

# The Mediating Effect of Social Capital on the Relationship between Distributed Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: A Proposed Model

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## Abstract

Previous studies have investigated various leadership styles as antecedents to OCB such as transformational, transactional, servant and charismatic. However, there is a lacking of studies investigating distributed leadership (DL) as an antecedent to OCB. DL is the latest emerging leadership styles in organization practice that emphasized leadership as an organizational process in which each member of the organization should have the right and the responsibility to skillfully participate in leadership practices. DL is critical for organizational constructs because it has the potential to improve employee OCB by giving employees a certain level of autonomy in decision making such as flexible rest time. Although studies on the relationship between transformational, transactional and servant leadership with OCB are rather common, studies that examine the relationship between DL and OCB are still lacking. There are a total of 7796 teachers at 81 technical schools and vocational colleges in West Malaysia. For this study, the sample size needed is 375 teachers. After reliability and construct validity analysis, research will use Pearson correlation coefficient and standard multiple regression in order to test the hypothesis of this study. This paper aims to review the literature related to DL and OCB and then propose a test model as well as propositions that can be tested. It is also to improve the relationship between dimensions of DL and dimension of OCB by suggesting Social Capital (SC) as a mediating variable.

**Keywords:** Mediating, Social Capital, Distributed Leadership, Citizenship Behavior.

## Introduction

In the last two decades, academicians have demonstrated that teacher's desire to invest in organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) has become the key to achieve school success (Cheng, 2015; Somech & Ohayon, 2019). Regardless of its vigor in school performance, the

OCB is not given much priority in practices of school management (Shrestha, 2019) including the technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Oplatka (2006) showed that leadership behavior is one of OCB'S main factors in schools. Distributed leadership (dl) gives school leadership relatively fresh perspectives to invite diverse sources of interest, skills and participation in leadership. Studies by Jofreh et al (2012); Kilinc (2014); Samancioglu et al (2019) showed that dl has a significant relationship with OCB. However, the study by Jofreh et al (2012) was also shown that not all dimensions of dl significantly related with teacher's OCB. To improve the result, this research study investigates social capital (SC) as an intervening variable in the relationship between dl and OCB. Over few decades since it was first introduced by organ in 1983, research towards the field of OCB has grown rapidly. Most early studies focused on the factor that contributed to OCB. Then the study grew dynamically over various themes such as consequences, dimensions and measurement of scales (Organ, 1988; Williams & Anderson, 1991; Podsakoff et al., 2000; Lee et al., 2013; Yu et al., 2021). It is important for scholars trying to investigate what are the factors that could improve OCB so that it could boost the employees' performance for the success of the organization (Organ, 2018). Commonly studied antecedents of OCB are job satisfaction (Organ & Ryan, 1995; Purwanto et al., 2021), perceptions of organizational justice (Alizadeh et al., 2012; Ulfa & Siwi, 2021), organizational commitment, personality characteristics (Podsakoff et al., 2000; Djaelani et al., 2020; Vossen & Hofmans, 2021), task characteristics (Todd & Kent, 2006), and leadership behavior (Podsakoff et al., 1990; Anser et al., 2021).

Previous studies have investigated various leadership styles as antecedents to OCB such as transformational (Lian & Tui, 2012; López-Domínguez, Enache, Sallan, & Simo, 2013; Podsakoff et al., 1990; Song et al., 2012), transactional (Lian & Tui, 2012; Nguni et al., 2006), servant (Bobbio et al., 2012; Sober & Wilson, 2000), and charismatic (Cavazotte et al., 2014). However, there is a lacking of studies investigating distributed leadership (DL) as an antecedent to OCB. DL is the latest emerging leadership styles in organization practice that emphasized leadership as an organizational process (Maxwell, Scheurich, & Skrla, 2009) in which each member of the organization should have the right and the responsibility to skillfully participate in leadership practices (Harris, 2013).

DL is critical for organizational constructs because it has the potential to improve employee OCB (Samancioglu et al., 2019) by giving employees a certain level of autonomy in decision making such as flexible rest time. Although studies on the relationship between transformational, transactional and servant leadership with OCB are rather common, studies that examine the relationship between DL and OCB are still lacking. A review of related literature indicates that there are only three studies examining the relationship between DL and OCB which are by (Jofreh et al., 2012; Kiliñç, 2014; Samancioglu et al., 2019). Jofreh et al (2012) study found a positive relationship between DL and OCB. It was then supported by (Kiliñç, 2014; Samancioglu et al., 2019). However, the study by Jofreh et al (2012) had found that not all dimensions of DL significantly affected OCB. For example, dimension of school culture towards DL did not have a significant relationship with civic virtue and courtesy of teachers. Meanwhile the dimension of DL practices did not have a significant relationship with courtesy and sportsmanship of teachers. Samancioglu et al (2019) who investigated the effects of DL on teacher's OCB to 344 teachers working at schools in Gaziantep city of Turkey suggested future researchers to include any mediator or moderator to improve the result between these relationships.

In line with the suggestion by Samancioglu et al (2019), this study will try to improve the relationship between dimensions of DL and dimension of OCB by investigating social capital (SC) as a mediating variable. This study chooses SC as a mediator because past researchers already suggested that SC could improve the relationship between leadership behavior and OCB especially on servant and transformational leadership (Joo & Jo, 2017; Hovenet al., 2021). However, the relationship between SC as a mediator between DL and OCB to promote organization success still remains unclear (Muringani et al., 2021; Ketterer & Rodriguez-Pose, 2018). This is because past researchers only showed that SC has a positive relationship with other leadership styles such as servant, ethical and transformational (Harris, 2013; Amintojjar et al., 2015). Moreover, there were few researchers provided that there was a relationship between SC and OCB (Shrestha & Subedi, 2020; Ruiz-Palomino et al., 2021). SC probably could improve the relationship between DL and OCB when the principal encourages DL in the organization's mission, vision, and goals, whereas employees are more likely to become more connected in a positive way, which unintentionally increases SC. Higher SC will make employees behave well with others thus could improve their courtesy, altruism, civic virtue, consciousness and sportsmanship. This relationship is in line with the foundations of Theory of Reason Action (TRA) that serve the purpose of individuals or organizations who have more social support tend to give extra effort and have high emotional intelligence (Bourdieu, 1998).

Previous studies by (Jofreh et al., 2012; Kılınc, 2014; Samancioglu et al., 2019) that investigated the relationship between DL and OCB have not adequately addressed the issues of theoretical underpinning in supporting their framework. Thus, it is reasonable that the framework of this study can be underpinned theoretically by Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and Theory of Reason Action (TRA). Yang, Ding, and Lo (2016) who conducted a relationship study between ethical leadership and OCB from 656 dyadic supervisor–subordinate data from 145 business units in Taiwan showed that the LMX could be used as theoretical underpinning between the DL and OCB effects. The operational framework for this research revealed that having a favorable relationship with a worker increases the likelihood of the worker engaging in OCB. TRA has been used in previous studies to support the relationship between human resource diversity management practices, diversity receptiveness and OCB (Noor et al., 2013) and link between well-being-oriented human resource management and performance (Salas-Vallina, Alegre, & López-Cabrales, 2021). Now, the application of these theories are extended to support the relationship between variables in this study. The Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) is based on a leader's interaction with their employee. This theory focuses on each value network holistically, acknowledging that a leader will have numerous relationship connections (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Jha, 2013). This concept also acknowledges that each member's relationship with the leader is at a distinct level (Gooty & Yammarino, 2016). For instance, when DL apply to the organization, it will promote equity and fairness thus employees might have the tendency to become more committed that lead to OCB.

Previous study (Jofreh et al., 2012; Kilinc, 2014; Samancioglu et al., 2019) also only focusing their respondent sample at the primary school teachers. Therefore, the researcher will shift the sample of the data collection towards the secondary Technical Schools and Vocational College's teachers. This is due to the fact that there have been lack of previous studies examining this relationship to TVET schools. It is also to compare the results of previous and current studies to see if there are any differences in the relationship between types of schools. Most of the OCB studies prefer to focus on employees who work in commercial settings

(Khalid & Ali, 2005; Karatepe & Uludag, 2008; Chiang & Hsieh, 2012; Ulfa & Siwi, 2021). However, the study towards non-commercial organization setting such as schools is still limited (Dipaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Nowadays, the technical and vocational schools continue to receive serious attention from the government through the 11th Malaysian Plan (RMK-11) that will help Malaysia becoming a high-income nation due to the changes brought upon by IR 4.0. Furthermore, this agenda is supported in the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 that emphasizes the foundation of TVET to achieve sustainable industrial-based job opportunities and boost-up the economy (Yaakob et al., 2020). Thus, several measures need to be implemented to strengthen and improve TVET delivery implementation. This includes elevation of the quality in TVET programs and teacher's performance (Rashid et al., 2020).

Teacher's performance is particularly important to improve student ability (Aaronson et al., 2007). However, Malaysian TVET education system has not escaped from the issue of insufficient competence among teachers (Saipudin & Suhairom, 2021). So, this study tries to recommend OCB as a possible factor that could increase Malaysia TVET teachers' performance. This is because OCB had been proven as a factor that could assist the performance of the teachers (Dipaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Moreover, the current researches on Malaysian TVET to enhance teacher's attitude, behavior and morality for the improvement of teacher's performance is extremely alarming (Saipudin & Suhairom, 2021) despite the fact that it is a vital factor along technological and teaching method. Even though there are three studies that have been conducted to investigate the relationship between these two variables, there is still limited number of studies done pertaining to the relationship of the dimension between DL and OCB in this particular field. Thus, to fulfill the empirical gap/contextual gap in this area, this study needs to critically be conducted by investigating the impact of SC as a mediator on the relationship between principal DL and teachers OCB in Malaysian technical schools and vocational colleges. The aim of this paper is to review the relevant literature and then construct a model showing the relationship between distributed leadership and OCB as well as social capital as a mediator.

### **Distributed Leadership**

DL is a concept that leadership no longer hold by single individual or position, but somewhat like a liquid and growing aspect that have been shared by certain or whole organization staff (Spillane, 2005). There are several dimensions of DL such as mission, goal and objective, school culture, collective decision-making, leadership experiences, and professional evaluation and development. Mission, goal and objective refers to the fact that to what extent the teachers and school staff are involved in specifying the mission, perspective and objectives of the school, and to what extent this has been carried out systematically and based on the records and experiences of the teachers. School culture includes values, norms and beliefs that support the leadership distribution at school and provide the environment where the teachers are encouraged to cooperate with each other and to take part in the decision-makings for the school and the professional improvement as well as their own training for leadership. Collective decision-making refers to the fact that to what extent the decision-making has been transformed from the hierarchical mode to the bilateral and distributed pattern, and to what extent the teachers have participated in the decision-making process. The leadership experiences refers to the level of involvement of the teachers and other staff members in the distribution of the leadership and it focuses on the supports of the

principal (providing the resources and facilities, attracting the participation of the members, empowering them, providing the data, etc) for planning on the improvement of the school, improving collective decision making and accountability in the schools and among the students and the parents. Professional evaluation and development deals with the intellectual maturity and evaluation of the teachers and other school members. It also includes the issues such as the evaluation and appreciation of the teachers as educational leaders, providing them with appropriate opportunity and sufficient information resources aimed at the assessment of their performance and making decisions about them, taking their abilities and performance into consideration (García, 2020).

### **Organization Citizenship Behaviors**

OCB is a person indirect and clear voluntary actions that not included in the organization's formal reward system but give an added value to the organization. It contains several dimension such as altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, sportsmanship, and civic virtue as the OCB (Organ, 1988). The first component is refers as the altruism and it is the employee impulsive act to orient new coworkers, appreciation about their job performance, and conflict management in the organization (Sheeraz et al., 2020). As a second factor, courtesy means that behavior of school teachers which is associated with encouraging other teachers to do their work best as well as preventing them from work related problems (Ehtiyar et al., 2010; Nuesca & Balacy, 2019). Likewise, the conscientiousness is termed as third component and it refers "compliance" behavior (Ang et al., 2004) which means employee can goes beyond the basic rules of the jobs for betterment of the organization. Similarly, Ang et al (2004) listed sportsmanship as the fourth element and known as the behaviors which display willingness to refrains the personal obligations and inconveniences. As a final factor, civic virtue refers to the particular behavior that displays productive participation of the employees in the organizational issues.

### **Social Capital**

SC is defined as the total of the real or projected assets surrounded, fully accessible and resulting from the relationship web that took part by an individual or social unit. Three main SC dimensions, including cognitive, relational and structural, are present. The researchers identified the structural dimension as the entire pattern of connections, configuration and organization between networks. The relational dimension, however, focuses on the special relationships that people exert as influence, like respect and friendship. The experts argued that the relational dimension was based on the confidence, standards, obligations and identifications held inside the network. The cognitive dimension of social capital represented an important set of assets not previously attributed to social capital in the literature. The scholars contended the cognitive dimension consisting of common language, events and maintaining extensive information (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Sloan, 2020).

### **Relationship between DL and OCB**

Jofreh et al (2012); Kılınç (2014); Samancioglu et al (2019) are the only studies that have looked at the relationship between DL and OCB. Jofreh et al (2012) conducted a dimensional relationship study between DL and OCB on 360 teachers and 52 headmasters at primary schools in Karaj, Iran. The result showed that not all dimensions of DL have significant relationship with dimensions of OCB. For example, all dimensions of DL do not have any significant effect with courtesy. In addition, the dimensions of professional evaluation and

development only have positive relationship with altruism and conscientiousness. Next, the dimensions of school culture and mission, perspective and objectives have positive relationship with sportsmanship only. Lastly, leadership experiences only have a positive relationship with civic virtue. Meanwhile, Kılınç (2014); Samancıoğlu et al (2019) tested the relationship between a composite score of DL and OCB. Kılınç (2014) discovered that teacher's OCB more frequently in schools where DL is prevalent in a study of 258 teachers in 14 schools in Turkey's Kastamonu district. Recently, a study by Samancıoğlu et al (2019) on the principals at 15 randomly selected primary schools in Gaziantep city of Turkey also found that DL had a significant effect on the OCB of teachers. These findings show that DL could be one of the important variables that encourage teachers to perform OCB.

This study will be conducted in order to improve the dimensional relationship between DL and teachers OCB by introducing suitable mediator which is SC. This is because Oplatka (2006) believes that teachers will become more motivated to take active role and perform beyond minimum expectations in school when their principals give positive feedback to teachers, provide them with professional autonomy, share managerial decisions with them, and support them emotionally.

The view of school teachers will change after the advent of DL that involves varieties of individuals to take part, involve, expertise, and contribute to leadership practices. Leadership practices will be delegated among teachers usually in a form of formal and informal roles such as the head of department, guide, or mentor (Muijs & Harris, 2003). Thus, this will make teachers improve their extra-role behaviors. DiPaola and Hoy (2005) stated that OCB will make teachers spend more time and effort to advocate school improvement and also a positive school environment. This shows that shared autonomy is really an important determinant of OCB in schools (Oplatka, 2006). Therefore, the current study hypothesizes a positive relationship between OCB and DL; that is, the more the DL in school, the more teachers exhibit OCBs.

### **Relationship between SC and OCB**

In comparison with financial capital, Hanifan (1916) explained the importance of SC as a capacity building asset. He stated that school-built social capital brought together people thus could display extra role behavior in order to increase the efficiency of the school. Katz and Kahn (1966) argued that employee performance at the organization must transcend the organization's basic duty descriptions in order to be effective and viable. Organ (1988) identified as an OCB the performance of employees that surpassed conventional employment standards. If the Hanifan (1916) argument concerning SC is correct, SC may operate as an agent influencing OCB positively.

Technological developments in recent decades have altered organization's efficiency and sustainability. Unni (2014) however said the development of the social network and nature of its human connections have necessitated such technological upheavals. Researchers believed that social networks facilitate an extra role behavior for the organization. 105 personnel of the automotive marketing and service business were examined for the investigation of the SC and OCB relationship. The result found a significant and positive relationship between these variables. The study has demonstrated to the research community that SC has a positive and substantial relationship with OCB. Amintojjar, Shekari, and Zabihi (2015) argued that SC is a key part of employee development and corporate success. His conducted a study on the relationship between SC and OCB in the local

municipality. The study has identified a significant and strong link between these relationships through a correlation analysis. Thus, managers and organizations had the potential to increase effectiveness and performance by strengthening SC. Bruque, Moyano and Piccolo (2016) hypothesized that the size of an employee's network is related to the employee OCB. The OCB has influenced the results of the task and the adaptation of the employee to change. The survey result of 405 staff in a large Spanish financial company showed that there is considerable and favorable connection between the support network of employees and OCB. They also found that OCB had a good influence on task performance and adaptation to change.

### **Relationship between DL and SC**

DL is proposed as key variables to encourage and motivate teachers to engage in innovative actions among them and thus transferring or regulating the effects of SC. However, there is still lack of studies on the relationship between DL and SC. The research, however, include studies examining the connection between different leadership styles such as relation and ethical leadership. This study therefore considered relationship leadership and ethical leadership as DL proxies (Sloan, 2020). Carmeli, Ben-Hador, Waldman and Rupp (2009) collected samples from 290 employees and 15 managers at the Israeli Community Center Association. The finding implies that the interaction between relational leadership and staff connecting SC existed positively. Pastoriza and Ariño (2013) conducted research to see if ethical leadership had an impact on the formation of SC in organization. The researchers took a sample of 408 part-time Master of Business Administration students from Spain, France, and Portugal and found there was a strong and significant connection between ethical leadership and structural, relational, and cognitive SC. The study's findings show that ethical leadership played a role in the emergence of SC.

Relational leadership, according to Hussain et al (2018) has a substantial impact in generating SC in organizations. The researchers selected 300 study participants from a Chinese information technology organization. According to the correlation analysis, relational leadership has a strong and significant relationship with SC.

### **SC as a Possible Mediator between DL and OCB**

This study will try to improve the relationship between dimensions of DL and dimension of OCB by investigating SC as a mediating variable. This study chooses SC as a mediator because past researchers already suggested that SC could improve the relationship between other leadership behavior and OCB especially on servant and transformational leadership (Jun, 2017; Linuesa-Langreo, Ruiz-Palomino, & Elche-Hortelano, 2018; Sloan, 2020). Furthermore, no study has yet been conducted to investigate the relationship between DL and SC. Besides, past researchers also provided that there was a positive relationship between SC and OCB (Harris, 2015; Behtooee, 2016; Broque, 2016). When the principal encourages DL in the organization's mission, vision, and goals, teachers are more likely to become more connected in a positive way, which unintentionally increases SC. Higher SC will make employees behave well with others thus could improve their courtesy, altruism, civic virtue, consciousness and sportsmanship.

### **Theoretical Underpinning**

It is critical to understand the extent to which DL influence OCB. The Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) will be used to underpin the relationships. The Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) is based on a leader's interaction with their employee. This theory focuses on each value network holistically, acknowledging that a leader will have numerous relationship connections (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Jha, 2013). This concept also acknowledges that each member's relationship with the leader is at a distinct level (Gooty & Yammarino, 2016). According to LMX, a leader-member connection can range from a low-quality relationship in which the majority of the exchanges are about the organization to a high-quality relationship in which the interactions contain the added complexity of social exchanges.

The leader delivers tangible and intangible resources to employees in a higher-quality relationship. Trust and fairness are the foundations of high-quality partnerships (Gouldner, 1960; Jha & Jha, 2013). The defining characteristics of a lower quality connection are formal job descriptions, defined duties, and written memos. It's also worth noting that both sides may have different perspectives on the connection. The relationship may be rated as high-quality by the leader, but the member may feel otherwise (Gooty & Yammarino, 2016).

One aspect of social interaction in the leader-member relationship could be the leader's role as a link to an excellent organization. Aside from the exchanges, the leader might represent the member to those the higher up by highlighting positive work, obtaining special assignments for the person, or mobilizing organizational resources to support the organizations. The leader must also have a positive relationship with organizational superiors in order for the higher degree of support to be available, which is an interesting twist to this interaction (Jha, 2013).

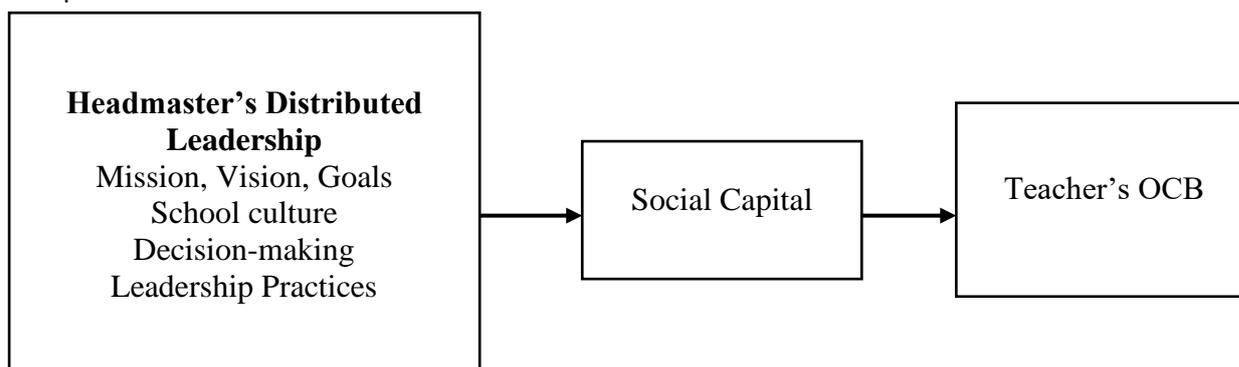
Yang, Ding, and Lo (2016) reported that the LMX could be used as theoretical underpinning between the ethical leadership and OCB in Taiwan with over 600 supervisor-employee in several organizations. The operational framework for this research revealed that having a favorable relationship with a worker increases the likelihood of the worker engaging in OCB. Maintaining a positive working relationship with the supervisor may give the employee the confidence to go beyond the job description to conduct OCB (Yang et al., 2016).

Previous studies in LMX indicated that subordinates in high-quality LMX obtained and inscribed more positive results than their peers in low-quality LMX relationships (Uhl-Bien, 2011). High LMX branches consistently gained more formal and informal rewards than low LMX members (Kamar & Alsetoohy, 2021). Low-quality exchange branches may encounter an inequity which proffers a rise in the perception of second-class rank. In a franchise scheme, LMX theory may be invaluable in terms of identifying variables that affect the quality of the relationship between leaders and subordinates, including satisfaction, performance, commitment, and motivation (Bakar, 2020). The LMX hypothesis of a mutual relationship between a leader and members is based on consistent support and the exchange of required resources. The high-quality exchanges between the leader and his subordinates are critical in determining the organizational success or failure of the company, the ability to achieve the desired goals, the improvement of the company's overall performance, the ability to achieve organizational integration, subordinates' satisfaction, and the rate of subordinate turnover. The widespread application of LMX implies that it is a valuable tool in explaining bilateral relations in organizational contexts (Lee, 2019).

Burch and Guarana (2014) also used LMX as theoretical underpinning to investigate the relative impact of DL and follower engagement on 280 Brazilian employees. The researchers discovered that a favorable DL resulted in increased follower engagement, which in turn

resulted in lower staff turnover. According to Michel and Tews (2016), the perceived relationship between the employee and the leader can support or hinder performance, which is often aided by OCB. As for this study, when principals give their teachers several level of autonomy such as flexible work time, there will be a high-quality exchanges between the leader and his subordinates thus could improve the sense of belonging of teachers for the schools.

Based on the review of the literature, the following model and propositions were developed.



### Hypotheses Development

1. Teachers working in urban have differences in term of levels of DL, OCB and SC compared to rural areas.
2. Elements of DL (Mission, Vision, and Goals, School Culture, Decision-Making, and Leadership Practices) have significant relationship with the OCB.
3. Principal DL has significant relationship with Teacher's SC.
4. Teacher's SC has significant relationship with OCBs.
5. Teacher's SC mediates the relationship between principal DL and Teacher's OCBs.

### Conclusion

Academicians have demonstrated over the last two decades that teacher's willingness to invest in Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) has become a critical component of school success (Cheng, 2015). Various leadership styles, such as transformational, transactional, servant, and charismatic, have been investigated as antecedents to OCB in previous studies. However, there are few studies that look at distributed leadership (DL) as a major contributor to OCB. DL is one of the most recent emerging leadership styles in organization practice, emphasizing leadership as an organizational process in which each organization member should have the right and responsibility to participate skillfully in leadership practices. DL is important for organizational structures because it has the potential to improve employee OCB by allowing employees to make decisions on their own, such as flexible rest time. This paper proposes a review of the literature on DL and OCB, as well as a test model and propositions that can be tested. This study also suggests to improve the relationship between dimensions of DL and dimension of OCB by investigating Social Capital (SC) as a mediating variable.

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