



Ciência e Natura

ISSN: 0100-8307

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Universidade Federal de Santa Maria
Brasil

Alinezhad, Mohsen; Abbasian, Hosein; Reza Behrangi, Mohammad
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Ciência e Natura, vol. 37, núm. 6-1, 2015, pp. 407-416
Universidade Federal de Santa Maria
Santa Maria, Brasil

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Investigating the Effects of Authentic Leadership of Managers on Organizational Commitment of Teachers with Organizational Justice as the Mediator Variable

Mohsen Alinezhad¹, Hosein Abbasian², Mohammad Reza Behrang³

¹ M.A. student of educational management at the faculty of management, Kharazmi University, Tehran

² Assistant professor of educational management at the faculty of management, Kharazmi University, Tehran

³ Associated professor of educational management at the faculty of management, Kharazmi University, Tehran

Abstract

The present study was conducted by the aim of investigating the fit of the presented model for the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment of staff with a mediating role of organizational justice. The population of the research included all the teachers in high schools (for male students) in Education district 2 in Qom city. From the population, 300 individuals were selected through cluster sampling. For gathering the data, authentic leadership questionnaire (Avolio et al., 2007), organizational justice questionnaire of Niehoff & Moorman (1993), and Allen & Meyer's Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (2002) were used. For analyzing the data, structural equation modeling – fit indices and path coefficients – was used. The results of the analysis showed that authentic leadership has a direct and significant effect on the organizational commitment of teachers. Also, authentic leadership has an indirect effect, through organizational justice, on organizational commitment. The other finding of the research is that organizational justice has a direct and significant effect on organizational commitment of teachers, and the offered conceptual model has a significant statistical fit, that means the explanatory model for organizational commitment based on authentic leadership and organizational justice has fitness with empirical data. Finally, based on the information obtained from structural equations model, it can also be said that all the components existing in the 3 variables of the research have positive and significant relationships with one another.

Keywords: Authentic Leadership, Organizational Commitment, Organizational Justice, structural equations model

1. Introduction

Human Resources are considered as one of the most valuable organizational assets, the most important competitive advantage, and also the rarest source in the knowledge-based economy (Belcourt et al., 2008). Commitment of the people to organization leads to such important results as reduced mobility, increased motivation and organizational citizenship behavior, as well as social support; so organizations are looking for committed work force (Kwon and Banks, 2004).

Allen and Meyer published more than 15 research on organizational commitment since 1984 have contributed much in the field. They assume organizational commitment as an attitude and a mental state which expresses a willingness, a need, and a requirement for continued employment in an organization. Willingness is a real wanting to continue working in the organization; need implies that people have to serve in the organization due to their investments there; and requirement implies a responsibility to organization to stay therein (in Klein et al., 2012)

Allen and Meyer developed a tri-dimensional model based on the observed similarities and differences in the definitions of organizational commitment (Meyer and Hersekovic, 2001). The three dimensions of organizational commitment are as follows:

1. Emotional commitment, an emotional dependence and a sense of identity and involvement of employees in the organization;
2. Continued commitment, including a person's willingness to stay in organization, reflecting the costs of leaving it against the benefits of staying with it.
3. Normative commitment, including the obligation to remain in the organization. This makes the employees remain in the organization after commitment and have a sense of loyalty or duty, and also feel that they are doing right (Allen and Meyer, 1991).

Klein et al. have defined commitment as a psychological bond that is based on one's goals. They considered commitment as a process and developed a model for it. Their process model shows four primary mode immediately determining commitment and a separate set of adjustments based on their levels contributing the increased commitment. The two immediate consequences of commitment (ie, motivation and persistence) contributing functionally in the final result are also shown (Klein and Park, 2015).

Many theories regarding leadership have been proposed by different schools (Ghasemi, 1388; Atkinson and Pilgrin, 2011; Tilster, 2010), yet despite the interest in effective leadership, no favorite leadership style has been used. Thus, the researchers have paid attention to correct behaviors which can develop effective leaders (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). This gradually led to a new theory of authentic leadership by Avolio and Gardner. According to Avolio (2004), authentic leadership is the original root and framework of different forms of leadership. In fact, authentic leadership is composed of a charismatic leadership, transformational leadership, knowledgeable leadership, moral leadership, interactive leadership, direct leadership, and participating leadership and involves a high degree of ethics, respect, and positive tendencies of the leader. An authentic leader is defined as a person who is trustworthy, hopeful, optimist and the cognitively flexible.

The concept of authentic leadership originates from socio-psychological research in the field of authenticity. From the ontological perspective, the authenticity reflects one's functions and actual core of their daily activities (Goldman and Kurnis, 2002). The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines authenticity as follows:

1. worthy of acceptance or belief as conforming to or based on fact
2. conforming to an original so as to reproduce essential features
3. made or done the same way as an original

4. not false or imitation
5. true to one's own personality, spirit, or character (in Stewart, 2012)

Walumbwa et al. (2008) identified four elements to develop and validation of the authentic leadership:

1. **Self-awareness** refers to demonstrating an understanding of how one derives and makes meaning of the world.
2. **Balanced processing** refers to leaders who show that they objectively analyze all relevant data before coming to a decision.
3. **Relational transparency** refers to presenting one's authentic self (as opposed to a fake or distorted self) to others.
4. **internalized moral perspective** refers to an internalized and integrated form of self-regulation which is guided by internal moral standards and values

In addition to leadership, organizational commitment has been shown by studies to be affected by the variable organizational justice (Crow et al., 2011). Research has been carried out on the psychological mechanisms of organizational justice in relation to the people's judgment about fairness, and their perceptions of the concepts. When employees feel they are treated justly, they tend to show a high job performance, better work attitude, and lower levels of stress (Cropanzana and Molina, 2015).

Many people believe that organizational justice must be created by the organization's managers and authorities. This means to improve integrity, honesty, loyalty, and trust (interactional justice) in the organization through proper distribution of resources,

opportunities and rewards to employees (distributive justice) using procedures, guidelines, tools and appropriate ways of allocating these resources (procedural justice) to establish appropriate relations between individuals and employees and improve the perceived fairness of the staff in order to improve performance, effectiveness and efficiency of the organization as a whole (Philip et al., 2012).

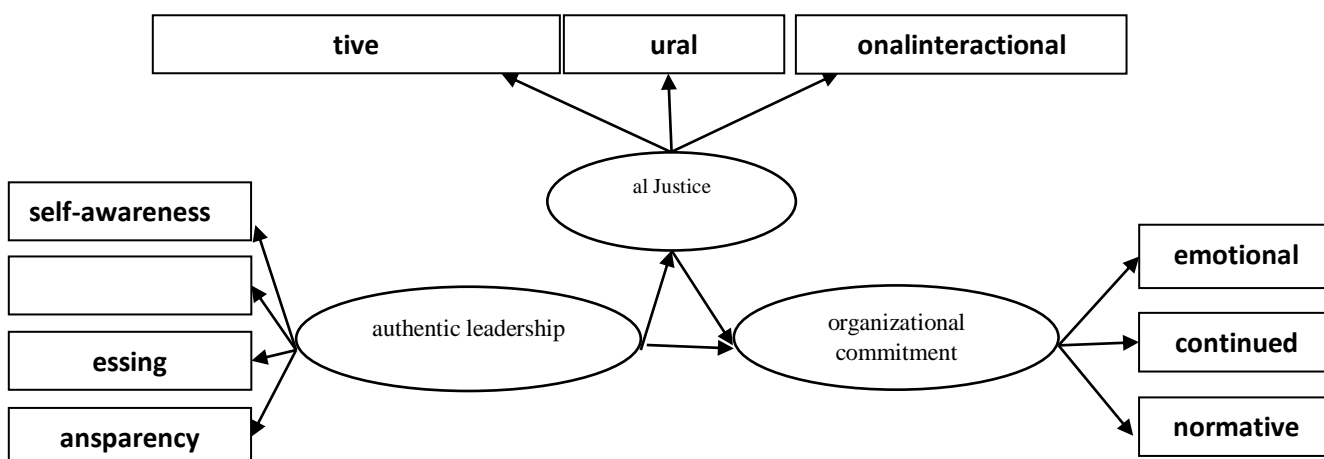
Organizational Justice through the three dimensions is as follows:

Distributive justice: this dimension of justice refers to fairness of outcomes and results that employees receive such as cash payment or rewards and promotions in organization (Gelens et al., 2013).

Procedural justice: this dimension of justice originates from perceived fairness out of organizational policies and procedures and determines the allocation of resources and other management decisions (Elamin and Alomaim, 2011).

Interactional justice: this kind of justice is associated with cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses related to the management or the supervisor (Charash and Spector, 2001). In short, interactional justice refers to the perception of fairness in the interpersonal behaviors (Karriker & Williams, 2009).

Given the above facts and the correlation between variables (authentic leadership, organizational commitment, and organizational justice), the present study seeks to answer the question "does the authentic leadership with the mediator variable affect the organizational commitment?" and whether the conceptual model presented in the study is significant.



2. Methodology

The present study is a description of correlation of causative pattern-finding type. The population consists of all male high school teachers in 2nd area of education in the city of Qom. The number includes 686 persons. The population of above 400 were selected by cluster sampling. Firstly, among all high schools in the city of Qom, the 2nd area and then 14 high schools were selected randomly and all their teachers were evaluated. Finally, after collecting the questionnaires distributed among teachers and ignoring incomplete questionnaires, 300 were entered into the final analysis. To gather information and assess the authentic leadership, the questionnaire Avolio et al. (2007) was used, which includes four functional dimensions, namely self-awareness, balanced processing, moral aspect and relational transparency. To measure organizational commitment, the questionnaire of organizational commitment by Allen & Meyer (2002) with 18 items was used. The questionnaire is a revised form of the 24-item questionnaire for organizational commitment by Allen & Meyer (1991). The credit of report by Meyer and Allen for each of the components of organizational commitment is 0.87, 0.75, and 0.79 for emotional commitment, continued commitment, and normative commitment, respectively. In order to measure

the third variable, the organizational justice questionnaire by Nihoff and Moorman (1993) - which consists of three parts, each one measuring distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice- was used. The validity of organizational justice questionnaire was reported by Shokrkon and No'ami to be 0.80. They also reported its reliability, using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to be 0.73. Validity of the tool has been approved by all research professionals and experts. Finally, to analyze the data obtained in this study, the softwares SPSS and AMOS have been used, and data applied in two descriptive levels with diagrams, frequency distribution tables, percentages related to demographic characteristics, and descriptive statistics to investigate variables of the sample. In the inferential level, in accordance with the measured data and statistical assumptions, fitting parameters and course coefficients were used to test the hypotheses.

3. Findings

The demographic characteristics of the type of employment were as follows:

Official: 86.7%, contractor: 10.8%, and temporal: 3.3%. Among them, 3.4% were between 20 to 30 years, 33% between 31 to 40 years, 46.3% between 41 to 50 years, and 16.3% were over 50 years. 3% were high school diploma, 5.7% were

undergraduates, 61.7% had B.A, and 29.7% had M.A.

Table 1.

Statistical Index Scale	No	Mean	SD
Self-awareness	300	13.46	3.55
Balanced processing	300	10.19	2.77
Internalized moral perspective	300	12.99	3.85
Relational transparency	300	15.65	4.51
Distributive justice	300	12.08	3.85
Procedural justice	300	14.84	7.01
Interactional justice	300	22.08	8.03
Emotional commitment	300	17.73	2.91
continued commitment	300	15.27	3.13
normative commitment	300	17.76	4.07

As the results table shows, among the dimensions of authentic leadership the highest one is of relational transparency. In the organizational justice, interactional justice is the greatest. In organizational commitment, the normative commitment is highest. To verify whether the explanatory model for

organizational commitment based on the authentic leadership and organizational justice fits with the experimental data, the software Amos and course analysis were applied. Authentic leadership affects significantly teacher's organizational commitment.

Table 2. Coefficients and significance of direct effects of authentic leadership on organizational commitment

Criterion variable	Predictor variable	Effect type	Non-Standardized coefficient	Standardized β	Significance statistics	sig
Organizational commitment	Authentic leadership	Direct	0.28	0.49	4.25	0.001

As the results table shows, authentic leadership has a significant positive correlation with organizational commitment. Authentic leadership and a direct correlation with organizational commitment of the teachers is $t=4/25$ and $\beta=0.49$. So the direct effect of authentic

leadership on organizational commitment was confirmed with 95% confidence.

Authentic leadership has a significant effect on organizational commitment indirectly through organizational justice.

Table 3. Coefficients and significance of direct effects of organizational justice on organizational commitment

Criterion variable	Predictor variable	Effect type	Non-Standardized coefficient	Standardized β	Significance statistics	sig
Organizational commitment	Religious orientation	Indirect (mediator organizational justice)	0.12	0.35	2.11	0.03

What can be drawn from the above results is that authentic leadership has a significant impact on organizational commitment indirectly through organizational justice. The indirect relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment of teachers is as

follows: $t = 2.11$ and $\beta = 0.35$. The indirect effect of authentic leadership on organizational commitment is confirmed with 95% confidence. Organizational justice has a significant impact on organizational commitment of teachers

Table 4. Coefficients and significance of direct effects of organizational justice on organizational commitment

Criterion variable	Predictor variable	Effect type	Non-Standardized coefficient	Standardized β	Significance statistics	sig
Organizational commitment	Organizational justice	Direct	0.42	0.74	3.32	0.001

What can be drawn from the above results is that organizational justice has a significant correlation with organizational commitment of teachers. The direct relationship between organizational justice and organizational

commitment of teachers is as follows: $t = 3.32$ and $\beta = 0.74$. Thus the direct effect of organizational justice on organizational commitment is confirmed with 95% confidence.

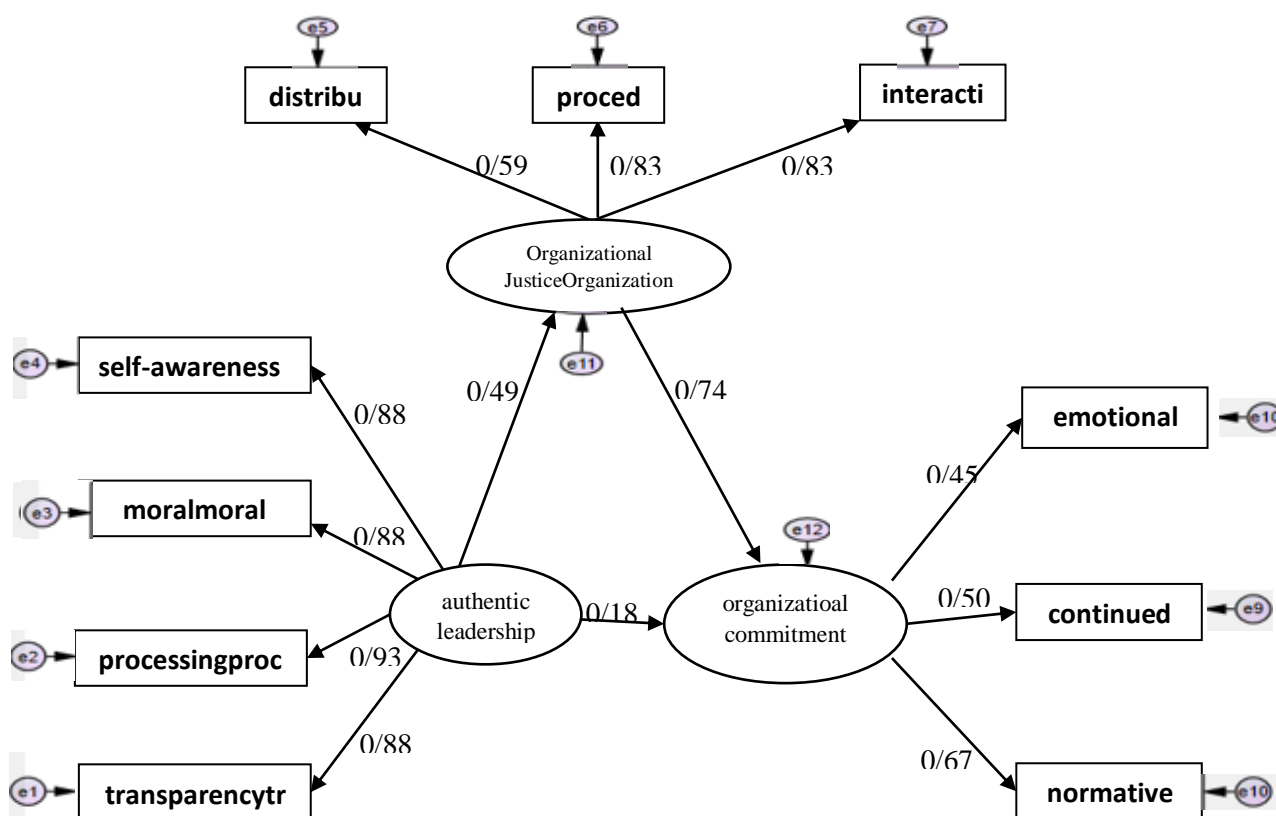


Diagram 1. Research model in standardized coefficients mode

Table 5. Fit indices for research model course analysis

Index	Fit index	
	value	acceptable
$\frac{\chi^2}{df}$	2.21	Less than 3
RMSEA	0.09	Less than 0.1
CFI	0.94	More than 0.09
NFI	0.91	More than 0.9
GFI	0.93	More than 0.9
AGFI	0.89	More than 0.9

In general, in Amos program, each of the obtained indices does not represent by itself the fitness or lack of fitness of the model and these indices should be interpreted together. Values obtained for these indices show that the model enjoys an appropriate status for explanation and fitness.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Assuming that authentic leadership is considered as a metaphor for professional and ethical effectiveness and an effective and informed way for educational management (Begley, 2001) with an effect on organizational commitment (Leroy, Palinsky and Simon, 2011), the findings of present study also show that authentic leadership has significant effects on organizational commitment and is consistent with the results of Chen (2010), Emuwa (2015) and Leroy et al. (2012).

Regarding the other research hypothesis that is organizational justice has a significant direct effect on organizational commitment of teachers, studies have shown that organizational commitment and is affected by the variable organizational justice (Crow et al., 2011). The relationship between organizational justice and commitment of people in the organization shows that any increase in organizational benefits will increase their commitment to integration of tasks and goals of the organization (Owliyaee, 1393). According to the results of Crow et al. (2011), Abdullahi et al

(1393), and Doosti et al (1392), these findings are also confirmed.

As previously mentioned, many believe that organizational justice should be organized by the managers and authorities of the organization (Philip et al., 2012). As authentic leaders have value-moral insights and are aware of the knowledge and abilities of others as well as the context of the organization (Gardner et al., 2011), it can contribute to the perception of organizational justice. Given the literature including Krish (2012) that represents a direct effect of authentic leadership on the employee's perceptions of justice, the hypothesis that authentic leadership has an indirect effect on organizational commitment of teachers through organizational justice is confirmed.

In general, a review of research literature confirms that the conceptual model has a significant fitness. This means that the model for explaining organizational commitment based on authentic leadership and organizational justice has fitness with the experimental data.

Given the results obtained as well as the correlation between these variables, it is recommended that school administrators should emphasize on all four dimensions the commitment of the staff to be increased. (self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, and internalized moral perspective) in order for the staff to have increased organizational commitment. It is to say that

- words and actions of the managers must be consistent;
- teachers should be encouraged to take decisions based on right and moral values;
- teachers should be encouraged to challenge the existing decisions, even if contrary to their beliefs; and
- interaction with members of the organization and relations should be clear.

By doing so, the school staff will be more committed.

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