

Research Article

**The Effects of Servant Leadership in Organizational Commitment and Performance
Towards Employee Absenteeism**

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Abstract

The influence of leadership as a factor in organizational performance and commitment to the workplace increased its significance. In this study we are exploring the impact of servant leadership on organizational engagement and absenteeism. Nowadays organizational success is becoming increasingly dependent on leadership and workplace efficiency. The study consists of 112 workers employed in 35 Chennai City organizations. Data collected through unobtrusive measurements and query forms was analyzed to assess the effect of leadership styles on organizational engagement and absence of employees Findings also reveal that servant leadership has a positive impact on organizational commitment. Lastly findings include that servant leadership has no direct impact on employee absenteeism but organizational commitment reduces the employee absenteeism.

Keywords: Servant Leadership, Organizational Commitment, Organizational performance, , Employee absenteeism

1.Introduction

In today's world leadership, not only in terms of the success of the organization, but also in developing and recognizing personal skills and secret attributes that can help society as a whole, plays an significant part in the well-being of the community. Organizations seeking high results and maintaining their human resources need workers who are dedicated to their work and organizations. And good leadership is one of the most critical ways to ensure that it does. Servant leadership, added by Greenleaf to literature. Today's business climate is increasingly dependent on expertise and organizations that can maintain their human capital have a tremendous advantage over those who cannot. Organizations that maintain workers with experience and skills on the job they do have better success than organizations with more absenteeism symptoms. Maintaining knowledge and skills, which can be described as social capital, ensures a more productive workforce and better performance of roles Because of this, factors contributing to turnover have been the subject of a wealth of literature since the beginning of the 20th century.

Servant Leadership

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Servant leadership is about putting the needs of followers above the needs of the leaders and helping followers reach their potential. Greenleaf defines servant leader behaviors as serving others, taking a holistic approach in business, creating a sense of community, putting followers above and empowering them, showing ethical behaviors and supporting followers with trusting long-term relationships and suggests that these behaviors increase the organizational commitment of employees.

Servant leaders are those who serve with a focus on the followers, whereby the followers are the primary concern and the organizational concerns are peripheral. The servant leader constructs are virtues, which are defined as the good moral quality in a person, or the general quality of goodness, or moral excellence.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment, with its research history close to 50 years, is specified as an important factor in explaining and understanding employee behaviors. Organizational commitment can be defined as psychological commitment towards organization. It can be similarly defined as a positive attitude towards organization.

Commitment represents both positive attitudes and behavioral tendencies [11]. In this context organizational commitment can also be defined as a strong belief in organizational goals and values, a desire to perform higher for the good of the organization, and a desire to stay in the organization.

Organizational Performance

Organizational performance is the most prevalent dependent variable of interest for researchers concerned with just about any area of management (Richard et al., 2009). Market competition for customers and capital make organizational performance essential to the survival and success of any business entity. As a result, this construct has been generally accepted as the primary goal of organizations. Functions and activities related to marketing, operations, human resources, as well as structure and strategy are all ultimately judged by their contribution to organizational performance. Organizational performance can be defined in numerous ways (Guest, 1997). Wright and Gardner (2002) categorized performance measures into employee outcomes (such as turnover and absenteeism), organizational outcomes (such as productivity and service quality) and financial outcomes (such as market value).

The Importance of Organizational Commitment in The Workplace

Organizational commitment in the workplace is the bond employees experience with their organization. Broadly speaking, employees who are committed to their organization generally feel a connection with their organization, feel that they fit in and, feel they understand the goals of the organization. The added value of such employees is that they tend to be more determined in their work, show relatively high productivity and are more proactive in offering their support.

Types of Organizational Commitment

The description above is a very good indicator of organizational commitment, but does only offer a broad description. In their article “Three component model of commitment” John Meyer and Natalie Allen discuss organizational commitment in great detail. We can see from their insightful research that there exists three distinct types of organizational commitment:

- 1. Affective commitment**
- 2. Continuance commitment**

3. Normative commitment

Employee Absenteeism

Employee absenteeism can be defined as stress that leads to work exhaustion. Sadly, it is the most gifted and committed employees that tend to burn out first. Because of their high standards and tendency towards perfectionism, these employees end up burning the candle at both ends. It refers to workers absence from their regular task when he is normally schedule to work.

In other words, it signifies the absence of an employee from work when he is scheduled to be at work. Any employee may stay away from work if he has taken leave to which he is entitled or on ground of sickness or some accident or without any previous sanction of leave.

2.Methodology

H1a: Servant leadership has a positive effect on employees' organizational commitment.

H2a: There is a negative relationship between servant leadership and Employee absenteeism.

Literature also suggests in cases of high organizational commitment employees will perform better, will be more active and have less intent to leave.

Research Goal

The goal of this research is to examine the relationship between leadership styles, organizational commitment, performance and Employee absenteeism. The effects of leadership styles on organizational commitment and Employee absenteeism are examined.

Data Collection and Method

Research methodology is based on quantitative methods. Data gathered by surveys is analyzed via factor analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis.

To measure the employee's absenteeism a questionnaire was administered among employees before and after introduction Servant leadership style.

The present study Barbuto and Wheeler's (2006) Servant Leader Questionnaire to assess Managers.

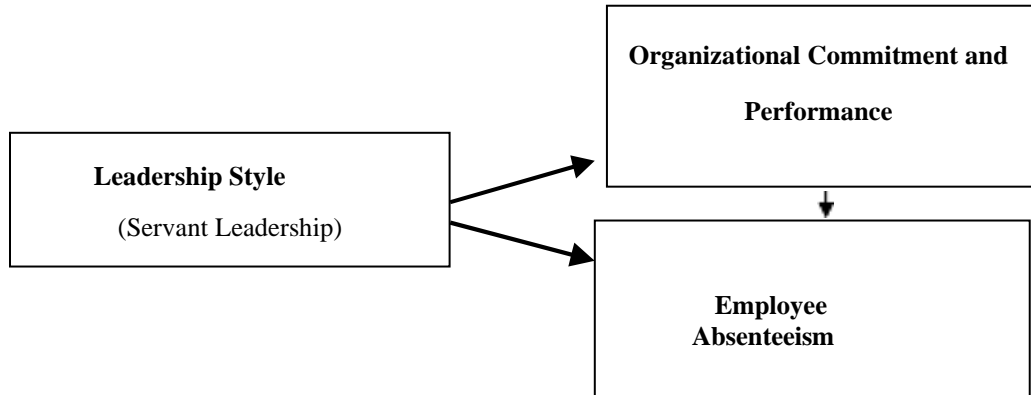
The employee commitment questions are adopted from Allen and Meyer (1990).

Survey is conducted at 10 different organizations in the city of Chennai. After a pilot study 1 question from the servant leadership scale and 2 questions from path-goal leadership scale are removed from the questionnaire.

5-point Likert scale is used in the questionnaire formed of 31 questions regarding organizational commitment and leadership styles. Questions 1-13 measures the servant leadership, question 14-28 measures the path-goal leadership, and questions 29-31 measures the organizational commitment.

Figure 1. General Model of Research

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3. Analysis and Findings

Demographic Data

Research is conducted on 112 employees at 35 organizations. Regarding participants, 34(30,4%) are female, 78(69,6%) are male, 25(22,3%) are working in production sector and 87(77,7%) are working in service sector. Also 6(6,3%) are high school educated, 14(12,5%) are bachelor degree holders 67(59,8%) has a a master’s degree, 20(17,9%) has and 4 (3,6%) are has professionally qualified.

Reliability and Factor Analysis

The results of the factor analysis and Cronbach’s Alpha (α) values are given below in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability And Factor Analysis

| Items | F1 | F2 | F3 | F4 | (α) |
|-------|------|------|----|----|--------------|
| 11 | .844 | | | | 0.940 |
| 1 | .822 | | | | |
| 8 | .816 | | | | |
| 10 | .805 | | | | |
| 6 | .798 | | | | |
| 12 | .797 | | | | |
| 4 | .792 | | | | |
| 2 | .757 | | | | |
| 3 | .750 | | | | |
| 9 | .726 | | | | |
| 13 | .686 | | | | |
| 7 | .614 | | | | |
| 27 | | .868 | | | |
| 28 | | .841 | | | |
| 25 | | .817 | | | |
| 26 | | .809 | | | |

| | | | | | |
|----|--|------|------|------|-------|
| 24 | | .791 | | | |
| 22 | | .763 | | | 0.932 |
| 23 | | .735 | | | |
| 19 | | .667 | | | |
| 20 | | .628 | | | |
| 21 | | .596 | | | |
| 17 | | | .818 | | |
| 15 | | | .810 | | 0.849 |
| 18 | | | .738 | | |
| 14 | | | .723 | | |
| 16 | | | .716 | | |
| 29 | | | | .935 | 0.908 |
| 30 | | | | .914 | |
| 31 | | | | .908 | |
| | | | | | |

As seen in Table 1. values reached by analysis are within the acceptable ranges. Items regarding servant leadership are gathered in 1 dimension and have a high Cronbach’s Alpha (α) value (0,940). Items regarding path-goal leadership are gathered in 2 dimensions with Cronbach’s Alpha (α) values (0,932) and (0,849). Items regarding organizational commitment are gathered in 1 dimension with Cronbach’s Alpha (α) value (0,908). These findings shows that scales used in the study are valid and reliable.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

Table 2. Mean, Standard Deviations and Correlation Analysis

| Variables | Mean | Standard Deviation | Org. commitment | Servant Leadership | Path-Goal Leadership | Employee Absenteeism |
|---|--------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Organizational commitment | 3.0841 | 1.20056 | 1 | | | |
| Servant Leadership | 3.2530 | 0.91474 | .684** | 1 | | |
| Employee Absenteeism | 0.2165 | 0.21418 | -.216* | -.191 | -.232* | 1 |
| **. Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed). *. Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed). | | | | | | |

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Results of the analysis show that means of perceptions are close to each other. Organizational commitment mean is the lowest with 3,0841. The mean of Employee absenteeism is found as %21,65 which is close


to the average Employee absenteeism in Turkey (20%).

Findings show that there is a statistically significant relationship between path-goal leadership and organizational commitment (,685) and also between servant leadership and organizational commitment (,684). According to findings there is a negative correlation between employee absenteeism and the other variables but the findings are not significant at the 0,01 level. However, the correlation is significant at 0,05 level.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is used to test the hypotheses and findings are given in Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5. Firstly, to test H1a and H1b hypotheses servant leadership variable as independent variable and organizational commitment as dependent variable are subjected to multiple regression analysis. After this servant leadership specified as independent variable and employee absenteeism is specified as dependent variable and introduced to the regression model. Last regression model is organizational commitment variable as independent and Employee absenteeism variable as dependent.

Table 3. Regression Analysis Model 1

| Variables | | Hypothesis | S.Beta | t Value | F | P Sign. | R2 | Test Result |
|----------------------|--|------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|-------|-------------|
| Independent Variable | Dependent Variable | | | | | | | |
| Servant Leadership | Org. Commit.  | H1a | 0,349 | 2,412 | 48,833 | 0,018 | 0,482 | Accepted |

The regression model used to show the effect of servant leadership and path-goal leadership on organizational commitment is statistically significant. Results of the analysis show that there is a statistically significant relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment ($\beta=0,349$; $p<0,05$) and between path-goal leadership and organizational commitment ($\beta=0,380$; $p<0,05$).

With these findings H1a and H1b is accepted.

Table 4. Regression Analysis Model 2

| Variables | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|-----|--------|---------|-------|---------|----------------|-------------|--|
| Independent Variable | Dependent Variable | | S.Beta | t Value | F | P Sign. | R ² | Test Result | |
| Servant Leadership | Employee absenteeism | H2a | -0,049 | 0,338 | 2,502 | 0,736 | 0,044 | Rejected | |

The regression model used to show the effect of servant leadership and path-goal leadership on employee absenteeism is not statistically significant. Results of the analysis show that there is no statistically significant relationship between servant leadership and employee absenteeism ($\beta=0,049$; $p<0,05$).

With these findings H2a and H2b is rejected.

Table 5. Regression Analysis Model 3

| Variables | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|----|--------|---------|-------|---------|----------------|-------------|--|
| Independent Variable | Dependent Variable | | S.Beta | t Value | F | P Sign. | R ² | Test Result | |
| Org. Commit. | Employee absenteeism | H3 | -0,216 | 2,186 | 4,778 | 0,031 | 0,037 | Accepted | |

The regression model used to show the effect of organizational commitment on turnover is statistically significant. Results of the analysis show that there is a statistically significant relationship between organizational commitment and turnover ($\beta=0,216$; $p<0,05$).

With these findings H3 is accepted.

4. Conclusion

Findings reached by analysis are partly in accordance with the literature.

Even though correlation analysis shows a significant relationship between employee absenteeism and leadership styles further analysis rejects H2a and H2b hypotheses. Future research on larger samples can show different results. The findings concerning these relationships are not in accordance with the literature.

Concerning the relationship between organizational commitment and employee absenteeism the findings are in accordance with the literature. Results show that organizational commitment has a significant effect on employee absenteeism. Evaluating all these findings we can safely say that employees are affected by leadership styles and their organization commitment is partly dependent on the leadership. Even though leadership has an important effect on organizational commitment the effect on employee absenteeism is weaker. In this context it can be said that

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servant leadership increases organizational commitment but when the employees think about leaving, they are also taking other factors into account.

Because of resource and time limitations the research sample is not very high. Future research should include more variables such as different leadership styles, role stress, organizational citizenship, person-organization fit and should be conducted on a larger sample.

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