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Effect of Positive HR-Attributions on Service Quality through Affective Commitment and Organization Citizenship Behavior

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ABSTRACT

Service excellence is considered vital in higher education and therefore, the provision of quality service is a challenge for institutions. Therefore, this study adds to the literature by exploring the extent HR attributions (positive) are related to service quality and through the mediation of organizational citizenship behavior and affective commitment. It enriches the literature by highlighting relatively new outcomes of HR-attributions. A survey-based questionnaire has collected data from a dyad of 331 faculty members and students of the universities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. MEDTHREE analysis was used for data analysis along with other statistical tests. The study results show positive but weak relationships between HR-positive attributions, service quality, and organizational citizenship behavior through the mediation of affective commitment. These findings highlight the role of context in the development of attributions and assert the role of clear communication of policies, motivations, and intentions, to the employees. This study shows affective commitment as the most vital mediator in HR attributions and service quality relationships. It can be concluded that if employees infer positive motivation behind HR practices, they become a committed workforce. Therefore, employees may perform well and provide better services through discretionary behaviors, which positively add to organizational outcomes. This study has opened new research avenues to explore the HR process approach and a novel phenomenon of HR attributions in different cultures, local context and varied organizational settings to seek more aspects that may be critical to achieving organizational outcomes.

JEL Classification: M12

Keywords: HR Positive Attributions, Affective Commitment, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Service Quality, Process Approach

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is considered the bedrock of any economy. Education eradicates unemployment, poverty, and crime, and it is believed that people with good education lead a better quality of life (Tilak, 2020). Therefore, for any country to make progress, the promotion of education is a necessary activity. Higher education leads to developing quality professionals and capacity building at the national level. Global competitiveness makes it crucial for these institutions to ensure the quality of education by providing students with skilled and qualified faculty and other facilities (Kaur, 2020). Whereas, in Pakistan, the competitiveness of the higher education institutions has become unavoidable for policymakers to reexamine service quality and assess performances and policies regularly. Therefore, there is a paramount need to improve standard and service quality in the education sector, as only four universities in Pakistan are among the world's top 800 universities according to a recent QS world ranking of Pakistan. Pakistan's higher education sector is facing many problems, and among other issues, the most critical issue needed to be solved is the quality of teachers, as cited in a report by Task Force on Higher Education (TFHE).

Service quality in the sector of higher education is relatively new, at least, in comparison to the commercial sector. Service excellence is considered vital in higher education; therefore, providing quality services is challenging for institutions (Endo, de Farias, & Coelho, 2019). There is an utmost need to identify the factors contributing to improved service quality of higher education in Pakistan as research is scant in this area. A critical role of organizations' human resources has been identified in improving service quality (Al-Ababneh, Masadeh, Al-Shakhsheer, & Ma'moun, 2018). Service providers need to recognize the importance and link of internal service quality with external service quality and should focus their efforts on improving human resources management in running service operations (Najam et al., 2020). Service quality depends upon certain behaviors and attitudes of employees that may be developed due to management policies, practices, and actions.

Kloutsiniotis and Mihail (2018) found positive relationships between employees' perception of HR practices and customer perception of service quality. Various researchers tried to explore the 'Black Box' of HR-Performance link and suggested a causal chain in which they proposed a link between employees' HR perceptions and their impact on the attitudes and behaviors of employees (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). Measuring HR practices alone may not serve the purpose as employees' attributions toward those practices are also critical for achieving desired performance. At the same time, focusing on commitment-focused HR positive attributions by previous research imply positive results for employees (i.e., the well-being of employees and service quality) (Nishii, Lepak, & Schneider, 2008). As a result, employees are likely to respond positively and favorably per social exchange theory. HR Perceptions influence attitudes and behaviors more than intended HR practices, which implies the importance of HR attributions in developing attitudes and behaviors which may result in improved service quality of organizations (Yang & Arthur, 2021).

Following the SHRM literature and the typology of HR attributions carved by Nishii et al. (2008), two research streams have been identified that explain why any firm adopts certain type of HR practices. First, it was suggested by scholars that HR practices developed to support their strategic goals, e.g., to improve employees' service orientation or reduce costs. Second, it represented that managements' values about the importance of employee well-being determine the type of practices. This study has focused on positive attributions the regarding organization's strategic priority of improving service quality and the philosophical value of improving well-being. Although the importance of attributions in shaping the employees' attitudinal, and behavioral responses and their impact on their performance is increasingly known to the scholars of strategic HRM. But research on HR attributions is at its infancy stage even in the context of western countries, it requires further investigation regarding its outcomes, antecedents, mediators, and moderators in multiple contexts

(Hewet et al., 2018). This paper has not only highlighted this emergent HR aspect and its possible outcomes but also in the context of Pakistan. Another novelty of this study is its focus on HR attributions by providing a deeper understanding of employees' different attributions that lead to various desired outcomes. It explains whether the positive HR attributions of well-being and quality enhancement (performance) lead to improved service quality. This inquiry may explain any possible links of performance attributions with actual performance indicators i.e. service quality.

Interest in examining the role of attribution theory in explaining the link between HR and performance has recently highlighted (Hewet, Amanada, Julia & Krestin, 2017; Yang & Arthur, 2019), which draws researchers' attention to examine HR systems from the employees' perspective rather than management's perspective (Ostroff & Bowen, 2016). Process-based approach in HRM has highlighted the role of psychological processes through which employees attach meaning to HRM and its relationship with performance. HRM may influence the individual outcomes as there is a difference between intentions of managers and meanings attach by employees to these practices (Hewett, Shantz, Mundy, 2019; Sanders, Shipton, & Gomes, 2014). Process approach and employees' attribution has not been the point of attention in terms of both theory and research methodology (Sanders & Yang, 2015). So it encourages the investigation of attribution theories and its application because it explains many HR-related issues. Developments are needed to advance stream of research especially in one of its elements i.e. HR attributions (Hewet et al., 2017). Therefore, present research aims to study the phenomenon of HR attributions in higher education sector of Pakistan. Furthermore, HR attributions have been linked positively with customer satisfaction but not with service quality as it is widely accepted that service quality is an antecedent to customer satisfaction so it further pushes researcher to fill this gap (Alzaydi, Al-Hajla, Nguyen, & Jayawardhena, 2018). The concept of HR attributions has been evolved from the process approach to HRM and implications of context is not considered in literature related to process approach which is important to consider as it allows more detailed exploration of the outcomes of HRM system in different situations (Farndale & Sanders, 2016; Arthur & Yang, 2019).

It is shared by group of researchers that scarce literature is available regarding service quality, satisfaction and role of different mediators and moderators in the context of Pakistani Higher Education Institutes (Saleem, Musa, Imam & Khan, 2017).Therefore, The importance of service quality in higher education has been gradually realized and need more attention to improve student satisfaction (Ada, Baysal, Seda, & Erkan, 2017).

Evidence from previous research which has taken under-discussion relationships was from the developed and western countries, and there found little evidence from non-western and developing countries as there is a difference in a socio-cultural context. Management philosophies, procedures, and techniques suitable in one culture may not be appropriate in some other culture with different characteristics. So it is important to know new emerging concepts related to HRM, its implementation, and their relationship with the variables mentioned above in a linear way to help managers of developing countries. This study has focused on evaluating the role of possible antecedents of service quality in the HR domain. Only a few researchers may have tested employees' attributions regarding HR practices and their impact on different attitudes and behaviors, which may lead to effective service quality. The present research has been conducted through a dyad of faculty members taken from the university i.e., service providers (university academic staff), about their HR attributions, and from those who are receivers of those services, i.e., students.

This study has some delimitations as it only encompasses positive attributions (commitment-based) attributions to view improvement in service quality. Secondly, data has been taken from Higher education universities and institutes in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Another delimitation is that only quantitative methods have been used but no qualitative data for analysis has been considered. Fourth, it is a cross-sectional study,

and may not take longitudinal effects into account. Additionally, it doesn't encompass a comparison of public and private universities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Researchers are striving to unfold the famous phenomenon of 'Black Box" in HRM by proposing different models and concluding that HR practices influence goals through employees' attitudes and behaviors. Aboramadan, Albashiti, Alharazin, and Dahleez (2019) attach HR practices positively to organizational commitment. It is argued that HR perceptions are the antecedents of employee behaviors and attitudes. According to different researchers, there is difference in intended and perceived HR practices as employees interpret these practices from their own perspective and those perspectives develop in light of attributions they attach to these practices . In light of attribution theory, it can be deduce that people develop attributions to predict the motivations behind the actions and decisions taken in their surroundings, which then influence their behaviors and attitudes. The typology of HR attribution is considered as novel concept and a positive addition to SHRM. Two main themes emerged from the analysis presented by Nishii et al., (2008) i.e. commitment-focused strategies (Positive attributions) lead to attributions that the organization wants to promote quality of service and cares for employee well-being, while control-focused strategies focused on reducing costs, and create feelings of exploitation. As per social exchange theory, positive HR attributions (i.e. quality enhancement and wellbeing attributions) result into positive results, which are then likely to reciprocate in favorable ways for employees (Torka et al., 2005). However, when intended HR practices are perceived by employees represent cost-reduction strategy likely to ensue low commitment (Nishii et al., 2008).

Attributions of employees that HR practices are designed by management to enhance the quality of service and well-being of employees are also termed commitment-focused attributions were positively related to employee attitudes i.e. affective commitment.

H1: Positive HR attributions have a positive relationship with affective commitment

The commitment of employees follows extra-role which proves positive relation between commitment and OCB. It has also been observed that overall job satisfaction and organizational commitment are among the strongest predictors of OCBs. Similarly, Grego-Planer (2019) reached same conclusion by considering affective commitment as a mediator and having a relationship with organizational citizenship behavior. Organizations should focus on improving the level of affective organizational commitment to increase the citizenship behavior of their entitled members (Yang & Arthur, 2021)

H2: Affective commitment is positively related to OCB

H6: Affective commitment mediates the relationship between HR positive attributions and OCB.

OCB and Service Quality

Researchers consider organizational citizenship behavior important in influencing a firm's performance because employees' discretionary and cooperative behaviors during their encounter with customers are necessary for goal accomplishment beyond the formal job requirements. Employees' experiences, through their attitudes and behaviors, influence the customers' experiences of service quality (Kandeepan, Vivek, & Seevaratnam, 2019). OCBs are critical for achieving customer satisfaction because it is difficult to predict about nature of services and behaviors required to perform with high quality (Ratnayaka, Kumara, & Silva, 2020). So, it can be deduced and expected that employees' attitudes resulted in OCBs and service quality. In light of mentioned studies, it can be inferred that

H3: OCB is positively related to service quality.

Affective Commitment and OCB as Mediator

In HRM-performance research, a new focus of attention is the development of employee attitudes and behaviors. A phenomenon emerges that interpretations and perceptions regarding organizational processes precede attitudes and behaviors rather than HR practices directly in the causal chain of HR- performance link. Causal HR explanations result in negative or positive attitudes and behaviors as explained by Nishii et al. (2008). He proposed a framework and proved affective commitment and OCB as mediators. Sanders and Yang (2016) using Kelley's co-variation principle of attribution theory, found affective commitment and innovative behavior to be positively related to high-commitment HR practices. Positive perception of HR practices results in the affective commitment of teachers with higher positions, and those from smaller campuses have more chances to exhibit organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) found in a study in Taiwan by Chang, Nguyen, Cheng, Kuo, and Lee (2016). This study has taken affective commitment and OCB as resultant attitudes and behaviors of positive HR attributions from employees' perspectives. Affective commitment is an attitudinal consequence resultant of positive mutual social exchange.

During the encounter between customer and employee, employees' willingness to be involved in a discretionary effort determines the level of satisfaction of the customer and the service quality delivered. Perceptions related to High-performance work practices were found to be positively associated with organizational citizenship behavior through affective commitment as a mediator. These studies allow the development of a hypothesis as given below.

H4: Affective commitment is positively related to service quality.

H5: Affective commitment mediates the relationship between HR-positive attributions and service quality.

Behaviors required to produce high-quality service usually are lie outside the boundary of the formal job description of employees added by Nishii et al. (2008). Kandeepan et al. (2019) added that OCBs are positively associated with quality service. Managers needed to increase citizenship behavior by leveraging their employees' affective commitment, which in turn can result in a positive perception of service quality added by. It was found that dimensions of affective commitment had the strongest correlation with the civic virtue dimension of organizational citizenship (Almutawa, Muenjohn, & Zhang, 2018). So above discussion is proposed.

H7: Affective commitment and OCB sequentially mediates the relationship between positive HR attributions and Service quality

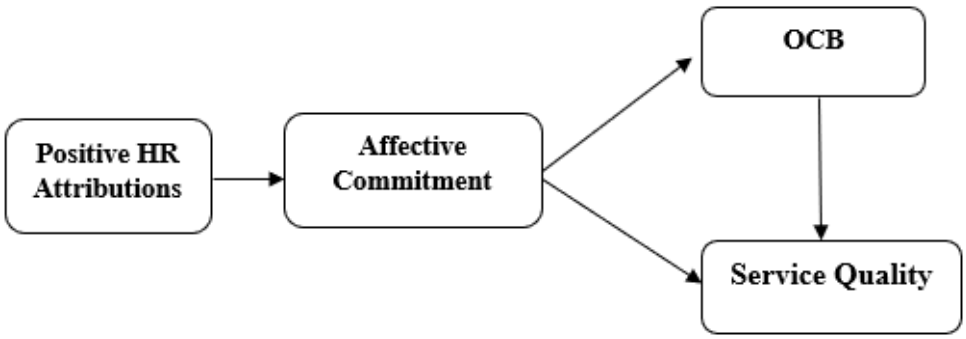

Figure 1. Conceptual Diagram.

3. METHODOLOGY

Sample and Sampling Design

For this research, the target population was the employees and students of the universities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, as this study aims to assess HR attributions of university employees and the perception of students regarding the academic service quality of universities. The population frame for the present research is the employees of universities located in twin cities i.e. Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The study aimed to analyze the relationship between attributions employees hold regarding management's motivation against implementing HR practices and its impact on the quality of service they render. Research has shown that students' perceptions were considered the most authentic way to measure the service quality of teachers (André et al., 2020). So to achieve that purpose, a dyadic approach was employed to get data from teachers and students to remove common method bias. Data collection was performed through a survey-based questionnaire from a dyad of 331 faculty members and students of the universities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The survey-based questionnaire consisted of two parts to be filled with different respondent types. The first part containing HR attributions, affective commitment, and OCBs were filled by the employees (faculty members), and the second part consisting of service quality items was filled by students of those faculty members. The unit of the analysis for this study is university teachers and students, and data has been collected at one point in time; cross-sectional in nature.

Data Analysis Strategy

This paper has used SPSS MEDTHREE developed by Hayes et al. (2013), to examine the estimates of the indirect effect of each mediator and for both mediators together. While Models 4 & 6 were applied to test simple and sequential mediation (Hayes et al., 2013). This approach has been selected because it was well suited for estimating the total mediation effect that affective commitment and organization citizenship behavior carry together and estimating the specific mediation effect for each mediator separately. Statistical significance for the indirect impact was determined from 95% bias and accelerated confidence intervals (Hayes, 2013). It is further suggested to use PROCESS if there is a single independent variable (that is not multidimensional) and the proposed model fits with the pre-defined models offered by PROCESS (Hayes & Preacher, 2010). In the latest research, many researchers have used this approach to measure sequential mediation (Bilal & Ahmad, 2019; Laeeque, Bilal, Babar, Khan, & Ul Rahman, 2018).

Measures

Positive HR attributions

Following Nishii et al. (2008), employees have been asked to mark five HR practices on the positive attributions of employee well-being and attributes related to enhancing service quality. It has ten items that have been marked on a five-point Likert scale.

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment has been measured through adapted scale by (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). It has five items measured on five point Likert scale.

OCB

Following Nishii et al. (2008), two dimensions of the OCB construct have been taken: Altruism and conscientiousness have been adapted from Podsakoff (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Jarvis, 2005; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990) .

Service Quality

Service quality has been measured through a scale developed by Abdullah (2006).Both dimensions constitute 20 items.

4. RESULTS

Demographics

A total of 500 respondents has been taken from university employees and students of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Response rate was 66% as 331 usable matched questionnaires were returned. It was found that 196 were male respondents whereas, 134 were female. 41% of employees had tenure of 6-10 years, whereas 28% were belong to the category of 1-5 years tenure, 24% of employees had tenure of 11-15, and 7.6% were having tenure of > 15. Most of the respondents fall in the age group of of 25-35, while 42 % were fall in the category of 36-45, 11% were in age category of 46-60, and only 3.6% belong to the above 60 age group.

Reliability Analysis

Consistency of results on using the same measure repeatedly can be explained through reliability statistics. Reliability was tested by using Cronbachs' alpha test for all the understudy constructs. Higher Cronbach alpha value represent greater internal consistency and therefore greater reliability.

Table 1. Results of Reliability Analysis.

Sr	Variable	α	Items
1	HR-Positive Attributions	0.96	10
2	Affective Commitment	0.93	5
3	Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.88	6
4	Service Quality	0.97	17

Factor Analysis:

Factor analysis was conducted to estimate understudy variables' divergent and convergent validity. The items related to HR attributions and affective commitment are loading to their respective variables, but item 1 of OCB and three last items of service quality were eliminated as they had not met the criteria i.e., 18, 19, and 20 of service quality. Loadings of HR-positive attributions ranges from 0.71 to 0.91, α=0.96, CR= 0.962 and AVE = 0.71, whereas factor loading for affective commitment ranges from 0.78 to 0.91, α=0.93, CR= 0.94, and AVE= 0.78. Factor loading of organizational citizenship behavior ranges from 0.68 to 0.87, α =0.88, CR= 0.97 and AVE= 0.60 and items of last item service quality ranges from 0.67 to 0.88 and α =0.96, AVE= 0.65 and CR= 0.97.

Other measures to establish validity and reliability include Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted. Benchmark value should be greater than o.7 to be adequate to ensure composite reliability. Discriminant validity is determined by average variance extracted (AVE) with value of at least 0.5 (Dillon & Goldstein, 1984; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Composite reliability can be checked through convergent validity that can be ensured if CR is greater than Online calculator was used to calculate CR whereas AVE was calculated in excel. All conditions met and reflected reliability and validity of scale.

Table 2. Factor Loadings.

	Factor Loading			
Items	**HRPA**	**AC**	**OCB**	**SQ**
1	.857	.893	.681	.889
2	.919	.859	.871	.879
3	.840	.909	.850	.856
4	.823	.788	.789	.790
5	.721	.918	.762	.809
6	.828		.710	.673
7	.882			.809
8	.806			.866
9	.911			.788
10	.871			.839
11				.812
12				.740
13				.851
14				.718
15				.844
16				.747
17				.752
	0.960	0.930	0.880	0.970
AVE	0.718	0.785	0.606	0.654
CR	0.962	0.943	0.902	0.970

Descriptive Statistics

Results shown in the table 3 reflect decriptives i.e., HR attributions (Mean = 2.35, SD = 0.88, , Kurtosis= -0.26, Skewness= 0.65), affective commitment (Mean= 2.66, SD = 0.77, Skewness= 0.38, Kurtosis=-1.06) and organizational citizenship behavior (Mean = 2.76, SD =0.70, Skewness = 0.25, Kurtosis = -0.71) and service quality (Mean = 2.76, SD= 0.70, Skewness = 0.25, Kurtosis = -1.15)

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics.

	Mean	**SD**	**Skewness**	**Kurtosis**
HR Positive Attributions	2.35	0.88	0.650	-0.267
Affective Commitment	2.66	0.77	0.381	-1.065
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	2.57	0.76	0.149	-0.716
Service Quality	2.76	0.70	0.258	-1.151

Mean values of variables were found to be towards disagreement or neutral, showing they haven't seen positive motivation behind HR practices and also lower values of affective commitment, OCB, and service quality. It

has depicted that in case of the absence of positive attributions, faculty showed lower values of service quality, affective commitment, and OCB as the trend of mean values were the same across all variables.

Correlation Analysis

The analysis of correlation was conducted to analyze the direction and strength of relationships between variables.

Table 4. Correlations.

	HRPA	AC	OCB	SQ
HR Positive Attributions	1			
Affective Commitment	.141*	1		
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	.209**	.151**	1	
Service Quality	.357**	.190**	.208**	1
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

The value shows strength of relationship whereas the sign reflects the direction of relationship i.e., negative or positive.Table 4 represents the results of Pearson's Correlation Positive and significant relationships were depicted through the values ranged from 0.14 to 0.35. HR attribution and affective commitment were found to be positive and significantly correlated ($r = 0.14$, $p < 0.05$). Similarly, affective commitment and OCB is also positive and significantly correlated ($r = 0.15$, $p < 0.05$). Positive relationship between OCB and service quality reflected by coefficient values ($r = 0.20$, $p < 0.05$). The correlation between affective commitment and service quality is also proved positive ($r = 0.19$, $p < 0.05$).

Hypotheses Testing (Regression Analyses)

Table 5 reflects results of regression analysis performed to analyze the direct hypothesis of the study.

Table 5. Direct Hypothesis Testing.

H	IV	DV	R^2	F	β	T	P
H1	HRA	AC	0.02	6.73	0.142	2.59	0.010
H2	AC	OCB	0.02	7.24	0.147	2.69	0.007
H3	OCB	SQ	0.04	15.4	0.212	3.93	0.000
H4	AC	SQ	0.03	11.807	0.816	3.43	0.001

It showed that 2% variation in affective commitment is due to HR positive attributions ($R^2 = 0.02$, $F=6.73$, $p < 0.05$). The regression analysis β estimates also approve a positive relationship between HR-positive attributions and affective commitment ($\beta= 0.142$, $t = 2.59$, $p< 0.05$) and supported first hypothesis. Results shows that variation in organization citizenship behavior will be 0.14 units and 2% variation in organization citizenship behavior is due to affective commitment ($R^2 = 0.02$, $\beta= 0.14$, $F= 7.24$, $p< 0.05$). Therefore, it can be said that there is a significant effect of affective commitment on organization citizenship behavior ($t= 2.69$, $p<0.05$) and supported hypothesis 2. The hypothesis 3 is supported by results showing significant effect (t=

3.93, $p < 0.05$). Coefficient values reflect that one unit increase of organizational citizenship behavior positively make 0.21 units change in service quality ($\beta = 0.21$). The fourth hypothesis suggests that affective commitment and service quality are positively and significantly related. Positive and significant results ($R^2 = 0.03$, $t = 3.43$, $F = 11.80$, $p < 0.05$) depicted in results. Similarly, coefficient values ($\beta = 0.81$, $p < 0.05$) represent that change of one unit in affective commitment will bring a change in service quality by 0.81 units. Thus, H4 is supported.

Mediation Analysis

The mediation hypotheses were tested in order to determine direct and sequential mediation between the hypothesized variables.

Table 6. Indirect Hypotheses Testing (Mediation Analysis).

Indirect Effects	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Service Quality (Outcome)				
Total Indirect effect (HR Positive Attributions)	0.03	0.013	0.016	0.068
M1 (Affective Commitment)	0.01	0.008	0.001	0.037
M2 (Organization Citizenship Behavior)	0.002	0.001	0.000	0.006
M1 & M2	0.001	0.010	0.004	0.051

Total effect= 0.282, *Direct effect* = 0.246

In table 6, an indirect effect of HR attribution on service quality through affective commitment and organizational citizenship behavior is $\beta = 0.035$, $p < 0.05$, 95% [0.016, 0.068] shown in the table. Indirect effects showed that affective commitment transmits 33.3% of total indirect influence of HR attributions on service quality, and is significant $\beta = 0.014$, $p < 0.05$, 95% [0.001, 0.037]. So it can be deduced that hypothesis five is accepted. Affective commitment and organization citizenship behavior both jointly cast 3.33% impact on service quality having $\beta = 0.001$, $p < 0.05$, 95% [0.004, 0.05]. So the results and estimates supported that affective commitment and organization citizenship behavior sequentially mediates the relationship between HR positive attributions and service quality. Hence, H7 has been accepted.

Table 7. Mediation Analysis.

Indirect Effects	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Organizational Citizenship Behavior (Outcome)				
Total effect (HR-Positive Attributions)	0.17	0.04	0.08	0.27
Direct Effect	0.16	0.04	0.07	0.25
Indirect Effect (Affective Commitment)	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.04

As stated in hypothesis 6, that relationship between positive HR attributions and organizational citizenship behavior is mediated by affective commitment. Model 4 (PROCESS MACROS) has been been applied to test the mediation; it has confirmed the mediation with relatively low values. Total effect is found to be significant $\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.05$, 95% [0.08, 0.27]. Significant direct effect of HR positive attributions was found on organizational citizenship behavior $\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.05$, 95% [0.071, 0.25]. Results of on indirect effects

calculated by bootstrap test confirmed that affective commitment transmits 5.8 % of the total effect of HR attributions on organization citizenship behavior, and is found to be significant $\beta = 0.01$, $p < 0.05$, 95% [0.00, 0.04]. So, it is indicated that hypothesis six is accepted.

Hence results shown confirmed that all hypothesis were accepted, both simple and sequential mediation—consistent with previous studies.

5. DISCUSSION

The study's main aim is to investigate the impact of positive HR attributions on service quality and organization citizenship behavior through affective commitment. Generally, all hypotheses were supported by results. The results of the present study showed a positive relationship inaccordance to results of similar previous studies (Nishii et al., 2008; Shahzad, 2011), but effect sizes and correlations were found to be weak in the context of public and private universities in Pakistan. Previous studies have predicated on the assumption that HR attributions have consistent relationships with employee attitudes and behaviors, but yet this hasn't been the case (Shantz, Arevshatian, Alfes, & Bailey, 2016; Van De Voorde & Beijer, 2015). It has roots in the theoretical base of attribution theories that state that attributions were context specific (Weiner, 1985).

Results have supported the notion that attributions have a role in modeling the different attitudes, behaviors and performance of employees as employee-oriented strategy is a more proximal determinant of HR decisions and has influence on employees added by Lepak and colleagues (2002). As it was hypothesized first that HR positive attribution of well-being and quality enhancement is positively related to affective commitment supported by (Nishii et.al, 2008). Another researcher supported this positive linkage between positive HR attribution and commitment (Hewett, Shantz, & Mundy, 2019). Second hypothesis was postulated that there is positive relationship between affective commitment and organization citizenship behavior (OCB). It is accepted in line with previous studies that emotional attachment with organization resulted from commitment of employees translated into greater motivation to contribute to the organization in behavioral terms (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Results of current study showed same trend having positive and statistically significant relation between affective commitment and OCB as well. Previous researches also supported these results and found these variables positively related (Nishii et al., 2008 ; Danish, Shahid &Humayon, 2015).

In third hypothesis, there is a positive relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and service quality. As expected, results supported this hypothesis so it was accepted, which reflects that once employees are willing to exhibit extra-role behaviors in organization they tend to perform well and their service quality improves as described by Nishii et al., (2008) that behaviors required to produce high quality service are normally lie outside the boundary of the formal job description of employees. It has been found by number of researchers that OCBs are positively associated with quality service (Koys, 2001). Fourth hypothesis was accepted in line with previous researches stated that affective commitment is positively related to service quality. studies al found positive relationship between affective commitment and service quality (Boshoff& Tait, 1996). Results supported fifth hypothesis reflecting that affective commitment partially mediates the relationship as it also has positive relationship with HR positive attributions and service quality (Arthur & Yang, 2019). Similarly, results supported six and seventh hypothesis as previous researches do through their findings. Study indicated that managers need to increase the level of citizenship behavior through leveraging their employees' affective commitment, which in turn can result in a positive perception of service quality added by (Almutawa, Muenjohn & Zhang, 2018).

In contrast to some previous studies, who fail to provide empirical evidence of context- specific theoretical explanation, a recent study supported empirically that HR attributions are a context-sensitive approach and recognized that individuals often evaluate different HR practices differently (Hewett, Shantz, & Mundy, 2019).

Some empirical evidence establishes different outcomes to be related to HR attributions but suggests some differences based on contextual factors e.g. organization type, national culture, organizational characteristics, individual differences, personality characteristics, employee ability and operationalization of attributions (Hewett, Patel, & Sanders, 2018; Ostroff & Bowen, 2016; Shantz et al., 2016; Van De Voorde & Beijer, 2015). This may specify the difference and importance of context in case of HR attributions. Results indicated that the context of the higher education sector might have produced weak relationships among selected variables. In Pakistani context, major directives to universities related to HR policy are given by HEC. Therefore, faculty may perceive managements' motivation behind implementation of HR policy less relevant, as recently, HEC directed and encouraged universities to generate funds by themselves in light of recent budget announcements and allocation. Public universities outweigh private ones in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, so such reasons may have impacted the study findings and kept it on disagreement. Another possible explanation might be that they were not aware of details related to every policy of their organization. Practices may not have been communicated well or only verbally to employees, which may result in less interest and knowledge to make any kind of attribution in general e.g., employees may not know the details of leave rules, details of end service benefits, in comparison to developed countries where practices are properly defined, designed, implemented and formally communicated.

Theoretical Implications

This research study has highlighted the importance of psychological process of employees in comprehension of HR- performance link. The results exemplifies the critical role of employee rather than strategy in explaining HRM in present realm. Lastly, it has identified the importance of the role of context in determining the impact of context in HR attributions. It is critical to recognize employees' perceptions and interpretations of HR practices, so management should orchestrate intended and implemented HR practices to get desired results (Piening, Baluch, & Ridder, 2014).

Managerial Implications

This study helps managers and universities understand how their employees attribute HR practices and take all necessary steps in policy and procedures to align their interpretations according to the firm's desires and needs. The importance of context is needed to be realized by managers in understanding the formation of attributions as it may vary with every type of organization, individual, and other related factors. The theory of attribution and the HR system (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004) throws light on importance of sending clear message related to firms' strategy e.g. organizations should communicate the difference, if any, between directives of Government and their intentions and philosophy of management. This study helps to know the difference in service quality attributed to the difference in interpretations of HR practices as basic practices are the same across the organizations, especially in Govt. organizations. Universities get insight into new aspects of HR that may impact quality. Wright and Nishii (2008) suggested that there is likely to be a disconnect between intended and actual HR practices, so researchers should also take caution in relying on managers' reports of HR practices.

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