

The mediating role of psychological empowerment and organizational justice in the relationship of servant leadership with job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior and organizational commitment

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Abstract

Introduction: The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between servant leadership with job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior and organizational commitment by considering the mediating role of psychological empowerment and organizational justice in an industrial company.

Methods: This study used a correlative research method through structural equation modeling (SEM). For this study, 232 employees were selected by the Multi-stage sampling method. The measures of this research included the Servant Leadership Questionnaire, Psychological Empowerment Questionnaire, Organizational Justice Questionnaire, Job Satisfaction Questionnaire, Organizational Citizenship Behavior Questionnaire and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire. Data were analyzed through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and intermediate analysis. Analyses of the structural equation modeling supported the fitness of the proposed model with the data.

Results: The results indicated a direct positive effect of servant leadership on job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior and organizational commitment and an indirect positive effect of this relationship through psychological empowerment and organizational justice.

Conclusion: It can be concluded that organizations may increase a sense of capability and perceived organizational justice in employees through absorbing, hiring, and training managers and promoting a servant leadership style in organizations and enjoy the benefit of the final result, like satisfied employees with high organizational citizenship behavior and organizational commitment.

Keywords: Servant Leadership, Psychological Empowerment, Organizational Justice, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Organizational Commitment.

Introduction

In the past few years, the world of business has witnessed many changes; rapid changes of environment, industry, customers, clients, competitors, products and services are issues that influence organizations and leads to the need of superiority (1). Expansive changes and globalization in today's world involves a new and different leadership style that realizes the organization's goals by optimal use of human and material assets and resources and develops capacities (2).

At the present juncture, ideal leaders are those who are inclined to serve followers and respect their dignity and position and value the organization's progress and maximization of the staff capacity (3). Servant leadership style is one of the modern leadership approaches

that is remedial for facing human changes in working environments at the present era.

This is while traditional leadership approaches create some obstacles for fostering productive employees in organizations. In the new leadership approaches, particularly servant leadership, empowerment is regarded as an axial factor (4). Servant leadership improves respect for people and their growth, construction of society, honesty, providing leadership for the benefit of the followers, participation of all employees and those who receive the organization services in power and position (5).

Multiple studies have been conducted about servant leadership and researchers have studied outcomes of applying this style of leadership in the organizations (6, 7). Servant leaders are regarded as those who always respect the followers, assign tasks to them, value individual development and growth of the followers, and seek to maximize the staff capacity, and these features increases staff empowerment. So, one of the outcomes of servant leadership is psychological empowerment of the employees (8). Having reviewed the related studies, Thomas & Velthouse argued that empowerment is a multi-layer concept and cannot be explained by a single concept. They have defined empowerment as an increase in internal work motivation that is embodied in four competence, self – determination, meaning, and impact areas and reflects the individual orientation for his working role. Competence refers to the individual belief in his capabilities to do occupational activities skillfully. Self-determination refers to the rate of feeling and perception of individuals of having independence for starting, regulating, and planning occupational activities. Meaning refers to the rate of individuals' perception of value of goals or occupational purposes that is judged in relation to their personal norms and ideals. Impact refers to the individuals' perception of whether they are able to affect occupational strategies and enforce the results in their work or not (3).

A servant leader is a person who stimulates trust, praise, and loyalty of the subordinates. Trust makes them regard decisions adopted by their managers fair because they believe that their manager takes in mind their rights. So, another outcome of servant leadership is organizational justice (9). Organizational justice indicates the staff perceptions of fair treatment of the organization with them (10). In the 1980s, the focus of studies on justice was drawn to the procedures by which outcomes are allocated. In other words, if people feel that they have not received desirable outcomes, but at the same time they believe that the procedures by which these outcomes are allocated are in accordance with justice and are based on accurate and acceptable principles, they will feel satisfied with the received outcome (11).

The server leadership is related to the positive view of the staff, altruism, service providing and also sympathy

and compassion towards the staff and other people, which could all cause job satisfaction among the staff. So, one of the occupational attitudes of the employees influenced by this style of leadership is job satisfaction (12, 13).

The server leaders make themselves as a sample for encountering the community, and the followers try to resemble these leaders and emulate their behaviors (14). So, another outcome of servant leadership is organizational citizenship behavior (15, 16). According to Organ (3) OCB is the behaviors which are not directly included in the formal rewarding system, but they will help organizations fulfill their operations in an efficient way.

Servant leaders take care of the employees through paying attention to their leadership method. Therefore, the employees seek to continue their relations with the organization and so organizational commitment may stimulate the employees for significant involvement in the organization. So, applying servant leadership style may be effective on the organizational commitment of the employees (17).

Besides being influenced by the servant leadership style, occupational attitudes and behaviors of the staff is also affected by psychological empowerment and organizational justice (18). So, it is predictable that the leaders and managers of organizations may directly influence the occupational attitudes and behaviors of the staff by applying the servant leadership style and improving the staff occupational attitude by increasing their psychological empowerment and showing justice in the organization.

Therefore, the proposed model states that servant leadership has a direct positive effect on psychological empowerment, organizational justice, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior and organizational commitment (hypotheses 1-5). Also, psychological empowerment and organizational justice has a direct positive effect on job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior and organizational commitment (hypotheses 6-11). Furthermore, psychological empowerment and organizational justice mediates the relations of servant leadership with job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior and organizational commitment (hypotheses 11-17). Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of this study.

Method

This study applies a correlative plan through a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) which is a multiple variable correlation method. Structural equation modeling is in fact an extension of the General Linear Model (GLM) that enables the researcher to test a set of regression equations simultaneously.

In the present study, the statistical community was all of the employees of an industrial company in Ahvaz city. To determine the validity and reliability of the measures, 85 people were selected. In order to test the hypotheses, 250 people were selected by using the Multi-stage sampling method. Among the questionnaires distributed

for determining validity and reliability of the measurement measures, 79 questionnaires were returned. Also, among the questionnaires distributed for testing hypotheses, 232 questionnaires were returned and formed the sample of the present study.

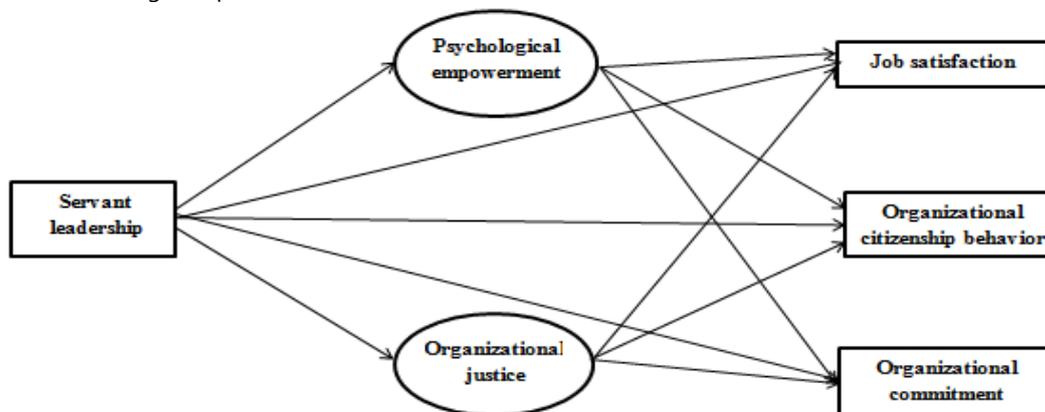


Figure 1. Proposed model of this study

Servant Leadership Questionnaire: This questionnaire was designed by Liden, Wayne, Zhao & Henderson (19). It contains 28 items and the responses are scored by a five point Likert scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). Liden and colleagues have estimated its reliability coefficient as 0.90 through using Cronbach's alpha method (19). In this study, the reliability coefficient of this questionnaire was calculated 0.91 by using Cronbach's alpha method. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) provided evidence for construct validity of this questionnaire in the present study.

Psychological Empowerment Questionnaire: This 12 item questionnaire has been designed by Spreitzer (20). For each dimension of psychological empowerment (competence, self-determination, meaning, and impact), 3 items have been considered and the responses have been scored by a five point Likert scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). Baharluo, Beshlideh, Sheykhshabani & Naami has determined the reliability of this questionnaire 0.868 by using Cronbach's alpha method (3). In the present study, the reliability coefficient of this questionnaire scale has been estimated through Cronbach's alpha method 0.76 for competence, 0.82 for self-determination, 0.77 for meaning, 0.81 for impact and 0.92 for total. The CFA provided evidence for construct validity of this questionnaire in the present study.

Organizational Justice Questionnaire: This questionnaire was designed by Colquitt (21). It contains 20 items: 4 questions for measuring distributive justice, 7 questions for measuring procedural justice, 4 questions for measuring interpersonal justice, and 5 questions for measuring informational justice and responses score by a five point Likert scale from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). By correlating four dimensions of organizational justice with the related scales in the manufacturing industries staff, Colquitt approved their criterion validity (21). In the present study, the reliability coefficient of this

questionnaire scale has been estimated by Cronbach's alpha method. This estimation for distributive justice was 0.73, 0.86 for procedural justice, 0.82 for interpersonal justice, 0.78 for informational justice and 0.91 in total. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) provided evidence for construct validity of this questionnaire in the present study.

Job Satisfaction Questionnaire: This questionnaire was designed by Judge and Bono (22). Answers ranged from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). Baharluo & colleagues have estimated its reliability coefficient as 0.83 through using Cronbach's alpha method (3). In this study, the reliability coefficient of the mentioned questionnaire was calculated 0.76 by using Cronbach's alpha method. The CFA provided evidence for construct validity of this questionnaire in the present study.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior Questionnaire: A questionnaire containing 16 items has been used for evaluating organizational citizenship behavior in this research. This is a modified questionnaire which has been designed by Smith, Organ & Near and it also is an adaptation from Organ and Konovsky's research (23). Answers ranged from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). The constancy coefficient of this questionnaire is reported to range between 0.45_0.65 by Javanmard, Moetamedi & Pirmorad in their study (24). In the present research the constancy coefficient of the questionnaire is calculated 0.86 using Cronbach's alpha method.

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire: This questionnaire has been designed by Mowday, Steers & Porter which contains 15 items and its responses are scored by a five point Likert scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree) (25). Carver has reported the reliability coefficient of this scale 0.83 (26). In the present study, the reliability coefficient of this questionnaire was estimated 0.91 by Cronbach's alpha

method. The CFA provided evidence for construct validity of this questionnaire in the present study.

Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive findings related to mean, standard deviation and the minimum and maximum scores of the respondents in the research variables.

Table 1. Descriptive findings related to the research variables

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
Servant Leadership	82	17.20	41	128
Empowerment	36.53	9.13	13	60
Competence	9.30	2.68	3	15
Self – Determination	9.13	2.53	3	15
Meaning	9.09	2.68	3	15
Impact	9.02	2.58	3	15
Organizational Justice	56.50	11.04	27	85
Distributive Justice	11.20	3.09	4	20
Procedural Justice	19.84	5.16	7	33
Interpersonal Justice	11.41	3.16	4	20
Informational Justice	14.04	3.84	6	23
Job satisfaction	46.38	10.74	16	79
Organizational citizenship behavior	45.79	12.53	15	75
Organizational Commitment	45.79	12.53	15	75

Table 2 presents the correlation matrix of the research variables. As shown in table 2, the coefficients of simple correlation between the research variables are significant at the level of $P \leq 0.05$.

To test the proposed model of this study, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method was used. The fitness of the proposed model based on fitness indices is reported in table 3.

As shown by table 3, the proposed model has a relatively good fitness. Figure 2 shows the proposed

model of this study along with standard coefficients of paths.

A fundamental assumption of the model proposed by this study contains several indirect paths. In order to determine the significance of any mediator relation and indirect effect of independent variable on the dependent variable through mediator variable, the bootstrap method was used on the Amos-21 software. Table 4 shows bootstrap results for mediator paths of the proposed model.

Table 2. Matrix of correlation between research variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1 Servant leadership	1													
2 Psychological empowerment	0.51**	1												
3 Competence	0.43**	0.84**	1											
4 Self – determination	0.42**	0.90**	0.72**	1										
5 Meaning	0.46**	0.89**	0.63**	0.73**	1									
6 Impact	0.46**	0.86**	0.58**	0.69**	0.73**	1								
7 Organizational justice	0.41**	0.29**	0.21**	0.25**	0.25**	0.28**	1							
8 Distributive justice	0.31**	0.14*	0.10	0.15*	0.12	0.14*	0.74**	1						
9 Procedural justice	0.26**	0.20**	0.15*	0.18**	0.17**	0.19**	0.80**	0.60**	1					
10 Interpersonal justice	0.35**	0.26**	0.20**	0.21**	0.23**	0.27**	0.65**	0.30**	0.25**	1				
11 Informational justice	0.30**	0.22**	0.17**	0.20**	0.20**	0.22**	0.68**	0.28**	0.26**	0.46**	1			
12 Job satisfaction	**0.54	**0.53	**0.47	**0.46	**0.47	**0.44	**0.47	**0.36	**0.33	**0.45	**0.25	1		
13 Organizational citizenship behavior	**0.54	**0.43	**0.34	**0.39	**0.37	**0.39	**0.44	**0.30	**0.30	**0.36	**0.34	**0.41	1	
14 Organizational commitment	0.62**	0.49**	0.37**	0.41**	0.47**	0.44**	0.51**	0.36**	0.34*	0.36**	0.41**	0.44**	0.37**	1

$0.01 \leq p^{**}, 0.05 \leq p^*$

Table 3. Fitness indices of the proposed model

Fitness indices	χ^2	Df	χ^2/df	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI	IFI	TLI	RMSEA
The proposed model	85.320	32	2.666	0.925	0.871	0.918	0.947	0.947	0.925	0.085

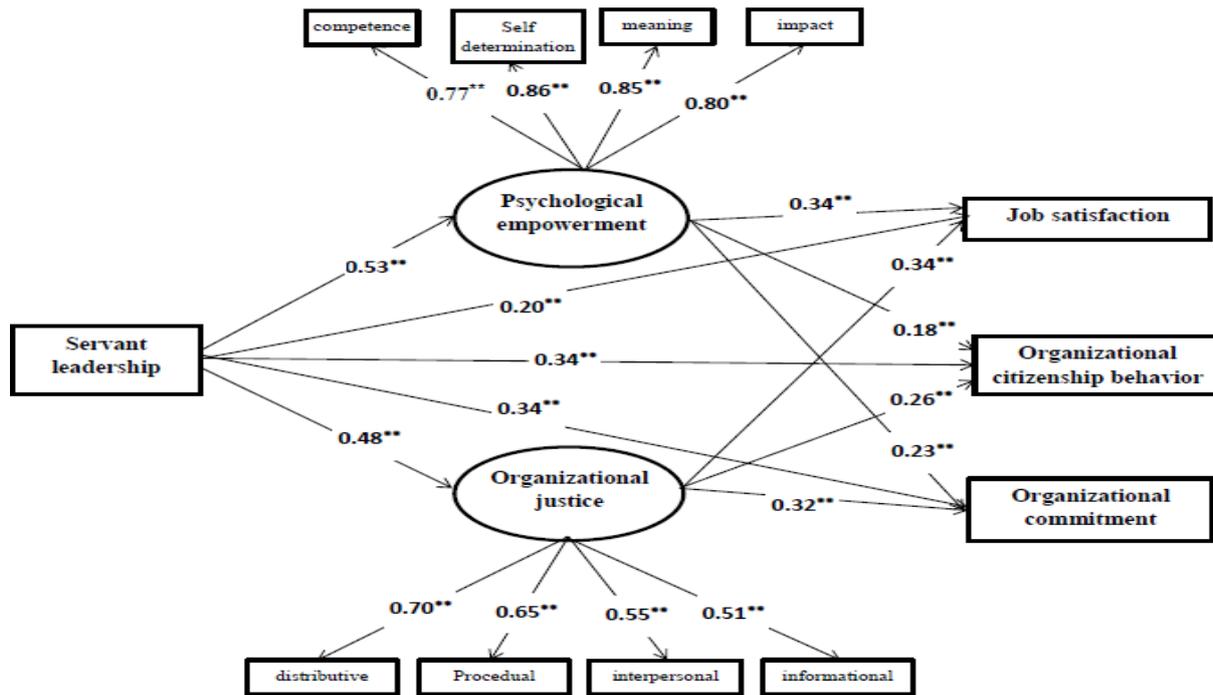


Figure 2. final model of the present study

Table 4. Bootstrap results for mediator paths

Variable	Data	Boot	Bias	Significance level	95% Confidence interval	
					Lower	Upper
Servant leadership→psychological empowerment →job satisfaction	0.0376	0.0375	-0.0001	0.0001	0.0217	0.0556
Servant leadership→psychological empowerment →organizational citizenship behavior	0.0598	0.0595	-0.0003	0.0038	0.0044	0.1141
Servant leadership→psychological empowerment → organizational commitment	0.0870	0.0858	-0.0012	0.0002	0.0327	0.1389
Servant leadership→ organizational justice → job satisfaction	0.0269	0.0270	0.0001	0.0001	0.0149	0.0451
Servant leadership→organizational justice→ organizational citizenship behavior	0.0656	0.0659	0.0003	0.0002	0.0312	0.1049
Servant leadership → organizational justice → organizational commitment	0.0920	0.0926	0.0006	0.0001	0.0497	0.1461

According to table 4, downward and upward limits of the confidence distance for mediator variables does not involve the zero. The confidence level for this confidence distance is 95 and the number of repeated sampling is 2000 Boot strop. Considering that zero is out of this confidence distance, the indirect relationship of the servant leadership with job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior and organizational commitment is meaningful through psychological empowerment and organizational justice.

Discussion

The objective of the present study was to investigate the direct effect of servant leadership on job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior and organizational commitment and also the indirect effect of this relationship through psychological empowerment and

organizational justice. The obtained results showed that servant leadership has a positive effect on psychological empowerment (H1). This finding is consistent with the results of other studies (8). According to Liden and colleagues, to be effective, an organization needs to recognize, apply, and develop specific talents and potentials of the employees.

The obtained results showed that servant leadership has a positive effect on the organizational justice (H2) and this finding is consistent with the results of other studies (9). According to the findings of this study, it can be said that servant leaders that have specific characteristics show specific behaviors and influence organizations' processes.

The findings of this research confirmed the positive effect of server leadership on job satisfaction (H3). These findings are coordinated with the results of researches

that has been carried out by Scuderi (13) & Harwiki (16). The empirical findings support this hypothesis which claims that the leaders, who have a role in gratification of the staff needs, are pioneers in increasing the job satisfaction among the staff.

The findings of this research confirmed the positive effect of server leadership on organizational citizenship behavior (H4). These findings are coordinated with the results of other researches (9). The server leaders provide peace, security and confidence in the work atmosphere, which increases the citizenship behaviors of the staff.

The obtained results revealed that servant leadership has a positive effect on organizational commitment (H5). This finding is consistent with the results of other studies (17). Servant leaders, due to their specific characteristics, have a relationship with the positive attitudes of employees.

The obtained results showed that psychological empowerment has a positive effect on job satisfaction (H6). These findings are coordinated with the results of researches carried out by Indradevi (27). When people find their job meaningful, or when they feel they have the ability to do the job in the best way, they would enjoy their job further.

The obtained results showed that psychological empowerment has a positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior (H7). These findings are coordinated with the results of researches carried out by Spreitzer (20), Wat & Shaffer (28). The capable staff may raise the willingness of helping their organization, alongside empowering their personal experiences from their organization.

The obtained results showed that psychological empowerment has a positive effect on the organizational commitment (H8) and this finding is consistent with the results of other studies (29, 30). This finding is logical because when employees feel a sense of capability in their work, they feel a sense of belonging and attachment to their organizations and get committed to it.

The obtained results showed that organizational justice has a positive effect on job satisfaction (H9). These findings are coordinated with the results of researches carried out by Sareshkeh, Ghorbanalizadeh Ghaziani & Tayebi (31).

The obtained results showed that organizational justice has a positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior (H10). These findings are coordinated with the results of researches carried out by Young (32). These findings can be displayed according to the procedure of social exchange. This theory states that the organization is an arena for exchanging between the leaders and the staff. Social exchange is usually unwritten and obscure, which is mainly based on the individuals' perceptions.

The obtained results showed that organizational justice has a positive effect on organizational commitment (H11) and this finding is consistent with the results of other studies (31, 33). According to the theory of equity, when the employees have a sense of equity in the organization and perceive that they are treated fairly in all fields, they will have a positive attitude towards the

organization and will show more inclination and commitment to remain in the organization.

The obtained results showed that servant leadership has an indirect positive effect on job satisfaction through psychological empowerment (H12). These findings are coordinated with the results of researches carried out by Nel, Stander & Latif (8) & Jones (33). In the opinion of Liden & colleagues, server leadership is concentrated and focused on developing staff potential capabilities.

The obtained results showed that servant leadership has an indirect positive effect on the organizational citizenship behavior through psychological empowerment (H13). These findings are coordinated with the results of researches carried out by Moghimi (34). The server leaders are altruist, always respect the followers' dignity and status, delegate authority, pay attention to the individual development and the subordinates' growth, and they also attempt to maximize the staff capacities.

The obtained results showed that servant leadership has an indirect positive effect on organizational commitment through psychological empowerment (H14) and this finding is consistent with the results of other research (8). The servant leadership model is a basis for empowerment of and attention to the employees and empower their followers to continue their future path.

The obtained results showed that servant leadership has an indirect positive effect on job satisfaction through organizational justice (H15) and this finding is consistent with the results of (35) research. According to the equality theory, if the staff feel equality in the organization, and also be treated fairly in all matters, they would become more satisfied with their organization and their job.

The obtained results showed that servant leadership has an indirect positive effect on the organizational citizenship behavior through organizational justice (H16). These findings are coordinated with the results of a research which was carried out by (9). A server leader stimulates the trust, the admiration and the loyalty of their subordinates.

The obtained results showed that servant leadership has an indirect positive effect on the organizational commitment through organizational justice (H17) and this finding is consistent with the results of (35) research. Servant leaders influence the organization processes by specific characteristics, including considering personal differences, using identical standards, removing discrimination, paying attention to the staffs opinions and ideas, giving information about the process of decision making, and considering ethical standards of behaviors.

Although the study findings lent overall support to the proposed model, there are some limitations that should be noted. At first, the data were collected through self-report measures. Surveying data may not adequately portray the complexity of employees' perceptions of work environments. A combination of self-report questionnaires and objective assessments would be ideal. Secondly, given the cross-sectional design of this

study, causal relationships among the variables cannot be established. Longitudinal studies should be employed to test the hypotheses. Longitudinal research clarifies cause and effect relationships. Finally, because the participants were employees of an industrial company, thus these results cannot be generalized without taking this into consideration.

Conclusion

It is recommended that the organizations should initially employ the servant leaders and then encourage, support and develop the servant leaders in order to enhance the organizational productivity and performance. Organizations can use the social learning processes to develop the servant leadership. Therefore, ensuring that the young leaders have the closest models of servant role in their jobs can facilitate the development of servant leadership. Finally, it is essential to develop the educational programs for learning the role models as well as developing the servant leader's skills.

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