

RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP
BEHAVIOUR: MEDIATION ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION

¹Sana Shahid, ²Prof. Dr. Amna Ali, ³Prof. Dr. Adil Adnan

¹MS Scholar, NUST Business School, 44000, Islamabad.

²Chairperson, Business Administration & Social Sciences Department, IQRA National University, Peshawar.

³Dean Faculty of Management & Social Sciences, IQRA National University, Peshawar.

¹s.shahid93@hotmail.com, ²amna.ali@inu.edu.pk

³adil.adnan@inu.edu.pk

Abstract

This study explores impact of responsible leadership on organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB), emphasizing mediating role of organizational identification. The research posits that responsible leadership—characterized by ethical conduct, stakeholder engagement, and long-term value creation—enhances employees' identification with their organization. This strengthened identification, in turn, fosters discretionary and prosocial behaviours that go beyond formal job requirements, commonly referred to as OCB. Using empirical data collected from 214 frontline employees working in four & five-star hotels, the study employs SEM to test associations. The findings confirm that responsible leadership positively influences OCB both directly and indirectly via organizational identification. These results underscore the significance responsible leadership culture to cultivate highly engaged and civically responsible workforce. Moreover, the study offers theoretical insights and practical implications for leadership development and organizational behavior, particularly in contexts striving for ethical and sustainable performance.

Keywords: Leadership, citizenship, social responsibility, hospitality industry, organizational identification.

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Corresponding Authors*:

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry has placed a greater emphasis on environmental concerns. This is a direct result of the significant impact that global tourism has had on the ecological sector. The consumption of resources, the development of waste, and the emission of carbon are all ways in which tourism has an impact on a variety of locations. According to Kuo et al. (2022), hotels have become increasingly reliant on sustainability initiatives, i.e., water and energy conservation, programs that encourage the reuse of towels and linens, recycling initiatives, and trash management, since these activities have become vital tactics. Sustainability has become essential in the hospitality industry, affecting customer satisfaction, star ratings, ROI, sales, profit, and market share (Legrand et al., 2022).

Organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) is a highly valued attribute in businesses, particularly in the hospitality sector, as it enhances organizational efficiency (Acar & Uslu, 2022), job performance, productivity, and customer satisfaction (Wong & Kim, 2023). OCB is discretionary, not formally recognized by reward systems, yet it significantly contributes to an organization's functionality and sustainability (Alshaabani et al., 2021). OCB classified into five dimensions: altruism, where employees assist colleagues with work-related tasks; courtesy, which involves politeness and consideration for others; and conscientiousness, where employees diligently fulfill their responsibilities (Marwat et al., 2023). These behaviours contribute positively to an organization by fostering cooperation and encouraging employees to exceed job expectations, thereby supporting sustainability efforts. Unlike most industries, hospitality and tourism rely heavily on service experiences shaped by employee-customer interactions (Acar & Uslu, 2022). Considering the industry's dependence on intangible service quality, employee involvement in sustainability practices is essential.

Several studies highlight the importance of leadership in fostering citizenship behaviours among employees (Lu et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2021). Responsible leadership emphasizes ethical, sustainable, and organizational citizenship practices (Abbas et al., 2022). This study focuses on OCB and explores how organizational identity mediates the relationship. It incorporates several theoretical perspectives, including social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). The mediating factors influencing this link have only been the subject of limited research, despite a strong connection between RL and OCB. Moreover, the study also proposes a model to investigate how employees' OI affects their OCB in frontline hospitality roles. This study tries to investigate how this variable mediates the benefits of responsible leadership in supporting OCB in the Hotel business.

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP

Haque et al. (2021) stated that current leaders face additional obstacles with increased accountability. The role of business and leadership in social responsibility contributes to environmental well-being. This is consistent with how the literature presents responsible leadership, emphasizing that leaders and organizations are becoming more accountable for benefiting society and stakeholders (Gull et al., 2023).

Responsible leaders actively communicate with organizational and external stakeholders to build a social and ethical-relational leadership phenomenon. (James & Priyadarshini, 2021) noted, Responsible CEOs are focused on establishing accountability regarding corporate value development, while also sharing a meaningful corporate vision. (Du & Yan, 2022) describes responsible leaders possess specific characteristics that enable them to promote social change. This dynamic underscores how leaders and organizations advocate for OCB and contribute to environmental sustainability (Salama, 2024). Modern leadership demands increased accountability, raising essential questions about how leaders define and exercise responsibility (de Klerk & Jooste, 2023). The responsible leadership framework emphasizes the link between leadership, OCB, and organizational identity. Therefore, this research emphasized that: 'Does OI

mediate the relationship between responsible leadership and organizational citizenship behaviour in the hospitality industry? Also, RL plays a crucial role by fostering fair labor practices, promoting environmental sustainability, and engaging with the community, which in turn boosts employee morale, customer trust, and brand reputation. Through RL implementation, a hotel manager can achieve energy-efficient operations and support local suppliers and fair staff treatment to foster ethical and committed organizational citizens. RL serves as both a leadership method and a critical strategic business approach intended for success within socially aware market environments.

RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP (RL) AND OCB

The leadership approach of responsible leadership (RL) integrates ethical decision processes alongside stakeholder interactions and sustainability commitment (Zhao & Zhou, 2021). Responsible leadership advances standard leadership styles through its establishment of accountable systems that promote equality and social duty principles. Leaders with the traits of responsible leadership build supportive workplaces because they show both moral integrity and employee care (Azila-Gbettor, 2023). Enhanced employee motivation and increased belonging result from such workplace conditions, which make employees more likely to perform beneficial discretionary tasks.

The voluntary activities that exceed standard job requirements, which enhance organizational performance, are known as Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) (Qalati et al., 2022). OCB includes behaviours such as altruism (helping colleagues), conscientiousness (going beyond required duties), and civic virtue (active participation in organizational affairs) (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Responsible and ethical leaders inspire a sense of obligation and reciprocity in employees, which increases OCB (Azila-Gbettor, 2023).

Employees reciprocate their leaders' responsible treatment according to Social Exchange Theory (SET) by giving discretionary efforts (Blau, 1964). The positive feelings employees experience due to responsible leader treatment create a motivation to exceed their established job responsibilities. Responsible leadership establishes a work environment of open communication and ethical values that leads employees to perform OCB (Haque et al., 2021). Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Responsible leadership (RL) positively impacts employees' organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB).

RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP (RL) AND OI

Organizational identification refers to the psychological bond employees develop with their organization, where they perceive its successes and failures as their own (Eluwole et al., 2022). Hence, it plays a crucial role in shaping employee attitudes, behaviours, and commitment to organizational goals. Responsible leadership, which emphasizes ethical decision-making, stakeholder engagement, and social responsibility, makes employees feel valued and connected to the company's mission (Luu, 2021).

By cultivating fairness, integrity, and transparency, responsible leaders create conditions that strengthen employees' organizational identification. A key mechanism through which responsible leadership enhances organizational identification is the creation of a positive organizational culture. Leaders who demonstrate responsibility establish ethical norms and values that guide employee behaviour (Elshaer et al., 2024). When employees observe their leaders prioritizing ethical decision-making, fairness, and social responsibility, they develop a stronger emotional connection with the organization (Zhao & Zhou, 2021). This sense of belonging motivates employees to align their goals with those of the organization, reinforcing their identification with it. Moreover, responsible leadership fosters employee organizational Identification, which is the belief that employees can express their thoughts, take risks, and voice concerns without fear of negative consequences (Costa et al., 2022). A psychologically safe environment allows employees to feel secure in their roles and more connected to their

organization. When leaders encourage open communication and demonstrate care for employees' well-being, employees reciprocate with loyalty and stronger organizational identification (Haque et al., 2021). Additionally, Social Identity Theory (Arshad et al., 2022) suggests that individuals define themselves based on their membership in social groups. Responsible leadership reinforces employees' sense of belonging by emphasizing shared values and collective goals. Employees who perceive alignment between their values and the organization's ethical vision are more likely to internalize their organizational identity, leading to greater commitment and engagement. Based on the theoretical and empirical evidence, it is hypothesized that:

**H2: RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP EXTENDS EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION.
ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION (OI) MEDIATES**

Responsible leaders create an ethical workplace where employees feel appreciated, supported, and aligned with company goals, improving organizational citizenship. However, the mechanism through which responsible leadership influences OCB is largely mediated by organizational identity, which refers to employees' psychological attachment to their organization. Social Identity Theory (Arshad et al., 2022) suggests that individuals define themselves based on their group memberships, and responsible leadership strengthens this identification by promoting trust, fairness, and ethical decision-making. Employees who perceive their leaders as responsible are more likely to internalize organizational values and develop a strong sense of belonging (Dai et al., 2022). This identification, in turn, enhances OCB, as employees who feel connected to their organization are more motivated to engage in discretionary behaviours that benefit the organization, such as helping colleagues, demonstrating conscientiousness, and promoting a positive organizational image (Agyeiwaah et al., 2024). Furthermore, responsible leadership fosters psychological safety, allowing employees to express themselves freely, reinforcing their commitment and willingness to go beyond formal job requirements (Haque et al., 2021). Given that organizational identity strengthens employees' intrinsic motivation and sense of responsibility, it serves as a crucial mediator between responsible leadership and OCB, suggesting that responsible leadership does not directly lead to OCB but does so through the development of a strong organizational identity (Freire & Gonçalves, 2021). Thus,

H3: Organizational identity mediates responsible leadership and OCB.

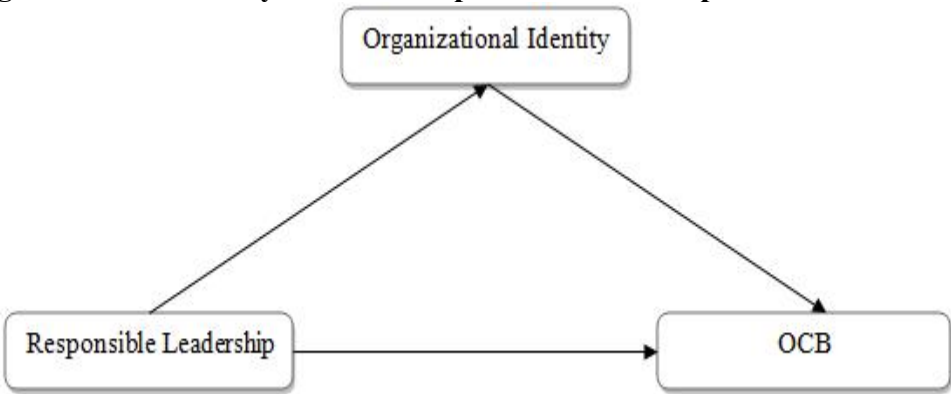


FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

RESEARCH METHOD

The target sample population was the Northern area hotel sector, Pakistan. A total sample size of 214 was considered for the current research. The questionnaire surveys were conducted between February and April 2024. Initially, organizations were contacted via email to participate, but very few responded. This led to a shift in approach, with researchers visiting companies in person to request their involvement. In some instances, direct discussions were held with HR directors or hotel managers. However, even after face-to-face requests, formal approvals from hotel administration boards still had to be secured through email correspondence. Participants were

assured of complete confidentiality and anonymity before taking part in the survey. They were encouraged to provide honest answers, as there were no correct or incorrect responses. The informed consent form clearly stated that respondents could withdraw from the study at any time. Contact information was provided in case participants had questions or needed clarification. Once all responses were collected, incomplete questionnaires were removed during the review process to maintain data accuracy.

MEASUREMENT SCALE

The questionnaire was developed using validated measurement scales with strong reliability and relevance to hospitality research. It included multiple sections, each assessing different constructs using established scales adapted for the hotel industry. Responsible leadership was measured using (Lin et al., 2020), Six-item scale, while OCB was assessed using a 9-item scale by (Park et al., 2015). Organizational identity was evaluated with (Mael & Ashforth, 1992) six-item scale. A five-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5) utilized in the study.

TABLE 1: CR, AVE & F.L

Construct	Factor Loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
RL	0.72 - 0.78	0.59	0.88	0.82
OCB	0.68 - 0.73	0.57	0.85	0.84
OI	0.70 -0.74	0.6	0.87	0.88

RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The study examined 214 northern Pakistani four- and five-star hotel frontline staff, with 53.5% female and 46.5% male participants. The majority (74.0%) was under 30 years old, followed by 16.7% aged 31–40, 6.4% aged 41–50, and 2.9% aged 51–60. In terms of education, 46.3% held a higher education degree, 36.9% had completed 12 years of formal education, and 9.3% had a master’s degree, 6.6% had six years of education, and 6.1% had nine years. Most employees (79.0%) worked in four-star hotels, while 21.0% were employed in five-star establishments. Regarding job tenure, 45.5% had less than one year of experience, 38.5% had one to five years, 9.4% had five to ten years, and 6.6% had over a decade of experience. These findings indicate a relatively young, well-educated workforce primarily engaged in four-star hotels.

TABLE 2: DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Category	Subcategory	Frequency (n = 214)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	114	53.50%
	Male	99	46.50%
Age Group	Under 30	158	74.00%
	31–40	36	16.70%
	41–50	14	6.40%
	51–60	6	2.90%
Education Level	6 Years of Education	14	6.60%
	9 Years of Education	13	6.10%
	12 Years of Education	79	36.90%

Hotel Category	Higher Education Degree	99	46.30%
	Master’s Degree	20	9.30%
	Four-Star Hotels	169	79.00%
	Five-Star Hotels	45	21.00%
Job Tenure	Less than 1 year	97	45.50%
	1–5 years	82	38.50%
	5–10 years	20	9.40%
	Over 10 years	15	6.60%

STATISTICS DESCRIPTIONS
TABLE 3: DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3
1. RL	4.05	0.779	(0.82)		
2. OCB	3.72	0.695	0.595	(0.84)	
3. OI	3.97	0.984	0.356	0.454	(0.88)

In Table 3, mean, standard deviation, and key variable intercorrelations are shown. The table above shows research variable means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations. Responsible leadership (RL) exhibited a mean of 4.05 (SD = 0.779), reflecting relatively high levels of perceived leadership. OCB had a mean of 3.72 (SD = 0.695), indicating a moderate level of employee perception of corporate social responsibility practices. Organizational identification (OI) scored a mean of 3.97 (SD = 0.984), showing a high level of identification with the organization. Intercorrelations among the variables were positive and significant, with RL and OCB showing a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.595$), and OCB and OI demonstrating a slightly stronger relationship ($r = 0.454$). Cronbach's alpha values for the scales were also strong, indicating good internal consistency, with values of 0.82 for RL, 0.84 for OCB, and 0.88 for OI. These results suggest a meaningful and robust relationship among the study variables, supporting further analysis.

HYPOTHESIS TESTS

The analysis began with an evaluation of the measurement model using AMOS software, which examined three key constructs: responsible leadership, organizational identity. The model incorporated distinct factors, with organizational citizenship behaviour and organizational identification measured through 6 indicators. Results demonstrated strong model fit, as evidenced by several statistical indices: a chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df) of 1.388 ($p < 0.001$), comparative fit index (CFI) of 0.932, incremental fit index (IFI) of 0.933, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.044. These metrics collectively indicate that the proposed model effectively captured the underlying data structure. Furthermore, all measurement indicators showed statistically significant factor loadings ($p < 0.001$) for their respective constructs, confirming the robustness of the measurement model.

HYPOTHESIS ANALYSIS AND MEDIATION PATHWAYS

The study utilized mediation-analysis features of the PROCESS macro to investigate the RL effect on OCB via a single mediator: OI. Results revealed significant positive relationships between RL and OCB ($\beta = 0.61, p < 0.05$), RL and OI ($\beta = 0.62, p < 0.01$), and with the indirect effect via OI calculated as 0.055 (SE = 0.025). However, Bootstrapping analysis (5,000 samples) with 95% confidence intervals confirmed partial mediation, as the direct path between RL and OCB became significant when accounting for mediators (95% CI [0.010, 0.0100]),

demonstrating that RL's influence on OCB operates entirely through enhancing employees' OCB perceptions and strengthening organizational identification, thereby supporting the hypothesized mediation model.

TABLE 4: HYPOTHESIS TESTING

	Path	β	SE	p-value	95% CI
H1	RL $\rightarrow$ OCB	0.61	0.12	< 0.05	[0.18, 0.64]
H2	RL $\rightarrow$ OI	0.62	0.08	< 0.05	[0.07, 0.37]
H3	RL $\rightarrow$ OI $\rightarrow$ OCB	0.055	0.025	0.032	[0.010, 0.100]

DISCUSSION

This study shows that organizational identification mediates responsible leadership and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) in hotels, offering important theoretical and practical insights. A unique mechanism links responsible leadership to OCB when leaders develop employees' identification with their organization. The research findings validate current theoretical constructs about leaders who boost organizational identification (OI) while establishing new paths by which leadership work. Socially responsible hotels using sustainable human resource practices demonstrate superior performance while achieving better well-being for their employees in the hospitality industry. The findings present critical knowledge for hospitality management to direct hotels toward choosing and growing responsible leadership and implementing comprehensive sustainability training and connecting human resource strategies with social and environmental targets. COVID-19 has intensified the requirement for these methods since hotels now face dual challenges in solving sustainability concerns while meeting workers who value purposeful employment more than profits. Hotels achieve success in the competitive market and generate social value through civic behaviours by cultivating responsible leadership and solidifying team identification systems.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The research contributes multiple important theoretical aspects to current literature regarding responsible leadership and OI, along with OCB in the hotel industry. The research strengthens Social Exchange Theory (SET) by validating how employees provide discretionary work after being exposed to responsible leadership. The research ensures consistency with Blau's (1964) assertion that moral treatment leads employees to offer their help voluntarily. Moreover, the study confirms Social Identity Theory (SIT) by showing that strong organizational identification leads employees to conduct Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) because they absorb both organizational values and achievements. The study shows that organizational identification functions as a mediating factor between responsible leadership and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) because responsible leadership advances employee identification with their business directly. Previous research on leadership points out that ethical leadership requirements do not suffice because employees need to experience social connection before demonstrating on-the-job behaviour (OCB). The study adds valuable empirical data about RL effects on high-contact service workers' behaviour to the developing RL research in hospitality management. The research defines an important link between leader-driven programs and organizational identity while demonstrating that moral and green initiatives from leaders enhance public citizen expressions. This research investigates organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) through its connection to the hospitality business domain. The study recognizes how OCB contributes to delivering high-quality service alongside sustainability then brings new insights about leadership-based approaches to develop these behaviours.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The results enable hospitality managers to develop specific actions that enhance staff engagement while promoting ethical conduct and environmental conservation initiatives. Hospitality managers should receive training about responsible leadership practices which covers ethical decision-making together with stakeholder relations and sustainability projects. Leaders who demonstrate consistently just practices combined with openness along with genuine environmental concern, create positive circumstances for their team members to extend trust and display discretionary work behaviours. Businesses need to raise their OI through clear communication of company values and by empowering employees to take part in OCB work as well as giving appreciation for employee involvement in organizational purpose achievement. Organizations that foster employee belongingness enable their staff members to exceed standard job requirements. Managers need to foster voluntary work through two types of recognition and awards: first for helping other colleagues and second for participating in sustainability initiatives. A psychologically safe workplace with employee valuing can serve as an incentive to promote additional voluntary workplace contributions. Hotels must reduce waste during daily operations through sustainable practices in combination with having leadership take responsibility for corporate social responsibility programming. The participation of workers in organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) increases when they notice their leaders actively championing ethical together with environmentally sustainable approaches. The research data shows that young highly educated workers form the majority of the workforce therefore human resource managers should prioritize mentorship programs alongside career progression options and health initiatives to sustain long-term dedication and voluntary effort. These organizational measures enable hospitality companies to foster responsible workplaces which produce identification through citizenship actions leading to better sustainable service quality performance.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research contribution valuable result about responsible leadership connection to organizational identification and citizenship behaviour in hospitality settings yet several restrictions apply. The research focused exclusively on hotels in northern Pakistan which have four stars or more which restricts the application of the research results to alternative regions and other classes of hospitality establishments. The study depended on survey-based data that employees provided themselves creating possible alignment biases along with bias from seeking positive responses. The use of a cross-sectional research design makes it impossible to determine the long-term causal relationship between responsible leadership and OCB. The study participants primarily consisted of young educated frontline workers who might not adequately represent the entire hospitality workforce. The research excludes the assessment of cultural and industry-related factors that might impact the relationships under investigation.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

To address these limitations and expand on the current findings, future research could take several directions. First, longitudinal or experimental studies could be conducted to establish causality and examine how responsible leadership influences OCB over time. Second, comparative studies across different regions, hotel categories (e.g., budget hotels), and cultural contexts would enhance the generalizability of the results. Third, incorporating multi-source data (e.g., supervisor ratings of OCB) could reduce common method bias. Fourth, future research could explore additional mediators (e.g., psychological empowerment, job satisfaction) and moderators (e.g., organizational culture, national culture) to provide a more nuanced understanding of the responsible leadership-OCB relationship. Finally, qualitative approaches, such as interviews or case studies, could offer deeper insights into how employees perceive responsible leadership and its impact on their workplace behaviours. Moreover, keeping in view the technological innovation and role of big data analytics in post pandemic era as researched by (Rafi & Sulman, 2025). Future research may explore how big data analytics can foster

organizational identification and enhance organizational citizenship behavior, particularly in data-driven hospitality environments. Future research can also integrate the role of artificial intelligence and advanced supervised learning models, as explored by Raffat & Ahmad (2025), in assessing money laundering activities. Embedding these technologies within organizational behavior frameworks may offer predictive insights into employee conduct, and ethical decision-making—ultimately enhancing compliance mechanisms and fostering a stronger ethical culture within hospitality settings.

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