

SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to explain the relationship between dimensions of servant leadership and dimensions of organizational commitment in the healthcare sector of Karachi. Two separate instruments were developed for the purpose of data collection and the data were collected at two different points in time. A total of 350 instruments were distributed among the employees of healthcare sector of Karachi. From these 350 respondents, only 300 filled and returned both the instruments. Since, there were three dependent variables in the study, therefore, three separate multiple regression analyses were used as the statistical technique. Results indicated that emotional healing has significant positive relationship with affective commitment. On the hand, altruistic calling and emotional healing have significant positive association with normative commitment. Whereas, emotional healing, wisdom and persuasive mapping have significant association with continuance commitment in the healthcare sector of Karachi.

Keywords: *Servant Leadership, Organizational Commitment, and Healthcare Sector.*

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Business world has never been as difficult as it is today. This is due to the competition that has made it difficult to have a sustainable competitive edge (Hitt et al., 2001). There are many ideas and strategies that can help in creating and sustaining competitive advantage. Some discussed that adapting modern technologies and creative techniques such as just in time approach or lean production can be useful in achieving competitive edge

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(Groeneveld & Van de Walle, 2010). However, it has been observed that these techniques have been proved ineffective to attain a sustainable competitive edge. The inability of such technologies/ tools lies in the fact that as soon as these techniques start creating a competitive edge, these techniques are soon followed by competing businesses (Groeneveld & Van de Walle, 2010). Hence, businesses are eagerly trying to find new and creative techniques that cannot be copied by other firms. In this regard, it is concluded that only human capital is the resource that cannot be imitated, hence, the immense importance of human capital is realized (Ariani, 2012).

The realization of the importance of human resources lead the organizations to find ways of having committed workforce. In this regard, it is argued that there are three major type of organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990) which are affective, normative and continuance commitment. However, commitment is something that is not transactional in nature and therefore one cannot enhance the level of commitment amongst the employees using the transactional leadership style. This in turn suggests that only economic exchange relations are not enough for have a committed workforce. Therefore, it is argued that the concept of social exchange can be helpful in enhancing the level of commitment amongst the employees (Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006).

Duchon and Plowman (2005) asserted that the social exchange theory emphasizes on commitment as a give and take procedure seeking a long-term bond with organization. These relations are also affected by behaviors of leaders, when employees consider or perceive leader as possessing desirable outcomes (Hannah & Avolio, 2011). On the other hand, effective leaders also try to gain creative cooperation of employees through social exchange relations. In their quest to gain creative cooperation of employees, leaders across the globe have tried a number of leadership styles. Servant leadership is one of the leadership styles.

The concept of servant leadership suggests that a supervisor also serves as a servant that usually attend the need of his/her followers. Hence, in this type of leadership, instead of showing arrogance, the leader shows humbleness and make the employees feel that he/she care about them. This helps the leader to gain trust of employees. The most common attributes of a servant leader are humbleness, sacrifice and constructive approach to behavior related to organization (Hannah & Avolio, 2011).

The servant leadership may have foremost influence on employees' assertiveness and job consequences which are crucial for the productivity. According to Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) servant leadership is a multi-facet construct that includes Altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping and organizational stewardship. Therefore, this study seeks to test the impact of the dimensions of servant leadership on the dimensions of organizational commitment in the healthcare sector of Karachi.

Problem Statement

Leadership has become one of the most extensively studied variable of organizational behavior and a large number of researchers (Dinh, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Liden, & Hu, 2014; Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014; Tourish 2014; Cheong, Yammarino, Dionne, Spain, & Tsai, 2019) have studied leadership. Previously, researchers were more concerned about traditional leadership styles. However, due to rapid changes in environment, managers are desperate to find ways of gaining creative cooperation from the employees. Hence, a number of new leadership styles have emerged over the period of time. Servant leadership is one of these newly emerged leadership styles. Hence, researchers (Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck, & Liden, 2019; Joo, Byun, Jang, & Lee, 2018; Burton, Peachey, & Wells, 2017; Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser, 2014) have studied servant leadership as well. McCann, Graves and Cox (2014) have studied servant leadership along with job satisfaction in the healthcare sector. Drury (2004) has worked on servant leadership and organizational commitment as well. However, Drury (2004) studied organizational commitment as a one dimensional construct. However, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) argued that servant leadership is a five dimensional model. The facets of servant leadership revealed by (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006) are altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship. Whereas, Allen and Meyer (1990) previously suggested that there are three dimensions of organizational commitment which affective, normative and continuance commitment. However, to the best of researchers' knowledge, no study has been conducted that tests the relationship between the dimensions of servant leadership and dimensions of organizational commitment. Hence, this study aims to test the relationship between the dimensions of these two variables in the healthcare sector of Karachi.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Background

This research study is based on the theoretical underpinnings of social exchange theory and leader-member exchange (LMX) theory. The social exchange theory suggests that there are two types of relationships at work, these are the economic exchange relationships and the social exchange relationships. Economic exchange relations are transactional in nature and cannot help in gaining the creative cooperation of employees. Therefore, in order to gain creative cooperation of employees, leaders must also have social exchange relations with the employees. This gives the rise to the concept of leader member exchange relations. In the words of Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory is a relationship-based approach to leadership that focuses on two-way relationship between leaders and their followers. The theory basically talks about the existence of relationship between the leaders and followers. The theory further argues that the quality of relationship between the leaders and followers influences the work outcomes of the followers (Deluga, 1998). Since, the current research study discusses about servant leadership, therefore, arguably the use of dimensions of servant leadership helps improving the relationship between the leader and followers which in turn motivates the followers to be more committed towards the firm. Hence, this study is based on the conceptual underpinnings of the social exchange theory and the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is an essential building block in understanding employee work attitude and productivity (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Dhar, 2015). Jamal (2011) revealed that organizational commitment is related to job performance in Malaysia & Pakistan. Employees with stronger confidence in the values and beliefs of an organization, accepts goals and objectives and are ready to get involved and do extra effort for organization. This sort of commitment indicates that those who are strongly associated to an organization will work hard to improve their organizational operations without looking for or intention of personal gain (Ariani, 2012). However, organizational commitment is not a one dimensional construct but it is rather a three dimensional construct, these are affective, normative and continuance

commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). These are the affective, normative and continuance commitment.

Affective Commitment can be categorized as the desire component of the organizational commitment and is the positive emotional attachment of an employee has towards the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Therefore, it can be stated that an employee who is high of affective commitment dimension will identify himself/herself strongly with the organizational goals and will have the aspiration to remain part of the firm. Whereas, the continuance commitment is attentiveness of the costs that are connected with leaving the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). In other words, the Continuance Commitment can be categorized as the need based component of the organizational commitment and is the commitment (or internal feelings) of an employee towards staying (continuing the current job) or leaving the organization. This is done purely on the basis of costs and benefits associated with staying or quitting the organization. Last but not the least; the normative commitment, in the words of Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky (2002) symbolizes a perceived responsibility to remain in organization. Hence, it is the commitment on the basis of a strong sense of responsibility towards the organization and hence it is the commitment (or internal feelings) of an employee that he ought to be loyal with the organization because of the feelings of obligation towards the organization. It is more of an ethical responsibility to stay loyal with one's organization and those employees having strong normative commitment stay loyal with the organization since they feel that it is the correct thing to do.

Leadership

Supervisors are important in gaining the creative cooperation of employees. The behavior of leaders is an important aspect in creating a better working environment (Mulki, Jaramillo, & Locander, 2008). However, there are a number of leadership styles for instance, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, ethical leadership, servant leadership, authentic leadership, and paternalistic leadership. Although, there is a debate about different leadership styles and their relative importance (Langley & Tsoukas, 2010; Mailhot, Gagnon, Langley, & Binette, 2016), however, one can safely argue that each leadership style provides a useable solution if applied in accordance with the requirements of organizational structure and demands of

environment. Since, the present research study is built on the theoretical underpinnings of social exchange theory, therefore, this study is primarily concerned about the softer side of leadership and seeks to test the relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment.

Servant Leadership

Greenleaf (1977) argued that going beyond one's self-interest is the core characteristic leadership. Although, other leadership styles also incorporate this characteristic, however, this characteristic has never been given the central position in any other leadership theory as it is in the concept of servant leadership. Luthans and Avolio (2003) suggested that servant leadership is based on the creation of opportunities within an organization to help followers grow (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). In comparison to other leadership styles, the ultimate aim of servant leadership is the well-being of followers (Greenleaf, 1977).

Servant leadership is usually defined as going above limit from one's self interest. The servant leadership also focuses on moral behavior of taking responsibility for having success in part of employee development. The servant leadership includes values which include acting ethically, intentions which include sacrificing for others and behaviors that include supporting employees eventually generates the respect and loyalty of employees (Kool & Van Dierendonck, 2012). Hence, it is a unique connection among leaders and employees when compared with other leadership styles. It is because of this reason that servant leadership tends to have significant relationship with task and performance in context to workplace where an employee engages more.

As far as the dimensionality of servant leadership is concerned, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) suggested a five-dimensional model of servant leadership. Altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping and organizational stewardship are the dimensions of servant leadership (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).

Altruistic calling is one of the dimensions of servant leadership. Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) states that altruistic calling is the desire for a positive change in others through services. This is considered central to the ideology of servant leadership. It has been demonstrated as the need of altruism in supervisors to have great influence on organization (Avolio

& Locke, 2002). On the other hand, Emotional healing is the second dimension of servant leadership. It can be defined as need for tolerance, recognition and humbleness as refer to healing. Wisdom is another dimension of servant leadership. Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) discussed that wisdom is superlative to accuracy and practicality, as integrating knowledge and utility. Leaders who are high in wisdom are usually characterized by good observant and are defensive across functions and setting. Another dimension of servant leadership is the persuasive mapping. It can be defined as a capability to inspire others by means of going across prescribed authority (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Supervisors who use persuasive mapping can inspire others without depending on any expert or authentic influence (Barbuto, Fritz, & Matkin, 2001). Whereas, organizational stewardship is defined as trusting organization as a legacy to support and must decisively pay to society (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). It is basically an involvement-oriented component of leadership (Barbuto et al., 2001).

Servant Leadership and Organizational Commitment

Researchers have studied the impact of servant leadership on positive work outcomes. In this regard, researchers (McCann, et al., 2014; Al-Asadi, Muhammed, Abidi, & Dzenopoljac, 2019; Li, Mehmood, Zhang, & Crossin, 2019) have studied servant leadership along with job satisfaction. On the other hand, researchers (Drury, 2004; Schneider & George, 2011) studied servant leadership and organizational commitment and found significant positive association between the two variables. However, these researches (Drury, 2004; Schneider & George, 2011) studied both the servant leadership and organizational commitment as one-dimensional constructs. This seems to be inconsistent with the researches of Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) and Allen and Meyer (1990). It is primarily because of the fact that Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) suggested that servant leadership is a five-dimensional construct, where, altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping and organizational stewardship are the dimensions of servant leadership. On the other hand, Allen and Meyer (1990) had previously argued that organizational commitment is a three-dimensional construct and the affective, normative and continuance commitment are the dimensions of organizational commitment. Therefore, present research study aims to test the causal relationship between the dimensions of servant leadership and dimensions of organizational commitment.

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of collecting data for this study, two separate instruments were developed. The first instrument consisted of 23 items, these items were adapted from Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) for measuring the dimensions of servant leadership. Whereas, the second instrument consisted of 24 items, these items were adapted from Allen and Meyer (1990) for measuring the dimensions of organizational commitment. Respondents were asked to rate their opinion on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree.

In order to avoid the common method bias, data were collected at two different points in time and there was a difference of one month between time one and time two. At time one, data were collected using the first instrument that seeks to collect the data regarding the opinion of employees about their respective supervisors. A total of 350 instruments were distributed among the employees of healthcare sector of Karachi. It should be noted that these 350 instruments were distributed only to those employees of healthcare sector who have been working with the same firm for at-least six months. This is done so because of the fact that the instrument seeks to inquire if the employees think that their leaders exhibit the qualities of servant leadership style and it usually take some time for employees to develop the perceptions about leadership style of their manager. Hence, purposive sampling technique was used in the present research study. From the 350 instruments that were distributed at time one, 321 instruments were filled and returned.

On the other hand, the second instrument that seeks to measure the level of dimensions of organizational commitment among the employees of healthcare sector was used to collect the data at time two. The instrument was distributed among those 321 respondents who had previously filled and returned the first instrument. From these 321 respondents, only 300 filled and returned the instrument. Hence, the final data set comprises of 300 pair of instruments.

Furthermore, since the study seeks to test the impact of dimensions of servant leadership on three different dimensions of organizational commitment namely affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment, therefore, three separate multiple regression analyses were used as the statistical technique.

RESULTS

Reliability

Cronbach’s alpha test was used to investigate the internal reliability of instruments. The standard value is 0.70 and above, which usually reflects that data collected from questionnaire is reliable and can be used for further statistical analysis and interpretation of results. Table 1, indicates the Cronbach alpha values of variables used in this research.

Table 1: Internal Reliability of Instrument

Variable Name	No. of items	Cronbach alpha
Altruistic Calling	04	0.875
Emotional Healing	04	0.913
Wisdom	05	0.907
Persuasive Mapping	05	0.806
Organizational Stewardship	05	0.891
Affective Commitment	08	0.701
Normative Commitment	08	0.703
Continuance Commitment	08	0.737

* Cronbach alpha 0.7 or above as the criteria for internal reliability

Since the Cronbach alpha of all the variables used in the study are 0.7 or greater, therefore, it is concluded that instruments used in the study are reliable instruments.

Regression Results

Since, there are three dependent variables in the study, therefore, three separate regression analysis were used in the study.

Table 2: Regression Results Affective Commitment Model

Variable Name	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value	VIF
Constant	2.191	10.153	.000	
Altruistic Calling	.054	1.033	.302	1.990
Emotional Healing	.240	4.634	.000	1.977
Wisdom	.005	.088	.930	1.845
Persuasive Mapping	-.060	-.964	.336	1.776
Organizational Stewardship	.027	.430	.667	1.657

Adjusted R² = 0.138 F-Statistics = 10.610 Sig = 0.00

Table 2 suggests that the value of Adjusted R square is 0.138 for the affective commitment regression model. This can be interpreted as 13.8% of variance in the dependent variable (Affective commitment) can be explained by independent variables. Furthermore, since the significance value of F in ANOVA is 0.000 that is less than 0.05, this depicts that all independent variables used in this study are accurate and authentic for explaining the affective commitment of employees. The F value also represents that right model had been selected to test the relationships. The F value of this model is 10.610 which is higher than 3.5, this suggests that the model is most accurate for testing the affective commitment of employees and is a good fit. Furthermore, the VIF values of all the variables are less than 10, this indicates that there is no issue of multicollinearity in the data. Table 2 also depicts the significance of independent variable on affective organizational commitment. The p-value of emotional healing in the model is less than 0.05, indicating that emotional healing has significant relationship with the affective commitment. Whereas, since the p-values of the rest of the variables are greater than 0.05, this indicates that these variables do not have significant association with the affective commitment.

Table 3: Regression Results Normative Commitment Model

Variable Name	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value	VIF
Constant	2.619	12.764	.000	
Altruistic Calling	.160	3.232	.001	1.990
Emotional Healing	.128	2.608	.010	1.977
Wisdom	-.018	-.314	.754	1.845
Persuasive Mapping	-.057	-.976	.330	1.776
Organizational Stewardship	-.002	-.035	.972	1.657
Adjusted R ² = 0.118		F-Statistics = 8.864		Sig = 0.00

Table 3 suggests that the value of Adjusted R square is 0.118 for the normative commitment regression model. This can be interpreted as 11.8% of variance in the dependent variable (Normative Commitment) can be explained by independent variables. Furthermore, since the significance value of F in ANOVA is 0.000 that is less than 0.05, this depicts that all independent variables used in this study are accurate and authentic for explaining the normative commitment of employees. The F value also

represents that right model had been selected to test the relationships. The F value of this model is 8.864 which is higher than 3.5, this suggests that the model is most accurate for testing the normative commitment of employees and is a good fit. Furthermore, the VIF values of all the variables are less than 10, this indicates that there is no issue of multicollinearity in the data. Table 3 also depicts the significance of independent variable on normative organizational commitment. The p-values of altruistic calling and emotional healing in the model are less than 0.05, indicating that altruistic calling and emotional healing have significant relationship with the normative commitment. Whereas, since the p-values of the rest of the variables are greater than 0.05, this indicates that these variables do not have significant association with the normative commitment.

Table 4: Regression Results Continuance Commitment Model

Variable Name	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value	VIF
Constant	2.428	2.764	.050	
Altruistic Calling	.187	1.245	.075	1.990
Emotional Healing	.035	2.604	.040	1.977
Wisdom	.020	2.514	.048	1.845
Persuasive Mapping	.067	2.771	.031	1.776
Organizational Stewardship	-.108	-.031	.961	1.657
Adjusted R ² = 0.106		F-Statistics = 8.057		Sig = 0.00

Table 4 suggests that the value of Adjusted R square is 0.106 for the continuance commitment regression model. This can be interpreted as 10.6% of variance in the dependent variable (Continuance Commitment) can be explained by independent variables. Furthermore, since the significance value of F in ANOVA is 0.000 that is less than 0.05, this depicts that all independent variables used in this study are accurate and authentic for explaining the continuance commitment of employees. The F value also represents that right model had been selected to test the relationships. The F value of this model is 80.57 which is higher than 3.5, this suggests that the model is most accurate for testing the continuance commitment of employees and is a good fit. Furthermore, the VIF values of all the variables are less than 10, this indicates that there is no issue of multicollinearity in the data. Table 4 also depicts the significance of

independent variable on continuance organizational commitment. The p-values of emotional healing, wisdom and persuasive mapping in the model are less than 0.05, indicating that these variables have significant relationship with continuance commitment. Whereas, since the p-values of the rest of the variables are greater than 0.05, this indicates that these variables do not have significant association with the continuance commitment.

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Discussion

Although, there have been few researches (Drury, 2004) in past that seeks to explain the relationship between the servant leadership and organizational commitment, however, there is a scarcity of research that seeks to explain the relationship between the dimensions of these two variables. Hence, this research study seeks to explain the relationship between dimensions of servant leadership and dimensions of organizational commitment especially in the healthcare sector of Karachi.

Results indicated that emotional healing has significant positive relationship with affective commitment. On the hand, altruistic calling and emotional healing have significant positive association with normative commitment. Whereas, emotional healing, wisdom and persuasive mapping have significant association with continuance commitment in the healthcare sector of Karachi. These results reinforce the results of previous researchers (Drury, 2004). Furthermore,

CONCLUSIONS

The results of present research study suggest that social exchange relations work better than the economic exchange relations when it comes to the question of enhancing the level of organizational commitment among the employees. It is because of the fact that an employee cannot commit for longer relation until and unless it does not benefit him or herself (Ariani, 2012). This beneficial relationship is important at workplace, commitment for staying for longer period of time only guarantee when individual feel some positive change in their own life. Employees with stronger confidence in the values and beliefs of an organization, accepts goals and objectives and are ready to do extra effort or exhibit higher level of organizational commitment (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005).

This study depicts that the effective way of leadership is influential in attaining long term success for the firm. Furthermore, the study also depicts that supervisors are always central to nurturing a healthy work environment and delivering support for the long run development of firm's human capital. Hence, selection of proper leadership style is crucial for enhancing the level of organizational commitment among the employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With reference to the results presented in this study, it is suggested that managers in the healthcare sector must focus on emotional healing as this is the only dimension of servant leadership which is found to be having significant relationship with all the three dimensions of organizational commitment. Hence, emotional healing is an important aspect of servant leadership that may play a crucial role in enhancing the level of organizational commitment among the employees of healthcare sector of Karachi. Furthermore, in addition to emotional healing; altruistic calling is also found to be positively associated with normative commitment; therefore, managers must focus on this aspect of leadership as well in order to enhance the level of normative commitment. Therefore, it is suggested that managers in the healthcare sector should concentrate on enhancing the communication channels, so that they may get able to reach the employees and listen their grievance and develop strategies for emotional healing etc. On the other hand, in addition to emotional healing; wisdom and persuasive mapping are also found to be positively associated with continuance commitment. Hence, managers must understand that the concept of social exchange relations plays an important role even in the matters of continuance commitment which is otherwise seems to be comparatively more related to the concept of economic exchange relations.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Since, this study is limited to the geographical boundaries of Karachi, therefore, this result obtained during the course of study have limited generalizability outside the geographical boundaries of Karachi. Therefore, it is suggested that similar studies should be conducted in other geographical locations as well. Furthermore, the study is conducted only in the healthcare sector, which again limits the generalizability of research in other sectors, therefore, it is suggested that similar studies

should also be conducted in other sectors as well. On the other hand, since leadership affects the job satisfaction of employees and it is also a well-known fact that job satisfaction also alters the level of organizational commitment, therefore, it is suggested that role of job satisfaction be tested in the relationship between the dimensions of the studied variables. Similarly, role of trust in leader can also be tested in the relationship between the dimensions of these variables.

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