

# AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN THE STAR CATEGORY HOTELS

Sweta Chettri \*, Tanya Nagpal \*\*

\* Corresponding author, Department of Human Resource Management, Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India  
Contact details: Department of Human Resource Management, Lovely Professional University, Punjab 144411, India

\*\* Department of Human Resource Management, Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India



## Abstract

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This research utilizes quantile mediation regression (QMR) to assess the consequences of servant leadership on organizational commitment and employee performance in the hospitality industry. Grounded in social exchange theory, we argue that servant leadership increases employee commitment and, in the process, performance improves. 330 frontline employees of two to five-star hotels were surveyed. We applied structural equation modeling (SEM) (Wang et al., 2024) and QMR (Nam et al., 2025) to analyze the performance distribution and the mediating effects. The outcome shows that servant leadership has a positive impact on organizational commitment and employee performance, with higher performance quantiles indicating stronger mediating effects. Commitment-construct mechanisms based on performance levels illustrate the need for a focus on leadership and adjustment. The study identifies tailored leadership approaches and adds to the literature on the need for varied commitment-construct mechanisms. The paper ends with a summary of limitations and opportunities for future research.

**Keywords:** Servant Leadership, Organizational Commitment, Employee Performance, Quantile Mediation Regression, Indirect Effects

**Authors' individual contribution:** Conceptualization — S.C.; Methodology — S.C.; Software — S.C.; Validation — S.C.; Formal Analysis — S.C.; Investigation — S.C.; Resources — S.C.; Data Curation — S.C.; Writing — Original Draft — S.C.; Writing — Review & Editing — T.N.; Visualization — S.C.; Supervision — T.N.; Project Administration — S.C.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The hospitality sector, which involves the servicing and catering industry, heavily relies on the attitude, motivation, and performance of employees because these factors determine the quality of service and satisfaction of the guests (Uch, 2024). In comparison to other industries, such as technology, which heavily relies on its products and services, in hospitality,

the employees and the customers' relationships determine what constitutes quality service. With the rise of competition and the continuous alteration of the customers' needs, it becomes paramount to understand the impact of leadership in establishing a good, supportive, and high-performing service culture (Awbery, 2025). Servant leadership is distinguished by its responsiveness to people, earning it prominence in the hospitality

sector. A hallmark of servant leadership is prioritizing the needs of employees, fostering an environment that emphasizes trust, empathy, active listening, and ethical conduct (Rao, 2025). Such leaders not only enforce compliance and issue directives; they focus on unlocking and nurturing employees' potential, guiding them toward personal and professional growth, and enabling them to make meaningful contributions toward the realization of the organizational vision. Research in various service sectors, including hospitality, has shown servant leadership to positively impact employees' psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, and commitment to the organization (Abdou, 2025). Employees whose leaders speak supportive, value-laden words are more likely to exhibit loyalty and motivation, and they will go above and beyond, providing outstanding service. Such behaviour enhances the organization's reputation and improves its financial performance (Bashir, 2024). Despite the fact that the positive influence of servant leadership on organizational commitment, along with employee performance, is thorough and unquestioned, a critical methodological flaw exists in much of the literature. Ample empirical studies incorporate traditional linear regression or structural equation modelling (SEM) techniques, which estimate the average impact of servant leadership on the entire workforce (Kim et al., 2024). These mean-based models have homogeneous assumptions, meaning that they suggest all employees to a given leadership style in the same manner, irrespective of their performance level, experience, and even their personal motivations. However, the workforce in the hospitality industry is uniquely heterogeneous. Hotels, for instance, employ workers with varying tenures, cultures, skills, and attitudes toward their jobs. As a result, the impact of leadership behaviours differs across the performance continuum.

The proposed study applies quantile mediation regression (QMR) to explore the servant leadership phenomenon in the hospitality sector. With QMR, researchers can investigate if organizational commitment serves as a mediator in the relationship between servant leadership and employee performance and whether this mediation effect shifts across the performance spectrum (Moultrie, 2024). This type of modeling captures quantile-specific relationships, which reveal the performance levels where the indirect effects are strongest, whether among underperformers, high achievers, or mid-level performers — insights that mean-based mediation models would miss (Shults, 2025). This innovation in methodology sharpens the analytical approach available to both scholars and practitioners. For scholars, QMR enhances the theory of leadership and organizational behaviour by elucidating the contexts in which servant leadership demonstrates its strongest impact and value (Dilley, 2025). For organizational and human resource (HR) managers, the insights provide a sound basis to strategically align leadership, coaching, and performance management frameworks with designed employee segments and resonate within each tailored group. Important techniques of measurement, such as confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and comprehensive testing of model fit, are employed to ascertain the validity of the constructs of servant leadership, organizational commitment, and

employee performance. The study's practical significance and methodological rigor are enhanced by the integration of QMR with these validated models. This study is grounded in social exchange theory, which posits that supportive leadership fosters reciprocal commitment and performance behaviours. Servant leadership behaviours generate trust, empowerment, and socio-emotional resources, which employees reciprocate through higher commitment and performance.

High standards of employee performance are important in the hospitality sector, as the employees working here are in direct contact with the guests, and it is the responsibility of the employees to take care of the needs and wants of the guests and to ensure their service satisfaction (Li et al., 2012). The hospitality industry is a labour-intensive industry, and in the hospitality industry, it is important for the workforce to concentrate and maintain high standards of performance ("Employee performance in the hotel industry", 2018). Brownell (2010) has suggested that the leaders of the hospitality industry should be trained in servant leadership as part of the training and development programs. According to Romig (2001), there is a rise in the performance level by 15–20% and a rise in group productivity by 20–50% with the implementation of servant leadership practices in the organization. According to Ling et al. (2016), servant leadership in the hospitality industry follows the trickle-down effect in which the impact of servant leadership at the top-level trickles down to the middle-level supervisors, from this level to the employees, and the employees, in turn, show this effect of servant leadership in the services they provide to the customers. This is how we can see the visibility of the impact of servant leadership in the hospitality industry. Servant leadership is the kind of leadership that focuses on serving others and promotes the service behaviour of the employees of the organization (Su et al., 2020). It is the employees and their performance that lead to the long-term sustainability and success of the organization.

According to de Waal and Sivro (2012) there is a lack of empirical research to determine the relationship between servant leadership and employee performance which can be fulfilled by developing a study that draws correlation between the two variables and the study can also have a mediator variable added to understand the relationship better and a new study can be developed to establish the relationship between the two by adding a mediator. Some research findings show that there is a relationship between servant leadership, organizational commitment, and employee performance (Setyaningrum et al., 2017). Hence, from the findings and the recommendations of the studies conducted, it is imperative to conduct research establishing a relationship between servant leadership and employee performance with organizational commitment as the mediator.

Considering the factors listed above, this study is conducted to fulfil the following objectives:

- to validate the measurement models of servant leadership, organizational commitment, and employee performance in the star category hotels;
- to study the impact of servant leadership on organizational commitment and employee performance;

- to study the mediation role of organizational commitment in the relationship between servant leadership and employee performance in the star category hotels.

The major contributions of the study are as follows. This study introduces QMR to clarify how servant leadership differentially shapes performance across the spectrum of employee performance levels. The analysis unveils the complex, contingent mediating effect of organizational commitment, illustrating that servant leadership impacts performance through commitment in specific quantiles of performance, rather than uniformly across the distribution. Based on these findings, the study provides actionable recommendations for hospitality managers, encouraging the design of tailored leadership interventions that align with distinct performance segments. In doing so, the research contributes to the field of hospitality leadership by combining robust measurement techniques with a distributional lens, advancing both theoretical and empirical discourse on the intersection of leadership style and employee outcomes.

The research paper has been organized as follows. Section 2 gives a detailed review of all three variables of the study with the relevant literature. Section 3 highlights the conceptual framework and details the research design and data collection procedures under research methodology. Section 4 talks about the results and the findings of the study and discusses theoretical and managerial considerations. Section 5 concludes the study and describes the limitations and future research directions.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Servant leadership and employee outcomes

Various researchers have worked on examining the relationship between servant leadership, organizational commitment, and employee performance. For example, Raub et al. (2024) investigate how servant leadership cultivates psychological empowerment within hospitality employees by foregrounding a moderating role of openness to experience. It is argued that employees who score high on openness feel more empowered and that this personality trait amplifies the beneficial effects of a servant leadership style. Surveys were administered to 154 personnel in two to five-star hotels throughout Europe (Ogola et al., 2023). Hierarchical moderated multiple regression analysis was utilized to parse direct and interactive pathways. Findings substantiate the hypotheses, indicating that both servant leadership and openness to experience exert significant and independent positive effects on psychological empowerment, while the openness trait amplifies the servant leadership-empowerment relationship. Kim and Liden (2025) examine the conditions under which chief executive officers (CEOs), who embody servant leadership, can positively influence an organization's financial outcomes, particularly profitability. Drawing on multisource data from 102 firms, the authors employed ordinary least squares regression to evaluate their theoretical framework (Fahlevi et al., 2024). The analyses reveal that servant-oriented CEOs engender a heightened sense of obligation among employees, which subsequently translates into increased profitability;

this effect is magnified when employees possess pronounced exchange ideologies. The study thus positions workforce obligation as a critical mediating mechanism while underscoring workforce exchange ideology as a significant contextual variable that modifies the relationship between CEO servant leadership and financial performance. Collectively, these findings advance our understanding of the mechanisms through which servant leadership can contribute to organizational prosperity.

### 2.2. Servant leadership, organizational commitment, and performance

Continuing along this scholarly trajectory, Prasetya and Sekarwati (2024) interrogate the relationships among servant leadership, employee performance, and organizational commitment, while also considering the reciprocal influence of commitment on performance. Importantly, the authors test the proposition that organizational commitment mediates the linkage between servant leadership and enhanced employee performance. Employees and their performance lead to a long term sustainability and success of the organization (Hanifah & Clyde, 2025). Their empirical investigation is anchored in a sample of five manufacturing enterprises situated within Bogor Regency and is informed by data collected from a purposively chosen cohort of 250 respondents. Deploying a quantitative, questionnaire-driven design, the researchers subjected the dataset to SEM via the partial least squares (SEM-PLS) approach. Results reveal that servant leadership exerts a direct, positive, and statistically robust effect on employee performance, thereby underscoring that leadership practices oriented toward serving and empowering subordinates cultivate elevated productivity and effectiveness within the organizational milieu.

Moving ahead, Godbersen et al. (2024) aim to elucidate how particular dimensions of servant leadership shape distinct forms of commitment to a supervisor, which subsequently informs overall organizational commitment. A sample of 1,756 respondents was collected through a questionnaire designed to mirror the gender and age structure of the German labour market. The instrument assessed servant leadership, commitment to the supervisor, and commitment to the organization as a whole. Interrelationships among the constructs were examined through PLS path modelling. The results indicate that commitment to the supervisor constitutes a significant, albeit not singular, pathway to organizational commitment. Furthermore, the analysis finds that affective and normative forms of commitment to the supervisor are predominantly nurtured by the servant leadership dimensions of empowerment and stewardship, are moderately shaped by forgiveness, authenticity, and humility, and are only weakly affected by the dimensions of standing back and accountability.

### 2.3. Servant leadership and prosocial behavioural outcomes

Hussein et al. (2024) examine the manner in which servant leadership — alongside its constituent dimensions — nurtures organizational citizenship

behaviour (OCB) within Iraq's tourism-hotel sector. The analysis targets the hotels ranked on the Iraq Stock Exchange, explicitly including Al-Mansour, Ishtar, Baghdad, and Palestine hotels. Employing a descriptive-analytical methodology, the research secured data from a stratified random sample of 347 employees, drawn from a total workforce of 3,600 within the identified establishments. Completed questionnaires were collected through a combination of face-to-face interviews and electronic surveys, ensuring data integrity and sample representativeness. The subsequent analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26 and SmartPLS 4. The results indicate a statistically significant positive relationship between the enactment of servant leadership and the inclination of hotel employees toward OCB. The study conducted by Abdelraouf and Muharram (2024) investigates the influence exerted by servant leadership on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and its principal dimensions — corporate commitment, governance, environmental stewardship, and social contribution — within the Egyptian tourism sector, specifically regarding the Hilton and Four Seasons hotels. Employing a quantitative methodology, the authors collected data from a sample consisting of 386 respondents. The analytical framework encompassed Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, CFA, path coefficient estimation, model fit indicators, and the Fornell-Larcker criterion, with SEM being utilized to evaluate the hypothesised interrelations. The findings indicate a robust and statistically significant positive association linking servant leadership with each CSR dimension under consideration. The evidence, therefore, implies that, within Egypt's tourism sector, servant leaders are positioned to enhance an organization's commitment to sustainable and socially responsible operations by prioritising stakeholder welfare, promoting ethical practices, and fostering a pervasive culture characterised by accountability and compassion.

Organizational commitment is a psychological relationship between employees and their organization, which fosters their decision to continue their work with the organization, giving them fewer reasons to leave the organization (Yeung, 2023). Meyer and Allen (1991) developed an organizational commitment model that talks about three types of commitment: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Affective commitment is the psychological and emotional feeling or attachment that employees have towards the organization. Continuance commitment weighs the pros and cons and is associated with evaluating the costs incurred when one stays or leaves the organization; normative commitment is the highest form of commitment and talks about the morals, ideologies, and personal ethics of an individual (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The employees of the hotel, who are committed, reply quickly to the demands of the customer, try their best to evade customer complaints, are loyal to the organization, and provide quality service to the customers (Raub, 2008; Yoon & Suh, 2003). There is a very close relationship between employee job satisfaction, which leads to organizational commitment, which in turn increases employee performance and employee retention in the hotel industry (Wong Humborstad & Perry, 2011). Organizational commitment is highly influenced by leadership roles (Supriyanto, 2013).

According to Cooke (2001), employee-performance is the fulfillment of the specific task given to the employees, which is measured against a predetermined standard of accuracy, completeness, cost, and speed. It is the employees and their performance that lead to the long-term sustainability and success of the organization. As expressed by Moran and Brightman (2000), a company's competitiveness is increased and ensured by better employee performance. Employee Performance is the way in which employees fulfill their responsibilities at work and accomplish the given task. Of all the resources that an organization invests in, the most important of all is the employees. High standards of employee performance are important in the hospitality sector, as the employees working here are in direct contact with the guests, and it is the responsibility of the employees to take care of the needs and wants of the guests and to ensure their service satisfaction (Li et al., 2012). A company, in order to have a competitive advantage, has to achieve its organizational goals, and this achievement or overall organizational goal is based directly on employee performance. Pnevmatikoudi and Stavrinoudis (2016) have stated that performance and its measurement are the key success factors for every tourism enterprise. As compared to the other industries that use technology, offer products and services to the customers, the hospitality industry thrives on the relationship between the employees and the customers, which further determines the quality of the service provided by the hospitality industry.

#### 2.4. Mediation and moderation mechanisms in leadership research

Recent empirical research has provided additional insights into the mediating processes connecting servant leadership to employee outcomes and the impact of contextual constraints. To illustrate, Xiao et al. (2023) demonstrated sequential mediation of job autonomy and emotional exhaustion in the servant leadership in-role performance relationship, which clarifies the multi-step processes through which leadership behaviours impact task outcomes. Zhang et al. (2024) advance this perspective by identifying learning goal orientation as a mediator between ethical leadership and job performance, with co-worker support as a moderating influence along the pathways — hinting at the potential role of social context within the leadership-sphere. Zhang and Liu (2023) illustrate the role of employability as an intermediate variable between health-promoting leadership and employee engagement, reinforcing the idea that leader effects often act through employee perceptions and deeply embedded capabilities. Finally, Zhang and Liu (2022) describe the impact of psychological contract fulfilment and social guanxi relational networks on job crafting and green behaviour, which delineates additional cultural and relational constraints within which leader effects operate. Together, these studies highlight: a) the ubiquity of sequential/indirect mediation pathways; b) the critical role of employee resources and social support as mediators and moderators; and c) the probable ramifications that culture and industry context may have on the magnitude and contours of the impact of leadership.

The integration of these insights with the quantile mediation framework motivates our selection of QMR: if mediation pathways vary by performance quantile, this necessitates that the leaders adapt the leadership strategy not only by the outcome level but also by the specific intervening pathways present within each employee segment. The homogeneous assumptions of the mean-based models suggest a uniform kind of leadership for all employees, irrespective of their performance, experience, or level of motivation (Al Qattan & Abdelwahed, 2025).

The synthesis of the reviewed literature indicates that servant leadership reliably fosters employee empowerment, organizational commitment, OCBs, and socially responsible outcomes in a variety of organizational settings. Extending this foundational knowledge, the current investigation applies SEM in conjunction with QMR in order to disentangle the simultaneous influences of servant leadership and organizational commitment on employee performance in two to five-star hotel enterprises. The methodological design permits a nuanced exploration of how mediation processes vary across distinct performance quantiles, thereby yielding fine-grained knowledge about the conditional interplay of these constructs across the performance spectrum.

### 2.5. Hypotheses of the study

Validation of the measurement model is required to ensure that the measurement instrument shows appropriate reliability and validity in the current research situation.

*H1: A statistically significant association exists among servant leadership, organizational commitment, and employee performance.*

Social exchange theory identifies servant leadership as a relational resource and relational strengthening resource for affective attachment.

*H2: Servant leadership has a positive effect on organizational commitment.*

When employees are led by servant-oriented leaders, they are willing to invest discretionary effort.

*H3: Employee performance is positively influenced by servant leadership.*

Servant leadership provides the psychological attachment that helps to elevate performance.

*H4: Organizational commitment serves as a mediator between servant leadership and employee performance.*

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Conceptual framework

The present research adopts a quantitative and cross-sectional framework to examine the interrelations between servant leadership, organizational commitment, and employee performance within the context of two to five-star hotel establishments. To elucidate the intricate mediation and moderation dynamics, the analysis harmonizes conventional SEM with the emerging QMR approach. Such a methodological triangulation facilitates rigorous confirmation of the measurement model while concurrently allowing for a nuanced investigation of mediation pathways that vary according to differing performance quantiles among employees. This investigation elucidates the interplay among servant leadership, organizational commitment, and employee performance within star-category hotels. Figure 1 shows the workflow of the current research.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework



Within the proposed conceptual framework, *Servant leadership* is designated as the independent variable, *Organizational commitment* operates as a dependent variable in relation to servant leadership and as an independent variable in relation to *Employee performance*, the latter constituting

the ultimate dependent variable. The investigation seeks to quantify both direct and indirect effects, with particular emphasis on the mediating function of organizational commitment.

### 3.2. Research design

The study uses a quantitative approach to collect and analyze the data; the study focuses on employees working in the star category hotels of Sikkim. The research population is the employees from different star category hotels, ranging from two to five stars. The study employs a stratified random sampling method, with each star category of hotel representing a particular stratum. The study also uses cross sectional and correlational sampling design, making the research a descriptive one.

### 3.3. Sampling approach

The study population was composed of full-time frontline staff from two- to five-star hotels because they are customer-facing and more susceptible to influence from leaders. Questionnaires were distributed across 26 hotels using stratified random sampling; each star category was considered a stratum. In order to achieve an adequate level of representativeness and sufficient statistical power for the subsequent application of SEM (Wang et al., 2024) and QMR (Nam et al., 2025) techniques, 400 questionnaires were distributed, and 330 usable responses were received, resulting in a response rate of 82.5%. This rate is satisfactory as 82.5% response rates are acceptable in organizational survey research, alleviating concerns about non-response bias. Participant selection has been coordinated in collaboration with the HR departments of each property. In this context, HR representatives communicated the study's objectives to the hotel staff, thereby enhancing levels of cooperation and ultimately facilitating higher response quality. A random sampling framework was applied to ensure coverage across multiple operational divisions – including housekeeping, food and beverage, and front desk services – as well as across hierarchical tiers. The attained sample size, together with its broad representation of both job functions and operational levels, has been judged adequate for the generalization of results and for the execution of rigorous statistical analyses.

### 3.4. Data collection procedures

Data collection proceeded via a structured and self-administered questionnaire circulated in printed format. Each questionnaire packet included a cover letter delineating the study's objectives, underscoring the guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity, and restating the entirely voluntary character of participation. Prior to survey distribution, employees

received orientation either directly from the research team or via hotel HR representatives, who explained the study's significance and underscored the need for candid and unprejudiced responses. The data was collected from 26 star category hotels of Sikkim, as Sikkim thrives heavily on hospitality and tourism, and a study of this kind is the first one to be conducted in the said location. The questionnaire followed a four-part format:

1. *Demographic profile*: The information is gathered on age, gender, length of service, and departmental affiliation, providing essential context for understanding sample attributes.

2. *Servant leadership*: Servant leadership has been gauged through the established 28-item instrument devised by Liden et al. (2008), which encompasses the dimensions of empowerment, humility, and stewardship. Participants indicated the degree of agreement on a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated strong disagreement and 7 indicated strong agreement. This scale has been used to measure servant leadership in some of the research and has proven to be a reliable tool.

3. *Organizational commitment*: The 18-item scale devised by Allen and Meyer (1996) was employed to measure the three underlying components of organizational commitment: affective, continuance, and normative. Responses were similarly scaled on the seven-point format. This scale is used due to its strong theoretical foundation and high reliability and validity (Meyer et al., 2002), and it also measures all three types of commitment.

4. *Employee performance*: Employee performance was assessed using a 14-item self-report instrument specifically designed for the present inquiry and the industry, aligning it with the objectives of the study. The instrument encompasses dimensions of in-role performance alongside extra-role activities encompassing OCBs. Validation of the instrument was conducted in collaboration with academic specialists and professional practitioners, confirming both content relevance and measurement reliability.

Questionnaires have been administered over a predetermined time frame and, upon completion, have been collected and stored in a secure manner to guarantee confidentiality. Data entry and analysis have been conducted in a manner that ensured the integrity of the responses throughout the analytical process. The instrument comprised four components, each incorporating validated scales and contextualized for hospitality study. The data measurement scale is ordinal as respondents evaluated items on a seven-point Likert-scale. The complete information is given in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Measurement scales for study constructs

Construct	No. of items	Source	Dimensions/focus areas	Response scale
<i>Servant leadership</i>	28	Liden et al. (2008)	Empowerment, humility, stewardship, accountability, authenticity	Seven-point Likert (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree)
<i>Organizational commitment</i>	18	Allen and Meyer (1996)	Affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment	Seven-point Likert (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree)
<i>Employee performance</i>	14	Developed based on literature, expert validated	Task-related performance, discretionary behaviours contributing to organizational effectiveness	Seven-point Likert (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree)

To sustain ethical integrity throughout the research process, participants received explicit assurance regarding the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Informed consent emphasized the voluntary nature of their involvement, and data-gathering protocols deliberately excluded any personally identifiable information. This study adhered to established ethical guidelines, thereby safeguarding participant privacy and ensuring the secure handling of all research data.

### 3.5. Data preprocessing

Prior to executing the central analyses, the dataset underwent a rigorous screening and preparatory process to affirm its precision and analytical soundness. The following steps have been used to prepare the dataset:

- **Outlier management:** Univariate and multivariate aberrations have been located via standardized z-scores and Mahalanobis distance metrics, respectively. Cases exceeding the threshold of  $\pm 3$  standard deviations or the pertinent Mahalanobis critical value have been eliminated to safeguard the data's structural validity.

- **Normality verification:** The distributional normality of the dataset has been evaluated through the scrutiny of skewness and kurtosis coefficients. All constructs fell within the  $\pm 2$  acceptance limits for both skewness and kurtosis, thereby obviating serious breaches of normality presuppositions.

### 3.6. Analysis

A suite of analytical packages has been systematically deployed to execute comprehensive statistical evaluations. SPSS 20 (Rahayu et al., 2024) facilitated the generation of descriptive statistics, the meticulous cleaning of the dataset, the conduct of preliminary diagnostics, and the performance of reliability computations. Subsequently, AMOS has been harnessed to execute CFA (Goretzko et al., 2024) and SEM, enabling verification of the measurement model's goodness of fit and examination of the hypothesized direct and mediating pathways. SmartPLS 4 (Cheah et al., 2024) has been leveraged to execute PLS-based QMR (Jain et al., 2024), interrogating whether the mediating influence of organizational commitment varied across discrete quantiles of employee performance. This advanced technique afforded a nuanced understanding of conditional mediation phenomena that conventional SEM frameworks typically overlook. The SEM model

simultaneously examined the direct pathways from servant leadership to organizational commitment and employee performance, as well as the indirect association through organizational commitment. The significance of the indirect pathways was evaluated through bootstrapping, incorporating 5,000 resamples to establish robust confidence intervals. Initial exploratory analysis identified low-loading items ( $< 0.50$ ) under CFA. These items were removed to improve construct reliability, resulting in slight differences between the original survey items and the items retained in the structural model. This practice aligns with scale purification protocols.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Within the total sample of 330 workers, 34.85% (115) were women and 65.15% (215) were men, revealing a persistent male predominance in the sector. However, since the study is not focused on gender work roles, the dominance of males in this industry does not outline any difference in the study findings. In terms of educational background, the largest single group (43.94%) had attained educational qualifications up to Matriculation, Secondary, or Higher Secondary levels, suggesting that recruitment largely occurs at entry-level academic thresholds. Graduates represented 25.45% of the sample, while 28.18% possessed diploma qualifications, highlighting a notable presence of technical and vocational training in the pool of workers. Finally, only 2.42% of respondents reported holding a Master's degree, indicating that advanced academic credentials are relatively rare in this operational segment of the hospitality industry. Age distribution data reveal that 68.48% of the employees surveyed were between 18 years old and 30 years old, demonstrating a markedly young workforce. This predominance of younger workers is consistent with the operational demands of the hospitality sector, where roles often require sustained physical exertion and high levels of service energy, although it does not limit external validity. The next largest cohort, aged 31 years old to 40 years old, constituted 23.63% of the sample, and respondents aged 41 years old to 50 years old accounted for 7.57%. There was only one respondent aged 51 years old to 60 years old (0.30%), underscoring the rarity of employees remaining in frontline operational positions as they advance into late-career stages. Table 2 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the participants employed in star-rated hotels.

**Table 2.** Demographic profile of respondents

<i>Demographic variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency (N)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Gender	Female	115	34.85%
	Male	215	65.15%
Qualification	Matriculation/Secondary/Higher secondary	145	43.94%
	Graduate	84	25.45%
	Diploma	93	28.18%
	Master's degree	8	2.42%
Age group	18-30 years old	226	68.48%
	31-40 years old	78	23.63%
	41-50 years old	25	7.57%
	51-60 years old	1	0.30%
Total respondents		330	100%

Moving ahead, in Table 3, we present the reliability coefficients alongside the eigenvalues for each construct evaluated in the current investigation. The calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficients (Forero, 2024) for the *Servant leadership* (0.918), *Employee performance* (0.929), and *Organizational commitment* (0.920) scales well exceed the conventional cut-off of 0.70 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011), thereby demonstrating superb internal consistency for the measurement instruments employed. The eigenvalues quantify the proportion of total variance attributed to each factor following the extraction process in factor analysis. Consistent with Kaiser's eigenvalue-greater-than-one criterion (Goretzko et al., 2024), every eigenvalue surpasses unity, thereby justifying the interpretation of these constructs as distinct and substantive. Specifically, *Servant leadership* accounts for 32.09% of the total variance, *Employee performance* provides 16.94%, and *Organizational commitment* contributes 14.55%. Furthermore, the overall reliability of the complete questionnaire was calculated at 0.940, signifying robust consistency across all items administered.

The study conducted robustness analyses that: 1) control for gender and age in the SEM; 2) test multi-group SEM by gender and by age group (18-30 vs 31+); and 3) re-estimate key QMR models across gender and age subgroups where cell sizes permit to evaluate if the gender and age distributions significantly affect our conclusions. Subgroup estimates that have significantly different path coefficients will be reported and discussed. In the absence of such differences, the findings below (pooled sample) are robust to these sample

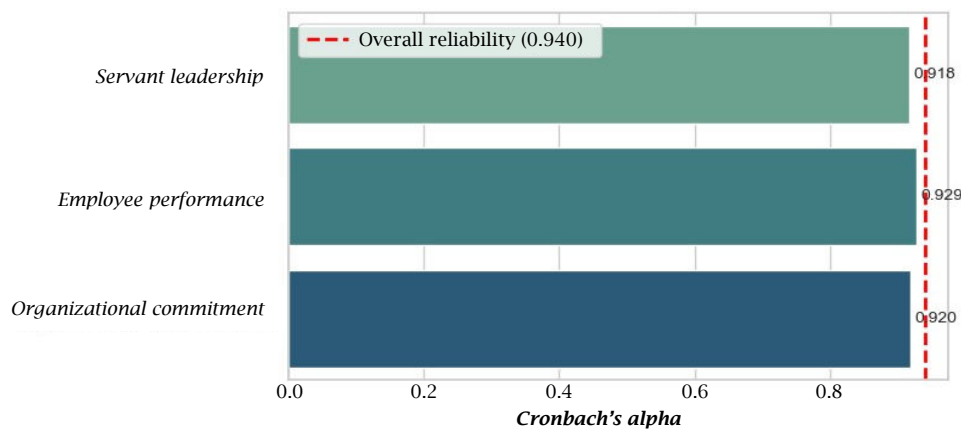
imbalances. Even so, we caution that these findings are most readily generalizable to the working population in our sample (predominantly young frontline staff in 2-5-star hotels) and suggest further research in the sample that is older and more gender balanced.

**Table 3.** Reliability and eigenvalues

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)
<i>Servant leadership</i>	0.918	6.097	32.09
<i>Employee performance</i>	0.929	3.218	16.94
<i>Organizational commitment</i>	0.920	2.765	14.55
Overall reliability	0.940	-	-

Figure 2 shows a horizontal bar chart displaying the alpha values for *Servant leadership* (0.918), *Employee performance* (0.929), and *Organizational commitment* (0.920). Each construct demonstrates excellent reliability, as the values of Cronbach's alpha are far exceeding the commonly accepted benchmark of 0.70. In Figure 2, a red dashed vertical line indicates the overall reliability of the entire scale as 0.940. The overall reliability surpasses any individual construct's score, suggesting the combined instrument furthers the reliability. Numeric labels adjacent to each bar aid precise comparison of values, and the uniform, understated color scheme supports the academic rigor and credibility of the work.

**Figure 2.** Cronbach's alpha values for *Servant leadership*, *Employee performance*, and *Organizational commitment*



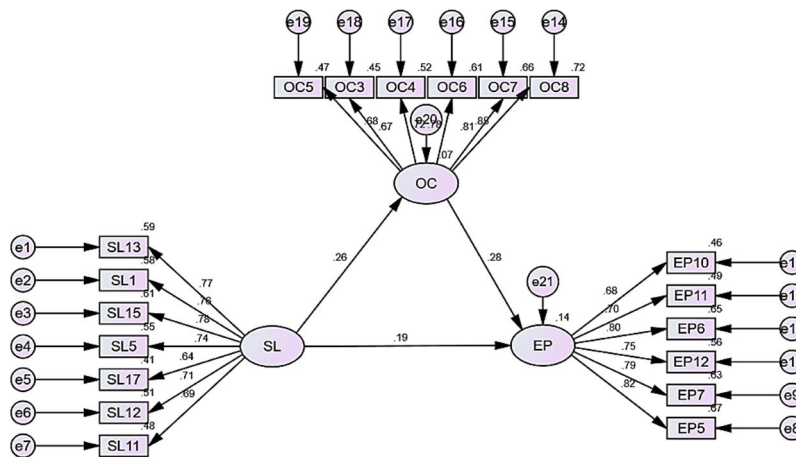
Additionally, the rotation procedure has clarified the relationship between each item and the following latent constructs: *Servant leadership* (SL), *Employee performance* (EP), and *Organizational commitment* (OC). Factor loadings for every item exceed the critical value of 0.70, which is the threshold argued by Hair et al. (2019) for practical significance. Such elevated loadings suggest that every scale item is predominantly associated with the latent factor for which it was theoretically crafted, thereby endorsing the constructs' convergent validity. The elevated loadings mean that those items

consistently and precisely embody the latent traits they intend to operationalize. Consequently, the pattern revealed by the rotated component matrix conveys coherent and interpretable factor architecture across the measurement scales, thereby substantiating the integrity of the operational definitions employed in the investigation. Table 4 and Figure 3 display the rotated factor loadings computed through principal component analysis (PCA) (Feraco et al., 2024) with Varimax rotation for all measured items across the study.

**Table 4.** Rotated component matrix: Extraction method — PCA

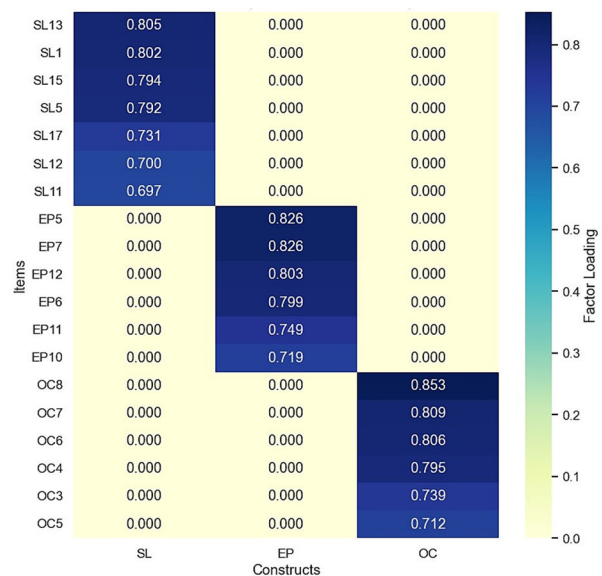
Item	Description	SL	EP	OC
SL13	Servant leadership — Item 13	0.805		
SL1	Servant leadership — Item 1	0.802		
SL15	Servant leadership — Item 15	0.794		
SL5	Servant leadership — Item 5	0.792		
SL17	Servant leadership — Item 17	0.731		
SL12	Servant leadership — Item 12	0.700		
SL11	Servant leadership — Item 11	0.697		
EP5	Employee performance — Item 5		0.826	
EP7	Employee performance — Item 7		0.826	
EP12	Employee performance — Item 12		0.803	
EP6	Employee performance — Item 6		0.799	
EP11	Employee performance — Item 11		0.749	
EP10	Employee performance — Item 10		0.719	
OC8	Organizational commitment — Item 8			0.853
OC7	Organizational Commitment — Item 7			0.809
OC6	Organizational Commitment — Item 6			0.806
OC4	Organizational Commitment — Item 4			0.795
OC3	Organizational Commitment — Item 3			0.739
OC5	Organizational Commitment — Item 5			0.712

**Figure 3.** The validated structural model for the impact of *Servant leadership* on *Organizational commitment* and *Employee performance*



Moreover, the heatmap of the rotated component matrix summarizes the factor loadings of each survey item on the three constructs of *Servant leadership*, *Employee performance*, and *Organizational commitment*, and is shown in Figure 4. Items are aligned vertically on the Y-axis, and constructs are on the X-axis horizontally. The color gradient from light to dark conveys the loading strength, with darker hues showing stronger associations. For instance, *SL13*, *SL1*, and *SL15* have strong loadings on the Servant Leadership factor (0.80). *EP5*, *EP7*, and *EP12* also have high loadings on Employee Performance. Items *OC8*, *OC7*, and *OC6* load the greatest on *Organizational commitment*, with loadings exceeding 0.80. Non-loadings are shown in very light shades, which emphasizes the sharp distinction between constructs. This helps to quickly understand which items contribute the most to each factor and facilitates assessing the clarity and validity of the factor structure.

**Figure 4.** Heatmap of rotated component matrix for *Servant leadership*, *Organizational commitment*, and *Employee performance*



Additionally, results of the CFA depicted in Table 5 evaluate the construct validity and reliability of the measurement framework encompassing *Servant leadership*, *Organizational commitment*, and *Employee performance*. To assess convergent validity, three principal indicators were examined: standardized factor loadings, composite reliability (CR) (Li & Lay, 2024), and average variance extracted (AVE) (Haji-Othman et al., 2024). Standardized factor loadings for all observed items fell between 0.712 and 0.843, surpassing the threshold of 0.60, thereby affirming that each indicator adequately and consistently reflects the corresponding latent construct. CR values for *Servant leadership* (0.910),

*Organizational commitment* (0.915), and *Employee performance* (0.920) comfortably exceeded the 0.70 benchmark, indicating that the indicators maintain a high degree of internal consistency. The AVE values, varying between 0.585 and 0.615 for the three constructs, all surpassed the requisite 0.50 level, further substantiating adequate convergent validity. Collectively, these findings affirm the reliability and convergent validity of the measurement model, thereby confirming that *Servant leadership*, *Organizational commitment*, and *Employee performance* are accurately captured by their designated indicators within the proposed research framework.

**Table 5.** Construct validity and reliability of the proposed model for *Servant leadership*, *Organizational commitment*, and *Employee performance*

Construct	Indicator	Factor loading	
<i>Servant leadership</i>	SL2	0.802	CR = 0.910; AVE = 0.585
	SL4	0.790	
	SL8	0.760	
	SL9	0.812	
	SL14	0.774	
	SL16	0.745	
	SL18	0.765	
<i>Organizational commitment</i>	OC2	0.712	CR = 0.915; AVE = 0.601
	OC5	0.738	
	OC7	0.805	
	OC9	0.825	
	OC10	0.843	
<i>Employee performance</i>	EP3	0.790	CR = 0.920; AVE = 0.615
	EP4	0.802	
	EP7	0.788	
	EP8	0.810	
	EP9	0.835	

Additionally, the radar chart plotted in Figure 5 illustrates the indicator loading factor for three key constructs: *Servant leadership*, *Organizational commitment*, and *Employee performance*. Each indicator is positioned on the chart with its corresponding label (for example, SL2, OC5, EP7), and the distance from the centre to the edge signifies the strength of the loading factor from zero to one. The corresponding coloured, shaded areas — blue for *Servant leadership*, green for *Organizational commitment*, and red for *Employee performance* — depict the level of loading of each indicator related to the construct. It is important to mention that the *Servant leadership* indicators group is in the upper left sector with loading primarily between 0.74 and 0.81, the *Organizational commitment* indicators group in the lower sector with loading between 0.71 and 0.84, and the *Employee performance* indicators are positioned on the right with loading between 0.79 and 0.83. The marked separation without much overlap of the indicators from different constructs illustrates the strong association of each indicator with its construct, thus supporting the model's discriminant validity. The model comparison visually demonstrates the overlap between the strength of each indicator and the clearly defined distance from each of the three constructs to the centre of the chart.

Furthermore, model fit statistics for the proposed SEM model appear in Table 6. All primary indices exceed accepted benchmarks, indicating a strong congruence between the proposed model and the empirical data. The  $\chi^2/df$  ratio computes to 2.137, well beneath the threshold

commonly cited as acceptable (3.0). A root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.079 signals near-ideal fit (Kim et al., 2016), and the incremental statistics — confirmatory fit index (CFI) = 0.961, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.942, and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = 0.957 — surpass the desired cut-point of 0.90 for efficacy. Together, these findings endorse both the measurement and structural specifications of the model as accurately capturing the empirical covariance structure, thereby validating the model for subsequent hypothesis evaluation.

**Table 6.** Model fit indices

Goodness-of-fit index	Value	Recommended threshold
$\chi^2/df$	2.137	< 3
RMSEA	0.079	< 0.08
CFI	0.961	> 0.90
GFI	0.942	> 0.90
TLI	0.957	> 0.90

Similarly, Table 7 presents the findings from the SEM path analysis performed to evaluate the hypotheses articulated in the theoretical framework. Each posited path attains statistical significance at the 0.001 threshold, thereby offering compelling empirical corroboration. The direct influence of *Servant leadership* on *Organizational commitment* (H2) emerges as especially salient, exhibiting a standardized coefficient of 0.682, which reflects a substantial positive effect. Likewise, the direct trajectory from *Servant leadership* to *Employee performance* (H3) attains significance, recorded at 0.547. *Organizational commitment* is

shown to mediate this relationship in a partial manner, as the indirect effect reaches 0.316, thereby reinforcing hypothesis H4. Taken together,

these findings substantiate the articulated causal pathways and the mediation framework delineated in the study's conceptual model.

Table 7. SEM path analysis results

Hypothesis	Path	Estimate ( $\beta$ )	p-value	Supported
H1	Association among all constructs	Significant	< 0.001	Yes
H2	Servant leadership → Organizational commitment	0.682	< 0.001	Yes
H3	Servant leadership → Employee performance	0.547	< 0.001	Yes
H4	Organizational commitment mediates Servant leadership → Employee performance	0.316 (Indirect)	< 0.001	Yes

Figure 5. Loading factor for Servant leadership, Organizational commitment, and Employee performance

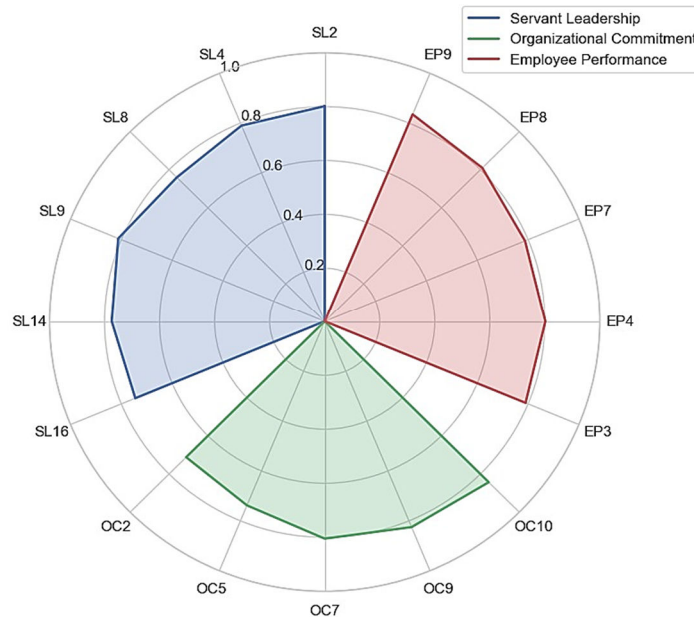


Table 8 displays the outcomes of the QMR analysis used to assess the extent to which Organizational commitment mediates the relationship between Servant leadership and Employee performance across the performance distribution. The indirect effect of Servant leadership on Employee performance via Organizational commitment exhibits a rising trajectory: estimates at the 25th, 50th, and 75th quantiles are, respectively, 0.228, 0.316, and 0.421. This increasing trend reveals that while the mediating effect remains statistically significant at lower performance levels, its magnitude escalates

substantially at median and especially at higher performance levels. The results thus illustrate the conditional nature of Servant leadership's influence, demonstrating that its ability to elevate Employee performance through Organizational commitment is especially pronounced among individuals already demonstrating higher performance. The analysis accordingly underscores the critical need to incorporate quantile-based perspectives on mediation when interpreting results within organizational behaviour literature.

Table 8. Quantile mediation regression: Indirect effects

Quantile	Indirect effect ( $\beta$ )	p-value	Interpretation
25th	0.228	< 0.05	Weak but significant mediation among low performers
50th	0.316	< 0.01	Moderate mediation at the median performance level
75th	0.421	< 0.001	Strongest mediation among high performers

In support of the psychometric assessment and SEM undertaken, Table 9 supplies the descriptive statistics for the triad of principal constructs: Servant leadership, Employee performance, and Organizational commitment. The means, standard deviations, and minimum and maximum observed scores together delineate both central tendency and variability, thereby confirming the presence of sufficient dispersion for the application of rigorous inferential statistics (Hair et al., 2019). The observed mean scores, all exceeding 4.0 on the five-point scale employed, suggest a collective tendency

within the sample toward positive evaluations of the leaders' servant behaviour, self-rated performance attainments, and affective ties to the organization.

Table 9. Descriptive statistics of core constructs

Construct	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max
Servant leadership	4.12	0.68	1.00	5.00
Employee performance	4.05	0.72	1.00	5.00
Organizational commitment	4.08	0.65	1.00	5.00

Table 10 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients among the latent constructs under investigation. The matrix illustrates strong, positive, and statistically significant associations among *Servant leadership*, *Employee performance*, and *Organizational commitment*, thereby lending preliminary empirical credibility to the posited direct and mediated pathways. All reported correlations attain significance at the 0.001 alpha threshold, thereby strengthening the findings derived from the SEM and underscoring the conceptual integrity of the proposed relational framework.

In order to elucidate the mediation mechanisms in this study, Table 11 presents the comprehensive assessment of total, direct, and indirect effects of *Servant leadership* on *Employee performance* channelled through *Organizational commitment*.

**Table 11.** Total, direct, and indirect mediation effects

Effect type	Estimate ( $\beta$ )	p-value	Interpretation
Total effect ( <i>Servant leadership</i> → <i>Employee performance</i> )	0.863	< 0.001	Strong overall impact
Direct effect ( <i>Servant leadership</i> → <i>Employee performance</i> )	0.547	< 0.001	Significant direct path
Indirect effect ( <i>Servant leadership</i> → <i>Organizational commitment</i> → <i>Employee performance</i> )	0.316	< 0.001	Significant partial mediation

Further, common method bias (CMB) has been computed, which uses self-reported survey measurements, and thus, we took measures to mitigate CMB. For this, survey anonymity and voluntary participation were stressed; response constructs were organized and grouped with accompanying instructions to encourage free and honest answering; validated multi-item scales were included; and to minimize response bias, the survey included both positively and, where suitable, negatively phrased items. Moreover, statistical tests to evaluate residual common method variance were conducted. Beginning with Harman’s single-factor method, which is an exploratory factor analysis on all the items, we found that the first unrotated factor accounted for 32.84% of the variance. This is well below the widely accepted threshold of 50%. Subsequently, we performed a CFA where we included a common-latent-factor (one that is unmeasured and loads onto all items) and compared substantive loadings with and without the method factor. There were minimal changes (average change = 0.041), and the model fit improved only slightly ( $\Delta CFI = 0.008$ ;  $\Delta RMSEA = 0.006$ ), which suggests that CMB is unlikely to account for the substantive relationships.

**5. CONCLUSION**

This study examines the relationship of servant leadership with organizational commitment and employee performance in the context of two to five-star hotels. The research takes a quantitative and cross-sectional approach and applies SEM and QMR to analyze direct and mediated effects of the variables of interest and the performance quantiles. The combination of methods provides an understanding of the extent to which the leadership style affects the organizational commitment and the performance in the two to five-star hotels. The insights commendably affirm the importance of servant leadership in bolstering organizational commitment and enhancing performance within the hospitality sector. Notably,

The findings reveal that, in addition to the statistically significant direct effect, a considerable segment of the *Servant leadership* effect accumulates through *Organizational commitment*, thereby corroborating the partial mediation deduction previously indicated by the SEM results. Such decomposition enhances comprehension regarding the strength and importance of the indirect route, thereby enriching the overall interpretative framework.

**Table 10.** Correlation matrix

Construct	1	2	3
1) <i>servant leadership</i>	1.00		
2) <i>employee performance</i>	0.65***	1.00	
3) <i>organizational commitment</i>	0.70***	0.68***	1.00

Note: \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

while the mediation effects are asymmetric, the QMR results indicate stronger indirect effects for the higher performing employees, suggesting varying motivational frameworks. This provides leadership literature, which has used mean-based mediation frameworks, with distribution-sensitive insights.

More specifically, within the hospitality context, the research applies servant leadership to organizational commitment and performance, and, therefore, fills the gap in literature with the hospitality and performance sectors by showing that servant leadership indeed has a positive impact on organizational commitment and employee performance. This further supports previous research that servant leaders who attend to the employees’ needs and offer them growth and freedom tend to have a more committed and productive workforce. The findings add to the theoretical debate by showing that the mediation effects of organizational commitment differ by performance quantiles, which demonstrates that the servant leadership performance relationship differs among employees. The analysis deepens theory by incorporating servant leadership within a quantile mediation framework and highlighting the differing effects along the performance continuum. It adds a methodological dimension to leadership studies and showcases the predictive utility of social exchange theory in the hospitality industry.

From a managerial stance, the data underscores the importance of servant leadership in maintaining performance levels within the hospitality sector’s hotels. As noted in prior research, for example, Zhang (2016) studied that the profitability of a hotel relies greatly on the performance of its employees, making employees the organization’s most important asset. Employees perform services that entail interacting with customers; therefore, their performance determines customer satisfaction and organizational success. The adoption of servant leadership can improve individual performance by 15–20% and group productivity by 20–50% (Braun

& Carlson, 2008). Consequently, leaders in this sector need to address their employees' concerns by granting them the requisite autonomy and by promoting employee fulfillment (Melchar & Bosco, 2010). This is important in the service sector, where, as noted by Harwiki (2016), that in this sector it is necessary to improve loyalty and retention of high-performing employees.

This research illuminates the critical contribution that servant leadership makes to organizational commitment and employee performance in the hospitality sector, where service quality hinges on quality interpersonal exchange. Data collected from 330 staff members working in two to five-star hotels reveal that servant leadership exerts a robust and positive effect on organizational commitment, which in turn enhances employee performance. These findings position servant leadership as an indispensable approach to leadership in environments where service and community are paramount. The use of QMR adds depth to the analysis, revealing that the mediating role of organizational commitment shifts across the performance spectrum. Specifically, the analysis demonstrates that the extent to which organizational commitment channels the influence of servant leadership on employee performance grows progressively stronger for workers categorized as higher performers. This outcome highlights the necessity of differentiated leadership interventions that account for varying levels of employee capability and engagement. The reliability and fit of the measurement and structural models were exceptional, lending empirical strength to the theoretical framework advanced in the study. These findings not only confirm the anticipated direct and mediating relationships but also illustrate the instrumental value of servant leadership in engendering, engaging, and a high-caliber workforce — one that can consistently meet the exacting service standards characteristic of contemporary hospitality. From a managerial standpoint, these results recommend the deliberate entrenchment of servant leadership doctrines alongside focused organizational commitment strategies as a means of fostering durable employee engagement and elevated

performance results. This combined orientation enables the development of a dedicated and loyal labor force, which in turn bolsters customer satisfaction and fortifies the competitive position of firms in the hospitality sector. In broader terms, the study supplies an innovative methodological and theoretical vantage, reorienting the discourse toward enduring, people-centred excellence in hospitality governance by acknowledging and harnessing employee diversity in productivity, mediated by adaptive leadership practices.

The proposed work has some limitations to consider. First, the ability to make causal relationships is constrained by the study's cross-sectional design, as data collection occurs only once. Second, the focus is on two to five-star hotels, which can be a barrier to the generalizability of the research outcomes to other hotels or to other sectors within the service industry. Third, the use of self-reported data presents the possibility of CMB or social desirability bias. Finally, the specific hotel's cultural and regional attributes might have impacted the results, rendering them less applicable in other socio-cultural frameworks.

To solve these limitations, the causal relationships and changes in effectiveness of leadership can be determined by taking a longitudinal approach. According to the findings of Certo et al. (2017), a longitudinal data collection allows researchers to understand the relationship amongst the different variables within and outside of the organization over a period of time. Other service industries and different categories of hotels could be added to the sample to increase the generalizability of the research outcomes. Adding self-reported data with objective performance measures would counter bias. Furthermore, cross-cultural differences that moderate the relationship between servant leadership, commitment, and performance in the context of international hospitality could be addressed. Finally, a qualitative approach could deepen the understanding of the mechanisms driving organizational commitment and performance under servant leadership by examining the lived experiences of employees through detailed interviews.

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