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Title: Unraveling the Underlying Mechanism between Participative Leadership and Job Satisfaction in Academia

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Unraveling the Underlying Mechanism between Participative Leadership and Job Satisfaction in Academia

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Abstract

Job satisfaction among higher education faculty members is crucial for institutional success, as it fosters student achievement and research innovation, ultimately enhancing overall organizational performance. Among various leadership styles, participative leadership plays a critical role in fostering employees' job satisfaction. Accordingly, this study examines the direct and indirect effects of participative leadership on the job satisfaction of higher education faculty members in Pakistan. Additionally, it explores the mediating roles of work engagement and psychological ownership in this relationship. A total of 259 higher education faculty members participated in this study. A cross-sectional survey was conducted using a self-reported questionnaire. The findings indicate a significant positive relationship between participative leadership and job satisfaction. Furthermore, work engagement and psychological ownership partially mediated this relationship. Theoretically, this study expands the literature on participative leadership and job satisfaction by highlighting the role of employee involvement in decision-making. By fostering a sense of ownership and meaningfulness, participative leadership enhances faculty job satisfaction. Practically, the findings offer valuable insights for academic leadership, emphasizing the importance of participative leadership in promoting faculty psychological well-being and job satisfaction. Future research should explore this relationship across different institutional and cultural contexts to enhance generalizability.

Keywords: *Participative leadership, Job satisfaction, Work engagement, Psychological ownership, Higher education, Path-Goal Theory*

1. Introduction

Higher education is pivotal in driving educational, social, and economic advancement. These advancements are primarily attributed to the performance of faculty members, whether in terms of student achievement or research innovation. However, these contributions often lack adequate recognition, which can adversely impact job satisfaction among faculty members. Conversely, high levels of job satisfaction are a significant source of motivation, leading to improved performance and more extraordinary accomplishments in teaching and research (Szromek & Wolniak, 2020). Thus, fostering job satisfaction among higher education faculty is essential for

promoting their productivity and effectiveness. Therefore, the current study examines job satisfaction (JS) in higher education faculty members.

School leaders are expected to be able to influence school staff, parents, and other stakeholders in achieving predetermined goals related to teachers' professional performance and students' academic achievements. (Kosgei & Edabu, 2023). According to Kiboss and Jemiryott (2014), leadership styles significantly affect the working environment in schools, subsequently influencing teachers' job satisfaction. Research has demonstrated that participative leadership (PL) fosters positive interpersonal relationships, enhances employee performance, and increases teacher job satisfaction. Prior studies prove that participative leadership positively correlates with teachers' JS. Therefore, this study investigates PL as the independent variable.

Work engagement (WE) has been identified as a significant factor influencing job satisfaction across various sectors, including nursing and the oil and gas industry (Ibrahim & Hussein, 2024; Wei et al., 2023). Zang and Feng (2023), highlighted the affirmative connection between teachers' job satisfaction and work engagement. This study incorporates work engagement as a mediating variable to explore underlying mechanisms between PL and JS. Furthermore, existing research has established the interplaying role of WE amid different leadership styles and job satisfaction (Ibrahim & Hussein, 2024; Orgambidez & Extremera, 2020).

Academic institutions that want to improve performance should focus on authenticity, dedication, and employee job engagement. To improve outcomes, these institutions must focus on enhancing academic staff's psychological ownership and work engagement of their work (Simmons, 2002). Academic organizations rely more significantly on employee involvement than other industries (Oshagbemi, 2000). Engaged workers have higher job satisfaction than their less-engaged peers (Lovakov, 2016). While both psychological ownership and job engagement contribute to job satisfaction, they are not the same constructs: work engagement is about themselves, but psychological ownership is about the organization (Aslan & Atesoglu, 2021). Academic staff's psychological ownership significantly impacts students' success in achieving educational goals (González-Rico et al., 2022; Hajdarpasic et al., 2015). Furthermore, the job satisfaction of academic staff lies with psychological ownership (Aslan & Atesoglu, 2021). Consequently, this study explores the interplaying role of psychological ownership amid participative leadership and teachers' job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is a critical factor in academic settings, as it directly influences teachers' job performance and student outcomes (Szromek & Wolniak, 2020). Despite the recognized importance of leadership styles in enhancing job satisfaction for organizational success, the role of participative leadership in enriching job satisfaction in academia has not been examined comprehensively. Moreover, the influence of PL on teachers' JS is not apprehended. The current study examines the interplaying role of psychological ownership and work engagement in this relationship to address this gap. At the same time, work engagement is widely recognized as a key mediator to accelerating job satisfaction through participative leadership (Chan, 2019), and its importance in academic contexts still needs scholars' attention. This study aims to explore how job satisfaction is enhanced by participative leadership through work engagement. Similarly, psychological ownership has been identified as a potential mediator linking leadership styles to job satisfaction. Although its significance is well-documented, empirical evidence on its mediating role in participative leadership and job satisfaction remains scarce, particularly within academic

settings. Therefore, this study also examines the interplaying role of psychological ownership amid participative leadership and teacher job satisfaction.

The theoretical framework of this study positions participative leadership as a predictor of job satisfaction, mediated by work engagement and psychological ownership. This framework is grounded in the Path-Goal Theory of Leadership (Evans, 1970; House & Dessler, 1974). This posits that a leader's primary role is to enhance employee motivation, satisfaction, and productivity by clarifying the path to goal achievement, removing obstacles, and providing necessary support. Participative leadership, a key component of this theory, fosters motivation by involving employees in decision-making, seeking their input, and providing constructive feedback. This approach strengthens employees' sense of ownership and increases their job satisfaction. (Dokony et al., 2020). Additionally, participative leadership enhances work engagement by promoting autonomy, recognition, and opportunities for meaningful involvement (Fatoki, 2023). By enabling employees to participate in organizational decisions actively, participative leadership fosters an emotional attachment to the organization, which enhances their intrinsic motivation and sense of psychological ownership (Pahi et al., 2022). This emotional connection leads to stronger identification with the organization and, ultimately, higher job satisfaction.

Current research will add to the literature on Path-Goal Theory by offering a comprehensive theoretical framework to investigate the relationship between participative leadership and job satisfaction. It provides valuable empirical evidence from the non-Western cultural context of Pakistan, thereby enhancing the generalizability and cross-cultural relevance of findings in this area. Additionally, the study critically investigates the interplaying role of psychological ownership, work engagement amid participative leadership, and teachers' job satisfaction. To fill this important gap, the current study examines mechanisms concerning the dynamics of participative leadership and job satisfaction among higher education faculty members through work engagement and psychological ownership. The findings offer practical guidelines for educational leaders, emphasizing adopting participative leadership practices to improve job satisfaction and foster a positive work environment for faculty members.

2. Literature review

2.1 Participative Leadership

Participative leadership encompasses behaviors that empower employees by encouraging their involvement in decision-making processes. Engaging employees in decision-making builds trust in the leader's abilities and fosters a collaborative environment. As employees gain experience and enhance their competencies, their contributions are acknowledged, and leaders value their innovative ideas. This recognition and trust motivate employees to take on additional responsibilities, contributing to organizational growth and competitiveness (Lu et al., 2015). Participative leaders further enhance employees' motivation by encouraging them to participate in organizational goal-setting and decision-making processes. This approach fosters employees' trust in their leaders and the organization while promoting autonomy, psychological ownership, and positive behaviors toward leadership and organizational objectives (Lu et al., 2015; Somech, 2003)

2.2 Work engagement

Work engagement, a concept introduced by Kahn (1990), has become a widely studied construct in organizational and human resource management (HRM) research. Work engagement has garnered concentration owing to its indispensable role in enhancing employee performance, well-being, and overall organizational outcomes. Work engagement is described in the literature “as a positive and fulfilling psychological state related to work, distinguished by zeal, persistence, and engrossment” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2002). This definition casts light on different dimensions of work engagement, such as the intellectual and passionate ability of the employees relating to their work. The first dimension, vigor, refers to employees' perceptions of their work as stimulating and energizing. It reflects their willingness to invest time and effort in work tasks, even when faced with challenges. The second dimension, *dedication*, highlights employees' emotional connection with their work. It captures the sense of significance, pride, and inspiration derived from performing their roles. Employees who exhibit dedication perceive their work as meaningful and purposeful, fostering a strong feeling of loyalty and devotion to their firm. The third dimension, absorption, describes the cognitive immersion employees experience when fully engaged in their tasks. It reflects deep focus and concentration, where employees become so engrossed in their work that they lose track of time.

2.3 Psychological Ownership

According to Pierce et al., 2003, psychological ownership is a state wherein individuals perceive a target as tangible or intangible, as their own, encapsulated in the sentiment of "it is 'MINE.'" This construct has roots in the broader psychological literature on possession and property (e.g., Dittmar, 1992; Furby, 1978) and has been adapted to organizational contexts. In such settings, the ownership target significantly influences individuals' self-definition (Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2001). These targets can range from the organization itself to specific aspects of work, such as novel ideas, strategic initiatives, or particular projects and their implementation (Avey, Wernsing, & Palanski, 2012; Baer & Brown, 2011; Brown, Crossley, & Robinson, 2014a; Brown & Robinson, 2011). Alok (2014) posited that deterrent and promising extents of PO are objective facets of a multidimensional construct, as evidenced by their minimal covariance and inconsistent relationships with precursors similar to authentic leadership and occupancy. Widanto, A., & Satrya, A. (2019) explored how participative decision-making can enhance employee commitment through the interplaying role of psychological ownership.

2.4 Job satisfaction

Lee et al. (2011) stated that job satisfaction is an individual's positive attitude based on their appraisal of their exertion or involvement. It is a multidimensional concept influenced by intrinsic motivation, extrinsic factors, social factors, and psychological factors (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Job satisfaction is recognized as one of the essential work-related attitudes in the study of organizational behavior (Alvinus et al., 2017). Participative leadership shapes workers' positive attitudes by creating a supportive and engaging work environment that benefits both the organization and its workers (Eva et al., 2019; Walumbwa et al., 2010). Participative leadership is of utmost value in shaping individuals' positive attitudes by enriching and engaging them in a congenial work environment that benefits both the organization and its employees Kaur (2018);

Neubert et al. (2016) and Amah (2018). Prior research also suggests a beneficial association between job satisfaction and work engagement (Fatoki, 2023; Ibrahim & Hussein, 2024; Kaur, 2018; Ozturk et al., 2021; Sypniewska et al., 2023).

2.5 Participative Leadership to Job Satisfaction

Research indicates that participative leadership positively influences employee job satisfaction. For instance, Fatoki (2023), conducted a study on small, medium, and micro enterprises, revealing that participative leadership significantly enhances job satisfaction. Similarly, (Donaldson & Dunfee, 1994) Highlighted that participative leadership fosters collaboration, inclusive decision-making, and improved employee satisfaction. These findings, supported by theoretical frameworks, suggest that participative leaders involve employees in decision-making, encourage active participation in achieving organizational goals, enhance motivation, improve communication, and promote cohesive teamwork. Collectively, these factors contribute to boosted job satisfaction.(Chan, 2019)Therefore, current research hypothesized that:

H₁: Participative leadership positively influences job satisfaction

2.6 Participative Leadership to Work Engagement

Participative leadership is considered crucial to significantly promoting work engagement among employees. The Sarti (2014), conducted a study in the human services sector, evaluating the effects of various leadership styles. The findings revealed that participative leadership positively stimulates work engagement by enriching employees' sense of involvement and value. Theoretically, this leadership style encourages employees to take part actively in the decision-making process for achieving the organizational goals by realizing them their importance for the well-being and growth of an organization (Sarti, 2014). Similarly, Fatoki (2023), highlighted that participative leaders enhance employees' sense of empowerment and trust, further contributing to work engagement. Huang et al. (2010) supported these findings, emphasizing that empowerment and trust are critical mechanisms through which participative leadership enhances employee engagement and satisfaction. Collectively, these attributes foster greater job satisfaction among employees. Huang et al. (2010) supported these findings, emphasizing that empowerment and trust are critical mechanisms through which participative leadership enhances employee engagement and satisfaction. Collectively, these properties of the job foster job satisfaction in employees. Furthermore, a study was conducted. Furthermore, Chan (2019) , explored that participative leadership fosters employees' insight into meaningfulness in their work, directly leading to higher engagement levels. The study also demonstrated the mediating mechanism of work engagement amid participative leadership and job satisfaction. Based on the findings of existing studies and theoretical frameworks, this study hypothesized that:

H₂. Participative leadership positively influences work engagement.

H₃. Work engagement mediates the relationship between participative leadership and job satisfaction

2.7 Participative leadership to psychological ownership

Participative leadership grants employees a certain level of autonomy and authority by involving them in decision-making processes. These decisions directly impact their roles, fostering the feeling of psychological ownership. This sensation of psychological ownership, characterized by feelings of possession and responsibility, promotes trust, support, self-investment, and alignment of personal goals with organizational goals (Wang et al., 2022). Research indicates that participative leadership significantly and positively influences favorable job outcomes (Usman et al., 2021). These outcomes, along with the psychological empowerment and sense of ownership experienced by employees, contribute to enhanced job satisfaction. Furthermore, studies have identified the interplaying role of psychological ownership amid participative leadership and employees' job performance (Fatoki, 2023; Usman et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022). Building on this theoretical and empirical foundation, this study hypothesized that:

H4. Participative leadership positively influences psychological ownership.

H5. Psychological ownership mediates the relationship between participative leadership and job satisfaction.

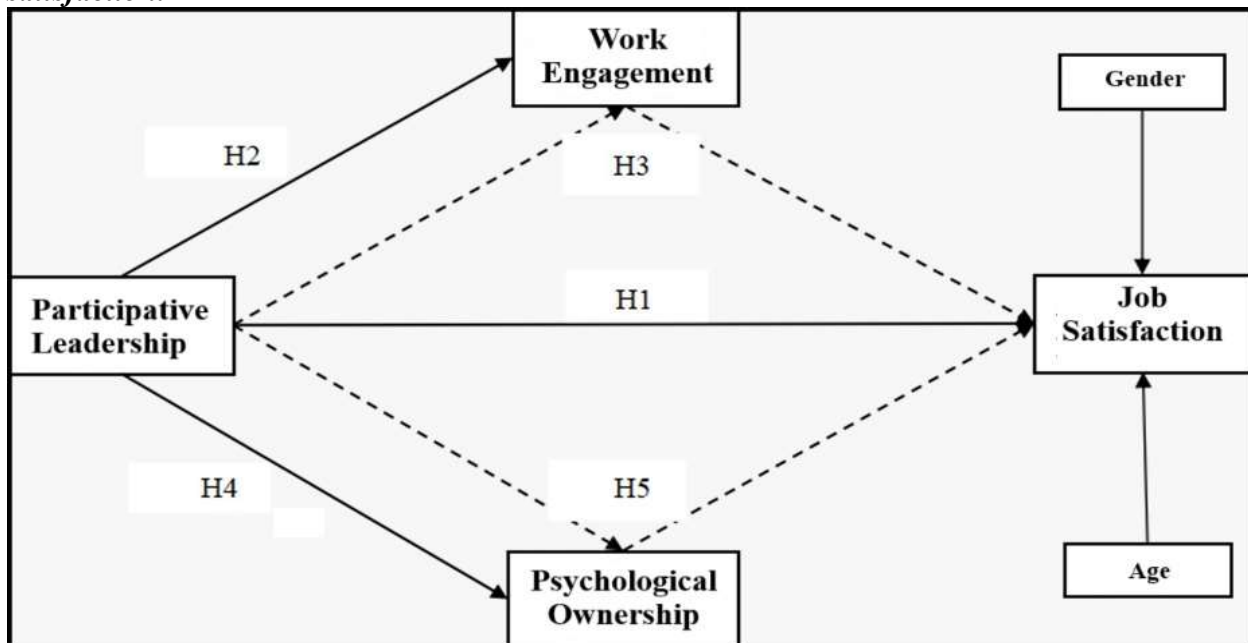


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Population and Data Collection

Faculty members from higher education institutions in Pakistan were surveyed using self-administered questionnaires. As all participants were proficient in English, the questionnaires were distributed in English without translation into local languages. First, 300 questionnaires were disseminated, of which 278 were received in a single wave. Of these, 19 were incomplete and excluded from the analysis, resulting in 259 valid responses, yielding an effective response rate of 86%. Participants provided data on participative leadership, work engagement, psychological ownership, and employees' job satisfaction. The participants' responses were rated on the 5-point

Likert scale, with a rating of 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree. To address potential biases, a single-factor Harman's test was conducted. The test yielded a variance of 21%, which is well below the 50% threshold, indicating no significant risk of common method bias. Additionally, demographic information, including gender and age, was collected. The demographic characteristics of the participants are summarized in Table 1.

3.2 Measures

3.2.1 Participative Leadership

This study adapted the 6-item scale instrument introduced by Arnold et al. (2000) to assess participative leadership. A sample item included: "My supervisor encourages team members to express their ideas or suggestions." The value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.94 for this measure, which is evident in Table 2.

3.2.2 Work Engagement

This study evaluated work engagement using the 9-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) of Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova (2006). Example item: "I receive recognition for a job well done." The value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.90 for this measure, which is evident in Table 2.

3.2.3 Psychological Ownership

This study evaluated psychological ownership using a 7-item scale of Van Dyne and Pierce (2004). An example item was, "I sense that this university is OUR university." The value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.84 for this measure, which is evident in Table 2.

3.2.4 Job Satisfaction

This study evaluated job satisfaction using a ten-item scale of Macdonald and MacIntyre (1997). An example item was "My job inspires me." The value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.90 for this measure, which is evident in Table 2.

4. Results

4.1 Demographic Analysis

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Items	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender			
Male	137	52.9	52.9
Female	122	47.1	100
Total	259	100.00	100.00
Age			
25y or below	32	12.4	12.4
26---30y	67	25.9	38.2
31---35y	60	32.2	61.4
36---40y	47	18.1	79.5
41---45	42	16.2	95.8
46y or above	11	4.2	100
Total	259	100	

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

We conducted a descriptive analysis of the dataset, which revealed key insights into the study variables. The mean value for participative leadership was 3.40, indicating a moderate employee tendency to experience participative leadership. The mean value for work engagement was 2.90, suggesting that employees are occasionally engaged in their work. The psychological ownership demonstrated a higher mean value of 3.50, reflecting a stronger inclination toward emotional attachment to the organization. Regarding job satisfaction, employees tended towards neutrality. The standard deviations of the constructs ranged from 0.42 to 0.72, indicating minimal variation from their respective means. Table 2 presents a summary of the descriptive analysis results.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis

Constructs	Mean	St. deviation	Cronbach α
Participative Leadership (PL)	3.40	0.72	0.94
Work Engagement (WE)	2.90	0.42	0.90
Psychological Ownership (PO)	3.5	0.68	0.84
Job Satisfaction (JS)	2.90	0.45	0.90

Additionally, Table 1 reports Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for all constructs, which exceeded the threshold of 0.70, confirming the internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scales.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted using SPSS version 20. Table 3 illustrates the correlation analysis results among the study variables, revealing significant positive associations between participative leadership, work engagement, psychological ownership, and job satisfaction. Specifically, participative leadership positively correlates with work engagement, psychological ownership, and job satisfaction.

Table 3. Correlations

Correlations	PL	WE	PO	JS
Participative Leadership (PL)	1			
Work Engagement (WE)	.671**	1		
Psychological Ownership (PO)	.869**	.642**	1	
Job Satisfaction (JS)	.855**	.753**	.792**	1

Note. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Similarly, work engagement positively correlates with participative leadership, psychological ownership, and job satisfaction. Psychological ownership is also positively correlated with participative leadership, work engagement, and job satisfaction. Finally, job satisfaction is positively related to participative leadership, work engagement, and psychological ownership.

4.4 Direct Effects

A simple linear regression analysis was executed using the stepwise method to assess the influence of PL on WE, PO, and JS. In the first step, the predictor variable was PL, and the outcome variable was JS. The study's findings demonstrated that participative leadership substantially directly

influences job satisfaction ($\beta=0.54$, $p<0.001$). These findings support Hypothesis 1, revealing that employees who experience frequent participative leadership exhibit greater job satisfaction.

In the second step, work engagement was examined as the influential variable, while job satisfaction was considered the outcome variable. Results demonstrated that work engagement has a constructive and significant relationship with teachers' job satisfaction ($\beta=0.34$, $p<0.001$). This outcome supports Hypothesis 2, suggesting that more engaged employees experience high job satisfaction.

In the third step, psychological ownership was examined as an influential variable, while job satisfaction was considered the outcome variable. Results indicated a notable parallel trend between psychological ownership and job satisfaction ($\beta=0.84$, $p<0.001$). These findings support Hypothesis 4, highlighting that the employees with more substantial psychological ownership of their jobs report higher job satisfaction. Table 4 summarizes the direct effects of the predictor variables on the outcome variable.

Table 4. Direct Effects

Constructs	β	Adjusted R ²
Participative Leadership	0.54***	0.73***
Work Engagement	0.34***	0.20***
Psychological ownership	0.84**	0.25***

*Note. Outcome variable is job satisfaction; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.*

4.5 Mediation Analysis

The present study investigated the interplaying roles of WE and PO amid PL and teachers' JS. The findings indicated a notable consequential effect of PL on teachers' JS through WE, supporting Hypothesis 3. Additionally, a significant direct effect of PL on teachers' JS was observed, concluding that the interplaying role of WE acted partially.

The interplaying role of PO amid PL and teachers' JS was assessed and found significant. In addition, results demonstrated a notable predictor effect of PL on teachers' JS via PO, supporting Hypothesis 5. Furthermore, a notable predictor effect of PL was identified on teachers' JS. Results also revealed that PO interplays partially amid PL and teachers' JS. Table 5 presents the mediation analysis using process macro V-2.16.

Table 5. Mediation Analysis

Relationship	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Confidence Intervals		t-statistics	Conclusions
				LLCI	ULCI		
PL=> WE=> JS	0.537	0.398	0.139	0.0833	0.1951	16.3991	Partial mediation
PL=> PO=> JS	0.537	0.426	0.110	0.0098	0.2043	10.5334	Partial mediation

Note. Bootstrap = 5000; level of confidence =95%

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated participative leadership's proximal and indirect effects on job satisfaction, with work engagement and psychological ownership as mediating variables. 259 faculty members from higher institutions in Pakistan participated in the research. The proximal and indirect effects of participative leadership were assessed, and it was found that this relationship enriches employees' job satisfaction.

The findings demonstrated a momentous predictor effect of participative leadership on job satisfaction, supporting Hypothesis 1. Faculty members who experienced participative leadership reported higher levels of job satisfaction. This study's findings are coherent with the research of Fatoki (2023), who found that employees in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) experienced a positive and valuable influence on job satisfaction when exposed to participative leadership styles.

Additionally, the findings showed that participative leadership significantly positively affects work engagement, confirming Hypothesis 2. Employees who experienced participative leadership demonstrated enriched work engagement. This aligns with the study of Monje-Amor et al. (2021), who argued that participative leadership fosters psychological safety and provides essential resources, promoting employee engagement in their work. This study also unveils a valuable positive direct influence of participative leadership on psychological ownership, supporting Hypothesis 4. Employees who reported higher levels of participative leadership demonstrated enhanced psychological ownership of their organizations. This study's findings align with those of Odoardi et al. (2019), who reported that participative leadership enhances employees' psychological ownership.

Furthermore, Hypothesis 3 confirmed that work engagement acts as a mediator between PL and employees' JS. This suggests that job satisfaction is enriched by participative leadership through work engagement. This study's findings align with those of Fatoki (2023), who explored an interplaying mechanism of WE between PL and employees' job satisfaction in SMEs.

Finally, the study reported a partially interplaying role of psychological ownership amid participative leadership and job satisfaction, confirming Hypothesis 5. This indicates that psychological ownership serves as a conduit through which participative leadership influences job satisfaction among faculty members. These results are aligned with the findings of Mardian Evtasari et al. (2023), and Building et al. (2024) who identified an interplaying role of psychological ownership amid authentic leadership and employees' job satisfaction. This highlights the critical role of psychological ownership as interplay amid leadership and teachers' job satisfaction, corroborating the conclusions of existing studies.

6. Practical and Theoretical Implications

Current research makes a significant scholarly contribution by enriching the existing literature and advancing the knowledge base of relevant practitioners. From a theoretical perspective, the findings demonstrate that PL enriches JS among faculty members of higher education institutions. Furthermore, the study elucidates the mechanisms underlying amid PL and JS by highlighting the interplaying role of WE and PO.

From a practical perspective, the findings present empirical evidence underscoring the essential role of participative leadership in fostering job satisfaction within the higher education sector. Consequently, participative leadership practices should be encouraged among administrators in academic institutions. Additionally, this research enriches the understanding of faculty job satisfaction by detailing its mechanisms through work engagement and psychological ownership. The findings suggest that administrators should implement measures to promote work engagement and enrich psychological ownership among faculty members in higher education institutions to enhance their job satisfaction.

7. Limitations and Future Direction

This study offers significant theoretical and contextual contributions by examining the interplaying mechanism of work engagement and psychological ownership in the relationship between participative leadership and job satisfaction among faculty members. It addresses a notable gap in the literature concerning the job satisfaction of academic employees. Prior to this research, the specific dynamics between participative leadership and job satisfaction had been seldom explored in such contexts. By investigating these relationships, the study enhances our understanding of how participative leadership influences job satisfaction through the mediating effects of work engagement and psychological ownership, thereby enriching the existing literature on participative leadership.

Furthermore, the research explores this relationship within the context of Pakistan, a developing Asian country characterized by a non-Western cultural setting. This approach responds to the call for examining such relationships beyond the context of Western, industrialized, rich, educated, and developed countries (commonly referred to as WEIRD cultures).

However, this study has certain limitations. First, it employs a cross-sectional research design, which restricts the ability to infer causal relationships. A longitudinal or time-lagged design could provide a deeper understanding of these dynamics. Future research should consider adopting such methodologies. Second, the data for this study were collected exclusively from faculty members in higher education institutions. This limitation should be acknowledged when attempting to generalize the findings to other educational contexts, such as school-level education. Future studies are encouraged to include data from school education departments to enhance the generalizability of the results.

8. Conclusion

The study's findings reveal that participative leadership has both direct and indirect positive effects on faculty members' job satisfaction within higher education institutions. Moreover, the research provides empirical evidence that work engagement and psychological ownership partially mediate the relationship between participative leadership and academic job satisfaction. These results underscore the critical importance of participative leadership, work engagement, and psychological ownership in shaping the mechanisms that foster job satisfaction among academic staff.

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