



SERVANT LEADERSHIP, JOB CRAFTING AND TASK PERFORMANCE IN ADAMAWA STATE HIGHER INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

This empirical paper examines the effect of servant leadership on task performance in Adamawa state higher institutions. Specifically, it assesses the moderating effect of job crafting on the relationship between servant leadership and task performance among employees of selected Adamawa State higher institutions. The population of this study was 3 selected higher institutions in Adamawa State with staff strength of three thousand one hundred and twenty one (3121). The sample size for this study was 355 respondents obtained through Yamane (1970) formulae. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. This study was conducted from December, 2020 to June, 2021. Partial least square structural equation modeling was adopted with the help of Smart PLS 3 for the purpose of data analysis. The result provided support for four hypothesized relationship of the study. Specifically; result reveals that Servant leadership was found to be significantly related to job crafting and task performance. It was also found that job crafting significantly relates to task performance in the higher institutions of Adamawa State. The study found that job crafting significantly moderate relationship between servant leadership and task performance. It was concluded that with servant leadership institutions can respond to their challenges effectively and properly in a dynamic and competitive world. Therefore, it was recommended that servant leadership of styles and job crafting spirit be encouraged among employees of the higher institutions in Adamawa State for improve task performance performances.

Keywords: *Servant Leadership, Task performance and Job crafting*

Introduction

Task performance has been identified as the significant key for organizations to gain the competitive advantage and superior productivity required (Bahmani, Muzafari, & Mowlaie, 2016). The most important function of any organization is to enhance its employee's performance so that it could compete and succeed in a highly competitive atmosphere (Naeem & Khanzada, 2018; Mislim, 2015). There can be little doubt that the quality of leadership available will also be one of the most critical determinants of the organization's ultimate success (Saleh & Elgelal, 2014). Jude, Muo and Chukwuemeka (2018); Abimbola; Omowumi & Dele (2017) explained that institutions in Nigeria have over the years acquired the reputation of poor performance. Hlengane and Bayat (2013) explained that poor employees' performance tarnishes the image of the organization and runs the workplace unruly there by de-motivating employees that are committed to the organizational goals. However, despite the important role of employees' performance in achieving organizational success, in Nigeria labor productivity recorded a decline of 4.7 percent between 2015 and 2016 (NBS, 2017). Naeem and Khanzada, (2018) explained that job performance is mostly dependent upon leadership styles. According to Asiedu (2017) effective leadership is essential for organizations that are interested in improving task performance. Leadership style is considered a key determinant of the success or failure of any organization (Abimbola; Omowumi & Dele, 2017). Mintzberg (2010) explained leadership as the key of trust that comes from the respect of others. Job crafting is a promising job redesign intervention strategy that individual employees can use to improve their well-being and job performance (Gordon, Demeroutia, Blanca, Bakker, Bippc & Marc, 2018). Job crafting helps employees to achieve their ideal career status (Dubbelt, Demerouti & Rispen, 2019). Organization's success depends on employees' performance and institutions need highly performing employees in order to achieve their goals, to deliver the services and have a competitive advantage. Therefore, the thrust of this study is to examine the moderating effect of job crafting on the relationship between servant leadership and employees' performance in Adamawa State higher institutions.

Problem

Lack of effective leadership are serious problems in many organizations which resulted to poor employee performance (Ukaidi, 2016; Khan, Qureshi & Ahmad, 2010). Despite several studies (Aunga & Masare 2017; Desderio, Piason & Bhebhe, 2017; Joiceswarnalatha & MuraliKrishna 2017; Aunga & Masare, 2017; Desderio, Piason & Bhebhe, 2017) on servant leadership style, literatures indicate that very few studies have looked at the servant leadership style. Also, there are a number of studies conducted in relation to servant leadership style on task performance which reported inconsistent findings. Among the studies that reported a positive associations between the constructs includes; Rasool, Arfeen, Mohti, and Aslam (2017), Nazarian, Soares and Lottermoser (2017); Asiedu and Darko (2017); Mohiuddin, (2017); Salman, Khan, Javaid, and Naeem u din (2016); Babalola (2016); Khuong and Khanh (2016); Abdullah, Islam and Al-Homayan (2016); Desderio, Piason and Bhebhe (2016); Almutairi (2016); Ukaidi (2016). Other studies that reported a negative associations between the constructs includes; Hayward, Amos and Baxter (2008); Ispas (2012); Chinelo (2012); Shafie, Baghersalimi & Barghi (2013); Shahab & Nisa (2014); Rathore, Abdul Khaliq and Aslam (2017); Timothy *et'al*, (2011); Ojokuku *et'al*, (2012). Baron and Kenny (1986) explained that moderator variables are typically introduced when there is an unexpectedly weak or inconsistent relation between a predictor and a criterion variable. Wong and Laschinger, (2013) recommended the incorporation of a moderating variable between leadership styles and work outcomes based on inconsistent findings.

Methodologically, a review of the literature on task performance indicates that the construct has been assessed mainly using generic measures such as (Chi-square, Descriptive statistics, Regression & Correlation analysis) in the previous studies (Jalal-Eddeen, 2015; Nyangahu & Bula, 2015; Iqbal, Anwar, & Haider 2015; Rasool, Arfeen, Mohti & Aslam 2017; Salman, Khan, Javaid & Naeemudin 2016; Soomo, Soomro & Memon 2015; Ijosiga & Odubuker, 2016) only few studies (Inuwa, 2016; Vraskikh, Masa'deh, Al-Lozi & Maqableh, 2016; Khuong & Yen, 2016; Yongxing, Hongfei, Baoguo & Lei 2017) that used structural equation Modeling (SEM). However, there has been a paucity of research on the use of SEM with the help of Smart PLS 3. To fill this gap, the present study will adopt SEM using Smart PLS 3 to assess employees' performance with other related constructs of the study.

Compared to other path modeling software Smart PLS software help users create a moderating effect or path models with interaction effects (Kura, 2017). To fill the gap for the need of moderating variable, the present study will introduce job crafting as a moderator in the relationship between servant leadership and employee job performance as suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) as well as Wong and Laschinger, (2013). Also, the study will answer the call by Wingerden and Poell (2017); Peng, (2018) who suggested for more job crafting studies in future and as a moderating variable respectively. This study proposed that:

- H1: There is significant relationship between servant leadership and task performance in Adamawa State higher Institutions
- H2: There is significant relationship between servant leadership and job crafting in Adamawa State higher Institutions
- H3: There is significant relationship between job crafting and task performance in Adamawa State higher Institutions
- H4: Job crafting significantly moderate the relationship between servant leadership and task performance in Adamawa State higher Institutions

Literature Review

Task Performance

Task performance is associated with the employees possessing the requisite knowledge, objectives and capabilities to meet the work standard by the organization (Al-Harthy & Yusof, 2016) or performing defined responsibility, accomplishing targets, employee competency, effectiveness and efficiency in doing work (Iqbal, Anwar & Haider, 2016; Khuong, *et al*, 2016). Maharani, Troena and Noermijati (2013); Asiedu and Darko (2017) further explain employee performance as the results achieved by one's effort with his ability in certain circumstances. Consistently, Campbell, McHenry and Wise (1993) explain employee's performance as "observable things people do that are relevant for the goals of the organization". Task performance is logically a function of its consequences; meaning that an employee's job performance can be altered by changing what happens to that person as a result of his performance. Thus, if these outcomes are favorable, the affected employee will continue to perform at the same level, or better; if the outcomes are unfavorable, he will reduces the effort, or cease it

altogether. For the purpose of this study task performance means performing assigned responsibilities to achieve organizational goals (Pradhan & Jena, 2017; David & Eguzoikpe, 2014).

Job Crafting

Job crafting is a concept recently developed in the organizational literature (Naami, 2014) and was observed as a hot topic in the field of organizational behavior researches and human resource management (Peng, 2018). Job crafting was viewed as behavior that is directed towards expanding specific job aspects (Bahmani, Muzafari and Mowlaie (2016). Mislum (2015) observed that one way individual job performance can be increase is through job crafting. Sen & Dulara, (2017) posit that employees who engage in the acts of job crafting are more likely to perform better. Similarly, Bacaksiz, Tuna and Seren (2017) explained that job crafting is closely associated with employee performance. The idea of job crafting was put forward by Kulik, Oldham, and Hackman (1987) when they suggested that individuals may redesign their jobs on their own initiative. Petrou, Demerouti and Schaufeli (2018) explained job crafting as a potential strategy employees use to react to and deal with organizational change. Irvin (2017) observed that job crafting (JC) involves employees changing certain aspects of the way they operate, interact with other employees, and how they think about their job. Job crafting was further viewed as behavior that is directed towards expanding specific job aspects i.e. job resources and challenges, but also reducing other aspects i.e. job demands (Bahmani, Muzafari & Mowlaie 2016). Job crafting is an opportunity for organizations and employees to raise the work engagement and employability of employees (Hekkert-Koning, 2014). Holcombe (2016) observed that crafting is uniquely different from organizational work design approaches because it is employee-initiated rather than company-driven. Job crafting, is applicable across a variety of roles, levels of seniority and degrees of autonomy (Berg, Wrzesniewski, & Dutton, 2010).

Servant Leadership Style

Servant leadership is one of leading philosophies which is being discussed around the world today (Hussain & Ali, 2012). Farling *et al.*, (1999); Laub, (2003); Russell, (2001); Hussain *et al.*, (2012) and Spears (1996) argued that servant leadership is a concept that is fairly new in the field of leadership study and has relatively less empirical research to support its philosophy. Greenleaf (1977) proposed servant leadership as a novel approach to solving the problem

of America social turmoil of 1960s-1970s (Bambale 2013). Greenleaf strongly believed that the fundamental aspect of leadership is the leader's notion that he/she is a servant first before any other consideration.

Melchar and Bosco (2010) defined servant leadership as serving others by working toward their development and wellbeing in order to meet goals for the common good. Laub (2004) described servant leadership as "understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader". Melchar *et al.* (2010) opined that servant leaders look out for the interests of followers and the organization over personal interests. Servant leadership is an approach to leadership with strong altruistic and ethical overtones that asks and requires leaders to be attentive to the needs of their followers and empathize with them; they should take care of them by making sure they become healthier, wiser, freer and more autonomous, so that they too can become servant leaders (Northouse, 2004).

Servant Leadership and Task Performance

Mohamed, Datche and Kisingu (2018) investigated on the effect of servant leadership on employee performance in the Somali National Civil service commission using a sample size of 44 respondents. The study result reveals that servant leadership has a statistically significant effect on employee performance in the Somali National Civil Service Commission. Though the study of leadership style was extended to Somali context but the sample size is too small to ensure generalizability. Bozorginezhad, Razmjooei, Gharbi, Managheb and Zarei (2018) investigated on 160 Shiraz nursing faculty members. The aim of the study was to explain the relationship between servant leadership and job performance by considering the mediating role of organizational culture. Pearson correlation and hierarchical regression analysis using Baron and Kenny method were used for analyzing the data. The study results showed that there is a direct and meaningful relationship between servant leadership and job performance. Muhtasom, Mus, Bijang and Latief (2017) investigated among 317 employees working in a selected 3, 4 and 5 star hotels located in Makassar, Indonesia. Questionnaire was used in collecting the data for the study and Structural Equation Model using AMOS 18 was adopted for the analysis. The results of the study found that servant leadership has a positive and significant impact on employee performance.

Setyaningrum and Surachman (2017) investigated on Organizational commitments are Mediation of relationships between Servant leadership and employee Performance. The results of this study showed that servant leadership has relevance to organizational commitment, and employee performance.

Schwarz, Newman, Cooper and Eva (2016) conducted a study among 249 subordinates/supervisors working with a Chinese prefecture-level government agency in Zhejiang Province. The study establishes that servant leadership influences the job performance of Chinese public sector employees. One significant contribution of this study is highlighting the role played by Public Service Motivation in linking servant leadership to followers' job performance. Though, this study has a limitation regarding its generalizability, given that it was conducted in only one government agency in a collectivistic cultural context. Considering this limitation the researchers suggested that future research should replicate their study across different cultural and organizational contexts.

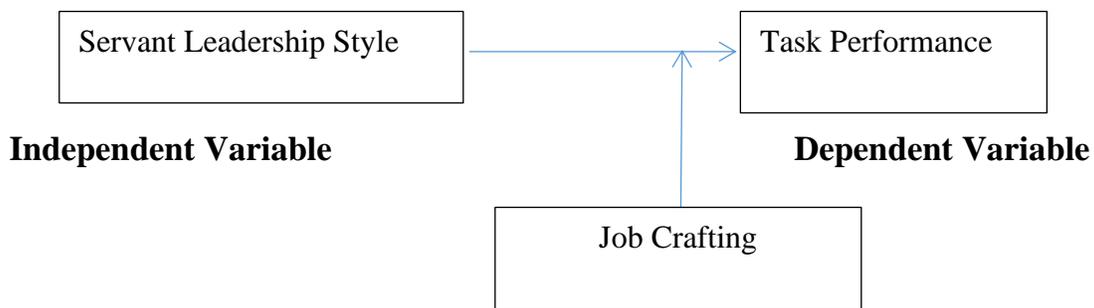
Job Crafting as a Moderator

Soeter (2017) conducted a study among 126 Dutch-speaking employees using a baseline questionnaire. The study examines job crafting as a possible moderating variable between failures and learning behavior. It was found that Daily failures and learning behavior are not significantly related and Job crafting is not a significant moderator to this relationship. Future research could replicate this study without aggregating the data and analyze the data by means of multilevel analysis. Pool (2016) investigated among a sample of 257 teachers in Deltion College, Netherland. The aim of the study was to identify to which extent does Job crafting mediate or (negatively or positively) moderate the relationship between Human Resource Management and Work engagement? The finding reveals that Job crafting was a partial mediator between HRM and Work engagement. Job crafting however did not moderate the relationship between HRM and Work engagement. It was suggested that future research be carry out to further research the relation between HRM, Job crafting and Work engagement in different cultural setting. This study proposed that

Theoretical Underpinning

This study was anchored based on social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) to explain servant leadership style and employees' performance. Social learning theory is a theory of learning process and social behavior which proposes that new behaviors can be acquired by observing and imitating others. It states that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation or direct instruction, even in the absence of motor reproduction or direct reinforcement. Specifically, the social learning theory postulates that individuals learn behavior from their work environment via physical observations, imitations and modeling. This suggests that an individual's behavior at work is determined by perception regarding the kind of behaviors' that most others do in a social setting and perception regarding the

kind of behaviors that most others approve or disapprove in an organization. Social learning theory is adopted in this study because servant leaders' behaviors focused on being visionary, trustworthy, humble and empowering. In line with these behaviors and social learning philosophy, if the employees observe leaders, imitates and take them as models it will go a long way in improving employees performance (Walumbwa, David, Mayer, Wangc, Wang, Workman , Christensen, 2011). Given the relative support for social learning theory across various life situations and the underlying principle of social learning that individuals learn behavior from their work-based referent others via observation and imitation, it is predicted that this theory would provide a support for good leaders - subordinates relationship that would improve employees performance.



Moderator

Figure: 1. Framework of the Study

Methodology

This study adopted the used of descriptive survey design. This is because the study seeks to predict and explain the relationships between servant leadership and task performance. The total population of this study is 3121 employees given from the employees from Adamawa State University Mubi (778), Modibbo Adama University of Technology Yola (1693), Adamawa State Polytechnic Yola has 650 employees respectively. The sample size for this study is 355 using Yaro Yammane method of sample size adequacy. A structured questionnaire was used for the data collection. This study has three major variables to be measure using three instruments adopted from different authors Ehrhart 2004 (GMSL); Tims et al. 2012 (JCS) and Welbourne *et al*, 1997). A five point likert scale ranging from one (1) representing strongly disagree to five (5) representing strongly agreed will be employed . For the analysis of data Structural Equation Modeling SEM PLS using Smart PLS 3.2.9 will be employed because SEM better tests Moderators and decreases the

likelihood of Type II errors (Lowry and Gaskin 2014; Rucker, Preacher, Tormala and Petty, 2011).

Result

Mohseni, Jayashree, Rezaei, Kasim & Okumus (2016) and Hair et al. (2011) explained that PLS-SEM assessment usually involves assessments of measurement models and the structural model. Measurement model deals with study reliability and validity of measures. Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black (2010) explained that factor loadings, composite reliability and average variance extracted are used to assess convergence validity as presented in Table 1 below. Initially, individual item reliabilities were evaluated by examining the outer loadings of each construct's measure as suggested by (Hulland, 1999). Additionally, internal consistency reliability was examined by means of composite reliability coefficient as suggested by (Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2013). Generally, the composite reliability coefficient for each latent construct should exceed 0.70 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). From table 1 below the least composite reliability coefficients value for this study is 0.835, demonstrating adequate internal consistency reliability. The Average variance extracted (AVE) for each latent construct in this study has exceeded the threshold value of 0.50, suggesting satisfactory convergent validity.

Table 1 Convergent Validity

Variables	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Task Performance	EJP1	0.818	0.971	0.973	0.682
	EJP10	0.792			
	EJP11	0.827			
	EJP12	0.831			
	EJP13	0.813			
	EJP14	0.818			
	EJP15	0.820			
	EJP18	0.852			
	EJP19	0.855			
	EJP2	0.870			

	EJP2 0	0.822			
	EJP3	0.871			
	EJP4	0.799			
	EJP6	0.777			
	EJP7	0.837			
	EJP8	0.784			
	EJP9	0.846			
Job Crafting	JCB1	0.825	0.918	0.932	0.606
	JCB1 0	0.739			
	JCB1 6	0.744			
	JCB2	0.822			
	JCB3	0.817			
	JCB4	0.761			
	JCB5	0.809			
	JCB8	0.727			
	JCB9	0.753			
Servant Leadership	SLS1	0.803	0.938	0.947	0.618
	SLS10	0.799			
	SLS11	0.758			
	SLS12	0.827			
	SLS13	0.773			
	SLS14	0.800			
	SLS2	0.850			
	SLS3	0.800			
	SLS4	0.787			
	SLS5	0.723			
	SLS6	0.715			

HTMT criterion was used to ascertain the discriminant validity of measures for this paper as shown in Table 2. Watanuki and Moraes (2016); Henseler, Ringle

and Sarstedt, (2015) suggested the adoption of heterotrait–monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) as a better-suited criterion to assess discriminant validity. With regard to this criterion, if the HTMT value is greater than 0.90 (Gold, Malhotra & Segars, 2001) it indicate the presence of discriminant validity problem. For the purpose of this study the HTMT highest value is 0.878 as can be seen in table 2 which is well below the threshold of 0.90 (Gold et al. 2001), thus confirming the discriminant validity of measurement.

Table 2 HTMT Test for Discriminant Validity

Variables	Job Crafting	Servant Leadership	Task Performance
Job Crafting			
Servant Leadership	0.758		
Task Performance	0.878	0.736	

Structural Model

After the measurement model is found worthwhile based on Reliability and Validity, it is expected that the structural model be discussed to examine the real effect of the path coefficient. For the purpose of this paper standard bootstrapping using 5,000 bootstrapped samples and 355 cases to assess the significance of path coefficients (Hair et al., 2013) were employed. Figure 2 and Table 3 below show the estimates for the full structural model.

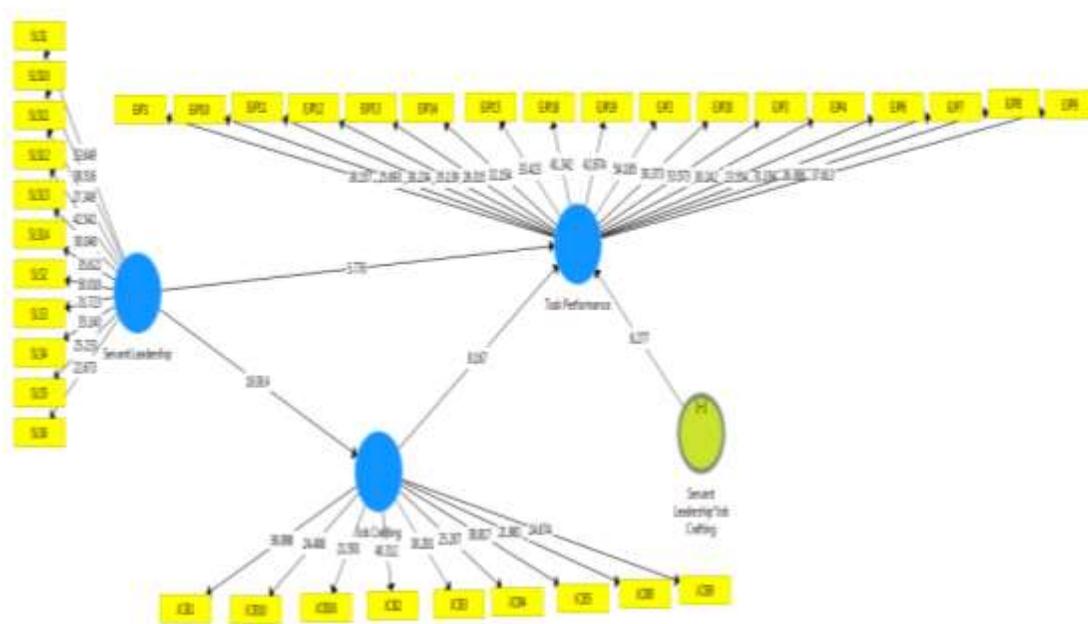


Figure 2 Structural Model of the Study

Table 3. Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Decision
Job Crafting -> Task Performance	0.428	0.426	0.052	8.167	0.000	Supported
Servant Leadership -> Job Crafting	0.705	0.704	0.037	18.914	0.000	Supported
Servant Leadership -> Task Performance	0.207	0.208	0.036	5.776	0.000	Supported
Servant Leadership*Job Crafting -> Task Performance	-0.255	-0.256	0.031	8.277	0.000	Supported

Results suggest a significant relationship between Servant leadership and task performance ($t = 5.776$, $p = .000$) and thus H1 was supported. Table 3 and Figure 2 above indicates that the interaction terms representing servant leadership and Job crafting ($t = 18.914$, $p = 0.000$) was significant, hence H2 was supported. Result also suggest a significant relationship between job crafting and task performance at ($t = 8.167$, $p = 0.000$), hence H3 was supported. Primarily, table 3, figure 2 above shows that job crafting positively moderate the relationship between servant leadership and task performance at ($t = 8.277$, $p = 0.000$), hence H4 was supported.

R^2 value is another important criterion for evaluating the structural model in PLS-SEM; it represents the proportion of variation in the dependent variable (s) that can be explained by the predictor variable (Hair et al., 2010). Although an acceptable value of R^2 depends on the research context (Hair et al., 2010), Cohen (1988) suggests values of 0.26, 0.13, and 0.02 to represent substantial, moderate and weak relationships respectively. Table 4 below shows R^2 values of the endogenous latent variables. The exogenous latent variables of the study explained 71.6 % per cent of total variance on Task performance, while the indirect variance accounted for 49.6 % percent. Based on Cohen (1988) criteria, the endogenous latent variable had an acceptable R^2 value, which was substantial.

Table 4 R Square

Exogenous Latent Variables	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Job Crafting	0.497	0.496
Task Performance	0.718	0.716

Discussion

This paper examines effect of servant leadership on task performance among employees of selected higher institutions in Adamawa State. The study result demonstrated that the entire study hypothesis showed a significant positive relationship with task performance. Consistent with H1, a positive relationship between servant leadership and task performance was found. This implies that, when higher institutions management demonstrated increase servant leadership principles it would influence their employees task performance in return. We argue that Servant leadership correlate positively with job crafting among higher institutions in Adamawa State (H2), and it was found supported. This finding is inconsistent with previous results. We further argued that Job crafting correlate positively with task performance the higher institutions (H3). Result supported our argument and matches with previous studies findings. The result specifically, showed that Job crafting significantly moderate between servant leadership and task performance (H4). That is, any tendency of job crafting between servant leadership and task performance can lead to better result.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Servant leadership has been identified as a new and promising leadership styles that improve task performance among higher institutions employees in this our technology driven working environment. Institutions with servant leaders can respond to challenges effectively and properly in a competitive and dynamic situations, which will translates into low turnover rate, high task performance and reduction in recruitment cost. It is recommended that the higher institutions should have enough hired servant leaders, build confidence in them, employs an aggressive and intense competitive strategy and regularly introduced new programmes and community services.

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