

## Impact of Servant Leadership on Organizational Success: Mediating Role of Employees' Creativity in the Banking Sector of Pakistan

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*Leadership is supposed to play a pivotal role in organizational success. Alongside this, it also assists in identifying personal skills and hidden capabilities that can benefit society. Therefore, through this study, an attempt has been made to correlate Servant Leadership with Organizational Success – concerning the banking sector of Pakistan and illustrate how it emulates the concept of Servant Leadership to ensure the achievement of Organizational Success. For this purpose, data was collected from bank employees and customers, and the sample size for the underlying research was 628. Convenience sampling technique has been used to collect data and SPSS and AMOS using version 22. Data analysis shows a positive and significant relationship among the variables. Per our findings, servant leadership can enhance employees' creativity, benefiting the organization. The sample size for this research is relatively tiny; future research is recommended with a larger sample size. A cross-cultural study will also be more fruitful to deeply understand the phenomena. The result shows that servant leadership significantly increases employees' creativity and organizational success. Employees' creativity mediates the relationship between servant leadership and organizational success.*

**Keywords:** *Servant leadership, organizational success, leadership, employee creativity.*

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Servant Leadership is recognized as a key aspect that, compared to traditional leadership styles, is more effective in the organizational environment (Clarke, 2012). Green Leaf (1970) introduced servant leadership more than 40 years ago, and researchers have recently rediscovered it to measure servant leadership traits in a leader. Extensive research is yet to be undertaken to understand the effects of servant leadership style on organizational success

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(Krogh & Govender, 2015). Servant Leadership is crucial for harnessing employees' creativity, engagement, and team effectiveness... It is among the most pervasive leadership styles and the most relevant when it comes to the positive psychology of individuals (Sendjaya & Cooper, 2011).

Comparatively, servant leadership is a more coherent and principled approach to service to followers, which is the crux of this leadership style. It provides vision, empowerment, and commitment to employees (Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2013). To achieve a competitive edge, organizations need to hold spiritual values, i.e., altruistic love, care, and affection for employees, leading to high organizational outcomes and enhancing employees' creativity. The servant leader, with all its ethical traits, fosters an environment conducive to enhancing employees' abilities, fostering their development, and stimulating their creativity through an organizational mindset, ultimately leading to the success of the organization (Usman & Danish, 2010).

Today, Employees' Creativity is a function of shared information and knowledge, collective decision-making, conflict management, and integration skills (Ahmed et al., 2016). These aspects are easily promoted by servant leadership because servant leadership is more likely Participative leadership; this leadership style empowers employees to involve themselves in the decision-making process and is known as democratic (Louis & Murphy, 2018). In such scenarios, employees see themselves as more capable of shaping their roles and trying creative approaches to accomplish their tasks (Linuesa-Langreo et al., 2016). In the 21st century, the emphasis has been shifted towards motivation and social responsibility to secure success and profit. Leadership is a key factor for creative employees and innovative organizations. The modern theory of servant leadership is of great value when it comes to people centered theory of leadership coupled with morality (Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

Leaders are the most effective source to enhance employee commitment. A committed workforce is a key factor in achieving its goals. Employees' commitment will surely increase if treated with a good leadership style (Javaid & Mirza, 2013). Organizational productivity and success are achieved through Individuals' job satisfaction and devotion to their physical and socio-emotional needs (Alvi et al., 2017).

Traditional leadership theories rely on a hierarchical structure where directives flow from the top down, with lower-level followers expected to comply (OC & Bashshur, 2013). This dynamic shift has prompted numerous researchers and practitioners to reassess prevailing theories. In contrast, organizational leaders adopt a servant leadership approach, epitomized by an inverted pyramid where leaders serve their followers (Heidari et al., 2019). Servant leadership, rooted in a rich historical tradition, has experienced a gradual resurgence and is hailed as an evolutionary response to meeting the evolving demands of Human Resource Development within the dynamic landscape of business (Akbari et al., 2014).

The correlation between employees' performance and leadership styles has been examined worldwide in various fields (Velu et al., 2017). Leadership is an influential factor between leaders and followers in performing their roles to achieve organizational success (Choudhary et al., 2013). In Organizations, Creativity has been recognized as one of the critical competencies for the 21st century, which can be achieved by adapting to environmental change (Çekmecelioğlu & Günsel, 2013). Some researchers believe that organizational success and survival depend on its ability to adapt to change, employees' creativity, knowledge, and innovation (Hyypiä & Parjanen, S 2013).

The Banking Sector is a vital pillar of any economy. Although this sector has been growing for the last few decades in Pakistan, it still suffers from various challenges, i.e., the global economic growth rate declined from 3.9 to 3 in 2013. Furthermore, the political and economic escalation in Pakistan, coupled with advancements in technology, has put immense

pressure on the banking sector to improve its creativity for sustainable growth (Suifan & Al-Janini, 2017).

Despite many theories and debates on leadership, there is a dire need to develop a new leadership paradigm. Servant Leadership has been in the limelight quite recently because it is based on altruistic ethics rather than transformational leadership. Unlike transformational Leadership, which motivates individuals by making exchange or cooperation efforts, Servant Leadership instills motivation by helping the employees to express their abilities as much as possible (Surat, 2013). Philosophically, the concept of servant leadership existed thousands of years ago. Organizational culture and operational methods have undergone significant transformation. The emphasis has transitioned from mere processes and results to prioritizing individuals and cultivating a positive work environment capable of attracting and retaining skilled workers. The foundation of organizational success lies in recognizing the paramount importance of human resources, as individuals and their interactions hold greater significance than tasks and structural frameworks in achieving objectives (Rachmawati & Lantu, 2014).

Servant leadership style influences followers to achieve organizational objectives through persuasion (Coleman, 2015). To achieve organizational success, leaders need to develop and apply specific leadership traits such as attentive listening, empathy, fostering healing relationships, conceptual thinking, stewardship, and fostering a sense of community (Mukonoweshuro et al., 2016). This research examines how employees' creativity mediates the connection between servant leadership and organizational success.

The problem prompting the study is the lack of evidence for building healthy relationships by leaders towards their employees. The Banking Sector must face increased challenges because of an ailing economy and ever-changing monetary policies (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016). The manifestations of poor regulatory relationship, employee turnover, long working hours, stress, lack of commitment and disengagements, less creativity of employees' threat of forced resignation by leaders, and an antagonist relationship with their leaders could have been the result of insufficient soft skills, an ineffective leadership style, and inadequate development of soft skills by the organizational leaders (Mukonoweshuro et al., 2016). So, there is an acute need to study this phenomenon in the Pakistani context to examine its universality. In the past, a comparative study was conducted to examine the impact of servant leadership on organizational performance outcomes in the service sector of Pakistan (Choudhary et al., 2013). In which the follower's behavior was not specified. This study will help banking leaders understand how their employees or subordinates perceive their leadership style and how they can change it to ensure employee creativity, which results in organizational success (Gregory, 2016).

## Literature Review

“There are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there a person who has attempted to define the concept.” In an interview, Kellerman (2012) commented, “I heard that there are approximately 1,400 different definitions of the word leader and leadership”. These numbers are real or exaggerated, which means that there is no consensus about what leadership is. Therefore, searching for a better definition is ongoing (Silva, 2016).

In today's competitive environment, Leadership is hailed as a key component for the success of an organization as it focuses on customer relations, cooperation, and learning. Besides, the ever-increasing competition necessitates more time and effort by the leadership. Leadership is a key component to adapting and changing for the best outcomes. To meet customer needs, leaders must acknowledge and fulfill the needs of their employees. They should support and motivate their members to enhance their creativity to achieve organizational success. Servant Leadership, suggested by Greenleaf, is, apparently, the most

suitable model for its employees. Besides, its inclusive job characteristics can be associated with employee and organizational success (Melchar & Bosco, 2010).

### *Servant Leadership and Organizational Success*

Organizational success is gauged by the ability of organizations to achieve long-term objectives and harmonize those objectives with the aspirations of their employees. It can also be described as the organization's capacity to interlink all activities towards a strategic vision. However, the procedural framework for organizational success is unclear (Wageeh, 2016). In this study, organizational success has been taken as non-financial performance. Great leadership is a key to the success of the business, the government, or many other associations that influence our work. Thus, leadership is key to making an organization productive as it transforms potential into reality. Organizational success depends on the methods adopted by organizational leaders rather than the company's policies and procedures. "Great Leaders breed better workforce, and cohesively they build a better organization". So, leaders play a very effective role in the excellence of the organization (de Waal & Sivro, 2012).

It is revealed in a recent study that 21% of individuals feel dedicated toward the success of their organization. Many employees lack clarity on how their tasks align with their company's objectives and how they can contribute to attaining them. There's an apparent gap where leaders have struggled to engage their workforce in pursuit of organizational goals. Servant leaders, however, prioritize serving their employees by providing the necessary support for them to become fully engaged and dedicated to realizing organizational success. Such leaders communicate relentlessly and visualize this world through other people's perspectives. On the contrary, servant leadership cultivates a performance-based culture of innovation. They focus on the organization's strategic priorities, simplifying operations accelerating progress, and training people to unleash their true potential (Rake, 2017).

The relationship between employees' motivation, organizational success and fiscal performance makes the study of servant leadership the most pertinent. Organizations with a healthy environment and stewardship culture can optimize the capacity of both leadership and subordinates. Organizational success can be possible for two reasons: unlike the traditional chain of command, servant leadership is a macro scheme that promotes inclusive leadership. Two, it cannot be associated with notorious corporate scandals of recent times. Employees seek leadership that engenders organizational success in a demanding and high-performance industry (Melchar & Bosco, 2010).

Servant Leaders focus on making their employees and customers happy by addressing their needs; those who do not will soon be outdone by those who do (Boeckelman, 2016). In a previous study, it was argued that to become a successful organization, financial and non-financial indicators should be better than their competitors over a considerable period (de Waal & Sivro, 2012). There are some high-performance organizational factors that are part of the servant leadership concept that led towards organizational success, such as conviction, integrity, and firm leadership. In contrast, sincerity and a result-oriented approach can also be associated with servant leadership for the high performance of the organizations. As far as innovations are concerned, servant leadership stresses constant development and inspiring employees to develop themselves to enhance inventiveness (de Waal & Sivro, 2012).

The concept of "servant leadership" originated 50 years ago; ever since the corporate world has gradually adopted the idea of compassionate leadership. Some people presume that servant leaders are mere pushovers who can even compromise a company's well-being to address the needs of their employees. Contrary to this notion, servant leaders are assertive yet tactfully modest and sympathetic as they must balance organizational growth and employee satisfaction with these traits. In such a working environment, personal and professional growth

can be bolstered. Employees get the impression that they are being heard and mentored by dependable leaders (Ilgaz, 2017).

This study also specifies that senior leaders who emulate servant leadership can inspire other leaders to replicate this style, resulting in uniformity of employee hopes through a stable organizational culture. In a demanding environment, employees seek leadership that will stimulate organizational success. Organizational success and employee achievement become inextricable; hence, if a leader can inspire the subordinates to raise their performance, it will benefit them and the organization (Melchar & Bosco, 2010).

In the banking industry, organizational success entirely rests in the hands of its people. Employees must be at their best to win the trust and loyalty of their customers. It is imperative for any banking organization to reach its highest potential that every person from teller to CEO owns the success of the organization. Such ownership can only exist if there is a high level of personal accountability, and it must start at the top of the organization (Galindo, 2013). So, servant leadership asks leaders to hold their followers accountable to experience success (Weber, 2017). The leader is a servant first, motivated to help employees eliminate job stress so they do not become fatigued and gradually become self-sufficient. Servant leadership benefits employees and businesses because employees who work within the organization become committed, motivated, and likely to deliver excellent performance, quality, and service (Miner & Nicole, 2013).

Organizational success is conservatively evaluated by financial indicators (Vimrová, 2015). However exclusively, organizational success cannot be evaluated unless the induction of intangible measures invariably leads to better financial results (Chiarello et al., 2014). Morissette (1996) has laid down a generally accepted definition of intangible measure as any quantitative measure of an individual or an entity's performance that cannot be monetized. Similarly, non-financial performance measures include workforce development, product quality, organizational success, on-time delivery, customer satisfaction, innovation, market share, and employee satisfaction (Hofmann, 2001). Therefore, acknowledging the superiority over another intangible measure, this study spotlights customer satisfaction to measure organizational success. Hence, we propose:

*Hypothesis 1: Servant leadership has a significant impact on organizational success.*

### *Servant Leadership and Employees' Creativity*

Servant leadership is fitting for empowering employees to tap into their creative capacities within contemporary, innovation-driven enterprises. Recognizing employees as primary drivers of organizational innovation, servant leaders are positioned to significantly influence unlocking their creative potential and guide them toward pioneering accomplishments (Cai et al., 2018).

A considerable body of research underscores the competencies of servant leadership in enhancing organizational performance and competitiveness. Characterized by a focus on people, servant leadership is associated with followers who demonstrate higher levels of commitment, dedication, creativity, engagement in their work, and overall high performance. Addressing market challenges, creativity is defined as the innovation and effectiveness of products introduced by organizations. This subject holds substantial importance in behavioral studies and has garnered significant attention. Specifically, scholars have extensively investigated employee creativity due to its significant correlation with organizational success (Thao & Kang, 2018). Studies in this domain indicate that effective leadership, such as servant leadership, is pivotal in fostering employees' creativity.

Furthermore, it is also said that the first process of servant leadership is creativity, and the servant leader knows how to motivate others to become creative because being a servant

leader, one can have an opportunity to help reclaim intangible resources, including follower's talent, to increase organization's capacity to innovate (Spears & Lawrence, 2002). In the innovation-supporting climate, employees will be more encouraged to try new approaches, explore uncertain but potentially promising methods, and persevere in problem-solving activities; they become motivated by servant leaders to invest their efforts towards creativity-stimulating practices (Yoshida et al., 2014).

Servant leaders foster the development of their followers' skills and empower them to perform their duties autonomously and make decisions regarding the best approach to their tasks. They support their employees in reaching their full potential. Research emphasizes that when employees are empowered, they showcase their capabilities and can positively impact their work environment. Additionally, it is argued that the work environment plays a crucial role in determining employees' readiness to contribute creatively; when they receive support from their leaders, they are more inclined to initiate new ideas. Hence, servant leadership lays the groundwork for fostering creativity (Malingumu et al., 2016).

Specific characteristics within servant leadership positively correlate with creativity. Firstly, empowering leadership underscores self-leadership and employee autonomy, which are pivotal for fostering creativity. Secondly, humility fosters a social environment where employees feel motivated to enhance their capabilities. Thirdly, authenticity in leadership correlates positively with individual creativity. Fourthly, forgiveness contributes to a climate of trust, thereby enhancing creativity. Lastly, courage is associated with risk-taking, which in turn fosters creativity. Therefore, collectively, servant leaders nurture an environment conducive to creativity. Consequently, a positive association between servant leadership and employee creativity is anticipated (Braam, 2018).

Servant leaders foster a workplace culture centered on the value of serving others, thereby cultivating an environment where followers are inclined to remain. The outcomes of these followers are pivotal for any organization aiming to minimize turnover expenses and bolster employee performance, teamwork, and creative and innovative capacities. Given these beneficial outcomes, various organizations may contemplate identifying and nurturing servant leadership attributes among their leaders (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015). Consequently, the following hypothesis is posited:

*Hypothesis 2:* Servant leadership has a significant positive impact on employees' creativity.

### *Employees' Creativity and Organizational Success*

In today's fiercely competitive landscape, organizations rely on creativity to innovate new products, enhance customer services, and rejuvenate themselves. Recent studies indicate that creative employees are a vital competitive asset for any organization, with creativity playing a pivotal role in organizational success. Moreover, organizational culture significantly influences creativity, and managing creativity presents a multifaceted challenge. Single approaches are insufficient for addressing complex problems; instead, strategies leveraging different organizational facets are needed for sustainable benefits (Baer, 2012).

Regardless of size or market, every organization aspires to succeed amidst intense competition. Consequently, companies strive to retain top talent, recognizing their pivotal role in organizational effectiveness. Building strong, positive relationships with employees is crucial for meeting challenges and directing efforts toward task fulfillment. Organizations devise strategies to enhance performance to compete effectively in a cutthroat market and achieve objectives. However, few companies acknowledge human capital as a potential asset capable of driving success or failure, emphasizing the importance of organizational leaders comprehending what motivates employee creativity (Dobre, 2013).

Creativity's role in organizational performance and growth is indispensable in dynamic competitive environments. Researchers assert that creativity is vital for organizational survival and competitiveness, emphasizing the need for creative employees to spearhead organizational innovation. In service firms, front desk employees serve as boundary workers, necessitating creativity to address diverse customer needs and effectively gather market intelligence (Shalley et al., 2004).

The banking sector in Pakistan has witnessed rapid growth over the past two decades, contributing significantly to the nation's asset composition. However, intense competition, especially following stringent benchmarks set by the State Bank of Pakistan, underscores the imperative for banks to attract foreign investors and cultivate innovative approaches to win profitable customers (Hassan et al., 2013).

Leaders are expected to demonstrate commitment to enhancing organizational management, recognizing that human capability is paramount for organizational success. Flexibility, knowledge, and skills are essential for effectively navigating changes and business challenges, highlighting the importance of creativity in facilitating forward-thinking and knowledge development within organizations. Creativity serves as a catalyst for innovation, underpinning organizational success by fostering inclusive growth through knowledge creation and problem-solving (Sulaiman et al., 2015).

Studies consistently show that employees' creativity at work can be influenced by affective factors. Positive emotions like joy, pride, and satisfaction frequently accompany creative endeavors, suggesting a link between organizational creativity and employees' positive affect. Research conducted within a multinational high-tech company in Sweden revealed that employees reported higher levels of happiness, enthusiasm, and optimism in organizations perceived to be more creative and innovative. Creative problem-solving and dealing with uncertain situations can initially induce stress, but successful resolution fosters positive effects at work. Consequently, individual creativity at work is posited to directly influence positive affect in the workplace (Tavares, 2016). The following hypothesis is proposed based on the arguments and initial findings.

*Hypothesis 3: Employees' creativity has a significant positive impact on organizational success.*

### *Mediating Role of Employees' Creativity between the Relationship of Servant Leadership and Organizational Success*

It is suggested in the previous research that the emergence of productive ideas is pivotal for the competitiveness of organizations. Creative employees develop fresh ideas that are handy in recognizing products and services that can fulfill emerging customer needs. Creativity may well be injected into modifying existing procedures to improve productivity. Consequently, the productivity of the entire organization can improve considerably. Though it may not enhance effectiveness, supervisors may consider such contributions while evaluating their employees' job performance (Gong et al., 2009).

Previous research has provided solid evidence that the support of leaders is related to the employees' creativity. The working environment that is established by a leader should bolster creativity. Employees should be encouraged to explore their talent. It shows that performance improves in the presence of reassuring leadership. Servant leadership style emphasizes assessing the needs of their employees and harnessing creativity. Servant leaders sit back and inspire their followers to develop creative solutions. Furthermore, they provide essential guidance so that the creative process propels toward the successful implementation of the

creative idea. Servant leaders always try to establish and maintain a positive working environment to sustain the flow of innovative ideas (Dierendonck & Rook, 2010).

Employees' creativity is the key to organizational success. Therefore, it is vital for effective management to foster employees' creativity and innovation. To achieve a competitive edge, the organization's work environment is the major factor in fostering and nurturing employees' creativity (Maharjan, 2010). Creativity can be defined as: "The process of realizing the problems and awareness of the weaknesses, groups, and inconsistencies, lack of information and the search for solutions and the transfer of results to others" (Torrance, 1993).

Given recent technological developments - reflected very clearly in the performance of various economic sectors - employees' creativity shall be boosted to achieve a competitive advantage with the largest knowledge capacity leading towards innovation in the services offered to their customers. Creativity in the banking world will ensure the success of banking organizations by increasing the employment of workers and revitalizing the national economy in general. In banks, employees' creativity includes simplifying ideas to deal with the underlying issues encountered by the customers and decentralizing the powers to the employees dealing with customers at the front desk (Al-Salaymeh, 2013).

Success is the ultimate desired objective of all organizations. Previous research or scholars have found multiple factors that positively affect organizational success. These factors are also called critical success factors (CSF); one CSF is the leadership style, which, if supportive, productively enhances organizational success. By pursuing a servant leadership style, Employees' creativity tends to contribute positively to the success of the organizations (Khan et al., 2014).

According to Arul (2017), it is difficult for business leaders to sustain their competitive advantage in a rapidly changing world. Today, technology and cost control are no longer a recipe for success. It is, therefore, innovation and creativity which holds the key to sustaining success. The most important aspect is the ability of individuals to think out of the box to apply inventive ideas to a wide range of activities. There are three C's that are vital for the success of any organization: a) creativity, b) courage, and c) challenges. Identifying the features of successful organizations that manage to sustain their competitiveness and creativity is the finest way to begin things.

Creativity is the first process of servant leadership. As a servant leader, you can help reclaim intangible resources, including people's talent, to increase the organization's capacity and productivity. Servant leadership focuses on employees' creativity, their attitude toward their work, and creative products. Relationships with customers and customers' perceptions of products profoundly impact the organization's overall success (Clarke, 2012).

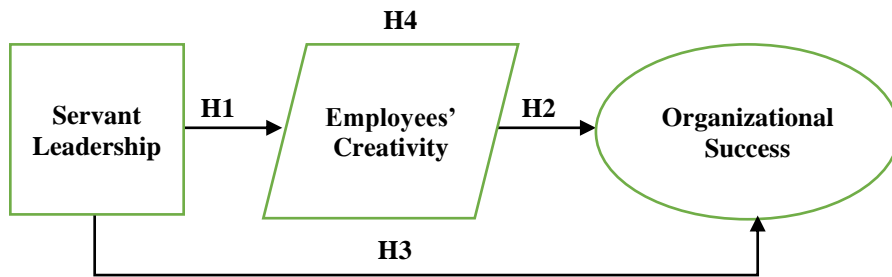
Employees' creativity is related to organizational success. In today's ever-changing environment, there is a need to cater to technological changes and address customer needs. Generally, Customers prefer personalized service. Therefore, to enrich their experience, an innovative approach has become the need of the hour. Organizational success is, hereby, dependent on 'out of the box performance' exhibited by front-desk employees rather than clinging to the traditional approach. As per new research by the University of East Anglia involving front-desk employees of two international companies, organizational success is directly proportional to employee creativity (Hassell, 2016).

In the study, employees completed questionnaires on innovation-oriented workplaces, inventive process engagement, and demographics. Managers gauged the creativity of their subordinates and evaluated the degree to which innovation-oriented practices were instigated at their workplaces. Servant leaders focus on grooming their subordinates and stimulating positive feelings. It is debated that positive feelings expand cognition, which leads to greater versatility in problem-solving, thus increasing the prospect of creativity. It is empirically



established that positive emotions boost creativity. Individuals undergoing positive emotions like pride, joy, and love are less likely to follow traditional behavioral scripts and to chase fresh, inventive, and impulsive ideas (Fredrickson, 1998). Therefore, servant leadership will nurture innovation and creativity to attain the best organizational outcomes (Sendjaya & Cooper, 2011).

*Hypothesis 4:* Employees’ creativity mediates the relationship between servant leadership and organizational Success.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework. Servant leadership is an everlasting conception. Servant leaders are servants first, and leadership starts with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. Robert Greenleaf was an ardent believer that servant leaders are the torchbearers of change. The philosophy is expressed in different perspectives by different researchers. Spears (2005) acknowledged ten essential servant leadership features: healing, listening, empathy, persuasion, awareness, conceptualization, foresight, commitment, and community building.

Servant leaders are dignified individuals; they are skilled communicators, compassionate collaborators, and system thinkers, and they put people first, use foresight, and exercise moral authority (Sipe & Frick, 2009). Three primacies that distinguish a servant leader in an organization: a) grooming people, building a dependable team, and achieving goals; b) three key principles - serve, encourage, and authorize; and c) three key practices - listening, delegating, and anchoring your subordinates towards the mission (Lerocci, 2017). Servant leadership brings prosperity, meaning, and joy into the workplace. Blanchard and Hodges (2003) revealed that servant leaders believe in the power of teams and recognize their people as appreciating assets.

## Research Methodology

The current research uses a convenience sampling technique to draw a sample from nine cities in Pakistan comprising seven bank employees, customers, and managers/immediate supervisors. Data was collected in three waves. The first consisted of a servant leadership questionnaire, which was filled out by 628 bank employees. They were requested to provide information about the servant leadership of 350 managers (immediate supervisors). The second wave captured employees’ creativity from managers (immediate supervisors), and the final wave consisted of organizational success questionnaires, which were filled out by 167 bank customers).

Servant leadership is measured using a scale developed by Burboto and Wheeler (2006). Organizational success is measured in terms of customer perspective using a modified

SERVQUAL scale to determine the functional dimensions of service quality specific to the banking industry (Awan et al., 2011). Employees' Creativity is measured using a 9-item scale developed by Janssen (2000).

### Data Analysis

Of the 628 employees, 73% were males. About 44% were aged between 20 and 30, 21% were between 31 and 40, 25% were between 41 and 50, and the remaining were above 50. About 53% had a bank tenure of 1-2 years, 30% had a tenure of 3-4 years, and the remaining employees were tenured above 4 years. Of the 167 customers who participated, 81% were male. About 11% were aged between 20 and 30, 47% were between 31 and 40, 26% were between 41 and 50, and the remaining were above 50. The participants were well educated; about 60% were graduates, and 40% were postgraduates. Of the 350 managers who participated, 85% were male. About 12% were aged between 20 and 30, 21% were between 31 and 40, 28% were between 41 and 50, and the remaining were above 50. They were well educated; about 72% were graduates, and 28% were postgraduates. About 25% had a bank tenure of 1-2 years, 29% had a tenure of 3-4 years, and the remaining managers were tenured above 4 years.

The scale's reliability was moderate because Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) values for all variables were above .60 (Taber, 2018); otherwise, above .70 values are considered good (Hair et al., 1998). The composite reliability is good. The data was approximately symmetric (because skewness is between -.50 and .50, and kurtosis is between -2 and +2) (Table 1). Model fitness statistics are also acceptable (Shah & Goldstein, 2006) (Table 2). The GFI value should be between 0-1; in this research, it is .923. A value close to 1 shows that the model is fit. CFI value is .910, which shows a good model fit. Overall, this model's fitness is acceptable for this research.

**Table 1**  
**Reliability and Normality Statistics**

Variable	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Skewness	Kurtosis	Composite Reliability
Servant leadership	17	.601	.442	.576	.763
Organizational success	22	.654	.125	.033	.756
Employees creativity	9	.660	-.352	.228	.748

**Table 2**  
**Model Fit Indices**

Fit Indices	Recommended Value	Actual Value
GFI	$\geq 0.90$	0.923
RMR	$< 0.10$	0.078
NFI	$\geq 0.90$	0.865
CFI	$\geq 0.90$	0.910
TLI	$\geq 0.90$	0.765
SRMR	$< 0.09$	0.038

The factor loading is presented in Table 3. To achieve convergent validity, the factor loading of all the variables must be greater than 0.5 (Nachmias, 2007), and AVE must be greater than 0.5. In the current research, both conditions have been fulfilled.

**Table 3**  
**Factor Loadings and AVE**

		<b>Factor Loadings</b>	<b>AVE</b>
Servant Leadership	SL.AC01	.784	.564
	SL.AC02	.689	
	SL.AC03	.874	
	SL.EH01	.786	
	SL.EH02	.672	
	SL.EH03	.663	
	SL.W01	.682	
	SL.W02	.641	
	SL.W03	.762	
	SL.W04	.729	
	SL.PS01	.639	
	SL.PS02	.715	
	SL.PS03	.764	
	SL.PS04	.696	
	SL.OS01	.705	
SL.OS02	.665		
SL.OS03	.894		
Organizational Success	OS.K01	.754	.545
	OS.CS04	.648	
	OS.CS03	.668	
	OS.CS02	.652	
	OS.CS01	.626	
	OS.ST05	.655	
	OS.ST04	.603	
	OS.ST03	.681	
	OS.ST02	.707	
	OS.ST01	.734	
	OS.C06	.789	
	OS.C05	.585	
	OS.C04	.613	
	OS.C03	.784	
	OS.C02	.765	
	OS.C01	.865	
	OS.R05	.879	
	OS.R04	.763	
	OS.R03	.876	
OS.R02	.670		
OS.R01	.754		
OS.K02	.749		
OS.K03	.723		
Employees' Creativity	EC01	.841	.555
	EC02	.714	
	EC03	.653	
	EC04	.874	
	EC05	.674	
	EC06	.658	
	EC07	.645	
	EC08	.688	
	EC09	.879	

AVE should be higher than the square of correlation (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 1998 ). This condition is fulfilled, and discriminant validity is achieved. The relevant vales .564, .545, and .555 are the values of AVE, which are greater than the Square of Correlation among the variables.

**Table 4**  
**Discriminant Validity**

	1	2	3
1. Servant leadership	.564		
2. Organizational success	.231	.545	
3. Employees creativity	.127	.335	.555

Mediation happens when a causal relationship exists between independent and dependent variables, and that relationship is explained by another variable (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Mediation is used to explain the relationship between two variables in addition to a new variable (Sobel, 1990). The mediator is a variable that affects the outcome of one or more variables (Hayes, 2009). Bootstrapping is used in current research with the help of AMOS to evaluate the indirect effects and their significance because the basic purpose of bootstrapping is to see the significance of indirect effects (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). The mediating effect of servant leadership on organizational success is significant at 0.001.

**Table 5**  
**Estimates**

	Estimate	SE	CR	Beta	Hypothesis
Employees creativity → Servant leadership	.634***	.131	4.818	.589	Accepted
Organizational success → Employees creativity	.407***	.091	4.473	.634	Accepted
Organizational success → Servant leadership	.334***	.087	3.831	.485	Accepted

*Total, Direct, and Indirect Effects*

The total effect of servant leadership on employee creativity is .634, and on organizational success is 0.592. The total effect of Employee Creativity on organizational success is 0.407. The total effect is the sum of the direct and indirect (mediated) effects.

	Total Effect	S.L	EC	C.S
Total Effect	EC	.634	.000	.000
	OS	.592	.407	.000
Direct Effect	EC	.634	.000	.000
	OS	.334	.407	.000
Indirect Effect	EC	.000	.000	.000
	OS	.258	.000	.000

The Direct effect of Servant leadership on employee creativity is 0.634, and on Organizational success is 0.407; the direct effect of employee creativity on organizational success is 0.334. The indirect (mediated) effect of Servant leadership on organizational success is .258. That is, due to the indirect (mediated) effect of Servant leadership on organizational success, when Servant leadership goes up by 1, organizational success goes up

by 0.258. This is in addition to any direct (unmediated) effect that Servant leadership may have on organizational success. From the above discussion, we can conclude that Partial mediation does exist and plays its part in the underlying research model, which leads us to the acceptance of the third hypothesis. From the above discussion, we can conclude that employee creativity mediates the relationship between servant leadership and organizational success.

## Discussion

Servant leadership has a positive and significant impact on Organizational success, which leads us to the acceptance of the hypothesis. According to Melchar and Bosco (2010), servant leadership provides organizational success. Joseph and Winston (2005) reinforced servant leadership by determining that it significantly contributed to the advancement of trust among devotees. Joseph and Winston's (2005) exploration added support for worker authority by demonstrating that the execution of a company can be enhanced through servant leadership. The data created may help leaders and directors implement servant leadership without winding up unduly worried about possible performance decreases. Joseph and Winston (2005) additionally underlined that the execution objectives and targets of a company might be better achieved through the usage of servant leadership. It also inferred those certain results related to executing and managing worker administration that incorporated in the company diminished customer turnover and enhanced organizational success. Netemeyer et al (2005) recognized the significance of the connection between the worker and the administrator by distinguishing its effect on the customer. Their exploration recommended that the worker go well beyond the essential prerequisites of the activity duties while collaborating with clients because of servant leadership.

Servant leadership also has a positive and significant impact on employees' creativity, which leads us to the acceptance of the hypothesis. The study conducted by Rasheed et al. ( ) shows that under the supervision of Servant Leadership, employees show innovative work behavior. Creativity is of indispensable significance for associations that contend in globally operating markets with different market dynamics and resolve to remain in front of the competition. In such associations, workers need to continually create items, products, methods, or services that are original and innovative (Basadur, 2004). To keep up with the growing business markets, it is very important to have hierarchical innovation and intrinsic motivation among the employees (Amabile, 1996). In the authoritative setting, there is a growing need for sufficient information on the connection between leadership and creativity (Shalley & Zhou, 2008), especially given the pivotal impact that leadership exerts on the learning forms crucial to innovativeness.

The worker initiative hypothesis might be particularly suited for understanding the administration of creativity and development as a result of its representative-centered nature, which goes for improving the characteristic motivation of representatives hiring authority and inventiveness, expanding on the observation that the consolation of followers to a great extent, to deal with their own work is not just the characterizing highlight of a servant-leader, but at the same time is the key component in the management of creativity in the organizational setting.

Employee creativity impacts organizational success. Servant leadership has a positive and significant impact on employee creativity, which leads us to accept the hypothesis. Pakistan's banking industry is facing many challenges. However, at a micro level, they are, in no way, less important. These challenges range from the survival of organizations in a stagnant business domain to creating procedures for promoting development through growing new business models, new items, or rebuilding and re-designing. We must comprehend the issues and acknowledge that in usage, we will commit errors, yet over the long run, with persistent

change, we can be headed for betterment. This is in no way, shape, or form a simple undertaking. It is vital to perceive the genuine idea of any issue and create functional answers for these issues in a convenient way. In forming the shape of the future, Leadership is the key to enhancing creativity and innovation in the business world (Anwar, 2011).

The emergence of productive ideas is pivotal for the competitiveness of organizations. Creative employees develop fresh ideas that are handy in recognizing products and services that can fulfill emerging customer needs (Gong et al., 2009). Previous research has provided solid evidence that the support of leaders is related to the employees' creativity. A working environment established by a leader should bolster creativity (Dierendonck & Rook, 2010).

Employees' creativity is the key to organizational success. Therefore, it is vital for effective management to foster employees' creativity and innovation. To achieve a competitive edge, the work environment of the organization is the major factor in fostering and nurturing employees' creativity (Maharjan, 2010). According to Arul (2017), it is difficult for business leaders to sustain their competitive advantage in a rapidly changing world. Today, technology and cost control are no longer a recipe for success. It is, therefore, innovation and creativity which holds the key to sustaining success. Servant leadership will nurture innovation and creativity to attain best organizational outcomes (Sendjaya & Cooper, 2011). In the current research, employees' creativity is the mediating variable. The result shows that employees' creativity partially mediates the relationship between servant leadership and organizational success. Bootstrap has been used to see the significance of the indirect relationship.

### **Implications**

Servant leadership has garnered notable attention in the realm of managerial leadership, both in academic discussions and within the domain of human capital management. The study of human resource practices has long been a significant and pivotal aspect of organizational performance, particularly within the banking sector. Pakistan boasts a well-established banking industry comprising various institutions, such as commercial banks and a Central Bank. Additionally, the banking sector in Pakistan serves as a primary source of employment generation (Naqvi, 2018). It is projected that the banking industry in Pakistan will continue to play a crucial role in driving ongoing improvements and advancements within the country's financial system (SBP, 2010).

There have been many types of Leadership. Servant leadership is one of the most investigated ones in recent times. The current study investigates the insight of Servant Leadership in relation to employees 'creativity and organizational success in the Banking Industry. Results show that servant leadership has the potential to enhance creativity and organizational success, which ultimately leads to more profit and success. From a strategic and managerial point of view this study can help form the strategies to get maximum output. Higher management does make the strategic decision about the organization for the implementation of servant leadership concept in the organization at higher level management might have long-term fruitful benefits. Team building and its effective working is one of the most important aspects of an organization to be considered; servant leadership can also help in building the most effective teams, as the different aspects are discussed in the current research. Given recent technological developments, which are very clearly reflected in the performance of various economic sectors, the effect of servant leadership on Employee creativity, as discussed in the current research, will help boost up and achieve a competitive advantage with the largest capacity of knowledge, leading towards innovation in the services offered to their customers.

This study adds to the existing body of literature on servant leadership, which remains relatively underexplored. There has been limited research conducted on servant leadership, particularly regarding its impact on followers and organizational outcomes in Pakistan.

Therefore, by examining the relationship between servant leadership and employee creativity in the Pakistani context for the first time, this study not only presents a fresh perspective on the concept but also offers insights suggesting that this leadership style could be advantageous for organizations. Additionally, few studies have investigated the effects of servant leadership on organizational success, leaving uncertainty about its intermediary mechanisms and their influence on organizational outcomes. Thus, by exploring the observed intermediary role of employee creativity, this study contributes to our understanding of how servant leadership may enhance follower attitudes and behaviors.

This study was conducted to see the impact of servant leadership in the banking sector of Pakistan. For that purpose, nine cities were selected to collect the data. The implementation and the importance of servant leadership is increasing daily across the Globe. However, the implementation of servant leadership is not as much as high in Pakistan as compared to the other developed countries. The variables used in the current research are Servant Leadership, employee creativity, and Organizational success. According to the respondents, Servant Leadership is much more fruitful for organizations. Its role in enhancing creativity and organizational success cannot be denied. More and more Implementation of Servant Leadership can play a vital role in the success of an organization.

### *Limitations and Directions*

The empirical findings of this study and the theoretical framework are concordant. However, the research has a few limitations. The sample comprised bank branch personnel, although a convenience sampling method was utilized. The participants in this study were well-educated and professionally qualified. It is conceivable that results could vary if similar research were conducted with individuals possessing lower levels of education and qualification. The study targeted employees and managers within the banking sector of Pakistan and bank customers. However, conducting similar research in other sectors, such as education and manufacturing, could provide further insights into the subject matter and broaden our understanding of implementing servant leadership.

Future research could adopt a mixed-method approach, incorporating questionnaires and interviews. Employee behavior and attitudes present challenges regarding observation, necessitating more profound exploration. The current study only considers certain dimensions of variables, leaving room for additional dimensions to be explored in future research.

Multisource data was used, yet we cannot rule out common method biases. For future research, organizational success can be measured in terms of Employee retention, turnover attention, and employee burnout. Employee satisfaction and a good working environment can also be incorporated as moderators.

## **Conclusion**

Organizational leaders who exhibit servant-leader behaviors may be able to encourage other leaders to use this style of leadership and lead in a way so that the employees feel involved, committed, and creative. In the banking industry, employees deal directly with customers, so how they feel during working hours affects the organizational success level. Especially for customer-oriented organizations with an emphasis on the banking industry, it is important that leaders and top management consider how the employees can change their attitudes towards their duties and how customers can be satisfied to achieve ultimate success just by a change in leadership style. Given our findings, sufficient evidence has emerged that in today's highly competitive environment in the banking sector, the key element of the banks' performance is the ability to create novel ideas and new and better ways to perform things. To achieve competitive advantages, organizations should invest in their people, train them, and

develop them because they are the ones who could help them grow. The outcome of this study shows that servant leadership always means happier people and happier people are more satisfied, engaged, and creative; they are less likely to quit. By focusing on this leadership style, customer retention can also be achieved to satisfy them.

Thus, organizational leaders should ensure that employees are encouraged and reinforced to come up with creative ideas. Bank managers should adopt servant leadership styles that address the needs of bank employees and allow them to enjoy autonomy regarding how they accomplish organizational goals. Finally, there should be a good relationship between supervisors and employees because no organization can claim to be successful without the help of their employees, and the sooner they recognize how servant leaders can play an important role in achieving organizational success and enhancing employees' creativity, the sooner they will improve. Finally, is the practice of moral and ethical values within organizations, which, unfortunately, despite its paramount significance, has been ignored largely in the banking sector. So, there is a need to adopt the attributes of servant leadership by managers so that they can be admired, respected, trusted, and viewed as models by their followers.

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