

Investigating the Relationship between Servant Leadership and Organizational Trust- Case Study North Khorasan Social Security Organization

Abstract

The present study aimed at investigating the relationship between servant leadership and organizational trust in the case study of the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. The research is descriptive in terms of the research method, and it is applied research in terms of purpose. The statistical research population included all employees of the North Khorasan Social Security Organization, with a total number of 225. Using the Morgan table, a minimum of 140 employees of the Social Security Organization were randomly selected from men and women and a questionnaire was distributed among them. The research findings indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between employees' perceptions of servant leadership governance and organizational trust. Moreover, research results show that organizations with servant leadership reflect higher levels of trust in the leader as well as trust in the organization. Servant leadership can improve organizational performance, and thus increase effectiveness and productivity in the organization.

Keywords: *Servant leadership, service, organizational trust.*

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Introduction

Leadership is necessary for all organizations to the achievement of their goals and is a key subject for gaining organizational effectiveness and organizational success (Atashzadeh, 2015). Today, effective leadership is considered an important principle for organizational success. Today's organizations are more focused on improving leadership than ever before. Various styles have been proposed by authors for leadership. One of these styles in recent decades is servant leadership. This perspective deals with the relationship between leader and followers in terms of service delivery, improvement, and empowerment. The servant-leader puts service at the center of attention. The servant leader must have a set of mentalities that are based on valuing and paying attention to people. A servant leadership approach to problems is necessary due to diversity among leaders (Shirani, 2011). Therefore, servant leadership is a good strategy to improve organizational performance (Zentner, 2016). Servant leaders instill in their followers a sense and desire to serve others (Lacroix, 2017). In servant leadership theory, followers are highly valued. Servant leadership, according to Patterson, includes love and affection, humility, altruism, trustworthiness, service, and empowerment (Lowe, 2012).

Greenleaf (1977) also introduced servant leadership as a leadership approach in which a person is motivated to take a leadership position due to his or her natural inclination to serve. In his view, a servant leader prioritizes the needs of his followers over his own needs, believes in serving others with a constant desire to lead, helps develop followers to become independent, and inspires followers to be independent and be on the path of service and become servants. Although Greenleaf (1970) proposed the basic concept needed to

understand servant leadership, his writings do not include a specific definition of servant leadership. Besides, Greenliffe's early work in the field, from 1970 to 1977, mostly reflected the philosophy of servant leadership rather than a theory of servant leadership that defined specific dimensions for servant leadership (Liden et al., 2015).

Servant leadership, on the other hand, is a positivist leadership style that influences a wide range of individual, group, and organizational outcomes, and its impact on outcomes is beyond the impact of other positivist leadership styles, such as transformational leadership, ethical leadership, and authentic leadership (Lee, Lyubovnikova, Tian & Knight, 2019).

Also, one of the main variables that can help improve organizational effectiveness and operations is a competitive advantage in organizational trust. As indicated by studies, organizations with a high level of trust are more innovative, adapt better to change, and are more successful than organizations with a low level of trust. Trust, on the other hand, plays a vital role in supporting a large number of external and internal processes and activities that create a competitive advantage for organizations. Organizations with a strong atmosphere of trust within the organization easily develop trust-based relationships with external partners and are more successful than organizations with lower levels of trust. Therefore, to maintain and increase trust, organizations need a style of leadership that prioritizes the interests, needs, and aspirations of individuals. A manager or boss as a service leader does not have a central position in the group. Rather, it provides resources for the group and supports them without expecting any special rewards or appreciation. Russell Weston, on the other hand, believes that building trust is one of the most essential aspects of servant leadership because paying attention

to others and giving priority to the tastes of the followers as the main and basic element in servant leadership causes the followers to trust the leader (Jafari, 2011). An atmosphere of trust arises when managers do what they are committed to and their behavior is predictable. Servant leaders are leaders who care about their followers. Subsequently, followers are one of the priorities of the organization and organizational considerations are of secondary importance (Patterson, 2003). Also, Greenleaf maintains that trust is a turning point for servant leadership since the legitimacy of leadership initiates with trust. According to him, only people who have strong experience in serving their organizations can be trusted. Thus, for Greenleaf, servant leadership is both the product and the premise of trust in leadership and organizational trust. This may be mediated by the fact that servant leadership increases the proper understanding of leadership (Baghersalimi, 2010). Servant leaders first pay attention to the needs of others and then meet their own needs and building trust is one of the crucial parts of leadership, especially servant leadership. Hence, trust in the organization is necessary. One of the most important factors affecting the relationship between leader and followers is leadership effectiveness and productivity. Moreover, trust affects any situation and is the most important factor in interpersonal communication. Trust is the root of

leadership. Trust is a constant assurance based on an individual's honesty, ability, or personality group. Thus, it can be concluded that servant leadership theory lacks sufficient scientific evidence to justify its acceptability. However, it can considerably help managers of organizations. The main research question is whether there is a positive relationship between servant leadership and organizational trust among the staff of the Social Security Organization of North Khorasan?

Methodology

The research statistical population includes all employees of the Social Security Organization of North Khorasan, with a total number of 225 (including formal, contractual, and specific work). Examining Morgan's table indicated that at least 136 to 140 questionnaires must be completed for this work. Therefore, for increasing confidence, 193 questionnaires were completed for the research. For data analysis, descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used in the SPSS software package. In descriptive statistics, tables of frequencies and percentages, means, and standard deviations were used, and in inferential statistics, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used for determining the normality of variables. Also, Spearman correlation and regression tests were used for testing research hypotheses.

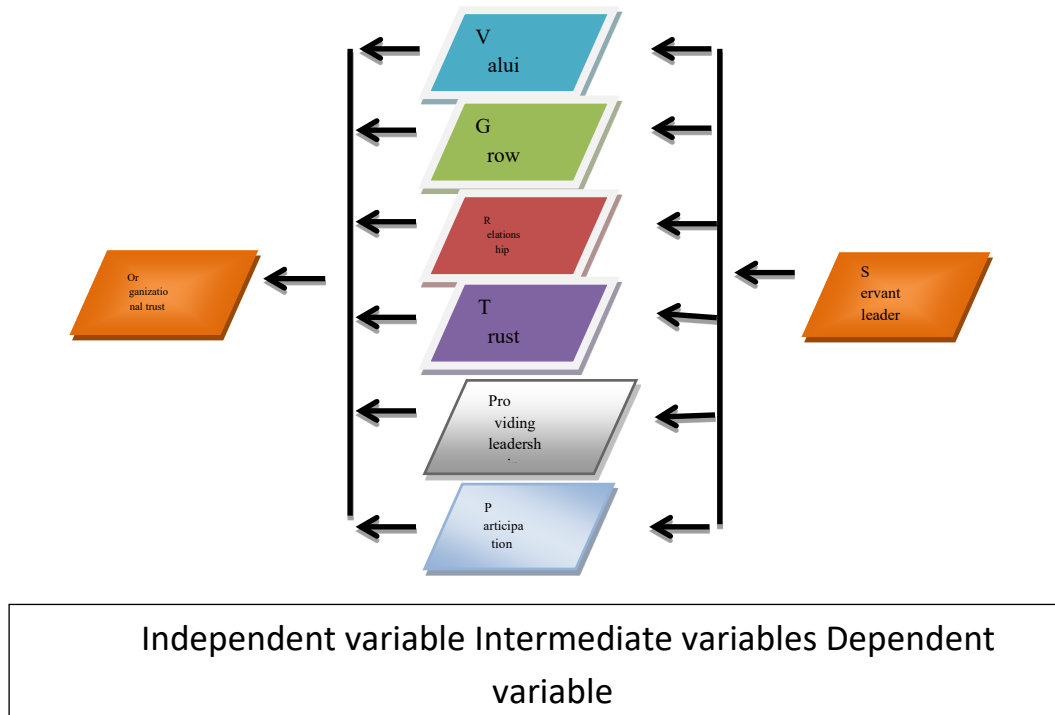


Figure 1. Research analytical model

According to Lab's 1994 servant leadership model, servant leaders have six characteristics: 1. Appreciating people, 2. Developing people, 3. Communicating, 4. Showing trust, 5. Providing leadership, 6. Becoming a partner in leadership,

servant leaders are expected to help build trust in the organization. Based on the organizational trust model, Cumming-Weber Milli (1996) states that organizational trust

is composed of three components: emotional, cognitive and behavioral trust. (Laub, 2003)

Research findings

Testing research hypotheses

In this research, the Spearman correlation test was used for supporting the hypotheses. Regarding the test of normality of data distribution, it should be noted that this test is a test of distribution matching for quantitative data. This method is based on the difference between the relative cumulative frequency of observations and the expected value under the null assumption. According to the null hypothesis, the selected sample has a normal distribution. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the distribution matching compares the cumulative probabilities of the values in your data set with the cumulative probabilities of the same values in a particular theoretical distribution. If the difference is large enough, this test will show P-Value less than your data does not match one of the desired theoretical distributions. In this test, if the decision criterion is 5%, the null hypothesis is rejected, i.e., the data cannot follow a specific distribution such as normal, Poisson, exponential, or uniform.

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Table 1: Kolmogorov-Smirnov single sample test

Parameters normal	servant_ leadership	Organizational trust
Number	174	184
Mean	20.53	39.2609
SD	4.359	5.31699
Normal parameters 1,2		
Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics	.895	1.164
Sig. Level (bilateral)	.400	.133

1: distribution testing is normal 2: Calculated from data
 Considering the table above and the decision criterion (p-value), it is observed that the values of 0.4 and 0.133 support the null hypothesis. That is, there is no reason to reject the hypothesis that "the respective sample is derived from a normal distribution." In other words, the distribution of this sample is normal.

Testing the major research hypothesis

The major research hypothesis investigates the relationship between servant leadership and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. This hypothesis as the H1 statistical hypothesis presents a claim or assumption 1 meaning that there is a significant relationship between the two variables and H0 represents a contradiction or null

hypothesis meaning that there is no relationship between the two variables.

H0: there is no significant relationship between servant leadership and organizational trust in the North Khorasan

Social Security Organization. $H_0 : \rho = 0$ H1: there is a significant relationship between servant leadership and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security

Organization. $H_1 : \rho \neq 0$ Therefore, if it is assumed that: Y: organizational trust variable; X: servant leadership variable,

and: ρ Spearman correlation coefficient between two variables in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization,

this hypothesis is tested in the statistical population. Considering the rank nature of research variables, if the test

significance level is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and H1 is accepted.

The Pearson correlation test indicates that the H1 is accepted. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between servant leadership and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. That is, servant leadership is very crucial in developing and promoting organizational trust and promoting servant leadership; Organizational trust is also improved. the value of the correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.257 and the probability value of its significance level is 0.001, which is less than 0.05. Thus, the null statistical hypothesis on the lack of a significant relationship between the two variables is rejected and the hypothesis on the presence of a significant relationship between the two variables is accepted.

Testing sub-hypothesis 1

The sub-hypothesis 1 investigates the relationship between the dimension of valuing individuals and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. This hypothesis is presented as a statistical hypothesis, H1, indicating a claim or assumption that means that there is a significant relationship between the two variables and H0 represents a contradiction of the claim or null hypothesis meaning that there is no relationship between the two variables. H0: there is no significant relationship between valuing individuals and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization.

$H_0 : \rho = 0$ H1: there is a significant relationship between valuing individuals and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization.

Therefore, if it is assumed that: Y is the organizational trust variable; X is the variable for valuing

individuals, and: ρ : the Spearman correlation coefficient between two variables in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization, this hypothesis is tested in the statistical population. Considering the rank nature of research variables, if the test significance level is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and H1 is accepted. The Pearson correlation test indicates that indicates that the H1 is accepted. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between valuing individuals and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. That is, valuing individuals is very important in developing and promoting organizational trust and promoting servant leadership; and by promoting the variable of valuing individuals, organizational trust is also improved. the value of the correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.217 and the probability value of its significance level is 0.003, which is less than 0.05. Thus, the null statistical hypothesis on the lack of a significant relationship between the two variables is rejected and the hypothesis on the presence of a significant relationship between the two variables is accepted.

Testing sub-hypothesis 2

The sub-hypothesis 2 examines the relationship between the dimension of growth of individuals and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. This hypothesis is presented as a statistical hypothesis, H1, indicating a claim or assumption that means that there is a significant relationship between the two variables and H0 represents a contradiction of the claim H0: there is no significant relationship between the growth of individuals and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization.

$H_0 : \rho = 0$ H1: there is a significant relationship between the growth of individuals and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization.

$H_1 : \rho \neq 0$ Therefore, if it is assumed that: Y is the organizational trust variable; X is the variable of

individuals' growth, and: ρ : the Spearman correlation coefficient between two variables in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization, this hypothesis is tested in the statistical population. Considering the rank nature of research variables, if the test significance level is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and H1 is accepted.

The Pearson correlation test indicates that the H1 is accepted. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between individuals' growth and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. That is, servant leadership is highly significant in creating and promoting organizational trust; Organizational trust is also improved by promoting individuals' growth. the value of the correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.149 and the probability value of its significance level is 0.045, which is less than 0.05. Thus, the null statistical hypothesis on the lack of a significant relationship between the two variables is rejected and the hypothesis on the presence of a significant relationship between the two variables is accepted.

Testing Sub-hypothesis 3

The sub-hypothesis 3 examines the relationship between communication and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. This hypothesis is presented as a statistical hypothesis, H1, indicating a claim or assumption that means that there is a significant relationship between the two variables and H0 represents a contradiction of the claim or null hypothesis meaning that there is no relationship between the two variables. H0: there is no significant relationship between communication and organizational trust in the North Khorasan

Social Security Organization. $H_0 : \rho = 0$ H1: there is a significant relationship between communication and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security

Organization. $H_1 : \rho \neq 0$ Therefore, if it is assumed that:

Y: organizational trust variable; X: communication, and: ρ : Spearman correlation coefficient between two variables in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization, this hypothesis is tested in the statistical population. Considering the rank nature of research variables, if the test significance level is above 0.05, the null hypothesis on the lack of a significant relationship between two variables is not rejected.

The Pearson correlation test shows that the H1 is not supported. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between communication and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. That is, the communication variable is not significantly effective in promoting organizational trust, and with promoting communication variable, organizational trust is not promoted. the value of the correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.124 and the probability value related to its significance level is 0.094, which is more than 0.05. Therefore, the null statistical hypothesis on the lack of a significant relationship between the two variables is not rejected.

Testing sub-hypothesis 4

The sub-hypothesis 4 investigates the relationship between the dimension of trust giving and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. This hypothesis is presented as a statistical hypothesis, H1, indicating a claim or assumption that means that there is a significant relationship between the two variables and H0 represents a contradiction of the claim or null hypothesis meaning that there is no relationship between the two variables. H0: there is no significant relationship between trust giving and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization

$H_0 : \rho = 0$. H1: there is a significant relationship between trust giving and organizational trust in the North Khorasan

Social Security Organization. $H_1 : \rho \neq 0$ Therefore, if it is assumed that: Y: organizational trust variable; X: variable of

trust giving, and: ρ : Spearman correlation coefficient between two variables in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization, this hypothesis is tested in the statistical population. Considering the rank nature of research variables, if the test significance level is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and H1 is accepted.

The Pearson correlation test shows that the H1 is accepted. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between trust giving and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. That is, servant leadership is very crucial in developing and promoting organizational trust and organizational trust is improved by promoting trust giving dimension. the value of the correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.241 and the probability value of its significance level is 0.001, which is less than 0.05. Thus, the null statistical hypothesis on the lack of a significant relationship between the two variables is rejected and the hypothesis on the presence of a significant relationship between the two variables is accepted.

Testing sub-hypothesis 5

The sub-hypothesis 5 examines the relationship between the delivery of leadership and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. This hypothesis is presented as a statistical hypothesis, H1, indicating a claim or assumption that means that there is a significant relationship between the two variables and H0 represents a contradiction of the claim or null hypothesis meaning that there is no relationship between the two variables. H0: there is no significant relationship between delivery of leadership and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security

Organization. $H_0 : \rho = 0$ H1: there is a significant relationship between delivery of leadership and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization.

$H_1 : \rho \neq 0$ Therefore, if it is assumed that: Y is the organizational trust variable; X is the variable of delivery of

leadership, and: ρ : the Spearman correlation coefficient between two variables in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization, this hypothesis is tested in the statistical population. Considering the rank nature of research variables, if the test significance level is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and H1 is accepted.

The Pearson correlation test shows that the H1 is accepted. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between the delivery of leadership and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. That is, delivery of leadership is very important in developing and promoting

organizational trust, and by promoting this dimension, organizational trust is also improved. the value of the correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.191 and the probability value of its significance level is 0.010, which is less than 0.05. Thus, the null statistical hypothesis on the lack of a significant relationship between the two variables is rejected and the hypothesis on the presence of a significant relationship between the two variables is accepted.

Testing sub-hypothesis 6

The sub-hypothesis 6 investigates the relationship between the partnership in leadership and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. This hypothesis is presented as a statistical hypothesis, H1, indicating a claim or assumption that means that there is a significant relationship between the two variables and H0 represents a contradiction of the claim or null hypothesis meaning that there is no relationship between the two variables. H0: there is no significant relationship between partnership in leadership and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security

Organization. $H_0 : \rho = 0$. H1: there is a significant relationship between partnership in leadership and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security

Organization. $H_1 : \rho \neq 0$ Therefore, if it is assumed that: Y is the organizational trust variable; X is the variable of

Table 2: Results of regression coefficients of the dependent variable of organizational trust and independent dimensions of servant leadership

Coefficients1					
	Non-standardized coefficient		Standardized beta	t	Sig.
	B coefficient	SD	Beta coefficient		
Constant coefficient in the model	3.182	.205		15.502	.000
The first dimension of independent variable: valuing individuals	.309	.082	.447	3.769	.000
The second dimension of independent variable: the individuals' growth	-.003	.097	-.004	-.030	.976
The third dimension of independent variable: communication	-.178	.102	-.261	-1.751	.082
The fourth dimension of independent variable: trust giving	.184	.105	.259	1.752	.082
The fifth dimension of the independent variable: delivery of leadership	.126	.098	.183	1.290	.199
The sixth dimension of independent variable: partnership in leadership	-.260	.096	-.388	-2.713	.007

The beta weights are presented in a column called beta to tell us about the units of change in the standard deviation of the dependent variable by changing one standard deviation in the independent variable, so it is well known that the dimension of valuing individuals has the greatest effect (0.447) on the

partnership in leadership, and: ρ : the Spearman correlation coefficient between two variables in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization, this hypothesis is tested in the statistical population. Considering the rank nature of research variables, if the test significance level is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and H1 is accepted.

The Pearson correlation test the H1 is not accepted. Therefore, there is not a significant relationship between the dimension of partnership in leadership and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. That is, this dimension is not effective in creating and promoting organizational trust, and without promoting it, organizational trust is not improved. the value of the correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.114 and the probability value of its significance level is 0.128, which is larger than 0.05. Therefore, the null statistical hypothesis on the lack of a significant relationship between the two variables is not rejected.

Results of regression coefficients of the dependent variable of organizational trust and independent dimensions of servant leadership

There is no significant relationship between the dimensions of servant leadership and organizational trust ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, the results of regression coefficients of the dependent variable of organizational trust and independent dimensions of servant leadership are presented for analysis in Table 2.

dependent variable of organizational trust. The coefficients of other independent variables and their effect on the model are also shown in the table above.

Conclusion

The results of the hypotheses are as follows: The major research hypothesis is as follows: there is a significant relationship between servant leadership and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. This hypothesis was supported using the Pearson correlation test. As observed the value of the correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.257 and the probability value related to its significance level is equal to 0.001, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null statistical hypothesis on the lack of a significant relationship between the two variables is rejected and the hypothesis of a significant relationship between the two variables is accepted. Consequently, there is a significant relationship between servant leadership and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. Sub-hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between the dimension of valuing individuals and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. The correlation coefficient between the two variables was 0.217 and the related probability of significance level was 0.003, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null statistical hypothesis on the lack of a significant relationship between the two variables is rejected and the hypothesis of a significant relationship between the two studied variables is accepted. Sub-hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between the dimension of individuals' growth and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. The value of the correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.149 and the probability value related to its significance level is 0.045, which is less than 0.05. Hence, the null statistical hypothesis on the lack of a significant relationship between the two variables is rejected and the hypothesis of a significant relationship between the two studied variables is supported. Sub-hypothesis 3: there is a significant relationship between communication and organizational trust in North Khorasan Social Security Organization. The value of the correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.124 and the probability value related to its significance level is 0.094, which is more than 0.05. Therefore, the statistical null hypothesis on the lack of a significant relationship between the two variables is not rejected. Sub-hypothesis 4: There is a significant relationship between the dimension of trust giving and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. The correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.241 and the probability value related to its significance level is equal to 0.001 which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null statistical hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the two studied variables is rejected and the hypothesis of a significant relationship between the two studied variables is accepted. Sub-hypothesis 5: There is a significant relationship between the delivery of leadership and organizational trust in the North Khorasan Social Security Organization. The value of

the correlation coefficient between the two variables is equal to 0.191 and the probability value related to its significance level is 0.010, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null statistical hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the two variables is rejected and the hypothesis of a significant relationship between the two studied variables is accepted. The value of the correlation coefficient between the two studied variables is 0.114 and the probability value related to its significance level is 0.128 which is more than 0.05. Therefore, the null statistical hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the two studied variables is not rejected. The beta weights are presented in a column called beta to tell us about the units of change in the standard deviation of the dependent variable by changing one standard deviation in the independent variable, so it is well known that the dimension of valuing individuals has the greatest effect (0.447) on the dependent variable of organizational trust. The coefficients of other independent variables and their effect on the model are also shown in the table above.

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