



Full length article

What Drives Citizen Extra-Role Behaviour? Leadership Perceptions and the Mediating Role of Public Service Motivation in Local Government

Bindu Tandon Aryal*, Kamaljeet Kaur

Faculty of Business Administration, Kuala Lumpur University of Science and Technology (KLUST), Malaysia

*Corresponding e-mail: 081901900002@s.iukl.edu.my; kamaljeet@klust.edu.my, Cell: +977 9851170128

Article Info

Received: 23.02.2026

Accepted: 23.03.2026

Available online: 30.03.2026

Keywords:

Extra-role behavior, Servant leadership, Ethical leadership, Public service motivation, Citizen engagement, Local governance, Public sector leadership, PLS-SEM

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.59857/yc5tz95>

ABSTRACT

Why do some citizens willingly contribute to local governance beyond what is formally expected of them? Extra-role behaviour has been widely studied in employee settings. But similar voluntary actions among citizens have got much less attention. This study looks at whether perceptions of leadership in local ward offices affect such discretionary civic engagement. And also whether public service motivation explains this link. Survey data came from 458 residents of a municipality in Kathmandu District, Nepal. All of them knew their elected ward representatives. Using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the results show that both servant and ethical leadership perceptions are positively linked with citizen extra-role behaviour. Public service motivation acts as important mediating mechanism. Our findings suggest that leadership behaviours are associated with voluntary civic actions through the way they strengthen citizens' commitment to public values. The model demonstrated strong explanatory power. This underscores the role of leadership signals in helping to build cooperative and participatory governance environments. Extending research on extra-role behaviour to the citizen level provides fresh theoretical insights for studies on leadership and motivation. It also offers practical implications that could benefit public sector management.

1. Introduction

Citizen engagement that goes beyond formal duties has emerged as a major concern in public administration, particularly at the local level. Participatory mechanisms have the potential to strengthen accountability, transparency, and service delivery (de Geus et al., 2020; Uster et al., 2026). Much of the existing research centres on formal forms of citizen participation. In contrast, voluntary extra-role behaviours that directly support public services have received considerably less attention (Santos et al., 2023; Jankelová et al., 2025). These behaviours are not required by any formal obligation. Yet they demonstrate citizens' genuine willingness to contribute to collective outcomes and reinforce stronger governance (Johansson & Hart, 2023; Sutiyo & Faedlulloh, 2024; Bolino et al., 2024). From management studies, we know that service-oriented and moral leadership approaches can encourage citizenship behaviour. They do so by influencing followers' internal motivations (Bedi et al., 2016;

Eva et al., 2019; Backhaus et al., 2022; Si et al., 2023; Abdi et al., 2024). Public service motivation also plays a central role. It represents an individual's intrinsic drive to serve the public interest (Perry & Vandenberg, 2015; Tang et al., 2024). Servant and ethical leadership, in particular, appear to enhance pro-social values and motivation (Gu & Liu, 2022; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2023; Li, 2024; Hanafiah et al., 2024). When we apply this to citizens, it becomes clear that perceptions of leadership in local governance can encourage voluntary supportive actions (Awasthi, 2022; Neves et al., 2024).

Recent research further indicates that leadership styles in public governance significantly shape how citizens perceive their leaders. This, in turn, affects trust and willingness to act for the collective good (Atiku, 2023; Zahari et al., 2024; Castanho Silva et al., 2025; Keelson et al., 2025). Citizens who perceive leaders as ethical and service-focused are more likely to embrace public values. This activates public service motivation in leaders. And it becomes a main driver for voluntary civic actions (Shim, 2019; Kaya & Ceylan, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2023). In South Asia, studies show PSM mediates leadership effects on citizen engagement and trust. Leadership does not work alone. It interacts with individual motivation to create real participation (Bhul, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2023; Ghalan & Mishra, 2026).

But there are still big gaps. Most extra-role behaviour and PSM studies happen in workplaces. This limits our understanding of how they work for citizens in public governance (Glińska-Neweś & Szostek, 2018; Ingrams, 2018; Stepanek & Paul, 2022). Women's representation in local governments has increased because of quotas and numbers have gone up in leadership science and technology sectors as well (Mithani et al., 2025; Raza & Singh, 2025). Yet we have little evidence on how citizens view female elected leaders' behaviours. Or how these views turn into voluntary civic help (Castanho Silva et al., 2025; Nash et al., 2025; Ghalan & Mishra, 2026). Age, occupation, education and gender also interact with leadership and motivation in emerging democracies. These things are still underexplored (UN Women, 2023; Bhul, 2023; WomenLead, 2025). Filling these gaps is important. Leadership strategies that encourage voluntary behaviour can improve governance and democracy legitimacy (Fritz et al., 2024; Nguyen et al., 2025).

This study can give useful ideas for local governance. It examines links between citizen perceptions of servant and ethical leadership and their extra-role behaviour. Public service motivation of leaders is the mediator. The study gives better understanding of citizen engagement beyond formal duties. It also tells policymakers and administrators how leadership conduct builds trust, motivation, and cooperation. These are very important for good service delivery (Nguyen et al., 2023; Abdi et al., 2024; Harbani et al., 2025; Uster et al., 2026). So the study has three main objectives:

RO1: To investigate the relationship between citizens' perceptions of servant and ethical leadership and their engagement in extra-role behaviour.

RO2: To examine the mediating role of public service motivation of leaders in these relationships.

RO3: To provide empirical evidence on leadership strategies that foster voluntary citizen contributions, with focus on female political leadership and quota systems in Nepal.

The research questions are:

RQ1: How do perceptions of servant and ethical leadership influence citizens' extra-role behaviour in local government settings?

RQ2: Does public service motivation mediate the relationship between leadership perceptions and citizen extra-role behaviour?

RQ3: How can insights from citizen perceptions and motivational mechanisms inform leadership practices to enhance participatory governance?

By combining recent evidence, theory on leadership and motivation, and Nepal local governance context, this study builds framework linking leadership perceptions to voluntary civic engagement. It improves understanding of how leadership and citizen motivation work together to drive extra-role behaviour. And it gives practical guidance for better participatory governance in emerging democracies (Nguyen et al., 2025; Castanho Silva et al., 2025).

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

This study uses leadership theory, public service motivation, and organisational behaviour theory. It explains how citizens do voluntary work in governance beyond duties. Citizen extra-role behaviour means extra actions that help governance. Like joining community programs, giving feedback, helping local projects (Organ, 2018; Santos et al., 2023). In local governance, leadership drives these behaviours. Especially when citizens see leaders as ethical and service-focused (Gu & Liu, 2022; Awasthi, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2023; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2023; Hanafiah et al., 2024). In new democracies like Nepal, women elected by quotas give good chance. We can see how citizens' views of leadership often translate into voluntary civic contributions (Castanho Silva et al., 2025; Nash et al., 2025; Ghalan & Mishra, 2026).

Servant Leadership and Citizen Extra-Role Behaviour (H1)

Servant leadership places community needs at the forefront. It works to empower people to actively take part in governance (Greenleaf, 1977; Dhiman & Roberts, 2023). Core elements involve empathy, humility, and bringing citizens into decision-making processes. These qualities help foster trust and stronger social connections (Gu & Liu, 2022; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2023; Harbani et al., 2025; Abdou et al., 2025). In municipal settings, when citizens observe female leaders practising servant leadership, they tend to get more involved in voluntary governance activities — for example, supporting local programs (Gu & Liu, 2022; Mesfin, 2023; Hanafiah et al., 2024; Harbani et al., 2025). Such actions go well beyond what is formally expected. They reflect a clear desire among citizens to contribute to the welfare of the group.

H1: Perceived Servant Leadership of female leaders is positively associated with citizen extra-role behaviour.

Ethical Leadership and Citizen Extra-Role Behaviour (H2)

Ethical Leadership means leaders act with integrity, fairness, transparency and they always promote ethical conduct in decision making (Brown et al., 2005; Mozumder, 2022; Abdi et al., 2024) and are able to build public trust. They make institutions legitimate. And they encourage voluntary actions for community (Mozumder, 2022; Li, 2024; Uster et al., 2026). When female leaders in local government seem ethical and principled, citizens contribute more voluntarily. This shows commitment to society (Abdi et al., 2024; Legate, 2024).

H2: Perceived Ethical Leadership of female leaders is positively associated with citizen extra-role behaviour.

Leadership and Public Service Motivation (H3, H4)

Public Service Motivation is inner drive to serve public. It wants to make meaningful contribution to society (Perry & Wise, 1990; Forte et al., 2022; Jensen & Piatak, 2024; Lim & Moon, 2025). Citizen views of leadership

can affect how they see PSM in leaders. Servant leaders focus on community needs. They show commitment. This makes citizens see leader’s PSM stronger (Shim, 2019; Gu & Liu, 2022; Kaya & Ceylan, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2023). Ethical leaders support fairness and justice. This also highlights leader’s public welfare commitment (Hoch, 2018; Abdi et al., 2024). When citizens see these behaviours, they believe leaders are motivated to serve. This encourages voluntary governance participation (Fritz et al., 2024; Abas, 2024, Nguyen et al., 2025).

H3: Perceived Servant Leadership of female leaders is positively related to perceived Public Service Motivation.

H4: Perceived Ethical Leadership of female leaders is positively related to perceived Public Service Motivation.

Public Service Motivation as a Mediator (H5)

Studies say leaders with high PSM inspire citizens. Studies suggest that leaders with strong public service motivation can inspire citizens to get involved. They promote voluntary governance work and extra-role behaviours (Zhang, 2023; Forte et al., 2022; Lim & Moon, 2025). When citizens observe leaders who seem genuinely motivated to serve the public, they often emulate this commitment. They start doing extra things — joining community programs, offering constructive feedback, or supporting local development efforts. In our view, PSM therefore functions as a bridge. It connects how citizens perceive leadership with their own voluntary engagement (Dhiman & Roberts, 2023; Jensen & Piatak, 2024; Palumbo, 2025; Yeboah-Asiamah, 2025).

H5: Public Service Motivation is positively related to citizen extra-role behaviour.

H5a: PSM mediates the relationship between perceived Servant Leadership and citizen extra-role behaviour.

H5b: PSM mediates the relationship between perceived Ethical Leadership and citizen extra-role behavior.

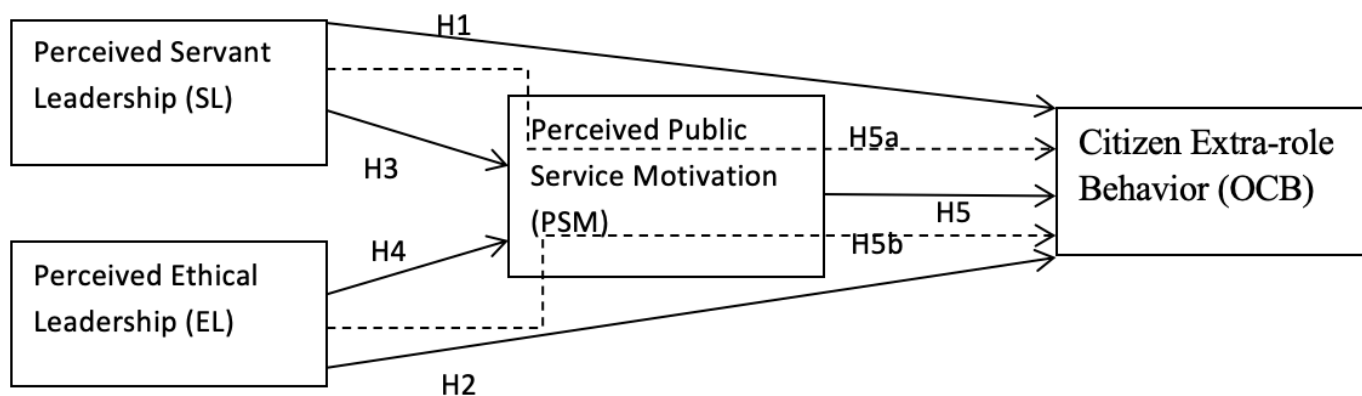


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

3. Research Methodology and Design

This study used cross-sectional survey design. It examined how citizens see leadership of female local leaders. And how these views affect extra-role behaviours. Public service motivation mediates this.

Research Design and Study Setting

Cross-sectional method is good for checking relationships at one time. Especially when comparing different groups (Hair et al., 2022; Pereira et al., 2024; Demir, 2025; Ghazali & Yaacob, 2025; Imam et al., 2025). Data came from Gokarneshwor Municipality in Kathmandu, Nepal. It has nine ward offices. These are lowest units in local government. This place lets us focus on citizen views under female reservation system. It helps understand gender inclusivity and local governance (Nash et al., 2025; Ghalan & Mishra, 2026).

Population and Sampling Strategy

Gokarneshwor Municipality was selected due to its mixture of urban, semi-urban, and rural wards, along with the availability of updated municipal census data. Each ward has two female leaders elected through the reservation system, resulting in 18 female leaders in total. The population of the study included 12,614 households in the municipality, with one respondent selected per household as the unit of analysis (Yamane, 1967).

We used a probability-based simple random sampling approach. Household numbers served as unique identifiers, and we contacted respondents by phone or WhatsApp using details from municipal records. This method gave every household an equal chance of being selected and helped reduce sampling bias as much as possible. Before they participated, we screened respondents to make sure they were familiar with their local female leaders. This step ensured the data we collected came from people with informed views. In total, 458 respondents completed the survey. That number exceeded the minimum sample size of 388 we had calculated as necessary for reliable Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis (Amin, 2019; Becker, 2023; Benitez, 2020; Hair et al., 2022; Pereira et al., 2024; Demir, 2025; Ghazali & Yaacob, 2025; Imam et al., 2025).

Data Collection Procedure

We carried out data collection using online surveys through Google Forms. The surveys were distributed via WhatsApp and SMS to reach respondents efficiently. Before they began the questionnaire, we asked participants a simple screening question: "Do you know the female elected leaders in your Ward office?" Only those who answered "Yes" were allowed to proceed. This ensured the data on leadership perceptions came from people who actually had some familiarity with their local female leaders. The online method proved effective for covering different wards. At the same time, it helped protect respondent privacy and followed standard ethical guidelines for research (Evans & Mathur, 2005).

For instrumentation and measurement, we relied on validated scales adapted from previous studies. Responses were collected on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

Servant Leadership (SL) was measured with 14 items adapted from Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2023). These items focused on the leader's emphasis on community service, empowerment, and citizen involvement (Dhiman & Roberts, 2023; Gu & Liu, 2022; Abdou et al., 2025; Hu et al., 2025). Likewise, Ethical Leadership (EL) used 10 items adapted from Brown et al. (2005) and Grimmelikhuijsen et al. (2025). They assessed perceived integrity, fairness, and moral conduct (Hoch, 2018; Abdi et al., 2024; Zahari et al., 2024). Further, Public Service Motivation (PSM) was captured with 11 items adapted from Zhang (2023). These items measured citizens' perceptions of the leaders' intrinsic motivation to serve the public (Forte et al., 2022; Tang et al., 2024). Finally,

Citizen Extra-Role Behaviour was captured with 9 items adapted from Tang et al. (2024), evaluating voluntary citizen participation in community and governance activities (Santos et al., 2023; Sutiyoso & Faedlulloh, 2024). Demographics like Age, gender, education, occupation, and ward number were collected for control purposes. A pre-test with 40 respondents was conducted to verify reliability and validity, and all constructs demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties for full-scale data collection.

Data Analysis Method

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which is suitable for testing complex mediation models and predictive relationships between constructs (Henseler et al., 2016; Akter et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2019; Benitez, 2020; Hair et al., 2022; Becker, 2023; Ringle et al., 2024; Pereira et al., 2024; Demir, 2025; Ghazali & Yaacob, 2025; Imam et al., 2025). Analysis proceeded in two stages with the first one being Measurement Model Assessment that examined construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, followed by Structural Model Assessment that tested hypothesized relationships, evaluated variance explained (R^2), and examined mediation effects using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples to determine statistical significance (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). This approach gives us confidence in rigorously testing the conceptual framework. It links leadership perceptions, public service motivation, and citizen extra-role behaviours in a structured way (Henseler et al., 2016; Akter et al., 2017; Sarstedt & Cheah, 2019; Hair et al., 2019).

4. Results

We analysed the data using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS software. The analysis followed a standard two-step process: first the measurement model, then the structural model. This allowed us to examine the hypothesized relationships among perceived Servant Leadership (SL), Ethical Leadership (EL), Public Service Motivation (PSM), and citizen extra-role behaviour — which we measured as Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) (Amin, 2019; Benitez, 2020; Hair et al., 2022; Becker, 2023; Ringle et al., 2024; Demir, 2025; Ghazali & Yaacob, 2025; Imam et al., 2025).

Sample Characteristics

Out of 458 participants we contacted, 54 were unfamiliar with the elected female leaders and were excluded, leaving 404. After screening the data for completeness and quality, we retained 332 responses for the final analysis. The sample was relatively young and well-educated: 52.4% were female, 46.4% male, and 1.2% identified as “Other.” About 51.5% of respondents were between 21 and 40 years old, which reflects good participation from the working-age group. Education levels were high — 78% had completed high school or beyond. The largest occupational groups were private service (23.5%), unemployed (22.3%), and self-employed/business (17.2%). Responses came proportionally from all nine wards of Gokarneshwor Municipality, ranging from 9.3% in Ward 9 to 13.2% in Ward 8 (Table 1).

Table 1 Demographic and Ward Distribution of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	154	46.39
	Female	174	52.41
	Other	4	1.2
Age	Under 20	21	6.33
	21-30	90	27.11
	31-40	81	24.4
	41-50	72	21.69
	51-60	50	15.06
	61-70	18	5.42
Education	No Schooling	2	0.6
	Reading/Writing	27	8.13
	Secondary (Grade 10)	44	13.25
	High School (Grade 12)	98	29.52
	Bachelor's Degree	105	31.63
	Master's & above	56	16.87
Occupation	Government Service	34	10.24
	Private Service	78	23.49
	Self-employed/Business	57	17.17
	Foreign Employment	33	9.94
	Retired	18	5.42
	Agriculture	38	11.45
	Unemployed	74	22.29
Ward	1-9	332	100

Source: Author's compilation based on survey data

Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model showed strong reliability and validity for all constructs. We checked internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (ρ_c). All values exceeded the recommended 0.70 threshold (Amin, 2019; Becker, 2023; Hair et al., 2022; Demir, 2025; Imam et al., 2025). For example, Servant Leadership (SL) had a ρ_c of 0.983, and PSM reached 0.984 — both indicating excellent reliability (Table 2).

Table 2 Reliability and Convergent Validity of Constructs

Construct	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability (ρ_c)	AVE
Servant Leadership (SL)	0.981	0.983	0.831
Ethical Leadership (EL)	0.977	0.981	0.896
Public Service Motivation (PSM)	0.981	0.984	0.882
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)	0.966	0.974	0.882

Source: Author's compilation based on survey data

Convergent validity held up well. All outer loadings were above 0.80, and AVE values exceeded 0.50. This confirmed that the constructs captured sufficient variance from their indicators (Amin, 2019; Benitez, 2020; Hair et al., 2022; Becker, 2023; Pereira et al., 2024; Demir, 2025). For discriminant validity, we used the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT).

Table 3 HTMT Matrix

Constructs	EL	OCB	PSM	SL
EL	-	-	-	-
OCB	0.899	-	-	-
PSM	0.894	0.879	-	-
SL	0.869	0.877	0.897	-

Source: Author's compilation based on survey data

All values stayed below the 0.90 threshold, confirming the constructs were distinct but theoretically related. The highest HTMT was 0.899 between Ethical Leadership and OCB — just under the cutoff. This is consistent with the conceptual overlap between leadership behaviours and citizen engagement seen in earlier work (Hameduddin & Engbers, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2023; Jankelová et al., 2025).

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model explained 78.6% of the variance in citizen extra-role behaviour (OCB), which indicates strong explanatory power from perceived leadership styles and PSM ($R^2 = 0.786$). Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples confirmed statistical significance for all direct paths ($t > 3.29, p < 0.001$). Perceived Servant Leadership showed the largest effect on OCB ($\beta = 0.511$) and PSM ($\beta = 0.536$). Ethical Leadership followed with effects on OCB ($\beta = 0.444$) and PSM ($\beta = 0.438$). PSM itself had a strong positive effect on OCB ($\beta = 0.505$), confirming its important role as a motivational factor (Table 4; Figure 2).

Table 4 Path Coefficients and Significance

Path	β	t	p
SL → OCB	0.511	6.724	<0.001
SL → PSM	0.536	6.790	<0.001
EL → OCB	0.444	6.044	<0.001
EL → PSM	0.438	5.647	<0.001
PSM → OCB	0.505	6.522	<0.001

Source: Author's compilation based on survey data

Bootstrapping also confirmed partial mediation of PSM between leadership perceptions and OCB. Specifically, PSM mediated the relationships of Servant Leadership and Ethical Leadership with OCB (H5a and H5b), highlighting that leadership behaviours enhance citizen extra-role behaviour both directly and indirectly through motivational mechanisms (Hameduddin & Engbers, 2022; Dhiman & Roberts, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2023; Tang et al., 2024).

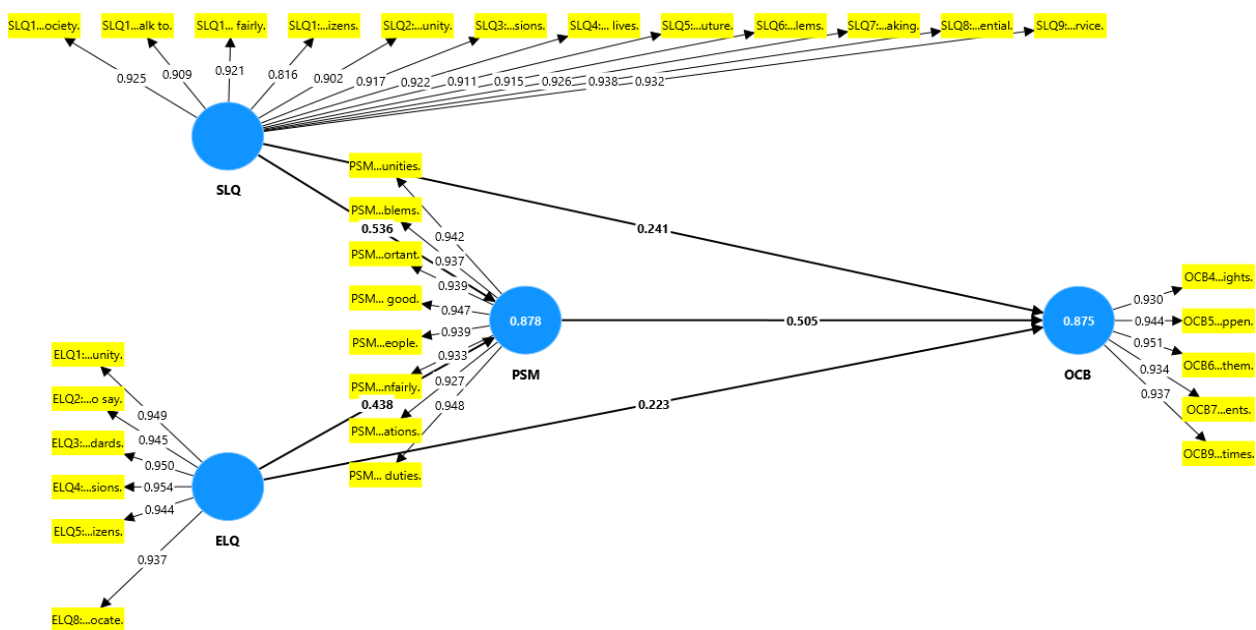


Figure 1 PLS-SEM Model Showing Direct and Mediated Relationships

Source: Author's compilation based on survey data

Overall, the results support the conceptual framework, indicating that female leaders elected under the reservation system can positively influence citizen engagement and extra-role behaviour, with Servant Leadership emerging as the strongest predictor (Gu & Liu, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2023; Mesfin, 2023; Abdou et al., 2025; Harbani et al., 2025).

Discussion

Findings show perceived leadership behaviours shape civic engagement beyond duties in local governance. This matches broader literature. Perceptions of Servant Leadership and Ethical Leadership link positively with citizen extra-role behaviour (Awasthi, 2022; Gu & Liu, 2022; Hameduddin & Engbers, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2023; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2023; Bhul, 2023; Hanafiah et al., 2024). Model explains 78.6% variance. Perceptions of leadership and motivation together account for much of voluntary contributions. Leadership quality very crucial in public service (Backhaus et al., 2022; Si et al., 2023; Abdi et al., 2024).

Globally, Servant Leadership strongly predicts extra-role behaviour. This matches studies in Western and Asian public administration. For example, in Australia and US, servant leadership uses empathy, community service, empowerment. It fosters citizen willingness for community behaviours (Gu & Liu, 2022; Dhiman & Roberts, 2023; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2023; Mesfin, 2023; Harbani et al., 2025; Abdou et al., 2025; Afridi et al., 2024). Patterns consistent across settings. Leadership focused on serving others connects with citizen motivations. No matter culture or institution (Hoch, 2018; Shim, 2019; Dhiman & Roberts, 2023). This thing is very important for democracy countries. It builds trust and collaborative governance through leadership that shows real concern for community.

Ethical Leadership also important as it links to civic trust and participation in global research. Leader integrity, fairness, transparency help (Mozumder, 2022; Reddick et al., 2025; Uster et al., 2026). In Scandinavian and North American places, ethical leaders increase public cooperation and voluntary activities (Hassan, 2014; Hoch, 2018;

Shim, 2019). Current findings align. Ethical leadership creates climate where citizens feel right to contribute beyond rules. It shows ethical conduct relevant everywhere in governance (Abdi et al., 2024; Legate, 2024; Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2025).

PSM mediation deepens understanding. Leadership does not only affect directly. It also works indirectly by building motivational commitment to public good (Hameduddin & Engbers, 2022; Zhang, 2023; Palumbo, 2025; Yeboah-Asiamah, 2025). This matches recent work. PSM explains how leadership signals become internalised. It leads to behaviours supporting community (Tang et al., 2024; Abas, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2025). PSM bridge in this study shows citizen psychological link with public values boosts leadership effects on voluntary engagement (Jensen & Piatak, 2024; Phinaitrup, 2026).

South Asia studies show leadership importance for civic behaviours. In India and Bangladesh, servant or ethical leaders increase trust. This raises voluntary community help (Atiku, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2023; Ghalan & Mishra, 2026). Current study similar. In places with low trust, visible ethical leadership motivates participation (Bhul, 2023; Ghalan & Mishra, 2026). In South Asia, social hierarchies complicate engagement. But these leadership behaviours bridge citizen-institution gap (Ghalan & Mishra, 2026; WomenLead, 2025; Keelson et al., 2025). In Nepal, local studies show gender and leadership affect participation. Female leaders in reserved seats improve governance views (Nash et al., 2025; Ghalan & Mishra, 2026). This study agrees. When citizens see female leaders as servant and ethical, extra-role behaviour increases. Leadership quality matters more than gender or quota alone (Bhul, 2023; WomenLead, 2025; Ghalan & Mishra, 2026).

Servant Leadership stronger than Ethical Leadership on PSM and extra-role. Practical actions for constituents have quicker effect than abstract ethics. This is meaningful. Citizens judge leaders on real outcomes and interactions (Awasthi, 2022; Gu & Liu, 2022; Mesfin, 2023; Hanafiah et al., 2024; Abdou et al., 2025; Afridi et al., 2024). Ethical conduct builds trust. But servant practices that empower and serve may better drive community involvement (Hoch, 2018; Abdi et al., 2024; Zahari et al., 2024; Reddick et al., 2025).

Research has policy value beyond theory. Local governments wanting more participation should invest in leadership programs. Focus on service and ethics. This can increase civic engagement. In new democracies, leadership aligned with public values strengthens citizen-government bond (Fritz et al., 2024; Abas, 2024). Findings add to cross-cultural literature. Leadership determines citizen behaviour. Patterns are consistent globally, regionally, locally. Leadership and motivation theories apply beyond employees to citizens. More study needed. How leadership perceptions and socio-cultural things shape outcomes. Future can add mediators like trust or bureaucratic responsiveness (Fritz et al., 2024; Abas, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2025).

Limitations and Future Research

Study has strengths. But limitations exist. First, cross-sectional design. It captures views at one time. Good for associations between leadership, PSM, OCB. But cannot prove cause (Hair et al., 2022; Demir, 2025; Ghazali & Yaacob, 2025; Imam et al., 2025). Future longitudinal studies better. They show how perceptions and behaviours change over time with female leadership. Second, study in one Nepal municipality (Gokarneshwor). This limits generalisation. Urban, semi-urban, rural wards included. But other places may differ politically, culturally, economically (Bhul, 2023; Ghalan & Mishra, 2026). Comparative studies in multiple areas needed. They confirm findings stronger.

Third, self-reported data from citizens. May have social desirability bias while screening ensured familiarity with leaders. But perceptions affected by politics, media, norms (Nguyen et al., 2023; Harbani et al., 2025). Future can mix surveys with objective leader or observations. Fourth, focus on female leaders from quotas. Limits to gender contexts while findings may differ for male leaders or no-quota places (Nash et al., 2025; Ghalan & Mishra, 2026). Future should look at gender-neutral settings. See if PSM and OCB patterns same.

Study looked at Servant and Ethical Leadership. But transformational, transactional, participative styles may also affect motivation and engagement. Adding more styles gives fuller picture (Awasthi, 2022; Gu & Liu, 2022; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2023; Mesfin, 2023; Hanafiah et al., 2024).

Future research should use longitudinal, multi-region, more leadership types. It validates findings. Also examine moderators like trust (Mozumder, 2022; Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2025; Ghimire & Kaur, 2026), political affiliation, institutional quality. They give deeper insights when leadership turns to engagement (Mozumder, 2022; Abas, 2024). Also, e-governance impact on leader perceptions in Nepal should be explored (Abas, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2025; Ghimire & Kaur, 2026).

5. Conclusion

This study shows citizen perceptions of female leaders' Servant and Ethical Leadership affect PSM and OCB in local governance. Servant actions and ethical conduct encourage voluntary governance work directly. They also strengthen perception of leaders' public service motivation indirectly. Servant Leadership had strongest effect on PSM and OCB. Tangible community actions are very important for civic engagement.

Leadership perception links policy like gender quotas to citizen participation. Study adds to public administration and gender-governance literature. Especially South Asia where engagement is challenge (Nguyen et al., 2023; Ghalan & Mishra, 2026).

Implications

Results of this study are important for local governments and policymakers. Leadership programs should focus servant skills: community service, empowerment, citizen response. Also ethical standards like transparency. Training helps female leaders from reservations. It builds trust. Policy-wise, gender quotas good for representation and for engagement when leaders are viewed positively. Governments can expand leadership building for all representatives. This maximises quota benefits for community. Further, the findings also help empower women and present a road map for more inclusivity in the private sector as well. Women face barriers hindering their entrepreneurial aspirations (Mithani et al., 2025) even in the sector of science and technology (Raza & Singh, 2025).

Theoretically, study confirms PSM mediates leadership to citizen behaviour. It supports combining leadership and motivation theories in public administration. Understanding psychological mechanisms important for governance outcomes (Forte et al., 2022; Zhang, 2023; Dhiman & Roberts, 2023; Lim & Moon, 2025; Phinaitrup, 2026).

Overall, effective leadership in service and ethics empowers citizens. It strengthens democracy and governance. By showing leadership perception and motivation paths, study gives useful ideas for scholars and practitioners to improve local governance and citizen involvement.

Declaration

The authors of this article declare that this work was prepared independently and that no Artificial Intelligence (AI) based applications, software or tools were used to generate any part of the manuscript in this article.

References

- Abdi, A. N. M., Hashi, M. B., & Latif, K. F. (2024). Ethical leadership and public sector performance: Mediating role of corporate social responsibility and organizational politics and moderator of social capital. *Cogent Business & Management*, 11(1), 2386722. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2386722>
- Abdou, A. H., Shehata, M. A., Mahmoud, H. M. E., Alborai, J. J., & Ibrahim, K. M. (2025). Servant leadership for hospitality sustainability: Green psychological capital as a pathway to environmental citizenship behavior. *Frontiers in Sustainability*, 6, 1535809. <https://doi.org/10.3389/frsus.2025.1535809>
- Akter, S., Fosso Wamba, S., & Dewan, S. (2017). Why PLS-SEM is suitable for complex modelling? An empirical illustration in big data analytics quality. *Production Planning and Control*, 28(11-12), 1011–1021. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09537287.2016.1267411>
- Amin, M. K., Rahman, M. A., Khan, T., & Karim, M. T. (2019). Investigating students' adoption and usage behavior of educational technology (EduTech) at tertiary level (PLS-SEM approach). *AIUB Journal of Science and Engineering (AJSE)*, 17(1), 25–30.
- Aryal, B. T., & Kaur, K. (2026). Women in local governance: Citizen perceptions of female leaders' servant and ethical leadership and their citizenship behaviors in Kathmandu, Nepal. *Journal of Advanced Academic Research*, 13(1), 30–46. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jaar.v13i1.90207>
- Atiku, S. O. (2023). Strengthening public sector performance: The role of good governance, leadership style, and service quality in village government administration. *International Journal of Social Science Humanities & Management Research*.
- Awasthi, P., & Walumbwa, F. O. (2022). Antecedents and consequences of servant leadership in local governance: Evidence from three case studies. *Public Administration Review*, 82(6), 1077–1094. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13552>
- Backhaus, L., Vogel, B., & Rofcanin, Y. (2022). Leadership in the public sector: A meta-analysis of styles, outcomes, contexts, and methods. *Public Administration Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13516>
- Bayati, M. M., Alimoradi, Z., Bahmani, M. K., & Sharifzadeh, M. S. (2025). Servant leadership, work-life quality, and organizational citizenship behavior in nurses: A cross-sectional design. *BMC Nursing*, 24, Article 561. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-025-03209-3>
- Becker, J.-M., Cheah, J.-H., Gholamzade, R., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2023). PLS-SEM's most wanted guidance. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 35(1), 321–346. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-04-2022-0474>
- Benitez, J., Henseler, J., Castillo, A., & Schuberth, F. (2020). How to perform and report an impactful analysis using partial least squares: Guidelines for confirmatory and explanatory IS research. *Information & Management*, 57(2), 103168. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2019.05.003>
- Bhul, B. (2023). The review of affirmative action for the inclusive civil service of Nepal. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 1(1) 23-45. <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/njpa/article/view/63288>
- Bolino, M. C., Klotz, A. C., & Whitney, J. M. (2024). The origin, evolution, and future of organizational citizenship behavior. *Academy of Management Collections*, 4(1), 0002. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amc.2023.0002>

- Brown, M. E., Treviño, L. K., & Harrison, D. A. (2005). Ethical leadership: A social learning perspective for construct development and testing. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 97(2), 117–134. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2005.03.002>
- de Geus, C. J. C., Ingrams, A., Tummers, L., & Pandey, S. K. (2020). Organizational citizenship behavior in the public sector: A systematic literature review and future research agenda. *Public Administration Review*, 80(2), 259–270. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13141>
- Demir, S., & Uşak, M. (2025). Analyzing the implementation of PLS-SEM in educational technology research: A review of the past 10 years. *SAGE Open*, 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440251345950>
- Dhiman, S.K. & Roberts, G. E. (2023). *The Palgrave Handbook of Servant Leadership*. Palgrave Macmillan Cham <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-01323-2>
- Evans, J. R., & Mathur, A. (2005). The value of online surveys. *Internet Research*, 15(2), 195–219. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10662240510590360>
- Eva, N., Robin, M., Sendjaya, S., van Dierendonck, D., & Liden, R. C. (2019). Servant leadership: A systematic review and call for future research. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 30(1), 111–132. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2018.07.004>
- Forte, T., Santinha, G., Oliveira, M., & Patrão, M. (2022). Public service motivation: Local government officials. *Social Sciences*, 11(9), 411. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11090411>
- Fritz, L., Baum, C.M., Low, S. et al. (2024). Public engagement for inclusive and sustainable governance of climate interventions. *Nature Communications*, 15, 48510. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-024-48510-y>
- Ghalan, R., & Mishra, B. C. (2026). Evaluating the Impact of Gender Quotas on Women’s Political Participation and Empowerment in Post-Federal Nepal. *Journal of Advanced Academic Research*, 13(1), 121–127. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jaar.v13i1.90231>
- Ghazali, Z. M. & Yaacob, W. (2025). Integrated PLS-SEM-Latent Growth Curve Model: A new conditional time invariant method for analysing panel survey data. *MethodsX*, 13, 04790. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mex.2025.103635>.
- Ghimire, S., & Kaur, K. (2026). Understanding the impact of Nagarik App on behavioural intention of the citizens of Kathmandu for the transition towards e-governance – An extended UTAUT study. *Journal of Advanced Academic Research*, 13(1), 128–144. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jaar.v13i1.90232>
- Glińska-Noweś, A. & Szostek, D (2018). Organizational citizenship behaviors in public and private sector. *International Journal of Contemporary Management*, 17(1), 4-58. DOI:10.4467/24498939IJCM.18.003.8382
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*. Paulist Press.
- Grimmelikhuijsen, S., Porumbescu, G., Hong, B., & Im, T. (2025). Does enforcement style influence citizen trust in regulatory agencies? An experiment in six countries. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 35(1), 29–44. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muad025>
- Gu, F., & Liu, J. (2022). Environmentally Specific Servant Leadership and Employee Workplace Green Behavior: Moderated Mediation Model of Green Role Modeling and Employees’ Perceived CSR. *Sustainability*, 14(19), 11965. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su141911965>
- Hameduddin, T., & Engbers, T. (2022). Leadership and public service motivation: A systematic synthesis. *International Public Management Journal*, 25(1), 86–119. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10967494.2021.1884150>
- Hanafiah, M. H., Ruslan, S. A., & Ismail, M. (2024). Systematic literature review: Servant leadership in public sectors. *F1000Research*, 13, 1506. <https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.146782.1>
- Hair, J. F., Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., & Gudergan, S. P. (2022). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)* (2nd ed.). Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483377421>
- Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2019). Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM): An emerging tool in business research. *European Business Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-10-2013-0128>

- Harbani, S., Abd. Hamid T., Aisyah P. (2025). The Mediating Role Of Public Trust In Improving Service Quality Through Servant Leadership In Local Governments. *Lex Localis - Journal of Local Self-Government*, 23(10), 187-200. <https://doi.org/10.52152/800441>
- Hassan, S., Wright, B. E., & Yukl, G. (2014). Does ethical leadership matter in government? Effects on organizational commitment, absenteeism, and willingness to report ethical problems. *Public Administration Review*, 74(3), 333-343. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12195>
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2016). Testing measurement invariance of composites using partial least squares. *International Marketing Review*, 33(3), 405-431. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMR-09-2014-0304>
- Hoch, J. E., Bommer, W. H., Dulebohn, J. H., & Wu, D. (2018). Do ethical, authentic, and servant leadership explain variance above and beyond transformational leadership? A meta-analysis. *Journal of Management*, 44(2), 501-529. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206316665461>
- Hu, M., Wang, Y., Xu, X. et al. (2025). The impact of servant leadership on employees taking charge behavior. *Scientific Reports*, 15, Article 27179. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-27179-3>
- Imam, S. F., Riyanto, S., Santoso, S., Ramli, Y., (2025). Analyzing the influence of leadership, learning, and empowerment on public sector performance: Combining PLS-SEM with SVM and k-NN approach. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 11, 100815. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.102086>.
- Ingrams, A. (2018). Organizational citizenship behavior in the public and private sectors: A multilevel test of public service motivation and traditional antecedents. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 40(2), 272-300. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X18800372>
- Jankelová, N., Némethová, I., Dabić, M. et al. (2025). Enhancing organizational citizenship behavior towards the environment. *Review of Managerial Science*, 19, 899-930. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11846-024-00781-x>
- Jensen, C., & Piatak, J. (2024). Public service motivation and trust in government: An examination across the federal, state, and local levels in the United States. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 54(5), 407-423. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02750740231200449>
- Johansson, E. & Hart, R. (2023). The outcomes of organizational citizenship behaviors in part-time and temporary working university students. *Behavioral Sciences*, 13(8), 697. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs13080697>
- Kaya, B., & Ceylan, B. (2023). Servant leadership and employee's job performance: The role of public service motivation in Ethiopian public sector organizations. *International Journal of Public Leadership*, 19(1), 64-79. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPL-05-2022-0025>
- Keelson, S. A., Amponsah, M. A., & Arhinful, A. E. (2025). The role of women in executive positions and their voice in policymaking in a developing nation. *Discover Global Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44282-025-00316-z>
- Legate, A. E. (2024). PLS-SEM: A method demonstration in the R statistical environment. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 35(3), 303-322. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.21517>
- Li, Q. (2024). Ethical leadership, internal job satisfaction and OCB: The moderating role of leader empathy in emerging industries. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11, 3367. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03367-w>
- Lim, J. Y. & Moon, K-K,(2025). The public service motivation's impact on turnover intention in Korean public organizations: Do perceived organizational politics matter? *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(4), 474. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15040474>
- Mesfin, S. (2023). The effect of servant leadership on the organizational citizenship behavior of instructors in public universities in Amhara region. *Cogent Business & Management*, 10(1), 2288711. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2023.2288711>
- Mithani, S., Ahmad, N., Sham, R., (2025). Entrepreneurial Barriers among Rural Women in Badin, Pakistan. *International Journal of Advanced Business Studies*, 3(special issue), 124-134. <https://doi.org/10.59857/IJABS.7139>

- Mozumder, N. A. (2022). Can ethical political leadership restore public trust in political leaders? *Public Organization Review*, 22(3), 821–835. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11115-021-00536-2>
- Nash, P., Pereira, T., Smout, J., Satija, S., & Ghosh, A. (2025). Women's leadership in politics and governance: Understanding the potential of transformative feminist leadership. *Gender & Development*, 33(2), 285–304. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2025.2532956>
- Neves, P.C., Palma-Moreira, A., Andrade, C., Au-Yong-Oliveira, M. (2024). Organizational citizenship behavior: Adaptation and validation of the OCB scale CCOE-R. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, 1475011. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1475011>
- Nguyen, N. T. H., Nguyen, D., Vo, N., & Tuan, L. T. (2023). Fostering Public Sector Employees' Innovative Behavior: The Roles of Servant Leadership, Public Service Motivation, and Learning Goal Orientation. *Administration & Society*, 55(1), 30–63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00953997221100623>
- Nguyen, H. H., Duong, C. H., Giang, T. T., & Nguyen, P. N.-D. (2025). From being served to serving: How servant leadership fosters organizational citizenship behavior in the digital era. *SAGE Open*, 15(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440251365790>
- Palumbo, R. (2025). Disentangling the interplay of public service motivation and organisational behaviours. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOA-03-2025-5296>
- Pereira, L. M., Sanchez Rodrigues, V., & Freires, F. G. M. (2024). Use of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to improve plastic waste management. *Applied Sciences*, 14(2), 628. <https://doi.org/10.3390/app14020628>
- Perry, J. L., & Vandenberg, W. (2015). Public service motivation research: Achievements, challenges, and future directions. *Public Administration Review*, 75(5), 692–699. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12430>
- Perry, J. L., & Wise, L. R. (1990). The motivational bases of public service. *Public Administration Review*, 50(3), 367–373. <https://doi.org/10.2307/976618>
- Phinaitrup, B. A. (2026). Transformational leadership, public service motivation, commitment, and performance in state-owned enterprises: Results from a Delphi study of executive consensus. *Cogent Business & Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2025.2608412>
- Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2004). SPSS and SAS procedures for estimating indirect effects in simple mediation models. *Behavior Research Methods, Instruments, & Computers*, 36(4), 717–731. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03206553>
- Raza, F. A., Singh, A. D. (2025). Unveiling the Missing Link: Women in Stem Leadership – A Comprehensive Review. *International Journal of Advanced Business Studies*, 3(special issue), 15-27. <https://doi.org/10.59857/IJABS.1109>
- Reddick, C. G., Demir, T., & Perlman, B. J. (2025). A categorical framework of ethical leadership for public organizations: Testing a multi-dimensional model of local government managers. *Administration & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00953997241291833>
- Ringle, C. M., Wende, S., & Becker, J.-M. (2024). *SmartPLS 4: User guide and reference* (Updated ed.). SmartPLS GmbH.
- Santos, R. S., Lousã, E. P., Sá, M. M., & Cordeiro, J. A. (2023). First, be a good citizen: Organizational citizenship behaviors, well-being at work and the moderating role of leadership styles. *Behavioral Sciences*, 13(10), 811. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs13100811>
- Sarstedt, M., & Cheah, J. (2019). Partial least squares structural equation modeling using SmartPLS: A software review. *Journal of Marketing Analytics*, 7(3), 196–202. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41270-019-00058-3>
- Shim, D. C., & Park, H. H. (2019). Public service motivation in a work group: Role of ethical climate and servant leadership. *Public Personnel Management*, 48(2), 203–225. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091026018806013>
- Si, W., Shi, S., Zhou, M., Cai, Z. (2023). Taken for granted: When servant leadership may be negatively related to OCB via psychological entitlement. *Journal of Business Research*, 154, 4812. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2023.114122>

- Silva, C. B., Pullan, D., Wäckerle, J. (2025). Blending in or standing out? Gendered political communication in 24 democracies. *American Journal of Political Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12876>
- Stepanek, S., & Paul, M. (2022). Organizational citizenship behavior. *Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development*.
- Sutiyoso, B. U. & Faedlulloh, D. (2024). Navigating social capital development through organisational citizenship behaviour in local government bureaucracy. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1), 2386708. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2024.2386708>
- Tang, H., An, S., Zhang, L., Xiao, Y., & Li, X. (2024). The antecedents and outcomes of public service motivation: A meta-analysis using the job demands–resources model. *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(10), 861. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14100861>
- UN Women. (2023). Facts and figures: Women's leadership and political participation. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/facts-and-figures/facts-and-figures-womens-leadership-and-political-participation>
- Uster, A., Vigoda-Gadot, E., & Cohen, N. (2026). Local civic engagement in turbulent times: Trust in governance, managerial quality, ethnicity, and education during polycrises. *Public Performance & Management Review*, 49(1), 81–110. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15309576.2025.2510977>
- Van Dierendonck, D., & Patterson, K. (2023). Servant leadership: A systematic review and future research agenda. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 185(4), 1019–1042. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-022-05305-2>
- WomenLead. (2025). Key elections to watch out for in 2026, Japan's women MPs demand more toilets, and other important updates about women in politics from December. *WomenLead Substack*.
- Yamane, T. (1967). *Statistics: An introductory analysis* (2nd ed.). Harper & Row.
- Zahari, A. I., Said, J., Muhamad, N., Ramly, S.M. (2024). Ethical culture and leadership for sustainability and governance in public sector organisations within the ESG framework. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 10(1), 100219. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joitmc.2024.100219>
- Zhang, Y. (2023). Disclosing the relationship between public service motivation and job satisfaction in the Chinese public sector: A moderated mediation model. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, Article 1073370. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1073370>