'WE' OR 'ME'? THEORIZING THE DARK AND BRIGHT IMPLICATIONS OF SERVING CULTURE IN THE WORKPLACE

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SUMMARY: Existing research on serving culture is rooted on the assumption that it positively benefits employee identification with the organization. I theorize why and when serving culture positively or negatively influences employees' organizational identification. First, I conceptualize employee perspective taking as a mechanism through which serving culture is transmitted into employees' increased identification with the organization. Then, building upon person-organization fit research, I theorize that employees high on communion make a better fit in organizations having a high serving culture which then leads to greater perspective taking and a stronger sense of organizational identification for these employees. However, employees high on agency make a poorer fit in organizations having a high serving culture which then leads to lesser perspective taking and a weaker sense of organizational identification for these employees. Practical implications and avenues for future research are discussed.

Keywords: serving culture, organizational identification, perspective taking, communion-serving culture fit, agency-serving culture misfit

INTRODUCTION

"The myth of management is that your personal values are irrelevant or inappropriate at work."
-Stan Slap (New York Times bestselling author)

Servant leaders motivate their followers by prioritizing the satisfaction of their followers' needs before focusing on fulfilling their own individual needs (Greenleaf, 1970). Servant leaders achieve this goal by engaging in follower-centric behaviors such as stewardship, empowerment, providing direction, and authenticity which leads to follower's sense of community, optimal human functioning, and meaningfulness (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Servant leadership has its roots in the principles of ethics, virtues, and morality and focuses on empowering employees to create a better future for the organization by serving the needs of others (Christensen-Salem et al., 2021; Parris & Peachey, 2013).

In this process, servant leaders create a serving culture in the workplace where employees have the shared understanding that the behavioral expectations and norms are to prioritize the satisfaction of needs of other employees over their own personal needs and to provide support and help to other employees (Liden et al., 2014). Serving culture is defined as the "extent to which all members of the work unit engage in servant leadership behaviors" (Liden et al., 2014, p. 1437). Employees in a serving culture unite with their leaders to accomplish organizational goals through service to others and focus on the growth and development of others (Carter & Baghurst, 2014). In fact, a serving culture triggers a service fire in its employees and motivates them to engage in altruistic-oriented and other-focused prosocial behaviors (Chen et al., 2015).

Liden and colleagues (2014) contend that serving culture leads to increased employee identification with their team as serving culture promotes an environment of mutual sharing, caring, trust, and support which further increases employee's identification with the organization. However, the way through which serving other team members' needs strengthens the employee's identification with the team and the organization is not understood in detail (Liden et al., 2014; Nowak, 2020). In addition, the assumption that serving culture leads to increased organizational identification for all employees may not necessarily hold true when we take employee individual differences into account such as their personality traits (Formanowicz et al., 2023; Galvin et al., 2015; Liao et al., 2008). This is because employees have their own preferences for organizational cultures and are more likely to make a better match with those organizations were the values derived from their personality aligns with the underlying values of the organization's culture (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). For example, employees high on conscientiousness make a better match in organizations where they get to work alone on technical tasks, whereas employees high on extraversion make a better match in team-oriented organizations (Anderson et al., 2008). Therefore, it becomes imperative to understand *why* and *when* employees are more likely to develop a strong organizational identification in a serving culture.

I first theorize employee perspective taking as an underlying mechanism which transmits the effect of serving culture to employee organizational identification. Serving culture encourages employees to build an emotional bond with other employees and take each other's perspectives while executing their roles and responsibilities in the workplace (Carter & Baghurst, 2014; Chen et al., 2015; Christensen-Salem et al., 2021). Perspective taking further strengthens the collective identity of employees which further leads to increased identification with the organization. Second, using person-organization fit theory (Tom, 1971; Edwards & Cable, 2009; Kristof, 1996), I theorize the employee personality traits which makes them comply with a serving culture. I theorize two higher order employee personality traits — communion and agency which may or

may not motivate employees to identify with a serving culture (Digman, 1997; Hauke & Abele, 2020; Hsu et al., 2021; Kim & Glomb, 2010). Specifically, I theorize that employees high on communion are more likely to promote others' interest over self-interest and are more likely to identify with a serving culture whereas employees high on agency are more likely to be concerned about self-interest over others' interest and are therefore less likely to identify with a serving culture (Buchanan & Bardi, 2015; Frimer et al., 2011; Trapnell & Wiggins, 1990).

I endeavor to make two contributions. First, I contribute to the servant leadership literature (Kiker et al., 2019; Liden et al., 2014; Liden et al., 2008; Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2017; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). While servant leadership may manifest itself in the form of serving culture in the workplace and positively shape employee outcomes, management scholars still need to unpack the different mechanisms through which these employee outcomes are shaped. Increased employee organizational identification has been argued to be one of the ways serving culture yields its desired effect on the workplace (Lv et al., 2022; Lythreatis et al., 2021). To develop a clear understanding of why employee organizational identification may be influenced by serving culture, I theorize the role of employee perspective taking as a link connecting these two constructs.

Second, I integrate the literatures on servant leadership (Kiker et al., 2019; Liden et al., 2014) and personality (Digman, 1997; Formanowicz et al., 2023; McCrae & Costa, 1989; Trapnell & Wiggins, 1990) to generate novel insights on when serving culture may not yield desirable outcomes for employees in the workplace. My framework challenges the existing assumption that serving culture is always beneficial for employees in the workplace (Christensen-Salem et al., 2021; Liden et al., 2014; Nowak, 2020). Existing research fails to provide a nuanced understanding of when employees in an organization maybe unwilling to embrace a serving culture. I theorize the necessity of investigating the match between employee personality traits and serving culture to determine the personality traits of employees who make a better match with a serving culture and develop a strong sense of organizational identification because of this match.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND PROPOSITION DEVELOPMENT

Serving Culture, Perspective Taking, and Organizational Identification

Perspective taking is defined as "imagining another person's thoughts or feeling from that person's point of view" (Williams, 2012, p. 2). Employees engaging in perspective taking see their team members to be more similar to them, discover common elements, and develop a shared identity with them (Davis et al., 1996; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Gerpott et al., 2020). Further, perspective taking infuses a sense of empathy and compassion in an employee towards their coworkers (Batson et al., 1997). Taking the perspective of coworkers creates an increased sense of shared interconnected identities among employees thereby blurring the boundary between self and other in the workplace (Goldstein et al., 2014).

Perspective taking involves understanding other coworkers' needs through interpersonal interactions and responding to them through demonstration of compassion, and engaging in considerate and benevolent behaviors (Williams, 2012). This is because perspective taking increases open communication among employees which further facilitates knowledge sharing and emotional bonding among them (Boland & Tenkasi, 1995; Gerpott et al., 2020). When employees engage in active perspective-taking, they identify with the emotions of their colleagues, share their experiences, feel concerned about their adversities, and take pleasure in their success and achievements (Al-Ajlouni, 2020; Parker & Axtell, 2001). Interestingly, due to a strengthened self-

3

other overlap, perspective takers are able to form strong social bonds with their colleagues which further leads to see their reflections in others (Galinsky et al., 2005).

Servant leaders build a serving culture where employees learn to care, respect, and support each other following the footsteps of their leader (McAllister, 1995). A serving culture is based on expectations that employees will give priority to the needs of their coworkers over their own needs and will engage in prosocial behaviors towards their coworkers (Liden et al., 2014). Specifically, serving culture due to its altruistic orientation evokes employees' self-identity to an extent that they perceive their team's collective goals as their individual call of duty (Chen et al., 2015; Kark et al., 2003). Serving culture has its roots in people-centered leadership which builds on the principle of expressing concern and demonstrating empathy towards other individuals (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015; Nowak, 2020). Realization of these goals further leads to greater team identification among employees and enhanced desire to engage in perspective taking in order to better understand and fulfill other employees' needs.

Specifically, a serving culture encourages employees to emotionally connect with each other and develop a strong bond through shared experiences (Carter & Baghurst, 2014; Christensen-Salem et al., 2021). This emotional bond among employees is primarily evident in a serving culture where employees define who they are from their salient motivation to serve other employees (Parris & Peachey, 2013). As employees derive value from their colleagues in a serving culture, they are more likely to identify with their colleagues and are strongly motivated to take their perspectives while executing tasks and other work-related behaviors (Chen et al., 2015) Thus, a serving culture strengthens collective identification and increases perspective taking among its employees. Therefore,

Proposition 1. Serving culture is positively related to employee perspective taking.

Organizational identification occurs ''when an individual's beliefs about his or her organization become self-referential or self-defining'' (Pratt, 1998, p. 172). As employees engage in perspective taking in a serving culture, it leads to increased positive perceptions of the group to which the employee belongs (Williams, 2012). This is because perspective taking through understanding of shared experiences enhances employees' cognitive evaluation of the surrounding environment leading to a greater identification with the collective (Liden et al., 2014). Further, employees transition from a primitive, egocentric morality to an enhanced principled view in which employees can make sense of multiple perspectives existing within the organization (Parker & Axtell, 2001).

Perspective taking also modifies the cognitive representation of other colleagues that is held by an employee leading to stronger "other" identification and making the colleagues appear more "self-like" (Davis et al., 1996). Perspective taking makes employees more aware of, and conscious about other employees' goals and preferences, which further strengthens the integration of "self" with "others" in the organization (Grant & Berry, 2011). Thus, a serving culture increases employee perspective taking and creates a sense of self-other overlap among its employees strengthening their team identification. This heightened team identification further leads to increased organizational identification through interdependence among organizational members (Liden et al., 2014; Mael & Ashforth, 1992).

Proposition 2. Employee perspective taking is positively related to employee organizational identification.

Proposition 3. Employee perspective taking mediates the positive effect of serving culture on employee organizational identification.

Employee Personality — Organizational Culture Fit

P-O fit is defined as the "the compatibility between an individual and a work environment that occurs when their characteristics are well matched" (Anderson et al., 2008, p.703). It emphasizes on the congruence between the characteristics of the employee and that of the organization (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Specifically, early research on P-O fit suggests employees are successful in organizations which share their personalities and are similar to them (Tom, 1971). P-O fit is a critical concept for management researchers as employees who fit well within an organization demonstrate greater workplace motivation and positive attitudes such as increased job satisfaction, organizational identification, organizational commitment, prosocial behaviors towards other employees, and reduced turnover intentions (Cha et al., 2014).

A widely accepted way to theorize P-O fit is value congruence — match between the values of an employee with the values of the organization (Anderson et al., 2008; Edwards & Cable, 2009; Erdogan & Bauer, 2005; Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Li et al., 2014; Raja & Johns, 2010). Values are defined as "general beliefs about the importance of normatively desirable behaviors or end states" (Edwards & Cable, 2009, p. 655). While organizations have dominant values specifying the desired employee behaviors (Erdogan & Bauer, 2005), employees also use their core values to guide their decision-making and task execution (Edwards & Cable, 2009).

Value congruence in organizations is determined by examining the match between employee values and organizational culture (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). This is because organizational culture is deeply embedded on certain fundamental values which then forms the defining elements for symbols, rituals, norms, and other cultural foundations within the organization (O'Reilly et al., 1991; Rousseau, 1990). Specifically, it is these underlying values which strengthens or weakens an employee's sense of self and identity as a member of the organization and their future behaviors (O'Reilly et al., 1991). A match between the employee's values and the values which forms the building blocks of the organization's culture, leads to better employee job attitudes and greater employee willingness to serve the organization (Erdogan & Bauer, 2005).

Personality refers to an "individual's characteristic patterns of thought, emotions, and behavior" (Funder, 1997, p. 1). In the organizational context, personality traits are found to influence employee's work values, and these work values get manifested into employee preferences for certain kinds or organizational cultures (Judge & Cable, 1997). Specifically, employees prefer to work for organizations whose culture matches with their personality (Judge & Cable, 1997). For example, employees high on extraversion fit better in organizations where the culture focuses on team orientation, whereas employees high on conscientiousness make a better match with organizations with cultures emphasizing working alone on technical tasks (Anderson et al., 2008). Similarly, employees with a strong prosocial identity was found to make a better fit with organizational culture having high prosocial characteristics (Cha et al., 2014). Interestingly, job seekers high on neuroticism are less likely to be attracted to decisive and innovative organizational cultures, whereas job seekers high on conscientiousness are more likely to be attracted to reward-oriented and outcome-oriented organizational cultures (Judge & Cable, 1997). Therefore, it becomes imperative to understand the employee personality trait which makes them a better match with the organizations which emphasize on a serving culture.

Personality researchers have identified agency-communion as two higher-order personality dimensions where agency is considered a personality trait which includes more individual-focused attributes in a person (such as ambition, independence, egotistic bias, self-competence, dominance) while communion is referred to as a personality trait which includes more group-focused attributes in a person (such as nurturance, interpersonal sensitivity, cooperation, attachment) (Blackburn et al., 2004; Digman, 1997; Hauke & Abele, 2020; Kim & Glomb, 2010). Agency and Communion represent the key dimensions of the circumplex model of interpersonal behavior which align with the agreeableness and extraversion traits of the five-factor model of personality (Trapnell & Wiggins, 1990). Although, the circumplex model and five factor model of personality have their origin in different research contexts, they are regarded as complementary and not competing frameworks of personality (Kim & Glomb, 2010; McCrae & Costa, 1989; Trapnell & Wiggins, 1990). The terms 'Communion' and 'Agency' were first coined by Bakan (1966) and were referred to as 'meta-constructs' encompassing individual motives, values, goals, and behavior (Buchanan & Bardi, 2015; Moskowitz et al., 1994; Trapnell & Paulhus, 2012). Although, agency and communion include values, goals, and behavior (Buchanan & Bardi, 2015); they have been widely accepted as personality traits (Bassoff & Glass, 1982; Formanowicz et al., 2023), and reported using the psychometrically sound measure known as the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ) (Buchanan & Bardi, 2015).

Employee Communion — Serving Culture Fit

According to Bakan (1966), humans derive their existence from the molecular form and can be classified under two modular forms — agency and communion (Jorgenson, 1981) where agency "manifests itself in self-protection, self-assertion, and self-expansion…, in the formation of separations…, in isolation, alienation, and aloneness…, and in the urge to master [while] communion manifests itself in the sense of being at one with other organisms…, in the lack of separations…, in contact , openness and union…, [and] in non-contractual cooperation" (Bakan, 1966, p. 15; Jorgenson, 1981, p. 410). Individuals high on communion identify themselves as part of a larger organism (Bakan, 1966; Helgeson, 1994). Communion emphasizes strongly on interpersonal connections and involves individuals forming caring, close, warm, intimate, communicative, and collaborative relationships (McAdams, 1988). Employee communion trait broadly encompasses four main dimensions of dialogue, love/friendship, care/help, and community which is positively related with employee's personal strive for affiliation and nurturance, and intrinsic motivation to form close and warm relationships (McAdams et al., 1996). Employees higher on communion perceive themselves as a part of the larger community and these employee perceptions get manifested into behaviors which include group participation, collaboration, attachment, cooperation, and integrating the individual identity with the group identity (Helgeson, 1994).

Communal employees take an expressive role instead of an instrumental role to fulfill their need of intimacy which they achieve by engaging in nurturing behaviors towards other members of the group (Helgeson & Fritz, 1999). Employees high on communion are less status driven and are less likely to engage in social comparison with their colleagues in the workplace (Locke & Nekich, 2000). Rather, these employees have a high altruistic orientation and seek approval from their colleagues to enhance their self-concept (Jorgenson, 1981). Employees have communal characteristics are also less power motivated and bear a strong servile attitude towards other organizational members (Saragovi et al., 2002). Employees high on communion have an implicit

need for closeness and relatedness, and these employees thrive in organizations where these needs are fulfilled (Hagemeyer et al., 2013).

Serving culture in an organization motivates its employees to prioritize the needs of their colleagues before fulfilling their own personal needs (Liden et al., 2014). This form of organizational culture encourages its employees to envision themselves as part of the larger employee community, connect with their coworkers, and engage in more cooperative behaviors towards them (Liden et al., 2014). Employees high on communion are more likely to be sensitive, supportive, caring, and nurturing and make a better match with the serving culture of the organization which is people-oriented, and driven towards group goal achievement (Brosi et al., 2016; Liden et al., 2014; Hsu et al., 2021). Communal employees are more driven towards promoting others' interest ("They") relative to self-interest ("I") (Frimer et al., 2011). This drive within communal employees further gets strengthened in a serving culture where they are more strongly motivated to take the perspectives of their coworkers while executing their workplace role (Davis et al., 1996; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Helgeson, 1994). This increased perspective taking in a serving culture strengthens the communal employees' identification with their organization. Therefore, I propose that employees high on communion will make a better match in organizations with a high serving culture. This personality-culture match will induce more perspective taking among communal employees and enhance their sense of organizational identification.

Proposition 4a. Employee communion personality trait positively moderates the positive relationship between serving culture and employee perspective taking such that when serving culture is high, employees high in communion will engage in more perspective taking than those low in communion.

Proposition 4b. Employee communion personality trait positively moderates the positive indirect effect of serving culture on employee organizational identification through employee perspective taking.

Employee Personality — Organizational Culture Misfit

"Misfit" is a way to conceptualize value incongruence when there is a mismatch between employee values manifested from their personality traits and the values which form the underlying blocks of an organization's culture (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Misfit can lead to negative employee outcomes such as reduced workplace motivation, low job satisfaction, weak organizational identification, and increased turnover intentions (Cha et al., 2014). Further, it might lead to employee perceptions of their needs not being fulfilled by the organizations which may lead to a reduced sense of belongingness in the organization (Edwards & Cable, 2009; Rich et al., 2010). Specifically, employees who are achievement-oriented and yearn for a high personal status, may find themselves out of place in an organization which emphasizes team work and task interdependence (Vogel et al., 2016).

A misfit may also reduce an employee's self-concept and identity as a valuable and contributing member of the organization (O'Reilly et al., 1991). This can lead to increased stress, discomfort, poor performance, and in some cases the employee may also be motivated to engage in counterproductive workplace behaviors (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Vogel et al., 2016). Because, this value incongruence does not fulfill the core needs of the employees, these employees are less motivated to invest themselves cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally into their jobs,

and as a result perceive their jobs to be less meaningful than others (Kahn, 1990, 1992; Rich et al., 2010; Vogel et al., 2016).

Employees may be a misfit in organizations where the cultural values, norms, and philosophies are incongruent with the values derived from their personality (Judge & Cable, 1997). For example, extraverts make a misfit in organizational cultures where employees are required to work alone, whereas conscientious individuals make a misfit in organizations where employees are expected to work in highly cohesive teams (Anderson et al., 2008). Similarly, employees high on openness to experience are a misfit in detail and team-oriented cultures, whereas employees high on agreeableness make a misfit in organizational cultures which are outcome-oriented, aggressive, and decisive (Judge & Cable, 1997). Therefore, it also becomes important to understand the employee personality trait which makes them a misfit in organizations which have a high serving culture.

Employee Agency — Serving Culture Misfit

Agency reflects one's existence as an individual and not as a part of the collective (Bakan, 1966). Agentic individuals engage in self-expansion, self-assertion, self-enhancement, self-control, self-protection, and strongly believe in the separation of self from the group (Helgeson, 1994; Helgeson & Fritz, 1999; Hsu et al., 2021). Interestingly, agency and communion are seen as two orthogonal dimensions of personality (McAdams et al., 1996), wherein agentic individuals are seen as seeking social control in relationships whereas communal individuals are perceived as seeking intimacy and closeness in their relationships (Formanowicz et al., 2023; Patterson, 1984).

Employees high on agency are more likely to be competitive, assertive, dominant, forceful, and inclined towards individual goal achievement (Brosi et al., 2016). They thrive in isolation and have an urge to master other individuals in the workplace (Bakan, 1966; Jorgenson, 1981). Employee agency trait broadly encompasses four main dimensions of self-mastery, status seeking tendency, achievement and responsibility, and strife for autonomy which is positively related with employee's sense of self-fulfillment, having control over situations, and overcoming significant challenges obstructing their goal achievement (McAdams et al., 1996). Further, agentic employees are more likely to engage in social comparison and competition with other colleagues in the workplace because of their high-status seeking tendencies (Locke & Nekich, 2000). Agentic employees also prefer taking an instrumental role instead of an expressive role to fulfill their need of achievement, which they do by engaging in behaviors benefiting the 'self' (Hauke & Abele, 2020; Helgeson & Fritz, 1999). Specifically, engaging in goal-directed behaviors which concord with the employee's agentic personality disposition leads to enhanced well-being for the employee in the workplace (Sheldon & Cooper, 2008).

Serving culture, on the other hand, emphasizes and rewards employee behaviors which involve prioritizing the needs of other colleagues and serving them (Liden et al., 2014). Employees in a serving culture show a willingness to help other coworkers and share instrumental and emotional resources with them (Liden et al., 2014). Employees high on agency are focused on advancing self-interest ("I") over others' interest ("They") (Frimer et al., 2011). Agentic employees are more concerned towards satisfying their own personal needs at the expense of others' needs (Kim & Glomb, 2010) and are a misfit in organizations which promote a serving culture and place a priority on fulfilling others' needs over personal needs (Liden et al., 2014). This increased pressure on agentic employees to serve their coworkers further weakens their perspective taking attitudes in the workplace (Davis et al., 1996; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). This reduced perspective taking attitude in agentic employees further weakens their identification

with the organization where the cultural norms are rooted in team interdependence (Liden et al., 2014). Therefore, I propose that employees high on agency will make a misfit in organizations with a high serving culture. This personality-culture misfit will weaken perspective taking among agentic employees and diminish their sense of organizational identification.

> *Proposition 5a. Employee agency personality trait negatively moderates the positive relationship between serving culture and employee perspective taking such that when serving culture is high, employees high in agency will engage in less perspective taking than those low in agency.*

> *Proposition 5b. Employee agency personality trait negatively moderates the positive indirect effect of serving culture on employee organizational identification through employee perspective taking.*

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

My paper has several key managerial implications. First, my paper recommends managers to foster a serving culture in the workplace because of its organizational benefits. I theorize and propose employee perspective taking as a mechanism through which serving culture translates to increased organizational identification for the employees. Managers should emphasize in promoting a serving culture in the workplace as it leads to greater perspective taking among employees. Further, perspective taking enables employees to identify common elements and develop a shared collective identity with other members of the organization, which in turn increases employees' identification with the organization. This enhanced perspective taking can also have positive effects when it comes to employees' interaction with different organizational stakeholders as it helps them better understand the needs and perspectives of different stakeholders. However, my framework also cautions employees that while serving culture has its benefits, it may not be attractive to employees high on agency. It is thus essential for managers to perform periodic organizational culture audits to understand employee preferences when it comes to shared values and norms (Fletcher & Jones, 1992; Testa & Sipe, 2013). A serving culture may not yield the expected benefits if implemented in an organization which demands high agency from its employees.

Second, my model has implications for managers especially when it comes to recruitment and selection (Catanzaro et al., 2010). My work cautions managers to pay attention to employee differences when it comes to hiring especially if the organization promotes a serving culture. Although, serving culture promotes development of a collective identity in its employees, there may be individual differences in the extent to which employees identify with a serving culture. I theorize and propose employee personality traits as a moderator in the indirect relationship between serving culture and employee organizational identification. This is critical especially when it comes to employee hiring. Organizations which implement a serving culture are more likely to benefit by hiring job applicants who are high on communion. This is because employees high on communion are more likely to be concerned about promoting interest of other employees over their own personal interests, which makes them a better match with a serving culture, and increases their perspective taking behavior and sense of identification with the organization. In contrast, employees high on agency are more likely to be concerned about promoting self-interest over the interest of other employees, which makes them a mismatch with a serving culture, and decreases their perspective taking behavior and sense of identification with the organization.

Lastly, my framework guides managers to design workplace policies which account for employee personality traits (Kang et al., 2023). It has been often observed that organizations design and implement policies with the attitude of "one size fits all" (Anand & Mitra, 2022). This approach may be problematic if there is significant variance among employees when it comes to their agency and communion personality traits. My model urges managers to pay attention to differences in employee personality traits especially when they are planning to implement policies to foster a certain form of workplace culture with the goal of improving employee identification with the organization.

My paper has implications for future research. First, future research can examine if serving culture can lead to increased professional identification through perspective taking in service-related jobs. Although, I theorize serving culture leads to increased perspective taking among employees which translates to increased identification with the team and the organization, it will be interesting to examine if serving culture also motivates employees to engage in perspective taking of other organizational stakeholders such as customers. Servant leaders develop their followers to provide high-quality service to their customers and adopt creative ways to fulfill the customer needs (Chen et al., 2015). It thus becomes interesting to examine if employees in a serving culture will be better able to satisfy the needs of customers when they engage in behaviors which involves taking the perspectives of the customers. Further, this active perspective taking may also enhance the sense of professional identification among employees in service-based industries (Garcia-Falieres & Herrbach, 2015; Reid, 2015).

Second, future research can examine the employee personality and serving culture match or mismatch to make better decisions about personnel selection and retention. Past research has consistently focused on P-O fit and assessment of job candidates in employee selection decisions (Sekiguchi & Huber, 2011; Swider et al., 2015; van Vianen, 2000; Yu, 2014). For example, job candidates high in conscientiousness make a better fit in engineering firm whereas job candidates high in extraversion make a better fit in consulting firms (Anderson et al., 2008). Therefore, it would be interesting to examine if job candidates high on agency or communion perform differently in selection tests or interviews during the recruitment process in organizations which have a high serving culture. Assessment of employee agency and communion during the selection process itself will protect the organization from future losses which the organization may have to incur if a mismatch between employee personality traits and serving culture arises once the job candidate is hired (Judge & Cable, 1997).

Lastly, future research can empirically test my framework using a multiple timepoint field study controlling for common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Participants could consist of employees from an organization who are asked to fill an online survey where they rate the items pertaining to serving culture, agency, communion, perspective taking, and organizational identification. Serving culture can be measured using Liden et al.'s (2014) approach of operationalizing serving culture. Employee agency and communion can be measured using Kim and Gomb's (2010) approach of operationalizing employee agency and communion. Employee perspective taking can be measured using Davis and colleagues' (1995) measure and organizational identification using the measure from Mael and Ashforth's (1995) study. To reduce common-method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012), the researchers can collect data related to the constructs: serving culture, agency, and communion at timepoint 1, perspective taking at timepoint 2, and organizational identification at timepoint 3. The model can then be analyzed using moderated-mediation regression analysis (Kausel & Slaughter, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Past research on servant leadership has highlighted the positive outcomes of a serving culture in the form of increased employee identification with the organization. My paper attempts to address this phenomenon and theorize the mechanism through which serving culture leads to increased employee organizational identification. Further, I theorize this phenomenon through the lens of employee personality-serving culture match by examining the personality traits which make employees strongly identify with a serving culture. I hope my paper will create more discussions and encourage management scholars and practitioners to further explore this phenomenon in different organizational culture context.

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