



Relationship between Servant Leadership and Empowerment in Successful and Unsuccessful National Sport Teams of Islamic Republic of Iran

Mohammad Heidari^{*1}, Shahriyar Ghasemi², Rasoul Heidari³

¹MA Student of Allameh Tabatabai University, Iran

²MA Student of Azad University of Babolsar, Oloom Tahghighat branch, Iran

³MA Student of Allameh Tabatabai University, Iran

Received: 28 March 2019

Accepted: 04 May 2019

Published: 01 June 2019

Abstract

Servant leadership means providing background in which followers can be ready for guidance and effectiveness. In addition to strong literature on servant leadership, this research seeks to analyze the relationship between servant leadership and empowerment in coaches of successful and unsuccessful national sport teams of Islamic Republic of Iran. This research is practical and method of statistical analysis is correlational. The population of this study was 80 persons of the coaches and leaders of successful and unsuccessful national teams of Iran. The statistical population of 66 persons was selected as the sample via random simple sampling with Morgan table. The tool of collecting data in this research was a questionnaire made by the researcher. The content validity of questionnaires of servant leadership and empowerment were confirmed by several professors of sport management of Iran's universities. The reliability of the tool of this research was reported well by collecting data from 15 people and then analyzing it by SPSS16 software. Test results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Data showed that the distribution is not normal, so we used nonparametric tests to analyze the data. The results showed that there is positive and significant relationship between servant leadership and empowerment. From other results of research we can say that the perception of successful and unsuccessful team's coaches from servant leadership is significantly different. The servant leadership and empowerment components of successful and unsuccessful team's coaches also did not have the same rank. These results mean that successful coaches might use servant leadership as an effective strategy for influencing followers (or athletes) and maybe servant leadership was a factor in their success. On the other hand, with reference to the relationship between servant leadership and empowerment components we can say that leaders can increase capabilities of their followers by applying servant leadership. This result is particularly more noticeable in unsuccessful coaches. Literature review reveals the need for further research on the area of sport and sport management.

Keywords: Servant Leadership; Empowerment; Successful Coaches; Unsuccessful Coaches

How to cite the article:

M. Heidari, Sh. Ghasemi, R. Heidari, *Relationship between Servant Leadership and Empowerment in Successful and Unsuccessful National Sport Teams of Islamic Republic of Iran*, *J. Hum. Ins.* 2019; 3(2): 75-80, DOI: 10.22034/jhi.2019.80900.

Introduction

Most theorists of management and organization know the twenty-first century as the century of leadership for organization. Because of the role that leadership plays in the individual and group

effectiveness, it is a well-known topic in organizational behavior. Researchers in organizational behavior have proven that leaders can be a distinguishing factor in the organization. One of the leadership styles which has been regarded among scientists in the field of

*Corresponding Author E-mail: master.m.2010@yahoo.com

management in recent years is the servant leadership (Bryant, 2003). Traditional approaches to leadership make some barriers in training successful athletes by coaches and leaders in high-level teams, while in new approaches to leadership, especially servant leadership, empowerment of staff is the pivotal factor. Theory of servant leadership as an effective moral style in leadership and management is very important among the theories of leadership that it can be considered as one of the ideal styles. This ideal was first introduced by Greenleaf in considering human factors. In the theories of traditional leadership, individuals are considered as servant of leaders and while in the inverted pyramid model, leaders are called to serve their followers.

Hence, such organizations need leaders at lower levels of the organizational pyramid and lower levels of the organization and serve people, so the inverted pyramid model can be considered as the essence of servant leadership. Servant leadership can be considered as an approach with a long history that gradually revived and finally proposed as an ideal and evolutionary approach toward response to the growing needs of human resource development in the changing environment of business (Spears, 1996).

Servant leadership

Greenleaf describes the leadership crisis as faculties of management have failed in fulfilling their responsibilities in preparing people for leadership roles in society. Chronic crisis of governance, inclusive unworthiness of organizations in overcoming their favor expectations are considered as a global factor now. Therefore the topic of servant leadership is considered as an important factor for all organizations. Nair (1994) believes that we should consider service as the axis, however, power has always been attend leadership, but the only legitimate use of power is to serve. The servant leadership is an approach in leadership that leader is a servant first and then a leader. Spears (1996) defines servant leadership: A developmental approach to life and work. Essence of servant leadership is a style which has the potential to create positive change in the society (stramba, 2002). Servant leadership begins with a natural individual feeling; Means a person who has the innate desire to serve. This conscious choice motivates a person to lead others. When development service is proposed to the people, they become healthier, wiser, freer and more independent by receiving service and even they like to serve, and accordingly outstanding and noble results arise in society and the community benefit (Winston, 2003).

According Greenleaf, leaders should have responsibility feeling to serve others (Greenleaf, 1996). According Nair, power has always been associated with leadership, but merely a legitimate use of power is correct: the service. Therefore we should set service in the center and core of leadership (Nair, 1994). Adamson introduces servant leadership focuses on people (Adamson, 2009). In the inverted pyramid model, leaders serve their followers; therefore such organizations need leaders in low levels of organizational pyramid and serve their followers (Spears, 1996). According to Chrome effective leaders are those who show their humility with respect to followers and recognition of their contribution in the team (Crome, 1998). In addition, Fredrickson believes that the real problem of managing public affairs is disconnection and dissociation between organizations and staff. So what should be considered is how these systems can be act organically for development of group through cooperation, service and harmony between people and system (Braynt, 2003). Ideal leaders are those who always tend to serve their followers and respect their dignity and accentuate grow and development of organization and maximize the potential of their staff (Graham, 1991). Bus knows the strength of servant leadership theory in that the development of research plays an important and vital role in the future of leadership in organizations and societies (Humphreys, 2005). Based on this approach, great leaders were great servants and it has been the key to their success. Drucker believes that the future organizations will accentuate equality, equity, justice and fairness. In the organizations that won't use the terms of leader and subordinate, employees and managers have identical values (Horsman, 2000).

Servant leadership focuses on development of potential capabilities of staff like effectiveness in work, stewardships, and social and civic behaviors, spontaneity and managerial capabilities for future. When managers develop self-respect, spontaneity and social importance in the organization, the staff are committed to organizational values in return seeking to maintain high performance levels in the organization and put their managers as a model for dealing with society (Liden et al, 2008). The principles of servant leadership in making effective follow cause effectiveness on follow variables including: self-esteem, commitment to follow the leader and the follower self-centeredness. Based on Patterson model, the service of leader affects moral kindness of follower and the follower commitment to the leader and self-centeredness (Winston, 2003). Structures of servant leadership of Peterson theory are as follow: the divine love , humility , altruism , trustworthiness , vision , service and empowerment (Patterson , 2003). Drory's study of

perception of staff from servant leadership with job satisfaction and organizational commitment (2004) showed that characteristics of servant leadership can be measured in an organization. It also showed that there is significant relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment. Irving (2006) in a study as the aspects of servant leadership in the armed forces expressed love is the base of servant leadership and relationship with followers that Patterson (2003) called it as the divine love, also Irving knew Trust, authority and service as the elements of model of servant leadership in the armed forces.

Empowerment

Empowerment is to give power to the people, and for servant leadership includes effective listening, making significance feeling in people, emphasizing teamwork and valorizing love and equality. Empowerment is considered as essential factor in organizational efficiency. Empowerment emphasizes on teamwork and reflects equity, likes and interests values. For empowering behavior, leadership should seek self- absorption and not guidance. The objective of empowerment is creation of successful leaders at various levels of the organization (Dennis and Bocarnea, 2005). Thomas & Velthouse (1990), in a study showed that empowered staffs have higher levels of concentration, innovation and flexibility that, in turn, increase the level of organizational commitment. In other words, employees who feel more significance in their job have higher levels of commitment to their organization and more energy to work (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Empowerment refers to creation of an internal sense in people who can make decisions independently in the process of their work (Robbins et al., 2002).

Considering the reducing factors of disability of employees in fulfilling job duties includes issues for improving their performance. Personal characteristics such as self-confidence, creativity, innovation, and positivism have particular importance in order to overcome this problem. Achieving this goal requires the use of appropriate and scientific solutions which are relevant to that. (Schneider et al., 2007). Empowerment is one of the most powerful ways to create these features in people and new motivational factor in dynamic working environment. Today, the main sources of competitive advantage is not only technology use, but also creativity, innovation, positivism, quality, commitment and abilities of staff that shapes it (Gresov & Drazin, 2007). Empowerment has positive effects on employee attitudes and behaviors (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1998).

Therefore, in the current turbulent circumstance, organizations have no choice but proper utilization

of human resources as a competitive advantage (Schneider et al., 2007). The most important factor for competitive advantage in organizations is human resources. Thus, the issue of empowerment is one of the serious concerns of organization's managers. In other words, empowerment is a strategy for organizational development and prosperity (Scarpello & Idrinka, 2006). Ratmawati (2007) stated that management competence and management commitment to staff's empowerment has a positive and significant relationship with organizational performance. Harris state that empowerment has a significant relationship with job satisfaction as well as in the exchanges relationship between the leader-follower with job satisfaction, empowerment plays a mediating role (Harris, 2009).

Many researchers, including Idrinka (1999), Farling (1999), Russell (2010), Peterson (2003) have announced empowerment as one the characteristics of servant leaders. Review of studies show that there is a lot of studies between servant leadership and empowerment within organizations and several studies have examined this variable. Literature studies also indicate poor studies of servant leadership in the field of sports. Thus, the present study investigated the relationship between servant leadership in successful and unsuccessful leaders and coaches of national sport teams of Islamic Republic of Iran.

Methodology

This research is an applicable research and gathering information from the population was conducted as field study. The method of this research was comparable-correlational. The population of this research includes 80 coaches of five successful national sport teams and five unsuccessful national sport teams of Islamic Republic of Iran. Selection criteria for the successful and unsuccessful coaches were based on the Ministry of Youth and Sports federation's documents that were submitted at the beginning of 2010. Choosing people of such a population, because of the difficult access to the national level coaches was not performed separately for each federation. The sample of this research estimated 66 people according to Morgan-Kerjcie table. 33 coaches of successful national sport teams and 33 coaches of unsuccessful national sport teams were chosen.

This research has done as Library and field manner. This research tools were questionnaires making by one researcher in Iran. These questionnaires made and used by Abaei (2010), for collecting internal thesis in iran, titled as the effect of servant leadership on organizational trust and organizational empowerment of staff in public organizations. The author of this research used

these questionnaires to collect data after adjustment of servant leadership and empowerment questionnaires. Above questionnaires were adjusted according to Likert five value spectrum. Content validity of the questionnaires was confirmed by 20 professors of sport management at Tehran University, Allameh Tabatabaiee university, several teachers of physical education and science sport of Iran universities. The reliability of questionnaires was confirmed by collecting data from 30 successful and unsuccessful sports coaches of the national teams of Iran and the analysis of Cronbach's alpha was confirmed for reliability.

Coefficients of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha and bisection coefficient) of tools were studied and its description are given in Table 1. Altogether Table 1 confirms reliability based on internal consistency of the scales used in the study.

Table 1. Reliability coefficients of research variables.

Reliability criteria scale	Cronbach's alpha	Spearman brown
Service	0.71	0.84
Humility	0.82	0.68
Reliability	0.87	0.93
Kindness	0.86	0.75
Empowerment	0.66	0.59

Table 2. Test results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S).

Variables	Number	Mean	SD	Z	Sig.
Service	66	3.08	0.890	1.19	0.102
Humility	66	3.16	0.850	1.42	0.012
Reliability	66	3.22	0.653	0.954	0.000
Kindness	66	3.34	0.781	1.08	0.033
Total servant leadership	66	3.10	0.823	1.27	0.05
Empowerment	66	3.52	0.764	1.37	0.049

Table 3. The results of spearman-brown correlations.

Statistical measure	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Service-1	66	14.03	4.40	1				
Humility-2	66	9.77	2.72	-	1			
Reliability-3	66	12.50	5.16	-	-	1		
Kindness-4	66	7.22	1.92	-	-	-	1	
Leadership-5	66	15.77	3.01	-	-	-	-	1
Empowerment-6	66	7.25	1.68	0.790	86	0.91	0.720	0.84

In this research, SPSS16 software was used for data analysis. For data analysis, Kolmogorov - Smirnov statistical methods used for normality of distribution of data, the Spearman - Brown coefficient correlation used for examining the relationship between servant leadership and empowerment components among coaches, one sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (equivalent to one-sample t test) used to examine the perception of the coaches to servant leadership, and finally to examine deference between the perceptions of successful and unsuccessful coaches from servant leadership, Mann-Whitney U test is used.

Results

Descriptive results

Descriptive results of demographic questions of questionnaire showed that 50 people (75%) of the sample were male and 16 people (25%) were female. Studying the age of sample showed that 30 people are under thirty years old and 36 people are between thirty to fifty years old. In terms of education, 18 percent of the coaches have sub-

diploma degrees, 62 percent bachelor's and 20 percent have graduate studies.

Inferential results

According to subject of the present study, the normality of data should be analyze so that we decide to use either parametric or nonparametric tests. For this test, we use Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test. The results of these tests are given in the table below.

As appears from the above table, all components of servant leadership and empowerment are significant at 0.05 confidence level. This result indicates that all data collection of servant leadership and empowerment are not normal. Therefore, nonparametric statistical tests should be used to analyze the data, because one of the factors for using parametric statistical tests is normal data distribution. The above table does not provide this requirement. K-S test results showed that the components of servant leadership and empowerment among successful and unsuccessful team coaches do not have a normal distribution. Therefore, to examine the relationship of these components with empowerment, we should use

nonparametric test of Pearson correlation coefficient. Nonparametric test of correlation test of Pearson is ranking correlation test, that's Spearman-Brown.

Table 3 results show the correlation between the components of servant leadership and empowerment. The results of the correlation test of Spearman-Brown show that there is positive and significant relationship between components of service, humility, kindness, trustworthiness, and servant leadership with empowerment variable. Also, the correlation coefficient indicates that the relationship is strong. Significance of the test was studied at 0.05 significance level. Hence, we can say with 95% confidence that the components of servant leadership have a significant relationship with empowerment. One sample T-test is used to examine the difference of one variable mean from the mean of the sample. We cannot use this parametric test because data distribution of this research is not normal. Thus, the one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was used to examine differences in perceptions of successful and unsuccessful coaches.

Table 4. The results of one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

Index	M	Z	P	Sig.
Success	2.34	1.43	1.08	0.05
Unsuccess				

The results of the table show the perception of coaches from servant leadership. The mean of coaches and population mean show the difference of coach's mean is significant than population mean. The table results show that this test is at significant level of 0.05. Thus, we can significantly say with 95% confidence that the mean of coach's perception of servant leadership differs from the population mean. Perception of successful and unsuccessful coaches of the national teams of Iran is too great.

Average ratings for each variable is shown in table 4. Table 5 shows Mann-Whitney U test results about the difference between successful and unsuccessful teams coaches perception from servant leadership. The table shows the results of Mann-Whitney U test is significant at significance level of 0.05. Therefore, we can say with 95 % confidence that the successful and unsuccessful coaches perception from servant

leadership are different. From the average rating in table 1 of this test we can say successful coaches have higher rank than unsuccessful coaches in perception of servant leadership.

Discussion and Conclusion

This research wants to study the relationship between servant leadership and empowerment among the successful and unsuccessful coaches of the national teams of Iran. Thus, the difference between successful and unsuccessful coaches ' perception of servant leadership and attitude differences of the two groups of coaches from servant leadership were studied. Sport and athletic competition are areas in which the need of leadership is felt like other social organizations. Hence, leaders and coaches should try to come up with taking servant role for their followers that the players are, to be more effective in order to improve competency of their teams and athletes. The results showed that there is significant relationship between servant leadership and empowerment components in successful and unsuccessful national team coaches. that's, raising each of the servant leadership variables can reinforce the empowerment. Therefore, the successful and unsuccessful leaders can reinforce servant leadership aspects by applying the techniques and practices of servant leadership and thereby empower their teams and athletes and form coherent and successful teams.

Also, the results showed that there were significant differences in perceptions of leaders from servant leadership and also perception of successful leaders and coaches from servant leadership is significantly different from unsuccessful leaders and coaches and successful coaches have a better understanding of servant leadership than unsuccessful coaches. From these results, it can be concluded that the unsuccessful teams' coaches can use the results of this research and by applying methods of the successful leaders try to reinforce servant leadership and also they become servant leaders.

Although becoming a servant leader refers to having features of leadership and it should be kept in mind that all leaders are not born with these characteristics and these features can be improve with the use of various methods.

Table 5. The results of Mann-Witney U test.

Group	Sun of rank	Mean of rank	Mann-Witney value	Z	Sig.
Success leaders	914.25	34.50	375.500	-2.16	0.05
Nonsuccess leader	798.25	29.50			

References

- Adamson L, 2009. Servant Leadership In A Community College: A Multivariate Analysis Of Employees Perceptions. PhD Thesis. Walden University.
- Bryant R.S, 2003. Servant Leadership and Public Managers. A Dissertation presented for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in organizational leadership; Regent university.
- Crom M, 1998. The Leader as Servant. *Training*. 35(7): 6-10.
- Dennis RS, Bocarnea M, 2005. Development of the Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument. *Leadership & Organizational Development Journal*: 26(8): 600-615.
- Drury S, 2004. Employee Perception of Servant Leadership. PhD Thesis, University of Virginia.
- Graham JW, 1991. Servant Leadership in Organizations: Inspirational and Moral. *Leadership quarterly*. 2: 105-119.
- Greenleaf RK, Frick DM, Spears LC, 1996. *On Becoming a Servant Leader*. 1rd Edn. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco.
- Gresov C, Drazin R, 2007. Equifinality: Functional Equivalence in Organization Design. *Academy of Management Review*. 22: 403-428.
- Harris KJ, 2009. Leader-Member Exchange and Empowerment: Direct and Interactive Effects on Job Satisfaction, Turnover Intentions and Performance. *The Leadership Quarterly*. 20: 371-382.
- Horsman JH, 2000. Perspectives of Servant Leadership and Spirit in Organization. PhD Thesis, Gonzaga University.
- Humphreys JH, 2005. Contextual Implications For Transformational and Servant Leadership. *Management Decision*. 43(10): 1410-1431.
- Irving JA, 2006. Exploring Servant Versus Self Sacrificial Leadership. A research proposal for assessing the commonalities and distinction of two follower oriented leadership theories. *Proceedings of the American Society of Business and Behavioral Sciences*. 13(1): 1305-1319.
- Liden RC, Wayne SJ, Zhao H, Henderson D, 2008. Servant Leadership: Development of Multidimensional Measure and Multi-level Assessment. *The Leadership Quarterly*. 19: 161-177.
- Nair K, 1994. *A Higher Standard of Leadership: Lessons from the Life of Gandhi*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Patterson K, 2003. Servant Leadership: A Theoretical Model. PhD Thesis, Regent university.
- Rafiq M, Ahmed PK, 1998. A Contingency Model for Empowering Customer Contact Services Employees. *Management Decision*. 36(9-10): 686-693.
- Ratmawati D, 2007. Managerial Competency and Management Commitment to Employee Empowerment. *Procendings of the 13th Asia pacific management conference*. Melbourne, Australia.
- Robbins TL, Crino MD, Fredendal LD, 2002. An Integrative model Of the Empowerment Process. *Human Resource Management Review*. 12: 420-442.
- Russell RF, 2010. The Role of Values in Servant Leadership. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*. 22: 76-84.
- Scarpello VG, Ledvinka J, 2006. *Empowerment and Function personnel/human resource management*. Boston: PWS-Kent Publishing Company
- Schneider JK, Dowling M, Raghuram S, 2007. Empowerment as a Success Factor in Start-up Companies. *Review of Managerial Science*. 1(2): 167-184.
- Spears LC, 1996. Reflections on Robert k Greenleaf and Servant-leadership. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*. 17(7): 33-35.
- Stramba L, 2002. Servant Leadership Practices. *The Community College Enterprise*. 9(2): 103-113.
- Thomas KW, Velthouse BA, 1990. Cognitive Elements of Empowerment: An Interpretive Model of Intrinsic Task Motivation. *Academy of Management Review*. 15: 666-681.
- Winston B, 2003. Extending Patterson's Servant Leadership Model: Explaining How Leaders and Followers Interact in a Circular Model. Paper presented at the Servant Leadership Research Roundtable, Regent University.