

Global Management Journal for Academic & Corporate Studies (GMJACS)
Fall 2024, Vol.14, No.2, PP. 1-19

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Published by Bahria Business School, Bahria University Karachi Campus

Innovate Playfully: Leading the Employees to Pursue Innovative Work Behavior through Playful Work Design

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to unravel the mediating role of playful work design linking servant leadership and innovative work behavior. Additionally, the study explored the role of servant leadership in affecting employee work initiative in the form of playful work design. The study collected data from 300 employees working in the service sector of Pakistan. An interviewee administered survey was used to collect the data from the respondents. Data analysis was done through structural equation modeling (SEM) using PLS-Smart. Additionally, SPSS was used for descriptive statistics and hierarchical regression. The study found that servant leadership affects employee proclivity to indulge in playful work design. Additionally, the study found that playful work design mediates the relationship between servant leadership and IWB. The study contributes to the existing literature by confirming the mediating role of playful work design in the relationship between servant leadership and IWB.

Keywords: Servant leadership, Playful work design, Innovative work behavior

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1 INTRODUCTION

The prevailing high competition in the industry has affected the work and the worker alike. The work, because of the shortened product life cycle and customers' global outreach (Lenka & Gupta, 2019) along with the increased emphasis on the search for most cost-effective ways (Ghosh et al., 2017), has moved from productivity to innovation. Firms, to survive and grow, cannot ignore innovation; as a result, employees, the source of innovation, have attained increased importance. A firm with a reduced focus on innovation can resultantly lag in innovation (Al-Ajlouni, 2020); which can ultimately lead to the downfall of the firm (Stock, 2015). With such a recipe of disaster in sight, firms are inexorably drawn into a new working paradigm that provides a dominant role to employees (Hansen et al., 2017). Unleashed by the ephemeral customers and increasing competition (Lu & Marjot, 2008), innovative pursuit of the firms has shaken the traditional stable job concept as well. It requires employees to be creative and innovative (van Laar et al., 2020). Unlike the employees of the industrial age following the manager scripted job; employees, in the era of creativity, are working on jobs that are rapidly evolving (Wong & Tetrick, 2017). The evolving jobs have

eroded the manager role considerably in job designing; and as a result, employees have begun to play a more active role in their job design. Initially, the employee initiated changes such as job crafting were meant to improve the wellbeing of the employees (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), but the associated improvement in performance (A. B. Bakker et al., 2012), work engagement (Matsuo, 2019) and creativity (Afsar et al., 2019; van de Riet et al., 2015) have presented a new opportunity. That is, seeking performance improvement through employee initiatives.

Academicians and practitioners are exploring new opportunities for employee initiatives that can give impetus to their innovative potential. The employee level innovative efforts that can be undertaken by any employee across the organization is known as innovative work behavior (IWB) (Cangialosi et al., 2020). IWB, exploring and implementing new ideas (Scott & Bruce, 1994), has more chance of coming to fruition if employees are resourceful (Messmann & Mulder, 2017) and brimming with positive emotions (Agarwal & Bhargava, 2014). Taking the clue from this, Scharp and colleagues introduced a new employee-led initiative known as playful work design (PWD) (Arnold B. Bakker et al., 2020). PWD, enriching the job with fun and competition (Scharp et al., 2019), is presumed to be even more effective than job crafting in promoting IWB among employees.

The current study uses two theoretical lenses to forward its claim. First, according to broaden and build theory (B&B), the fun component of PWD can enrich the thought-action repertoire of the employees that not only help the employees to come up with the creative ideas, but also help in garnering the required support to implement it (Fredrickson, 2004). Second, the competition component can work as a resource enhancer. According to the conservation of resource theory (COR), employee laden with added resources can work to build the required support for the implementation of the innovative idea (Hobfoll, 1989). Additionally, a resourceful individual can show more creativity as compared to the employee beset by resource paucity.

Though there is evidence pointing to the usefulness of PWD in affecting creativity (Scharp et al., 2019), the determinants prompting PWD are not clear yet, as research on PWD is in its nascent state. Apart from personal disposition, leadership is found to play a significant role in affecting employee proactive work behavior (Varela et al., 2019). Feeding a job with fun and competition, because of being a deviation, is possible when supported by the organization and the leadership (Fong & Snape, 2015). Relational leadership, such as servant leadership, can play a positive role in this regard. Servant leadership, an employee-centric leadership (Greenleaf, 2002), is found to affect proactive behavior such as job crafting (Bavik et al., 2017) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Chiniara & Bentein, 2018). The employee growth intent and empowering way of dealing with employees make servant leadership a suitable leadership process to provide employees with the required support to indulge in PWD.

The current contributes to the existing literature in multiple ways. First, it is the first study that has unraveled the role of leadership in affecting PWD. Second, the study uses PWD as a link mechanism between servant leadership and IWB. Finally, it is the first study from the developing countries like Pakistan on PWD.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Servant Leadership

Leadership from military generals to the business leader has been a narrative meant to aggrandize the leaders (Carlyle, 2001). It was these great leaders who were regarded as the reason for the accomplishments of humanity (Popper, 2004). Towards the end of the 20th century, this narrative was jolted by two unrelated developments. On the one hand, the unethical practices emerging at Enron, and WorldCom (Crowther & Aras, 2008) shook the confidence in the aggrandized leaders. On the other hand, the rise of the knowledge economy caused the staling of knowledge to be faster (Powell & Snellman, 2004). Under the influence of fast staling knowledge, the leaders no longer had the comfort of using the accumulated knowledge as was the practice in the manufacturing economy. In tandem, both of these changes pushed the search for a benign leadership. Along with the other emerging leaderships, servant leadership also came to the forefront. Though initially introduced in 1971 by Greenleaf, it failed to garner much support in presence of the popularity of transformational and charismatic leadership. Servant leadership is a leadership that uses service to the employees as an influencer instead of positional power or personal idealized influence (Greenleaf, 2002). Servant leadership is a leadership that is follower-centered leadership that employees one-on-one prioritizing of followers' needs and interest with an intent to serve the employees and the whole community (Eva et al., 2019). The increased interest in servant leadership resulted in a proliferation of servant leadership models. Currently, there are 11 different models of servant leadership are available causing a considerable variation. Yet, if an attempt is to come up with a common picture then servant leadership is a leadership characterized by; service (Greenleaf, 2002), character (Schwetschenau et al., 2016), vision (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006), shared leadership (Page & Wong, 2000), stewardship (Wheeler, 2012), and community building (Laub, 1999).

Servant leadership, since the inception of the 21st century, has been in ascendance. Servant leadership has been studied for its pro-employee nature; the studies have found servant leadership to be positively influencing employee satisfaction (Burden, 2014; Chan & Mak, 2014), work engagement (De Clercq et al., 2014; Haar et al., 2017; Kaya & Karatepe, 2020), wellbeing (Jin et al., 2017), and knowledge sharing (Sial et al., 2014). Furthermore, servant leadership is also found to be beneficial for the organization. Studies have found that servant leadership improves employee performance (Bande et al., 2016), creativity (Jaiswal & Dhar, 2017; van Dierendonck & Rook, 2010; Yang et al., 2019), organizational citizenship behavior (Chraim, 2016; Vondey, 2010), innovative work behavior (Cai et al., 2018; Iqbal et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2020; Rasheed et al., 2016), and helping behavior (Zou et al., 2015).

2.2 Playful Work Design

An activity, how motivating it may be, when it is called a job, it begins to attenuate the motivation. The tour guide, apparently interacting with the new people and being always on the leisure trip, is found to have an ebbing motivation. Similarly, a songwriter accosted by the approaching deadline would find the most cherishing activity to be eroding the intrinsic motivation. Once the void of motivation, the incumbent finds

the job to be difficult. The need of having a motivated worker spurred researches that have found a useful role for play (Isen & Reeve, 2005). To maintain the job as a source of motivation and positive energy, one of the possible alternatives is to equip it with fun and challenge (Bolton & Houlihan, 2009; Mollick & Rothbard, 2013). Play, due to its inherent fun and challenge, has the potential to maintain positive energy and motivation in the work. Play at work can enable the employees to avoid boredom, increase well-being, and provide relief from the life stressors (Arnold B. Bakker et al., 2020).

Bakker and colleagues taking the clue from the positive influences emanating from play proposed employees initiated an effort to imbibe their work with fun and challenge through play (Arnold B. Bakker et al., 2020). The process named playful work design is a process through which employee intentionally seeks to fill their work with activities that imbibe the work with enjoyment and challenge without damaging the job design (Scharp et al., 2019). Employees, either through ludic play ensures fun (Martin & Ford, 2018) or through antagonistic play fill the job with the challenge (Lazzaro, 2009). For instance, sharing of a funny example or anecdote by a teacher not only uplifts the sagging motivation of the students, it also gives a positive boost to the teacher. Similarly, setting a relatively tougher target for oneself is bound to improve the required effort level, thus enhancing motivation. Organizations like Google value the positive emotions of employees considering it to be the source of productivity and creativity (Bolton & Houlihan, 2009; Krapivin, 2018). Though the idea of playful work design has been recently introduced it is found to affect the flow, work engagement, and employee creativity (Scharp et al., 2019).

2.3 Innovative Work Behavior

Sometimes creativity is taken as a synonym with innovative work behavior (IWB). However, the ideas despite the seeming confluence, are different. IWB is a benign and extended form of creativity. It is benign in comparison to hardcore creativity as IWB accepts relative creativity, a creative idea adopted from other organizations into one's organization, as creativity while creativity does not allow this luxury and only considers radical creativity, a completely new idea, to be a creative input (Anderson et al., 2004). Along with the difference in relative and radical creativity, IWB also differs from creativity in terms of scope. While creativity ends with the introduction of a creative idea, IWB does not. IWB, after introducing a creative idea, takes pain to implement it as well (Kanter, 1988). In short, IWB is the creation and implementation of an idea (Scott & Bruce, 1994). According to Scott and Bruce (1994), IWB is complex and multi-stage employee behavior. Starting with idea generation, IWB moves from its intermediary stage of idea promotion to its final manifestation in the form of idea implementation.

IWB is a sought after employee work behavior because of its being beneficial for the organization in multiple ways. It is found to positively influence employee performance (Leong & Rasli, 2014). Additionally, IWB can enhance organizational performance (Şahin Örnek & Ayasa, 2015; Shanker et al., 2017). Finally, it is found to augment the organizational innovative performance as IWB improves the new product radicalness and originality (Sanz-Valle & Jiménez-Jiménez, 2018).

2.4 Servant leadership and Playful Work Design:

Playful work design is a proactive work behavior (Arnold B. Bakker et al., 2020). As it is employee-initiated change, the support from organization and leadership is useful (Varela et al., 2019). In case support from the leadership is not available, the inclination to indulge in proactive work behavior is diminished. Servant leadership because of its being employee-centric provides the employee with the required support and autonomy to indulge in proactive work behavior (Khan et al., 2020). The employee growth intent of servant leadership provides employees with opportunities and resources to initiate changes to indulge in proactive work behavior. Additionally, servant leadership involves the employee in the decision-making process (Page & Wong, 2000). It also delegates work to the employees (Patterson, 2003). Employees, finding themselves valued and included, have the confidence to initiate changes through proactive work behavior (Varela et al., 2019). As playful work design is one of the proactive work behaviors (Arnold B. Bakker et al., 2020; Scharp et al., 2019), the same reasoning can be applied to it and it can be said that servant leadership enables the employees to indulge in playful work design.

As playful work design was introduced a couple of years ago, currently no study is available exploring its antecedents. However; the conceptual similarity with other proactive work behavior such as job crafting, other employee-initiated changes in job design (Tims & Bakker, 2010; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), enables us to explore its antecedents following the antecedents of job crafting behavior. Servant leadership is found to be related to job crafting behavior (Bavik et al., 2017; Khan et al., 2020). Taking a clue from the established relationship between servant leadership and job crafting behavior, a similar relationship can be proposed between servant leadership and the playful work design of employees. In light of the above-mentioned rationale and empirical evidence, the following hypothesis is formulated.

H1: Servant leadership is related to employee playful work design.

2.5 Servant leadership and Innovative Work Behavior

Innovative work behavior is a risky enterprise (Cohen & Erlich, 2015). Employees knowing the associated negative consequences, in case their IWB effort fails, prefer to shun its pursuit (Bos-Nehles et al., 2017). Moreover, IWB consumes additional resources (J. P. J. de Jong & Den Hartog, 2007); an employee with resource constraint is in no position to indulge in IWB. To spur employees to indulge in IWB, the fear caused by the failing IWB effort and the demotivation emanating from the resource constraints are required to be managed. Employee supportive leadership such as servant leadership is one of the possible options available to the organization (Varela et al., 2019). The proceeding lines are going to elaborate on how servant leadership can work not only to remove the fear but also to equip the employees with the resources to pursue IWB.

Servant leadership has an employee-centric approach (Greenleaf, 2002), it actively seeks to work for the growth and development of the employees (Sendjaya & Pekerti, 2010). Involving employees in decision making early (Laub, 1999; Patterson, 2003), valuing them (Laub, 1999), and supporting them in time of any difficulty (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) enable them to create an image of supportive leadership. The

leadership that will be available to stand by them in case their initiative does not bring the intended positive effects. The availability of such support removes the fear of failure and employees readily indulge in IWB. Additionally, the employee-centric servant leadership working for the growth and development of the employees is aware that growth and development require learning which demands-resources. Servant leadership is ready to provide the employee with the resources they need to learn and grow (Yuan et al., 2020). One of the venues where employees can invest the extended resources to grow is IWB.

Besides the mentioned reasoning, there is piling empirical support for the relationship between servant leadership and IWB (Cai et al., 2018; Khan et al., 2020; Krog & Govender, 2015; Rasheed et al., 2016). In light of the support, the following hypothesis is being formed.

H2: Servant leadership is related to employee innovative work behavior.

2.6 Playful Work Design and Innovative Work Behavior:

IWB, the creation, and implementation of new ideas (Scott & Bruce, 1994), is an extra-role behavior. Idea creation and idea implementation, IWB's two distinct yet diffusing stages require employees to be enriched with cognitive skills and relational skills. Cognitive capabilities, though useful for both the stages, plays a dominant role in idea creation. The cognitive capabilities get a positive push when the employees have positive emotions. According to the broaden and build theory of positive emotions, positive emotions broaden the thought and action repertoire of the employees (B. L. Fredrickson, 2004; Barbara L. Fredrickson, 2001). With the extended thought and action repertoire, the employee finds itself to be more opulent in idea creation. Playful work design and especially its fun component is useful in giving an upbeat to the positive emotions. Equipped with the positive emotions, as described by broaden and build theory (Barbara L. Fredrickson, 2001), an employee is better placed to come up with creative ideas (Amabile et al., 2005).

In the next but connected stage of IWB, employees are required to garner the support of the relevant others to push for the idea implementation (J. de Jong & den Hartog, 2010). Employees' relational skills count more at this stage. In this regard, broaden and build theory can provide the reason for an improved relationship building. An individual with positive emotions is easy to approach others and can be easily approached by others that in turn makes relation-building an easy task (Diener et al., 2020). Moreover, an employee with positive emotions, due to its positive influence on creativity (Amabile et al., 2005), can sell the idea in a better way as compared to an individual with negative emotions. Playful work design imbibes the incumbent with positive emotions; thus, smoothening the way for building required relations to implement the innovative idea. Though the empirical support is non-existent, using the available theoretical underpinning, the following hypothesis is proposed.

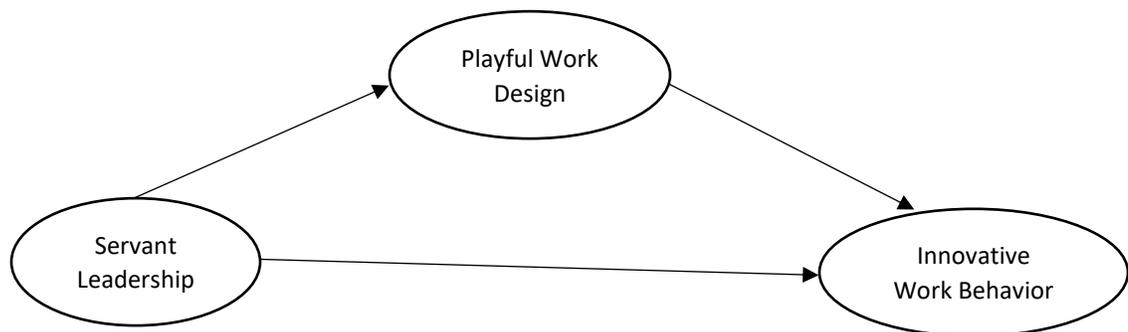
H3: Employee playful work design is related to employee innovative work behavior.

2.7 The mediating role of Playful Work Design relating servant leadership and innovative work behavior:

The preceding discussion relating to servant leadership and IWB needs to be further elaborated for the mediating processes. Multiple mediating processes are possible; therefore, there are studies that have used trust and job crafting (Khan et al., 2020) as mediators between servant leadership and IWB. The current study using the proposition of broaden and build theory claims the mediating role for playful work design. As previously discussed servant leadership provides the required autonomy and support to employees to initiate changes in their work design by enriching it with play and competition – the two components of playful work design (Arnold B. Bakker et al., 2020). The employees, infusing their jobs with playful work design, find themselves to be favorably affected by the ensuing positive emotions. The employees, using these positive emotions, not only come up with innovative ideas but also work for garnering support for their implementation. Supported by the above discussion, a mediating role for playful work design is proposed linking servant leadership and IWB.

H4: Playful work design mediates the relationship between servant leadership and innovative work behavior.

Figure1: Conceptual Framework



3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Respondents

The data was collected from the employees of the service sector in Pakistan. The reason for choosing service sector employees is their increased chance of initiating changes in job design. A total of 300 employed individuals were approached out of which 258 shared the data, thus making the response rate of 86%. The profile of the respondents, as given in Table-1, shows that 62.4% of the respondents are male

while 37.6% of the respondents are female. The average age of the respondents is 34.13 years while average job experience was found to be 10.34 years. Moreover, Table-1 shows that the job experience of the respondents in the current field is 7.60 years while the time span spent with the current organization 5.78 years.

Table 1: Respondents Profile

Variable	Value	n (258)
Gender	Male	62.4%
	Female	37.6%
		Mean
Age		34.13
Job Experience		10.34
Job Experience in the current field		7.60
Job Experience in the current Organization		5.78

3.2 Measurement:

Servant Leadership: Servant leadership was measured with SL-7, a seven items scale developed by Liden and colleagues (Liden et al., 2015). All the items were measured on 7 points scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. One of the representative items used is: "My leader makes my career development a priority."

Playful Work Design: To measure playful work design, the current study used the construct developed by Schalp and colleagues. The scale has 10 items. One of the representative items is "I approach my work in a playful way." The items were measured on 7 points Likert scale. In the used scale 1 meant never while 7 was used to represent always.

Innovative Work Behavior: Innovative work behavior was measured through a 10 items scale developed De Jong and Hartog (2010). The scale items were measured on 7 points Likert Scale where 1 = Never, while 7 = Always. "How often do you search out new working methods, techniques or instruments?" is one of the representative items from the scale.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Measurement Model:

Before testing the structural model, the constructs were evaluated for reliability and validity. Reliability was gauged through Cronbach's Alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR). For a measure to be reliable, both the values are required to be at least 0.7 (Hair et al., 2010). All the constructs used in the model have alpha and CR more than 0.7 as shown in Table-2, thus ensuring inter-item consistency. Additionally, to evaluate constructs for their validity, the study examined the convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity, at the item level, was gauged through item loading – the loading of 0.7 or more is required to establish an item's convergent validity (F. Hair Jr et al., 2014). While, the construct level convergent validity was evaluated through average variance extracted (AVE), for which the acceptable value is 0.5 or more. The results as given in Table-2 show that all the constructs have items' loadings in excess of 0.7 except for playful work design with one item with slightly less than 0.7 and the item was retained in the scale. Additionally, table-2 shows that the constructs have AVE of more than 0.5. The minimum AVE of 0.535 was found for playful work design, thus establishing construct level convergent validity. Finally, the construct level discriminant validity was evaluated through the HTMT ratio, required to be 0.85 or less (Henseler et al., 2015). Table-2 shows that all the constructs are found to be having an HTMT ratio to be in the acceptable range. The maximum HTMT ratio was found for the pair of playful work design and IWB (0.85). It is safe to assume that the constructs used in the model have discriminant validity.

Table 2: Reliability and Validity

		HTMT Ratio					
		Min. Loading	Alpha	CR	AVE	(1)	(2)
Innovative Work Behavior (1)		0.723	0.912	0.927	0.562		
Playful Work Design (2)		0.684	0.920	0.932	0.535	0.850	
Servant Leadership (3)		0.734	0.867	0.894	0.549	0.431	0.355

4.2 Structural Model:

The explanation of the structural model is preceded by descriptive statistics and variance inflation factor (VIF) values. Table-3 showing mean and standard deviation with correlation values show that there is a significant correlation between the constructs, so it is appropriate to run the model. A high correlation value of 0.771 between innovative work behavior and playful work design could be a source of concern, but it is not so for two reasons. First, the high correlation is between the predictor and the target variable, therefore, the high correlation value does not bring the issue of multicollinearity. Yet to dispose of any doubt, Table-4 gives the VIF values. All the values in Table-4 are less than 2.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	M	SD	Correlation	
			(1)	(2)
Innovative Work Behavior	5.419	.925		
Playful Work Design	5.579	.924	.771**	
Servant Leadership	4.842	1.304	.375**	.304**

Table 4: VIF Values

	VIF Values	
	(1)	(2)
Innovative Work Behavior (1)		
Playful Work Design (2)	1.152	
Servant Leadership (3)	1.152	1.000

The proposed structural model intended to test the direct relation between playful work design, servant leadership, and IWB. Moreover, the model proposed servant leadership and IWB to be indirectly related through playful work design. Each of the hypothesized relations is discussed one by one. The first hypothesis claiming a relation between servant leadership and playful work design was to be significant [$(\beta = 0.363, p = 0.000)$, CI (0.227, .437)]. The second hypothesis proposing a relation between servant leadership and IWB was found to be supported [$(\beta = 0.141, p = 0.003)$, CI (0.052, 0.238)]. The last direct relation hypothesis relating playful work design and IWB was found to be significant [$(\beta = 0.741, p = 0.000)$, CI (0.639, .815)]. Similarly, servant leadership was found to affect IWB through playful work design [$(\beta = 0.269, p = 0.000)$, CI (0.154, .373)].

Table 5: Structural Model

Relation	β	SE	t-test	p-value	95% Bias Corrected Confidence Interval (CI)	
					Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Playful work design \rightarrow Innovative work behavior	0.741	0.043	17.052	0.000	0.639	0.815

Servant Leadership → Innovative work behavior	0.141	0.047	2.975	0.003	0.052	0.238
Servant Leadership → Playful work design	0.363	0.063	5.779	0.000	0.227	0.473
Servant Leadership → Playful work design → Innovative work behavior	0.269	0.056	4.799	0.000	0.154	0.373

To study the impact on control variables and elaborate the incremental role of each extraneous variable hierarchical regression was used. The results for both the dependent variables are explained one by one. The control variables gender, age, and overall job experience were not found to be significantly affecting playful work design ($\Delta F = 2.401$, $p > 0.05$). In the second step, servant leadership was found to be significantly affecting playful work design ($\Delta F = 53.209$, $p < 0.01$).

For the second dependent variable, IWB, control variables were not found to be significantly contributing ($\Delta F = 0.579$, $p > 0.05$). Servant leadership increases explanatory power of the model significantly ($\Delta F = 61.417$, $p = 0.000$). Similarly, when playful work design is added to the model, the explanatory power of the model increases significantly ($\Delta F = 314.675$, $p = 0.000$).

Table 6: Hierarchical Regression

		Dependent Variable	
		Model 1	Model 2
Step		Playful Work Design	Innovative Work Behavior
1	Gender	-0.002	0.007
	Age	0.105	0.032
	Job Experience	0.065	0.049
	ΔR^2	0.028	0.007
	ΔF	2.401	0.579
	2	Gender	0.038
Age		0.178	0.110
Job Experience		0.070	0.054
Servant Leadership		0.423**	0.453**
ΔR^2		0.197	0.194
ΔF		53.209**	61.417**
3	Gender		0.022
	Age		-0.022
	Job Experience		0.002
	Servant Leadership		0.139**
	Playful Work Design		0.743**
	ΔR^2		0.444

5 DISCUSSION

The study intended to study the direct relation between servant leadership, playful work design, and IWB. The study also meant to explore the mediating role of playful work design between the relationship between servant leadership and IWB. The results were turned out to be as suggested in light of the theory and empirical evidence. All of the hypotheses are discussed one by one. First, playful work design, a proactive work behavior, was found to be related to servant leadership just like the other proactive work behavior, such as job crafting (Bavik et al., 2017; Khan et al., 2020). Second, the study found servant leadership and IWB to be related as was previously found by the other researchers (Cai et al., 2018; Khan et al., 2020; Krog & Govender, 2015; Rasheed et al., 2016). Third, the relation between playful work design and IWB was also found to be supported though there is no study available at the moment. Similarly, the last hypothesis proposing a mediating role for playful work design relating to servant leadership and IWB was also supported. This finding corroborates the earlier finding establishing a mediating role for job crafting between servant leadership and IWB (Khan et al., 2020).

5.1 Theoretical Contribution

Collectively, the current study makes three contributions to the existing knowledge. First, the current study is the first study unfurling the predictors of playful work design. Servant leadership because of its follower orientation (Greenleaf, 2002) provides the employee with resources, decision latitude, and confidence to indulge in playful work design. This is the first study that has explored the determinants of playful work design. Second, the current study using the theoretical lenses of broaden and build theory and conservation of resources theory has found playful work design to positively influence IWB. From the perspective of broaden and build theory playful work design enriching the positive emotions in the job broadens the thought-action repertoire that in turn ensures IWB of employees. Moreover, as suggested by the COR theory, employees can use the available resources for their growth (Hobfoll, 1989). The current study found playful work design works as a resource that is helpful in facilitating the pursuit of innovative work behavior. Finally, the current study unfurls yet another linking mechanism relating to servant leadership and IWB. The employees, led through servant leadership, find themselves to have the required support, empowerment, and confidence to indulge in playful work design. That in turn, not only imbibes them with positive emotions, but also increases their resources that collectively help them in their pursuit of IWB.

5.2 Managerial Implications

The study offers multiple suggestions to the organizations. First, as the study finds servant leadership to be positively related to playful work design and IWB, firms should relax their command and control mentality of the manufacturing economy. For stimulating IWB, organizations need not only to shun the leader oriented leadership style but to adopt an employee-oriented leadership style that facilitates the employees such as servant leadership. Second, the firms, following the footsteps of Google and Apple, leaders in innovation

must promote employee initiative to design their jobs. Taking the clue from the creative spur provided by job crafting, the HR practitioners can search for more employee initiative changes that can ensure the innovative work behavior of the employees. Playful work design can be adopted as one of such initiatives because of its ability to imbibe the employees with positive emotions and to work as an additional resource it can work as a stimulus for innovative work behavior.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

Just in retrospect, we can see what was amiss. At the end of the current study, we realized that collecting data from multiple sources and multiple points in time would have been a better option. Collecting data at two different times would have allowed for the cause to establish its effect (Taris & Kompier, 2014). It is suggested that data regarding servant leadership could be measured in time 1 (T1), while data for playful work design and IWB could be measured after a month at time 2 (T2). Furthermore, the current study collected data from the employees only that makes the study susceptible to common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). A better option could be collecting leadership related data from the sub-ordinates (Employees) while data for playful work design and IWB could be collected from the immediate manager.

As the idea of playful work design is a new conception, there is yet much to be explored in terms of antecedents, effects, and mediating links. The role of organizational support can be studied as a determinant of playful work design. Additionally, the studies have claimed that playful work design causes positive emotions. Yet, there is no study empirically confirming, thus the future researchers can use positive emotions as a mediating link between playful work design and creativity or innovative work behavior. Finally, the researchers are required to explore the role of playful work design on the attitude, performance of the employees.

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