



## Outcomes of Humble Leadership on Employee Organizational Citizenship Behaviors; Mediating Role of Psychological Safety

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### Abstract

*The current study model asserts a certain influence concerning humble leadership over employees' outcome (OCB) is treated through psychological safety and draws its assumptions from the social exchange theory. According to the theory, leader humility fosters high levels of employee psychological safety in order to increase employee OCB towards the organization. An analysis of the findings was done utilizing a quantitative research approach. Due to the use of a time-lag research strategy, the sample size for this study is 247. Since data was collected from Pakistan's banking industry. The findings support the idea that humble leadership and employees' OCB are mediated by employees' psychological safety. The current study draws this conclusion based on its theoretical and methodological strengths, implications, and research limitations for the future.*

**Keywords:** *humble leadership, psychological safety, employee organizational citizenship behaviors, social exchange theory.*



## **Introduction**

Organizational citizenship behavior has gained prominence in recent decades as a primary area of study in the field of organizational behavior (Zhang & Song, 2020). It has been determined that employee organizational citizenship behavior significantly contributes to the enhancement of a vast array of organizational outputs (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000).

Organizational Citizenship Behavior, abbreviated OCB, is the voluntary conduct of members or employees of organizations that goes beyond the scope of their job responsibilities and is not governed by company policies (X. Qian, Zhang, & Jiang, 2020). OCB is highly profitable for the organization because it can increase its effectiveness and efficiency and is not tied to a formal reward system. As stated by (Gonçalves & Brandão, 2017), organizational support behavior refers to conduct that employees engage in outside the scope of their formal work responsibilities. Prior investigations concerning the foundations of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) have placed significant emphasis on attitude and dispositional factors.

Unanswered is the inquiry into whether and which procedural elements can be efficiently implemented to directly impact OCB (Y. Wang, Liu, & Zhu, 2018).

Thus far, existing scholarly investigations have recognized numerous factors that contribute to organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). These factors include the perception of organizational politics, emotional intelligence, fulfillment of psychological contracts, and ethical leadership. As a leader's supervision style has a notable influence on employees' attitudes and behaviors, both directly or indirectly, it has been recognized in earlier studies that a leader's behavior plays a significant role in determining the organizational structure (Walters & Diab, 2016). Additionally, a number of business stakeholders have identified organizational leadership as a key factor in today's volatile markets. According to various academics, there is need to undertake research on various leadership philosophies to examine how these beliefs affect employee OCB. Previous studies have mostly focused on examining the intricate procedural mechanisms that underlie the association between humble leadership and organizational citizenship behavior. Nevertheless, there exist a dearth of knowledge about the impact of humble leadership on organizational citizenship behavior and they underlying mechanisms that explain this association remain inadequately explored (Kluitenberg, 2016). Furthermore, there needs to be more comprehensive knowledge in the existing corpus of literature regarding the border conditions that impact the correlation between humble leadership and organizational citizenship



behavior. As a result, the authors have requested that further investigations establish the conditions under which the relationship between modest leadership and organizational citizenship behavior is constrained (Natria, Yasmina, & Riantoputra, 2023).

In response to this demand, the present study examines the relationship between modest leadership and employee OCB. To incorporate humble leadership into one's leadership methodology, one must actively listen to and consider the ideas and feedback put forth by others (Owens et al., 2013). As a result, it is unsurprising that empirical research has consistently found a correlation between the encouragement of follower voice behaviors and humble leadership. Prior studies have established that followers' initiative and proactive conduct in the workplace is notably influenced by meek leadership. Moreover, empirical evidence suggests it positively enhances job crafting (Tuan, Rowley, Masli, Le, & Nhi, 2021). Furthermore, research has shown that followers exposed to humble leadership experience an elevated level of energy instead of merely observable behavioral outcomes. Moreover, empirical evidence indicates that individuals led with humility demonstrate high commitment, engagement, and information sharing.

Additionally, they are more likely to offer assistance and information. Furthermore, several mediated mechanisms, including psychological capital, empowerment, and job crafting, mediate the relationship between modest leadership and OCB. Fundamentally, an examination of the existing body of literature demonstrates that proficient leaders within organizations are critical, given their indispensable function in fostering favorable psychological qualities among their subordinates (Sarfraz, Rathore, Ali, Khan, & Zubair, 2022). These individuals in leadership positions must offer direction and inspiration to promote good work conduct among assistants, including participation in organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), while minimizing unfavorable conduct, such as withdrawal behavior. Furthermore, while empirical data supports a positive correlation between leader humility and the OCB of employees, the precise psychological mechanism that drives this association remains elusive (Cho, Schilpzand, Huang, & Paterson, 2021).

Future researchers are specifically encouraged by the calls made by (C. Liu, 2016) to look at additional mediators to gain a deeper insight into the impact of humble leadership on employee OCB. In the present study, researcher employed the psychological safety as a mediator between humble leadership and employees' OCB in order to respond to this call. Understanding ways through which the humility of leaders could promote employee's proactive behavior is important



(Jin, Qing, & Jin, 2022). In this essence, in this study, researcher developed a conceptual model relating humble leadership to employee's proactive behavior (OCB). In this model, it is anticipated that psychological safety would mediate the relation between the humble leadership and employee's proactive work behavior (OCB).

The establishment of a work environment that promotes psychological safety (i.e., a work environment characterized by employees who feel secure in expressing their ideas, actively seek constructive criticisms, offer honest feedback, engage in collaborative efforts, take calculated risks, and engage in experimentation), is one method for dealing with hazards and leads employees in order to foster open dialogue, individuals are encouraged to express their concerns and actively seek more comprehensive feedback (W. Wang, Kang, & Choi, 2022). Moreover, voice behavior which refers to the discretionary citizenship behavior of offering proposals to enhance existing work practices and policies, is an outcome widely connected with psychological safety (Nguyen, Teo, Halvorsen, & Staples, 2020).

The uniqueness of this study can be determined from two different perspectives: first, the study examined the leadership style like humble leadership for employee OCB; second, the significance of psychological safety as a mediator in the relationship between humble leadership and employee OCB. Similarly, these objectives are significance because they address two major concerns in leadership research: first, the dearth of empirical studies that look at the connection between employee OCB and Humble leadership; second, the severe shortage of studies that explore the underlying mechanisms in the relationship between leadership and employee OCB. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the effects of humble leadership on psychological safety and employee OCB, present study applies social exchange theory.

Reconsidering all the various facets of SET, the social exchange theory holds that when workers are behaved well at work place, they are more likely to feel compelled to repay the favor by doing the same (Al Hawamdeh, 2023). Leaders that uphold humility to motivate their teams to act morally by rewarding and punishing them for their behaviour. Because psychological safety is regarded as perception of safety at workplace, employees who perceive psychologically safe by their leader actions are motivated to involve their selves in more discretionary citizenship behavior at workplace such as OCB.

The remaining sections are described below in order to address the gap in the literature and achieve the research goals: In the following section, the theoretical framework serving as the



basis for the research model is presented followed by a review of the relevant literature and the development of hypotheses. The paper then briefly discusses the technique that was employed before presenting and discussing the empirical findings and their implications. The essay ends by acknowledging the limits of the research and providing a launch pad for potential future research directions.

### **Literature Review and hypotheses development**

#### **Social Exchange Theory (SET)**

According to the social exchange theory (SET), people participate in exchange relationships with others out of a desire for social rewards. When two people have something valuable to exchange and are ready to do so, a social exchange takes place. From this perspective, cost-benefit analysis is an intrinsic element in every interpersonal interaction. A reciprocity process governs the exchange of resources, whereby one party generally reimburses the other for their favorable (or, at times, unfavorable) behavior (Stafford & Kuiper, 2021). This theory is founded upon two fundamental principles: firstly, individuals ought to provide support and aid to those who have assisted, supported, or aided them; secondly, no action should be taken to harm those who have extended such assistance, support, or aid to others. It is predicated on the notion that material and social resources are frequently exchanged during interpersonal interactions (Sulistyan, 2020). In accordance with social exchange theory, an exchange relationship's nature may initially be of moderate quality before improving with repeated resource exchanges. According to this hypothesis, when someone or a group offers them benefits, people tend to form close, trusting ties with them and begin offering benefits in return. With accordance to the notion, people prefer to form relationships of exchange with those who can provide the most security and benefit (H. Kim, So, & Wirtz, 2022).

#### **Humble leadership and OCB**

Relationships develop into enduring bonds of trust, loyalty, and reciprocal obligations over time; guided by specific "rules of exchange" (Ding, Yu, Chu, Li, & Amin, 2020). This paradigm clarifies the significance that humble behaviors play in the reciprocity between leaders and followers, making it particularly relevant for research on humble leadership. For instance, Wang et al.'s experimental results from 2019 show that humble leaders make their subordinates feel valued, which reduces supervisors' counterproductive work habits (CWBs). Moreover, (Naem



Mian, Malik, & Hussain, 2023) emphasize this concept in order to show how humble leaders might promote more solidified interpersonal bonds among team members.

Furthermore, humble leadership comprises three components, as defined by (Suryani et al., 2023) as social and interpersonal qualities: a readiness to objectively evaluate one's capabilities and contributions, a regard for the gifts and abilities of others, and a receptiveness to learning. Recent academic attention has focused on meek leadership. A review of the literature reveals that humble leadership legitimizes subordinates' growth, promotes learning orientation, job satisfaction, work engagement, and retention among assistants, increases employee loyalty and commitment, improves the integration of the top management team and an empowering environment, and lessens the adverse effects of a narcissistic leader on favorable follower outcomes (Cho et al., 2021).

It has a good effect on team performance via social contagion and on subordinate creativity via psychological capital. A regulated mediation relationship exists between modest leadership, employee initiative, psychological empowerment, and leader identity. Although numerous studies have underscored the importance of subtle leadership for organizations and individuals, further research is required to ascertain how humble leadership influences a broader spectrum of positive outcomes for organizations or individuals (Aghighi, 2021). Additional analysis of the factors that precede OCB is critical, as OCB improves the efficacy of organizations and evaluates and promotes employee performance.

According to the current paper, humble leadership and OCB are positively correlated. The prediction is supported by at least three factors. Firstly, (Bahmannia, van Knippenberg, & Lowe, 2023) provided evidence that employee's perceptions of self-efficacy and self-worth will be improved when humble leaders value employee's strengths and even see themselves as students of their subordinates' talents. Since self-efficacy and OCB are closely related, humble leadership may be associated with OCB in a favorable way. Secondly, humble leader's expressions of appreciation for employee's accomplishments might assist followers understand the value of their contributions to companies, which in turn helps followers have a sense of purpose in their work (Ete et al., 2020). Given the beneficial effects of work meaning on OCB, it makes sense to assume that humble leadership will also have a good effect on OCB. Thirdly, humble leaders used to own their shortcomings and exhibit openness to new ideas, which can provide followers the chance to exercise their own will.



The aforementioned arguments lead to the following hypothesis, that

*H1*: Humble leadership is positively related to OCB.

### **Humble leadership and Psychological Safety**

According to (Zhang & Song, 2020), a humble leader is one who makes relationships with others and displays a pattern of behavior that others (such as followers) can pick up on. Because leaders serve as role models and establish standards and values that may affect the behaviour of their followers, exemplary leadership is necessary. They are seen as setting the standard for the organization's moral fiber and ethics. Humble leaders openly acknowledge that they lack all the answers (Rego, Melo, Bluhm, e Cunha, & Júnior, 2021). They are conscious of their own limitations and how others' skills can make up for any gaps in their own skills. They appreciate the input of their followers and are willing to pick up knowledge from them. Employees in such a setting feel valued for their contributions, are free to speak up, and are aware that taking risks and making mistakes is acceptable and even encouraged. These are all indications of a psychologically safe atmosphere (S. Qian, Liu, & Chen, 2022).

According to (Ali, Zhang, Shah, Khan, & Shah, 2020), psychological safety is the degree to which people believe they won't be rejected or dismissed for handling amicable relational issues like seeking feedback, owning up to mistakes, or raising concerns. In the current study, it is hypothesized that humble leaders will boost their followers' sense of psychological safety. For instance, (Cho et al., 2021) argued that employees will assume their association or group has a mentally safe environment if the leaders are helpful, instructionally engaged, and exhibit non-cautious replies to questions and issues. It makes sense to think that humble leaders will play a crucial role in improving employees' feelings of psychological safety because previous research has shown that they will typically exhibit each of these behaviors.

According to the underlying tenets of social exchange theory, which investigates the mechanisms by which "certain 'rules' of exchange" cause "relationships to evolve over time into trusted, loyal, and mutual commitments" (X. Liu, Mao, Chiang, Guo, & Zhang, 2023) also emphasize this concept to emphasize how humble leaders can improve rapport with their employees.

Researchers have also discovered that when working with a humble leader, coworkers use voice more frequently (El-Gazar, Zoromba, Zakaria, Abualruz, & Abousoliman, 2022). The social exchange theory has therefore been essential in assisting us in comprehending how humble



leadership motivates followers to act in a positive manner. As a result, the following theories are put forth.

*H2: Humble leadership is positively related to Psychological Safety.*

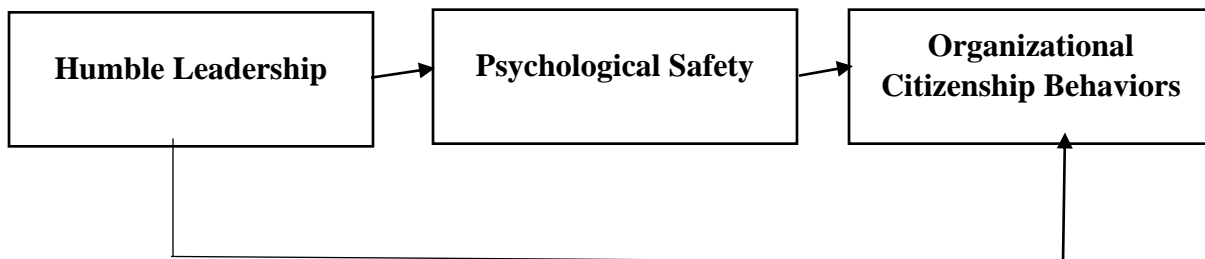
### **Mediating role of Psychological Safety**

When discussing the effects of interpersonal hazards on employees, the phrase "psychological safety" is often employed. A person's fear of repercussions to their reputation, career, or place of employment diminishes as their sense of psychological safety grows (S. Kim, Lee, & Connerton, 2020). Psychological safety is usually thought of as something that happens at the team level. Many people and groups are now looking into psychological safety (Jiang, Hu, Wang, & Jiang, 2019).

Claiming that humble leadership improves psychological safety is the main argument put out in this study. Social exchange theory identifies modest leadership as a significant social cue. (Khan, Jaafar, Javed, Mubarak, & Saudagar, 2020) state that followers of humble leaders may interpret their openness to help, acknowledgment of their contributions, and seeming self-consciousness as a sign of a shift in power dynamics between the leader and the employee. According to (Ahmad & Umrani, 2019), this might make followers feel more supported and increase their faith in their leaders. According to research conducted by (Basit, 2021), when followers perceive their leaders as trustworthy, they will positively perceive their jobs regarding cognition. Humility in leaders can have a beneficial psychological impact by legitimizing and facilitating staff growth and improvement while openly acknowledging their contributions and abilities. The current study hoped to find a positive relationship between organizational citizenship action and psychological safety. As a result, the following hypothesis is offered.

*H3: Psychological safety mediates the relationship among humble leadership and OCB*

Figure 1







## **Research Methods**

### **Participants and procedures**

We employed a quantitative hypothetico-deductive strategy for testing hypotheses to accomplish our research objectives. The information was supplied by workers in the service industry's banking sector. Meetings between managers and personnel are commonplace in these enterprises, providing an excellent opportunity to study the relevant elements. The data was supplied by managers in the mentioned sector in particular.

Using a three-wave research design, we were able to evaluate our mediator (T2: psychological safety) independently, result (T3: employee OCB), and predictor (T1: moderate leadership) all at the same time. There was a two- to three-week interval between every measurement. Avoiding issues that may develop from relying solely on self-reports and data collected from a single source is possible with a temporally separated architecture. Due to the decreased possibility of false positive outcomes, data from several studies show that common technique biases are unlikely to occur when mediating effects are identified (Simons & Peterson, 2000). Data on the dependent variable were acquired via a peer report. People in collectivist societies tend to be more attuned to the actions of those around them, which allows them to make more accurate judgments about the OCB of their peers (Raja & Johns, 2010). One advantage of peer reports over supervisor reports is that proper dyadic pairing minimizes data nesting issues caused by having one supervisor for multiple respondents. Bank workers in Pakistan's Islamabad and Dera Ghazi Khan were surveyed in a field study. Before they decided to participate, individuals were sent a cover letter outlining the study's goals and assuring them of total anonymity. The message reassured participants that their involvement was voluntary and included the principal investigator's contact details in case they had any inquiries or wanted to submit comments. The employees selected their peers, who had known them for at least six months, to guarantee they could accurately evaluate the employees' performance.

A commendable 78% response rate was achieved when 390 out of 500 questionnaires issued at T1 were filled out. Three weeks following T2, we re-surveyed the same individuals and received 400 complete questionnaires (or 66% response rate). Lastly, three weeks following T2, we re-contacted the same participants and asked them to complete a third survey that assessed the study's outcomes. In addition, at T3, we had our respondents' coworkers fill out an OCB metrics survey. Three waves of time-matched self-report surveys yielded 290 responses. Due to missing



data on 10 peer-reported forms, a final sample of 247 usable responses was created, yielding an overall response rate of 49%.

This study's participants were 80% males. Among the 69% of branch managers respondents, 48% held a master's degree or above. Furthermore, several participants (39%) had area-level managerial roles. Finally, the results suggest that the majority of respondents (50%) work in the BOP.

### **Measures**

We decided to conduct the polls in English because that is the language mandated for all Pakistani educational institutions and workplaces. Previously, studies in analogous domains in Pakistan used English questionnaires without meeting any language understanding issues (Raja & Johns, 2010). Furthermore, the data separation allowed us to clarify the survey-filling procedures and eliminate any potential ambiguity. As a result, we chose not to translate our surveys into Urdu and instead retained the original English versions of all metrics. Unless otherwise noted, all scales were graded using a five-point Likert scale, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 7 representing "strongly agree."

### **Humble leadership**

A nine-item scale was created by (Owens, Johnson, & Mitchell, 2013) to measure modest leadership. A surface action would be to "Assign information to external agencies." "Report it to the relevant organization personnel." The results were reported using a 7-point Likert scale, where one signifies strongly disagree and seven means strongly agree. Reliability is 0.93.

### **Psychological Safety**

Items related to psychological safety were measured using a six-item scale by (Edmondson, 1999). Products like "It is safe to take a risk in this organization" are illustrative. "This organization's members can bring up difficult issues and problems." We used a seven-point Likert scale to score the answers, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 7 = Strongly Agree. In this study, the scale's reliability using Cronbach's alpha was 0.75.

### **Organizational Citizenship behavior**

We utilized an eight-item scale adapted from the original (Lee & Allen, 2002) questionnaire to assess corporate citizenship. On a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 signifies strong disagreement, and 7 means strong agreement, respondents were requested to indicate the extent to which they agreed. To illustrate OCB, some examples of assessments include "Assists others with their



duties" and "Willingly gives his/her time to help others who have work-related problems." In this study, the scale's reliability using Cronbach's alpha was 0.77.

**Control variables**

Our dependent variable showed some variation with respect to the name of the organization when we ran a one-way analysis of variance. In order to represent the name of the company across all of its categories, we used a single dummy variable.

**Confirmatory factor analysis**

We used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to determine whether the variables measured simultaneously from the same source were discriminately valid. Following the guidelines laid out by (Brown & Moore, 2012), we performed one-on-one CFA using a two-factor model in conjunction with a single-factor model. The complete set of results for psychological safety, OCB, and humble leadership can be found in Table 1. For the one-factor model, the results are as follows:  $\chi^2 = 3612.38$ ,  $df = 209$ ,  $\chi^2 / df = 17.28$ ,  $RMSEA = .27$ ;  $CFI = .42$ ,  $TLI = .57$ ,  $GFI = .56$ ; and for psychological safety, OCB, and humble leadership, the complete set of results is  $\chi^2 = 470.38$ ,  $df = 168$ ,  $\chi^2 / df = 2.80$ ,  $RMSEA = .08$ .

**Data Analysis**

Table 2 summarizes the main criteria used in the descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and Cronbach's alpha reliability of this study. There is a positive relationship between modest leadership and psychological safety, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and overall climate ( $r = 0.76$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Table 1

Result of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Measurement Models	$\chi^2$	<i>Df</i>	$\chi^2/Df$	<i>TLI</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>GFI</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>
Full Model (3 factors)	470.38	168	2.80	.97	.94	.95	.08
Full Model(1factor)	3612.38	209	17.28	.57	.42	.56	.27

Notes: Better fit indices are presented in bold; three-factor model = humble leadership, psychological and OCB.



Table 2

Means, Standard deviations, Correlations and Reliabilities of the study variable

Sr#		Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1	Humble leadership	3.30	1.07	(.78)			
2	Psychological Safety	4.12	0.59	.538**	(.74)		
3	OCB	2.77	0.69	.762**	.599**	(.70)	

N= 247; \*p<0.05;\*\*p <0.01. The alpha reliabilities are given in parenthesis; T1 denotes time one, T2 denotes times two, and T3 denotes time three.

We employed PROCESS macro processes and the bootstrapping method to evaluate the mediation effects (Hayes, 2015). As shown in Table 3, the direct and mediation hypotheses were tested. Hypothesis H1's results demonstrate that modest leadership benefits OCB (B = 0.71, t = 18.4, p<0.001). The fact that modest leadership considerably impacts psychological safety (B = 0.55, t = 9.97, p<0.001) lends credence to H2. The indirect impact of conservative leadership on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) psychological safety (indirect effect = 0.24, p<0.001) provided support for H3. Additional support for H3 was provided by the bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals that did not include zero and encircled the indirect effects for OCB (0.08, 0.20).

Table 3

Mediation Regression Analysis

Sr.#	Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	B	SE	T	P
	Step 1	.53	.28	—	—	—	0.000
1	Direct effects of humble leadership on psychological safety	—	—	.55	.05	9.97	0.000
	Step 2	.76	.58	—	—	—	0.000
2	Direct effects of humble leadership on OCB	—	—	.71	.03	18.41	0.000
	Step 3	.79	.63	—	—	—	0.000
3	Direct effects of psychological safety on OCB	—	—	.24	.04	5.77	0.000
Bootstrap result for indirect effects							
		Effect	SE	Z		P	



Indirect Effect and Significance using normal distribution					
1	Sobel	.13	.02	4.97	.00
		M	SE	LL95% CI	UL 95%
Bootstrap results for indirect effects					
1	Mean PS	.13	.02	.08	.20

Note: n= 247, organization name is control variables. Size of the Bootstrap sample=5000, LL=Lower limit, CI= Confidence Interval, UL= Upper Limit.

## Discussion and Conclusion

### Discussion

According to some research (Steenkamp & Maydeu-Olivares, 2023), humble leadership may have an impact on organizational and employee outcomes. There is still little information in the literature currently available about the boundaries of the relationship between humble leadership and OCB. The boundary conditions of the association between modest leadership and OCB are thus to be identified, they urged of future researchers (Natria et al., 2023). This study investigates the hypothesis that when workers see a humble modest leader at work, they exhibit more OCB in their behaviour. Psychological safety is also explored in this study as a mediator between OCB and modest leadership. The results demonstrated that modest leadership has a good effect on OCB and that psychological safety is a mediator between the two. Data from the Pakistani banking sector, including Habib Bank Limited, Bank Alfalah, National Bank of Pakistan, MCB, Meezan Bank, and United Bank Limited, were collected for the empirical findings. The main theoretical framework was social exchange theory (Tuan et al., 2021). This section touches on a few theoretical and practical implications arising from the study's findings.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, our research offers unique ideas on how and for whom humble leadership yields favorable results. The advantages of humble leadership in the context of emerging countries like Pakistan are well supported by our findings. Another significant finding from our study is that individuals with weak openness to experience may be detrimental to organizations in comparison to people with strong openness to experience. Future research should investigate cross-cultural models in an effort to better comprehend the elements that lead to the emergence of humble leadership in firms.



### **Theoretical implications**

Our study's findings have profound theoretical ramifications for the literature on humble leadership. First, our study contributes to our understanding of humble leadership, which is thought to improve employee wellbeing, engagement, and satisfaction. By promoting a climate where workers feel encouraged and respected, it may help to develop a healthy organizational culture. Being receptive to criticism and having a humble demeanor can help an organization develop and innovate. Furthermore, it was hypothesized that humble leadership is likely to have a favorable impact on workers' desire to participate in OCBs. Employees may have a stronger sense of affiliation with the company and a willingness to contribute beyond the scope of their formal responsibilities when they see their leaders as modest. Employees are more likely to go above and beyond in their roles when their leaders are humble and focused on the group's success. Our findings are consistent with a growing body of research that shows followers are motivated by humble leadership, are more engaged, committed, resilient, and eager to help others, as well as share information with others (Qu, Zhu, & Goddard, 2022). Our study adds to what is known about the essential link between OCB and modest leadership by delving into the mediating role of psychology in this connection. According to the findings of our study, psychological safety serves as a link between modest leadership and OCBs. A culture of transparency and trust fostered by humble leaders can increase workers' feelings of psychological safety. Employees are more inclined to collaborate, exchange ideas, and participate in OCBs when they feel psychologically safe doing so. Because they are confident that their contributions will be appreciated and valued, they feel confident taking risks. Last but not the least, by using humble leadership as important predecessors and psychological safety as a mediator of correlations between those two factors and outcomes, this study also adds to the body of research on psychological safety. The SEM results, which also speak to the fundamental assumptions of the social exchange theory (SET), lend weight to these assertions.

### **Practical implications**

Our study has important managerial ramifications as well. Organizations can benefit from this theoretical framework's understanding in a number of ways. Organizations should support and cultivate the humble leadership traits in their leaders in order to promote OCBs among their workforce. Training programs can assist leaders improve their behaviors of humility, attentive listening, and soliciting criticism. Furthermore, fostering a culture of psychological safety is



crucial because it encourages people to take initiative, work together, and contribute creatively. A give-and-take relationship between humble leadership, OCBs, and psychological safety is highlighted by incorporating Social Exchange Theory within the context of these ideas: First of all, humble leaders foster an environment of open communication by modelling qualities like openness, humility, and respect for team contributions. Because their acts are seen as fair and sincere, employees feel more trust and reciprocity. Second, humble leadership helps create a climate of psychological security. Employees are more likely to feel comfortable expressing their ideas, raising their concerns, and taking calculated risks when they believe their leaders to be approachable and humble. Third, the Social Exchange Theory contends that when workers have satisfying interactions with their leaders, they feel obligated to repay them. This might make people more inclined to participate in OCBs. As a means of giving back to the considerate treatment they receive from modest leaders, workers could feel inspired to go beyond their formally defined job tasks. There are further real-world consequences stemming from the study's location in Pakistan, an underdeveloped nation. In developing nations like Pakistan, there needs to be more empirical data on the effects of moderate leadership on employee performance. As a collectivistic society dealing with complex political and economic issues, Pakistan provides a one-of-a-kind setting for this research. The intriguing implication of this study's results is that moderate leadership might benefit businesses in a country with such a unique climate. Despite cultural differences, these outcomes show that modest leadership is effective.

### **Limitations and future research directions**

While the new research provides a new perspective on humble leadership, it has flaws. Despite using data from several sources and a time-lagged research approach, our study does not meet the criteria for a pure longitudinal design since not all study variables were examined at each time point. Psychological safety and modest leadership were evaluated using self-reports. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that mediation may have been successful even if this was not the case. Ongoing observation of all study model variables is possible with a comprehensive longitudinal research technique that future investigators may use. Future research might build on our current paradigm and suggest additional procedures and situations where humble leadership might result in various effects. For instance, considering additional psychological variables as moderators and/or mediators in the relationship between humble leadership and results may be beneficial. By speculating and testing cross-cultural models, future studies may examine the



effects of humble leadership in contexts of both developed and developing countries. Researchers might examine additional elements that might clarify how and why humble leadership might benefit different groups of people. For example, it is possible to include perceived organizational support and the climate of human resources support as moderators that explain how people succeed in their careers despite unethical leadership. Additionally, utilizing Social Exchange Theory as a frame of reference, future study could experimentally investigate the correlations suggested in this paradigm. Studies conducted over an extended period of time could examine how these interactions changed over time and determine how different leadership philosophies and organizational cultures affected these dynamics. Qualitative research may also shed light on how workers perceive social interactions and what drives them to participate in OCBs in this context.

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