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Measuring the influence of servant leadership on knowledge sharing (Case Study: Parsian Insurance Company)

Ebrahim Niknaghsh[*a], Shahram Bandpey [b]

a Department of management, FiroozKooh Branch, Islamic Azad University, FiroozKooh, Iran
b Department of management, FiroozKooh Branch, Islamic Azad University, FiroozKooh, Iran

CHRONICLE	Abstract
	Today one of the most important approaches to organization success is to utilized proper leadership style which is able to affects lots of organizational outputs. The effect of leadership on follower outcomes at work has been extensively established through various researches on management practices. Leaders depict several different styles and provide guidance to their followers to attain their goals the purpose of writing the current research is to survey the influence of servant leadership on knowledge sharing attending moderating role of social responsibility. In this study, we are trying to survey the role of servant leadership on employees' commitment so the main question of the current research is: Is servant leadership effective on knowledge sharing attending moderating role of social responsibility in Parsian Insurance Company? The research is applicable from goal view and descriptive rom data collection. Data gathering tool is questionnaire which library and fieldwork were utilized for its designation. Statistical society includes 880 employees of Parsian Insurance Company from which 268 ones were selected by Cochran sampling formula. Sampling strategy was stratified random. To measure servant leadership, agapao love, empowerment, vision, servicing, humility, trust and altruism were utilized. The results of Appling structural equation model in Listel software environment illustrated that servant leadership and its dimension affect significantly and positively on knowledge sharing. Meanwhile social responsibility moderates the influence of servant leadership on knowledge sharing.

* Corresponding author. Tel: +989111553198   Email address: Eniknaghsh@yahoo.com

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Introduction

The effect of leadership on follower outcomes at work has been extensively established through various researches on management practices. Leaders depict several different styles and provide guidance to their followers to attain their goals (ULLAH, 2018). Among the various leadership styles, servant leadership (SL) is a preferred one. A servant leader places too much focus on individual development and welfare as well as on the communities to which he or she belongs. Thus, SL is also viewed as a moral, practical and consequential style of leadership (KEITH, 2008). In 1977, Robert Greenleaf introduced the concept of servant leadership, in which service to employees is the leaders' primary responsibility. Although developments of servant leadership models (Parolini, 2004; Patterson, 2003; Russell & Stone, 2002; Winston, 2003; Wong & Page, 2003) and questionnaires (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Dennis & Winston, 2003; Liden et al, 2008) have encouraged recent research, little is known about the conditions that facilitate servant leadership. While conceptual models posit that certain values (like humility, altruism, agapao love and etc.) are causal criteria which lead to servant leadership, these models do not postulate the source of those values (Yukl, 2010).

Spears [4] recognizes ten traits of SL: listening, compassion, healing, attentiveness, influence, conceptualization, forethought, stewardship, developing others, and building society. SL is based on the belief that an organization's strategic goals can be achieved if the servant leader first facilitates the development and well-being of followers through its moral and practical attribute. SL differs from traditional leadership trends, which are based on the perception that the leader at the "top of the pyramid" accumulates and exercises power (SPEARS, 2010).

SL instead focuses on sharing power: prioritizing the needs of others and helping community develop and achieve goals. Servant leaders, therefore, should understand their ethical obligation not only to their own success, but also to organizational success (EHRHART, 2004). Such leaders instill the significance of service both intrinsically and extrinsically. The omnipresent focus of servant leaders on contributing to others' growth makes it worth examining the relationship between SL and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and between SL and knowledge-sharing behavior (KSB) Organ, Podsakoff, and Mackenzie (ORGAN, 2006).

Define OCB as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization." OCB is mainly influenced by cognitive rather than affective factors; as a result, it is a premeditated behavior. Employees who perceive they are being treated fairly will engage in OCB, or extra role behavior (to go beyond formal requirements of job / job description), to maintain a balance between their commitment to their job involvement and to the firm productivity/efficiency. Conversely, those workers who perceive they are being treated unfairly will not engage in it (ANDREEVA, 2016).

Employees gain knowledge from leaders and their experiences. The effective management of knowledge in organizations results in desired results for management and the organization and, consequently, a competitive advantage (GIAMPAOLI, 2017). Knowledge sharing is recognized as the most important of the components of knowledge management (TRIVELLAS, 2015).

Knowledge sharing enables an organization to exchange and apply scattered information, practices, unusual

understandings, insights, and experiences (WANG, 2014).

Effective knowledge sharing facilitates learning, creativity, innovation, knowledge creation, problem solving, decision-making and, ultimately, individual, group, and organizational performance (AKHAVAN, 2012). Ultimately, sharing knowledge transforms individual knowledge into a valuable asset for an organization (ISLAM, 2013). For that reason, knowledge sharing has gained considerable attention in business management (WANG, 2014).

This study adds to existing ones on the knowledge-sharing domain from an SL perspective. Eva et al. (EVA, N., ROBIN, M, 2019).

Propose controlling behavioral biases in survey research by collecting data at different time lags to measure cause and effect measurement over times. Accordingly, to add methodological strength to the study, we collected data in four-time lags: data on servant leadership was collected at time I, KSB and OCB at time II, work engagement at time III, and self-efficacy at time IV. The study was conducted in Pakistan, a high-power distance society, a context for leader-follower studies. Such contextualized studies are a valuable addition to existing literature for showing how SL may affect the attitude and behavior of employees in other high power distance cultures. Lastly, the research is significant for illuminating the nature and functionality of SL as it impacts both KSB and OCB while measuring the effects of self-efficacy and engagement. Amir (AMIR, D.A, 2019).

In Parsian Insurance Company, leaders still utilize traditional leadership styles and employees are not satisfied of their job which effect on their commitment, the job leaving rate in recent years, shows this claim. In this study, we are trying to survey the role of servant leadership on employees' commitment so the main question of the current research is:

Is servant leadership effective on knowledge sharing attending moderating role of social responsibility in Parsian Insurance Company?

Literature Review

Transformational leadership style in particular has been identified as a key component in promoting people development, Servant leadership is a unique approach, and based on the leader being at the down of the organization which called reverted pyramid It needs that servant leader be able to bear pain inflicted by conflict, be a steward of resources, be an effective listener, and be the developer of skills of those within the organization (Depree, 1989; Gholi pour & Hazrati, 2008).

Servant leadership can be defined as a leadership style which is primarily focused on the growth and well-being of people. A Servant leader has the moral character, the wisdom to foresee what is wanted, the ability to meet the needs of people, and the courage to act on that (Nuijten, 2009).

Sevant leadership is characterized by the interest to serve and empower employees and the belief that the best way to achieve organizational goals is through developing the people potential. The idea of leaders and servants has gained enhancing acceptance in the leadership and organizational literature (Russell & Stone, 2002; Wheatley, 1994). When applied to public education, it can be claimed that for no other reasons, Organizations are founded to serve the basic wants of the human race (Covey, 2006).Servant leadership is being practiced in the corporate world and the priority of service to people has enabled many outstanding for-profit organizations to thrive in very competitive markets

(Ruschman, 2001). Also, it can be said servant leadership is more appropriate for nonprofit organizations (Giampetro-Meyer et al, 1998). Servant leadership has been criticized for negative association with the term servant and for seeming like a rather unrealistic from of organizational leadership; however, the reality is that it is becoming more accepted and publicly discussed (Whetstone, 2002). Servant leadership is a certain model of leadership which needs trust, risk-taking, and tenacity to create and maintain servant-led organizations (ruschman, 2001). A lot of theoretical and empirical studies show that servant leadership has positive and meaningful impact on knowledge sharing. Agarwal et al (1999) found that one of the strong components of servant leadership characteristic attributes like" consideration" behavior to be positively correlated with knowledge sharing. Consideration behaviors of servant leaders allow them to see rank or leadership position in organization as nothing but responsibilities. Therefore, holding a position should not mean an authority or command but carrying out one's responsibilities.

Drucker (1999) believes that organizations are now evolving toward structures in which rank entails responsibility but not authority, and where the supervisor's job is not to command, but to persuade. So, for organizations to be productive it is critical for leaders to effect on their followers, Leaders should assist and support people's growth, needs, wanted and desires and motivate them to carry out their duties to the fullest expectation of the organizations (Blickle,2003).

The results of researches show that employees have different expectations of the workplace and their managers/leader. Here, the employees were asked to think about the best team manager/ leader they had worked for, and what has made them such effective mangers. What made them the best team leaders or managers is the ability to listen to people which is one of the potential characteristics of servant leaders. This was closely followed by mangers who treat all employees with respect and as equals, and do regard themselves" superior "to the employees in the organization who they were responsible to manage. Thus, these characteristic of servant leaders will extensively associate with employees' knowledge sharing to their organization. In addition, the perceived support of the leaders was found to relate positively with employec's knowledge sharing to the organization (Eisenberger et al, 1986). Personal attributes or traits of servant leaders and group-leader relations increase knowledge shaing of people. As leaders are like agents of change, so their acts profoundly affect their followers more than how the followers'acts affect them (Mathieu and Zajec, 1990). " Leadership plays an important role in understanding group behavior, for it's the leader who usually provides the direction toward goal achievement" by demonstrating some excellent characters to employees. Hence servant leaders should"adapt their style to fit the organizational and cultural context in which they act"." Organizational effectiveness and success are broadly affected by the quality of its leadership today's leadership should be able to mobilize ideas and values that energize other staff" (Buchanan and Huczynski 2004).

Conceptual framework and hypotheses.

Figure I illustrated conceptual framework of the research. In the model, savant leadership and its indices include agapao love, humility, altruism, trust, vision, service and empowerment are independent variables, knowledge sharing is dependent and knowledge sharing is moderating one.
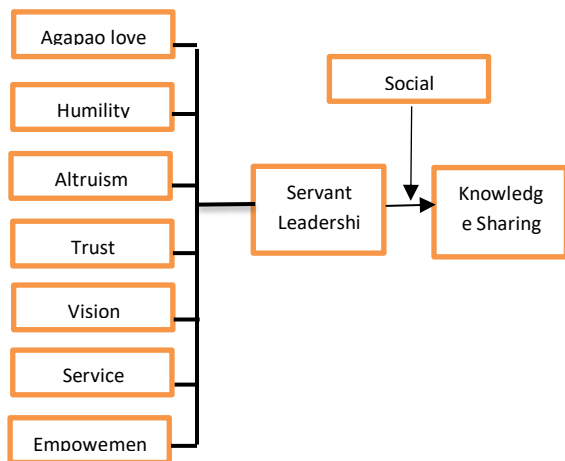
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Figure1: Conceptual framework of research

1. Servant leadership affects significantly and positively on knowledge sharing.
1.1. Agapao love affects significantly and positively on knowledge sharing.
1.2. Humility affects significantly and positively on knowledge sharing.
1.3. Altruism affects significantly and positively on knowledge sharing.
1.4. Trust affects significantly and positively on knowledge sharing.
1.5. Vision affects significantly and positively on knowledge sharing.
1.6. Service affects significantly and positively on knowledge sharing.
1.7. Empowerment affects significantly and positively on knowledge sharing

Material and methods

The study was done in a society involving 1144 employees of Parsian Insurance Company. Whereas this number seems to be too much, the sampling was done through an integral counting method.

$$n = \frac{NZ^2_{1-\frac{\alpha}{2}}pq}{(N-1)\varepsilon^2 + Z^2_{1-\frac{\alpha}{2}}pq} \Rightarrow \frac{880 \times (1.96)^2 \times (0.5)^2}{879 \times (0.05)^2 + (1.96)^2(0.5)} \cong 268$$

So, the sample is 288 employees. Also, the sampling strategy is stratified sampling.

Current study can be considered as a descriptive survey if to view from data collection aspect and as an applied research if to investigate the goals of the study. To collect the data library method (to refer to books, articles, libraries, etc.…) and

fieldworks (questionnaire) was being used. For gathering data, a questionnaire in three separated parts was designed. The first part was about servant leadership includes 39 questions with 5-point Likert scale.

Table 1: distribution of each servant leadership dimension questions

Social responsibility	
SL dimension	Questions
Agapao love	1-5
Empowerment	6-10
Vision	11-15
Service	16-21
Humility	22-28
Trust	29-34
Altruism	35-39

Also 5 questions were applied to measure knowledge sharing.

To measure social responsibility, six main dimensions were considered: society right, human resources, environment, fairly actions, attending to consumers and society development.

So the other part of questionnaire includes 18 questions with 5 point Likert scale too.

Table 2: distribution of each social responsibility dimension questions

Social responsibility	
SR dimension	Questions
Society rights	45-47
Human resources	48-50
Environment	51-53
Fairly actions	54-56
Attending to consumers	57-59
Society development	60-62

To analyze the data SPSS 17 and LISREL software were utilized.

The management experts were being asked to evaluate the validity of questionnaires, for this mean, the questionnaires were given to some professors and experts in management, and after their modifications

were being applied and they confirmed it, the questionnaires were given to the participants.

To determine the questionnaires' reliability, the 'Cronbach Alpha technique' was applied. For this purpose, 30 people were chosen by random (from the statistical samples) and the questionnaires were given to them. The 'Cronbach Alpha' values for all variables were calculated:

Table 3: the results of reliability

Variables	Cronbach Alpha
Servant leadership	0.765
Knowledge sharing	0.724
Social responsibility	0.792

These values support the reliability of questionnaires, because the calculated results for Cronbach's alpha are more than (0.7).

Results

a) Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

To investigate the relationship between servant leadership and its indices with organizational commitment, this test was used.

Table 4: the results of using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

Path	Sig	Result
Servant leadership	0.092	Data distribution is normal
Knowledge sharing	0.127	Data distribution is normal
Social responsibility	0.063	Data distribution is normal

As table 4 indicates data distribution in statistical society is abnormal. Therefore,

the first conditions to utilize structural equation model is supported .

b) Structural equation model

Chart 4 shows the influence of servant leadership on knowledges sharing attending moderating role of social responsibility applying factor analysis method.
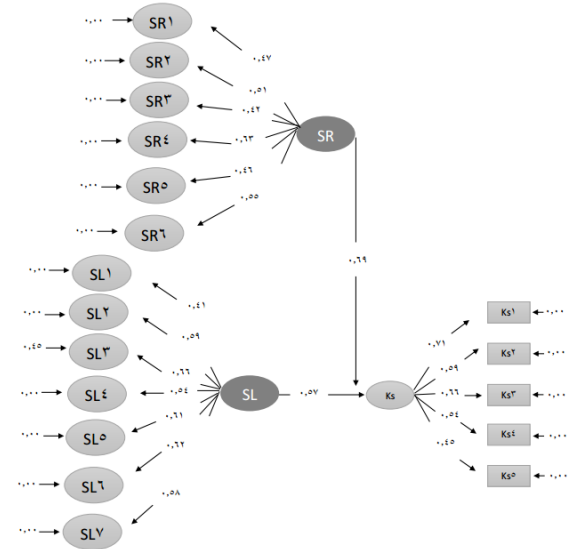

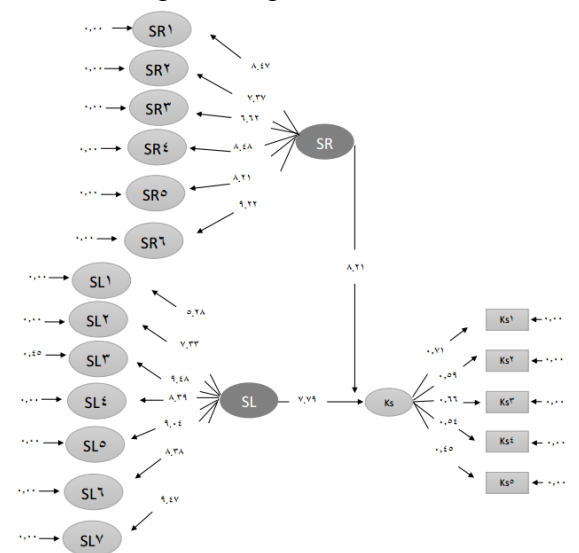**Figure 2:** Approved structural equation model along with significant coefficient

Figure 3: Approved structural equation model along with factor loading

The results indicate that servant leadership affects significantly and positively on knowledge sharing and corporate social responsibility moderates the influence of servant leadership on knowledge sharing.

Table 5: The Result of the Sup hypotheses testing

Number	Sup hypotheses	Path Coefficient	T Value	Significant	Result
1-1		0/41	5/27	0/05	Confirmed
1-2		0/59	7/33	0/05	Confirmed
1-3		0/66	9/48	0/05	Confirmed
1-4		0/54	8/39	0/05	Confirmed
1-5		0/61	9/04	0/05	Confirmed
1-6		0/62	8/38	0/05	Confirmed
1-7		0/58	9/47	0/05	Confirmed

Conclusions

The results of utilizing structural equation model, proved all hypotheses in which social responsibility moderates the influence of servant leadership and its dimensions on knowledge sharing. Considering the results, some suggestions can be represented to managers of Parsian Insurance Company as :

-Creating an attractive, interesting, accurate and useful job for employees.

-Playing fairly payment and rewards to all employees .

-Creating promotion opportunities for employees and making fairly promotion rules .

-Respecting and behaving politely with all employees .

-Delegation and entrusting new responsibilities to employees

-Supporting an opportunity to get employees' ideas and comments

-Formulating comprehensive vision for the organization in terms of employees' excellence

-Aligning employee and organizational goals

-Making self-governing independent teams

- Supporting employees and represent their mercy and kindness to the followers

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