The critical role of self-leadership's in work engagement and organizational citizenship behaviors

کام کی مصروفیت اور تنظیمی شہریت کے رویوں میں سیلف لیڈرشپ کا اہم کردار۔

Written by:
Fakhr E Alam Afridi[86]
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9776-5074
Shahid Jan[87]
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8518-7668
Fayaz Ali Shah[88]
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6662-177X

Abstract

This study discuss the relationships between self-leadership, organizational commitment, emotional exhaustion, work engagement, Organizational Citizenship Behaviors, and perceived organizational commitment. Using a sample of 280 employees, it was found that self-leadership had a positive relationship with organizational citizenship behaviors. Further, through emotional exhaustion self-leadership had a significant relationship with work engagement. The findings further suggest that perceived organizational support moderated the relationships between self-leadership and both organizational citizenship behaviors and emotional exhaustion. This study filled a void in the literature by critically examining how emotional exhaustion may act as a mechanism in between self-leadership and work engagement/organizational citizenship behaviors.

Keywords: self-leadership, OCBs, work engagement, emotional exhaustion, organizational commitment, perceived organizational support.

خلاصہ

یہ مطالعہ خود قیادت ، تنظیمی وابستگی ، جذباتی تھکن ، کام کی مصروفیت ، تنظیمی شہریت کے رویوں ، اور سمجھے جانے والے تنظیمی عزم کے مابین تعلقات پر تبادلہ خیال کرتا ہے۔ 280 ملازمین کے نمونے کا استعمال کرتے ہوئے ، یہ پتہ چلا کہ خود قیادت کا تنظیمی شہریت کے رویوں سے مثبت تعلق ہے۔ مزید یہ کہ جذباتی تھکن کے ذریعے خود قیادت کا کام کی مصروفیت کے ساتھ ایک اہم تعلق تھا۔ نتائج مزید بتاتے ہیں کہ سمجھی جانے والی تنظیمی مدد نے خود قیادت اور تنظیمی شہریت کے دونوں طرز عمل اور جذباتی تھکن کے مابین تعلقات کو معتدل کیا۔ اس مطالعے نے تنقیدی جائزہ لیتے ہوئے ادب میں ایک خلا کو پُر کیا کہ کس طرح جذباتی تھکن خود قیادت اور کام کی مصروفیت/تنظیمی شہریت کے رویوں کے درمیان ایک میکانزم کے طور پر کام کر سکتی ہے۔

، کام کی مصروفیت ، جذباتی تھکن ، تنظیمی وابستگی ، سمجھا گیا تنظیمی تعاون OCBs، خود قیادت ، مطلوبہ الفاظ

Introduction

While there has been research focusing on different tactics to motivate individuals, a more recent perspective on individuals' ability to motivate themselves has come from self-leadership (Park, Song, & Lim, 2016). Despite the somewhat abundance of empirical research on self-leadership, there are still unanswered questions that remain within the self- leadership literature. While self-leadership has been studied in conjunction with variables such as individual performance (Manz & Sims Jr, 1980), self-efficacy

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[86] Ph.D. Scholar, Islamia College Peshawar, Pakistan.
[87] Dr. Associate Professor, Islamia College Peshawar, Pakistan.
[88] Dr. Assistant Professor, Islamia College Peshawar, Pakistan.

(Neck & Milliman, 1994), job satisfaction (Prussia, Anderson, & Manz, 1998), and creativity (Godwin, Neck, & Houghton, 1999), there are still some avenues of research that have not yet been explored. In particular, there are still areas of interest that self- leadership may influence.

While a great deal of research has studied direct relationships between self-leadership and outcomes (DiLiello & Houghton, 2006; Neck & Houghton, 2006), there has not been near as much attention paid to mediating and moderating variables. There have been calls within the field to study more in-depth models of self-leadership that go beyond direct relationships (Neck & Houghton, 2006). These calls seek to answer questions about how self-leadership influences individual outcomes and what conditions may strengthen or weaken the relationships. A large amount of the empirical research has only looked at direct relationships (Stewart, Courtright, & Manz, 2011). By studying the relationships in isolation from one another, researchers cannot fully understand how self-leadership can influence different outcomes. This study will attempt to better understand self-leadership's role within a more complex mediated and moderated model, as opposed to just studying direct relationships. This will help to answer calls from the field to incorporate self-leadership into more developed theoretical models.

This study will help to explore the mechanisms by examining mediators of self-leadership relationships, through which self-leadership can influence individual outcomes. By understanding how self-leadership influences the outcomes, a better understanding of the self- leadership processes can be created. A similar vein of thought exists for studying moderators of self-leadership relationships. In particular, by understanding in which situations self-leadership relationships can be modified, researchers can again better understand the way self-leadership can influence outcomes. Additionally, by studying moderating mechanisms, researchers may be able to better suggest in what situations self-leadership may or may not be appropriate. However, it is crucial to understand the importance of examining more complete models of self-leadership that include these mechanisms through which self-leadership is likely to influence certain outcomes. This study can help to explain why self-leadership is critical for organizational practices.

Theoretical background and Hypothesis of the study

The theoretical and empirical backing for each hypothesis is discussed in the follow up to each hypotheses. All hypotheses are pictorially diagramed in Figure 1. The hypotheses discuss the relationships between self-leadership, organizational commitment, emotional exhaustion, work engagement, and OCBs.
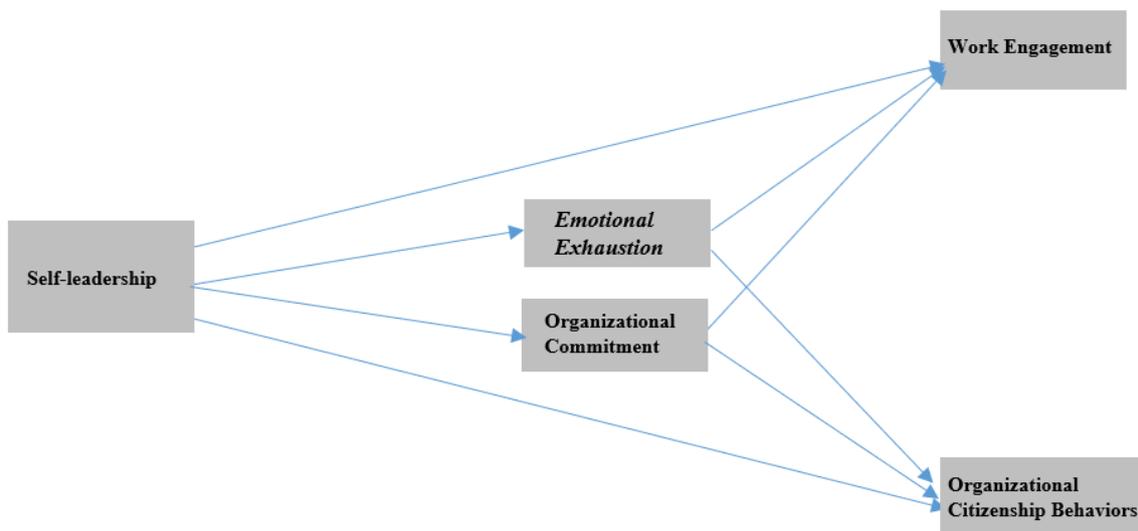

Figure 1. Conceptual framework. Source: the author.

Hypothesis 1: Self-leadership will be positively related to work engagement.

Businesses and individuals want individuals who remain engaged in work. With both motivating and un-motivating situations, it is necessary for individuals to keep high levels of engagement to ensure productivity at work (Park et al., 2016). Work engagement presents relevant situations in which organizations want individuals to remain engaged and accomplish all work that is needed (DiLiello &

Houghton, 2006). There is a host of research on work engagement that examines three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption (Gagné & Deci, 2005). All three of the dimensions of work engagement are particularly intriguing for why individuals do stay motivated in their work. Vigor relates to individuals having high levels of energy and resilience when working, thus maintaining positive actions while working (D'Intino, Goldsby, Houghton, & Neck, 2007). The second key dimension of work engagement is dedication. Dedication relates to individuals having enthusiasm, inspiration, and pride in their job essentially how well individuals identify with the job itself. If individuals identify with their job, exhibit pride, and exhibit enthusiasm it will lead to higher levels of work engagement (Park et al., 2016). Finally, the remaining dimension of work engagement is absorption. Absorption refers to the degree to which employees remain fully engrossed by their work and have difficulty detaching from the work (Furtner et al., 2015). There are a few recent studies that seek to examine the direct relationship between these constructs. Based on the theoretical arguments made above from social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), as well as the scant, but critical empirical research that has been completed on self- leadership and work engagement.

Hypothesis 2: Self-leadership will be positively related to organizational citizenship behaviors.

There has been an abundance of research on Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) in the literature, spurring multiple meta-analyses and literature reviews. These studies have typically found that there are positive benefits associated with employees engaging in extra-role behaviors that are necessary for proper functioning of the organization (Daft & Lewin, 1993; Prussia et al., 1998; Stashevsky, Burke, Carmeli, Meitar, & Weisberg, 2006). Using social cognitive theory as a basis, it is plausible to investigate how self-leadership can influence engagement in OCBs (Bandura, 2001). Social cognitive theory is frequently used as an underlying explanation for self-leadership relationships and it provides a unique lens for examining how self-leadership relates to OCBs. This theory is used to explain self- leadership relationships due to the way that individuals can exert influence over themselves, which in turn can affect different elements of their lives, such as behaviors and environments (Bandura, 2001). This consists of an idea that human behavior is related to external factors individuals are involved in, personal factors, and the behavior itself. As individuals motivate themselves, it can influence their behaviors (Neck & Houghton, 2006; Stewart et al., 2011). This relates to a crucial link in social cognitive theory between individuals attitudes/beliefs and their behaviors. OCBs are crucial for successful running of an organization, so finding ways to have these completed is important for researchers (Furtner et al., 2015). By examining this way in which individuals influence their attitudes/beliefs towards the behaviors, it increases the likelihood of the extra-role behaviors being completed.

Hypothesis 3: Emotional exhaustion will mediate the relationship between work engagement and self-leadership.

The relationship between emotional exhaustion and work engagement has been briefly examined in the literature. A recent article (Maksum, Safitri, Ibrahim, Marini, & Wahyudi, 2020) has shown that when emotional demands are high on an individual (which could result from emotional exhaustion), individuals reported lower levels of work engagement. Thus, as individuals have higher levels of emotional loads present, it can draw resources away from work engagement levels. Furthermore, a recent article on burnout and work engagement, (Dinh et al., 2014) propose and argue that within the job demands-resource model that emotional exhaustion negatively influences levels of work engagement. In particular, emotional exhaustion represents a way that self-leadership may influence work engagement. By lowering levels of emotional exhaustion, individuals can then redirect resources towards remaining engaged their work (Marques-Quinteiro, Vargas, Eifler, & Curral, 2019).

Hypothesis 4: Emotional exhaustion will mediate the relationship between self-leadership and OCBs.

Mental weariness and emotional exhaustion are characteristics that are stereotypical of individuals experiencing emotional exhaustion.(Mount, Barrick, Scullen, & Rounds, 2005), thus leaving individuals without the resources needed to cope emotionally with a given situation. By combining conservation of resources theory and social cognitive theory, the link between self-leadership and emotional exhaustion can be established. As discussed above, social cognitive theory often is used in conjunction with self-leadership research. Individuals can influence their own thoughts/beliefs, behaviors, and environments, according to social cognitive theory. Self-leadership provides strategies through which individuals can directly influence themselves. This suggests that individuals who engage in self-leadership are better suited to modify

different parts of their situations to best suit a given task (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2005). This can result in better management of resources, which in turn, can mean better allocation of resources. When individuals engage in self-leadership and can influence their own behaviors, they are placed in a better situation for influence thoughts, actions, behaviors, etc (Houghton & Neck, 2002a; Nakagawa, 2004; Stewart, Carson, & Cardy, 1996). In this situation, individuals would be better suited to manage their level of emotional exhaustion by conserving resources in a more efficient manner. As a result, individuals would be influencing various parts of their situations, which in can be seen through conservation of resources. In turn, self-leadership can lead to lower levels of emotional exhaustion by using these strategies to better control resources and prevent higher levels of emotional exhaustion from occurring (Stashevsky et al., 2006). Thus, the first part of this hypothesis is that self-leadership will lead to lower levels of emotional exhaustion. In turn, the lower levels of emotional exhaustion are expected to influence individual outcomes.

H 5: Affective commitment (a), normative commitment (b), and Continuance commitment (c) mediate the relationship between self-leadership and work engagement.

Affective commitment is based on the feelings that an individual has regarding "liking" the organization Thus, affective commitment suggests that individuals stay attached to the organization because they like the organization and want to be there. Social cognitive theory suggests that the environment, behaviors, and attitudes/beliefs can influence one another. If individuals exhibit affective organizational commitment, they want to be with the organization, which should lead to positive benefits within the triadic reciprocal model (Houghton, Bonham, Neck, & Singh, 2004). As individuals want to be with the organization, it should lead to higher levels of work engagement. Since individuals like the organization, there should be a draw to stay engaged in their work to benefit the organization.

The second type of organizational commitment is normative commitment. Normative commitment typically receives less attention in the literature and has often been modified as to what it actually is. Normative commitment relates to the ideas that individuals feel obliged to stay with the organization (Neck & Milliman, 1994). The sense of obligation is what drives the bond the organization has. Again, within the social cognitive theory model of reciprocal behavior (Bandura, 1986), these feelings of obligation can influence their behaviors and their environment. As individuals feel obliged to stay with the organization, they should remain more engaged in their work. Since individuals have a sense of obligation, they should feel a sense of obligation to do the best they can at their job.

The third part of the organizational commitment typology is continuance commitment. Continuance commitment is different in conceptualization from affective and normative commitment. Continuance commitment relates to feelings of needing to be with the organization (Ilgen & Pulakos, 1999). This feeling of needing to be with the organization can be a result of the costs that an individual has associated with leaving, as well as a lack of alternatives that they could use as options for leaving. This form of organizational commitment is expected to influence levels of work engagement in a different way. While still operating within the triadic reciprocal model of social cognitive theory, continuance commitment can influence other elements of the model. In particular, higher levels of continuance commitment should lead to lower levels of work engagement (Dee, Henkin, & Chen, 2000).

Hypothesis 6: Affective commitment (a), Normative commitment (b), and Continuance commitment (c) mediate the relationship between self-leadership and OCBs.

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) suggests that human behavior can be modified within the triadic reciprocal model. This model incorporates elements of attitudes/beliefs, behavior, and the environment. Within this model, a theoretical link can be made from organizational commitment to OCBs. Organizational commitment represents an attitude that individuals have regarding the level of attachment they have. As individuals exhibit higher levels of organizational commitment, they are more likely to engage in behaviors that are more beneficial to the organization (DiLiello & Houghton, 2006; Houghton & Neck, 2002b; Manz, 1986; Neck & Manz, 2010; Park et al., 2016; Stewart et al., 1996). In particular, the positive attitude can lead to higher levels of OCBs. These are the extra-role behaviors that result from individuals remaining committed to the organization. Social exchange theory may also help to explain the relationship between organizational commitment and OCBs. Social exchange theory rests upon reciprocity norms between two actors. This is based on a continuous relationship where actors voluntary engage in behaviors that they expect to be reward at some point in the future. Individuals who exhibit higher levels of organizational commitment are more likely to engage in OCBs because of the norms of reciprocity (Cobb-Clark & Schurer,

2012; Frayne & Geringer, 2000; Locke & Latham, 2004). In particular, individuals who are committed know that if they engage in OCBs, it is likely that they will be rewarded later. Thus, there is a benefit to engage in these behaviors because of the expectation that completion of extra-role behaviors leads to some positive benefit from the organization later.

Methodology

The sample in which the developed hypotheses tested were the banking sector employees in a KPK province Pakistan. The employees within the banking sectors provide an ideal testing ground for the hypothesized relationships that were developed. In particular, all of the constructs of interest are ones that have great importance to organizations that operate in this field.

Survey Design

The data was collected via a survey instrument that completed by individuals within the organization. Data was collected at a single time point due to limitations and constraints from the organization. The variables that are being measured within this study are self-leadership, emotional exhaustion, organizational commitment, work engagement, and OCBs. These are variables that are of hypothesized interest within the study. Furthermore, demographic information collected and used as control variables.

Independent Variable

Self-leadership

Self-leadership is measured with the revised self-leadership questionnaires developed by (Houghton & Neck, 2002b). The nine-item measurement instrument that is scored on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 5 = "Strongly agree.

Mediating Variables

Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is measured using the emotional exhaustion subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory. The subscale consists of 9 items that are scored on a 5 point Likert-type scale ranging from "1" = "strongly disagree" to "5" = "strongly agree" (Baer et al., 2015)

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is measured using the revised organizational commitment scale from Meyer and Allen (1997).Each item scored on a 7 point Likert-scale ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree" (Meyer, Allen, & Beckstead, 1997).

Dependent Variables

Work Engagement

Work engagement measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 (UWES-9), developed by (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). The UWES-9 is measured on a 7 point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = "Never" to 7 = "Always".

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

OCBs is measured using the OCBO and OCBI items from (Williams, 1997). The item scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree".

Statistical Analysis Tool

MPLUS is a software program that allows for analysis of moderated mediation. MPLUS allows for researchers to statistically analyze the conditional indirect and direct effects that are occurring within the

dataset. MPLUS allows the researcher to test unlimited configurations of moderation and mediation, not simply the model (Ramayah, Cheah, Chuah, Ting, & Memon, 2018).   Within MPLUS, multiple independent and dependent variables can be used. In particular, this research design contains parallel mediators and multiple dependent variables. MPLUS is capable of handling this model in one statistical analysis, as opposed to having to run independent regression analyses for each of the dependent variables.

Results and discussion

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for study variables are include in Table 1 below. Of note, the average age of participants was 48.27 years old with an average tenure at the organization of 10.44 years. Thus, the individuals, on average, had some level of experience in the organization and working. Among the variables of interest, we see moderate, significant correlations between self-leadership and both work engagement ($r = .429$) and organizational citizenship behaviors ($r = .385$). Additionally, self-leadership had expected relationships with emotional exhaustion ($r = -.144$) and organizational commitment (AC: $r = .197$, NC: $r = .212$, and CC: $r = .203$). In addition, most significant correlations were in the expected direction, with the exception of the relationship between emotional exhaustion and affective commitment ($r = .167$).

This relationship was expected to be negative, however, the corresponding correlation was positive. While this is of note, there is not a hypothesized relationship between emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment, so the data analysis will proceed as expected. Of note, most hypothesized relationships showed significant correlations in the expected direction. Additionally, while there are some correlations that seem troublesome (above .60), a word of caution in interpretation is needed. The correlations that exceed the thresholds for concerns about multicollinearity are between individual facets of organizational commitment with organizational commitment, as well as between individual facets of organizational citizenship behaviors with organizational citizenship behaviors. Therefore, these are not as concerning as at first glance since the correlations in question are between a sub dimension of a variable and a global measure of the variable, which would be expected.

Table 1.
Means, Standard Deviation, Correlations

		Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	Gender	1.08	.277															
2	Age	48.27	11.98	-.020														
3	Educ	3.22	.735	.202**	-.287**													
4	Tenure	10.44	9.30	.031	.476**	.034												
5	SL	33.27	7.40	-.038	.012	-.052	.002	(.875)										
6	POS	22.35	7.50	.098	.079	.016	.043	.436**	(.860)									
7	EE	28.82	12.59	-.148*	-.036	-.042	-.033	-.144*	-.204**	(.928)								
8	AC	22.54	5.59	.010	.092	.073	.097	.197**	.185**	.167**	(.631)							
9	NC	22.18	7.45	.059	.103	-.019	.046	.212**	.400**	-.013	.435**	(.756)						
10	CC	23.27	8.74	-.038	-.037	.036	.036	.203**	.223**	.096	.372**	.511**	(.862)					
11	OC	67.9	17.10	.011	.048	.064	.091	.249**	.325**	.117	.694**	.824**	.837**	(.829)				
12	WE	38.57	11.10	.073	.159*	-.049	.112	.429**	.429**	-.397**	.312**	.437**	.271**	.403**	(.902)			
13	OCBO	22.45	4.07	-.033	.123*	.006	.154*	.214**	.091	.067	.223**	.218**	.160**	.236**	.272**	(.723)		
14	OCBI	27.63	5.48	.010	.104	.050	.079	.401**	.185**	-.231**	.226**	.217**	.141*	.203**	.506**	.390**	(.878)	
15	OCB	50.16	7.81	-.013	.141*	.025	.116	.385**	.163**	-.109	.255**	.238**	.150*	.248**	.466**	.776**	.884**	(.855)

Note: ** correlation is significant at .01 level; * correlation is significant at .05 level. Cronbach's alpha values are reported on the diagonal.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Three separate confirmatory factor analyses were conducted (Table 2). These three models are as follows: (1) hypothesized model, (2) one- factor model, and (3) a model where the facets of organizational commitment were all loaded onto a single latent variable, as opposed to individual facet latent variables. As can be seen in Table 2, the hypothesized model was the best fit to the data. While not all fit indices met traditional thresholds for good fit (Fuller, Simmering, Atinc, Atinc, & Babin, 2016; Wong, 2013), the hypothesized model will be the one that this study proceeds forward with.

Table 2.
Confirmatory Factor Analysis Fit Statistics.

Model	X^2	df	X^2 / df	X^2 diff	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Single Latent Factor Six Latent Factor Model	9640.645	2015	4.784		.318	.116	.135
Single Org Commitment Latent Variable Eight Factor Model	5372.501	2000	2.686	4268.14	.698	.077	.102
Separate Org Commitment Latent Variables	4962.551	1987	2.498	409.95	.734	.073	.091

Structural Equation Modeling

Hypothesis 1 as shown in Table 3, this hypothesis was not supported (β = .059, p = .802). The hypothesis 2 was supported (β = .453, p <.01). Thus, the direct relationship between self- leadership and organizational behaviors was significant and positive. Hypothesis 3 as can be seen in Table 4, this hypothesis was supported. The bootstrapped confidence intervals do not overlap zero, suggesting support for the hypothesis. As can be seen in Table 3, the piecemeal approach to indirect effects also provides support with the path from self-leadership to emotional exhaustion (β = -.786, p < .05) and emotional exhaustion to work engagement (β = -.225, p < .01). Similarly, Hypothesis 4 proposed that emotional exhaustion would mediate the relationship between self-leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors. As can be seen in Table 8, this hypothesis was supported. The bootstrapped confidence intervals do not overlap zero, suggesting support for the hypothesis. As can be seen in Table 3, the piecemeal approach to indirect effects also provides support with the path from self-leadership to emotional exhaustion (β = -.786, p < .05) and emotional exhaustion to work organizational citizenship behaviors (β = -.115, p < .01).

Table 3.
Path Analysis Results.

Path	Estimate	S.E.	P-Value
SL -> WE	.059	.23	.80
SL -> OCB	.453	.18	.01**
SL -> EE	-.786	.34	.02*
SL -> OC	.274	.18	.13
EE -> WE	-.225	.04	.00***
EE-> OCB	-.115	.03	.00***
OC -> WE	.446	.08	.00***
OC -> OCB	.102	.05	.03*

Hypotheses 5 and 6 (parts a, b, and c) proposed that facets of organizational commitment would mediate the relationship between self-leadership and both work engagement and organizational citizenship behaviors. Due to model convergence issues, the facets of organizational commitment were collapsed into a single organizational commitment variable for analysis in Mplus. Post hoc analysis in SPSS conducted to determine if there is reason to suspect differential outcomes for each of the organizational commitment facets. As can be seen in both Tables 4, this hypothesis was not supported. The bootstrapped confidence intervals overlapped zero, suggesting non-support for the relationships.

Hypothesis 6a-c suggested that organizational commitment would mediate the relationship between self-leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors. As can be seen in both Tables 7 and 8, this hypothesis was not supported. The bootstrapped confidence intervals overlapped zero, suggesting non-support for the relationships. Again, these analyses were conducted using a single organizational commitment variable. Post hoc analysis using the individual facets of organizational commitment will be conducted to determine the extent to which there is similar results between the two analyses. However, this initial support suggests that organizational commitment does not mediate the relationship between self-leadership and either work engagement or organizational citizenship behaviors.

Table 4.
Mplus Bootstrapped Confidence Intervals.

Mediating Variable	Dependent Variable	Condition	Estimate	S.E.	95% Bootstrapped Confidence Interval
Emotional Exhaustion	Work Engagement	Low	.225	.100	{.029, .421}
Emotional Exhaustion	Work Engagement	Medium	.177	.081	{.018, .336}
Emotional Exhaustion	Work Engagement	High	.128	.063	{.006, .251}
Emotional Exhaustion	OCBs	Low	.116	.053	{.012, .219}
Emotional Exhaustion	OCBs	Medium	.091	.042	{.008, .174}
Emotional Exhaustion	OCBs	High	.066	.032	{.003, .129}
Organizational Commitment	Work Engagement	Low	.146	.107	{-.065, .356}
Organizational Commitment	Work Engagement	Medium	.122	.084	{-.043, .287}
Organizational Commitment	Work Engagement	High	.099	.063	{-.023, .222}
Organizational Commitment	OCBs	Low	.033	.031	{-.027, .093}
Organizational Commitment	OCBs	Medium	.028	.024	{-.019, .075}
Organizational Commitment	OCBs	High	.023	.018	{-.012, .058}

The first major finding of this study was a significant direct effect of self-leadership on organizational citizenship behaviors. This study found support for the positive relationship between self-leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors. The second major finding from this study examined the usage of emotional exhaustion as a mediating mechanism in self-leadership relationships. The findings support that self-leadership can lead to lower levels of emotional exhaustion, which in turn leads to higher levels of work engagement and organizational citizenship behaviors. By taking a step towards incorporating emotional exhaustion in to the self-leadership literature, this study has a major finding in understanding how self-leadership influences individual outcomes. The third major finding found that work engagement had an interesting relationship with self-leadership. In particular, the direct relationship between self-leadership and work engagement was not significant. However, further probing of the relationship found that there was a significant mediating effect through emotional exhaustion. Therefore, self-leadership may be impacting work engagement, just not without a mechanism through which this process can be transmitted. The fourth major finding was that perceived organizational support had some support for being a moderating factor on self-leadership relationships. Thus, under certain conditions the degree to which individuals feel supported by their organization can shift their levels of emotional exhaustion and extra-role behaviors.

Conclusion

This study focused on the role of self-leadership as a way to increase positive employee outcomes by examining how self-leadership influences employee work engagement and organizational citizenship behaviors. In addition, this study proposed that emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment

would mediate the relationships between self- leadership and employee outcomes. This study also sought to understand how perceptions of organizational support could influence the relationships that an individual's level of self- leadership had with other outcomes of interest. Using a sample of 280 employees, it was found that self-leadership had a positive relationship with organizational citizenship behaviors. This positive relationship occurred both as a direct relationship and an indirect relationship through emotional exhaustion. Similarly, through emotional exhaustion self-leadership had a significant relationship with work engagement. Finally, perceived organizational support moderated the relationships between self-leadership and both organizational citizenship behaviors and emotional exhaustion.

The first contribution from this study is the finding that self-leadership does influence organizational citizenship behaviors. Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), conservation of resources theory, and social exchange theory support this finding theoretically. Second, this study took the first step toward understanding the roles that emotional exhaustion and organizational commitment play as mechanisms through which self-leadership influences outcomes. Third, this study sheds some light on our understanding of the relationship that self- leadership holds with organizational commitment. This study provides a clear idea for research about the exact workings of the relationship by probing linkages between self- leadership and the different facets of organizational commitment. This contributes to the understanding of what causes work engagement by showing that self-leadership can lead to lower levels of emotional exhaustion.

Limitations and Future Research

There are also several weaknesses of this design that should be relevant to readers when drawing conclusions. The primary limitation of this study is the use of self-report, cross-sectional survey data. While self-report data does inherently present certain problems, there are situations in which self-report data are acceptable in. Therefore, there are some limitations tied to this part of the data due to all measures being self-reported. The second limitation of this data is that it was collected in a cross sectional manner. This does limit the causal inferences that can be drawn from the results that have reported above. The problems with cross sectional data being used for causal inferences are well known within the field.

The first area of future research that could be looked at is a continued examination of the self-leadership and work engagement relationship. This study represents the first step towards understanding through what mechanisms this relationship operates. By understanding how exactly self- leadership influences work engagement levels, researchers will have a more complete picture of the process through which individuals who engage in self-leadership influence their own outcomes.

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