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Article

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Leader humility and organisational citizenship behaviour: the mediating roles of job satisfaction and employee engagement

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ABSTRACT

The study examined leader humility (LH) and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) with the mediating roles of job satisfaction (JS) and employee engagement (EE) among employees in a public university in Ghana. A cross-sectional research design was used in carrying out the study. The study used stratified sampling to sample 246 respondents and data garnered using a questionnaire while structural equation modelling was utilised in testing the hypotheses. This study demonstrated that LH has a positive and significant relationship with OCB, JS and EE. The results of the study further showed that JS and EE have significant positive link with OCB. Finally, the study established that JS and EE played partial mediation roles in the link between LH and OCB. The results of this study indicate that employees whose supervisors have humble leadership traits tend to be satisfied, engaged and ultimately, are able to exhibit OCB. This implies that humble leaders are assets to their organisations. Thus, organisations seeking to have satisfied and engaged employees as well as employees who indulge in OCB should ensure that their supervisors have humble leadership traits.

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Leadership; Human Resource Management; Work & Organizational Psychology

Introduction

The majority of workers are aware that their main responsibility is to complete the tasks given to them and produce work that is both acceptable and helpful to the organisation as a whole. OCB is an optional behaviour; that is, a behaviour which is not required as part of an employee's official work duties. Nonetheless, it helps the organisation to function well (Robbins et al., 2013; Tashtoush & Eyupoglu, 2020). Although it supports the efficient operation of the organisation, this type of personal discretionary behaviour is not openly or immediately acknowledged by the formal incentive system (Organ, 2006). People who are consistently willing to go above and beyond their official job duties and invest more time and effort in their work are found in world-class organisations (Kashif et al., 2011). The concept of OCB is explained by social exchange theory in the sense that people feel obliged to reciprocate when they have benefited from an individual or entity's action (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2004; Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara et al., 2023). According to empirical research, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) predicts OCB because employees who have positive relationships with their leaders also frequently exhibit behaviours that help others at work and, as a result, improve organizational performance (Martin et al., 2016; Organ, 1988; O'Grady, 2018).

This makes leaders central in any organisational setup. The centrality of leaders is echoed by Jiménez-Estévez et al. (2023) in their report that leaders are authority figures who work closely with subordinates and represent the organisation. Nazir et al. (2021) added that as authority figures, they

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influence the attitudes of employees. Scholars have touted leader humility as a fundamental organisational virtue because of the advantages associated with this type of leadership (Hassan et al., 2023; Hendijani & Sohrabi, 2019; Li et al., 2022; Maldonado et al., 2022; Qiuyun et al., 2020). The first theoretical model of humility in organisational leadership was created by Owens and Hekman (2012). It outlines the behaviours, procedures, contingencies, and consequences of organisational processes. Subsequently, LH like other positive leadership styles that are other-centred has been acknowledged as a promoter of employee positive work behaviours that improve productivity (Hu et al., 2018; Jeung & Yoon, 2016; Jiménez-Estévez et al., 2023; Lin et al., 2019; Ruiz-Palomino et al., 2023). In the view of Hassan et al. (2023) and Wang et al. (2017), humble leaders do not believe that they are the centre of everything and adopt a bottom-up approach to things. Leader humility refers to 'an interpersonal characteristic that emerges in social contexts that connotes a manifested willingness to view oneself accurately, a displayed appreciation of others' strengths and contributions, and teachability, or openness to new ideas and feedback' (Owens et al., 2013).

Further, Owens et al. (2013) stipulated that LH influences perceptions, attitudes, and behavioural reactions by significantly influencing the interactions between leaders and their followers. Employees immensely benefit from a leader's humility, which can also create reciprocal circumstances that make them engage in constructive behaviour in return. Given that a leader represents the organisation, followers often see a humble leader's actions as an expression of organisational support, which in turn causes OCB (Andiyasari et al., 2017). According to Abdullah (2020), even though some organisations, especially those in the public sector, confront egocentric and arrogant leaders who have ruined corporate culture and driven valuable people to perform poorly or leave, humility as a leadership trait among public sector leaders is not examined as frequently as other character traits in the leadership literature. As widely acknowledged, employees leave their supervisors and not the organisation (Han & Bai, 2020) and so studying leader humility because of its characteristics could be beneficial to employees and organisations alike. Moreover, public sector organisations face challenges of absenteeism, not assisting co-workers, misusing time and other resources, and theft of property (Hassan et al., 2014; Vishwakarma et al., 2015).

Further, studies have asserted that a humble leader is a model for employees' positive work behaviour which helps employees to engage in OCB through JS and EE (Owens et al., 2013, Owens et al., 2015, Ou et al., 2017). Despite the importance of LH to OCB, little research exists in terms of the direct effects of LH on followers' extra-role behaviours (Mao et al., 2017; Qiuyun et al., 2020). Also, Qin et al. (2020) posited that scholarly works on humble leadership are in their infancy while Wang et al. (2017) indicated that LH has received little attention from scholars. This shows more research is needed on this subject matter. In addition, the characteristics of LH could affect JS and EE which could in turn transmit OCB. However, there are limited empirical studies that consider the mediating roles of JS and EE in the LH – OCB nexus. To address this shortcoming, there is a need to conduct empirical research on LH and OCB considering the mediating roles of JS and EE in the relationship. It is on this basis that the current study examined the effect of LH on OCB through the mediating roles of JS and EE in a public university.

Public universities are most of the time challenged with resource deficits. As such, LH and OCB are significant to these universities. For instance, a public university noted for a humble leadership reputation could have a leverage to attract talented faculty members, support staff and students. Besides, humble leaders could influence faculty members and support staff to go beyond the requirements of their job description and as well, go the extra mile for students and colleagues alike which would result in increased knowledge sharing, supportive learning environment and collaboration. Overall, LH would lead to a more positive service experience for students and the larger university community.

Theoretical backing and hypotheses

Leader humility and organisational citizenship behaviour

LMX is a theory that hinges on relationships between social actors with unequal status in organisations (Obeng et al., 2021; Shin & Park, 2021) and that it significantly affects work-related outcomes (Sunaryo et al., 2024). LMX predicts that humble leaders could stimulate OCBs since employees who have positive relationships with their managers are also likely to exhibit behaviours that help others in their workplace and ultimately improve performance (Martin et al., 2016; Organ, 1988; O'Grady, 2018; Qin et al., 2020).

Thus, humble leaders cause their followers to exhibit extra-role behaviours. According to Chon and Zoltan (2019), it is undisputed that a humble leader's exemplary integrity attributes inspire their subordinates to reciprocate independent, positive, extra-role behaviour in the workplace, which leads to OCB on the part of the workforce. Bradley and Klotz (2018) found that LH has a positive link with OCB. Additionally, empirical studies also show that OCB is often exhibited by the backing and effort of humble leaders (Khan & Malik, 2017; Organ, 2018). It is, therefore, hypothesised that:

H1: LH is positively related to OCB.

Leader humility and job satisfaction

Humble leaders have a positive influence on their followers (Li et al., 2022). Among these are the influence on employee JS (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Yang and Xu (2022) opined that humble leaders frequently listen before speaking, which fosters a pleasant environment for interactions and in the long term, this breeds satisfaction among employees. Also, workers will most likely be satisfied with their jobs when their leaders have the humility to recognise their qualities, accept their shortcomings, and focus on their personal development (Owens & Hekman, 2012). Through the LMX relationship, team members who have strong relationships with their leaders are given the chance to speak out and also communicate due to the humility of their supervisor (Botero et al., 2009). Employees who work in favourable social exchange relationships in teams with humble and supportive leaders are highly expected to develop a positive attitude toward their jobs (Flynn, 2005). Empirically, Owens et al. (2013) found that LH was positively related to follower JS. Similarly, Ou et al. (2017) found that LH was positively related to follower JS. Oga and Worlu (2022) findings revealed that LH significantly and influences workers' JS. On this basis, it is hypothesised that:

H2: LH is positively related to JS.

Leader humility and employee engagement

According to Qiuyun et al. (2020), recent research highlight leader humility as a core organisational virtue, with empirical evidence linking it to factors such as higher employee engagement. Wright et al. (2016), posit that humble leaders tend to be interested in employee growth and development which invokes a positive exchange with employees. As reported by Yang and Xu (2022), the approach of a humble leader affects employees' desirable attitudes such as work engagement. In turn, this fosters a shared interpersonal process that results in team members who are driven to reach their full potential (Owens & Hekman, 2016). Owens and Hekman further added that leaders who exhibit humility inspire followers to do the same. Kahn (1990) posits that when employees have confidence in their leaders who are humble and supportive, they will be more willing to devote themselves to their work because they feel psychologically safe and available. Empirical evidence indicate that LH enables employees to reduce stress by providing support to employees and motivates employees to exert more effort to perform their tasks and engagements in the workplace (Wang et al., 2018). Rich et al. (2010) also indicated that humble leaders make subordinates feel energetic and inspire them to become more focused and motivate to devote themselves to the work, which aligns with the connotation of engagement. In their meta-analytic study, Luo et al. (2022) found humble leadership to be related to employee engagement. Consequently, it is hypothesised that:

H3: LH is positively related to EE.

Job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour

JS, according to Luthans et al., (2010), is an attitude developed by employees all the time regarding various aspects of work such as wages, supervisory style, co-workers, promotions and the job itself. Satisfied employees pride themselves on their affiliation with the organisation, support its objectives, and exhibit higher levels of OCB as a result (Awang et al., 2010; Steinhaus & Perry, 1996). Yee et al. (2010)

stated that satisfied employees represent the true worth of their company resulting in OCB as their satisfaction is considered an important driver of firms' improvements. Some scholars have found a nexus between JS and OCB. For instance, Unal (2013) found a significant relationship between JS and four dimensions of OCB (Altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, and civic virtue). Mohammad (2016) found JS to have a positive effect on OCB. Additionally, Gunay (2018) in a study also evinced a significant link between JS and OCB. Furthermore, Hemakumara (2020) in a related study found that JS had a positive significant connection with the OCB of employees. As a result, it is postulated that:

H4: JS is positively related to OCB.

Employee engagement and organisational citizenship behaviour

Employee work engagement involves positive definitions of employee health and encourages the best possible functioning of employees within an organisational setting (Adnan et al., 2020). It is a positive mental state at the workplace that is expressed by employees as vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). To put it in another way, engaged workers feel a connection to their workplaces on a physical, cognitive, and emotional level (Albrecht, 2010). Uddin et al. (2018) opined that rising EE creates a more productive workforce and leads to high performance levels. Empirically, the study of Ariani (2013) showed that EE is significantly and positively related to OCB. Amadi et al. (2017) discovered that EE has a positive significant connection with OCB. A study by Macey and Schneider (2008) found that higher levels of EE were associated with greater OCB. Additionally, a meta-analytic study by Christian et al. (2011) found a significant and positive correlation between EE and OCB. A significant association between EE and OCB was similarly established by Byaruhanga and Othuma (2016). In this regard, the hypothesis formulated is:

H5: EE is positively related to OCB.

Mediation of job satisfaction in the relationship between leader humility and organisational citizenship behaviour

Employees express job satisfaction through building relationships, cooperation and events occurring in the workplace with the personality of their supervisors as a contributing factor (Hajdukova et al., 2015). Humble leaders enhance the JS levels of their subordinates. For instance, Farrington and Lillah (2019) found that LH has a connection with employee JS that is positive. Sabir et al. (2012) asserted that organisational performance is a combined effort of the leader and the employees. Luo et al. (2022) found that humble leadership influences job satisfaction. Given that JS is also deemed as a predictor of OCB (Gunay, 2018; Hemakumara, 2020; Mohammad, 2016), it is hypothesised that:

H6: JS mediates the relationship between LH and OCB.

Mediation of employee engagement in the relationship between leader humility and organisational citizenship behaviour

From the social exchange theory, workers are inclined to show their leaders' good intentions in the workplace by having positive attitudes (Blau, 1964). Workers will be engaged in their work when they sense that their leader cares about their well-being and can carry out the organisation's values in their behaviour itself (Kahn, 1990). Also, Nielsen et al. (2010) showed that humble leaders positively impact employees' attitudes and emotions which contribute to EE. Agreeably, humble leaders acknowledge the efforts of their subordinates and assist them in understanding the value of their work which leads to OCB (Chen et al., 2018). A study by Aboramadan and Dahleez (2020) found that employee engagement mediated the link between transformational and transactional leadership styles, which are positive leadership styles like leader humility, and OCB. Ozturk et al. (2021) in their study also found that the links between servant leadership and extra-role performances were mediated by EE. Moreover, an indirect

relationship was established between leader humility and proactive behaviour by El-Gazar et al., (2022). Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H7: EE mediates the relationship between LH and OCB

Control variables

Family supportive supervisor behaviour (FSSB) and trust in supervisor (TIS) were controlled in this study because of the potential they have in affecting the variables generally and OCB specifically. For instance, O'Grady (2018) revealed that employees' trust in their supervisor leads them to engage in OCB. Alam et al. (2021) also indicated that supportive supervisors enhance the effectiveness of leadership and foster high EE. Again, trust is believed to affect the JS of employees (Hassan et al., 2016). Moreover, according to Vermeulen et al. (2022), the LMX theory suggests that high-exchange relationships are characterised by trust and encourage employees to perform beyond their role description. Controlling FSSB and TIS was, therefore, essential in isolating the confounding effect they have on the LH – OCB nexus through JS and EE.

Conceptual framework

The framework of the study is presented in Figure 1. It is premised on the seven hypotheses developed in the preceding section of this paper. The paths from LH to OCB; LH to JS; and LH to EE reflect H1; H2; and H3 respectively. The JS – OCB and EE – OCB links reflect H4 and H5 respectively. The connection from LH → JS → OCB and LH → EE → OCB respectively, reflect the mediation hypotheses labelled H6 and H7. FSSB and TIS are the control variables used in the study.

Research methods

Research design

The researchers adopted for this study, the cross-sectional survey design. This research design was adopted because the study involved individual employees as the unit of analysis and also, used a standardised questionnaire to collect the data at a particular point (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Ofori & Dampson, 2011). Also, it allowed the collection of quantitative data which was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics making it possible to generate findings that are representative of the population. (Saunders et al., 2012).

Sampling procedure

A total number of 246 administrators in a public university in Ghana were sampled out of a target population of 640 based on Yamane's (1967) method for determining sample size to serve as respondents in gathering data for the study. In order to ensure a proportionate representation of the various staff categories, a sample for each category was chosen according to their proportion in the population. Specifically, the stratified random sampling technique was used to select samples from each stratum to ensure representativeness of the population. The lottery method was used by the researcher to select

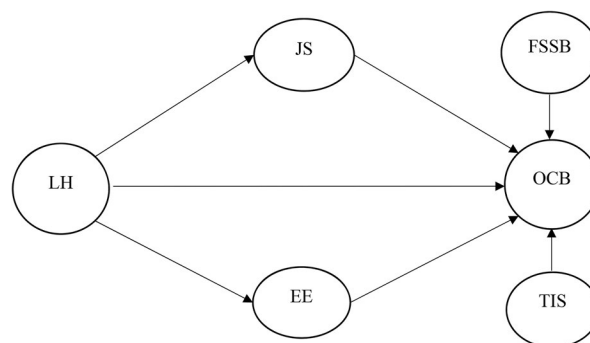


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

Table 1. Population and sample.

Stratum	Population	Sample
Administrative Assistants	177	68
Senior Administrative Assistants	184	71
Principal Administrative Assistants	233	90
Chief Administrative Assistants	46	17
Total	640	246

samples in each stratum. Table 1 shows the complete sampling frame grouped by the various strata and the required sample size to ensure representativeness of the respondents. It is worthy to note that the respondents had enough knowledge to respond to the questionnaire which was essential in reducing common method bias (Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015).

Instrument and data collection

A self-completing structured questionnaire was developed for the study. The questionnaire comprised two main sections; sections for the sample characteristics and the variables used in the study. The variables were measured on a seven-point Likert scale with the endpoints being; 1 (Least form of agreement) and 7 (Highest level of agreement). In measuring LH, the scale developed by Owens et al. (2013) was adapted. A sample measure is 'My supervisor actively seeks my feedback even if it is critical'. In measuring OCB, the scale developed by Podsakoff et al. (1990) was adapted. An example of the measure is 'I help others who have heavy work load'. In measuring JS, items including 'I am satisfied with the feeling of accomplishment I get from the job' were adapted from the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) developed by Weiss et al. (1977). To measure EE, items such as 'I work with intensity on my job' developed by Rich et al. (2010) were adapted. In measuring FSSB, items developed by Hammer et al. (2009) were adapted. A sample measure is 'My supervisor is willing to listen to my problems in juggling work and non-work life'. TIS, was measured by items such as 'I can depend on my supervisor to meet his/her responsibilities'. The measures were adapted from Yang et al. (2009). The measures were adapted to suit the local context. The questionnaire included an introduction section outlining the study's goals, guaranteeing the anonymity and confidentiality of the responses, and offering instructions on how to complete it as a procedural remedy for common method bias (Chang et al., 2010; Jordan & Troth, 2020; Podsakoff et al., 2012). All the questionnaire items are in the appendix. Ethical clearance was provided by the University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (UCCIRB/CHLS/2023/05). Prior to the data collection, written informed consent was obtained from the respondents.

Data processing and analysis

The data from questionnaires were processed and analysed utilising SPSS and SmartPLS. The data analysis included descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were computed on the demographic variables and presented using frequencies and percentages via SPSS. Partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS was used to analyse the hypotheses. Following appropriate assessment criteria for the measurement and structural models, the results were presented and discussed. In PLS-SEM, the assessment of the measurement model is done based on assumptions that the model achieves indicator reliability (factor loadings), construct reliability (Cronbach's alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR)), convergent validity (average variance extracted-AVE) and discriminant validity (HTMT). The structural model assessment follows by assessing the coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), variance inflation factors (VIF) effect size (f^2) and significance of the hypothesised paths (β).

Results

Sample characteristics

The characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 2. From the table, it is observed that the majority (50.8%) were females. Most of the respondents (42.7%) were aged between 31 and 40 years, while 23.2% were aged between 18 and 30 years. Concerning the level of education, 75.2% representing the majority had a bachelor's degree. When it comes to rank, the largest proportion of respondents (36.6%) were Principal Administrative Assistants and 43.1% of respondents had worked for 2-5 years.

Table 2. Characteristics of sample.

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	125	50.8
	Male	121	49.2
Age	18–30 years	57	23.2
	31–40 years	105	42.7
	41–50 years	52	21.1
	51–60 years	32	13
	61–70 years	10	4.1
Level of Education	Bachelor's degree	185	75.2
	Master's degree	58	23.6
	PhD	3	1.2
Rank	Administrative Assistant	68	27.6
	Senior Administrative Assistant	71	28.9
	Principal Administrative Assistant	90	36.6
	Chief Administrative Assistant	17	6.9
	Less than one year	25	10.2
	2–5 years	106	43.1
Number of years worked in the University	6–10 years	51	20.7
	over 10 years	64	26
	Total	246	100

Measurement model

The results displayed in Table 3 show that the data gathered from the respondents were not contaminated with common method bias issues. By observing the scores of the VIF which according to Kock (2015) is used to assess common method bias, it can be said that the required threshold was met. The various indicators had scores below the 5.0 cut-off point proposed in Hair et al. (2019).

Concerning the indicator reliability, Table 3 revealed that loadings for the constructs have met the requirements. By extension, the *t* values for the corresponding indicators also showed that they are significant and met all logic to be retained in the model. Henseler et al. (2009) posited that when the loadings of each item are larger than or equal to 0.70, the indicators of a construct can accurately assess that construct. This means that factors that load below this threshold should be removed. However, indicator loadings as low as 0.50, according to Benitez et al. (2020) should be kept as long as the model's overall reliability and validity aren't compromised by the addition of such indicators. As a result, some indicators with loadings below 0.70 were maintained.

For the internal consistency reliability of the constructs, the CA and CR values were considered and are displayed in Table 4. A cursory look at the scores of all the measures proved that the internal consistency reliability of the variables was achieved since the values obtained were > 0.70. Additionally, the convergent validity of the components was evaluated using the AVE. According to the established criteria ($AVE \geq 0.50$), the results in Table 4 demonstrated that the constructs achieved the appropriate mutual relationship.

The discriminant validity (DV) of the model was checked using the HTMT ratio criterion due to its efficacy in assessing the distinctiveness of constructs to the study. According to the values in Table 5, DV issues were not detected. This is because the values did not exceed both the conservative (0.85) and liberal (0.9) cut-off points for concluding the non-existence of DV problems (Henseler et al., 2015). Therefore, the variables were retained to analyse the phenomenon under investigation.

Structural model

The structural model assessment followed. Table 6 provides interpretations of vital parameters like the R^2 and Q^2 . With regards to the R^2 , the study upheld that 58.6 percent of changes in the scores of OCB were accounted for by the joint contribution of LH, JS, EE, FSSB and TIS. Premised on the suggestions of Hair et al. (2019), this change moderately explained the variation of OCB. Also, 10.7 percent of the variation in JS was explained by LH. In addition, the results depict that a percent of 10.8 of changes in the EE were caused by the traits of LH. In light of the predictive relevance, Q^2 , the table demonstrates that while OCB ($Q^2 = 0.515$) made a substantial predictive relevance, JS ($Q^2 = 0.098$) and EE ($Q^2 = 0.098$) respectively had small predictive relevance in the model.

Table 3. Indicator loadings test statistics and common method bias.

Construct indicator	Loading	t value	VIF
EE1	0.780	11.540	3.688
EE2	0.903	29.071	2.272
EE3	0.575	10.314	1.540
EE4	0.924	31.833	4.740
EE5	0.828	15.287	5.848
EE6	0.893	28.772	3.524
EE7	0.745	11.024	2.569
EE8	0.519	4.561	2.534
FSSB1	0.627	6.232	1.922
FSSB2	0.640	5.801	2.137
FSSB3	0.799	5.286	3.096
FSSB4	0.833	6.718	4.623
FSSB5	0.738	4.430	3.883
FSSB6	0.617	3.834	2.280
FSSB7	0.672	1.931	1.968
JS2	0.649	8.723	1.862
JS3	0.634	8.263	3.726
JS4	0.841	39.120	2.339
JS5	0.842	24.709	2.905
JS6	0.852	17.896	4.043
JS8	0.699	9.843	2.772
LH1	0.884	62.598	2.862
LH2	0.784	35.756	4.796
LH3	0.667	13.025	2.852
LH4	0.626	8.715	1.986
LH5	0.565	9.905	2.133
LH6	0.718	13.294	2.852
LH7	0.807	27.323	2.909
LH8	0.660	13.810	2.267
LH9	0.732	25.668	2.425
OCB1	0.893	42.760	2.665
OCB5	0.765	18.908	4.427
OCB6	0.435	5.280	2.817
OCB7	0.826	33.360	2.358
OCB8	0.736	16.575	4.012
OCB9	0.950	73.480	3.314
OCB10	0.785	27.163	4.633
TIS1	0.743	2.865	1.932
TIS2	0.845	4.297	2.843
TIS3	0.953	4.217	2.289
TIS4	0.813	3.563	3.433
TIS5	0.809	3.209	4.254

Table 4. Construct reliability and convergent validity.

Construct	CA	CR	AVE
EE	0.918	0.925	0.615
FSSB	0.846	0.849	0.557
JS	0.875	0.889	0.576
LH	0.890	0.906	0.521
OCB	0.890	0.916	0.617
TIS	0.925	0.920	0.698

Table 5. Discriminant validity-HTMT.

Construct	EE	FSSB	JS	LH	OCB	TIS
EE						
FSSB	0.846					
JS	0.805	0.819				
LH	0.307	0.321	0.312			
OCB	0.326	0.443	0.502	0.647		
TIS	0.304	0.265	0.341	0.457	0.279	

Table 7 provides the results of the hypotheses that were tested and the effect size (f^2) with **Figure 2** displaying the beta values of the hypothesised model. The results were interpreted based on three sub-columns which were direct link, indirect link and controls. From the direct paths, the study's findings revealed that LH had significant relationships with OCB ($LH \rightarrow OCB$; $\beta=0.620$), JS ($LH \rightarrow JS$; $\beta=0.327$) and

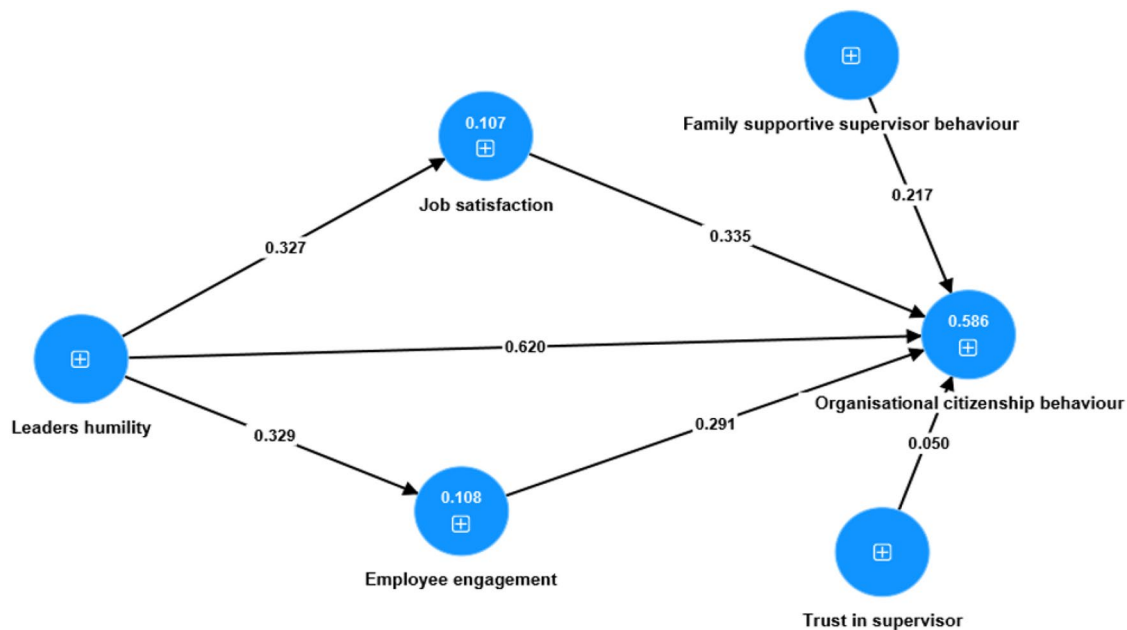
Table 6. Coefficient of determination and predictive relevance.

Construct	R ²	Q ²
OCB	0.586	0.515
JS	0.107	0.098
EE	0.108	0.098

Table 7. Results of hypotheses test.

Hypotheses: Paths	β	t value	p value	f ²
<i>Direct link</i>				
H1: LH \rightarrow OCB	0.620	7.450	0.000	0.549
H2: LH \rightarrow JS	0.327	6.734	0.000	0.120
H3: LH \rightarrow EE	0.329	7.069	0.000	0.121
H4: JS \rightarrow OCB	0.335	2.493	0.013	0.089
H5: EE \rightarrow OCB	0.291	2.833	0.005	0.073
<i>Indirect link</i>				
H6: LH \rightarrow JS \rightarrow OCB	0.109	2.087	0.037	
H7: LH \rightarrow EE \rightarrow OCB	0.095	2.679	0.007	
<i>Controls</i>				
FSSB \rightarrow OCB	0.217	1.031	0.303	0.029
TIS \rightarrow OCB	0.050	0.292	0.770	0.003

Note: f² of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 is seen as small, medium and large respectively.

**Figure 2.** Beta values of hypothesised PLS-SEM model.

EE (LH \rightarrow EE; $\beta = 0.329$). Again, the results established that JS (JS \rightarrow OCB; $\beta = 0.335$) and EE (EE \rightarrow OCB; $\beta = 0.291$) had a significant positive relationship with OCB. Moreover, in the indirect column, it was indicated that LH was positively related to OCB through JS (LH \rightarrow JS \rightarrow OCB; $\beta = 0.109$) and EE (LH \rightarrow EE \rightarrow OCB; $\beta = 0.095$). This type of mediation is complementary partial mediation (Nitzl et al., 2016). These findings were in line with the hypotheses formulated in the study. Thus, the seven hypotheses found support in the study. Furthermore, the results in the control column were tested for the purposes of assessing other variables that may interfere with the results of the study. As a result, FSSB and TIS were controlled for. The results demonstrate that FSSB (FSSB \rightarrow OCB; $\beta = 0.217$) and TIS (TIS \rightarrow OCB; $\beta = 0.050$) were not significantly related to OCB. Concerning the effect size of the hypothesised links, it is seen in Table 7 that the links explain varied effects. For instance, the findings show that LH had a large effect on OCB while it (LH) had a weak effect on both JS and EE. Lastly, the findings revealed that JS and EE had a small effect on the score of OCB.

Discussion

The study examined LH and OCB through the mediating role of JS and EE in a public university. Seven hypotheses were formulated for testing. The study established that LH has a positive and significant relationship with OCB, JS and EE. The finding relative to LH and OCB is consistent with previous empirical research including Bradley and Klotz (2018), Chon and Zoltan (2019), Khan and Malik (2017) and Organ (2018). Similarly, the results of LH and JS intersect with other findings such as Owens et al. (2013), Ou et al. (2017) and Oga and Worlu (2022). Also, the revelation made by Rich et al. (2010) and Wang et al. (2018) regarding the positive and significant LH – EE nexus was also made in this study. These findings are indications that LH through LMX has a positive influence on the work outcomes of employees they work with (Li et al., 2022; Sunaryo et al., 2024). Thus, through the humility of leaders, positive relations are developed between them and their employees which stimulates desirable outcomes such as OCB, JS and EE among the employees (Qin et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2018; Yang & Xu, 2022). Moreover, the depiction of leader humility as a fundamental organisational virtue because it promotes employee positive work behaviours that improve productivity (Hassan et al., 2023; Li et al., 2022; Maldonado et al., 2022; Qiuyun et al., 2020; Ruiz-Palomino et al., 2023) is corroborated. Also, the centrality of leaders generally as figures in influencing the attitudes of their employees as highlighted by scholars (e.g. Jiménez-Estévez et al., 2023; Nazir et al., 2021) is supported.

Further, the study affirmed that JS and EE have a significant positive link with OCB. The positive link JS has with OCB is corroborated by Gunay (2018), Hemakumara (2020), Mohammad (2016) and Unal (2013). The positive link between EE and OCB also confirms the findings of Ariani (2013), Amadi et al. (2017), Byaruhanga and Othuma (2016), Christian et al. (2011) and Macey and Schneider (2008). It is shown from the foregoing that JS and EE are predictors of OCB. The linkage between JS and OCB lends credence to the assertions of scholars such as Awang et al. (2010) and Steinhaus and Perry (1996) that satisfied workers are proud of their association with the organisation, endorse its goals, and demonstrate increased levels of OCB as a consequence. Similarly, the EE – OCB relationship is a testament that engaged employees have a physical, cognitive, and emotional connection to their organisation that lead them to be more productive (Albrecht, 2010; Uddin et al., 2018) and engage in extra-role behaviours.

Finally, the study established that JS and EE had partial mediating effect on the link between LH and OCB. The import of this is that not only do JS and EE relate to OCB, they also transmit the influence LH has on OCB. Thus, LH has a positive relationship with JS and EE and they in turn relate to OCB. As such, through LMX, humble leaders impact employees' attitudes, acknowledge the efforts of their employees, and help them to understand the value of their work. These lead to the satisfaction and engagement of the employees the leaders work with and subsequently culminate in OCB (Chen et al., 2018; Hajdukova et al., 2015; Nielsen et al., 2010).

Conclusions

This study concludes that LH is positively related to JS, EE and OCB. Also, JS and EE are positively related to OCB, and both, in turn, transmit the relationship LH has with OCB. Thus, organisations seeking the satisfaction and engagement of their employees as well as OCB of their employees should see to it that their supervisors therein have humble leadership traits. In addition to the direct contribution of LH to OCB, JS and EE also directly contribute to OCB while also acting as mediators in the LH – OCB nexus.

Theoretical implications

Theoretically, this study draws the attention of leadership and more generally, management scholars to consider humble leadership in leadership studies because of its positive impact on employee work outcomes. Again, the results of this research give evidence for the LMX theory through the dyadic link that develops between leaders and employees that are exchanged via a series of exchanges (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Gerstner & Day, 1997). Of the qualities humble leaders exhibit in the workplace, employees use quid pro quo arrangements and engage in extra-role behaviour (Liden & Graen, 1980; Eisenberger et al., 2001). Thus, employees display favourable attitudes in return for their bosses' good intentions.

(Blau, 1964). Besides the reciprocal characteristic of LH enhancing OCB, employee positive work outcomes like JS and EE are upheld. Because of the relationship that exists between the leader and their subordinates, the humble characteristics of the leader flow to the subordinates and make impressions on them. The humble behaviour makes the subordinates satisfied and engaged. The satisfaction and engagement of the subordinates in turn lead to their extra role behaviours including OCB.

Practical implications

This study shows that LH is vital in creating a positive work environment and promoting employee behaviours that are desirable. By fostering JS and EE, humble leaders contribute to OCB. That is, employees whose supervisors have humble leadership traits tend to be satisfied, engaged and ultimately, are able to exhibit OCB. This implies that humble leaders are assets to their organisations. In this regard, organisations seeking to have satisfied and engaged employees as well as employees who indulge in OCB ought to recruit and select supervisors with humble leadership traits (Maldonado et al., 2022). By the recruitment and selection of supervisors with humble leadership traits, job ads should list the specific humble leadership characteristics as part of the person qualities requirements of the leadership position. Again, during the interview process, shortlisted applicants should be tested on such leadership characteristics. For supervisors who are already part of the organisation, leadership development programmes like attitudinal training could be utilised to reinforce supervisors' humility traits and to transform the supervisors without humility traits to embody humility as leaders.

More so, with the positive nexus between JS and OCB as well as EE and OCB, organisations through their managers should constantly see to it that their employees are satisfied and engaged. Satisfied and engaged employees become content and committed to their organisation (Albrecht, 2010). Again, through job satisfaction, employees will be dutiful which will benefit others and the entire organisation since they would feel obliged to support the organisation loyally and faithfully (Frolova & Mahmood, 2019). All these contribute to the OCB of the employees. Additionally, ensuring employees are satisfied with the job and engaged is also prudent considering that the connection between LH and OCB is transmitted through them. To ensure employees are satisfied and engaged, leaders should be open and regularly communicate with their employees about progress of assigned tasks and be interested in their well-being. They should also empower their employees by delegating more tasks to them and allow them the autonomy to carry out tasks.

Limitations and directions for future studies

Generalisation of the revelations made in this study to public sector organisations may be done but, with caution. This is because the findings are based on a single study unit. Management and leadership scholars should, therefore, investigate the phenomenon investigated in this study using multiple public sector organisations. This cross-sectional study could not observe the dynamics of the phenomenon under investigation over time. Hence, a longitudinal study will bring to light the dynamics of this phenomenon over time and so should be pursued. Further, studies ought to be carried out to explore the link between LH and OCB with the mediation effects of JS and EE at both the individual and group levels to provide a basis for comparing differences in the phenomenon at such levels.

Author contributions

Abraham Ansong: Conception and design, critically revised manuscript for intellectual content, and final approval of the published version. Sylvester Owusu Ansah: Conception and design, manuscript drafting, and final approval of the published version. Linda Obeng Ansong: Critically revised manuscript for intellectual content and final approval of the published version. Raphael Papa Kweku Andoh: Manuscript drafting, analysis and interpretation of data, critically revised manuscript for intellectual content, and final approval of the published version.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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Data availability statement

The data associated with this study is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Appendix

Questionnaire items

Leader humility

1. My supervisor acknowledges when I have more knowledge and skills than him or her
2. My supervisor actively seeks my feedback even if it is critical
3. My supervisor admits to me when he or she does not know how to do something
4. My supervisor compliments me on my strengths
5. My supervisor is open to my advice
6. My supervisor is open to my ideas
7. My supervisor is willing to learn from me
8. My supervisor shows appreciation for my unique contributions
9. My supervisor takes notice of my strengths

Organizational citizenship behaviour

1. I help others who have heavy work load
2. I try to avoid creating problems for coworkers
3. I keep abreast of changes in the organisation
4. I consider the impact of my actions on coworkers
5. I am always ready to lend a helping hand to those around me
6. I do not abuse the rights of others
7. I attend functions that are not required, but help the organisation's image
8. I help others who have been absent
9. I willingly help others who have work related problems
10. I obey company rules and regulations even when no one is watching
11. I help orient new people even though it is not required

Job satisfaction

I am satisfied with:

1. The chance to do things for other people
2. The chance to tell people what to do
3. The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities
4. The way company policies are put into practice

5. My pay and the amount of work I do
6. The chances for advancement on this job
7. The working conditions
8. The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job

Employee engagement

1. I work with intensity on my job
2. I devote a lot of energy to my job
3. I strive as hard as I can to complete my job
4. I am enthusiastic in my job
5. I feel positive about my job
6. I am excited about my job
7. I am absorbed by my job
8. I focus a great deal of attention on my job

Family supportive supervisor behaviour

1. My supervisor is willing to listen to my problems in juggling work and non-work life
2. My supervisor takes the time to learn about my personal needs
3. My supervisor makes me feel comfortable talking to him or her about my conflicts between work and non-work
4. My supervisor and I can talk effectively to solve conflicts between work and non-work issues
5. My supervisor is a good role model for work and non-work balance.
6. My supervisor demonstrates effective behaviours in how to juggle work and non-work balance
7. My supervisor asks for suggestions to make it easier for employees to balance work and non-work demands

Trust in supervisor

1. I can depend on my supervisor to meet his/her responsibilities
2. Given my supervisor's track record, I see no reason to doubt his/her competence
3. My supervisor follows through with commitments (s)he makes
4. I can rely on my supervisor to show good judgment when making work-related decisions
5. I can rely on my supervisor to do what is best at work