

THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENTS AND SERVANT-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract

Employee engagement is vital for organizational success, driving productivity, innovation, and resilience. Despite efforts to enhance engagement, challenges persist, particularly in adapting to remote and diverse workforces. This research evaluates the influence of leadership behavior assessments and servant-oriented leadership on employee engagement within Chinese organizations. The study also uses a quantitative research design based on questionnaires to explore how demographic factors impact engagement levels. Findings reveal that differences in occupation and Types of Job generate differences in Employee Engagement, emphasizing the need for tailored engagement strategies. Additionally, Leadership Behavior Assessments and Servant-oriented Leadership demonstrate significant positive impacts on Employee Engagement, underscoring the critical role of effective leadership in driving engagement and enhancing organizational performance. Integrating servant leadership principles into leadership development programs can foster a collaborative and productive work environment, ultimately contributing to organizational success.

Keywords: Leadership Behavior Assessment, Servant-Oriented Leadership, Employee Engagement

Introduction

Employee engagement is increasingly recognized as a key driver of business performance, productivity, and retention, with its influence reaching far beyond the traditional metrics of employee satisfaction. The Global Human Resources Management Trends Whitepaper by Bersin in 2020 underscores the critical nature of employee engagement by ranking it fourth among the most significant management trends. This recognition signals a paradigm shift in organizational priorities, where employees' emotional and psychological investment in their work is seen as a cornerstone of sustainable success. The need for agile and committed workforces is paramount in today's fast-paced and ever-changing economic environment. Employee engagement is not just a buzzword; it's a strategic imperative that can significantly influence an organization's resilience and adaptability. Engaged employees often demonstrate heightened loyalty, increased productivity, and a propensity to go above and beyond their job descriptions, which can result in innovative solutions to complex challenges.

To this end, companies are exploring various methods to bolster engagement. These include implementing feedback mechanisms such as regular surveys and suggestion boxes, offering professional development programs, recognizing and rewarding outstanding performance, and fostering a collaborative and inclusive culture. Despite these efforts, challenges remain. As companies navigate the complexities of the modern economic landscape, effectively engaging their employees will continue to be a defining factor in their success (McCloud, 2018). The gap in understanding the relationship between leadership styles—particularly servant-oriented leadership—and employee engagement within various organizational contexts presents a crucial study area. Better insights into this relationship could inform more effective strategies to enhance engagement and, by extension, improve organizational performance and resilience. (Rabiul et al., 2022)

Literature Review

Demographic factors, such as gender and age, have been considered important in understanding employee engagement levels in response to leadership styles. For instance, Long and Chen (2020) found that younger employees in the Chinese hospitality industry responded more positively to servant leadership than their older counterparts, suggesting a generational difference in leadership preferences. Similarly, Chen and Liu (2022) noted gender differences, with female employees in China demonstrating a higher increase in engagement under servant leadership than male employees, potentially reflecting differing socialization patterns and expectations.

Li and Yin (2019) expanded on this using 360-degree feedback to assess leadership behaviors. It is reported that leaders who scored highly on such assessments often had teams with greater engagement levels. This suggests that the presence of positive leadership behaviors and the awareness and acknowledgment of these behaviors by employees contribute to a more engaged workforce. Long (2019) specifically examined the

role of paternalistic leadership, a style that combines authority and benevolence in a manner consistent with traditional Chinese values. Their findings indicate that when employees positively assess such leadership behavior, their engagement increases, likely due to the alignment with cultural expectations of leadership in the workplace.

From the perspective of work attitudes, Yang (2019) found through research that servant leadership positively influences employees' perceived trust in their leaders and their trust in the organization. This indicates that servant leadership plays a significant role in promoting employee trust perceptions. Yang et al. (2019), using samples from various industries nationwide, conducted analyses on 230 sample data and found that servant leadership positively influences employee satisfaction and affective commitment. From the perspective of intrinsic motivation, Shuck and Wollard (2020) studied small enterprises and found a positive relationship between servant leadership and psychological empowerment. This result is attributed to servant leadership providing subordinates with more care and attention, which encourages them to work autonomously, achieve goals, and continuously stimulate employees' intrinsic motivation. Scholars like Sun (2019) argued that servant leadership enhances employees' self-efficacy. Kang et al. (2019) conducted research in the context of China and confirmed the positive influence of servant leadership on psychological empowerment.

Kang et al. (2021) explored the relationship between gender and employee engagement. They found that compared to males, females tend to have lower levels of engagement, possibly due to their greater responsibility for household work. Alagarsamy et al. (2020) confirmed this relationship but noted that the correlation between gender and engagement is relatively weak and not absolute. They also found that there is a positive relationship between age and engagement. Bao (2019) found that the relationship between gender, age, and engagement is more pronounced when the sample size is larger (500 or more individuals).

Methodology

The primary population for this research consists of employees from enterprises in Jilin Province, China. Since the population is infinite, the sample size calculated by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) is approximately 400. This research evaluates the influence of Leadership Behavior Assessments and Servant-oriented Leadership on Employee Engagement within Chinese organizations. By surveying a demographically diverse group of employees, the study will identify how these leadership approaches correlate with engagement levels, considering varying personal backgrounds such as gender, age, educational level, monthly income, occupation, and working experiences. This study utilized a quantitative research design based on questionnaires.

Result

Descriptive Statistics

Demographic Factors

Table 1: The Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Factor

Question	Options	Frequency	Percent
1. Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	276	69.00
	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	124	31.00
2. Marital Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Single	116	29.00
	<input type="checkbox"/> Married	150	37.50
	<input type="checkbox"/> Divorce	134	33.50
3. Age	<input type="checkbox"/> 18 but less than 25 years old	13	3.25
	<input type="checkbox"/> 25 but less than 35 years old	60	15.00

	<input type="checkbox"/> 35 but less than 45 years old	171	42.75
	<input type="checkbox"/> 45 but less than 60 years old	115	28.75
	<input type="checkbox"/> 60 years old and above	41	10.25
4. Educational Level	<input type="checkbox"/> Junior High School or Below	115	28.75
	<input type="checkbox"/> High school or Vocational School	151	37.75
	<input type="checkbox"/> College or Undergraduate	92	23.00
	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's Degree or above	42	10.50
5. Monthly Income	<input type="checkbox"/> Below 3,000 yuan	4	1.00
	<input type="checkbox"/> 3,000 but less than 5,000 yuan	40	10.00
	<input type="checkbox"/> 5,000 but less than 10,000 yuan	101	25.25
	<input type="checkbox"/> 10,000 but less than 15,000 yuan	229	57.25
	<input type="checkbox"/> 15,000 yuan and more	26	6.50
6. Occupation	<input type="checkbox"/> Government Employee	5	1.25
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Institution Employee	55	13.75
	<input type="checkbox"/> Company Employee	91	22.75
	<input type="checkbox"/> Servant Industry Employee	190	47.50
	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Employed	59	14.75
7. Types of Job	<input type="checkbox"/> Technology/I.T.	45	11.25
	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	61	15.25
	<input type="checkbox"/> Finance	125	31.25
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	169	42.25
8. Job Characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/> Primarily physical/manual labor	1	0.25
	<input type="checkbox"/> Primarily administrative/clerical work	55	13.75
	<input type="checkbox"/> A mix of physical and administrative tasks	101	25.25
	<input type="checkbox"/> Customer service oriented	159	39.75
	<input type="checkbox"/> Creative/Designoriented	84	21.00
9. Working Experience	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than a year	114	28.50
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 but less than 3 years	147	36.75
	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 but less than 5 years	91	22.75
	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 years and more	48	12.00
Total		400	100.00

Table 1 reveals a predominantly male sample with diverse marital statuses and a concentration of respondents aged 35 but less than 45 years. Most have attained high school or vocational training, with a significant proportion earning between 10,000 and less than 15,000 yuan per month. The service industry employs the largest group, primarily in finance-related roles, with a mix of customer service and administrative tasks. Many employees have relatively short tenure in their current fields, indicating a young workforce in terms of career duration.

Leadership Behavior Assessment

Table 2: The Descriptive Statistics of Leadership Behavior Assessment

Classification	N	Mean	S.D.	Meaning	RANK
Vision and Innovation	400	3.340	0.807	undecided	2

Self-Improvement and Feedback	400	3.393	0.820	undecided	1
Leadership Behavior Assessment	400	3.367	0.801	undecided	-

Table 2 suggests that the highest-rated aspect of the Leadership Behavior Assessment is "Self-Improvement and Feedback," with a mean score of 3.393 and a standard deviation of 0.820, followed by "Vision and Innovation," with a mean score of 3.340 and a standard deviation of 0.807. The Leadership Behavior Assessment has a mean score of 3.367 and a standard deviation of 0.801, rating "Undecided".

Servant-oriented Leadership

Table 3: The Descriptive Statistics of Servant-oriented Leadership

Classification	N	Mean	S.D.	Meaning	RANK
Altruism and Service	400	3.378	0.908	Undecided	2
Vision and Influence	400	3.335	0.830	Undecided	4
Personal Integrity and Example	400	3.410	0.984	Undecided	1
Team Empowerment Improvement	400	3.351	0.834	Undecided	3
Servant-oriented Leadership	400	3.369	0.851	Undecided	-

It is evident from Table 3 that "Personal Integrity and Example" ranks highest with a mean score of 3.410 and a standard deviation of 0.984, followed by "Altruism and Service", "Team Empowerment Improvement", and "Vision and Influence" with a mean score of about 3.378, 3.351, and 3.335, respectively. Overall, Servant-oriented Leadership has a mean score of 3.369 and a standard deviation of 0.851, rating "Undecided".

Employee Engagement

Table 4: The Descriptive Statistics of Employee Engagement

Classification	N	Mean	S.D.	Meaning	RANK
Cognitive Engagement	400	3.360	0.821	Undecided	3
Affective Engagement	400	3.420	0.978	Undecided	1
Behavioral Engagement	400	3.377	0.908	Undecided	2
Employee Engagement	400	3.386	0.854	Undecided	-

The results obtained from Table 4 suggest that the highest-rated aspect is "Affective Engagement," with a mean score of 3.420 and a standard deviation of 0.978, followed by "Behavioral Engagement" and "Cognitive Engagement," with a mean score of approximately 3.377 and 3.360, respectively. Overall, Servant-oriented Leadership has a mean score of 3.386 and a standard deviation of 0.854, rating "Undecided".

Inferential Statistics

Differences in Demographic Factors Generate Differences in Employee Engagement

Differences in Gender Generate Differences in Employee Engagement

$$H_0 : \mu_1 = \mu_2$$

$$H_a : \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$$

Table 5: The Independent Samples t-test of the Gender Factor

Items	Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p-value
Employee Engagement	Male	276	3.19	1.164	0.606	0.437
	Female	124	3.33	1.08		

It can be seen from Table 5 that the p-value of Employee Engagement concerning Gender is about 0.437, which is much higher than the critical value of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) cannot be rejected, which implies that differences in Gender generate no differences in Employee Engagement.

Differences in Marital Status, Age, Educational Level, Monthly Income, Occupation, Types of Job, Job Characteristics, and Working Experiences Generate Differences in Employee Engagement

$$H_0 : \mu_i = \mu_j$$

$$H_a : \mu_i \neq \mu_j \text{ at last one Pair where } i \neq j.$$

Table 6: The One-Way ANOVA of Marital Status, Age, Educational Level, Monthly Income, Occupation, Types of Job, Job Characteristics, and Working Experiences

Employee Engagement		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Marital Status	Between Groups	1.316	2	0.658	0.902	0.407
	Within Groups	289.773	397	0.730		
	Total	291.089	399			
Age	Between Groups	0.786	4	0.197	0.267	0.899
	Within Groups	290.303	395	0.735		
	Total	291.089	399			
Educational Level	Between Groups	2.309	3	0.770	1.055	0.368
	Within Groups	288.780	396	0.729		
	Total	291.089	399			
Monthly Income	Between Groups	0.758	4	0.190	0.258	0.905
	Within Groups	290.330	395	0.735		
	Total	291.089	399			
Occupation	Between Groups	4.545	4	1.136	2.566	0.042*
	Within Groups	286.543	395	0.725		
	Total	291.089	399			
Types of Job	Between Groups	8.367	3	2.789	2.368	0.041*
	Within Groups	509.543	396	1.287		
	Total	517.91	399			
Job Characteristics	Between Groups	0.250	4	0.063	0.085	0.987
	Within Groups	290.839	395	0.736		
	Total	291.089	399			
Working Experiences	Between Groups	0.329	3	0.110	0.149	0.930
	Within Groups	290.760	396	0.734		
	Total	291.089	399			

It can be seen from Table 6 that the p-values of Employee Engagement for Occupation and Types of Job are about 0.042 and 0.041, respectively, which are much less than the critical value of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, which implies that differences in occupation and types of Jobs generate differences in employee engagement. In contrast, differences in other demographic factors generate no differences in Employee Engagement since their p-values are much higher than the critical value of 0.05.

Leadership Behavior Assessment Influence on Employee Engagement

Table 7: The Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Employee Engagement Based on Leadership Behavior Assessment

Model	Coefficient ^a			t-value	p-value	
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta			
	B	Std. Error				
1	Constant	-0.039	0.055		-0.713	0.476
	Self-Improvement and Feedback: X_1	0.618	0.046	0.584	13.285	0.000
	Vision and Innovation: X_2	0.401	0.046	0.385	8.754	0.000

Dependent Variable : Employee Engagement

The results obtained from Table 7 indicate that Self-Improvement and Feedback (X_1), with a coefficient of 0.618 and a p-value of 0.000, suggest the highest significant positive impact on Employee

Engagement, while Vision and Innovation (X_2), with a coefficient of 0.401 and a p-value of 0.000 also indicating a significant positive impact on Employee Engagement. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.911 suggests that the predictors included in the model can explain approximately 91.1% of the variability in Employee Engagement.

Servant-oriented Leadership Influence on Employee Engagement

$H_0: \beta_i = 0$

$H_a: \beta_i \neq 0 (i=1, 2, 3, 4)$

Table 8: The Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Employee Engagement Based on Servant-oriented Leadership

Model	Coefficient ^a			t-value	P-value		
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta				
	B	S.E.					
1	Constant		0.052	0.017		3.133	0.002
	Altruism and Service (X_1)		0.334	0.024	0.355	13.950	0.000
	Vision and Influence (X_2)		0.064	0.020	0.063	3.215	0.001
	Personal Integrity and Example (X_3)		0.310	0.009	0.358	36.447	0.000
	Team Empowerment and Improvement (X_4)		0.278	0.029	0.272	9.628	0.000

Dependent Variable : Employee Engagement

It is evident from Table 8 that Altruism and Service (X_1), with a coefficient of 0.334 and a p-value of 0.000, suggest the highest significant positive impact on Employee Engagement, followed by Personal Integrity and Example (X_3), Team Empowerment and Improvement (X_4), and Vision and Influence (X_2) with a coefficient of 0.310, .278, and .064, respectively. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.992 suggests that the predictors included in the model can explain approximately 99.2% of the variability in Employee Engagement.

Leadership Behavior Assessment and Servant-oriented Leadership Influence on Employee Engagement

$H_0: \beta_i = 0$

$H_a: \beta_i \neq 0 (i=1, 2)$

Table 9: The Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Employee Engagement Based on Leadership Behavior Assessment and Servant-oriented Leadership

Model	Coefficient ^a			t-value	p-value		
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta				
	B	Std. Error					
1	Constant		-.008	.018		-.478	0.633*
	Leadership Behavior Assessment: X_1		.081	.017	.076	4.874	0.000*
	Servant-oriented Leadership: X_2		.927	.016	.923	59.573	0.000*

Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

The results obtained from Table 9 indicate that Servant-oriented Leadership (X_2), with a coefficient of 0.927 and a p-value of 0.000, suggests the highest significant positive impact on Employee Engagement, while Leadership Behavior Assessment (X_1), with a coefficient of 0.081 and a p-value of 0.000 also indicating a slightly positive impact on Employee Engagement. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.991 suggests that the predictors included in the model can explain approximately 99.1% of the variability in Employee Engagement.

Discussion

Demographic Factor

Occupation type directly influences the daily work environment and the professional experiences of employees, thereby affecting their engagement. In their paper, Macey and Schneider (2008) discussed how occupation types shape employee engagement. Their research emphasized that the nature of work and job demands in different occupational fields directly affect employee engagement. For instance, due to their constant innovation and learning demands, technology and I.T. fields often inspire higher engagement levels. In contrast, traditional educational or administrative roles might show lower engagement due to a lack of such

stimuli. Locke (1976) emphasized the importance of job satisfaction in influencing employee engagement and overall job performance in his theories on job satisfaction. Employees who are highly satisfied with their jobs are more likely to show high levels of engagement because they feel content and valued in their roles. Locke's research provides a perspective on how enhancing job satisfaction can directly boost employee motivation and engagement.

Leadership Behavior Assessment Influence on Employee Engagement

Leadership behavior significantly influences employee engagement, a notion well-supported by scholarly research. In particular, transformational leadership, as discussed by Bass and Riggio in their book *Transformational Leadership* (2006), highlights how leaders can inspire and energize employees, thereby markedly increasing engagement levels. Similarly, Judge and Piccolo's meta-analysis (2004) in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* contrasts transformational and transactional leadership, showing that transformational leadership is more effective in fostering high employee engagement and satisfaction levels. These studies demonstrate that leadership style is not just about directing behavior but inspiring and engaging employees to enhance their productivity and commitment to the organization.

Servant-oriented Leadership Influence on Employee Engagement

To reinforce the concept of servant-oriented leadership's impact on employee engagement, several foundational and recent studies offer robust evidence. The work of Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) in *Group & Organization Management* is pivotal, as it not only develops a reliable scale for measuring servant leadership but also connects servant leadership traits like empathy and growth orientation directly to increased employee engagement and organizational commitment. Similarly, Van Dierendonck and Nuijten's (2011) *Journal of Business and Psychology* article elaborates on the Servant Leadership Survey, providing a validated multidimensional measure of servant leadership. Their findings confirm that servant leadership significantly boosts employee engagement, satisfaction, and commitment, underlining the direct benefits of this leadership style on organizational health.

Further empirical backing is provided by Liden et al. (2014) in their *Academy of Management Journal* article, which examines the effects of servant leadership and serving culture on both individual and team performance levels within organizations. They demonstrate how a culture fostered by servant leadership enhances performance by promoting higher engagement and satisfaction among team members. These studies collectively argue that integrating servant leadership into management practices enhances employee engagement and leads to superior organizational performance, making a compelling case for its adoption in contemporary leadership development strategies.

Recommendation for Future Research

Implement Comprehensive Mentorship and Career Development Programs: Organizations should implement comprehensive mentorship programs to address the diverse needs of different age groups within the workforce. For younger employees, these programs can provide guidance, enhance job security, and integrate them more effectively into the company culture. Additionally, creating clear career development pathways can help retain top talent by showing a commitment to the professional growth of all employees, regardless of their age. For more experienced employees, offering roles as mentors leverages their extensive knowledge and enhances their engagement by providing them with new challenges and recognition for their expertise.

Develop Role-Specific Engagement Initiatives: Recognizing that different job roles and educational backgrounds require different engagement strategies, organizations should tailor their initiatives to meet these varied needs better. For employees with higher academic qualifications, offering roles that involve complex problem-solving and strategic decision-making can help maintain high levels of engagement. For occupational groups, customizing benefits and work conditions, such as flexible working hours for creative professionals or advanced training sessions for technical staff, will address specific motivational drivers and enhance job satisfaction and loyalty.

Enhance Leadership Training with a Focus on Servant Leadership: Leadership profoundly impacts employee engagement. Organizations should invest in leadership training programs that focus on building servant leadership qualities, such as empathy, active listening, and a commitment to the well-being and development of employees. Training current and future leaders to prioritize the needs of their teams and foster an inclusive, supportive work environment will not only boost engagement but also cultivate a positive organizational culture that drives overall productivity and performance.

Conclusion

The results obtained from the study indicate that differences in occupation and job types generate differences in employee engagement. The multiple linear regression analysis findings show that all aspects of leadership behavior assessment (vision and innovation, as well as self-improvement and feedback) significantly and positively impact employee engagement. All aspects of servant-oriented leadership (altruism and service, vision and influence, personal integrity and example, and team employment improvement) have also positively impacted employee engagement. Finally, Leadership Behavior Assessment and Servant-Oriented Leadership impact Employee Engagement positively.

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