

Mediating role of organizational culture in the relationship between servant leadership and job performance

Papel de mediación de la cultura organizacional en la relación entre el liderazgo de servicio y el desempeño laboral

Papel mediador da cultura organizacional na relação entre liderança servidora e desempenho no trabalho

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Abstract

The main aim of the present study is explaining the relationship between servant leadership and job performance by considering the mediating role of organizational culture. A descriptive-correlative method was used in this study. The statistical population of this study included staff of Shiraz nursing faculty. They were 275 persons at the time of study. The sample size was 160 persons based on Kerjesi-Morgan's table and the sampling was done by a simple-randomized method. Three questionnaires of servant leadership style (Taylor), organizational culture (Robbins) and job performance (Paterson) were used for gathering information. The validity and reliability of questionnaires were confirmed. Indexes such as mean and standard deviation and Pearson correlative coefficient and hierarchical analysis regression using Baron and Kenny method of two parts of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used for analyzing the data and testing the hypothesizes. Results of the analyzed data showed that there is a direct and meaningful relationship between servant leadership, organizational culture and job performance. There is also a direct and meaningful relationship between organizational

Resumen

El objetivo principal del presente estudio es explicar la relación entre el liderazgo de servicio y el desempeño laboral al considerar el papel mediador de la cultura organizacional, para lo cual se utilizó un método descriptivo-correlativo. La población estadística de este estudio incluyó personal de la facultad de enfermería Shiraz. Fueron 275 personas en el momento del estudio. El tamaño de la muestra fue de 160 personas según la tabla de Kerjesi-Morgan y el muestreo se realizó por un método simple y aleatorio. Se utilizaron tres cuestionarios de estilo de liderazgo de servicio (Taylor), cultura organizacional (Robbins) y desempeño laboral (Paterson) para recopilar información. La validez y fiabilidad de los cuestionarios fueron confirmadas. Se usaron índices como la media y la desviación estándar y el coeficiente correlativo de Pearson y la regresión del análisis jerárquico utilizando el método de Baron y Kenny de dos partes de estadística descriptiva y estadística inferencial para analizar los datos y probar las hipótesis. Los resultados de los datos analizados mostraron que existe una relación directa y significativa entre el liderazgo de los servidores, la cultura organizacional y el desempeño laboral.

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culture and job performance. Organizational culture plays a mediating role in the relationship between servant leadership and job performance.

Key words: job performance, organizational culture, leadership style, servant leadership.

También existe una relación directa y significativa entre la cultura organizacional y el desempeño laboral. La cultura organizacional juega un papel mediador en la relación entre el liderazgo de servicio y el desempeño laboral.

Palabras clave: desempeño laboral, cultura organizacional, estilo de liderazgo, liderazgo de servicio.

Resumo

O principal objetivo do presente estudo está relacionado com a relação entre o líder de serviço e o desempenho laboral considerando o papel mediador da cultura organizacional, para que o uso pessoal seja um método descritivo-correlativo. A população estadual deste estudo está incluída na faculdade de enfermagem Shiraz. Fueron 275 personas no momento do estudio. O tamanho da peça de 160 pessoas segue a tabela de Kerjesi-Morgan e o desempenho é feito por um método simples e aleatório. Se utilizaram os cuestionarios de estilo de liderar de servicio (Taylor), cultura organizacional (Robbins) y desempeño laboral (Paterson) para información recopilar. La validez y fiabilidad dos cuestionarios fueron confirmadas. A utilização de índices como a média e a baixa remuneração e o coeficiente correlativo de Pearson e a análise comparativa de histórico utilizando o método de Baron e Kenny para os componentes da estatística descritiva e estadística inferencial para analizar os dados e probar as hipóteses. Os resultados dos analizados mostram que existe uma relação direta e significativa entre os líderes de servidores, a cultura organizacional e o desempenho laboral. Também existe uma relação direta e significativa entre a cultura organizacional e o desempenho laboral. A cultura organizacional tem papel e mediador na relação entre o líder de serviço e o desempenho laboral.

Palavras-chave: desempenho laboral, cultura organizacional, estilo de liderazgo, liderazgo de servicio.

Introduction

Organizations need sustained improvement of their performance in order to be survived and progress and human resources are the fundamental capital of organizations and the source of any development and innovation in them (Asgharpoor,2007). There are different viewpoints about job performance. In fact, job performance is defined as the sum of the behaviors that individuals have regarding to their jobs or in the other word, the amount of product, outcome or return that derive from the employment of a person in his or her job (Swanson¹⁵ et al, 1998). Spector¹⁶ (2006) describe performance as the rate of return that derives from the employment of a person both service and production in an organization and it is influenced by two factors such as ability of employees in carrying out their job duties and their motivation too. Millar and Stevens ¹⁷(2012) believes clearly that the person's performance is

the measure of his success in his work. Now, if this person is motivated, empowered and prosperous, he can use the resources of the organization in a best and desirable manner and realize all kinds of productivities and at last, improve the organizational performance, otherwise stagnation and backwardness are the gifts of passive and unmotivated manpower. Borman and Motowidlo ¹⁸(1993) suggest that Job performance refers to any action and behavior that is related to the goals of the organization (Abubakar, Elrehail, Alatailat and Elci,¹⁹ 2017).

Poor performance has significant and negative impacts on leadership and employees which are backwash for the organization. Poor performance of manpower is one of the main problems of modern organizations. It is vital and necessary for public organizations whose poor performance provides the ground of failure in performing public services as well as for private companies whose poor performance provides

¹⁵Swanson

¹⁶ Spector

¹⁷Millar & Stevens

¹⁸ Borman & Motowidlo

¹⁹ Abubakar, Elrehail, Alatailat & Elci

the ground of their own bankruptcy (Naami, 2002). It is obvious that if the performance of organizational employees is poor, it should be corrected in order to increase their efficiency, survival, sustainability and effectiveness of the organization (Ahadi, Fathi and Abdolmohammadi, 2014). Shoghi and Haj Fathali (2012) suggested about the importance of paying attention to the job performance that nowadays is full of complexities that have faced many organizations with numerous problems in the ground of growth and elevation and they have faced managers as planners, organizers and leader with many challenges during improving their performance. So, most of the organizations consider improving employee performance as their most important goal in achieving organizational performance improvement. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the organizational performance by recognizing some of the effective factors on employees' performance (Ranaikordsholi and Saghapoor, 2011). Individual's performance can play a major role in the success of any organization. Therefore, nowadays organizations should determine the effective factors on improving the employees' performance in order to achieve better performance (Eslami et al, 2007). Organizational performance is affected by various factors such as organizational commitment, education, leadership, belief, value and culture (Shahhosseini et al, 2016). Namanian and Feizallahi (2015) suggested that organizational culture is effective in achieving organizational performance. Organizational culture has been considered because of its potential effect on the success of the organization over the past two decades. Strong culture is defined as a combination of norms and values that have many divisions and leads to long-term survival and organizational performance enhancement (Darvish, Shabani and Abedsaidi, 2014). Culture has an effective effect on organizational structure and plan... and what is more important is that, it has also an effective effect on organizational performance. Culture differentiate ought to and ought not and It forms the organizational behavior style (Namanian and Feizallahi, 2015). Nazarian, Atkinson²⁰ and Froodi (2017) point to the results of researches of Lee & Yu²¹ (2004). Organizational researchers focus on culture because they believe that organizational culture affects the performance.

In fact, culture is a term that is used by social scientists and researchers in the field of anthropology. This term has a wide range of usages and it is so useful that it is used in other social sciences (Seyyedi and Izadi, 2013). Hofsted²²(1998) believes that culture is the common thought of members of a group or class that separates them from other groups. An organizational culture is a system of collective understanding of the employees towards the organization and this trait distinguishes the two organizations from each other. Someone consider the organizational culture as the dominate climate on organizational climate in which individuals are involved and their behavior is shaped. This subject plays an important role in the organizational employees' performance. Since, manpower is the rarest and the most expensive capital of any organization, the low performance of employees is usually one of the organizational problems. Denison²³ (1990) determines organizational culture as a powerful force that determines its performance and operations. Hordon Schtain and Berk in their research about organizational culture suggest that organizational growth is a planned process which is equal to transformation of organizational culture; in fact any transformation will not be effective in the organization regardless of organizational culture; If managers are also intended to change the organization's performance, they must pay attention to the constituent elements of organizational culture and their variation (Zarei Matin, 1993). Cultural mechanism is more important than other mechanisms which are used by leaders in making fundamental changes and developments in the concerned organizations because the degree of success of these leaders depends on their succession in upward mobility of their attitude level, organizational employees' and their intellectual beliefs in order to support the considered plans seriously and effectively (Tabeli, Scandari and Ansarimanesh, 2015). Schein²⁴ (2003) suggest that leaders' behavior affects the culture. They are satisfied of values, norms, responsibility and commitment to work by being more awareness of the organizational goals and strategies in spite of having a strong and coherent culture. It will improve organizational spirit, motivation, performance and employee's productivity along with strong leadership (Mamizadeh, 2001). Leadership is a subject that

²⁰ Atkinson

²¹ Lee & Yu

²²Hofsted

²³ Denison

²⁴ Schein, Edgar





has attracted the attention of researchers and common people toward itself. Perhaps the reason of its widespread attractiveness is that it is a very mysterious process that exists in the lives of all people (Tabeli et al, 2015). Greenleaf²⁵ planned servant leadership in 1970. He transformed the traditional models of leadership completely; this leadership theory is based on ethical teachings and relies on how people cope with their problems, motivation and leading people. These leaders determine the standards of service by using their leadership style and behavior (Aleksandrovna Maximova and Aleksandrovich Belyaev, 2017). They are necessary for creating and maintaining an efficient and effective service system. In fact, these leaders are not only feeling themselves responsible of achieving organizational goals and human resource development but also they feel that they are responsible of beneficiaries of the organization (Eslami et al, 2007). Servant leadership is a leadership and service approach in which the leader is servant in the first stage and he is leader in the second stage. This style of leadership is based on the philosophy of service and servant leaders are the leaders who prioritized serving their followers, meeting their needs as well as developing and educating their employees. Servant leaders prefer empowerment, mutual trust, cooperative spirit, ethical use of power and value of serving followers than any other thing in the organization (jeinani, 2007). Universities need leaders who are sophisticated, intelligent and advanced increasingly. University employees wish to be the university's complement. They want to learn new ideas, new skills and new approaches of solving old problems constantly. They wish to be led by those who motivate them, maintain them responsible and prepare them for the future (Zarei et al, 2008). Nursing faculty is one of the most sensitive and important areas of health centers in the country. Employees' performance plays a significant and important role in the treatment and improvement of patients in this field and their inadequacy and inefficiency will lead to irreversible consequences. Therefore, it is worthy to consider and evaluate the performance of these centers because poor organizational performance could have consequences such as increasing costs, reduction of organizational and employees' productivity, losing funds, lack of incentive and job satisfaction in these centers (Nekooi Moghaddam et al,

2012). On one hand, the leadership style can affect motivation, satisfaction, job aspirations, and at last, it affects faculty employees' performance and patient's treatment process which requires recognition and attending to the common organizational culture among faculty administrators. The desirable and optimal performance evaluation has been considered in Shiraz Nursing Faculty a long time ago. It is expected that faculty managers look for an optimal and competitive performance through investigating their organizational culture and providing appropriate feedback, considering the main mission of this faculty in the production, development, transfer and use of knowledge as well as the importance, challenges and global competencies of the quality and effectiveness of the organization of medical sciences. Therefore, the present study is going to answer the following question: Does organizational culture play a mediating role in the relationship between servant leadership and job performance of employees of Shiraz nursing faculty?

Literature background

The relationship between three variables of organizational culture, servant leadership and job performance has not been studied since now but there has been done some researches about the relationship between organizational culture and servant leadership and job performance and their effect on each other separately in the country and abroad. We consider some of them in the following:

Chiniara and Bentein²⁶ (2017) in a research entitled, " Advantage of servant leadership: the effect of perceived low differences of the quality of the relationship between the leader member, team cohesion, teamwork performance and citizenship behavior ", which has been done on 36 samples of team performance suggested that servant leadership has a meaningful effect on team cohesion and performance. Dubey et al²⁷(2017) have done some empirical researches about 217 employees of some Indian companies and concluded that organizational culture will form performance evaluative systems and affect the performance. Shahzad et al²⁸(2017) have done a research about Pakistan software industry and suggested that organizational culture will innovate the organizational performance.

²⁵ Greenleaf

²⁶ Chiniara & Bentein

²⁷ Dubey et al

²⁸ Shahzad et al

Harwiki ²⁹(2016) suggested that servant leadership has a direct effect on organizational culture and employees' performance but organizational culture has less effect on employees' performance. Chiniara and Bentein (2015) suggested that servant leadership affect employees' performance. Liden, Wayne, Liao and Meuser³⁰ (2014) in a research entitled, "Servant leadership and serving culture ", suggested that culture plays a role in the relationship between the servant leadership and team performance. Zehir, Ertosun, Zehir and Müceldili ³¹(2011) in a research entitled, " Effects of leadership style and organizational culture on job performance ", which has been done on multinational companies of Istanbul suggested that leadership style and organizational culture have a direct effect on employees' performance. Jajermizadeh and Seyyad Tabatabai (2017) in a research entitled, "Effect of servant leadership on organizational performance considering the mediating role of organizational trust of employees of Medical Sciences University of Shiraz ", suggested that the direct effect of servant leadership on organizational performance of Medical Sciences University of Shiraz is equal to 0.47. Masudi and Zarei (2014) in a research entitled, " Investigating the relationship between the servant leadership, organizational trust and job performance of Shiraz Technical & Vocational Training Organization", suggested that all of the dimensions of servant leadership have a meaningful and direct relationship with job performance and dimension of modesty is the strongest predictor of job performance than other leadership dimensions. Darvish, Shabani and Abedsaidi (2014) in a research entitled, " The relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational performance and organizational culture in Medical Sciences University of Shahid Beheshti," suggested that there is a strong correlation between organizational performance and organizational culture. Jafar Jalal, Jafarpoor, Dehghan Nayyeri and Haghghani (2013) in a research entitled, " Investigating the correlation between nurses' perception of organizational culture and their performance in the ground of patient safety in selected hospitals of Medical Sciences University of Babol", suggested that there is a positive and meaningful correlation between nurses' perception of organizational culture and their performance in the ground of patient safety ($p < 0.01$).

²⁹ Harwiki

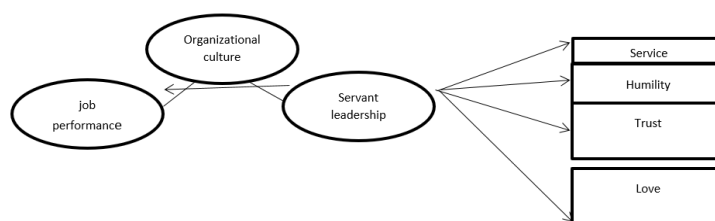
³⁰Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser

Research hypothesizes

Main hypothesis: There is a meaningful relationship between servant leadership and job performance considering the mediating role of organizational culture.

Sub hypothesizes:

- 1- There is a meaningful relationship between components of servant leadership and job performance.
- 2- There is a meaningful relationship between components of servant leadership and organizational culture.
- 3- There is a meaningful relationship between components of organizational culture



and job performance.

(Figure 1: Research conceptual model)

Methodology

The present research is an applied, descriptive-correlative research in terms of its aim and method respectively. Its statistical population included the staff of Shiraz nursing faculty. They were 275 persons in 2017. The sample size of this case study was 160 persons based on Kerjesi-Morgan's table. They were assured that their responses would remain confidential. Sampling was done by a simple- randomized method. Tools of gathering data were three questionnaires as following:

a: questionnaire of job performance (Paterson, 1970)

Questionnaire of job performance is translated by Arshadi and Shokrkon (1996). This questionnaire has 15 questions and it is estimated based on 4 scores such as seldom, sometimes, often and always (by calculative method 0, 1, 2, 3) . Questionnaire reliability coefficient was

³¹Zehir, Ertosun, Zehir & Müceldili





calculated by Cronbach's Alpha index in the present research and it was equal to 82%. It is very valuable.

b: questionnaire of organizational culture (Robbins, 2005)

This questionnaire has 27 items. It is based on 4 Likert Scale ((4) strongly agree to (1) strongly disagree). Questionnaire reliability coefficient was calculated by Cronbach's Alpha index in the present research and it was equal to 86%. The questions of the questionnaire were reported in terms of face and appropriate content validity with the cooperation of professors and experts.

c: questionnaire of servant leadership (Hazrati, Gholipoor and Asgharpoor, 1388)

This questionnaire has 23 items. It is based on 5 Likert Scale ((5) strongly agree to (1) strongly disagree). Professors and experts confirmed the questionnaire validity. The questionnaire reliability was considered by Cronbach's Alpha index. Questionnaire reliability coefficient was calculated by Cronbach's Alpha index and it was equal to 82%.

Data analysis

Statistical methods of mean and standard deviation are used for analyzing the descriptive findings and Pearson meaningful correlative coefficient and hierarchical analysis regression using Baron and Kenny method (1986) and software of SPSS are used for analyzing the inferential findings.

Descriptive findings:

(Table 1: mean and standard deviation of research variables)

organizational culture	servant leadership	job performance	
2.92	3.69	3.51	mean
0.44	0.75	0.38	standard deviation

Inferential findings:

First hypothesis: There is a meaningful relationship between servant leadership and job performance.

Pearson correlative coefficient is used for testing this hypothesis and its results are reported in table 1.

(Table 2: correlative matrix of servant leadership and job performance)

servant leadership		
0.18*	job performance	
** meaningful at level 0.01	meaningful at level 0.05	•

We can conclude from the output of table 2 that there is a direct and meaningful relationship between servant leadership and job performance at the level less than 0.05 ($r=0.18, p<0.01$).

Second hypothesis: There is a meaningful relationship between servant leadership and organizational culture.

Pearson correlative coefficient is used for testing this hypothesis and its results are reported in table 3.

(Table 3: correlative matrix of servant leadership and organizational culture)

servant leadership		
**0.47	organizational culture	
** meaningful at level 0.01	meaningful at level 0.05	•

We can conclude from the output of table 3 that there is a direct and meaningful relationship between servant leadership and organizational culture at the level less than 0.01 ($r=0.47, p<0.01$).

Third hypothesis: There is a meaningful relationship between organizational culture and job performance.

Pearson correlative coefficient is used for testing this hypothesis and its results are reported in table 4.

We can conclude from the output of table 4 that there is a direct and meaningful relationship between organizational culture and job performance at the level less than 0.01 ($r=0.27, p<0.01$).

(Table 4: correlative matrix of organizational culture and job performance)

organizational culture		
**0.27	job performance	
** meaningful at level 0.01	meaningful at level 0.05	•

Fourth hypothesis: Organizational culture plays a mediating role in the relationship between servant leadership and job performance.

Hierarchical analysis regression using Baron and Kenny method is used for investigating the mediating role of organizational culture in the relationship between servant leadership and job performance. Results are reported in table 5.

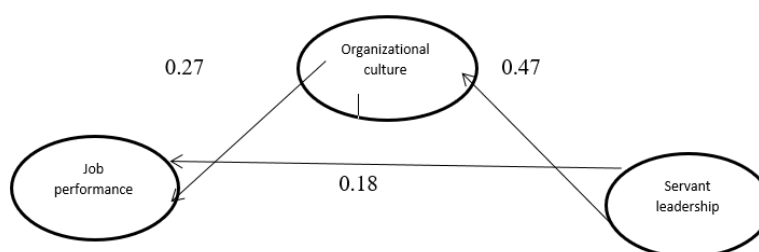
(Table 5: results of hierarchical analysis regression using Baron and Kenny method for determining the mediating role of organizational culture in the relationship between servant leadership and job performance)

P	df	F	R ²	R	p	T	β	predictive variable	criterion variable	Step
0.01	1,158	5.63	0.03	0.18	0.01	2.37	0.18	servant leadership	job performance	First
0.001	2,157	20.35	0.20	0.45	0.001	5.06	0.41	servant leadership	job performance	Second
					0.001	5.82	0.47	organizational culture		

We can infer from the results of Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) of the first step of table 5 (F (1, 158)-5.63, $p < 0.01$) that there is a linear meaningful relationship between predictive variable (servant leadership) and criterion variable (job performance) and servant leadership is able to predict job performance meaningfully. Square of multiple correlation coefficient is equal to 0.03. It means that around 3% of job performance variance is predictable by servant leadership.

We can infer from the results of Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) of the second step of table 5 (F (2, 157)-5.82, $p < 0.01$) that there is a linear meaningful relationship between predictive variables (servant leadership and organizational culture) and criterion variable (job performance) and servant leadership and organizational culture are able to predict job performance meaningfully. Square of multiple correlation coefficient is equal to 0.20. It means that around 20% of job performance variance is predictable by servant leadership and organizational culture. On the other hand, the rate of predictability of predictive variables is increased to 17% than the first step by adding the variable of organizational culture. It indicates that organizational culture plays a mediating meaningful role in the relationship between variables of servant leadership and job performance.

The graph of variables path is as following based on tables 2-4:



(Table 4: direct and indirect and total effects of variables)

Total effect	Indirect effect	Direct effect	Effects
0.47	-----	0.47	Effect of servant leadership on organizational culture
0.27	-----	0.27	Effect of organizational culture on job performance
0.30	0.12	0.18	Effect of servant leadership on job performance





Discussion and conclusion:

Result of the first hypothesis showed that there is a meaningful relationship between servant leadership and job performance. The result of this hypothesis is in agreement with results of researches of Keshtkar and Talebizadeh (2017), Jajermizadeh and Seyyad Tabatabai (2017), Masudi and Zarei (2014). Analysis of the above finding shows that servant leadership style has a positive effect on performance of staff of Shiraz nursing faculty (Pacheco et al., 2017). The importance of presenting services to the staff of Shiraz nursing faculty is vital due to the sensitivity of their performance which is related to patients directly or indirectly and it leads to satisfaction of patients and the medical community. Emami Razavi and Giuri (2009) in their research entitled, "Professional standards of nursing community", suggested that existence of professional leadership is considered as their community standards and they also suggested that individuals and the interaction climate with nurses affect the improvement of nursing staff performance. Humphreys³² (2005) believes that Great leaders act as servants in order to meet the needs of employees, customers and society. They feel their leadership along with them and try to improve the quality of their employees' performance in the statistical population of the present study. Result of the second hypothesis showed that there is a meaningful relationship between servant leadership and organizational culture of nursing faculty. The result of this hypothesis is in agreement with results of researches of Keshtkar and Dadkhodazadeh (2018) and Zehir et al (2011). Effective leaders are the leaders who are capable of solving conflicts, attracting employee participation in properly and timely decision-making and facing with challenges, having sharp-sightedness and intelligence in updating science and modern services and thought-provoking solving issues under their own leadership. This issue involves the correct recognition of the dominant culture of the organization by the leader in turn and respecting to the subculture of the employees. The result of the second hypothesis expresses the above expression in the Shiraz nursing faculty. Result of the third hypothesis showed that there is a meaningful relationship between organizational culture and job performance of nursing faculty. The result of this hypothesis is in agreement with results of researches of Keshtkar

(2017) and Keshtkar (2018) but it isn't in agreement with result of research of Harwiki (2016). The confirmation of the third hypothesis of this research shows that the more paying attention to organizational culture indicators, the more improvement of the performance of the staff of the nursing faculty. So, the role of organizational culture as a mediating variable has a positive effect on the employees' performance. Generally, we can conclude that the general hypothesis of the researcher has been accepted and organizational culture plays a mediating role in the relationship between servant leadership and job performance. It is recommended based on the results that servant leaders and managers who are adapted to various cultures should be employed in order to achieve the organization's goals and optimum performance.

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³² Humphreys

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