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Testing a Model of Perceived Organizational Support, Citizenship Behavior, Commitment, Job Satisfaction and Leader-Member Exchange as Concequences of Servant Leadership in Cement Factory Employees in Kermanshah

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The present study aimed at designing and testing a model of servant leadership consequences. It has selected the servant leadership structure as an antecedent variable, the job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior structures as the consequent variables, and the perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange structures as the mediator variables. The research method was descriptive correlational. Therefore, a total of 230 employees from an industrial company were selected through simple random sampling. The research tools included the servant leadership, perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior questionnaires. The data was analyzed through structural equation modeling (SEM) and mediator analysis. The analysis of structural equation modeling supported the proposed model fit with data.The results indicated a

direct positive effect of servant leadership on all dependent variables in the model, and a direct positive effect of perceived organizational support on job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior, and a positive indirect effect of servant leadership on job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior through perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange.

***Keywords**:* servant leadership, perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior

Given the vast changes occurred in the workplace, there is a need for leadership than the management in today's organizations. According to Pate, Beaumont & Stewart (2007), the business world has experienced dramatic changes in most of the areas in addition to labor force. In the last 20 years, the labor composition of organizations has been changed dramatically in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and age. Thus, there is more interest in personal development. The leadership encourages the followers to fulfill certain objectives which show their values and motivation. Unlike the appearance, not only the leadership is an exercise of power, but also it is inseparable from followers' needs and goals (Pate et al., 2007). Frederickson (1971; cited in Bryant, 2003) also argued that the management of public affairs, rupture and separation between organizations and staff are the real problems. Therefore, it should be noted how these systems can operate as an organism for developing the group through cooperation, serving, and balance between people and system.

The ideal leaders are those who always serve the people and respect their dignity and pay attention to growth and progress of organization as well as maximize their employees' capacity (Graham, 1991). The traditional approaches to leadership create obstacles in the development of productive workers in the organizations, while the empowerment is considered as the

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pivotal factor in new approaches to leadership, especially the servant leadership (Patterson, 2003). Furthermore, the servant leadership is in its early era of concept formation, but numerous researchers have considered it as a valid theory in the field of organizational leadership (Birkenmeier, Carson & Carson, 2003).

Greenleaf (1977) introduced the concept of servant leadership among the modern management theorists. The servant leadership is conceivable when the leader serves subordinate members and staff. The self-service should not be an incentive for a leader, but he should be on the top of a higher incentive program as the focus on the other individuals' needs. The desire to serve others effectively to achieve the group's objectives is the primary incentive for servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977). The servant leadership respects the human equality and seeks indivudal development in members in the organization. The servant leadership understands and acts in such a way that the leader prefers the other individuals' interests to his personal interest (Russell & Stone, 2002).

Different features of servant leadership are offered by theorists of organizational behavior management. For instance, according to Patterson (2003), the most important structures of servant leadership are as follows: Agapao love, humility, altruism, trusty, vision, service and empowerment. In addition to the servant leaders' essential characteristics, the servant leadership literature has mentioned complementary features as other specifications of a servant leader. These features include communicatins, credibility, competence, supervision, specificity, effectiveness, effective listening, persuading, encouraging the others, teaching, and empowerment. The complementary features are not the secondary characteristics by themselves, but they are

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complementary and sometimes prerequisites for effectivene servant leadership.

Several studies have been conducted on the servant leadership. The results of which indicate that this style of leadership can have a positive effect on the employees' attitudes and performance. Since the servant leadership is a people-oriented leadership style, the expected evidence indicates that the servant leaders have more satisfied and committed employees with higher metafunctional performance. Encouraging the employees' psychological needs, the servant leaders encourage the employees towards positive attitudes and behavior (Guchel & Begech, 2012; Saboe, 2010; Vondey, 2010; Taleghani & Rezaee Mehr, 2013).

Job satisfaction is one of the consequences of servant leadership (Kharrazi, Mirkamali & Torki, 2013; Olesia, Namusonge & Iravo, 2013; Scuderi, 2010). Job satisfaction refers to a set of attitudes which the organization members have towards their jobs and in general towards the organization (Mccormick & Ilgen, 1985).

Organizational commitment is another result of servant leadership style (Ramli & Mat Desa, 2014; Olesia et al., 2013; Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko & Roberts, 2009). In fact, organizational commitment is a kind of attitude to work and is specifically associated with the employees' participation and willingness to remain in the organization. It affects the employees' job performance (Silverthorne, 2004).

Organizational citizenship behavior is another consequence of servant leadership which leads to the greater efficiency of an organization (Guchel & Begech, 2012; Taleghani & Rezaee Mehr, 2013; Vondey, 2010). Organizational citizenship behavior is defined as a behavior which goes beyond the official requirements of an organization and is useful for the organization

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(Spector, 2006; translated by Mohammadi, 2006). According to Graham (1991), the servant leadership has a positive impact on the organizational citizenship behavior because it encourages a higher level of moral reasoning in followers.

Leader-member exchange is another consequence of servant leadership which can play a mediating role in the relationship between the servant leadership with job attitude and performance (Dierendonck, 2011). Schyns & Day (2010) have defined leader-member exchange as the quality of the exchanges and working relationship between an employee and his immediate supervisor. The value of a high-quality relationship has been recently indicated by Schyns & Day (2010). According to them, the high leader-member exchange is correlated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior.

Perceived organizational support is another mediator variable of this research. Empirically, it is found that leadership predicts the variables of studied concequences, including the organizational citizenship behavior and eemployees' attitudes through the perceived organizational support (cited in Zahiri, 2013). The perceived organizational support includes the employees' perceptions of organizational valuarization of their colaboration, participation and well-being. In other words, when employees feel that the organization pays attention to their presence and efforts, and supports their well-being and active participation in different ways, their perceived organizational support will be strengthened. In this regard, it should be noted that the actions and behavior of informal powerful agents or the supervisors and managers are indicators of organziational intentions and objectives, not those of a particular supervisor or manager (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

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According to the reviewed literature, the designed model of this study explores some of the most important consequences of an organization's servant leadership, including organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction with mediation of perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange. Figure 1 shows the proposed model of this study.

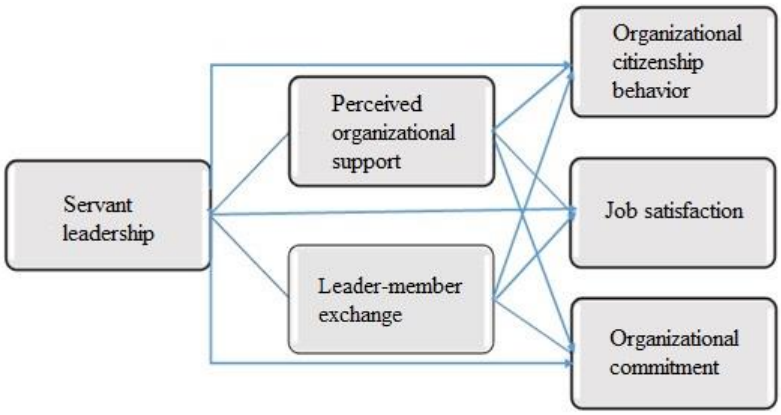


Figure 1. A proposed model of some consequences of servant leadership in this research

Method

The population of this research consisted of all 550 employees in Saman Cement Industrial Company in 2014. Using simple random sampling, 230 participanmts were selected as the samples. About 91 percent of the participants were male, and the rest of them were female. Furthermore, the participants' mean age was 37 and the mean of their work experience was 15 years.

Instruments

Servant Leadership Inventory

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The servant leadership inventory (Liden, Wayne, Zhao & Henderson, 2008) was utilized in this study. This questionnaire contains 28 items, and the responses are scored on a 5-point Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Liden et al. (2008) estimated the reliability coefficient of this questionnaire as .90 through Cronbach's alpha and found an acceptable validity. In this study, the reliability coefficients of servant leadership inventory were obtained equal to .81 and .66 through Cronbach's alpha and split-half methods, respectively, and also its validity was estimated as .662 (P<.000) by correlating with a researcher-made questionnaire.

Perceived Organizational Support Inventory

The perceived organizational support inventory (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) was utilized to assess the perceived organizational support in this study. This questionnaire consists of 8 items and its responses are scored on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002) have reported the reliability of this questionnaire as .81 by Cronbach's alpha method. Furthmore, the validity of this questionnaire was obtained as .55, which is significant at the level of P<.01. It indicates the favorable validity of this questionnaire. In this study, the reliability coefficients of perceived organizational support inventory were obtained as .82 and .69 through Cronbach's alpha and split-half methods, repectively, and its validity, which was estimated through correlation with a researcher-made questionnaire, was equal to .672 (P<.000).

Leader-member exchange questionnaire: The leader-member exchange questionnaire (Graen & Uhl-bien, 1995) was utilized to measure the leader-member exchange in this study. This

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questionnaire has 7 items, and its reponses are scored according to 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Katrinli, Atabay, Gunay & Cangarlis (2010) reported the reliability coefficient of this scale through Cronbach's alpha as .88. In this study, the reliability coefficients of leader-member exchange questionnaire were estimated as .86 and .80 through Cronbach's alpha and split-half methods, respectively, and its validity, which was estimated through correlation with a researcher-made questionnaire, was equal to .794 (P<.000).

Job Satisfaction Questionnaire

Job satisfaction questionnaire (Judge, Parker, Colbert, Heller & Iles, 2000) was utilized to estimate the job satisfaction. This questionnaire has 5 items, and its responses are in the form of 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Judge et al. (2000) reported the reliability of this questionnaire as .92 through Cronbach's alpha method. In this study, the reliability coefficients of job satisfaction questionnaire were equal to .85 and .79 through Cronbach's alpha and split-half methods, and its validity, which was estimated through correlation with a researcher-made questionnaire, was equal to .737 (P<.000).

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire

The organizational commitment questionnaire (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979) was utilized to estimate the organizational commitment in this study. This questionnaire consists of 15 items, and its responses scored according to 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Carver (2008) reported the reliability of this scale as .83. In this study, the reliability coefficients of organizational commitment questionnaire were equal to .79 and .76 through Cronbach's alpha and split-half

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methods, and its validity, which was estimated through correlation with a researcher-made questionnaire, was equal to .754 (P<.000).

Organizational Citizenship Behavior Questionnaire

A 16-item questionnaire was utilized to estimate the organizational citizenship behavior in this study. This questionnaire is a modified version (Smith, Organ & Near, 1983). From among a total of 16 items in this questionnaire, 3 ones are scored inreversely and the responses are according to 5-point Likert Scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Smith et al. (1983) obtained the reliability of this questionnaire in the range of .89-.91. In this study, the reliability coefficients of servant leadership questionnaire were obtained as .73 and .73 through Cronbach's alpha and split-half methods respectively, and its validity, which was estimated through correlation with a researcher-made questionnaire, was equal to .691 (P>.000).

The descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized for the sake of data analysis in this study. Furthermore, the descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation of scores were applied in addition to Pearson bivariate correlation coefficient, structural equation modeling (SEM) and Bootstrap methods at the inferential statistics. All analyses were conducted by SPSS and AMOS-18 softwares.

Results

Table 1 shows the descriptive findings and correlation coefficients between research variables.

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Table 1
Descriptive Findings and Correlation Coefficients of Research Variables (p≤ .01, *p≤ .05)**

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Servant leadership	81.74	17.10	1					
2. Perceived organizational support	23.39	6.16	.783**	1				
3. Leader-member exchange	20.81	5.62	.619**	.572**	1			
4. Job satisfaction	13.71	4.04	.585**	.546**	.493**	1		
5. Organizational commitment	46.61	12.04	.679**	.652**	.651**	.528**	1	
6. Organizational citizenship behavior	48.99	12.16	.565**	.541**	.538**	.429**	.466**	1

As shown in Table 1, the correlation between all variables is significant at the level of p<.01.

The structural equation modeling was utilized before investigating the structural factors in order to evaluate the proposed model. The fit of proposed model was tested based on a combination of fit metrics to determine the adequacy of the proposed model fit with data. Despite the fact that most of the values of fit indices indicate the acceptable fit of the proposed model with data, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) indicates that the model needs to be improved.

Table 2 shows the standardized coefficients of paths in the proposed model.

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Table 2

The Structural Model, Paths and their Standardized Coefficients in the Proposed Model of this Study

Path			β	Sig. level
Servant leadership	→	Perceived organizational support	.78	.000
Servant leadership	→	Leader-member exchange	.62	.000
Servant leadership	→	Job satisfaction	.35	.000
Servant leadership	→	Organizational commitment	.29	.000
Servant leadership	→	Organizational citizenship behavior	.24	.007
Perceived organizational support	→	Job satisfaction	.23	.014
Perceived organizational support	→	Organizational commitment	.24	.001
Perceived organizational support	→	Organizational citizenship behavior	.19	.026
Leader-member exchange	→	Job satisfaction	.12	.090
Leader-member exchange	→	Organizational commitment	.34	.000
Leader-member exchange	→	Organizational citizenship behavior	.28	.000

As shown in Table 2, the path coefficient of leader-member exchange variable to job satisfaction is not significant at the level of P<.05, and thus the direct hypothesis 9 is not supported. However, the bivariate correlation coefficient of this path is significant at the level of P<.001. The significant simple correlation coefficient between these variables supports their right choice based on the research background.

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After removing the insignificant path (leader-member exchange to job satisfaction), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) again indicates that the model needs to be improved. The next step is to improve the proposed model by correlating the path error (perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange). According to Shabrok (1990, cited in Arshadi, 2007), it can be expected that the errors are covariate for two variables when they have common causes which are not included in the model. Table 3 shows the fit indices of proposed model, the modified and final models.

Table 3

Proposed Model Fit based on the Fit Indices

Fit indices	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI	IFI	TLI	RMSEA
Proposed model	12.789	4	3.197	.981	.901	.931	.987	.987	.951	.100
Modified model	15.560	5	3.112	.977	.905	.978	.984	.985	.953	.098
Final model	8.605	4	2.151	.987	.934	.988	.993	.993	.975	.073

As shown in Table 3, the final model has relatively good fit.

Figure 2 shows the proposed model of this study along with standardized path coefficients.

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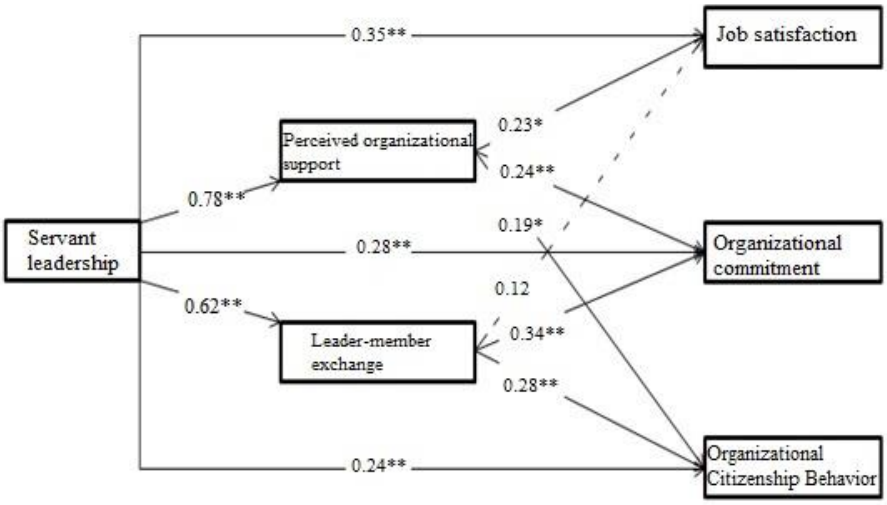


Figure 2. The proposed model of this study along with standard path coefficients (p≤ .001, *p≤.01)**

As shown in Figure 2, the coefficients of all direct paths are fully significant.

According to an underlying assumption of this proposed model, there are the mediator paths and these relationships are assessed by bootstrap method. The bootstrap results for mediator paths of proposed model in this study are presented in Table 4.

As shown in Table 4, since the high and low levels in none of indirect relationships cover zero, the indirect relationship between variables is significant. Furthermore, the results of Bootstrap test indicate that the indirect relationship is significant at the level of P≤ 0.001. Therefore, the perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange variables play the roles as the mediator variables in the relationship between the servant leadership with job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior.

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Table 4

Results of Bootstrap for Mediator Paths of Proposed Model

Path	Value	Boot	Sig. level	Standard error	Confidence level of .95
					High level, low level
Servant leadership→ Perceived Organizational Support → Job satisfaction	.0422	.0418	.0095	.0211	.0013 .0854
Servant leadership → perceived organizational support →organizational commitment	.1719	.1711	.0001	.0550	.0616 .2789
Servant Leadership → perceived organizational support→ organizational citizenship behavior	.1418	.1417	.0044	.0595	.0294 .2647
Servant Leadership →leader-member exchange→ Job satisfaction	.0311	.0307	.0027	.0100	.0130 .0534
Servant leadership → leader-member exchange → organizational commitment	.1629	.1622	.0001	.0354	.0956 .2348
Servant Leadership → leader-member exchange → Organizational citizenship behavior	.1345	.1339	.0001	.0384	.0613 .2131

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Discussion

The main aim of this study was to investigate a model of servant leadership consequences. This study was seeking to investigate the role of servant leadership on the job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior both directly and indirectly through the mediation of the perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange. Most of the obtained relationships in this study are consistent with the findings of previous studies; however, based on the available information, there is no conducted study which simultaneously examines all relationships in this study.

The findings of this study support the positive effect of servant leadership on the perceived organizational support. This finding is consistent with the findings of Zahiri (2013) and Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) According to the definition, the perceived organizational support includes the employees' perception of organizational respect for their collaboration, participation and well-being (Worley, Fuqua & Hellman, 2009). In other words, when employees feel that the organization pays attention to their presence and efforts and supports their well-being and active participation in different ways, their perceived organizational will be strengthened (Colquitt, Scott & Lepine, 2007). Therefore, the servant leaders effort to preserve and protect the human capital of organization, and thus increase the employees' perceptions of organizational support.

The findings of this research study support the positive effect of servant leadership on the leader-member exchange. This finding is consistent with those of Dierendonck (2011) and Barbuto & Hayden (2011). The relationships between the servant leaders and their followers can be described and explained through social exchanges rather than the simple economic

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exchanges. The social exchange relationships are not well defined and depend on the trust and norms of muual relationship. According to this view, the social exchange tends to create the personal commitment, respect and trust. Due to the servant leaders' compassionate, altruistic and trusty behavior, their followers feel empathy with leader and have higher quality interactions with him.

The results of this research support the positive effect of servant leadership on the job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with those of Kharrazi et al. (2013), Lisbijanto & Budiyanto (2014), Olesia et al. (2013) and Scuderi (2010). The servant leader gives the priority to employees' needs, and thereby makes them satisfied with their jobs. The empirical findings support this hypothesis which asserts that the leaders, who play pivotal roles in satisfying the employees' needs, are capable of increasing their job satisfaction. In this regard, it is fully approved that the fulfillment of needs is closely correlated with job satisfaction (Brewer, 2010). Among the multiple leadership styles, the servant leadership style is the best example which involves the human factor because a servant leader believes that his primary mission is to meet his followers' needs.

The findings of this study support the positive effect of servant leadership on organizational commitment. This finding is consistent with those of Khoshbakhti, Keshtidar & Zendehboudi (2011), Harwiki (2013), and Ramli & Mat Desa (2014). According to the explanation of this relationship, it can be concluded that the positive relationship between leadership and organizational commitment depends on the shared values and the staff’s sympathy with leaders and organization (Patterson, 2003). Servant leaders take care of their staff through paying attention to their leadership methods. Accordingly, employees seek to

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continue their relationship with organization and take efforts for organization. Hence, organizational commitment can motivate the staff for significant participation in the organizations.

The results of this research study support the positive effect of servant leadership on organizational citizenship behavior. This finding is consistent with those of Nadi and Ghahremani (2011), Lisbijanto & Budiyanto (2014), and Taleghani & Rezaee Mehr (2013). According to Liden et al, (2008), an organization will be effective if it identifies, applies and develops its employees' certain talents and abilities. In this regard, the servant leaders can play an important role in helping the employees to understand their potential abilities. Servant leadership focuses on developing the employees' potentials such as organizational citizenship behavior. When the leaders develop the importance of socialization in the organization, the employees want to maintain the highest levels of performance in the organization and show further organizational citizenship behavior.

The findings of this research approve the positive effect of perceived organizational support on job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. This finding is consistent with those of Casper, Harris, Bianco & Wayne (2011), Nadiri & Tanova (2010) and Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002). Since the perceived organizational support is one of the social exchanges between the employees and organization, the relationship between this structure and job attitudes and behavior can be accounted for by referring to the mutual norm. According to this norm, the employees require to respond to support provided by the organization. When the employees find that the organization is commited to its requirements for employees in an exchanging relationship, they will also have positive attitudes towards organziation and wil be

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more satisfied, gain higher commitment to organization, and show further organizational citizenship behavior.

The findings of this study support the positive effect of leader-member exchange on job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. This finding is consistent with those of Baharlou, Hashemi Sheikh Shabani & Naami (2014), Montakhab-Yeganeh, Arshadi, Baharlou & Ahmadi-Chegeni (2014), Zhong, Lan & Chen (2011) and Schyns & Wolfrom (2008). In the field of relationship between the leader-member exchange with job behavior and attitudes, it seems that the quality of leader-member relationship is constructive because motivating the employees leads to the improvement of an organization. If the employees feel that their supervisors treat them fairly, they are more likely to preserve their positive attitudes towards work, business results and supervisors. This increases their job satisfaction. Thus, they try to compensate for these services resulting in their increased organizational commitment. Furthermore, in the field of leader-member exchange, the high quality interactions lead to the communications beyond the employment's contract. This will likely increase the employees' organizational citizenship behavior. It should be noted that the findings of standardized coefficients in this study do not unexpectedly approve the direct positive effect of leader-member exchange on job satisfaction. According to the explanation of this unapproval, since the servant leadership and perceived organizational support variables have higher weight in predicting job satisfaction than the leader-member exchange in structural model of this study, the direct effect of leader-member exchange on job satisfaction became insignificant.

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According to the findings of the investigation of the indirect paths of research, the perceived organizational support plays the mediator role in the relationship between the servant leadership and job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. This finding is consistent with those of Sun & Yang (2009), Brown & Trevino (2006) and Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002). It can be accounted as follows. On the one hand, the servant leaders are known as those, who constantly tend to provide services, respect the followers' dignity and position, pay attention to subordinates' personal growth and progress, and maximize the employees' capacity. These features enhance the employees' perceived organizational support. On the other hand, when the employees understand that they are valuable for organization, and when they are emotionally supported to access their required resources (e.g., the existence of educational opportunities, promotion, flexible work schedules, diversity and importance of duty, and lack of job pressure) which satisfy the employees' social-emotional needs as well as the awareness of available help and support by organization, they will more likely have job satisfaction, will be more committed to their organizations and also show further organizational citizenship behavior.

Based on the findings investigating the indirect paths of research, the leader-member exchange plays the mediator role in the relationship between the servant leadership and job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. This finding is consistent with those of Dierendonck (2011), Hansen (2010). Since servant leaders are considered as the legitimate models for appropriate behavior criteria, the employees tend to follow them and replicate their actions. This, in turn, enhances the trust of leaders and followers,

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and thus increases the quality of their interactions. Furthermore, the servant leaders' followers likely feel empathy with the leader and have higher quality interactions with their leader due to the leader's compassionate, altruistic and trusty behavior. On the other hand, if employees feel that the supervisors are treating them fairly, they will likely retain their positive attitudes towards the work, business results and supervisors and compensate these services. Therefore, as expected, the results of leader-member exchange are correlated with the views on the subordinates' work and increase the employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In the filed of leader-member exchange model, the high quality interactions lead to the communication beyond the work contract which will likely lead to the acceptance of additional roles and organizational citizenship behavior.

Limitations & Suggestions

Obviously, conducting any research study, especially in the field of humanities, contains some limitations. This study is not an exception and containes the following limitations. First, the research plan and use of structural equation modeling does not prove the causality. Second, this research is conducted on the staff in Saman Cement Industrial Company. Thus, the generalization of its results to other organizations and individuals should be done with caution due to the different climatic and cultural conditions. Third, the data collection instruments in this research study included the self-report questionnaires, and one should consider the certain limitations of these instruments.

Therefore, the following suggestions are provided for further studies. First, since the design of longitudinal studies provides more opportunities for investigating the causality, the researchers are suggested to investigate this study’s variables in longitudinal

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studies. Second, it is suggested repeating this study in other organizations to lead to a better understanding of studied variables and better conclusion in the field of servant leadership. Third, it is suggested utilizing other data collection instruments such as the observation and field studies in addition to the use of self-report questionnaires in order to estimate the variables.

Finally, according to the results of this study on the importance of servant leadership in raising the level of perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior, the managers need to pay special attention to identify, estimate and improve the level of servant leadership in the organizations. In this regard, it is suggested that the organizational leaders should first effort to employ the servant leaders, and then increase the organizational productivity and performance by further encouragement, support and development of this leadership style.

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