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Does Persuasive Mapping Enhance Organizational Based Self-Esteem among University Students: Evidence from China's Higher Education

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Abstract

Although several studies have sought to explore the causes of self-esteem, few have attempted to investigate the relationship between Persuasive Mapping (PM) and Organizational-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE). By drawing on the Path-Goal Theory, the current study attempted to empirically examine and investigate whether PM can enhance OBSE among university students in the eastern region of China. The research method used to carry out the current study was a cross-sectional design. Data were collected from 89 students in three universities in the eastern region of China from July to October 30, 2023. The method used to carry out the current study was a survey, which included questions about the PM and OBSE scales. Contrary to the researcher's expectation, PM did not significantly enhance OBSE, β= - .01, t(87) = -0.08, p = .94. The current study may be crucial in laying a foundation for recognizing how PM impacts OBSE. This made the present study a significant preliminary effort to ascertain how PM affected OBSE among university students in the eastern region of China.

Keywords: *Persuasive Mapping, Organizational-Based Self-Esteem, Path-Goal Theory, China, Higher Education, University*

Introduction

Over the past two decades, there have been several empirical studies that acknowledge the significance of self-esteem (Elsaied, 2021; Hee-Soon & Cheol, 2020; Kim, 2018). Self-Esteem is referred to as the thoughts, feelings, and sentiments of contentment that indicate the match between the actual and ideal selves (Silber & Tippett, 1965). Recent evidence

suggests that when employees have healthy self-esteem, they exhibit several beneficial traits. For example, employees are likely to be more open to and interested in novel concepts and ideas (Branden, 2021). Based on strong beliefs about their capability and competence, because employees may keep a flexible approach and positive attitude toward the challenges they encounter, their turnover intentions may be less likely (Dalgic et al., 2020). Given the significance of self-esteem in terms of personal and organizational growth, it has become vital for academic research to investigate the cause of self-esteem in the workplace.

Organizational-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE), a term closely related to self-esteem, has recently come into research focus and is being investigated in social studies. Although a considerable body of academic research has attempted to assist practitioners in understanding the antecedents to OBSE (Elsaied, 2021; Farok & Zainal, 2017), there have been few attempts made by researchers to examine the relationship between Persuasive Mapping (PM) on OBSE.

Objective and Research Question

The main objective and purpose of the current study was to search for a new antecedent of OBSE by emphasizing the role of PM in triggering OBSE. The research question that addressed the objective and purpose of the current study was: Does PM predict OBSE among university students in the eastern region of China?

Hypotheses

$H1_0$: PM does not positively predict OBSE among university students in the eastern region of China.

H1: PM positively predicts OBSE among university students in the eastern region of China.

The remainder of the current study is organized and structured as follows. A review of the literature regarding PM and OBSE is followed by a description and explanation of the research method employed. The study's findings are then offered, followed by a discussion and a conclusion.

Literature Review

Organizational-Based Self-Esteem

OBSE is an essential indicator for assessing how well individuals in organizations who possess positions through employment consider their needs to feel a sense of recognition and self-worth can be fulfilled (Pierce et al.,1989). In other words, OBSE indicates how the organizations' members think about and perceive the importance, value, meaning, or efficacy of their participation in organizational settings (Mayer et al., 2007). The researcher notes that a large volume of published studies has focused on the consequent factors of OBSE. To be more specific, results from earlier studies recognized the critical role played by factors at the group level, such as social exchange relationships (Kim, 2018), and factors at the organizational level, such as organizational identity (Chang & Hwan, 2017) and organizational socialization strategy (Hee-Soon & Cheol, 2020), in generating OBSE. Meanwhile, extant research has documented that OBSE has the potential to impact individuals' attitudinal and behavioral responses (Jang et al., 2012; SeungGeun et al., 2013).

Additionally, existing literature has also evaluated what factors can give rise to OBSE in the workplace. Specifically, the researcher notes that most research has primarily focused on individual-level factors that could result in OBSE (Abas et al., 2015; Beheshtifar & Azadi, 2013). For instance, the study conducted by Beheshtifar and Azadi (2013), it was shown that procrastination behavior negatively predicted OBSE. In another study that set out to determine OBSE, Abas et al. (2015) found that perceived organizational support positively predicted OBSE among 660 public service officers in Malaysian ministries. A recent study conducted by Elsaied (2021) found that servant leadership positively affects OBSE among 537 employees in a travel and tourism corporation in Egypt. Given that few studies examined the role played by PM in predicting OBSE, PM was designated as the independent variable to study its impact on OBSE in the current study.

Persuasive Mapping

PM refers to the capability of a leader who can effectively direct their followers' efforts to accomplish desired outcomes expected by corporations via the application of persuasive and motivating techniques

by using "sound reasoning and mental framework" (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). According to Barbuto and Gottfredson (2016), servant leaders in particular pay close attention to and analyze the distinctive ways in which their followers think and behave. Using knowledge of each follower's mental model, the servant leader can formulate tailored behaviors that may have an impact on their followers (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016). Existing research shows that persuasive mapping can influence individuals' attitudes and behaviors (Hashim et al., 2017; Kim & Min, 2011; Prakasch & Ghayas, 2019). For instance, in a empirical research that examined how work stress and servant leadership affect the burnout of the directors in a childcare center in South Korea, Kim and Chung (2017) found that persuasive mapping negatively affected burnout. Likewise, persuasive mapping was also found to positively predict student satisfaction with the instructor in an online setting in a higher educational setting in United States (Sahawneh & Benuto, 2018). Further, in a study that evaluated the relationships between the servant leadership of school coaches of Taekwondo in South Korea, persuasive mapping positively affects athletic performance (Kim & Min, 2011).

In addition to aspects at the individual level, previous studies also offered insight into the effects of persuasive mapping on performance at team and organizational levels (Barbuto & Hayden, 2011; Hashim et al., 2019). For instance, motivated by the persuasive disposition of servant leadership, leaders who implemented persuasive mapping have been noted to significantly improve organizational performance (Hashim et al., 2019). Although extensive research has been carried out on OBSE, few studies exist that examine the relationship between PM on OBSE. OBSE was designated as the dependent variable in the current study to examine whether PM can enhance employees' sense of importance, value, meaning, and efficacy.

Theory and Hypothesis Development

The researcher draws on the Path-Goal Theory to propose that PM can enhance followers' sense of value, importance, meaning, and efficacy in organizations. According to Path-Goal theory (Northouse, 2021), leaders need to guide their followers toward achieving organizational goals by selecting a leadership style that matches the traits of the followers and the

demands of the work. As far as followers with internal locus of control are concerned, they usually hold the view that their knowledge and skills are what make a task at work successful (Judge & Robbins, 2017). Therefore, leaders can effectively increase followers' feelings of value, importance, meaning, and efficacy if they can recognize the thought patterns of their followers and thus exercise participatory leadership over their employees. However, when it comes to followers with an external locus of control, they frequently assume that factors outside of their control, such as opportunities, task complexity, and other circumstances, determine whether or not they can fulfill their duties within organizations (Judge & Robbins, 2017). Therefore, if leaders can recognize the assumptions of their followers having an external locus of control and thus exercise directive leadership, followers' sense of value, importance, meaning, and efficacy can be increased because they would feel that there are factors beyond their control to help them.

The researcher's explanation is consistent with extant studies, which demonstrates that PM can lead to OBSE in organizations. For example, Farok and Zainal (2017) found that because servant leaders attached importance to putting followers' needs first and empowering followers to grow and succeed, they would enhance followers' abilities and potential and enable followers to feel their sense of self-esteem. Extant research also suggested that when servant leaders choose to express personal consideration for their followers and encourage them to participate in leadership behaviors, positive organizational culture is created in organizations, thus enabling followers to maintain a concept of self-confidence and feel their sense of value, importance, and capability in organizations (Elsaied, 2021). Given that persuasive mapping is one of the dimensions of servant leadership, the studies conducted by Farok and Zainal (2017) and Elsaied (2021) provided partial evidence for the proposition that PM helps to improve university students' OBSE. The researcher thus proposes the following hypothesis: *H1*. PM positively predicts OBSE.

Methodology

Population and Sample

The current study employed a non-experimental quantitative research design using survey methodology. A convenient sampling method was adopted. The population was university students in eastern China. Data were collected from 89 students in two universities in the eastern part of China. Based on the power of .80, a significance level of α= .05, the expected medium effect size of .15, (Cohen, 1992), a sample size of 89 is sufficient to conduct a simple regression analysis for the current study.

Measure

The researcher used Brislin's (1980) recommended back-translation process to develop Chinese versions of the PM and OBSE measurements. To measure PM, one sub-scale of the Servant Leadership Scale developed by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), the PM scale, was employed. The PM scale has three items. The PM utilizes a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The score of the PM scale is computed by summing responses across items and ranges from 3 to 15. The mean or average score of the PM Scale is calculated by dividing the score of the PM Scale by three, which is the number of items of the PM Scale. Previous research showed that the PM scale had acceptable validity and reliability. As shown in Table 1, for the current study, the Cronbach's alpha for the EM scale was .77, indicating an acceptable reliability for the PM scale (Yockey, 2018, p. 106). The means of the individual items ranged from 3.81 to 3.87, with a mean on the total scale of 11.42 (*SD* = 5.61). The mean and standard deviation of the items of the PM scale are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Reliability Statistics for the PM Scale

Variable	Dimension	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Cronbach's Alpha
PM	-	PM 1	3.81	0.94	89	.77
		PM 2	3.74	0.96	89	
		PM 3	3.87	0.97	89	
	Scale Statistics: Mean = 11.42, Variance = 5.61, Std. Deviation = 2.37, N of items = 3					

Note. PM = Persuasive Mapping.

To measure OBSE, the OBSE Scale developed by Pierce et al. (1989), was employed. The OBES scale has only one dimension with 10 items. The OBES utilizes a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The score of the GSE scale is computed by summing responses across items and ranges from 10 to 50. The mean or average score of the OBSE Scale is calculated by dividing the score of the OBSE Scale by 10, which is the number of items of the OBSE Scale. Previous research showed that the OBSE scale had acceptable validity and reliability. As shown in Table 2, for the current study, the Cronbach's alpha for the OBSE scale was .82, indicating an acceptable reliability for the OBSE scale (Yockey, 2018, p. 106). The means of the individual items ranged from 3.52 to 3.73, with a mean on the total scale of 35.94 (*SD* = 5.67). The mean and standard deviation of the items of the OBSE scale are provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Reliability Statistics for the OBSE

Variable	DIM	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Cronbach's Alpha
OBSE	-	OBSE 1	3.54	1.00	89	.82
		OBSE 2	3.52	0.87	89	
		OBSE 3	3.55	0.97	89	
		OBSE 4	3.47	0.91	89	
		OBSE 5	3.57	0.90	89	
		OBSE 6	3.60	0.85	89	
		OBSE 7	3.64	0.93	89	
		OBSE 8	3.66	0.93	89	
		OBSE 9	3.67	0.91	89	
		OBSE10	3.73	0.86	89	
	Scale Statistics: Mean = 35.96, Variance = 32.18, Std. Deviation = 5.67, N of items = 10					

Note. OBSE = Organizational-based Self-Esteem. DIM = Dimension.

Results

As shown in Table 3, there were 89 valid observations for the demographic variables: Gender, Age, Level of Education, and Field of Study. Table 4 presents the frequency, or the number of participants, for each category of

Gender. As shown in Table 4, there were 48 males and 41 females, representing 53.9% and 46.1% of the data set, respectively.

Table 5 presents the frequency for each category of age group. Specifically, 16(18%) students were between 18 and 20 years old, 49(55.1%) students were between 21 and 23 years old, and 24(27%) students were between 24 and 26 years old.

Table 3

Statistics

		Gender	Age	Level of Study	Field of Study
N	Valid	89	89	89	89
	Missing	0	0	0	0

Table 4

Frequencies for Demographic Variable: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male students	48	53.9	53.9	53.9
	Female students	41	46.1	46.1	100
	Total	89	100	100	

Table 5

Frequencies for Demographic Variable: Age Group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 to 20 years old	16	18	18	18
	21 to 23 years old	49	55.1	55.1	73
	24 to 26 years old	24	27	27	100
	Total	89	100	100	

Table 6 presents the frequency for each category of Level of Education. As shown in Table 4, 45(50.6%) students were studying at undergraduate schools and 44(49.4%) students were studying at graduate schools.

Table 7 presents the frequency for each category of Field of Study. As shown in Table 5, 37(41.6%) students were studying in the field of Economics & Management, 19(21.3%) students were studying in the field

of Culture, Art, & Humanity, and 33(37.1%) students were studying in the field of Science & Technology.

Table 8 presents the sample size (N), standard deviation, minimum and maximum, Kurtosis, and skewness for the seven items of the PM. The means for each of the items on the scale ranged from 3.74 to 3.87. Because the skewness statistics of items of the LMX scale were between -0.57 and -0.32, which is less than two (West et al., 1995); and the kurtosis statistic of each item is between -0.46 and -0.23, which is less than seven (West et al., 1995), the data in the sample can be considered to have a normal distribution.

Table 6

Frequencies for Demographic Variable: Level of Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Undergraduate School	48	53.9	53.9	53.9
	Graduate School	41	46.1	46.1	100
	Total	89	100	100	

Table 7

Frequencies for Demographic Variable: Field of Study

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	EM	16	18	18	18
	CAH	49	55.1	55.1	73
	ST	24	27	27	100
	Total	89	100	100	

Note. EM = Economics and Management; CAH = Culture, Art, and Humanity, ST = Science and Technology.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for the Items of the PM Scale

	N	MIN	MAX	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
PM1	89	1	5	3.81	0.94	-0.36	0.26	-0.36	0.51
PM2	89	1	5	3.74	0.96	-0.32	0.26	-0.46	0.51
PM3	89	1	5	3.87	0.97	-0.57	0.26	-0.23	0.51
Valid N	89								

Note. PM = Persuasive Mapping; MIN = Minimum; MAX = Maximum.

Table 9 presents the sample size (N), minimum and maximum, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis for the seven items of the OBSE Scale. The means for each of the items on the scale ranged from 3.47 to 3.73. Because the skewness statistics of items of the OBSE scale were between -0.37 and 0.01, which is less than two (West et al., 1995); and the kurtosis statistic of each item is between -0.43 and 0.44, which is less than seven (West et al., 1995), the data in the sample can be considered to have a normal distribution in the current study.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for Items of the OBSE Scale

	N	MIN	MAX	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
OBSE1	89	1	5	3.54	1.00	-0.29	0.26	-0.42	0.51
OBSE2	89	1	5	3.52	0.87	-0.37	0.26	0.44	0.51
OBSE3	89	1	5	3.55	0.97	-0.22	0.26	-0.56	0.51
OBSE4	89	1	5	3.47	0.91	-0.15	0.26	-0.34	0.51
OBSE5	89	1	5	3.57	0.90	0.01	0.26	-0.33	0.51
OBSE6	89	1	5	3.60	0.85	-0.14	0.26	0.03	0.51
OBSE7	89	1	5	3.64	0.93	-0.25	0.26	-0.36	0.51
OBSE8	89	1	5	3.66	0.93	-0.14	0.26	-0.43	0.51
OBSE9	89	1	5	3.67	0.91	-0.21	0.26	-0.30	0.51
OBSE10	89	1	5	3.73	0.86	-0.20	0.26	-0.06	0.51
Valid N	89								

Note. OBSE = Organizational-based Self-Esteem; MIN = Minimum; MAX = Maximum.

Table 10 displays the results of two independent-samples *t*-tests. The results reported that a significant difference did not exist in PM scores between male students and female students. Female students (M = 3.74, SD = 0.93) had the same score of PM as male students (M = 3.86, SD = 0.66), $t(70.53) = 0.72$, p = .49, d = .15.

As shown in Table 11, a significant difference did not exist in OBSE scores between male students and female students. Female students (M = 3.48, SD = 0.65) had the same score of OBSE as male students (M = 3.70, SD = 0.46), $t(70.32) = 1.86$, p = .08, d = .40.

Table 11 displays the results of independent-samples *t*-test. The results reported there a significant difference did not exist in PM scores between students studying at graduate schools and students studying at undergraduate schools. Students studying at graduate schools (M = 1.33, SD = 0.43) had the same score of PM as did students studying at undergraduate schools (M = 1.24, SD = 0.48), $t(87) = 0.92$, $p = .36$, d = .20. There is not a difference in OBSE scores between students studying at graduate schools and students studying at undergraduate schools. Students studying at graduate schools (M = 2.02, SD = 0.85) had the same score of PM as did students studying at undergraduate schools (M = 1.90, SD = 0.93), $t(87) = 0.68$, $p = .50$, d = .14.

Table 10

Results of the Independent-Samples t Tests with PM and OBSE as the Dependent Variables

	Gender	N	M	Std. Deviation	df	t	*p*	d
PM	Male	48	3.86	0.66	70.53	.72	.49	0.15
	Female	41	3.74	0.93				
OB SE	Male	48	3.70	0.46	70.72	1.97	.07	0.41
	Female	41	3.48	0.65				

Note. PM = Persuasive Mapping; OBSE = Organizational-Based Self-Esteem; M = Mean.

Table 11

Results of the Independent-Samples t Tests

	Gender	N	M	Std. DEV	t	df	*p*	d
PM	Graduate School	41	1.33	0.43	.92	87	.36	.20
	Undergraduate School	48	1.24	0.48				
OBSE	Graduate School	41	2.02	0.85	.68	87	.50	.14
	Undergraduate School	48	1.90	0.93				

Note. PM = Persuasive Mapping; OBSE = Organizational-Based Self-Esteem; M = Mean; Std. DEV = Standard Deviation.

Table 12 and Table 13 display the results of the one-way between subjects ANOVA with PM as the dependent variable. The results indicated that the

PM scores from students did not vary based on the Age Group of the students, $F(2, 86) = 0.17$, $p = .85$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$. The results also showed that the OBSE scores from students did not vary based on the Age Group of the students, $F(2, 86) = 0.58$, $p = .0.55$, $\eta^2 = .01$.

Table 12

Descriptives

	Age Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
PM	18 to20 years old	16	3.73	0.81
	21 to 23 years old	49	3.80	0.88
	24 to 26 years old	24	3.88	0.59
	Total	89	3.81	0.79
OBSE	18 to 20 years old	16	3.56	0.47
	21 to 23 years old	49	3.65	0.60
	24 to 26 years old	24	3.50	0.57
	Total	89	3.60	0.57

Note.OBSE = Organizational-Based Self-Esteem.

Table 13

Results of the One-Way Between Subjects ANOVA with OBSE as the Dependent Variable

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	*p*	η^2
PM	Between Groups	0.21	2	0.11	0.17	0.85	0.00
	Within Groups	54.63	86	0.64			
	Total	54.85	88				
OBSE	Between Groups	0.39	2	0.19	0.60	0.55	0.01
	Within Groups	27.93	86	0.33			
	Total	28.32	88				

Note. OBSE = Organizational-Based Self-Esteem.

Table 14 and Table 15 display the results of one-way between subjects ANOVA within PM and OBSE as the dependent variables. The results reported the PM scores did not vary based on the Field of Study of the

students, $F(2, 86) = 0.29$, $p = 98.65$, $\eta^2 = .70$. Tukey's post hoc procedure reported students who studied in the field of Science & Technology (M = 1.92, SD = .28) scored higher in EH than those who studied in both fields of Economics & Management (M = 1.06, SD = .25) and Culture, Art, & Humanity (M = 1.06, SD = .24). The OBSE scores did not vary based on the Field of Study of the students, $F(2, 86) = .00$, $p = .99$, $\eta^2 = .00$.

Table 14

Descriptives for PM and OBSE

	AgeG	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Post Hoc Test Tukey's Test
PM	1. EM	16	1.06	0.25	3>1
	2. CAH	49	1.06	0.24	3>2
	3. ST	24	1.92	0.28	3>1; 3>2
	Total	89	1.29	0.46	
OBSE	1. EM	16	1.94	0.85	
	2. CAH	49	1.96	0.91	
	3. ST	24	1.96	0.91	
	Total	89	1.96	0.89	

Note. PM = Persuasive Mapping; OBSE = Organizational-Based Self-Esteem; AgeG = Age Group; EM = Economics and Management; CAH = Culture, Art, and Humanity, ST = Science and Technology.

Table 16 displays the results of the Pearson correlation analysis. The results indicated that there was not a relationship between PM and OBSE, $r(87) = .-0.01$, $p = .94$.

H1 was tested using simple linear regression analysis at a significance level of .05 in SPSS. Preliminary analyses aimed to test for the no violation of the assumption of normality were also performed (Yockey, 2018, p. 357). As shown in Table 8 and Table 9, because the absolute value of the skewness statistic was less than two and the absolute value of the kurtosis statistic was less than 7 for both PM and OBSE, the scores for both PM and OBSE were treated as being normally distributed (West et al.,1995, p. 74). As shown in Table 17, a regression analysis was performed and conducted to examine the relationship between PM and

OBSE. The researcher rejected *H1*that PM predicts OBSE because p = .94. PM did not predict OBSE, β = -.01, $t(87)$ = -0.08, p = .94.

Table 15

Results of the One-Way Between Subjects ANOVA with PM and OBSE as the Dependent Variable

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	*p*	η^2
PM	Between Groups	12.82	2	6.41	98.65	0.00	.70
	Within Groups	5.59	86	0.07			
	Total	18.40	88				
OBSE	Between Groups	0.01	2	0.00	0.00	.99	.00
	Within Groups	69.81	86	0.81			
	Total	69.82	88				

Note. PM = Persuasive Mapping; OBSE = Organizational-Based Self-Esteem.

Table 16

Results of the Pearson Correlations between PM and OBSE

		PM	OBSE
PM	Pearson Correlation		-0.01
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.94
	N	89	89
OBSE	Pearson Correlation	-0.01	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.94	
	N	89	89

Note. PM = Persuasive Mapping; OBSE = Organizational-Based Self-Esteem.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 17

Results of Simple Regression Analysis

	OBSE				
	B	Std. Error	B	t	*p*
(Contant)	3.62	.30		12.09	.000
PM	-.01	.08	-.01	-0.08	.94
R^2	.00				
Adjusted R^2	-.01				
F	.01				
df	(1, 87)				

Note. PM = Persuasive Mapping; OBSE = Organizational-Based Self-Efficacy.

Discussion

The results of the statistical analyses for the demographic variable Gender demonstrate that no differences exist in PM and OBSE between male students and female students. These findings suggest that both the male students and the female students perceive the same level of attention and effort made by their professors to analyze the various ways in which they think and conduct. These findings also suggest that both the male students and the female students feel the same degree and level of importance, value, meaning, or efficacy of their participation at the universities. One explanation for this is that professors at Chinese universities place a high value on fostering harmonious interactions with students by fostering an inclusive environment (Chin et al., 2021; Huang & Zhao, 2021; Lau et al, 2023; Li & Yang, 2021). They recognize that each student, regardless of gender, deserves the same level of attention and consideration to help them better realize their potential by boosting their self-esteem and confidence (Li & Yang, 2021).

Moreover, the results of the statistical analyses for the demographic variable Level of Education suggested no differences existed in PM and OBSE between Students from graduate schools and undergraduate schools. The results of the analyses for the demographic variable Age Group showed that no differences existed in PM and OBSE among students of different age groups. A possible explanation for these findings might be that there isn't a significant age difference between graduate and undergraduate students, for which both graduate and undergraduate students can be considered young adults (Liu et al., 2020). Hence, students from graduate and undergraduate schools are likely to score similarly in PM and OBSE.

Furthermore, the results of the statistical analyses for the demographic variable Field of Study indicated that students studying in the field of Science & Technology scored higher than did students studying in both fields of Economics & Management, and Culture, Art, & Humanity. It seems possible that majors in the field of Science & Technology, such as mechanics, computer science, and materials science, require students to have both theoretical learning and hands-on experience in practical

laboratories (England et al., 2019; Wester et al., 2021), which are relatively more difficult for the students and require more student-professor interactions than majors in the study fields of Economic & Management and Culture, Art, & Humanity. Hence, professors in the field of Science & Technology are likely to offer students more personalized guidance and assistance. However, the results suggested that no differences existed in OBSE for students from the fields of Science & Technology, Economics & Management, and Culture, Art, & Humanity. This finding means that no matter what field the students come from, they all have the same level of perceptions about their importance, value, meaning, and efficacy at the universities (Huang & Zhao, 2021; Li & Yang, 2021).

Finally, the results of the correlation statistical analysis revealed that PM did not correlate with OBSE. The research question examined whether PM could predict OBSE among university students in the eastern region of China. Based on the simple linear regression analysis results, the researcher rejects *H1*, suggesting that PM does not predict OBSE. This finding implies that professors cannot necessarily make students feel more valuable, important, meaningful, or effective by attempting to guide them toward achieving their learning objectives, even if they recognize students' unique ways of thinking and behaving. This finding is not consistent with the empirical study by Farok and Zainal (2017), suggesting that the abilities and potentials of followers are likely to be increased by servant leaders, which enables followers to feel OBSE in themselves.

This finding contradicts the study conducted by Elsaied (2021), suggesting that leaders with a service mindset can help to shape an organizational culture in which followers feel valued, important, and capable within their organizations. The exact cause for the result that PM does not predict OBSE is unknown, but it may be related to the convenient sampling method that could introduce bias into the results. (McMillan, 2016, p. 123). Therefore, researchers in future studies can adopt a random sampling method to increase the representation of the sample by removing bias (Vogt, 2007). Future research is also needed to identify the explored mediator of psychological variables in the relationship between PM and OBSE, such as psychological contract (Freese & Schalk, 2008). Additionally, researchers in the future are also suggested to use a qualitative research method to provide a thick description of the feelings

and experiences of students to study how and why PM may or may not enhance their OBSE (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2016).

Conclusion

The current study examined how PM affected OBSE by drawing on Path-Goal theory. The simple regression analysis showed that PM did not predict OBSE using a .05 level of significance. This result may be explained by considering the bias caused by the convenient sampling method. Therefore, this unexpected finding should be interpreted with caution. In this regard, it is still recommended that professors should leverage PM to boost university students' OBSE in eastern China. The current study might be essential for setting up the basics for comprehending how PM affects OBSE. In this regard, the current study serves as a vital and crucial first attempt to determine the impact of PM on OBSE among university students in the eastern region of China.

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