

STUDYING THE RELATION BETWEEN SELF-LEADERSHIP WITH JOB SATISFACTION AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

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ABSTRACT: *Purpose: Customer satisfaction in modern organizations requires employees' job satisfaction that can be led to performance improvement in the organization. In this regard, self-leadership and strengthening of it among the employees and managers can facilitate this issue. Purpose of the present paper was to study the relation between self-leadership with job satisfaction and performance improvement. Methodology: Ninety two employees of the Economic Affairs and Finance Organization in Kermanshah province were studied for data collection among whom eighty seven were prepared to respond to research questions. The applied tools included standard questionnaire of self-leadership, job satisfaction and performance improvement and statistical techniques such as t-value test, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equations using SPSS and Smart PLS software were utilized for data analysis. Findings: The results revealed that self-leadership has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction and performance improvement ($p < 0.05$). Also behavior-oriented and natural reward strategies have a significant relation with job satisfaction while the relation between constructive thinking strategy and job satisfaction is not significant. Similarly the significant relation between job satisfaction and each component of performance improvement has been confirmed. Hence, it is recommended to managers to help employees utilize self-leadership as an incentive for job satisfaction and thus performance improvement by trying towards self-direction and spontaneity so that organizations act better in adapting with dynamic environments and remain stable in the competitive world.*

KEYWORDS: self-leadership, job satisfaction, performance improvement, interaction, employee motivation

INTRODUCTION

The world is changing rapidly. Globalization of markets, development of dynamic technologies, shortening of the product life-cycle and speed of change in customers' demand have made organizations involved in competition over customer satisfaction through production and offering higher value products and services (Schiuma & Lerro, 2008). In order to survive the organizations have to adapt with such changes. Executive institutions and organizations with any mission, purpose and perspective act ultimately in a national or international domain and are obliged to respond to customers and beneficiaries whether purpose of the organization is profitability and customer satisfaction or precise and comprehensive execution of legal tasks and helping to fulfill development purposes of the country.

Nowadays, the business perspective that has been shaped by various and integrated macro forces has obliged organizations to find new ways of management and performance improvement of business (Hamel 2007, 2009; Schiuma 2011). It is widely accepted that dynamism of value creation is resulted from continuous improvement of organizational performance. Indeed, the organization is able to satisfy needs, demands and expectations of its customers better through performance improvement. This is possible by means of permanent development of organizational capabilities and capacities (Mar & Schiuma, 2011). Therefore, organizations need to improve their performance to be able to achieve excellence. Performance improvement plan is developed through offering an appropriate structure to support superior performance of employees in order to change unfavorable behaviors and help employees in their job. Key of success in performance improvement is existence of an efficient leadership and employees who have high self-leadership. Efficient leadership is started with efficient self-leadership. Given to the concept of excellent leadership by Manz and Sims (1991) before leaders can lead others efficiently they should learn to lead themselves: "If you want to lead someone, the first vital step is to lead yourself" (p. 25).

Purpose of excellent leadership is that leaders act as positive models and develop self-leadership skill of their followers. Therefore, leadership needs self-leadership (Furtner et al., 2012; Manz & Sims 1991; Pearce 2007; Reichard & Johnson 2011). According to Drucker (1999) those people are successful in the knowledge-oriented society in the 21st century who know their strengths exactly and can influence in themselves effectively (Lowney, 2003). Self-leadership has been recognized as an effective tool with positive effect on performance (Manz 1986; Neck & Houghton 2006).

The effect of individuals' self-leadership on their professional activities in team works show the positive relation between individuals' self-leadership and ranking of their performance by managers (Konradt et al., 2009). Self-leadership is a process through which people affect themselves in order to achieve self-direction and spontaneity that are essential for action (Neck & Houghton 2006; Yukl 2002). This process is consisted of three main strategies: behavior-oriented strategy that includes the ability to observe behavior and identification and evaluation of effective and ineffective behaviors in order to improve performance. Natural reward strategies that are the individual's ability to perceive positive aspects of task and focusing on its internal rewards and constructive thinking strategy in which the individual's thinking affects his/her behavior and it is helpful for organizations and encourages progress-oriented, positive and constructive thinking (Houghton & Neck, 2002). Employees who have high self-leadership and are familiar with organizational standards and step towards fulfillment of purposes of the organization can help it to be successful in the current competitive world. If self-leadership and its reinforcement are considered among the employees and managers in organizations, a high satisfaction level among the employees and as a result performance improvement can finally be achieved.

Job satisfaction is a feeling by people with regard to their job. When it is said that someone has a high job satisfaction it means that he/she likes his/her job generally, values it highly and has a positive feeling towards it (Nasrabadi et al., 2010). The need for close interaction and communication in service provider organizations threatens consumers' satisfaction. Since processes of production and consumption can not be separated employee satisfaction is necessary in the organization to attract customer satisfaction. It is noteworthy that job satisfaction is a key factor to maintain high performance and efficient services that is led to productivity increase directly (Gunlu, 2009). Job satisfaction has a special importance at all

levels of management and human resources in organizations, because this concept plays a significant role in advancing and improving the organizational performance and labor force health. Whenever employees are satisfied with their job, the organization will have positive effects in the society and it will become efficient and helpful.

Therefore, given to above-mentioned issues the relation between self-leadership and performance improvement has not been studied by considering job satisfaction as the intermediate variable. Purpose of the present paper was to study the relation between self-leadership with employee job satisfaction and performance improvement of the organization. This paper has implications for any organization that attempts to survive and requires taking part in national and global arena through the principle of continuous improvement as well as enhancement of service quality and speed of action in responding to customers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section self-leadership literature and its dimensions as well as literature related to job satisfaction and performance improvement and the relation among the variables are reviewed.

Self-leadership

Leaders are often put in positions of power before they have learned the art of self-leadership, in this case leaders do not motivate others. Motivation is something personal and inherent. Self-leadership was proposed for the first time by Manz (1983, 1986) and Manz and Neck (2004) as development of self-management theory. After twenty years the concept of self-leadership entered business management area widely (Topper, 2009). Self-leadership is related to a choice regarding who we are, what we do and who we will become. This concept does not advocate selfish approach to receive what we want at all costs. Self-leadership recognizes that everything is not always obtained easily but our surrounding environment creates opportunities and conditions through our choices.

Cathy Wassermann, the career counselor defined self-leadership as below:

It is a perceptual and strategic approach for self-development that provides a lifetime tool to achieve one's internal and external resources, active direction of one's path and obtaining one's insight more. This approach is based on the assumption that if we only use one percent of our brain along with self-awareness, focus and enhanced support, access to something more than our potential talents will become possible (Topper, 2009).

Self-leadership has been defined as an effectiveness process or leading oneself through using special sets of cognitive and behavioral strategies (Neck & Manz, 2004). Behavioral strategies including positive encouragement are favorable behaviors that are led to successful results while negative suppression is among unfavorable behaviors that are led to unsuccessful results (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Cognitive strategies guarantee creation of autonomy and development of constructive thinking such as positive self-talk (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Theoreticians of self-leadership state that creativity and innovation are predicted results of individuals' self-leadership (Dallilo & Houghton 2006; Houghton & Yoho 2005; Neck & Houghton, 2006). Thus given to the concept of self-leadership as a determinant of innovation it is expected that self-leadership has a direct effect on innovation of team members (Partum & Sawatsombon, 2010). Self-leadership is essential in organizations which need continuous innovation (Pearce & Manz, 2005). When employees are encouraged to lead

themselves in defining the problems, problems solution, decision making and identifying the current opportunities and challenges at the present and in the future, creativity is encouraged in them. On the other side, if employees are not encouraged to self-leadership under critical conditions, creativity is not actualized in them (Pearce & Manz, 2005).

Manz and Sims (2001) suggested that leaders in organizations should develop the individual's ability in self-management at the workplace. They labeled this type of leadership as superleadership, leading others in the same direction of leading themselves and asserted that there are limitations in the control executed by supervisors at the workplace. Indeed, the origin of control and motivation towards work is internal and inherent (Hertzberg et al., 2003). When employees are trained and empowered to become self-managing labor force, supervisors can focus on long-term categories and keep aloof from their role that controls and specifies insignificant negligence.

Self-leadership has been defined as a self-influence process related to one's thoughts and behavior (Furtner & Ruthman 2010, 2011; Furtner et al., 2010, 2011; Neck & Manz 2010) and contains three main classes as developing self-management findings: 1) behavior-oriented strategies (self-management), 2) natural reward strategies and 3) strategies of constructive thinking model (Houghton & Neck, 2002; Manz, 1986; (Neck & Houghton, 2006). The following table shows self-leadership strategies and those of its sub-group.

Table 1- Self-leadership strategies

Self-leadership strategies	
Behavior-oriented strategies	Self-goal setting Self-reward Self-punishment Self-observation Self-cueing
Natural reward strategies	Focus of thought on natural reward
Constructive thinking strategies	Assessment of beliefs Depiction of successful performance Self-talk

Source: (Houghton & Neck, 2002).

Behavior-oriented strategies

Behavior-oriented strategies include the ability to observe one's behavior, the ability to think about behavior, identification and evaluation of effective and ineffective behaviors, determining purposes to improve behavior replacement and granting the individual's reward to him/herself while purposes are fulfilled in order to enhance individual performance at the workplace and living environment. Mainly, behavior-oriented strategies are ended in the positive experience that ineffective behavior is identified and replaced with effective behavior in order to enhance performance (Manz & Neck, 1999). Behavior-oriented strategies contain self-goal setting, self-reward, self-punishment, self-observation and self-cueing (Furtner et al., 2012). Self-leadership uses self-observation (e.g., "which purposes are important for me?") and then self-goal setting for effective influence in one's thoughts and behaviors. Moreover, self-observation is used during the process of obtaining purposes for continuous supervision so that it does not deviate individuals from self-goal setting. In order to achieve secondary and superior purposes individuals can utilize self-reward to reinforce favorable behaviors (e.g., eating a very good food). Individuals can utilize self-punishment

(e.g., "I am not satisfied with my job performance today, for this reason I do not go to see my friends tonight") and self---- as a reminder to weaken unfavorable behavior (Furtner et al., 2012) and includes using creative notes and posters as well as social signs (for example, friends and relatives). Self---- must always recall the individual's purposes and encourages self-observation too (Furtner & Ruthman, 2010).

Natural reward strategies

Natural reward strategies are focused on internal motivation. People who are interested in doing their tasks and also their job is amusing and pleasant can concentrate actively on positive and pleasant aspects of work and ignore unfavorable aspects. Besides, they can actively put the positive and favorable aspects in their tasks (Neck & Manz, 2010). This ability of focusing on task due to its internal reward causes to increase competency, self-control and purposefulness which enhance the individual's motivation in work (Hertzberg et al., 2003).

Constructive thinking strategies

Strategies of constructive thinking model are based on positive influence and controlling of permanent thinking models that have a positive effect on individual performance. Mental imagination is used in order to conceive successful performance which supports self-goal setting and stability by creating a positive and clear image of the future (Furtner et al., 2012). The issue that the individual's behavior can be observed but his/her thought is obtainable only by him/herself is a challenge for organizational change. Since the individual's thought affects his/her behavior fostering advance-oriented, positive and constructive thinking is useful for organizations (Jodie & Lock, 1992). Constructive thinking contains beliefs, self-talk and mental image. Positive self-talk can be used to reach purposes which is highly important for self-strengthening and maintaining personal motivation. Identification and replacement of inefficient beliefs and assumptions is used to replace negative and irrational thoughts with positive thoughts. This is led to a constructive and positive approach. If leaders have an extensive range of distinctive self-leadership skills, they have the basis to lead other people (Furtner et al., 2012; Manz & Sims 1991; Reichard & Johnson 2011). Leaders should determine their purposes before explicating them with their followers. They should have suitable self-reflective skills and deal with their weaknesses and strengths effectively. Such skills support self-development. Leaders should develop internal attractiveness, pleasure and enthusiasm in doing their (leadership) tasks in addition to high self-leadership skills and utilize mental imagination to affect their followers effectively and motivate them through transitional perspective (Furtner et al., 2012).

Job satisfaction

In order that an organization is successful in the age of globalization and intensive competition it needs employees who take step towards organizational purposes and have a strong intention to remain in it. Such loyalty and commitment is possible through having employees with high job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is individuals' feeling toward their job. It is applied to the individual's total attitude about his/her job. The person who has a high job satisfaction has a positive attitude towards his/her job. And the person who is not satisfied with his/her job will have a negative attitude towards it. When it is talked about employees' attitude towards a job their job satisfaction is often intended. Indeed, job satisfaction and attitude are used interchangeably in this regard (Robins, 1943, p. 109).

Employees who have experienced job satisfaction will be profitable more probably (Likert & Kens, 1979, p. 156) and will remain in their job and conversely lack of job satisfaction is associated with increased absence, high complaints of employees and increased turn-over. Employee turn-over is highly costly for the organization. It is led to increased registration fees and choosing among the competent people, costs of training and advancement of people as well as disappointment of those remained in the organization (Mac & Mire, 1993, p. 274). The need for close interaction and communication in service provider organizations threatens consumers' satisfaction. As processes of production and consumption can not be separated employee satisfaction is necessary to attract customer satisfaction. It is noteworthy that job satisfaction is a key factor to maintain high performance and efficient services that is led to productivity increase directly (Ebru Gunlu, 2009).

Job satisfaction has three dimensions:

- 1- Job satisfaction is the individual's emotional response to the job that cannot be observed and is only stated.
- 2- Job satisfaction explains how expectations are satisfied.
- 3- Job satisfaction is occurred due to contradictory factors like wage and reward and leadership style of colleagues.

People want to achieve their personal purposes; obtain mental satisfaction; escape from ineffectiveness; prohibit wasting of time and finally increase their mental peacefulness as highly as possible through job satisfaction (Aksu & Aktas, 2005; p. 481).

Different studies about job satisfaction show that several factors are associated with job satisfaction including the following items.

Payment system: Employees are highly sensitive to wage, because wage and salary are effective on life standards and security of people. Level of wage reflects how management deals with employee participation in the organization and managers' degree of attention to them. Any injustice in wage payment has a negative effect on employees' attitude towards the organization and their job satisfaction (Rezaee, 2001, p. 34).

Progress opportunities: External promotions or rewards like the existing opportunities for promotion or financial rewards, external tranquilities like security and peacefulness, social comfort such as supportive colleagues and supervisory relations play an important and secondary role in determining job involvement and thus job satisfaction level (Lambert, 1991, p. 35).

Organizational climate: Organizational climate is effective on job satisfaction too. An organization with inflexible structure motivates negative job feelings in the individual and flexible policy is led to job satisfaction. Generally, organizations which do not consider independence, accountability and decision-making of employees will witness employees' dissatisfaction (Ehtiar, 1996, p. 13).

Leadership style: Type of leadership and supervision style of the organization are effective on employees' morale and perhaps no factor is as effective as this on weakening or reinforcing of employees' morale. Supervisors should direct employees in doing their tasks and support them in solving their problems and give feedbacks about job performance if necessary. Also leaders should consult with employees in their job decisions in order to increase their motivation and capability, because participation has a positive effect on job satisfaction. Leadership is very important in determining and directing employees' attitude (Rezaee, 2001, p. 35).

Physical conditions: Physical conditions are the most important factor effective on productivity. Conditions of workplace should be coordinated with needs and expectations of employees and employees' purposes are coordinated with those of the corporation through this (Simseck, 1995, p. 103).

Performance improvement

The term performance has been defined with efficiency and effectiveness, because effectiveness illustrates degree of attaining the purposes and efficiency refers to the fact that how resources have been used to achieve purposes. They can be regarded as two important aspects of performance, i.e. there can be both internal reasons (efficiency) and external reasons (effectiveness) for special sections of performance. Thus, performance is a function of efficiency and effectiveness of activities (Cruss & Lunch, 1991).

Improvement is achieving a new level of performance that has been organized with regard to each previous level or creating helpful changes. Performance improvement is external measurement of a special process or procedure and modification of a process or procedure to increase output, productivity or effectiveness of a process or procedure (Wikimedia Foundation, Inc, 2013). Therefore, performance improvement is a method to analyze performance problems and initiate a system to ensure good performance (Luma & Waltro, 2002). Organizations should make a balance in their planning among environmental issues and conditions of their competitors (De Nassimento & Di Madirous, 2007).

Performance improvement in organizational development is the concept of organizational change in which managers and rulers manage the plan which measures current performance level of the organization and then idea production to modify organizational behavior and substructures in order to reach a favorable location or superior output. Primary purposes of organizational improvement are increased effectiveness and organizational productivity in order to improve capability of the organization for offering the products and services (Wikimedia Foundation, Inc, 2013). Five dimensions were considered in the present paper to investigate performance improvement factor including the time spent for improvement, skills and mechanisms of performance improvement, improvement of perspective and purposes, operational improvements and improvement of results and feedback loops.

The time spent for improvement: The time that is spent for improving of production, management support, employee motivation and perceiving the need for improvement (Fayek Aziz & Mohamed Hafez, 2013). **Skills and mechanisms of performance improvement:** It means using improvement mechanisms (learning through experience and experimentation, awareness) and skills (access to information, information transparency and information utilization) (Fayek Aziz & Mohamed Hafez, 2013).

Improvement of perspective and purposes: It is the improvement process in different perspectives (finding the roots of improvement problems) and various purposes (what the improvement team intends to perform) (Fayek Aziz & Mohamed Hafez, 2013).

Operational improvements: They are improvement and change in the framework based on which works are done (Fayek Aziz & Mohamed Hafez, 2013).

Improvement of results and feedback loops: It is identification of the results obtained from the improvement process and creating of feedback loops (Fayek Aziz & Mohamed Hafez, 2013).

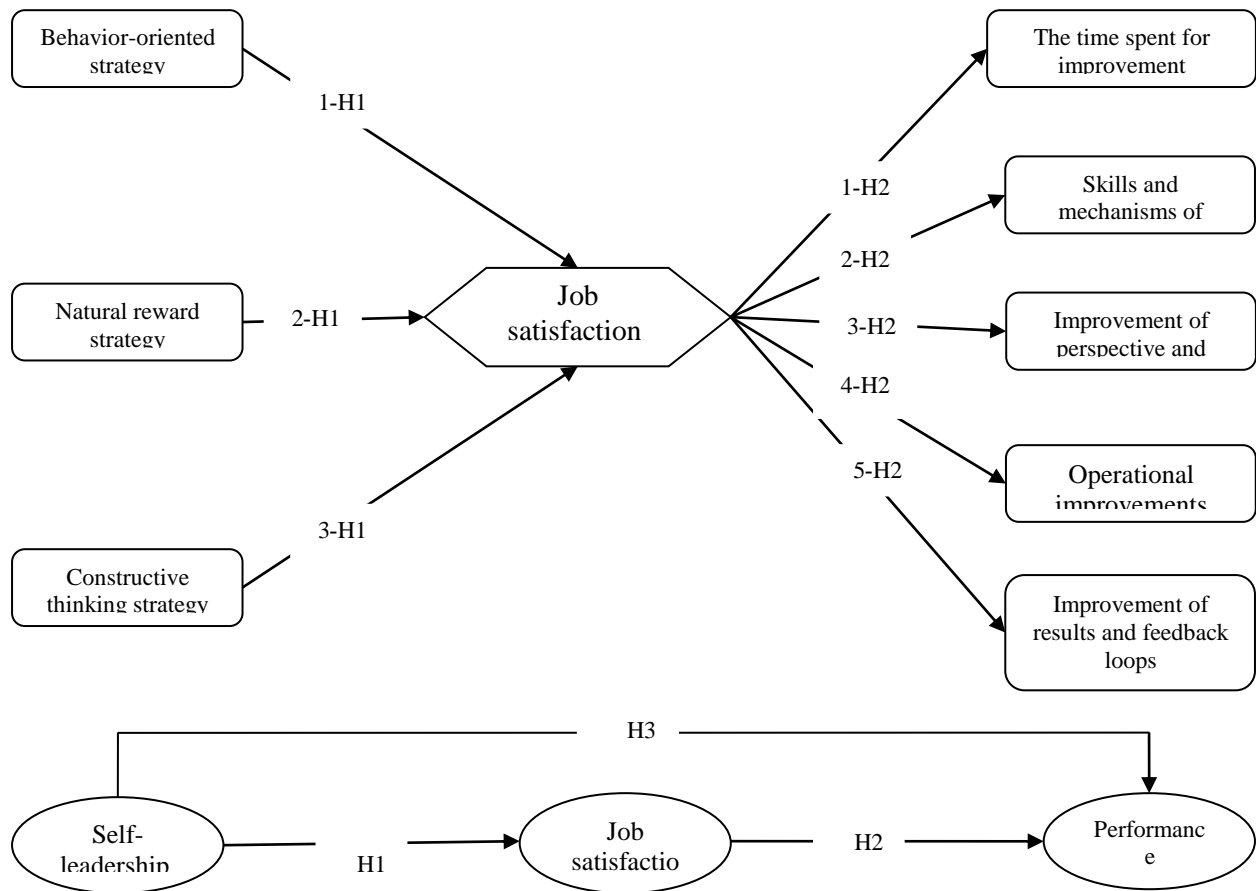
Relation among research variables in conducted studies

Various studies have been conducted about self-leadership that reveal the positive effect of this component on people and organizations. Self-leadership has a positive effect on job performance of team members, i.e. skill, adaptability and professional activity both at the individual work level and team level (Housechildte & Konradt, 2012). Also it increases innovation and innovative behaviors among the employees in their workplace (Carmeli et al., 2003) and enhances entrepreneurship in individuals (Roberts et al., 2007). Concentration of organizations on enhancement of self-leadership strategies among the people is led to positive results in their personal and work life. Among the self-leadership strategies constructive thinking strategy has the highest importance in creativity prediction (Aghababae et al., 2012) and behavior-oriented strategies have more importance in predicting psychological empowerment of people (Rajaeepour et al., 2012). Job satisfaction plays the intermediary role among behavior-oriented strategies of self-leadership and team performance (Politis, 2005). Employees who are satisfied with their job and organization have a high level of organizational commitment (Gunlu et al., 2010). The researches reveal that there is a positive and significant relation among job value, self-autonomy, job opportunities, job possibilities and job challenge with job satisfaction (Nasrabadi et al., 2010).

Conceptual model and hypotheses

A scientific and theoretical framework is required to perform academic and systematic researches that is referred to as conceptual model. The conceptual model in this paper was proposed based on literature review and experts' opinions. According to literature review the items related to self-leadership (behavior-oriented strategy, natural reward strategy and constructive thinking strategy) and performance improvement (the time spent for improvement, skills and mechanisms of performance improvement, improvement of perspective and purposes, operational improvements and improvement of results and feedback loops) and job satisfaction as the intermediate variable provided a suitable framework for modeling. Having proposed the conceptual model, hypotheses were represented.

Figure 1- Conceptual model



Hypotheses

- 1- There is a relation between self-leadership and job satisfaction.
- 2- There is a relation between job satisfaction and performance improvement.
- 3- There is a relation between self-leadership and performance improvement.
- 1-1 There is a relation between behavior-oriented strategies and job satisfaction.
- 1-2 There is a relation between natural reward strategies and job satisfaction.
- 1-3 There is a relation between constructive thinking strategies and job satisfaction.
- 2-1 There is a relation between job satisfaction and the time spent for improvement.
- 2-2 There is a relation between job satisfaction and skills and mechanisms of performance improvement.
- 2-3 There is a relation between job satisfaction and improvement of perspective and purposes.
- 2-4 There is a relation between job satisfaction and operational improvements.
- 2-5 There is a relation between job satisfaction and improvement of results and feedback loops.

METHODOLOGY

This paper was conducted using descriptive-field method. The statistical population included all employees of the Economic Affairs and Finance Organization (92 persons) in Kermanshah province. Since the statistical population was limited research sample and statistical population are the same. It means that research sample included ninety two employees.

Therefore sample size formulas were not used because the statistical population was limited. Eighty seven employees were prepared to respond to research questions. Standardized questionnaire was used to test the research model, so the questionnaire contained three sections in addition to demographic questions. Components related to the independent variable (self-leadership) were adopted from Carmeli et al.'s study (2006), components related to the dependent variable (performance improvement) were adopted from Fayek Aziz & Mohamed Hafez study (2013) and components related to the intermediate variable (job satisfaction) were adopted from Brafild and Roth study (1951) that is known as Minnesota questionnaire. Having been reviewed by experts and professors, the questionnaire was confirmed. Hence research questions have the required validity.

The collected data were analyzed using statistical techniques including t-value test, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equations using SPSS and Smart PLS software in order to explain the model elements and the relations among them. Construct validity was studied by means of confirmatory factor analysis. Cronbach alpha coefficients of all research variables were more than 0.88, thus questions of the questionnaire have the required reliability (Table 4).

FINDINGS

Descriptive statistics

Fifty nine employees were male and 28 were female. In terms of age, 9 persons were below 30 years old, 29 persons were between 31-37 years old, 40 persons were between 38-45 years old and 9 persons were above 45 years old. Fourteen employees had diploma, 47 employees had associates degree and B.A, 25 employees had M.A and one employee had PhD. In terms of work experience, 12 managers had work experience between 1-5 years, 27 managers had work experience between 6-10 years, 28 managers had work experience between 11-15 years and 20 managers had work experience of more than 15 years (Table 1).

Table 1- Demographic characteristics of the sample

Variable	Classes	Frequency	Frequency percentage
Gender	Female	28	32.2
	Male	59	67.8
Age	Below 30 years old	9	10.3
	31- 37 years old	29	33.3
	38-45 years old	40	46
	Over 45 years old	9	10.3
Education level	Diploma	14	16.1
	Associates and B.A	47	54
	M.A	25	28.7
	PhD	1	1.1
Work experience	1-5 years	12	13.8
	6-10 years	27	31
	11-15 years	28	32
	Over 15 years	20	23
Total		87	100

PLS¹ method for model's goodness and reliability and validity of the results

PLS method is one of the statistical multi-variable techniques that can evaluate goodness of models with several independent and dependent variables in spite of limitations such as unknown distribution type of variables, low sample size and existence of correlation among independent variables which must be observed in regression and structural equations methods (Jafari Samimi & Mohammadi, 2011). Two models are tested in PLS: The first one is the measurement model and the second one is structural equations model (Boniface et al., 2012).

Measurement model

Two models should be tested in PLS for model's goodness: external model and internal model.

External model

Common goodness indexes in PLS measurement models for nine latent variables are represented in Table 2. Three important indexes are reliability of factor loading, composite reliability (internal consistency index of the measurement model) and average variance extracted (AVE) (a percentage of changes of the latent variable that has been explained by observed variables).

Reliability of the items and convergent validity were estimated in external model. Reliability of each item was obtained through factor loading of items related to each construct. Items which have minimally factor loading equal to 0.500 are considered significant and are remained in the model (Hair et al., 1998). Coefficients of factor loading of the observed variables in Table 2 were calculated for each latent variable. These coefficients are in the range 0.565-0.918.

Internal consistency of the model is measured by composite reliability index (Werts et al., 1974). If composite reliability index for each construct is more than 0.7, it means that composite reliability of the model is suitable (Boniface et al., 2012). This index was more than 0.7 in the goodness model for all variables (Table 2).

The average variance extracted index that is convergent validity shows that variance of each construct can be explained by the selected indicators (Fornell and Lacker, 1981) and the minimum suggested value for constructs is 0.5 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). This index shows that a variable in the model has explained more than half of the variance of index variables averagely. It was more than 0.5 for all variables in this paper (Table 2).

Internal model

One of the assessment standards of internal model is discriminant validity. It is used to investigate each indicator has the highest correlation with its construct than other constructs. When several indicators are used to measure each latent variable, the researcher should not content him/herself with the individual scale of the indicator; rather he/she should consider degree of discriminant validity of constructs too. One of the methods to study this issue is to use square root of average variance extracted. To this end, square root of average variance extracted should be higher than other correlations related to other factors with this construct (Gefen & Straub, 2005, Nevitt, J., & Hancock, 2001, Chin, 2001). The results shown in Table 3 reveal that all constructs have been separated from each other well.

¹Partial least square method

Structural model

It is possible to study the hypotheses and variables' coefficient of determination using structural equations model. Thus confirmation or rejection of each hypothesis can be studied by comparing the calculated t-value for each path coefficient with the critical value 1.96. If the amount of calculated t-value is less than the critical value or equal to it, the hypothesis is rejected and if it is higher, the hypothesis is confirmed.

According to the obtained output of path coefficient and t-value in research model, primary hypotheses were confirmed and since the calculated t-value of all secondary hypotheses related to the relation among self-leadership components and job satisfaction (except one case) was more than 1.96 the positive effect of behavior-oriented strategy and natural reward strategy on job satisfaction was confirmed. This is while the significant effect of constructive thinking strategy on job satisfaction was not confirmed. Also all hypotheses related to the relation between job satisfaction and performance improvement components were confirmed (Table 4).

Validity of structural equations was determined based on coefficients of determination of dependent variables and showed variance explained of model constructs (Boniface et al., 2012), so if value of R^2 of dependent variables is more than 0.67, it is classified as good; if it is between 0.33 to 0.67, it is classified as moderate and if it is below 0.19, it is classified as weak. Coefficients of determination in the goodness model of this paper were equal to 0.48, 0.10, 0.08, 0.13, 0.15 and 0.23 for job satisfaction variable, the time spent for improvement, skills and mechanisms of performance improvement, improvement of perspective and purposes, operational improvements and improvement of results and feedback loops respectively (Table 2).

Table 2- Goodness indexes of latent variables in internal and external models

Variables	Mean	Standard deviation	Items	Factorial loads	R^2	Cronbach alpha	CR	AVE
Behavior-oriented strategy	4.12	0.544	q1 q2 q3 q4 q5 q6	0.786 0.576 0.698 0.738 0.669 0.720	-	0.82	0.849	0.531
Natural reward strategy	3.89	0.692	q1 q2 q3	0.837 0.667 0.669	-	0.71	0.773	0.534
Constructive thinking strategy	3.73	0.503	q1 q2	0.848 0.745	-	0.73	0.799	0.638
Job satisfaction	2.84	0.802	q1 q2 q3 q4 q5 q6 q7 q8 q9 q10	0.825 0.702 0.565 0.624 0.719 0.605 0.596 0.768 0.628 0.728	0.48	0.90	0.901	0.504
The time spent for improvement	3.64	0.896	q1 q2	0.772 0.853	0.10	0.70	0.794	0.660

Skills and mechanisms of performance improvement	3.14	0.880	q1 q2 q3 q4 q5	0.747 0.803 0.768 0.849 0.591	0.08	0.83	0.868	0.572
Improvement of perspective and purposes	3.08	0.851	q1 q2 q3	0.662 0.862 0.856	0.13	0.75	0.838	0.632
Operational improvements	3.09	1.06	q1 q2 q3 q4	0.770 0.817 0.875 0.904	0.15	0.88	0.902	0.711
Improvement of results and feedback loops	2.82	1.15	q1 q2 q3 q4	0.881 0.831 0.918 0.908	0.23	0.92	0.935	0.783

Table 3- Studying values of square root of average variance extracted with correlations

Variables	Operational improvement	Improvement of perspective and purposes	Constructive thinking strategy	Improvement of results and feedback loops	job satisfaction	Behavior-oriented strategy	The time spent for improvement	Skills and mechanisms	Natural reward strategy
Operational improvement	0.84								
Improvement of perspective and purposes	0.695	0.79							
Constructive thinking strategy	0.342	0.223	0.79						
Improvement of results and feedback loops	0.849	0.682	0.361	0.88					
Job satisfaction	0.423	0.404	0.421	0.570	0.71				
Behavior-oriented strategy	0.370	0.374	0.611	0.471	0.680	0.72			
The time spent for improvement	0.242	0.394	0.221	0.289	0.305	0.287	0.81		
Skills and mechanisms	0.534	0.721	0.203	0.521	0.288	0.267	0.662	0.75	
Natural reward strategy	0.292	0.280	0.573	0.356	0.500	0.538	0.258	0.255	0.73

Table 4- Results of testing the hypotheses

Hypothesis	Independent variables	Dependent variables	β	t-value	Result
H1	Self-leadership	Job satisfaction	0.541	10.34	Confirmed
H2	Job satisfaction	Performance improvement	0.261	4.77	Confirmed
H3	Self-leadership	Performance improvement	0.351	6.68	Confirmed
H1-1	Behavior-oriented strategy	Job satisfaction	0.598	9.44	Confirmed
H1-2	Natural reward strategy	Job satisfaction	0.180	2.44	Confirmed
H1-3	Constructive thinking strategy	Job satisfaction	-0.038	0.722	Not confirmed
H2-1	Job satisfaction	The time spent for improvement	0.315	4.89	Confirmed
H2-2	Job satisfaction	Skills and mechanisms of performance improvement	0.278	5.45	Confirmed
H2-3	Job satisfaction	Improvement of perspective and purposes	0.362	6.27	Confirmed
H2-4	Job satisfaction	Operational improvements	0.386	6.79	Confirmed
H2-5	Job satisfaction	Improvement of results and feedback loops	0.547	13.4	Confirmed

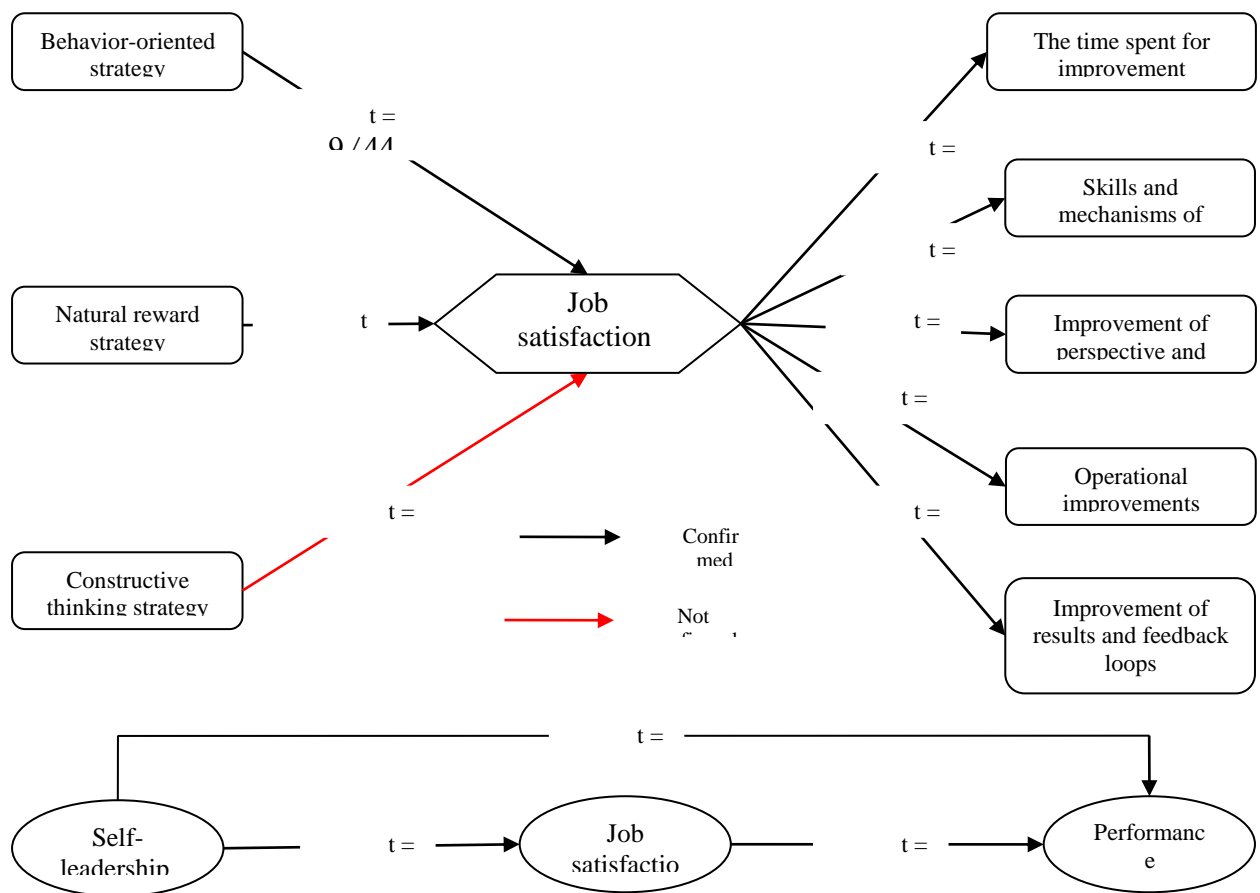


Figure 2- Research model and evaluation of the results

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Given to ever-increasing challenges of modern dynamic and complex environments (like globalization) organizations in the 21st century require continuous improvement of performance and establishment of a very flexible structure with employees who have a high level of job satisfaction to increase innovation and guarantee their survival. Continuous performance improvement of organizations creates a huge synergism that can support the growth and development plan and create opportunities for organizational excellence. The growing procedure of autonomy in the organization makes it clear that leaders and employees need self-leadership and strong leadership skills. Therefore, self-leadership plays a key role at all levels of the organization. It is regarded as a suitable context to enhance job satisfaction among the employees and thus productivity of human and physical capital and a way to attain success and performance improvement of organizations.

The present paper was performed to study the relation between employee job satisfaction and performance improvement of the Economic Affairs and Finance Organization in Kermanshah province through structural equations modeling. Reliability and validity indexes extracted from Smart PLS software are acceptable and validity of structural equations of the model is moderate. The relation between self-leadership and performance improvement was studied in this paper by considering job satisfaction as the intermediate variable in the form of three primary hypotheses and eight secondary hypotheses. Results of the hypotheses are as below: Primary hypothesis one studied the relation between self-leadership and job satisfaction. Since t-value related to this hypothesis was more than 1.96 the positive and significant relation between self-leadership and job satisfaction was confirmed. Therefore, it can be inferred that employees who have the ability to utilize self-leadership strategies will have a high level of job satisfaction. Employees who have self-leadership ability in the modern challenging world that speed of changes and intensive competition are its apparent features can manage their thoughts and feelings with regard to their organization and job well. This ability to self-direct the individual's feelings and attitudes towards job is led to employees' satisfaction. They know their job as an important part of their life and believe that satisfaction with their job and performance has a clear effect on their total satisfaction. Hence, they will have a favorable feeling towards their job.

Primary hypothesis two studied the relation between performance improvement and job satisfaction. Since t-value related to this hypothesis was more than 1.96 the positive and significant relation between performance improvement and job satisfaction was confirmed. Therefore, it can be concluded that employees who have a high level of job satisfaction are more committed to their job and organizational purposes and try more to achieve such purposes and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their organization against their competitors and will have an organization with better performance.

Primary hypothesis three studied the relation between self-leadership and performance improvement. Since t-value related to this hypothesis was more than 1.96 the positive and significant relation between self-leadership and performance improvement was confirmed. Therefore, employees who enhance self-leadership strategies in themselves always look for ways of continuous improvement in themselves and their organization and they can develop and improve their performance and that of the corporation effectively.

All secondary hypotheses that studied the relation between self-leadership strategies and employees' job satisfaction and the relation between job satisfaction and five aspects of performance improvement were confirmed except secondary hypothesis three which studied the relation between constructive thinking strategy and job satisfaction. T-value of the hypotheses was more than 1.96 and the positive relation of these hypotheses was confirmed. These findings are consistent with Politis research (2005) that indicated the positive relation among behavior-oriented strategies of self-leadership and job satisfaction. It can be stated that organizations and especially the one under study should focus more on enhancement of self-leadership strategies specifically constructive thinking strategy so that employees can increase their job satisfaction level and have a better job performance by conceiving a promising future and a certain perspective. Existence of inspirational insight and the ability to conceive a successful organization in employees is a motivational factor towards self-goal setting, self-direction and spontaneity of organizational members. This insight will be the strong supporter of individuals' self-leadership and stimulates people to attempt to improve the current status and reach a favorable position. Since motivation is a major factor in attempts of the individuals and serving the organization, managers and leaders' focus on self-leadership strategies and their strengthening in employees can be resulted in having an organization with motivated employees who have a good feeling toward their organization and job and are loyal and committed to organizational purposes. Such job satisfaction arising from an enthusiastic and incentive environment improves job performance of individuals and the organization in offering services to the society.

Therefore, given to the obtained results and generally considering the research model, self-leadership plays a key role in dealing with dynamic environments. Organizations should believe that they will be failed if they have not empowered employees- namely employees who are able to utilize their skills and capabilities. Organizations will be successful that have loyal and committed employees and this is possible through leaders' focus on improving and strengthening of self-leadership in employees in order to empower them against intensive challenges of the globalization age and intensive competition. Employees must have the capability to be able to utilize self-leadership strategies to improve the current and future conditions of their personal and work life. In this way they can develop their work life quality and manage their performance effectively. Those who have a high level of self-leadership are more successful in their work life and will have a positive feeling towards their job and a higher job satisfaction. Organizations which have such employees have a better performance than their rivals and shine better at the national and international level.

Finally some applied recommendations are proposed:

Applying specialized counselors regarding self-leadership to train employees about self-leadership strategies and manner of strengthening them in employees

Establishment and development of organizational culture which enhances self-leadership in employees

Encouraging the employees to lead themselves in facing with organizational problems and job-related decision-makings

Encouraging the employees to focus on durability of favorable behaviors that are resulted in effective outputs and suppression of negative behaviors which have negative effects on work and personal life

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