SURVEYING THE EFFECT OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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Abstract

This study determines the impact of servant leadership on the organizational commitment, with the variable of trust of employers as a mediator factor, in the Sewage Company of Tehran. The statistic society of this research includes all 57 managers and leaders of this company according to data. Sampling was done by census method. The research method is descriptive, correlative and data gathering was done by questionnaire. Meyer and Allen (1994) questionnaire was used to evaluate the organizational commitment's questionnaire, the questionnaire of Moghimi and Ramezan (2011) was the reference of our questionnaire in measuring servant leadership element. Ultimately, Elonen et al. questionnaire (2008) was used for the questionnaire related to trust. Validity was approved by Cronbach's Alfa after using the experts' opinion. The validity of the organizational commitment's questionnaire was 0.811, servant leadership's questionnaire was 0.805, and the organizational trust's questionnaire was 0.784. Also, data was analyzed by Structural Equation Modeling. The results illustrated that servant leadership effected on employers' trust and organizational commitment. In addition, it was shown that servant leadership's effect on the organizational commitment is possible through the trust as a mediator variable.

Keywords: Servant Leadership, Organizational Commitment, Employers' trust

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Introduction

Organizations without rebuilding the leadership's methods and approaches cannot make relationship with the environment, and respond to the environmental condition and requirements (Jafari, Mirmoghadam, 2012; 66). Organizations which ponder to their strategy development are aware about the development must be commence from the leaders and human resources, because human is the main capital of an organizations. Meanwhile, those organizations are successful which their leaders can mobilize these valuable capital and grow the competence and commitment among them (Shirvani et al., 2009). Simultaneously because of the privatization and downsizing of governmental institutions and the development of small businesses, new approaches as like as ethics and commitment are considered by the mangers. No organization can succeed unless its employers and members have such commitment about it and effort towards its goals (Nasr Esfehani et al, 2010; 105).

On the other hand, no organization reaches to high levels of performance unless its employers be committed to organizational purposes as effective members of the organizational work teams. Thus, employers will have extraordinary performance when they feel the work belongs to them and they have psychological relation to the organization or join their identity to the organization (Downport, 2010; 59). This phenomenon is related to the leadership method such that the leadership methods and guidance and attitude of managers to the organization influence on reactions of employers, and these reactions make motivation for employers to work efficiently or destroy the desires and encouragement between them (Nosadeghzade, 2005;25). Great leaders works as a servant to provide employers' requirements; they believe that serving others is the most magnificent and the best reward for the leaders (Esfehani et al., 2010; 108).

Leadership as the most important task of managers, is a science and an art to influence people to accomplish the goal. Leadership or management's style determines atmosphere, culture and ruling strategies of the organization. Leadership style is a set of attitudes, characteristics and skills of managers shaped based on four factors including the system of values, trust in staff, leadership tendencies and a sense of security in vague situations. Leadership style, is indicative of how the mangers interact with employees under their supervision (Pera, 2000; 123). In the current world that is called the era of postmodernity, the leadership characteristics is far different

and the servant leadership style is placed at the center of activities, because managers provide services to employers whom provide services to customers.

Servant leadership with its effects on organizational commitment is one of the factors affecting on the efficiency and effectiveness which are the most important factors of an organization and they must be enforced as well (Nasr Esfehani et al, 2010; 127). Organizational commitment can provide many positive consequences. Employers who have more commitment have more discipline in their works and they work more hours, it is the task of managers to maintain the employers' commitment (Haghighi and Jalalian, 2013; 127).

One of the most needs of employers in the organization is making trust between them and the mangers. High levels of trust cause less cost in controlling and evaluation, because employers work with self-control mechanism and also have internal motivation. Therefore, it is critical to survey on the effect of servant leadership on the organizational commitment through the effect of the trust (Hasanzade, 2005, 43).

Governmental organizations are almost organized to conduct regular tasks according to the governmental goals, they implement of approved programs and serving people. However government agencies has become more important while the wide of their activities and public cost has been increased, improvement in governmental organizations' functions is seemed necessary. In these organizations, the most sensitive and important roles holds by the managers; if managers could provide conditions to increase the potential powers of their employers and use them as well, the productivity of these organizations will be improved certainly. The managers of government agencies can conduct their assigned tasks and activities when their staff feel that they are trustworthy, however, the trust level is low in our country (Gholipoor et al., 2009; 104). If managers want to reduce the absenteeism and employers' turnover, they must do some activities that cause positive attitude among their staff, and if the prevailing atmosphere of distrust exists in the organization, this positive attitude will be lost (Khonifar et al., 2009; 108). We can see the serving leadership as the result of organization's trust. Considering others' interest, and preferring followers' interests rather than leader's personal interests have a key role in making trust in an organization (Gholipoor et al., 2009; 108).

As a conclusion, according to the indifference of government's employees, and lack of trust to governmental agencies, the researcher tend to survey on the effect of servant leadership on the organizational commitment with the trust of employers as a mediator variable in the Sewage Company of Tehran, because trust is an effective feature of servant leadership. Thus, the main question of this research is:

"What is the effect of the trust on the influence of servant leadership on the organizational commitment?"

Servant leadership

"Robert Greenleaf" introduced the concept of servant leadership among modern management theories in 1987. According to his explanation, the leader has to consider the demands of others in advanced. In addition, other theorists knows servant leadership theory as a modern and approved theory. This theory respects to human equality and looks for personal improvement among the organization's members (Russell, 2001). Thus, the servant leadership is the act and understanding of a leader to prefer others' interests over the personal interest (Laub, 2004). In servant leadership, the primary motivation is the desirability of serving. This leadership style is imaginable when the leader devotes himself or herself for serving to followers or employers. Self-service must not be the motivation of the leader, but the leader must be on the summit of motivating plan and focuses on other's needs (Russell and Robert, 2002). Mayer (1994) said that it is impossible to reach to higher standard of leadership and put the providing the service in the center of activities while our power and dominant thought is the leadership. However, the power comes with the leadership, it has just one legitimate use and it is providing service (Russell and Robert, 2002). Servant leadership has a huge potential and power to improve the organizational leadership. The servant leadership has a great motivation to focus on followers' needs and put their demands in his or her attention (Denis, 2003). The first motivation for a servant leadership is the effective serving to others to accomplish the group's goals. Great leaders perform as a servant for providing staff's demands. They believe that providing other's need is the most magnificent and the best reward for leadership (Nasr Esfehani et al., 2010). According to the opinion of "Jim Stuart", the root of leadership is the commitment of providing services. Hill (2007) believes this theory makes changes in the traditional model of management and causes

the alternation in the concept of management and leadership. "Greenleaf" illustrates a servant leadership as a person who draws a shared vision about the success. Servant leadership tries to improve their followers, and make them powerful, instead of using the power to make a domination and an influence on them. Furthermore, he believes that the followers of these servant leaders will become servant leaders as well (Yukl, 2006).

Organizational commitment

The concept of organizational commitment refers to the emotional reaction of a person to the organizational features and to the organization as a complete system which he or she works for and it is related to the goals and values of that organization. This concept refers to the degree of belonging and attachment or loyalty of a worker about the organization and it is about a positive evaluation about the job. According to "Mowday and Boulian" (1974), the organizational commitment includes three factors:

1. Identification: Pride to the organization, beside of internalization of the objectives and values of the organization.
2. Willingness to invest the efforts in favor of the organization.
3. Loyalty: giving importance to maintain membership in the organization.

These features are implied that the organization's members influence on the activities of an organization. They feel the high social position and rank in the organization, and they are ready to participate for making decision in the organization more than the leaders' understanding about participatory or advisory leadership (Abrams & Hogg, 2001). However, we have many definition about organizational commitment, all have a same perspective which the commitment is a psychologic mood that describes the relationship between the employer and the organization. Although, there is a traditional difference between these descriptions, and it is about the nature of psychological state (Cook & Wall, 1980). To approve these differences "Myer" and "Allen" developed a model with three elements. The first factor is the emotional commitment that refers to the emotional belonging and attachment of an employer to the organization, organizational identification and organizational involvement. Employers continue to their employment and the job in the organization with a powerful emotional commitment, because they want to do this job

desirably. The next factor is continuous commitment that refers to the concept of an employer about the related costs of leaving the organization; these costs include job's related issues (such as qualification or wasted efforts to achieve non-transferable skills) or job's unrelated issues (as like as the cost of movement or transportation). The reason that make the employers to make this commitment to an organization is their needs to do this job. The last factor is the normative commitment that is about the feeling of an employer about staying in the organization, these employers with a high level of normative commitment feel that they have to continue and stay with their organization (Khorshidi, 2009).

Trust

"Dietz, &Hartog" (2006) explain the trust in three steps in thier study (Khanifer et al., 2009):

Trust as an opinion, trust as a decision, and trust as an action.

First step: trust as an opinion

The first phase of trust is a set of integrated mental ideas and beliefs about the other partner, which the persons can imagine that his or her partner's action has a positive result for him or her.

Second phase: trust as a decision

The second phase of trust is making a decision to trust to another person, this phase shows the belief to another person potential trustworthy as well. In a real trust situation, there are two expectations; a trustworthy behavior and a desire to act upon it. "Gelisimi" stated two categories relating to this subject (Dietz, &Hartog, 2006).

1.   Reliance driven behaviors: for an example, the environmental control of the manager on decisions and valuable resources of the subordinates or intentional reduction of control and investigation of the subordinates' actions.

2.   Behaviors related to disclosure of information and sharing it with others. For an example, the organization' manager can share the main strategies related to international trades with specialized departments.

Third phase: the trust as an action

In this phase, trust is shown as an action, it means that a person intend to do an action based on the created trust.
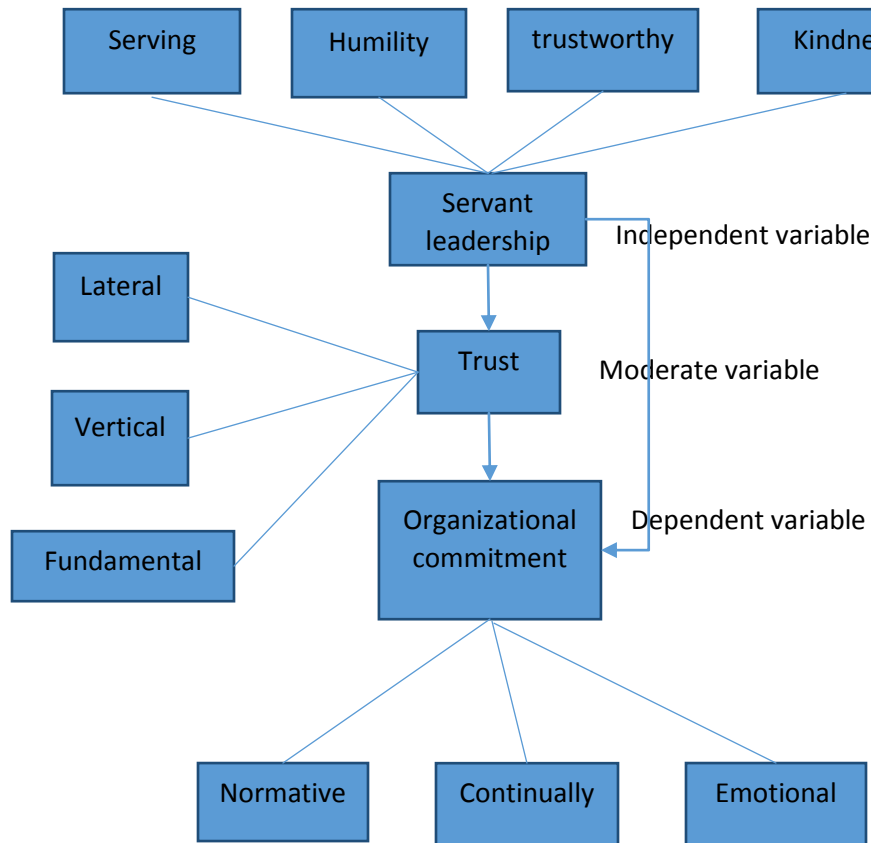
Conceptual Model

Figure 1: Conceptual Model (Ramli&Desay, 2014)

Research Methodology

This research is practical, descriptive and correlation based on its function and data gathering methods. The statistical society include 57 leaders and managers of the Sewage Company of Tehran. According to the statistical society limitation, the census method was used.

The questionnaire consisted three parts; in the first part, the items related to organizational commitment, in the second part, the servant leadership variable and in the third part, organizational trust's variable have been measured by Five-point Likert scale (1-Totally disagree, 2- disagree, 3- no-opinion, 4- agree, 5- totally agree). The organizational commitment's questionnaire, the questionnaire of servant leadership and the questionnaire of organizational

trust have been from Myer & Allen (1994), Moghimi&Ramezan (2012) and Elonen et al. (2008) respectively.

Results

To analyze the hypotheses, Structural Equation Modeling was used by "Lisrel 8.5", and Path Analysis was used to examine the main and subsidiary assumptions.

The table 1 illustrate the result of causal analysis of Structural Equation Modeling to test the hypothesis. The modeling results approved the casual effect of servant leadership on the trust of employers, the influence of servant leadership on the organizational commitment of employers, the impact of trust on the organizational commitment and ultimately the effect of servant leadership on the organizational commitment through the mediator variable (trust).

Hypothesis	Standard estimation	T quantity	Test result
The effect of servant leadership on the trust of employers	0.47	3.42	Approved
the influence of servant leadership on the organizational commitment	0.55	4.47	Approved
the impact of trust on the organizational commitment	0.84	2.38	Approved
servant leadership on the organizational commitment through the mediator variable	0.84	2.38	approved

Figure 2: Table of the results of the hypotheses'' test

Conclusions and recommendations

According to the factor of the organizational commitment and the emotional commitment index, it is suggested that senior managers continue this process to increase the belonging' feeling to job among the employers, in addition, senior managers must considers some ways to convince staff to recognize organizational problems as their own problems and do not separate themselves from the organization. Furthermore, considering the continuous commitment, managers need to keep and improve this condition, because not only the staff dislike to leave the organization, but also they want to stay in their position due to the needs of the organization and it shows the proper atmosphere of the organization.

Regarding to the factor of servant leadership and the index of providing service, managers need to keep the condition, because they truly have the characteristics of a servant leader which provides the service without rewards. Thus, it is better to continue their methods and models. According to the index of humility, the results illustrates that the mangers do not have enough self-devotion about their personal interests and it is against of a servant leadership's feature. The results about the trustworthy index shows that the managers do not welcome new ideas, it is proper that they try to accept new ideas to increase the organizational productivity and function, however, based on the result, managers show respect for their subordinates, and it must be kept as well.

In the subject of kindness, results demonstrate that the managers cannot keep calm in the crisis; so, they need to change this behavior through proper methods, nevertheless, the results show that they have compassionate and it is a good manner.

The index of lateral trust from organizational trust's factor points out the lack of equality and justice, that is must be corrected in the organization indeed. The results advice that the honesty is known valuable by staff and the managers have to try to improve this procedure in their organization.

Vertical trust's results present that managers believe to be success, according to gathered data, it is obvious that honesty is not a key value in the mind of managers, thus, it must conduct a

complete survey about this issue, and it is necessary that the managers have to reconsider their insight about this subject.

Fundamental trust index says that the organization does not respect to all staff equally. Lack of justical and equality causes problem in the organization; so, the correction is necessary. Although, the staff have positive evaluation about the direction of the senior managers about the company.

Research's limitations

This research had many limitations as like as other researches, these limitations have root in the statistical society, such as lack of accuracy in answering to the questions and the limitation of specific organizational study. Other restriction are about scientific research's nature, for example, the extent of theoretical concepts, few studies that have examined these variables, the abstraction of some of the concepts and questionnaire's questions, and the restriction of data gathering tool to a questionnaire.

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