al., 2022).*

*The structural model test will include the direct tests (H1 -H3) and mediation hypothesis (H4). Bootstrapped indirect effects and confidence intervals will be used to assess mediation, as it is an approach that is commonly accepted since it does not require any assumptions about the normality of the distribution of the indirect effect (Hayes, 2022). The mediation analysis will be understood by establishing total, direct and indirect effects comparison as to whether the mediation is partial or complete, according to occurrences of significance (Hair et al., 2022).*

**RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

*PLS-SEM has been chosen as the one able to provide accurate estimates of direct and indirect relationships, especially those related to studying the mediating role of organizational commitment in the relationship between democratic leadership and organization citizenship behavior. The results used 5000 bootstrap resamples to strengthen the quality of path coefficient estimates and determine the level of statistical significance (Hair et al., 2021). In addition to the structural modelling, a demographic analysis was done to assess gender, age, professional experience, and education level of the respondents.*

*Table 1 Demographics Profile of Respondent*

• Variable	• Frequency (N = 217)	• Percentage
<b>• Gender</b>		
• Male	• 110	• 50.7%
• Female	• 107	• 49.3%
<b>• Age</b>		
• 20-29	• 60	• 27.6%
• 30-39	• 95	• 43.8%

• 40-49	• 40	• 18.4%
• 50+	• 22	• 10.2%
<b>• University Type</b>		
• Public	• 150	• 69.1%
• Private	• 67	• 30.9%
<b>• Academic Rank</b>		
• Lecturer	• 120	• 55.3%
• Assistant Professor	• 65	• 30.0%
• Associate Professor	• 25	• 11.5%
• Professor	• 7	• 3.2%

**MEASUREMENT MODEL**

**TABLE 2 RELIABILITY AND CONVERGENT VALIDITY**

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Loadings</i>	<i>α (Cronbach's Alpha)</i>	<i>CR (Composite Reliability)</i>	<i>AVE (Average Variance Extracted)</i>
• <i>Democratic Leadership</i>	• <i>DL1: Participative decision-making</i>	• 0.892	• 0.91	• 0.94	• 0.72
	• <i>DL2: Employee involvement</i>	• 0.878			
	• <i>DL3: Open communication</i>	• 0.889			
	• <i>DL4: Empowerment</i>	• 0.886			
• <i>Organizational</i>	• <i>OC1:</i>	• 0.8	• 0.94	• 0.96	• 0.76

**LEADING WITH DEMOCRACY: UNPACKING THE PATHWAYS FROM  
DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP TO ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP  
THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

<i>ional Commitm ent</i>	<i>Affective Commitment</i>	87			
	• <i>OC2: Continuance Commitment</i>	• 0.8 79			
	• <i>OC3: Normative Commitment</i>	• 0.8 60			
• <i>Organizat ional Citizenshi p Behavior (OCB)</i>	• <i>OCB1: Altruism</i>	• 0.8 94	• 0.92	• 0.94	• 0.73
•	• <i>OCB2: Conscientiou ness</i>	• 0.8 78			
	• <i>OCB3: Civic Virtue</i>	• 0.8 76			
	• <i>OCB4: Courtesy</i>	• 0.8 82			

**TABLE 3 DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY: FORNELL-LARCKER CRITERION**

• <i>Construct</i>	• <i>Democratic Leadership</i>	• <i>Organizational Commitment</i>	• <i>OCB</i>
• <i>Democratic Leadership</i>	• 0.85	•	•
• <i>Organizational Commitment</i>	• 0.60	• 0.87	•
• <i>OCB</i>	• 0.58	• 0.65	• 0.84

**DIRECT RELATIONSHIP:**

**HYPOTHESIS 1: DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP HAS A POSITIVE IMPACT ON OCB**

*The study found a positive and meaningful connection between FTA and BSP ( $\beta = 0.767, t = 16.326, p < 0.05$ ). This means the research has enough real data to back up H1.*

**Hypothesis 2: Democratic leadership has a positive impact on organizational commitment**

*The study found a positive and meaningful connection between FTA and BSP ( $\beta = 0.543, t = 16.673, p < 0.05$ ). This means the research has enough real data to back up H2.*

**HYPOTHESIS 3: ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT HAS A POSITIVE IMPACT ON OCB**

*The study found a positive and meaningful connection between FTA and BSP ( $\beta = 0.453, t = 16.673, p < 0.05$ ). This means the research has enough real data to back up H2.*

• Relationship	• B	• SE	• t-value	• Decision
• DL→OCB	• 0.52	• 0.067	• 7.80	• Supported
• DL→OC	• 0.35	• 0.063	• 5.60	• Supported
• OC→OCB	• 0.461	• 0.070	• 6.603	• Supported

**TESTING THE MEDIATION EFFECTS**

**HYPOTHESIS 4: ORGANIZATION COMMITMENT MEDIATES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP AND OCB**

*The analysis using bootstrapping showed a strong indirect effect ( $\beta = 0.379; t = 5.65, p < 0.05$ ). The 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect was [LL = 0.257, UL = 0.472], and it did not include zero. This means the mediation effect of green investment on the link between fintech adoption and banking sustainable performance was confirmed. In other words, hypothesis H3 was supported.*

**LEADING WITH DEMOCRACY: UNPACKING THE PATHWAYS FROM DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP TO ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

• <i>Hypotheses</i>	• <i>Relationship</i>	• $\beta$	• <i>SE</i>	• <i>t-value</i>	• <i>95% CI</i>		• <i>Decision</i>
					• <i>LL</i>	• <i>UL</i>	
• <i>H4</i>	• <i>DL→OC→OCB</i>	• <i>0.23</i>	• <i>0.074</i>	• <i>4.62</i>	• <i>0.25</i>	• <i>0.44</i>	• <i>Supported</i>

**DISCUSSION**

*This research paper contributes to the body of knowledge in leadership and organizational behavior, as it explains the connection between democratic leadership and faculty organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Pakistan through the lenses of organizational commitment. Using Social Exchange Theory, the results indicate that participatory leadership is a socioemotional resource, on perceiving that leaders seek their voice, share decision making authority, and practice equity, the faculty will reciprocate with discretionary behaviors that facilitate the institutional working (Blau, 1964). This finding compliments the exchange-based accounts of OCB, according to which positive leadership behaviors promote extra-role contributions (Podsakoff et al., 2009).*

*The Self-Determination Theory views democratic leadership as one that facilitates development of OCB through satisfaction of the autonomy and relatedness needs (Ghraiiri, 2024; Haskasap et al., 2022). HEIs are professional environments where the support of autonomy is especially pertinent, and participatory leadership might mediate the internalization of institutional objectives by alignment of institutional governance processes with the faculty identities of self-directed professional. This theoretical framing adds value to the contribution made by the manuscript by moving beyond a simplistic account of predictive leadership by leadership and explaining why democratic leadership is highly consequential in the context*

*The intermediating impact of organizational commitment implies that a democratic leadership contributes to OCB not directly, by encouraging employee participation, but also indirectly, by reinforcing the psychological relationship between faculty and the institution. Dedication is a credible way of transmitting: faculty that feel emotionally attached to their university would be more willing to do more than the official job description mandates, including mentoring, serving on committees, and even approving institutional programs. This conclusion is corroborated by extensive literature that commitment is a strong antecedent of cooperative behavior and citizenship-oriented behavior (Deci et al., 2017).*

*The Pakistani HEI setting makes the study more relevant contextually. Democratic leadership may play the role of a countervailing governance practice in systems where administration is disposed towards centralization that raises voice, perceived fairness and collegiality. The positive relations found in this research, thus, indicate that participatory governance does not only not contradict the Pakistani HEIs but may actually be particularly beneficial in promoting discretionary participation of faculty. This gives context sensitive evidence in the de westernization of the research of the leadership by empirically testing the mechanisms of participatory leadership in a South Asian context.*

*In practical terms, these findings suggest that any university that is pursuing having more faculty citizenship must invest in leadership development programs of heads of departments, deans, and administrative leaders, with a focus on understanding the rationale behind the decision made, consultative practices, and shared governance forms. These kinds of interventions can strengthen organizational commitment, and foster voluntary cooperation- something essential to accreditation, research collaboration, supporting students, and the sustainability of the institution. Seeing that OCB is underestimated in terms of its role in formal evaluation systems, leadership-based psychological attachment turns out to be a rather strategic channel of maintaining high rates of citizenship.*

## **CONCLUSION**

*The proposed investigation is the hypothesis that democratic leadership*

## LEADING WITH DEMOCRACY: UNPACKING THE PATHWAYS FROM DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP TO ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

---

*is associated with organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) in higher education organizations in Pakistan through the mediation of organizational commitment. The model is based on the concepts of the Social Exchange Theory and Self-Determination Theory as it explains the motivational impact of participative practices of governance that encourage faculty to make discretionary gifts by reinforcing relationship reciprocity and intrinsic psychological needs. The empirical framework places organizational commitment as a critical process in which democratic leadership is transformed into OCB, and leadership does not have a direct impact on behavior, but rather has a long-term psychological commitment to the institution.*

*This paper concludes that democratic leadership can be a substantive strategy that can be adopted by higher education to promote collaborative academic cultures and institutional effectiveness in the absence of sufficient resources. The results provide theory-based advice to university leadership behavior's, which suggests that participation, voice and transparency are not simply normative concepts but effective management instruments that can help promote faculty commitment and citizenship behavior.*

*Future studies should use longitudinal and multi-source research designs to strengthen causal inference, overcome the method bias, and to study the boundary conditions, including power distance orientation, institutional typology and level of governance maturity to better understand under what conditions democratic leadership is most effective.*



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

### References

1. Abbasi, A. (2023). Linking organizational citizenship behavior and trust in organizations: Examining mechanisms and outcomes. *Cogent Business & Management*.
2. Abuowda, A., Iwidat, H., & Alawnah, M. (2024). Impact of e-leadership on organizational citizenship behaviour of faculty members in higher education: Information and communication technology as a mediator. *Discover Education*, 3, 48.
3. Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. Wiley.

4. Deci, E. L., Olafsen, A. H., & Ryan, R. M. (2017). *Self-determination theory in work organizations. Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 4, 19–43.
5. Etikan, I., & Bala, K. (2022). *Sampling and sampling methods. Biometrics & Biostatistics International Journal*, 11(1), 1–5.
6. Gastil, J. (1994). *A definition and illustration of democratic leadership. Human Relations*, 47(8), 953–975.
7. Ghairi, A. M. (2024). *Impact of leadership style on job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior: The mediating role of management control systems. Corporate Ownership & Control*, 21(1), 146–157.
8. Hair, J. F., & Alamer, A. (2022). *Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in education research: Guidelines and applications.*
9. Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., Sarstedt, M., Danks, N. P., & Ray, S. (2022). *Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) using R: A workbook.* Springer.
10. Saad Jaffar, Dr Asiya Bibi, Hajra Arzoo Siddiqui, Muhammad Waseem Mukhtar, Waqar Ahmad, Zeenat Haroon, and Badshah Khan. "Transgender Act 2018: Islamic Perspective to Interpret Statute for the Protection of Rights and Socio-Psychological Impacts on Pakistani Society." (2020).
11. Haskasap, E., Saner, T., Eyupoglu, S. Z., & Gonsel, C. S. (2022). *Influence of organizational democracy on organizational citizenship behaviors in digital transformation: Mediating effects of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Sustainability*, 15(1), 452.
12. Hayes, A. F. (2022). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis (3rd ed.).* Guilford Press.
13. Hermanto, Y. B., Srimulyani, V. A., & Pitoyo, D. J. (2024). *The mediating role of quality of work life and organizational commitment in the link between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior. Heliyon*, 10, e27664.
14. Khan, D., Sadia, & Chaudhry, H. K. (2023). *Organizational citizenship behavior in higher education institutions of Pakistan. Journal of Development and Social Sciences*, 4(2), 568–578.
15. Kline, R. B. (2023). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling (5th ed.).* Guilford Press.
16. Kock, N. (2023). *Common method bias in PLS-SEM: A full collinearity assessment approach. International Journal of e-Collaboration*, 19(2), 1–10.
17. McAnally, K. (2024). *Self-determination theory and workplace outcomes: Review and future directions.*
18. Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1991). *A three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment. Human Resource Management Review*, 1(1), 61–89.
19. Meyer, J. P., Stanley, D. J., & Vandenberg, R. J. (2022). *Affective commitment in organizational research: Advances and future directions. Journal of Organizational*

## LEADING WITH DEMOCRACY: UNPACKING THE PATHWAYS FROM DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP TO ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

---

- Behavior*, 43(8), 1203–1218.
20. Olafsen, A. H., & Deci, E. L. (2020). *Self-determination theory and its relation to organizations*. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Psychology*.
  21. Podsakoff, P. M. (2024). *Common method bias: Causes, consequences, and remedies*. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*.
  22. Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J.-Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). *Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review and recommended remedies*. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(5), 879–903.
  23. Muhammad, Sardar, Rabiah Rustam, Saad Jaffar, and Sadia Irshad. "The Concept of Mystical Union: Juxtaposing Islamic And Christian Versions." *Webology* 18, no. 4 (2021): 854-864.
  24. Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2023). *Sources of method bias in organizational research and recommendations for control*. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 10, 1–28.
  25. Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Paine, J. B., & Bachrach, D. G. (2009). *Organizational citizenship behaviors: A critical review of theoretical and empirical literature*. *Journal of Management*, 35(1), 122–141.
  26. Schoemann, A. M. (2024). *Best practices for testing mediation with bootstrapping and confidence intervals*.
  27. Jaffar, Saad, Muhammad Ibrahim, Faizan Hassan Javed, and Sonam Shahbaz. "An Overview Of Talmud Babylonian And Yerushalmi And Their Styles Of Interpretation And Legal Opinion About Oral Tradition." *Webology* 19, no. 2 (2022).
  28. Xu, Z. (2023). *Leadership and teacher commitment: Empirical evidence in educational settings*. *International Journal of Educational Management*.
  29. Yao, H. (2024). *Distributed leadership and teacher outcomes: Mediation of empowerment and organizational commitment*. *Teaching and Teacher Education*.