



From Calling to Commitment: Exploring the Link Between Leader-Career Calling and Employee Job Satisfaction

Zahra Masood Bhutta¹, Saeed Ahmad², Muhammad Naseer Altaf Shah³

¹ Associate Professor, National University of Modern Languages, Multan, Pakistan. Email: zmbhutta@numl.edu.pk

² Assistant Professor, National University of Modern Languages, Multan, Pakistan. Email: sahmah@numl.edu.pk

³ Assistant Registrar, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan. Email: naseer.altaf@iub.edu.pk

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the influence of leader career calling on employee job satisfaction in the higher education sector of Pakistan. Data were collected from 250 faculty members of different universities through a structured questionnaire. Leader career calling, employee motivation, and job satisfaction were measured using established scales, and the data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Research results show that leader career calling significantly predicts employee job satisfaction. At the same time, employee motivation is positively affected by leader career calling and, in turn, enhances job satisfaction. Furthermore, employee motivation partially mediates the relationship between leader career calling and employee job satisfaction. To promote employee well-being and organizational effectiveness, universities and other institutions should develop leaders who view their roles as purposeful callings and inspire intrinsic motivation among employees.

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Corresponding Author's Email: zmbhutta@numl.edu.pk

1. Introduction

"What motivates people to work? is as one of the core questions in management studies. Historically, we have viewed this as motivation driven by rewards only from outside of the work itself—money, power, prestige. Yet, all the while new research consistently points towards more intrinsic motivating factors of career calling being one that is particularly salient. A calling in career refers to the idea that our work is more than just a job, it is meaningful and an important part of life for us on both a personal level (aligned with our values and sense of self) as well as aligns with contributions we make to society at large (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009). For individuals, career calling has been linked to a variety of positive experiences including lower stress (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997), higher levels of work engagement (Dik et al., 2012), and an enhanced sense of meaning in life overall (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009). In organizations, career calling is associated with lower turnover intentions, greater job satisfaction, and increased organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., (Chen, 2018; Han, 2021). External Impact: Career calling can make prosocial contributions beyond the workplace (e.g., in volunteerism; (Dik et al., 2012). As such, career calling stands to generate major benefits for both the individual and the organization. Yet, despite forty years of career calling research very little is known about how callings in particular influence behaviors across occupational fields due to the almost exclusive focus on individual-effects of calling. Few studies, however, have elaborated on the implications of leader career calling—i.e., the perception of their work as a calling for employees. In particular, the links between leader career calling and employee job satisfaction are understudied. Leaders working climate, organizational norms and employee reciprocity of attitudes to everyone understand the importance of positions (Park, 2018). A high career calling motivates leaders influence employees to view their jobs in a more meaningful context this helps employees derive greater job satisfaction and perhaps purpose. This research investigates the effect of leader career calling on employee job satisfaction: in context of higher education sector in Pakistan. Higher education institutions are a highly complex organizations where leadership has a significant capability of shaping the institutional culture and impacting employee engagement.

Studies in these contexts find that employees, especially faculty members, experience higher levels of job satisfaction when they feel their jobs reflect what they regard as important and consistent with their values. To the best of our knowledge, no study has yet analyzed how leaders can influence employee job satisfaction by promoting career calling, which represents a critical void in the growing literature on career calling. Thus we propose and examine a straightforward pathway that links leader career calling with employee job satisfaction through employee motivation (see Figure 1).

1.1. Hypothesis Development

The related Social Information Processing Theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) holds that individual behavior flows from the social settings where it takes place. Leaders are also the primary source of information for employees, are generally observed as role models, and can exert an important impact on employee attitudes and reactions. Leaders who see their jobs as a career calling—if they convey passion and meaning in the work—will make their employees feel motivated to create careers with their own set of habits and personal values. Career crafting refers to a proactive behavior in which employees shape their own job, to best fit personal needs with talents through alignment of work tasks, meaning and personal strengths, interests and career goals (Tims & Akkermans, 2020). Whether they elevate their motivation, possessiveness of what they do by wrapping it around themselves and end up with a greater job satisfaction – when employees are career crafting, the benefits follow. Employee motivation, the force behind achieving personal and professional goals is an important component in this process. We developed some hypotheses that were inspired by the leader career calling and employee motivation syndrome. First, identification of Career Calling of leader and job satisfaction of the employee

Leaders who view their job as a calling are more likely to create an organizational climate where employees' intrinsic work motives and need satisfaction can flourish. That type of passion and purpose in what they do may be so clear to the employees that they, too, begin carrying it for their own work. In the academic sector for example, faculty who see their leaders on a career calling as opposed to only managing them have higher levels engagement in their teaching and research work leading to greater job satisfaction (Dik et al., 2012). Leaders high in career calling may provide considerable employee development, such as opportunities to grow and advance (among other forms of development—see Dik et al. (2012), which can promote enhanced job satisfaction. Thus, we hypothesize:

H1: Leader career calling predicts employee job satisfaction in a positive sense.

H2: Employee Motivation to Mediate the Relationship between Job Crafting and Satisfaction

Employee motivation is one of the key drivers in the translation of career calling amongst leaders to improved job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is mostly driven by motivation, especially intrinsic Job Satisfaction motivation. This leads to greater employee motivation to align tasks with their personal values and career goals when leaders who have a career calling instruct employees on the importance of doing work that makes a positive difference and encourage support for personal growth. In the realm of higher education, engaged faculty members in our survey indicate they are more satisfied with their jobs, believing that their job contributes to others and offers opportunities for personal growth. We therefore put forward the following hypotheses:

H2: Calling: The leader's career calling positively predicts employee motivation.

H3: It is a good thing that employee motivation leads to increase in employee job satisfaction.

H4: The relationship between leader career calling and employee job satisfaction is partially mediated by employee motivation.

2. Methodology

2.1. Sample and Data Collection

The focus of this study is primarily the higher education sector in Pakistan, especially on universities. Faculty members, who are critical for the academic and social development of academicians, constitute the main study population. The research thus engaged the faculty members and distributed with them survey to find out about leader career calling, motivation of their own and job satisfaction at multiple universities throughout Pakistan. The survey also asked

about the number of years in service, academic field Journal Name; c in which the respondent graduated.

2.2. Measurement

A scale to measure leader career calling will be adapted from Dik et al. (2012), which was used to gauge the degree of work as a calling that one experienced. Intrinsic motivation will be measured by the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory covering interest/enjoyment, perceived competence and perceived autonomy. We will assess overall job satisfaction using a modified version of the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1985), which includes completion domains about many aspects of the job itself, compensation, and opportunities for advancement.

2.3. Data Analysis

The study use this data for testing the relationships between leader career calling, employee motivation and job satisfaction using structural equation model (SEM). Such a study situation is ideally investigated by using SEM in order to explore the complex relationships and mediating effects.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

In this study data was collected from 250 faculty members in different universities of Pakistan. Description of the sample is summarized in Table 1. Most of the respondents were male (55 %). 60% are in the 30–45-year age group, 30% are in the 46–60-year age group, and 25% are over age of sixty. In terms of years of experience, 40% of faculty members are having less than 5 years of experience, 30% having over 5 years of experience and remaining 30% have over 10 years of experience in education.

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the sample (N = 250)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	137	55.0
	Female	113	45.0
Age	30-45 years	150	60.0
	46-60 years	75	30.0
	60+ years	25	10.0
Years of Experience	<5 years	100	40.0
	5-10 years	75	30.0
	>10 years	75	30.0

3.2. Correlation Analysis

We tested the relationship among the core variables by conducting a correlation analysis prior to testing the hypotheses. Table 2 reports the findings. We have also found significant correlation between leader career calling with employee motivation ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.01$), and between employee motivation and job satisfaction ($r = 0.60$, $p < 0.01$). It means that the hypothesized relationships exist. As leader career calling increases, so does employee motivation and job satisfaction.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3
1. Leader Career Calling	-		
2. Employee Motivation	0.56**	-	
3. Job Satisfaction	0.54**	0.60**	-

Note: $p < 0.01$

3.3. Hypothesis Testing

We tested the following hypotheses by conducting Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS. In the SEM analysis, these results are summarized below.

H1: Leader Career Calling and Job Satisfaction

Hypothesis 1: Followers' job satisfaction will be higher when leaders experience a calling in their career. The results from the SEM analysis indicated that leader career calling was significantly and positively associated with job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.01$). Here we see continuous support of H1, demonstrating that leaders who perceive their work as a calling enables higher job satisfaction among their employees.

H2: Career calling of leaders and employee motivation

Hypothesis 2 is that leader career calling would positively predict employee motivation. Results from SEM analysis results indicated that career calling of the leader has a significant positive effect on employee motivation ($\beta = 0.56$, $p < 0.01$) hence supporting H2.

H3: Employee motivation and Job Satisfaction

The third hypothesis theorized a positive relationship between work motivation with job satisfaction. The analysis confirmed positive significant effect of employee motivation on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$) supporting H3.

H4: Employee Motivation as a Mediator

Fourth Hypothesis states that employee motivation will mediate the each of relationship between leader career calling and job satisfaction. However, the statistical result shows indirect effect with $\beta = 0.35$ ($p < 0.01$), which means employee motivation partially mediates leader career calling relate to job satisfaction This supports H4.

4. Discussion

By using this measurement, the current study provides direct evidence that leader career calling has very significant positive effect on employee job satisfaction with mediating role of employee motivation. This is in line with previous research suggesting that leaders displaying a strong sense of purpose and in their work can affect employee outcomes positively (Dik et al., 2012). In the context of higher education in Pakistan, faculty members who identify their leader as one on a career calling are feeling greater role fulfillment, driving up job satisfaction. The positive relationship that we found in this study between leader career calling and employee motivation validates the effectiveness of intrinsic motivation for improvement job satisfaction. This means that faculty who are intrinsically motivated have a higher probability to participate in career crafting, because they take control of their own professional growth and well-being, which is linked with higher job satisfaction.

5. Conclusion

The study adds to the career calling literature by providing evidence that leader career calling matters for employee job satisfaction. By considering the higher education sector of Pakistan, we illustrate how leaders who consider their work to be a calling inspire and motivate employees which translates into job satisfaction. The results indicate that both universities and other organizations can promote employee well-being and organizational effectiveness by developing purposeful leaders.

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