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Positive leadership psychology: Authentic and servant leadership in higher education in Pakistan

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Abstract

The literature about leadership styles and their effectiveness is vast but very limited in the context of Pakistan. Authentic leadership refers to genuine leaders who exercise effective management through self-authenticity while servant leadership refers to those inclined to place others before themselves. Since the two distinct leadership styles were identified, both have attracted increasing researchers' attention to explore their numerous possible applications in organizations and individual psychology. A conceptual framework based on authentic leaders (positive psychology) and servant leaders (serving others first) was hypothetically modeled and tested through 380 survey questionnaires randomly distributed among university employees. Overall, 323 responses were selected for the quantitative analysis of data, using SPSS v25., Jamovi v1.2.17, and Smart PLS v3.2.8. The results revealed that authentic leadership is a significant predictor of commitment and performance in contrast to the servant leadership style in the educational environment of the country. Religiosity was found to be an external locus of control and moderator of the study which was significantly associated with leadership styles and commitment. The influence of authentic leadership on employees is evident. Therefore, organizations may keep in mind the key characteristic of personal authenticity in future hiring. Servant leadership, though present in employees, does not effectively predict organizational outcomes. However, based on these factors, training can be designed to ensure the performance and commitment of employees.

Keywords Authentic leadership · Servant leadership · Positive psychology · Organizational outcomes · Religiosity · External locus of control

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Introduction and Background to the Study

Leadership studies have diverse applications in organizations. The influence of leadership through positive psychology on an organization's staff, policy planning, decision-making and implementation, and the management of change and human behaviors is one of the few factors critical to organizational success (Rahmanseresht and Yavari 2017). These factors can determine the success or failure of an organization by determining its direction, helping evaluate its current positioning, future planning, and sustainability, and shaping its competitive advantages.

The goal of social exchange is to optimize the benefits that accrue to the members and the effectiveness of the leader. This principle founded by sociologist George Homans demonstrates that people weigh up the possible advantages and dangers arising from social ties (Homans 1988). When the dangers outweigh the advantages, people may stop or leave the partnership. Even the earliest debates on the social exchange were centered, in essence, on consideration of social exchange as mutual transactions or mutual exchanges that are common

in social life, and, therefore, significant subject for research. This cognitive orientation is based on earlier philosophical and psychological orientations stemming from utilitarianism on the one hand and behaviorist thinking on the other. The vestiges of these two fundamental roots still exist and are visible in the latest implementations of the exchange principle. The key emphasis in the research is on the theoretical perspectives of exchange theory to the study of significant socio-psychological and sociological trends in the interpretation of the micro-level interaction mechanisms and the macro-structures build on these mechanisms in society. Style, such as leadership style, is a collection of characteristics that may influence us in a certain way in a certain area or circumstance. In the case of trustworthiness, for example, not a great deal is understood about how it is communicated. Nevertheless, it is obviously necessary to preserve a respectful partnership. This is done in a manner that values the human participant, partnership, and performance in what others believe to create a sense of satisfaction and equity. The classification of leadership behavior is based on its two specific dimensions—the initiation of systems (task-oriented activities) and the initiation of attention (people-oriented behaviors). Initiating the practices involved in these processes, such as arranging, coordinating, and identifying tasks and the right people to perform those tasks; deciding how the tasks are to be performed in an organization; and what often is to be achieved through these processes. But it is people's concern. Since the adoption of this model of leadership, successful leadership behavior has been shown to be characterized by high efficiency, whether the leader demonstrates a mission-oriented behavior or person-oriented conduct. It leads to the conclusion that effective leaders are capable of handling both efficient performance and the human dimension of the organization.

The principle of social exchange suggests that social activity is the product of an interaction phase. The principle of social exchange implies that workers reciprocate the actions of the members of the leadership towards them through their own especially favorable (mutual reciprocity) conduct as a part of the process of developing social exchange ties (Brown and Mitchell 2010; Blau 1964). Social exchange theory attempts to explain the mechanisms by which people create and sustain relationships. According to the principle of social exchange, people assess their interactions by evaluating what they believe they could obtain from those interactions. Based on what they can obtain, they consider alternatives to choose among the connections in their lives. Without the mention of consideration to followers, no definition of leadership is complete. Give and take from both sides is important because, as Homans said, "Influence on others is received at the cost of enabling oneself to be affected by others" (Homans 1961). The leader receives acceptance in the form of position, respect, and opportunity for greater influence. Lack of performance in a group reduces the main advantages that members

have and, therefore, places the leader's position at risk. An organizational environment relies heavily upon the administrative function and systems. Moreover, the employee behaviors and features of organizational operations have significant effects on administrative systems. In this context, individual psychology, leadership styles, and organizational features are strongly correlated to organizational outcomes, particularly commitment and performance. In a similar context, transformational leadership has been a topic of discussion for decades. This style of leadership is capable of producing positive organizational outcomes in all types of organizations irrespective of the nature of the organization—whether it offers services or products, whether it is a financial institution, governmental or non-profit organization, or corporate organization—transformational leadership has had a positive influence on organizational citizenship behaviors, resulting in evoking followers' commitment, creating job satisfaction, and engendering better performance outcomes. In the previous literature, empirical evidence has consistently demonstrated the influence of the transformational leadership style on producing effective outcomes, such as those mentioned above. In the current research, organizational studies have shifted their focus to the topic of gaining competitive advantages because of increased complexities and diversity in organizational environments (Buil et al. 2019; Bakar and Omillion-Hodges 2019).

A few studies have discussed the multifactor nature of the influence of transformational leadership on organizational life (Bass and Avolio 2000; Bass and Riggio 2006). Leadership-related influences, such as motivation through inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and idealized influence in terms of a person or their behavior, were examined in these studies. Idealized influence, in particular, has been shown to bring about strategic organizational change in followers' goal-setting behaviors, organize and create a meaningful organizational life, improve emotional stability, and establish personal identities at the workplace with the leaders functioning as role models (Huang et al. 2005; Kreitner et al. 2002; Kinicki and Kreitner 2006).

Commenting on potential developments in leadership science, Avolio et al. (2009) endorsed the growing scholarly interest in enquiring into leadership (*diverse and evolving global call*) through personality framework (*leadership cognitive approaches*) which helps to find the way(s) to achieve required organizational outcomes (Avolio et al. 2009). Evidence showing that companies understand the effect of leadership on the well-being of workers or operational results through the cognitive experiential leadership model, which was initially constructed as a framework for significant strategic development with flexible and responsive management (Cemi et al. 2014). Many of the connections are made up of a certain amount of give and take, but it does not indicate that they are all equal. Social exchange implies that it is the assessment of the

advantages and disadvantages of each association that decides whether or not individuals choose to continue a social connection. There is another notable difference between the individual(s) experiential learning (*perception and consequences*), nature of the response to a certain situation (*quick or slow decision making*) due to which a significant interest has been developed in testing dual-processing theories of leadership. Van Dierendonck et al. (2014) observed that workers became more dedicated and involved when these two styles of leadership are integrated as compared to a single leadership style (*having one-sided focus*) (Van Dierendonck et al. 2014). Organizations are made up of all kinds of people and they respond differently to distinctive styles of leadership. Combining the two styles makes it possible to engage everyone within the organization system. Organizations as systems that are considered to be (*providing*) the cognitive structures and mechanisms, which people use to process information, and the styles that are people's relatively stable and preferred ways of processing information.

The leader handles self (*awareness*) as well as followers (*using positive psychology*), influences groups (*providing directions*), and the organization. Similarly, the importance of understanding internal cognitive and emotional mechanisms raises higher that relate to successful leadership (*can influence the quality of life of both members and followers*). Notwithstanding a strong global research interest in the key position of leadership in higher education, there is no established work that has explored how specific leadership styles in higher education simultaneously influence both employee well-being and organizational results (*job satisfaction, organizational engagement, and turnover expectation*). Particularly in higher educational settings, there is a considerable variety of leadership theories that have been used to extend the analysis of leadership in diverse situations for various outcomes. Study of leadership literature and distinct operational natures of the organizations, combining and contrasting strengths and weaknesses of leaders encourage greater effort by academic scholars to design alternative models of leadership spectra *by combining leadership theories*. This leads to a deeper understanding that helps build a comprehensive evaluation of leadership strategies, and to measure the cognitive (*positive influences*) direct effect of enthusing the followers and the complex interrelationship among the leadership style, employee well-being, and organizational outcomes (Samad 2015).

There is an endless debate about what professionals should learn from literature about new theories of collective leadership versus existing leadership. Enhancing researcher capability and encouraging practitioners to test other than conventional methods can provide invaluable insights into leadership experience in today's

diversified environment. Rather than serving as the sole person in charge of mobilizing others, leadership now is a deliberate practice of building environments in which individuals may serve as representatives for the greater good. Understanding organizational leadership through combining leadership styles opens fresh insights for action so that practitioners may use leadership theories and existing knowledge to meet the demand for accountability and broaden the existing narrow frameworks to close the gap in the research in the public leadership domain (Ospina (2017).

The paper is organized into several sections. The second section presents a review of literature on authentic leadership, servant leadership, religiosity as an external locus of control, outcomes (performance and commitment), and the significance of this study. The third section provides information about material, methods, and procedures. The fourth section presents results, demographic information, validity, and reliability of the construct and discussion about statistical analysis. The fifth section discusses the results, presents the conclusions, and practical and theoretical implications of the study.

Authentic Leadership

The authenticity of leadership in contemporary research refers to the nature of self-aware individuals practicing higher moral leadership (Sparrowe 2005). Authentic leaders are consistent in their ethical values and behaviors and demonstrate concordance with their followers' morality as well. Avolio and Gardner (2005) also examined the impact of the positive mindset of self-aware individuals who prioritize the traits of hope, self-resilience, and optimism on the sustainable performance of followers. Authentic leadership was conceptualized by George (2003) and it addresses the lasting impact of leadership brought about by creating value and reflecting the highest standards of morality in one's personal and professional lives. Luthans and Avolio (2003) refer to it as the lens of social exchange through which we can see the mutual sharing of valued resources to create trust and social power through repeated interactions that serve as a form of influence. It leads to the co-creation of work for active players to produce work identities. The authentic leaders' self-reflection inspires others to accept their leadership role in their organizational and personal lives. Such leaders create a safe environment at the workplace through balanced processing and accountability as well as rational transparency and self-awareness and thus produce and maintain high-quality connections at the workplace (Walumbwa et al. 2007). Therefore, authentic and self-aware positive mindset of leadership and its broad and universal application are popular subjects of research among scholars.

Servant Leadership

Greenleaf (1970), through his research, conceptualized servant leadership and stressed the importance of social benefits that arise from serving and caring for others. The notion of servant leadership, right from its inception, has been popular and has been the topic of scholarly discussions across the globe. The concept was deeply rooted in Christian theology that reveres servants and serving. Servant leadership later became associated with caring for others by recognizing the inner feelings of others' needs first as the defining characteristic of a person or group of persons possessing the desire to serve society. The author further emphasized the importance of this style of leadership in the field of education, where the servant, with a latent and transformative instinct, impacts young minds and hearts (Greenleaf 1991). Scholarly contributions following Greenleaf's works have supported this style of transformational leadership, which is beneficial to organizational outcomes. Later, Spears (1996) modified the concept of servant leadership to suit different scenarios, including those pertaining to formal organizations. Servant leadership is not limited to the care of others but also refers to putting others' needs first through social justice, cultural leadership, stewardship, humility-based communication, accountability, and empowering others, which are the core dimensions discussed and validated for organizational life settings (Barbuto and Wheeler 2006; Sendjaya and Sarros 2002; Russell 2001; Block 1993). Servant leadership is widely accepted as applicable across various domains including education, healthcare, and governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Religiosity as an External Locus of Control

Fumham (1982) examined the connections between the theological beliefs of a person as the locus of control. The results of his study indicated a stronger inner inclination toward authenticity among fundamentally religious-minded people, which means that their inner beliefs are of great significance to them and subconsciously influence their thinking. Such people, in contrast to those with liberal mindsets, believe in God's will as a natural force that controls everything happening around them. Various beliefs that serve as loci of control (*internal or external*) are encompassed by the same ideology. However, external factors may lead to the generation of the internal locus of control. A study of twenty-first-century magnitudes of the loci of control revealed that the relationship between the external locus of control and the culture of a country strengthens and this relationship is stronger in individualistic cultures (Cheng et al. 2013). The phenomena of evolving religious contexts in human lives and religious affiliations are deeply and powerfully embedded in human interactions and societies and will persist as integral aspects of the sociocultural phenomena influencing human life (Turner et al.

2017). However, religious scholarship and studies regarding the external locus of control are limited in the context of Islamic social perspectives.

Commitment and Performance

Commitment is often defined as individual involvement in the workplace (Yusof and Shamsuri 2006). Of the several dimensions of commitment—*affective, normative, and continuous commitment*—discussed in the literature, the feeling of belongingness to a place, involvement in the current operational activities of an organization, and loyalty are the factors most commonly recognized across the globe (Meyer and Allen 1997). These factors are crucial in explaining employee participation in organizational activities (Avolio et al. 2004). It involves a level of trust between individuals and organizations and their leaders. Thus, commitment determines the success or failure of an organization. As commitment is a psychological state of individuals, transformational leadership processes must make conscious efforts to build individuals' trust in the organization and its leaders (Bass and Avolio 2000; Bass and Riggio 2006).

Further, employee performance refers to individual accomplishments in the workplace. It determines individual behavior as well as individuals' alignment with the organization's strategic vision, policies, and objectives defined to achieve organizational business excellence (Delery and Doty 1996). Purcell (2003) discussed the link between employee performance and overall organizational performance. Some scholars also considered the link between employee performance and organizational engagement as one that fosters consistent improvements in performance (Mone and London 2018). Therefore, these links can be referred to as a critical factor in organizational success.

Moreover, commitment to the workplace and factors influencing performance are also critical in organizational success. The core significance of these factors stems from the psychology of individuals. Therefore, individual reciprocal actions aligned with the strategic vision of an organization play a key role in these phenomena. Leadership influence, however, is the most impactful element in enhancing followers' commitment and performance. Therefore, improved individual confidence, better commitment, and improved performance can be considered critical factors in gaining competitive advantages through leadership influence.

Current Research Phenomena and Significance

In the twenty-first century, higher institutions of education across the world face several challenges arising from the new developmental perspective including ensuring students'

well-being, promoting skilled human capital, implementing new teaching and instructional strategies and support mechanisms, and providing effective administration. Higher education in Pakistan, too, is similarly impacted by the global influences of this developmental perspective (Zahid et al. 2019). The country, under Islamic ideology, is facing tremendous pressure to shape a value-based society through education, yet the greatest challenge it faces is relatively poor governance. If the fact is that the country's economic growth and higher education are interlinked, then the choice of leadership style becomes critical and valuable in predicting workplace spirituality (*connectedness, values, and process*) and overall culture to achieve the best outcomes. The current study contributes to filling a significant gap in the research on the impact of individuals' leadership choices and perspectives on organizational outcomes so that a growing sector can serve the nation more effectively.

The Rationale of the Study

Leadership is an essential management function to promote organizations to optimize productivity and accomplish goals. Leaders inspire team members and guide their members toward achieving the outcomes through a clear sense of direction. Leadership characteristics are key who provide them value, respect, and effective influence over followers to direct them and govern them to perform things by knowing from them. Therefore, the importance of leadership studies possesses paramount values in the literature. Their casual influence over human resources in the diverse and changing nature of the inclusive workplace has recognized globally. A quality relationship typically based on mutual trust and considerable respect willingly stays the most crucial factor to proactively engage employees to manage change through using positive psychology. The study provides insight about real revelation and key contributions toward the positive psychology of leaders by comparing both styles to obtain organization outcomes.

Material, Methods, and Procedures

Material

Questions regarding the independent variables—authentic leadership and servant leadership dimensions that are explained in Fig. 1 below—were included in the questionnaire. Questions regarding six dimensions of servant leadership identified from the extensive literature review (Spears 1996; Sendjaya and Sarros 2002), and four dimensions of authentic leadership (Avolio et al. 2007; Avolio and Gardner 2005), and questions regarding organizational commitment (Fry 2003;

Fry et al. 2005; Malone and Fry 2003), commitment/membership, external locus of control¹ and general questions about religiosity were included in the questionnaire.

Method

A quantitative approach was adopted to collect data from the respondents through the above-referred self-administered questionnaire that sought respondents' views on authentic leadership, servant leadership, commitment, performance, locus of control, and religiosity. A total of 380 rating questionnaires were printed and distributed to university staff, faculty, and executives serving in public and private universities located in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Pakistan. Out of the 380 questionnaires, 323 were completed and subjected to statistical analyses using SPSS V 25.0, Jamovi v1.2.17, and Smart PLS v3.2.8. Active participants also submitted completed questionnaires based on their convenience and the empirical data collected through questionnaires in the necessary follow-up. Structural equation modeling using PLS smart 3.0 was carefully conducted, bearing in mind the computational concept depicted in Fig. 1, to objectively assess the construct consistency, content validity, and to establish reliability.

Procedure

All computational methods and measures for data set preparation, i.e., calculating item average, determining reliability and content validity of the philosophical construct were performed. The sample mean standard deviation, observed correlation, and reliability, Cronbach alpha (α) of all key indicators were found to be consistent with and within the standard range, (Abbas et al. 2020).

A five-point Likert scale questionnaire with options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was distributed. To determine the sample size, Slovin's formula was used at 5% precision level of the overall population as given below:

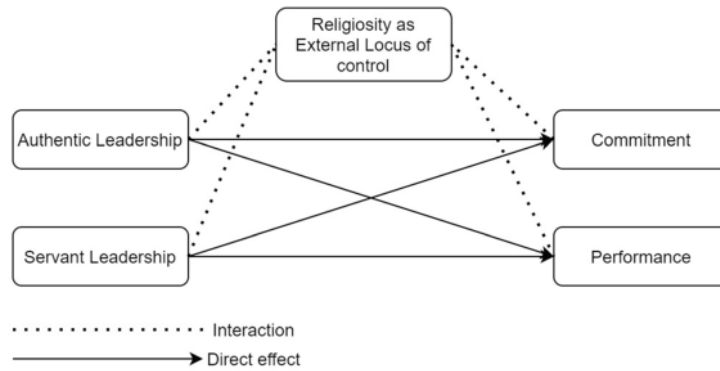
$$n = \frac{N}{1 + n \times (e)^2} \text{ since } n = \frac{7154}{1 + 7154 (0.05)^2}, n=379$$

Results

Table 1 presents the demographic statistics of the sample. Most of the respondents were male ($n = 226$, 70%); however, to reduce any bias by ensuring equal opportunity, the

¹ SOEP 2012—Documentation on biography and life history data for SOEP v29. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) is a professional association for human resource management professionals. Wimbledon, London, England.

Fig. 1 Causal framework



questionnaire was distributed evenly. Majority were from the private sector ($n = 206$, 63.8%), of which $n = 201$ (62.2%) were married. In term of educational qualification most of them had a master's degree or above and work experience of more than 5 years. While greater value of respondents were older than 30 years, hence, one may conclude that the respondents of this study were experienced, mature, and educated individuals.

Table 2 explains the correlation coefficients of the demographics and other variables in the model. There is a positive correlation between age and marital status, education, organization, income, and years of service, and a negative correlation in terms of gender. The construct of servant leadership has a

positive and higher correlation with age, marital status, organization, income, and years of service, while authentic leadership has a positive correlation with education and income. Performance and commitment are negatively correlated with years of service and positively correlated with the gender of the respondents of the current study. "Both, servant leadership and authentic leadership are positively and significantly correlated with the moderator variable (religiosity as external locus of control) while authentic leadership is positively and significantly correlated with commitment, performance, and the moderator variable according to the correlation coefficient results." However, this seems to imply that servant leadership is not related to anything other than religiosity and education.

Table 1 Demographical statistics

Name	Mean \pm STDEV	Range	Frequency	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Age	3.59 \pm 1.08	20–29	53	16.4	22.6
		33–39	65	20.1	36.5
		40–49	146	45.2	81.7
		>50	59	18.3	100
Marital Status	1.62 \pm 0.48	Single	122	37.8	37.8
		Married	201	62.2	100
Education	2.68 \pm 0.72	Bachelors	20	6.2	6.2
		Masters	91	28.2	34.4
		MS/MPhil	182	56.3	90.7
		PhD	30	9.3	100
Org type	1.63 \pm 0.48	Public Sector	117	36.2	36.2
		Private Sector	206	63.8	100
Yrs. of Service	3.25 \pm 0.98	<1 Year	22	6.8	6.8
		2 to 5 Years	29	9	15.8
		6 to 10 Years	150	46.4	62.2
		11 to 15 Years	90	27.9	90.1
		15 years >	32	9.9	100
Gender	1.30 \pm 0.45	Male	226	70	70
		Female	97	30	100
		N	323	100%	

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Table 2 Correlation coefficients

Variables	1 Age	2 Marital Status	3 Education	4 Organization	5 Income	6 Services	7 Gender	8 SL	9 AL	10 PR	11 CM	12 Rel X LoC
1	1											
2	.365**	1										
3	.494**	0.087	1									
4	0.031	.170**	-.156**	1								
5	.636**	.143**	.687**	-0.052	1							
6	.805**	.424**	.404**	0.054	.460**	1						
7	-.263**	-.200**	-.221**	-0.04	-.236**	-.269**	1					
8	.304**	.167**	-0.049	.223**	.126*	.254**	0.006	1				
9	-0.071	-0.053	.112*	-0.022	.119*	-0.004	0.063	0.075	1			
10	-0.093	0.001	-0.057	0.076	-0.06	-.223**	.143**	0.031	.245**	1		
11	-.259**	-.143*	-0.019	-0.003	0.002	-.173**	.149**	0.061	.592**	.233**	1	
12	0.083	.111*	0.08	.144**	.131*	.139*	0.044	.459**	.402**	.131*	.411**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)/* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 explains construct loading, validity, and reliability, which are the most common measures to verify the internal consistency of constructs (*as essential requirements of the data set preparation*) (Abbas et al. 2020). The Cronbach's alpha and average variance, commutative variance derived as reliability indicators in Table 3 show that all item loadings are equal to or more than the threshold value of .40 (Hair et al. 2011). In general, higher values show higher levels of reliability. Reliabilities 0.60 and 0.70 are presumed to still be "acceptable in experimental studies," values in the range of 0.70 and 0.90 range from "adequate to better." Values of 0.95 and greater are questionable because they imply that the items are irrelevant and they also reduce the internal consistency. The average variance extracted (AVE) is a reflective measurement model evaluation to discuss the convergence validity of through building calculation. Convergence is the extent to which the construct is valid. The metric used to evaluate a building convergence is the AVE for all items on each construct. To calculate the AVE, the loading of each indicator must be squared to the construct and the mean value must be calculated. An acceptable AVE is 0.50 or higher, and it indicates that the construct explains at least 50% of the variance of its items. Another important process is for determining the discriminant validity of the construct, that is, the extent of its applicability but it is a construct of a different nature from the structural measurement model. The AVE should also be $\geq .50$ for better convergence validity (Henseler et al. 2009). The average variation of the latent construct explains the observed variables (Farrell 2010), and it is noted that the no indicator has a comparatively lower cross-loading value, which explains acceptable alpha, composite reliability, and accumulative variance. The desired range for Cronbach's alpha was minimum $\geq .70$ and maximum $\leq .95$, and this range was achieved (Nunnally 1994; Hair et al. 2014).

To summarize, the assessments of the construct in the model and statistical inferences from the above results show that the measurements have a good quality of assumptions and that the construct had been explained well to the respondents. Hence, a questionnaire-based causal effect can constitute an accurate explanation of the model (Hamid et al. 2017). Hair et al. (2019) explained the correct and standard measurement of the developed model in PLS smart; model focusing (*Fronell-Larcker criterion*) could sufficiently explain endogeneity testing in PLS smart analysis. In addition to this PLS-SEM primary focuses on theory testing and prediction interplay (*even a single item can be permitted as measured or construct*) SRMR (Table 3) value can be reported for noticing extreme caution between latent variables i.e. (*divergence between the observed and estimated covariance matrices*).

Smart PLS 3.2.8 bootstrapping tested the hypothesis for the variables, and Table 4 describes these statistical inferences. Leadership styles (authentic and servant leadership) were tested against the organizational outcomes, performance, commitment, religiosity as the moderator. Religiosity was modeled as a common external locus of control for both styles of leadership. Overall, the results showed that authentic leadership is a significant predictor of organizational outcomes as compared to the servant leadership style in the context of higher education in Pakistan. The bootstrapping method evaluated the statistical importance of the path coefficient and it measured the t-values. The effect size of the construct AL to commitment as 0.08; to performance—0.067 and DEMO—0.0032. The t-values and effect size of SL to commitment—0.0018; to performance—0.0012 and DEMO—0.1261. The effect size of authentic leadership is higher than servant leadership reported in this study according to cutoff criteria i.e. $F^2 \geq 0.02$ ($r^2_{\text{values}} \geq 0.02$, $r_{\text{small}} \geq 0.15$

Table 3 Construct validity, cross loadings, and model fit

Variable	Code	Loading	α /AVE	SS Loadings	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Performance	PR1	0.762	0.897/0.62	4.35	14.49	14.5
	PR2	0.795				
	PR3	0.835				
	PR4	0.868				
	PR5	0.756				
	PR6	0.776				
	PR7	0.709				
Servant Leadership	SL1	0.694	0.919/0.65	4.3	14.32	28.8
	SL2	0.789				
	SL3	0.782				
	SL4	0.714				
	SL5	0.938				
	SL6	0.902				
Authentic Leadership	AL1	0.862	0.875/0.59	3.83	12.77	41.6
	AL2	0.706				
	AL3	0.625				
	AL4	0.765				
	AL5	0.795				
	AL6	0.819				
Commitment	CM1	0.810	0.868/0.60	3.18	10.6	52.2
	CM2	0.767				
	CM3	0.649				
	CM4	0.876				
	CM5	0.748				
Religiosity	Rel1	0.861	0.875/0.69	2.88	9.6	61.8
	Rel2	0.760				
	Rel3	0.875				
External Locus of Control	X1	0.790	0.878/0.74	2.58	8.59	70.4
	X2	0.920				
	X3	0.874				
Model fit		Saturated	Estimated	Desired range		
Indicator(s)	SRMR**	0.072	0.074	between 0.05 and 0.08		
	RMS Theta*	0.143	Should be close to zero			

Standardized Root Mean Square Residual/Root mean square error correlation

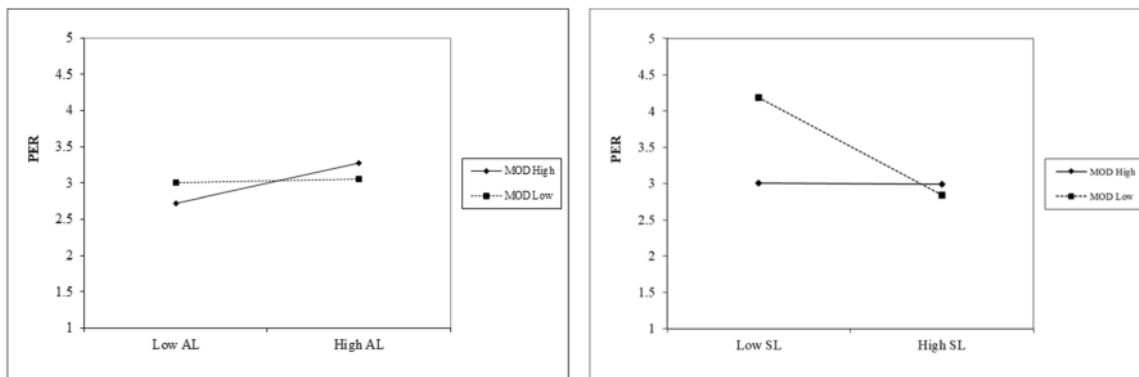
**Fig. 2** Moderation graph

Table 4 Mean, standard deviation (STDEV), T-Values, P-values

Hypothesized Path	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P-Values	P-values support
AL -> CMT	0.606 ± 0.057	10.577	0.000	Yes
AL -> PER	0.275 ± 0.074	3.739	0.000	Yes
SL -> CMT	-0.114 ± 0.059	1.926	0.055	No
SL -> PER	-0.007 ± 0.060	0.112	0.911	No
MOD -> AL	0.604 ± 0.130	4.655	0.000	Yes
MOD -> SL	0.514 ± 0.103	4.997	0.000	Yes
MOD -> PER	0.026 ± 0.080	0.322	0.748	No
MOD -> CMT	0.226 ± 0.080	2.826	0.005	Yes
Rel -> AL	-0.407 ± 0.087	4.649	0.000	Yes
Rel -> SL	0.287 ± 0.071	4.039	0.000	Yes
LOC -> AL	0.159 ± 0.086	1.848	0.065	No
LOC -> SL	-0.382 ± 0.078	4.871	0.000	Yes
Demographics -> AL	0.001 ± 0.078	0.011	0.991	No
Demographics -> SL	0.242 ± 0.055	4.399	0.000	Yes

(O/STDEV) *Value of T statistics $\geq 1.65 = 90\%$, **Value of T statistics $\geq 1.96 = 95\%$, ***Value of T statistics $\geq 2.57 = 99\%$, AL (Authentic Leadership), SL (Servant Leadership), Mod (interaction term [religiosity* external locus of control], Rel (religiosity), Loc (Locus of Control)

medium, and ≥ 0.35 large effect sizes) and $Q^2 > 0$. Authentic Leadership's commitment and performance have *t-values* 10.577, i.e., ≥ 2.57 and $P \leq 0.000$, and the *t-value* is 3.739, i.e., ≥ 2.57 and $P \leq 0.000$, respectively. The hypothesized path of authentic leadership to both commitment and performance show a statistically significant association. While, the servant leadership to; commitment *t-value* is 1.926, i.e., ≤ 1.96 ($\leq 0.05 = 95\%$) and $P \geq 0.055$; and performance *t-value* is 0.112, i.e., $\leq 1.65 = 90\%$ and $P \geq 0.911$. The results show a statistically nonsignificant relationship. The moderation effects illustrated in Fig. 2 (Dawson 2014) are provided by combining unstandardized regression coefficients of IV, DV, and moderator as the third variable. A key purpose of moderation is to “measure and evaluate the differential influence of the interaction of independent variables (religiosity as the external locus of control) on the dependent variables, namely, performance and commitment. It leads to the conclusion that the component, which is the sum of the two, determines the resultant component over and below the condition and moderator (Aiken et al. 1991; Dawson 2014). The slope down the path of discordance applies to the height of the result and the variable shows the degree to which the position of the discrepancy matters. According to Fig. 2, moderation effects on authentic leadership, and servant leadership occur with performance when authentic leadership is high and low religiosity as an external locus of control. The result, therefore, is influenced more by the interaction of the moderator in the position $X > Y$ or the other $X < Y$. The line opposite to the line in the full arrangement is

from time to time referred to as the “axis in incongruity” ($X = -Y$, i.e., whether the variables X and Y are not in the contract, see Fig. 2), and visual observation of the position and intensity of the moderating effect. Moderation effects conducted and recorded show a significant curving along this line (as opposed to the height of the output variable) depicts the degree of difference between the two predictor variables that can affect the outcome variable.

Discussion

Servant leadership and authentic leadership styles have generated immense research interest among contemporary scholars (Kaya and Karatepe 2020). Leadership interventions offer management and development solutions in formal and informal ways to ensure effective performance outcomes. Transforming strategies into actions aligned with the organizational vision is the long-term strategic leadership agenda. Educational institutions require the core rationale of purpose and existence (understanding other's preferences and work-based self-concept) through effective learning, which is not only beneficial for students but employees as well.

Sustainable development applies in both organizational and personal contexts. Authentic leadership depends on the choice of employees while servant leadership is embedded in Pakistani higher education through the sociocultural context. Authenticity enhances performance and well-being through

positive psychology—a healthy mind is a productive one, and its psychological balance ensures rational commitment (Berzonsky 2003). Of the two proposed styles, authentic leadership is the more preferred as it prompts commitment and performance and displays a stronger relationship with the former than the latter. These results were not hypothesized initially, but the significant positive relationship between servant leadership and the demographic variables of the respondents shows that servant leadership is a natural phenomenon in educational settings or the socio-economic settings of a predominantly Islamic country. Islamic principles stress the welfare of society and other associated members and this also is seen in the current study.

The current study is contextualized by the socio-demographic features of Pakistan, where 98% of the people practice and believe in Islamic principles. The increasingly negative worldview about Muslim societies forms a background for the current study. The natural inclination toward servanthood in the educational context of the US as reported by (Chewning 2000) seems to apply to the educational context of Pakistan as well. However, the difference between Chewning's study and the current study is in terms of religious beliefs. Chewning's work on contemporary servanthood in education focuses on the concept of Christ's Call. The relationship between servant leadership, religiosity, and the external locus of control is significant and positive. However, the study was unable to determine the links between this relationship and organizational outcomes.

With the median age of 23 years, the "Muslim" society in Pakistan reportedly has the youngest population in the world (Hackett et al. 2012). Pakistan's urban population constitutes 25.1% of the total population and its median age is 22.8 years, which can be assumed to be youth who are still studying, and most of them on the verge of graduation which is the university employees and older than the median age. There can be several reasons for the causal relationship between authentic leadership and organizational outcomes in the current study. The foremost is that the desire to serve others is innate in people and cannot be seen or judged by another person until interactions take place, while authenticity is obvious and can be demonstrated in an organizational setting easily. The inclination toward authenticity is due to the nature of the relationship between the concept of freedom and liberal education (Michael and Stefaan 2002). Thus, authentic leadership depends on the inner choice of employees for self and leaders (Wiewiora and Kowalkiewicz 2019).

A moderation analysis revealed the fact that authentic leaders do not have any associations, with the external influence considered in this study, namely, religiosity. However, that does not rule out other factors of influence. Instead, a combination of religiosity and the external locus of control influences them significantly. Servanthood, religiosity, and

the external locus of control remained linked to each other. Another observation from the statistical investigation of religiosity as the external locus of control is that its influence on commitment is positive and significant. However, such a significant influence of the external locus on performance is not observed. Thus, this external locus may create in the employees in the higher education sector a greater inclination and commitment to the workplace due to the sociocultural influence of religion, but that cannot help organizations improve the performance of the employees.

Conclusions

Leadership styles are sets of attributes that can enable leaders to lead the followers in a certain direction in a specific time or situation. In the context of having a positive influence, for example, often not much is known about how such an influence is exercised by leadership style. Nonetheless, it is most important to sustain a respectful relationship between leaders and followers for mutual gains in organizational life. It can be achieved in a manner that respects the personal relationships and achievement of that success which gives others a sense of fulfillment and justice having been done.

The theory of social exchange explains that employees reciprocate the favorable behavior that others show toward them with favorable behavior (mutual reciprocity) as part of the cycle of establishing social exchange relations. Social interaction theory is a philosophy of human behavior that has been formulated to explain the processes by which individuals establish and sustain relationships. The theory of social exchange states that people evaluate their relationships to determine the benefit they think they will derive from the relationships in their lives to contemplate alternatives. Without concern for followers, the concept of leadership cannot be considered as complete. Give and take on both sides is significant because influence over others is gained at the expense of allowing oneself to be influenced by others. The leader is acknowledged by the followers by accepting the leader's role, granting recognition, and greater control in the future as the incentive. Lack of success for a group means the elimination of the benefits expected by the followers. This threatens the leader's position as a leader.

Statistical tests to identify the style of leadership best suited for achieving organizational outcomes revealed that authentic leadership is a positive and significant predictor of organizational outcomes compared to servant leadership. These results are similar to the findings of previous studies, such as that of Hoch et al. (2018), who reported the ability of transformational leadership to predict organizational outcomes. Though the debate about characteristics of transformational leadership style is ongoing and though many researchers do not agree that authentic leadership theory is relevant to transformational

style, but positive leadership psychology is, however, servant leadership is considered to be more akin to transformational style of leadership. Initiating concern that explores the identification of the social and emotional interests of persons, job fulfillment, and self-esteem are servant leadership's way of affecting people's success and addressing their concerns. Authentic leadership activities of persons, whether they are predominantly role-oriented or a person-oriented, has been shown to be consistent with high efficiency. This leads to the conclusion that effective leaders are capable of handling both the predictors of commitment and performance, namely, the mission dimension and the human dimension of the organization. The current study presents results that contradict those of another study, i.e., by Kaya and Karatepe (2020), which reported that the servant leadership style is the better predictor of organizational outcomes compared to the authentic leadership style. The reason for this difference could be the demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, and income of the sample used in the current study. Another aspect that cannot be ignored is the presence of religiosity as an external locus of control. The religiosity of a person has a positive and significant relationship with the two leadership styles, but the external locus of control is positively and significantly correlated with servant leadership alone.

Moreover, religiosity as the external locus of control acting as a moderator influence performance outcome of both leadership styles. For better performance, organizations must use the outcomes of this study to emphasize strategic leadership and planning for motivating employees.

Practical and Theoretical Implications

It is recommended that higher educational institutions hire employees who display the traits of authenticity to ensure better organizational outcomes. Nevertheless, they should also take into account the theory of servant leadership because it explains the drive to serve others' needs first through care and stewardship and, second, through empowering others in organizational settings, which (*having an inner feeling of serving others first*) predicts significant organizational outcomes. However, the current results do not support this phenomenon. A qualitative scale study could be conducted to validate the lack of importance accorded to servant leadership in an Islamic society, which may cause cognitive hurdles, (*nature of servanthood such as community building*) and the reason for which the authentic leadership style is preferred.

For better campus administration, servant leadership practice-based training may be planned, designed, and implemented to provide support for organizational outcomes in the context of higher education. Employees possessing a God-gifted (*evident through correlation with demographic variables*) propensity for servanthood, which is a strategic

personal characteristic in leaders, can be leveraged to ensure long-term benefits for public and private institutions.

Availability of Data and Material Data availability enclosed in zip file as supplementary material.

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Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflicts of Interest/Competing Interests There is no conflict of interest involved in this study.

Declarations We also declare that the manuscript is not under consideration for publication anywhere else.

Ethics Approval we are ensuring quality and integrity of our research.

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