

**INFLUENCE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP ON
FACULTY RETENTION IN PRIVATE HIGHER
EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN LAHORE,
PAKISTAN: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF JOB
SATISFACTION AND MODERATING ROLE OF
STRUCTURAL EMPOWERMENT**

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UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

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STRUCTURAL EMPOWERMENT**

by

SHEIKH ANEELA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	xii
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	xiii
ABSTRAK.....	xiv
ABSTRACT.....	xvi
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction to the Study.....	1
1.2 Background of the study.....	3
1.3 Problem statement.....	9
1.4 Objectives of the Study.....	12
1.5 Research Questions.....	12
1.6 Hypotheses of the study.....	13
1.7 Significance of the Study.....	14
1.8 Focus of the Study.....	15
1.9 Limitations and Delimitations.....	16
1.10 Operational Definitions.....	16
1.10.1 Servant Leadership.....	17
1.10.1(a) Empowerment.....	17
1.10.1(b) Accountability.....	17
1.10.1(c) Standing Back.....	17
1.10.1(d) Humility.....	17
1.10.1(e) Authenticity.....	18
1.10.1(f) Stewardship.....	18
1.10.1(g) Forgiving.....	18
1.10.1(h) Courage.....	18
1.10.2 Faculty Retention.....	18
1.10.2(a) Employee Retention.....	19
1.10.2(b) Job Support and Recognition.....	19

1.10.2(c) Compensation and Career Growth.....	19
1.10.2(d) Organizational Culture.....	20
1.10.2(e) Work-Compatibility Factor.....	20
1.10.2(f) Autonomy and Independence.....	20
1.10.3 Job Satisfaction.....	20
1.10.3(a) Pay.....	20
1.10.3(b) Promotion.....	21
1.10.3(c) Co-workers.....	21
1.10.3(d) Workplace Conditions.....	21
1.10.4 Structural Empowerment.....	21
1.10.4(a) Information.....	22
1.10.4(b) Opportunity.....	22
1.10.4(c) Resource.....	22
1.10.4(d) Support.....	22
1.11 Rationale of the study.....	22
1.12 Summary.....	24
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	25
2.1 Introduction.....	25
2.2 Pakistan: As an Emerging Knowledge-based Economy.....	26
2.3 Higher Education in Pakistan.....	27
2.4 Leadership.....	29
2.5 Servant Leadership.....	32
2.5.1 Theory of Servant Leadership.....	34
2.5.2 Religiousness of Servant Leadership.....	37
2.5.3 Dimensions of Servant Leadership.....	37
2.5.3(a) Empowerment.....	38
2.5.3(b) Humility.....	38
2.5.3(c) Authenticity.....	39
2.5.3(d) Stewardship.....	39
2.5.3(e) Accountability.....	40
2.5.3(f) Standing back.....	40
2.5.3(g) Courage.....	41
2.5.3(h) Forgiving.....	41

2.5.4	Complex Characteristics of Servant Leaders.....	42
2.5.6	Enactment of Servant Leadership.....	45
2.6	Philosophical Stance.....	50
2.7	Servant Leadership in Higher Education.....	51
2.8	Faculty Retention.....	53
2.8.1	Concept of Faculty Retention.....	55
2.8.2	Dimensions of Faculty Retention	57
2.8.2(a)	Employee retention.....	57
2.8.2(b)	Job Support and Recognition.....	57
2.8.2(c)	Compensation and career growth.....	57
2.8.2(d)	Compensation and career growth.....	58
2.8.2(e)	Work Compatibility factor.....	58
2.8.2(f)	Organizational Culture.....	58
2.8.3	Servant Leadership and Faculty Retention	59
2.8.4	Job Satisfaction and Faculty Retention.....	60
2.9	Job Satisfaction.....	62
2.9.1	Job Satisfaction and Higher Education.....	69
2.9.2	Job Satisfaction in HEI's faculty.....	71
2.9.3	Role of Job Satisfaction among Faculty.....	72
2.9.4	Supervision and Job Satisfaction.....	73
2.9.5	Dimensions of Job satisfaction	74
2.9.5(a)	Pay.....	74
2.9.5(b)	Co-workers.....	74
2.9.5(c)	Promotion.....	76
2.9.5(d)	Job Work Conditions.....	76
2.9.6	Job Satisfaction: Rewards and Promotional Opportunities	77
2.10	Structural Empowerment.....	78
2.10.1	Kanter's Structural Empowerment Theory.....	79
2.10.2	Structural Empowerment and Staff Retention.....	81
2.10.3	Structural Empowerment and Job Satisfaction.....	82
2.10.4	Dimensions of Structural empowerment.....	85
2.10.4(a)	Information.....	85
2.10.4(b)	Opportunity.....	85

2.10.4(c) Support.....	85
2.10.4(d) Resource.....	85
2.11 Theoretical Perspective.....	85
2.12 Underpinning Theory: Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)	87
2.13 Theoretical Background.....	88
2.14 Interrelationships Among Research Variables.....	89
2.14.1 Servant Leadership and Academic Staff Retention.....	89
2.14.2 Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction.....	91
2.14.3 Servant Leadership and Empowerment.....	91
2.15 Conceptual Framework of the Study.....	93
2.16 Scope of the Study.....	94
2.17 Summary.....	95
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY.....	96
3.1 Introduction.....	96
3.2 Research design.....	96
3.3 Population and Sampling.....	97
3.3.1 Target Population.....	98
3.3.2 Unit of Study.....	98
3.3.3 Sampling Procedures and Sample size.....	98
3.4 Research Instrument.....	100
3.4.1 Section A: Demographic variables.....	101
3.4.2 Section B: Servant Leadership Scale (SLS).....	102
3.4.3 Section C: Faculty Retention Measuring Scale (FRS).....	103
3.4.4 Section D: Job Satisfaction Measuring Scale (JSS).....	104
3.4.5 Section E: Structural Empowerment Scale (SES).....	105
3.5 Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument.....	105
3.5.1 Validity (Expert opinion).....	106
3.5.2 Pilot testing.....	106
3.5.3 Reliability of the Research Instrument.....	107
3.6 Statistical Techniques and Data Analysis.....	109
3.6.1 Descriptive Analysis.....	109
3.6.2 Inferential Statistics.....	109
3.6.3 Justifications for using PLS-SEM.....	110

3.7	Mediation Analysis with PLS-SEM.....	111
3.8	Assessing the measurement model.....	113
3.8.1	Construct Validity.....	113
3.8.2	Convergent validity.....	114
3.8.3	Discriminant validity.....	114
3.9	Assessment of Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing.....	115
3.9.1	Multicollinearity Assessment (VIF).....	116
3.9.2	Path Coefficients and Hypotheses Testing (t & p Values).....	116
3.9.3	Coefficient of Determination (R^2).....	117
3.9.4	Effect size (f^2).....	117
3.9.5	Predictive relevance Q^2	118
3.10	Data Screening.....	118
3.10.1	Assessment of Data Normality.....	118
3.10.2	Missing Values Analysis.....	119
3.10.3	The Outliers.....	119
3.11	Scope of the Study.....	120
3.12	Summary.....	121
	CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS.....	122
4.1	Introduction.....	122
4.2	Response rate and Respondents' profile.....	122
4.3	Demographic Profile of Respondents.....	123
4.4	Descriptive Analysis of Variables.....	125
4.5	PLS SEM Data Analysis.....	126
4.5.1	Assessment of Measurement Model.....	126
	4.5.1(a) Convergent Validity.....	127
	4.5.1(b) Discriminant Validity.....	135
4.5.2	Assessment of the Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing.....	139
	4.5.2(a) Assessment of Multicollinearity.....	140
	4.5.2(b) Hypotheses testing (Direct relationships)	141
4.5.3	Hypothesis testing (Indirect Relations)	143
	4.5.3(a) Mediating Analysis.....	143
	4.5.3(b) Moderating Analysis	144
4.5.4	The Coefficient of determination (R^2).....	145

4.5.5	Effect Size (f^2)	147
4.5.6	Evaluation of Predictive Relevance (Q^2).....	148
4.6	Summary	151
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....		152
5.1	Introduction.....	152
5.2	Recapitulation of the Findings.....	152
5.3	Discussions on Research Findings.....	155
5.3.1	Discussion on current level observant leadership, faculty retention...	155
5.3.1(a)	Current level of Servant Leadership at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan.....	155
5.3.1(b)	Current level of Faculty Retention at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan.....	156
5.3.1(c)	Current level of Job Satisfaction at HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan.....	157
5.3.1(d)	Current level of Structural Empowerment at HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan.....	158
5.3.2	Influence of Servant Leadership on Faculty Retention at private HEIs of Lahore.....	159
5.3.3	Influence of Servant Leadership on Job Satisfaction at Pakistan's Private HEIs.....	162
5.3.4	Discussion on the Findings of Indirect Relationships.....	163
5.3.4(a)	Discussion on the Findings of Mediation.....	163
5.3.4(b)	Discussion on the Findings of Moderation.....	166
5.4	Implications on Theory.....	167
5.4.1	Theoretical Implications.....	167
5.4.2	Implications to Practice.....	168
5.5	Implications on Educational Leadership.....	170
5.6	Future Research.....	173
5.7	Conclusion	174
5.8	Recommendations.....	179
REFERENCES		183
APPENDICES		
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS		

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
Table 2.1	Twelve basic characteristics of a servant leaders.....	41
Table 2.2	Sendjaya et al.'s (2008) servant leadership dimensions and behavior.....	43
Table 2.3	Core characteristics of a servant leader.....	45
Table 2.4	Nine practical actions of a servant leader.....	46
Table 2.5	Wheeler's (2012) servant leadership principles and practices for HE.....	46
Table 3.1	The population and the sample size 10% from the target population.....	99
Table 3.2	Sections of the Research Instrument.....	101
Table 3.3	Items constructing servant leadership measure and their codes....	102
Table 3.4	Items constructing a faculty retention measure and their codes....	103
Table 3.5	Items constructing job satisfaction measure and their codes.....	104
Table 3.6	Items constructing Structural empowerment measure and their codes.....	105
Table 3.7	Reliability Scores for the servant leadership construct.....	108
Table 3.8	Reliability Scores for the faculty retention construct.....	108
Table 3.9	Reliability Scores for the job satisfaction construct.....	108
Table 3.10	Reliability Scores for the structural empowerment construct.....	109
Table 3.11	Variables of the study.....	119
Table 3.12	Outliers Detection via Case-wise Diagnostic.....	120
Table 3.13	Research objectives and data analysis techniques.....	120
Table 4.1	Response rate of questionnaire	122
Table 4.2	Respondents' demographic profiles	123
Table 4.3	Level of research variables	126
Table 4.4	Assessment of Measurement Model of Servant Leadership.....	128
Table 4.5	Assessment of Measurement Model of Faculty Retention	129
Table 4.6	Items removed from Faculty Retention Construct due to low factor loadings.....	130
Table 4.7	Assessment of measurement model of faculty retention after removal of low factor loading measuring items.....	131
Table 4.8	Assessment of Measurement Model of Job Satisfaction	131
Table 4.9	Assessment of Measurement Model of Structural Empowerment.....	132
Table 4.10	Discriminant validity– Fornell-Larcker.....	135
Table 4.11	Discriminant validity-HTMT.....	136
Table 4.12	Items Cross Loadings (Servant leadership).....	136
Table 4.13	Items cross loadings (faculty retention).....	137
Table 4.14	Items cross loadings (job satisfaction).....	138
Table 4.15	Items cross loadings (structural empowerment).....	139
Table 4.16	Multicollinearity Assessment.....	140

Table 4.17	(a) Influence of Faculty’ demographics on their job satisfaction level at private HEIs.....	142
	(b) Result of Hypothesis 1.....	142
Table 4.18	(a) Influence of Faculty’ demographics on their retention at private HEIs.....	142
	(b) Result of Hypothesis 2.....	143
	(c) Influence of servant leadership on faculty retention at private HEIs.....	143
	(d) Influence of servant leadership on job satisfaction at private HEIs.....	143
	(e) Influence of job satisfaction on faculty retention at private HEIs.....	143
Table 4.19	(a) Mediating influence of job satisfaction between the relationship of servant leadership and faculty retention.....	144
	(b) Moderating influence of structural empowerment on the relationship between servant leadership and faculty retention.....	145
Table 4.20	R ² Values of Endogenous Latent Constructs.....	145
Table 4.21	Variance Explained (R ²).....	146
Table 4.22	Strengths of effect size.....	147
Table 4.23	Effect Size of the exogenous variables.....	147
Table 4.24	Construct cross-validated redundancy measure(Q2).....	149
Table 4.25	Summary of the research questions and hypothesis.....	150

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework of the Study.....	93
Figure 2.2 Conceptual framework with constructs.....	94
Figure 3.1 Sampling procedures.....	100
Figure 3.2 A Schematic flow of PLS-SEM analysis for a reflective- formative model.....	111
Figure 3.3 Mediation analysis model: Source: Baron and Kenny (1986)	112
Figure 4.1 Measurement model framework (Reflective).....	134
Figure 4.2 Measurement Model Step Two (Formative).....	146
Figure 4.3 Structural model of the study.....	148
Figure 4.4 Blindfolding (Predictive relevance).....	149

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HEC	Higher Education Commission
HEI	Higher Education Institutes
HOD	Head of the Department
HRM	Human Resource Management
HE	Higher Education

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A	Cover Letter
Appendix B	Research Instrument
Appendix C	Data Collection Permission Letter
Appendix D	Total Variance Explained
Appendix E	Expert Opinion
Appendix F	Publications from the Thesis

**PENGARUH KEPIMPINAN BERKHIDMAT TERHADAP PENGEKALAN
FAKULTI DI INSTITUT PENDIDIKAN TINGGI SWASTA DI LAHORE,
PAKISTAN: PERANAN KEPUASAN KERJA SEBAGAI MEDIATOR DAN
PEMERKASAAN STRUKTUR SEBAGAI MODERATOR**

ABSTRAK

Ahli fakulti adalah tulang belakang perusahaan pendidikan tinggi, berkhidmat sebagai pakar yang memupuk kelebihan daya saing jangka panjang negara dan pembangunan sosioekonomi. Perolehan fakulti yang tinggi daripada IPT merugikan dan tidak mampu dimiliki oleh ekonomi sedang pesat membangun seperti Pakistan. Sektor pendidikan tinggi di Pakistan kini sedang bergelut dengan isu pusing ganti fakulti yang tinggi, mengakibatkan pengekalan fakulti yang lemah. Kajian mengenai pusing ganti fakulti di Pakistan, khususnya berkaitan amalan kepimpinan, telah mendapat perhatian yang terhad. Penyelidikan ini menilai bagaimana sifat kepimpinan pekhidmat dalam pendidikan tinggi mempengaruhi tempoh penginapan jangka panjang fakulti di IPT. Matlamat penyelidikan ini adalah untuk menyiasat dan membendung isu-isu pengekalan fakulti yang lazim di IPT swasta di Pakistan melalui penggunaan sifat kepimpinan pekhidmat. Objektif utama penyelidikan ini adalah untuk menyiasat pengaruh amalan kepimpinan pelayan terhadap pengekalan fakulti di IPT swasta Pakistan. Tambahan pula, kajian ini juga menilai potensi peranan pengantara kepuasan kerja dan peranan penyederhanaan pemerksaan struktur dalam hubungan antara kepimpinan pekhidmat dan pengekalan fakulti. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kajian kuantitatif dengan reka bentuk kajian tinjauan. Pengkaji mencadangkan dan menyiasat tujuh hubungan hipotesis antara pembolehubah kajian. Pengkaji menggunakan instrumen kajian tinjauan dengan 94 soalan tertutup untuk mengumpul data daripada IPT swasta Lahore, Pakistan. Penyelidik memilih Teknik persampelan rawak berstrata bukan kebarangkalian untuk 321 kes yang berdaya maju. Pembolehubah penyelidikan ini

menunjukkan hubungan yang signifikan. Hasilnya menunjukkan hubungan yang signifikan antara kepemimpinan pekhidmat, pengekaln fakulti, dan kepuasan kerja. Namun begitu, pemerksaan struktur menunjukkan pengaruh yang tidak ketara sebagai pembolehubah moderator. Penyelidikan ini menyediakan cadangan pragmatik untuk Suruhanjaya Pendidikan Tinggi HEC, profesional dalam pengurusan sumber manusia HRM, ketua jabatan, HOD dan badan pentadbir lain dalam usaha mengurangkan pusing ganti fakulti di IPT. Beberapa implikasi terhadap teori dan amalan turut dibincangkan, batasan kajian diambil kira, dan cadangan dan cadangan untuk penyelidikan masa depan turut dihuraikan. Secara keseluruhannya, kajian ini telah memperkayakan literatur sedia ada mengenai kepemimpinan hamba dalam pengajian tinggi.

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ABSTRACT

Faculty members are the backbone of higher education enterprises, serving as experts who nurture the country's long-term competitive advantage and socioeconomic development. High faculty turnover from HEIs is detrimental and unaffordable for emerging economies like Pakistan. The higher education sector in Pakistan is currently struggling with high faculty turnover issues, resulting in poor faculty retention. The study of faculty turnover in Pakistan, particularly in relation to leadership practices, has received limited attention. The present research evaluates how servant leadership attributes in higher education influence the faculty's long-term stay at HEIs. The aim of this research is to investigate and curb the faculty retention issues prevailing in private HEIs in Pakistan through the adoption of servant leadership attributes. The major objective of the present research is to investigate the influence of servant leadership practices on faculty retention at Pakistan's private HEIs. Furthermore, this study also evaluates the potential mediating role of job satisfaction and the moderating role of structural empowerment in the relationship between servant leadership and faculty retention. The present study used a quantitative research method with a survey research design. The researcher proposed and investigated seven hypothesized relationships among the research variables. The researcher employed a survey research instrument with 94 closed-ended questions to collect the data from private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan. The researcher opted for a non-probability stratified random sampling technique for 321 viable cases. The present research's variables exhibited

significant relationships. The results revealed significant relationships among servant leadership, faculty retention, and job satisfaction. Nevertheless, structural empowerment displayed an insignificant influence as a moderator variable. The present research provides pragmatic propositions for Higher Education Commission HEC, professionals in human resource management HRM, heads of departments, HODs, and other governing bodies in an effort to decrease faculty turnover in HEIs. Several implications for theory and practice are also discussed, the research limitations are taken into account, and suggestions and recommendations for future research are also elaborated. Overall, the present study has enriched the existing literature on servant leadership in higher education.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the Study

The twenty-first century is witness to the global integration of the knowledge-based economy. A dynamic and vibrant socioeconomic and corporate global milieu has developed in the national and worldwide markets. The global economy demands that societies prepare a competent and skilled workforce to tackle the challenges of globalization. As higher education institutions HEIs also contribute to national business and socioeconomic advancement, quality education should concentrate on managing future scenarios, from simple education deliverance to entrepreneurship.

Higher education institutions must have competent and effective leadership. HEIs face a rigorous and demanding global environment to attain their noble goals. HEIs, in the context of globalization, are a driving force behind any nation's socioeconomic and sociopolitical development (Naz, 2018). At the same time, the world is rapidly moving towards a future scenario of cultural diffusion. Globalized world culture is seen as achieving societal harmony and economic stability. Accordingly, HEIs are currently entangled in globalization as a mega-developmental phenomenon (Holland & Scullion, 2019), which raises challenges to test the HEIs' resilience in mega-developmental scenarios (Cunningham et al., 2019).

Thus, HEIs need to be agile in an ever-changing and challenging environment (Siddique & Nazir, 2018). The intellectual capital produced by HEIs has become a crucial factor for a sustainable global knowledge-based economy. Every country in the world has developed its HEIs to provide a platform for the facilitation of socio-economic and socio-political growth. The evolving socio-economic and socio-political scenarios depend on quality education deliverance, as HEIs play a pivotal role in this global knowledge-based transformation, as per 21st-century requirements (Davliatova & Starodubtsev, 2019).

As stated by Chonghui (2020), HEIs serve as the focal points of knowledge and excellence. They are also the research hubs that are actively addressing the growing socio-economic needs. HEIs prioritize the retention of skilled and experienced faculty as a key factor in the development of knowledge centers as repositories of skilled workforces and intellectual human capital. Thus, higher education institutions require faculty, who are skilled and qualified in order to sustain quality parameters. Thus, the ability of HEIs to retain competent and skilled academic personnel directly influences their overall quality, stability, and consistency. Moreover, the high turnover rate of experienced faculty from HEIs can potentially have a detrimental impact on the research quality, and teaching and learning activities (Zavelevsky & Lishchinsky, 2020).

When a competent faculty departs from an HEI, this departure is accompanied by critical knowledge, skills, and expertise, which are indispensable for the sustainability and competitiveness of the HEIs. Further, the recent concern about faculty's turnover and retention has gained momentum and attention (Amen et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2019). However, with the changing global economic scenarios, "recruitment and retention" has generated a highly competitive environment involving a shared pool of skilled faculty. HEIs leaders understand the value of healthy communication and collaboration with their faculty when it comes to faculty's job satisfaction and institutional commitment, ethical leadership practices are seen as the best choice (Bendermacher et al., 2017).

Head of departments HODs in HEIs hold key positions in departmental leadership and serve for a variety of important responsibilities. The HODs are mainly responsible for maintaining control over the quality of their faculty members' teaching and learning, quality research output, and other departmental endeavors. The faculty members' teaching and learning process, research, and other departmental endeavors are under the control and supervision of the HODs, as they supervise all departmental operations. As a result, they exhibit a diverse spectrum of leadership styles, which can be attributed to variations in their sector (public or

private), gender, qualification, age, and work experience.

The complex and multifaceted dimensions of faculty retention issues in the HE sectors, particularly with the evolving perception of servant leadership attributes in the academic context, inspired this study, which aimed to pave the way for a more satisfied, empowered, and committed faculty (Harris et al., 2016; Regaisis, 2018; Do et al., 2018; Hassan et al., 2019; Cliek, 2019). The high faculty turnover rate significantly influences research output and academic activities in private HEIs. As a result, it becomes imperative to identify and address the factors that contribute to poor faculty retention.

In light of the above debate, this research focused on interpreting and evaluating servant leadership attributes, which are becoming increasingly popular among millennials as a leadership style (Hassan et al., 2019), and are rarely tested in the academic arena to retain faculty members by improving their job satisfaction, leading to improved institutional commitment (Zahra et al., 2013).

Chapter one presents the background of the present study, followed by the problem statement, research objectives, research questions, and research hypotheses. This chapter provides additional details regarding the significance of the study. Additionally, this chapter discusses the constraints and bounds placed on the practical implications of the current research. Furthermore, this chapter also highlights the operational definitions of significant keyterms.

1.2 Background of the Study

This study consisted of three main themes. It mainly focuses on the faculty issues encountered by private HEIs in Pakistan. The study particularly examines the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction, two key variables responsible for the retention of faculty members at private HEIs. In addition, this research also evaluates the potential influence of "structuralempowerment" as a moderator to further elevate the faculty

retention issue in HEIs. The following sections offer a thorough examination of Pakistan's work culture and the historical evolution of its HE.

Bhatti et al. (2014) reached a consensus that Pakistan is projected to have a population of 342 million by 2050 and is the sixth most populous country in the world. Pakistan's service sector is a major driver of its economic growth, accounting for 57.7% of its GDP (Baig, 2012). Since Pakistan's independence in 1947, the service sector in HE has been a major concern for the government, academicians, policymakers, and the public (Akhtar, 2015). Siddiqui (2016; 2021) notes that inadequate financial resources, political instability, and abrupt decisions related to continuing education policies contributed to Pakistan's educational sector's decline and deterioration. Moreover, Pakistan's economy has failed to keep up with its rapidly growing population for decades.

While discussing various viewpoints on higher education leadership, researcher's primary and practical concern is to explore the most effective leadership style for HEIs. Scholars share two different concepts: some argue that adopting leadership practices from other service sectors is the only way to improve the education sector (Davies et al., 2001; Chandler et al., 2002); others argue that a specific leadership approach is a pre-requisite for HEIs (Birnbaum, 1991; Bergquist, 1992).

In 1974, the Government of Pakistan founded the "University Grant Commission", UGC based on the necessity to upgrade the higher education system and address the issues encountered by the higher education sector in Pakistan. Previously known as the UGC and currently "Higher Education Commission," HEC is now in charge of ensuring the quality of the country's HEIs. Therefore, in order to foster a knowledge-based economy, Pakistani government modified the constitution and set up HEC in Islamabad, the federal capital state of Pakistan (Saddozai, 2017).

The Government of Pakistan assigned HEC with primary responsibilities, i.e.,

fostering a culture of research across research-based HEIs by establishing centers of excellence and providing doctoral scholarships for both domestic and overseas study. In addition to financing students, the Government of Pakistan also provides funding for the infrastructure of HEIs to achieve its "HEC-Vision 2025" and enhance the learning environment. This is driven by the conviction that Pakistan can achieve its millennial goals of socioeconomic and political development through quality education. For HEIs, faculty is the most valuable asset when it comes to bring success to HEC policies, since the paradigm has been switched from simply attracting highly qualified faculty to also keep them intact and retained. Challenges and competitiveness among highly qualified faculty have increased as HEIs have become reservoirs of skilled faculty (HEC-Vision 2025).

HEC allocated funds to public-sector HEIs and encouraged the private sector to establish HEIs and meet the challenges of the country's socioeconomic needs with a strict policy of monitoring and quality assurance. In accordance with its regulations, HEC serves as the coordinating body responsible for issuing directions to HEIs in accordance with its "Vision 2025.". Furthermore, HEC is responsible for monitoring higher education and its progress.

Public HEIs in Pakistan have historically enjoyed an excellent track record for providing faculty with lifetime employment and job security. However, in recent years, faculty turnover has become more prevalent, even in public HEIs as well (Rahman, 2016; Zahra et al., 2013). For higher compensation and perks, faculty often choose to work for private HEIs rather than public ones (Khalid et al., 2012; Rahman, 2016). Private HEIs have the opportunity to advance thoughtfully, plan training and development faculty programs, and implement helpful service practices that are not out of the reach of private HEIs (Chughtai& Zafar, 2006). Pakistan's public HEIs have had a difficult time surviving in this environment, with more employment prospects opening up as a result of socio-economic development and globalization, and with the idea of "faculty retention" as gaining traction

(Malik et al., 2020).

Moreover, there are increased employment opportunities for highly skilled and competent faculty in private HEIs, as the number of private HEIs has surpassed the number of public HEIs. This proliferation of private HEIs is due to regulatory changes at the HEC level (Zahra et al., 2013). The increase in postgraduate students is also one of the major reasons for the country's increased number of private HEIs. Furthermore, Butt et al. (2020) observed that the decline in faculty turnover and improved faculty retention in private HEIs led to an increase in sustainable competitive advantage in Pakistan.

Job satisfaction has also long been recognized as a major indicator of faculty's intention to voluntarily quit HEIs (Amen et al., 2021; Siddique & Nazir, 2018). Satisfaction with promotion, supervision, and training decreases faculty's turnover intentions, leading to actual departure from the HEIs (Kazemi et al., 2015). Further, according to (Masum et al., 2015; Amen et al., 2021) job satisfaction is a powerful predictor of faculty' intentions to stay or leave HEIs.

Saleem & Qamar (2017) argued that job satisfaction creates a high level of institutional commitment, which ultimately decreases the chance of turnover intentions. Hence, faculty members who significantly contribute to the advancement of the national intellectual workforce require a high level of job satisfaction and trust in their leaders, as these factors significantly influence the HEI's output, including students' performance, quality research output, and its competitive advantage over other HEIs. Subsequently, the direct influence of servant leadership on job satisfaction and faculty retention is of major concern for any HEI (Harris et al., 2016).

Furthermore, experts have hailed structural empowerment as the latest management intervention for organizational development. Although the concept of structural

empowerment originated in corporate and industrial endeavors to increase efficiency, empowering faculty with work structures can also benefit educational institutions with improved faculty retention (Sahar & Suandi, 2014). Past research (Henkin & Marchiori 2003; Honold 1997; Manojlovich & Laschinger 2002; Wang & Lee 2009) reveals that enhancing structural empowerment is a highly effective approach for enhancing several work-related outcomes, including motivation, institutional commitment, and job satisfaction. Faculty members in an empowered workplace are capable of executing impactful tasks. They demonstrate initialization, collaborate in teams, and work independently.

Further, to ensure consistent performance and retention of faculty, HEIs explore and adopt various strategies and policies, e.g., pay-satisfaction, opportunities for learning and growth, rewards, job-satisfaction, faculty training, job-embeddedness, flexible work conditions, career development, institutional support, job-involvement, work-life balance, relationship with immediate boss, promotion, recognition, and organizational justice (Akhtar et al., 2015; Shakeel, 2015; Butt, S., 2015) remuneration, training, and development (Ashfaq et al., 2017) job stress, commitment, organizational policies, job role ambiguity, and job formalization (Rizwan et al., 2017) employee participation and compensation (Khalid & Nawab, 2018) compensation & promotional growth (Bibi et al., 2017) and leadership style (Cilek, 2019). In the aforementioned scenario, it is vital to ensure the training and retention of the academic workforce, whereas losing faculty can have detrimental consequences for HEIs (Moin & Hassan, 2021).

The leadership of HEIs establishes its culture, motivates the staff to stay intact with the HEI, and exhibits the finest abilities against undesirable faculty turnover. A leader plays a crucial role in effectively retaining highly valued faculty within HEIs for longer periods of time. In addition, the leader-follower relationship's quality positively impacts the duration of followers' tenure within an institution (Barnard, 2016). According to Sharif & Scandura

(2014), employees who view their leaders as morally upright tend to achieve higher levels of performance. As debated above, faculty retention is a global issue for HEIs. Many aspects influence faculty retention, the most salient of which are leadership behavior, job satisfaction, and structural empowerment. This reflects the perception and preference of 21st-century work environment priorities (Hassan et al., 2019).

Servant leadership remains experiential in academia, which needs to be tested empirically for its implementation in HEIs. This can only become possible by escalating servant leadership research and increasing its efficiency in HEIs, as suggested by Greenleaf (Greenleaf, 1977). Further, Gibson & Petrosko (2014) argued that employees who develop high levels of trust in their leader and feel high levels of job satisfaction exhibit lower intentions to leave their organizations.

In the 21st century, job satisfaction has a significant influence on faculty's retention to the HEI's (Masum, 2015; Siddique & Nazir, 2018; Hameed et al., 2018; Moin & Hassan, 2021). The HE sectors require a leadership approach that instigates change from within, and servant leadership may be the most effective approach, with pending empirical testing.

The servant leadership approach is grounded in the community service philosophy at large, and is essential for developing inventiveness and confidence among the faculty in the HE sectors to meet future long-term global challenges (Farnsworth, 2007; Wheeler, 2012). Moreover, in the context of private HEIs, more employment opportunities for highly skilled faculty are available as private HEIs have increased in number over the past few years. Further, Butt et al. (2020) added that policies and promotion play a significant role in faculty' retention and job satisfaction.

This study, however, is one of the very few empirical investigations to explore the idea of servant leadership as a potential leadership practice for the HE sectors in an Eastern

academic setting. The present investigation on servant leadership attributes at private HEIs in Lahore, Pakistan, has served as the foundation for this study. This study, based on a systematic and scientific research approach, aims to examine servant leadership attributes and advance the concept of servant leadership in HE sectors.

1.3 Problem Statement

The issue of faculty loss is more complex and cumbersome in emerging economies like Pakistan. The HE services sector in Pakistan, a developing economy, is plagued by talent erosion. There is a lack of attention and research in Pakistan regarding leadership practices in the HE services sector to mitigate faculty loss within HEIs.

HEC encourages the private sector to share the country's educational goals in alliance with the public sector. As HEC aims to alleviate the country's intense and rapidly changing business and socio-economic developmental constraints. Private sector HEIs have the potential to significantly reduce the increased pressure on public HEIs. This, in turn, can increase job opportunities for faculty members and potentially reduce faculty turnover rates (Khalid & Nawab, 2018; Akhter, 2020; Safi, 2021). A significant dearth of HEIs in Pakistan also prioritizes job satisfaction, leading to faculty' absenteeism and departure (Amen et al., 2021).

The main issue after faculty recruitment is its retention (Khan et al., 2014; Butt, 2020; Moin & Hassan, 2021). Poor faculty retention in private HEIs in Lahore, Pakistan, is attributed to the rapid proliferation of private HEIs to cater to the increasing number of graduate and post-graduate students (Butt, 2020). Furthermore, with increased pressure on HEIs to produce quality teaching and learning alongside quality research output, the faculty experiences an increased workload and burnout, provoking a voluntary exit from HEIs (Firdous, 2017; Akhtar, 2020). In emerging economies like Pakistan, losing faculty is an unaffordable deprivation factor in Pakistan's growing economy (Sadozai et al., 2017; Shakeel, 2015; Nasir, 2015; Naeem, 2014;

Rahman & Nas, 2013).

The mushroom growth of private HEIs in Pakistan has been an evolving phenomenon (Zahra et al., 2013; Butt & Akhtar, 2020). This evolving trend brings challenges to private HEIs for faculty turnover by providing faculty with the freedom to select private HEIs of their own choice and convenience (Butt et al., 2020). Which has shifted the educational paradigm away from quality education deliverance to a more commercialized and revenue-generating service sector. Moreover, the availability of the previous data on faculty turnover per annum is scarcely available at private HEIs; the only data found in the literature for the faculty turnover rate in private HEIs is 60% per annum (Ali, 2008; Ahmed, 2011).

Furthermore, HEC has invested heavily in faculty training, development, and improved pay scales across the country; despite these advantages, faculty turnover has remained high (Rizwan et al., 2017; Farooq & Ahmed, 2017; Zahra et al., 2013). Further, Safi (2021) asserted that the faculty turnover rate in HEIs of Pakistan has become alarming.

As reported by HEC Pakistan (HEC-Vision, 2025), time and monetary investment are vital in raising a highly qualified and skilled faculty. The report “HEC-Vision, 2025” also states that it is imperative to retain the faculty by providing them with higher salaries, status, recognition, and an academic environment, with the mandate to bring structural changes in HEIs to ensure a quality teaching-learning and research culture.

The relationship between servant leadership and faculty retention is under-researched in an Eastern context, particularly in Pakistan. Eastern regions trail far behind in terms of empowering their faculty in the academic sector to define transparent goals and objectives, and they also have failed to equip their faculty with a purpose and vision that is goal-oriented (Hassan et al., 2019). The notion of "retention" is experiencing a steady rise in popularity due to emerging trends in globalization, with a larger pool of job prospects (Malik, Baig, & Manzoor, 2020). In the West, researchers have adequately studied servant leadership and

faculty retention models (Engelhart, 2012; Harris, 2016; Ragaisis, 2018).

Servant leadership can potentially control faculty turnover issues, as significant relationship exists between the specific needs of 21st-century employees' needs, i.e., job satisfaction, which is considered a strong predictor of faculty' departure from HEIs (Sadiq & Nazir, 2018; Masum et al., 2015; Amen et al., 2021; Mubarak et al., 2012; Harris, 2016; Hassan et al., 2019). Structural empowerment, in addition to job satisfaction and leadership practices, significantly influences institutional commitment and contributes to improved faculty retention at HEIs (Ahadi & Suandi, 2014; Laschinger et al., 2001). Structural empowerment is an effective strategy for establishing work environments that effectively draw and retain faculty (Chang, Shih, & Lin, 2010). In general, employees who feel empowered are more likely to demonstrate increased levels of commitment to their institutions (Biron & Bamberger, 2010).

Consequently, this study investigates the potential influence of servant leadership attributes to curb faculty retention issues at private HEIs in Pakistan. By practicing the servant leadership attributes the contributing factors responsible for high faculty turnover in private HEIs can be controlled, i.e., job satisfaction (Harris, 2016; Siddique & Nazir, 2018) and structural empowerment (Orgambidez. et al., 2014; Ahadi & Suandi., 2014).

This study aims to assess the faculty retention rate at private HEIs in Lahore, Pakistan. It takes into account the influence of servant leadership attributes, with job satisfaction acting as a mediator, and structural empowerment playing a moderating role. This study aims to enhance the achievement of "HEC-Vision 2025" by HEC, Pakistan. This study is the first to empirically investigate the issue of faculty retention in private HEIs in Lahore, Pakistan, within the context of servant leadership practice.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present research are;

- 1) To estimate the current levels of servant leadership, faculty retention, job satisfaction, and structural empowerment at private HEIs in Lahore, Pakistan.
- 2) To demonstrate the influence of faculty demographic profiles (e.g., gender, age, qualification, designation, nature of employment, work experience, number of jobs switched) on job satisfaction at private HEIs in Lahore, Pakistan.
- 3) To demonstrate the influence of faculty demographic profiles (e.g., gender, age, qualification, designation, nature of employment, work experience, number of jobs switched) on their retention at private HEIs in Lahore, Pakistan.
- 4) To investigate the significant influence of servant leadership practice on faculty retention at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan.
- 5) To investigate the significant influence of servant leadership on job satisfaction at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan.
- 6) To investigate the significant influence of job satisfaction on faculty retention at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan.
- 7) To evaluate the significant mediating role of job satisfaction between the relationship of servant leadership and faculty retention at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan.
- 8) To evaluate the significant moderating role of structural empowerment on the relationship between servant leadership and faculty retention at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan.

1.5 Research Questions

This research posed eight questions, as presented below:

- 1) What is the current level of servant leadership, faculty retention, job satisfaction, and structural empowerment at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan?
- 2) Do the faculty' demographic profiles, i.e., gender, age, qualification, designation, nature of employment, work experience, number of jobs switched significantly influence

job satisfaction at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan?

- 3) Do the faculty' demographic profiles, i.e., gender, age, qualification, designation, nature of employment, work experience, number of jobs switched significantly influence faculty' retention at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan?
- 4) Does servant leadership significantly influence faculty retention at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan?
- 5) Does servant leadership significantly influence job satisfaction at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan?
- 6) Does job satisfaction significantly influence faculty retention at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan?
- 7) Does job satisfaction significantly mediate the relationship between servant leadership and faculty retention at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan?
- 8) Does structural empowerment significantly moderate the relationship between servant leadership and faculty retention at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan?

1.6 Hypotheses

Stated below are the hypotheses, formulated based on the research questions as mentioned above;

H_{a1}: Faculty' demographic profiles, i.e., gender, age, qualification, designation, nature of employment, work experience, number of jobs switched, have a significant influence on job satisfaction at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan.

H_{a2}: Faculty' demographic profiles, i.e., gender, age, qualification, designation, nature of employment, work experience, number of jobs switched, have a significant influence on their retention at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan.

H_{a3}: Servant leadership has a significant influence on faculty retention at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan.

H_{a4}: Servant leadership has a significant influence on job satisfaction at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan.

H_{a5}: Job satisfaction has a significant influence on faculty retention at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan.

H_{a6}: Job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between servant leadership and faculty retention at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan.

H_{a7}: Structural empowerment significantly moderates the relationship between servant leadership and faculty retention at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The present study has the potential to make a substantial contribution towards the enrichment of educational strategies in Pakistan. This study primarily targets the private HEIs in Lahore, Pakistan, including the policymakers, vice chancellors, administrative staff, deans, and specifically the HODs at the private HEIs in Lahore, Pakistan. Additionally, this study could potentially assist HRM in formulating and executing strategies to enhance job satisfaction and extended institutional retention among faculty members.

The results of this study may have significant implications for policymakers in higher education and managers in human resource management. Policymakers in higher education must prioritize the crucial importance of retaining faculty for a longer time. Consequently, implementing such policies will enhance accountability for HEI's management in analyzing human social behaviors and the potential influence of servant leadership attributes on faculty retention within the higher education sector.

This study will also be advantageous to HEI's leadership, which needs to retain faculty for longer periods of time by embracing servant leadership characteristics and competencies. According to the study's findings, implementing servant leadership principles in Pakistan's HEIs may enhance the proportion of faculty members who desire to stay intact with their

institutions for an extended period of time. Furthermore, this study is expected to increase the awareness among HEIs leaders about the importance of implementing servant leadership, job satisfaction, and structural empowerment attributes in their academic units. These attributes are crucial for achieving HEIs' goals through extended retention periods of the faculty.

The present study will also add to the existing body of knowledge by providing new perspectives on the implementation of structural empowerment traits, job satisfaction, and servant leadership attributes in the leadership of HEIs in Lahore, Pakistan. This will affect faculty members' social conduct. The primary goal of this study is to enhance understanding within its context by undertaking an empirical inquiry into the relationships among job satisfaction, structural empowerment, faculty retention, and servant leadership. This study applies the notion of servant leadership to private HEIs in Lahore, Pakistan. As a result, Pakistan's private HEIs can gain a better understanding of the practical applications and implementations of servant leadership attributes.

1.8 Focus of the Study

The study focused solely on full-time faculty members employed at private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan. The researcher focused on a limited number of variables, specifically "servant leadership" as an independent variable, "structural empowerment" as a moderator variable, and "job satisfaction" as a mediating variable, to curb faculty retention issues at private HEIs located in Lahore, Pakistan. However, it is important to note that numerous other variables may also contribute to poor faculty retention. In order to be an eligible participant for the present study, full-time faculty members must have served their respective HEIs in the same department under the supervision of the same HOD for a minimum of one academic year without undertaking any supplementary administrative responsibilities.

1.9 Limitations and Delimitations

The HEIs examined in this research exclusively consist of private HEIs located in Lahore, Pakistan. Due to their substantial impact, these HEIs are offering higher education in Pakistan. The study's major limitation and drawback was the lack of previous statistical data availability for faculty turnover rates per annum at private HEIs in Lahore, Pakistan. This lack of information hindered the researcher's ability to make the comparisons with the rising trend in faculty turnover. Time constraints and limited resources also restricted the data collection on a broader scale.

Delimitations are the boundaries that a researcher sets for the research they conduct, defining the aspects of the study that are acceptable and those that are not. Delimitations contribute to a reduction in research generalizability, making it more relevant to the research objectives. Due to the limited time frame and financial and logistical limitations, the researcher has restricted this study to a sample size of only ten private HEIs located in Lahore, Pakistan. Out of a total of twenty-two, there are 5,160 full-time faculty members. It is important to mention here that “degree colleges, degree awarding institutes, and public HEIs” are not included in this count. Furthermore, there is a possibility that some additional interfering variables must be at play; hence, the researcher has delimited this research to three variables only, i.e., structural empowerment, job satisfaction, and servant leadership.

1.10 Operational Definitions

This section describes the operational perceptions for the research variables that are operative in the present study.

1.10.1 Servant Leadership

Leaders need to equip themselves with a unique leadership style in order to effectively

manage their team dynamics. Consequently, leaders who behave ethically with their followers are more effective in carrying out their responsibilities (Yukl, 2010). The relationship-based, leader-follower model of servant leadership has been proven to be effective in lowering staff turnover and boosting productivity. In the present study, "servant leadership" refers to an ethical and moral approach that prioritizes the needs of the faculty in order to hold their loyalty and commitment to their respective HEIs for a longer period of time. The research measures servant leadership through its eight major dimensions, adapted from (Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) as described below:

1.10.1(a) Empowerment

Empowerment is characterized by an attitude and conduct of self-assurance. It develops within the personnel an understanding of their individual capacity for execution. A servant leader grants autonomy, self-direction, and innovative performance to his or her followers.

1.10.1(c) Accountability

Accountability pertains to the responsibility that personnel bear in regard to the consequences that result from their performances. This mechanism holds a team and individuals executing a particular task accountable for the outcome.

1.10.1(c) Standing Back

Standing back refers to the positive, passive demeanor of any institution's leader. A leader prioritizes the interests of their followers and gives them credit for achieving their assigned objectives. Hence, standing back is about supporting and recognizing the hard work of the followers.

1.10.1(d) Humility

Humility is the willingness to recognize one's own limitations. This behavior signifies

a willingness to proactively seek the input of others and acknowledge one's own constraints. Humility is demonstrated when one considers the positives and negatives of their subordinates.

1.10.1(e) Authenticity

Authenticity is a manifestation of an individual's "true self." It is a manifestation of an individual's internal thoughts and emotions. It demonstrates integrity and genuineness while proficiently conveying one's internal intentions, dedications, and incentives.

1.10.1(f) Stewardship

The willingness to sacrifice one's own interests in order to assume responsibility for the greater good is an element of stewardship. Within the framework of this research, leaders who demonstrate fidelity to the stewardship principle inspire and motivate their subordinates to conscientiously and cooperatively carry out their societal responsibilities.

1.10.1(g) Forgiving

When leaders and managers need to develop their teams and inspire their followers, forgiveness is vital. If adherents harbor old grudges, it hinders their development and performance. Practicing forgiveness elicits the finest performance from followers.

1.10.1(h) Courage

Courage distinguishes servant leaders from their counterparts. Within an institution, a leader demonstrates their determination by challenging established workplace conduct models that are fundamental to innovation and creativity.

1.10.2 Faculty Retention

Employee retention is defined as an organization's ability to hold its employees (Aleem & Bowra, 2020). Faculty retention is the process of retaining, inspiring, and empowering faculty members to remain dedicated to an organization for longer periods of time or until the expiration of a specific employment contract (Temba, 2020). In the present study, faculty

retention pertains to voluntary departure of faculty from HEIs as a result of unsatisfactory job conditions and leadership, while also indicating a tendency towards a more “opportunistic approach” in pursuing new career endeavors. Faculty retention in this study is a dependent variable, which is measured through its five key dimensions, adapted from (Kydnt, E., 2009; Kumar, 2014) as explained below;

1.10.2(a) Employee Retention

Intentions of employees to voluntarily resign and depart from an organization as a result of an unsatisfactory job environment and ineffective human resource management, referred to as employer-induced employee turnover.

1.10.2(b) Job Support and Recognition

The employee receives recognition and acknowledgment for their outstanding performance. Consistent feedback serves to effectively guide all challenging activities. Furthermore, employees are granted appreciation in both their personal and professional spheres.

1.10.2(c) Compensation and Career Growth

Employees are paid and compensated by management in accordance with their job performance. An administration that is not only efficient and exclusive in its pursuit of compensation, increases other supplementary grants for its staff, and also offers endeavors for their future professional development.

1.10.2(d) Organizational Culture

Furthermore, management ensures that a pleasurable social environment and position-related autonomy are promoted. Its objective is to facilitate coordination between different departments. Nevertheless, employees are honored and welcomed to share their substantial concerns and constructive suggestions with management, which fosters an environment of

respect within the company.

1.10.2(e) Work-Compatibility Factor

Management ensures that its employees possess an appropriate balance between work and personal life, thereby enhancing their self-actualization and self-esteem.

1.10.2(f) Autonomy and Independence

An autonomous and independent work environment is encouraged by the management. This facilitates adaptation and control at the workplace. As a consequence, employees develop a sense of gratitude towards their job, while the organization experiences a significant advantage.

1.10.3 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is another indicator of an employee's contentment and pleasure at their workplace. Job satisfaction is an essential concern that employees often identify as a result of their specific employment responsibilities (Sadiq & Nazar, 2018). In this study, job satisfaction refers to an elevated state of mind and a degree of contentment, which may be affected by a variety of workplace conditions, structures, and supervision. Job satisfaction is employed as a mediating variable in this research. Job satisfaction is measured with its four key dimensions, adapted from (Ozpehlivan & Acar, 2016), i.e., pay, promotion, co-workers, and workplace conditions.

1.10.3(a) Pay

The faculty's salary package is known as pay. Faculty members have been observed routinely comparing their wages and responsibilities to those of their peers. If they discover that their wage standards are lower than those of the other faculty members with the same rank and designation within the same institution, they become demotivated, dissatisfied, and eventually depart.

1.10.3(b) Promotion

Promotion is also a vital aspect that may significantly affect faculty's job satisfaction. It relates to the employees' expectations of their employer considering their newly acquired expertise and abilities after a certain period of job tenure.

1.10.3(c) Co-workers

A co-worker is a person who occupies a comparable position within a given institution. Additionally, coworkers exert mutual influence, operate within the same institutional sphere, and gain knowledge from one another. A development of positive peer relationships within the workplace fosters a longer tenure for newly hired faculty members.

1.10.3(d) Workplace Conditions

The elements of an employer's terms and conditions for employment that deal with the working environment are referred to as job working conditions. Unbalanced and declining work conditions have a negative impact on faculty' job satisfaction in an institution. Faculty members have special concerns about their physical office structures and environment, as they spend a large portion of time at their workplace.

1.10.4 Structural Empowerment

Employees who perceive easy access to essential workplace organizational structures are more satisfied and content and report higher-levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Wong & Laschinger, 2013). In the context of the present research, "structural empowerment" pertains to the faculty's freedom for easy access to necessary work structures that enhance their institutional commitment (Ahad & Suandi, 2014). In this research, "structural empowerment" is employed as a moderator variable and is measured through its four formal dimensions, adapted from (Laschinger et al., 2010; Havaei & Dahinten, 2017), i.e., information, opportunity, resource, support.

1.10.4(a) Information

Information is the range provided through which a faculty member accesses important information related to the current state of the institution.

1.10.4(b) Opportunity

Opportunity is the chance given to a faculty member to acquire new prospects and skills at their job.

1.10.4(c) Resource

The term "resource" refers to the time and resources that a faculty member utilizes to perform their duties effectively.

1.10.4(d) Support

Support is a backing provided, through which the faculty member obtains problem-solving advice and resources.

1.11 Rationale of the study

Effective leadership is vital in contemporary educational institutions, particularly in HE, as it establishes an atmosphere that fosters faculty commitment. Faculty turnover has become a significant global concern, particularly in the private HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan. Hence, it is imperative to analyze the influence of servant leadership on the retention of faculty members, along with a mediating role of job satisfaction. The aim of this study is to provide valuable insights into the dynamics of faculty management at private HEIs in Lahore, Pakistan.

Private HEIs in Lahore, Pakistan, operate under a complex organizational structure. These institutions face unique challenges in managing their faculty, which include hiring, retention, and skill development processes. This study aims to better understand the organizational dynamics of private HEIs that influence faculty' social behavior and decision-

making by assessing the current level of servant leadership, job satisfaction, and structural empowerment in HEIs of Lahore, Pakistan. Faculty turnover in HEIs significantly influences the quality and continuity of educational endeavors. The faculty turnover rate can seriously undermine HEI's stability, have a detrimental influence on students' learning experiences, and incur huge costs for recruiting and training new faculty. A variety of organizational contexts have recognized servant leadership, defined by its emphasis on empowerment, empathy, and a desire to community serve, with an effective leadership style. Nonetheless, the influence of this leadership style has not been explored in a non-Western context yet. This study evaluates the relationship between servant leadership and faculty retention, thereby improving awareness of leadership styles and attributes in educational settings.

Faculty retention is also substantially influenced by job satisfaction. The present research is conducted at private HEIs located in Lahore, Pakistan. Doing so, provide recommendations for developing and implementing policies for the betterment of job conditions and satisfaction and foster a positive work culture. Further, the purpose of this study is to better understand the underlying relationships by which servant leadership traits improves faculty retention, also through mediating role of job satisfaction and the moderating role of structural empowerment. This comprehension of the above-mentioned phenomenon may be tailored to the specific needs of private HEIs in Lahore, Pakistan.

Moreover, this study enhances the existing literature on leadership practices in HE by examining the distinct setting of private HEIs in Lahore, Pakistan. The results can provide valuable insights for future research and practical efforts aimed at improving faculty management practices, ultimately leading to an improved educational quality and institutional competitiveness. Ultimately, this study fills an important void in the existing body of knowledge by examining how servant leadership style influences the ability of private HEIs in Lahore, Pakistan, to retain faculty members. It also takes into account the mediating role of job satisfaction and the moderating role of structural empowerment. The

goal is to create a work climate that is welcoming and favorable for faculty members, ultimately enhancing institutional resilience, stability, and academic quality.

1.12 Summary

Leadership styles in HEIs affect faculty retention to a varying degree. Whereas the competency and influence of servant leadership are not dependent on large financial resources, but rather on a caring and intelligent execution of leadership traits in HEIs. According to the literature, an employee will remain loyal to an organization that cares about their professional and personal priorities and issues by providing moral, emotional, and financial support. An appealing and modest organizational culture always tempt employees to join such an enterprise.

In other words, staff recruitment and retention are fundamental for HEIs management. Empirical research show that faculty retention is dependent on organizational culture and innovative initiatives. As a result of the above discussion, we can conclude that servant leadership attributes are associated with improved faculty retention rates. It is also proposed that Pakistan's private HEIs can efficiently recruit, manage, and retain academic staff, with a focus on leadership traits and faculty' job satisfaction for its impact on staff performance and retention.