

Effect of Servant Leadership behavior on Work Design, Knowledge characteristics Analysis

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Abstract:

This study investigates the complexities effect of servant leadership and Work Design of Morgeson's. This study proposed hypotheses on each dimension of servant leadership behavior and each dimension of knowledge characteristics of work design.

This Study collected data from 537 employees from various businesses in Indonesia and Taiwan. The Structural Equation modeling was used to investigate the model of fit. The multiple regressions were also used to test the effect of each servant leadership dimension to the dimensions of knowledge characteristics. This study found that empowerment of servant leadership behavior has an effect to all dimensions of knowledge characteristics, significantly. The service behavior of leader has also significant effect on skill variety of work design.

Implication of the findings for organizations and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: *Work design, knowledge characteristics, servant leadership*

Introduction

Servant leadership that addressed to the leader's personal moral objects (Turner, 1997) was known able to involve interaction between the leaders and their subordinates more intensively. Servant behavior was also may have greater impact by affecting the values, attitudes and behaviors of subordinates (Meglino et al., 1991). Based on the previous study (Li, 2006), servant behavior have some characteristics such as listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others, and building community. These behaviors were able to serve their followers best and encourage others not only to engage in independent moral reasoning such as perform the job well, but also to follow it up with constructive participation in organizational governance (Graham, 1995). Previous study found that servant leadership related to behavioral and attitudinal outcomes (Li, 2006) such as Job satisfaction (Ikkel, 2005) and motivation (Graham, 1995). Study has also found that the services of leader were able to both supported and withdraw employee desires and close to performance effort.

Nowadays, work design that become something of a fad among leaders and organizational consultants (Hackman, 1975), was adequate to increase the spawn use of assembly-line systems that maximized employee efficiency and minimized the employee skills needed. One of the critical work designs was knowledge characteristics (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). The service intention of leader to employee might become social interaction between leader and employee. The leader behavior might support employee on work and increase the perception of knowledge characteristic requirement on the job design. The adequacy OF knowledge characteristics as the part of requirement on work (Morgeson

et al, 2006) was suspected related each other to maximize employee work performance (Morgeson et al, 2003; Humphrey et al, 2007).

This research suggested that knowledge characteristics might have some possible explanations for different finding of the servant leadership's behavior intention. Leader might have effects the subordinate perception on knowledge requirement on the job, significantly. The findings were expected able to explain on employee's perception of knowledge characteristics adequacy on work by intention of leader's service on subordinates.

Conceptual background and hypotheses

Servant Leadership

In the beginning of studies found that leadership behavior has relationship on employees' motivation, commitment, empowerment, improve communications on group, enhance employee's participation and involvement, and improve employee's satisfaction and performance (Heller and Yukl, 1969, Atwater, 2009, Gooty et al 2009). Leadership behavior such as concept of servant-leadership that addressed to the leader's personal moral objects (Turner, 1997) began with the natural feeling that one wants to serve and to serve first. It was identified by ten characteristics such as listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others, and building community. Servant leaders serve their followers best and encourage others not only to engage in independent moral reasoning such as perform the job well, but also to follow it up with constructive participation in organizational governance (Graham, 1995). Servant leadership were characterized by empowering behavior, vision, and service intention (Li, 2006)

Previous study found that servant leadership related to both behavioral and attitudinal outcomes such as Job satisfaction (Ikel, 2005) and motivation (Graham, 1995). These leader behaviors are able to involve interaction between the leader and his or her subordinates more intensive and may have greater impact by affecting the values, attitudes, and behaviors of subordinates (Meglino et al., 1991). Services of leader will also have different outcomes (Li, 2006) such as able to both supported and withdraw employee desires and close to performance effort. In sum, the behaviors of servant leadership will meaningful on the subordinate perception to gain their success. Previous studies of servant leadership were still limited on the investigation of behavioral impact on personal subordinate, such as performance, commitment, motivation (Atwater, 2009, Gooty et al 2009). For further success in the future, organization has to expand their behavioral change and development broader from the individual level, such as group and the organizational on whole. This study that was aimed to expand the broader organizational system, will interact the concept of servant leadership with the most suspected psychological effect on the organizational level i.e., work design of Morgeson (2006).

Knowledge Characteristic of Work Design

Knowledge characteristics on the job design covered job complexity, information processing, problem solving, skill variety and specialization (Campion & McClelland, 1993). They reflected the kinds of knowledge, skill, and ability demands that are placed on an individual as a function of what is done on the job (Morgeson, 2006). In common, the study of work design was aimed to maximize the effect of performance on work. Previous finding of this characteristic has found significant effect on performance such as performing complex and difficult job, performing

variety of work and multiple tasks, and performing specialized tasks (Hackman et al, 1980). Knowledge characteristic of Work Design Questionnaires (WDQ) was suggested supported and contributed more on performance. Contrary to the Oldham study (1996) and Humphrey study (2007) on the relationship of Knowledge characteristics and performance, the study of Morgeson (2006) sought that effect of knowledge characteristics on high performance was influence by the coverage of knowledge characteristics dimensions it self. Furthermore, Humphrey (2007) argued that knowledge characteristic has average highest contribution on performance among other WDQ characteristics.

Knowledge characteristics of work design were adequate to increase the spawn use of assembly-line systems that maximized employee efficiency and minimized the employee skills needed (Morgeson et al, 2006). It was become critical, on the way the organization creates the work environment gaining their best work performance. The most important effect was come from the leader behavior to direct the work process become more productive. Leader behavior and intention to their work climate, may effect on maximized the adequacy of employee efficiency and skills needed. Their supports may behave on helping, listening, empathy, healing, aware to the situation, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others, and building community. Within the servant leadership characteristics such as empowering behavior, vision, and service intention (Li, 2006), the support of leader to their subordinate become more effective.

Point to the explanations, different intention of the servant leadership's behavior, might influence their subordinate perception on adequacy of knowledge requirement on the job, significantly. Thus, this study predicted servant leadership would effect the employee perception

of adequate of knowledge characteristics of their work design requirements:

Hypotheses 1: Empowering behavior would positively effected on each of knowledge characteristics (a. job complexity, b. Information processing, c. Problem solving, d. skill variety and e. Specialization)

Hypotheses 2: Leader vision would positively effected on each of knowledge characteristics (a. job complexity, b. Information processing, c. Problem solving, d. skill variety and e. Specialization)

Hypotheses 3: Leader intention to serve would positively effected on each of knowledge characteristics (a. job complexity, b. Information processing, c. Problem solving, d. skill variety and e. Specialization)

Method

Participants

Participants were 643 employees from various businesses in Indonesia and Taiwan. Participants were approximately 33.45 years old, 174 (32.5%) participants were male, and 408 (76%) were married. Participants of this study also distinguished from their level of study. They were 118 (59.2%) were graduate from senior high school and below, 63 (11.8%) were graduate from university.

Measurement

To test the hypotheses, this study firstly tested the model. The model was included 3 independent variables of servant leadership's dimension and multiple dependent variable of knowledge characteristics. This study used

Amos to test the overall model of fit. The multiple regressions were used to test the effect of each dimension of servant leadership on knowledge characteristics.

Measure Development Strategy

Items were written by the authors or obtained from previous research. After review of wording, content, and so forth, 43 item sets for total items were retained for inclusion in the instrument. Responses were made on a 5-point Likert-type scale with scale anchors ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Knowledge characteristics were measured using 20 items taken from Morgeson & Humphrey's (2006) WDQ. Participants were asked i.e., "The job requires a variety of skills". The knowledge characteristics 5 dimensions included Job Complexity (M=3.11, SD=0.72, Cronbach's $\alpha = .566$), information process (M=4.07, SD=0.63, Cronbach's $\alpha = .741$), skill variety (M=3.94, SD=0.74, Cronbach's $\alpha = .856$), problem solving (M=3.90, SD=0.60, Cronbach's $\alpha = .589$) and specialization (M=3.99, SD=0.56, Cronbach's $\alpha = .733$).

Servant Leadership was measured using 23 items taken from Page and Wong (2003). Participants were asked regarding to their direct supervisor, i.e., "seeking to serve rather than be served". A Five-point likert-type scale was used, and the individual items were averaged (Cronbach's $\alpha = .946$; M=3.76, SD=0.56).

Result

Model of fit

Evaluate the adequacy of the model of fit, the index of fit show *Goodness of fit* with *Model of fit* use to evaluate the adequacy of the model of fit, GFI=.991, AGFI=.923, RMR=.011, CFI = .990, NFI=.988, and RMSEA = .083.

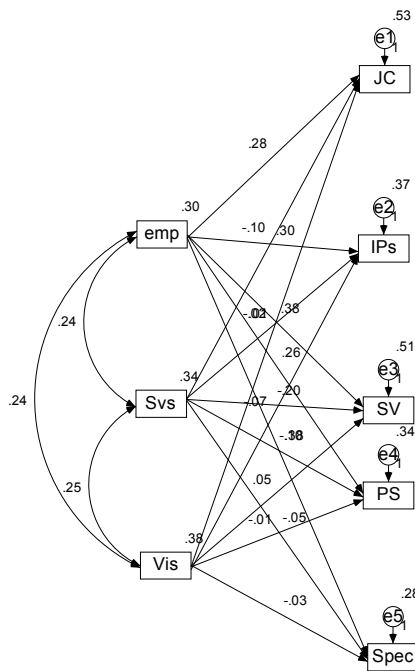


Figure 1 Model Goodness of fit

Emp (Empowerment), Svs (Service), Vis (Vision), JC (Job Complexity), IPs (Information processing), SV (Skill Variety), PS (Problem Solving), and Spec (Specialization)

Hypothesis testing

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviation, correlations, and Cronbach’s α . Table-1 informed servant behavior of leader correlated positively to all of knowledge dimensions except leader’s service behavior on job complexity and problem solving characteristic.

Table 1
Mean, Standard Deviation, Correlation matrix between variables

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
|-------------------------------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| 1. gender | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. education | .015 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Married | -.015 | -.497** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Leader | .066 | -.084 | .066 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Job Complexity | -.078 | -.024 | .007 | .006 | .566 | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. Information processing | .085* | .232** | -.077 | -.129* | -.100* | .741 | | | | | | | | |
| 7. Skill Variety | .099* | .001 | .014 | .015 | -.012 | .452** | .856 | | | | | | | |
| 8. Problem Solving | .097* | .105* | -.003 | -.146* | .063 | .469** | .463** | .589 | | | | | | |
| 9. Specialization | .148** | .143** | -.049 | -.079 | .043 | .498** | .472** | .372** | .733 | | | | | |
| 10. Empowerment | .042 | -.021 | .072 | .004 | .155** | .208** | .198** | .159** | .312** | .881 | | | | |
| 11. Service | .030 | -.023 | .114** | .018 | .082 | .138** | .087* | .073 | .206** | .748** | .852 | | | |
| 12. Vision | .086* | -.229** | .220** | .085 | .099* | .112** | .134** | .088* | .196** | .706** | .700** | .737 | | |
| 13. Servant Leadership | .062 | -.113* | .151** | .045 | .131** | .174** | .166** | .126** | .272** | .925** | .869** | .900** | .946 | |
| 14. Knowledge Characteristics | .101* | .142** | -.029 | -.105 | .354** | .696** | .749** | .716** | .710** | .319** | .179** | .195** | .268** | .629 |

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Bold diagonal values are Cronbach's α ,

Hypotheses-1 sough that empowering behavior of leader would positively effected on each of knowledge characteristics (a. job complexity, b. Information processing, c. Problem solving, d. skill variety and e. Specialization). Hypotheses-2 sough that Leader vision would positively effected on each of knowledge characteristics and hypotheses 3 sough that Leader intention to serve would positively effected on each of knowledge characteristics. To test the hypothesis, table 2 shows that leader empowering behavior was effected to all of knowledge dimensions ($\beta_1=.210^{**}$, $\beta_2=.266^{**}$, $\beta_3=.244^{**}$, $\beta_4=.234^{**}$ and, $\beta_5=.370^{**}$), thus hypothesis-1 was supported. The leader vision was effected to job complexity and skill variety ($\beta_1=.079^*$ $\beta_2= -.016$, $\beta_3=-.099$, $\beta_4=-.155^*$ and $\beta_5=-.049$), thus hypothesis-2 was partially supported. The leader service behavior was not effect to all of knowledge dimensions, thus hypothesis-3 was not supported.

Table 2
Effect of servant leadership on knowledge characteristic

| | Knowledge characteristics | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Job Complexity β_1 | Information Processing β_2 | Problem Solving β_3 | Skill Variety β_4 | Specialization β_5 |
| Empowering | .210** | .266** | .244** | .234** | .370** |
| Vision | -.079* | -.016 | -.099 | -.155* | -.049 |
| Service | .006 | -.065 | -.015 | -.043 | -.056 |
| R ² | .027 | .046 | .030 | .048 | .099 |
| F | 4.869** | 8.549** | 5.557** | 9.054** | 19.570** |

* significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Conclusion

Discussion

This study predicted servant leadership effect to the employee perception of adequate on knowledge characteristics of work design requirements. All dimension of servant leadership was used to predict

adequacy for all of the subordinate knowledge characteristics, i.e. empowering behavior, vision, and service intention.

Empowering behavior of servant Leadership found effect to all knowledge characteristics. This finding indicates the intension of empowering process to employee would support the adequacy of the requirement on job complexity, information processing, problem solving, skill variety, and specialization on the job ($p < .01$). The leader vision was also needed to employee on adequacy perception of some job requirements, i.e. job complexity, and skill variety ($p < .05$). However, the leader services have no sufficient support on knowledge characteristics, significantly ($p > .05$).

Managerial Implication

The findings imply leaders to have more concern on support their subordinate to feel sufficient on the job requirement. Knowledge requirement design might imply to the recruitment process, selection and adaptation process of HRM. This process of HRM function would a crucial moment before new staff has been placed. In case, the participant of this study was exit of the pre placement employee. Thus, the result might more imply for manager to manage their performance, and career opportunities. The success of these processes stage will influence by how the leader intent to empower their subordinates, than served their work in practice as well. This moment will direct the leader to how their behavior will be developed to support the empowering process. Leader should also increase the interaction between leader and employee more customized.

Leader may empower their subordinate by giving a discretion (or latitude) over certain task related activities (Bowen and Lawler, 1992; Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Schessinger and Heskett, 1991). Randolph

(1995) defines employee empowerment as “a transfer of power” from the employer to the employees. Blanchard et al. (1996) for instance argued that that empowerment is not only having the freedom to act, but also having higher degree of responsibility and accountability.

Some experience of success empowerment, Malone (1997) asserts that, managers should act as coaches and help employees to solve problems in organization. Managers empower their subordinates by delegating responsibilities and assisting them when they have problems. This make subordinates to be more satisfied with their managers in return they will perform to the manager’s expectations. Employees need to be assisted in the process of empowerment. Managers frequently use coaching as one of the strategies in making empowerment successful in organization. Participative management allows employees’ to participate in decision-making process (Mallak and Kurstedt 1996). This process intrinsically motivated behavior, management releases some of their authority and responsibility to lower levels of the organization that deal directly with the product or service.

Application of good leadership in organization is in a position to tap into expressed thoughts of others, give verbal expression to their feelings, able to delegate and empower employees. Good leadership inspires the subordinates, using vision, leader also empowers employees through training and development. Hamish (2004) “leadership is not only having innovative ideas”, but it is also getting people to follow, not just in dragooned single file, but with pride, aflutter in their hearts and expectations. Therefore, support of servant behaviors of empowerment would meaningful for increase both perception and real adequacy of knowledge requirement of the subordinate jobs.

Limitation and Future Research Direction

Notwithstanding these contributions, this study also has several limitations. Although this allows us to rule out leadership-related explanations for the observed findings (knowledge characteristics), it is an open question as to whether these results will generalize to other, work design characteristics (i.e. task, social and ergonomics of job characteristics). The finding or non-significant of support of vision on few of knowledge characteristics, and leader's service for all knowledge characteristics, might explain in other characteristics. Leader's service behaviors that tend for helping on the technical job might support on the task or ergonomics characteristics of work design. It might because both service and task was on the same level of practical work. Finally, although these results support our hypotheses partially, additional research should be conducted to measure other concept of leadership such as transformational leadership, charismatic leadership and so on. Investigate the others work design characteristics related to each dimension of servant leadership. Also explore the mediation variables on these relationships and observe different moderators to investigate strengthen of their relationships.

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