

INVESTIGATING THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEES' LOYALTY IN THE PRIVATE EDUCATION SECTOR IN EGYPT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship between ethical leadership and Empowering Leadership on employee loyalty (Organizational Commitment) and its two dimensions namely, affective commitment (AC) and continuance commitment (CC). A personally administered questionnaire was used for collecting the study data from 108 employees who represent different academic levels from the Private Educational sector in Egypt. Four hypotheses were developed in order to test the said relationship. Hypotheses were tested through using various testes namely: the correlation coefficient and the regression analysis from the Statistical Package for Social Science software. There is a positive and significant relationship between Empowering leadership and Affective commitment. There is a positive and significant relationship between Empowering leadership and Continuance commitment. There is a positive and significant relationship between Ethical leadership and Affective commitment. There is a positive and significant relationship between Ethical leadership and continuance commitment. The study contributes to the literature on Organizational commitment and more specifically to the relationship between employee loyalty and types of Leadership in the Egyptian higher education Private sector. The outcome of the research draws decision makers' attention to the importance of leadership and its impact on employees' loyalty

KEYWORDS: *Empowering Leadership, Employee Loyalty, Ethical Leadership*

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INTRODUCTION

The financial crisis, economic recession and repeated scandals involving leaders from business and government organizations have led organizational researchers to re-examine how leaders can enhance employee loyalty and commitment to the organization (De Cremer et al., 2011). Increasing attention now is being paid to the role of empowering leadership (Arnold et al., 2000; Huang et al., 2010; Konczak et al., 2000) in fostering cooperative attitudes and behaviors among employees. Recent research indicates that empowering leadership is associated with a variety of important outcomes, including subordinate motivation, satisfaction, performance, pro-social behaviors, counter-productive behaviors and specially loyalty (Chen et al., 2011; Den Hartog and De Hoogh, 2009; Huang et al., 2010; Kim and Brymer, 2011; Konczak et al., 2000; Mayer et al., 2012; Mayer et al., 2009; Piccolo et al., 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2011; Walumbwa and Schaubroek, 2009)

Empowering leader behaviors and ethical leadership are likely to be associated with high-quality leader-employee-exchange relationships based on trust, mutual liking, and respect (Brown and Treviño, 2006; Graen and Scandura, 1987; Liden et al., 1997). Research on the correlates of leaders exchange relations found that leaders with favorable exchange relationships are more likely to be perceived to be effective and induce affective and continuous subordinate loyalty than leaders with unfavorable exchange relationships (Gerstner and Day, 1997).

Employee loyalty has emerged as a potentially important topic. Many scholars have confirmed that employee loyalty at the workplace and his/her performance organizational success, as well as organizational financial performance, are positively related (Saks, 2006; Simpson, 2009). Employee loyalty has been defined in different ways by the academic literature. They explained that the emotional aspects affect the way that employees feel about those three factors and whether they have positive or negative attitudes toward the organization and its leaders.

Over the years, Researchers and human resources specialists have found that enthusiastic workers are a productive asset to the organization (Kompaso and Sridevi 2010) Previous research has found that individuals strike more meaning in their day-to-day work than they do in their personal lives (Mishra et al.; Ugwu et al., 2014). Therefore, managers should strive to make work meaningful, such as by ascertaining and endeavoring to resolve any difficulties that employees face (Biswas et al., 2013). In addition, clear guidance and direction should be provided to employees in order to empower them, so that they feel that their contributions are valued and relevant to the success of their organization (Robbins and Judge, 2012). Studies have shown that effective leaders can have a positive impact on the perceptions of workers about their jobs and thus boost retention (Macphee and Suryaprakash, 2012). On the other hand, Jackson and Schuler, (1983) and Hawkins et al. (2012) showed that employee burnout after four or five years. Which may result in employees being less likely to have an emotional bond with their organization and have greater intention to leave their jobs.

As a result of the economic pressure, the private sector organizations are showing regularly an increased interest in adopting new human resource management (HRM) practices that would influence employee relations as well as their loyalty (Turkyilmaz et al., 2011). Researchers and practitioners, over the years, have believed that loyal-committed employees are highly productive and the level of loyalty is considered as a driving force behind their organization's performance (Suliman and Alkathairi, 2013). Moreover, researchers have found a positive relationship between loyalty and commitment (Field and Buitendach, 2011). It is regarded as important as such and has their effects on organizations' performance and productivity. Ethical and empowering leaders are likely to develop high-quality exchange relationships with their subordinates through honest and open communication and principled decision-making (Brown and Treviño, 2006). They succeed in regenerating a high level of loyalty and work engagement.

The higher education private sector in Egypt could play a crucial role during the transition process, which currently employs a huge amount of Egypt's labor force. A boom in its investment by leveraging existing human resources will enable the Government to achieve strong educational development and meet the economic aspirations of its people. Empowering employees to generate loyalty and commitment to employees, which motivates them to perform well and in return leads to increased investments in general. The purpose of this research is to examine the impact of ethical leadership and empowering leadership on employee loyalty in the Egyptian Education Private sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following sections review discoveries and empirical evidence from prior studies.

Leadership

Various academics and practitioners have considered leadership as the most crucial topic in organizational behavior (Rahim, 1998). Leadership is defined as “the process by which individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2007). Its importance stems out from the fact that the success of an organization in achieving its goals and objectives is highly dependent on leaders and their leadership style. Leader’s behaviors affect the attitude and potential of organization’s employees. Therefore, organizations at present are more concerned about the understanding, development, and improvement of their leadership (Bushra et al, 2011). Leadership research has long suggested that leaders’ honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness are important predictors of leadership effectiveness (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991; Kouzes and Posner, 1992; Posner and Schmidt, 1992).

A high-quality exchange relationship is beneficial for both the leader and the subordinate, and the benefits may include increased performance, loyalty, satisfaction (Masterson et al., 2000). High-quality exchange relationships are more likely to occur when leaders are honest, trustworthy, and genuinely concerned about the well-being of their followers (Erdogan et al., 2006; Wayne et al., 2002). As claimed by Kahn (1990), employees who are engaged at workplace become highly loyal and caught up in their job tasks; they show and use their thoughts, feelings, creativity, values and their personal and strong connections for and within the workplace. Moreover, engaged employees can help an organization in achieving its mission, execute its strategy and generate business results (Vance, 2006). The starting point of our research is the assumption that leaders who exhibit ethical and empowering leadership are most likely to make their employees more loyal and therefore enhance their overall performance. The concepts of ethical and empowering leadership will be explained in the following sections.

Ethical Leadership

Ethics is an intricate concept based on an interchange of perspectives towards the individual belief systems among the citizens of any culture. The ethical leader is a trustworthy and principled individual who cares about people and makes fair and balanced decisions (Brown and Trevino, 2006). Ethical leadership is the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making (Brown et al., 2005). As a resource, ethical leaders provide support to employees by having their best interests in mind, as well as by defining and modeling appropriate ethical behavior.

Brown et al. (2005) conceptualized ethical leadership as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making”. According to this perspective, ethical leadership consists of certain traits and behaviors. Ethical leaders are altruistic, honest, trustworthy and principled decision-makers who care about the well-being of their followers and broader society (Treviño et al., 2000, 2003). In addition, ethical leaders proactively try to transform followers by communicating ethical standards, modeling ethical behavior, and holding followers accountable for ethical actions (Brown and Treviño, 2006; Treviño et al., 2003).

Simons (1999) theorized that ethical behavior, the perceived degree of congruence between espoused and enacted values, is crucial for the development of employees' trust in managers. There also has been a growing interest in the intersection of leadership and ethics (Krishnan, 2001; Banerji and Krishnan, 2000; Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999). Nonetheless, notwithstanding the supposed centrality of ethics in effective leadership, there remains with few exceptions (Brown et al., 2005; Treviño et al., 2003) little empirical research in this area. Increasing attention now is being paid to the role of ethical leadership (Brown and Treviño, 2006; Treviño and Brown, 2004) and empowering leadership (Arnold et al., 2000; Huang et al., 2010; Konczak et al., 2000) in fostering cooperative attitudes and behaviors among employees. In the modern business environment, demand for more ethical business processes and actions has been proliferating (Rosenthal and Buchholz, 2000). Simultaneously, the environment has continually pressed business systems to apply and/or enhance business ethics of their working and behavior (Cooper and Argyris, 1998; Cooper and Vargas, 2004; Brooks, 2006). Due to these prior studies, the following hypothesis was proposed in the current study: *(H1) There is a positive relationship between Ethical leadership and Affective commitment; (H2) There is a positive relationship between Ethical leadership and continuance commitment*

Empowering Leadership

Empowering leaders share decision-making authority with their subordinates, consult with subordinates regarding important decisions that may relate to their work, allow subordinates more autonomy, and remove unnecessary bureaucratic constraints (Arnold et al., 2000; Chen et al., 2011; Konczak et al., 2000). These empowering behaviors have beneficial outcomes, and a positive association between participative leadership and affective commitment has consistently been shown in previous research (Chen et al., 2007, 2011; Konczak et al., 2000; Kirkman and Rosen, 1999). However, possible mediators of this relationship have not been investigated thoroughly in previous studies. As mentioned earlier, empowering leader behaviors to provide subordinates with important cues about the extent to which their ideas are valued and respected by the leader. This feedback is likely to relate positively to the quality of exchange relationship between leaders and their subordinates, which in turn may enhance subordinate affective commitment. Due to these conclusions, this study hypothesized the following: *(H1) There is a positive relationship between Empowering leadership and Affective commitment; (H2) There is a positive relationship between Empowering leadership and Continuance commitment*

Employee Loyalty

The importance of loyalty in the workplace has been acknowledged all over the world because the performance of any organization depends on the loyalty of its employees; the more the employees are loyal, the better is the performance of the organization (Mohsan et al., 2011). In fact, loyalty is considered one of the key factors that determine organizations' success in today's modern business, which is known for its increased competition and technological advancements. In such business, organizations need to attract and retain skilled, reliable loyal and committed human resources for maintaining its competitiveness in the market (Mohsan et al., 2011). Loyalty is also considered as one of the keys to quality and improved productivity (Mohsan et al., 2011). Organizations invest a significant amount of resources as well as efforts for attracting, recruiting and retaining proactive, engaged and committed employees (Albrecht and Andreetta, 2011).

Although the concept of "Employee Loyalty" or commitment has been widely discussed in the literature, it remains loosely defined (Aityan and Gupta, 2012). Hart and Thompson (2007) have suggested a three-tiered psychologically based definition which consists of "the variety of obligation types that loyalty can imply and anticipates the potential for asymmetrical loyalty configurations between employers and employees" (Aityan and Gupta, 2012,). In

other words, without reciprocity, it is difficult to expect loyalty (Aityan and Gupta, 2012). Turkyilmaz et al. (2011) highlighted that loyalty is a psychological state which describes the relationship between employees and their organizations; this relation has its implications on their decisions to stay or not with their Organizations. It is considered a strong desire to continue being a member in an organization (Turkyilmaz et al., 2011).

Based on the review of prior studies and literature, the following proposed conceptual framework was developed. Figure 1 illustrates the model.

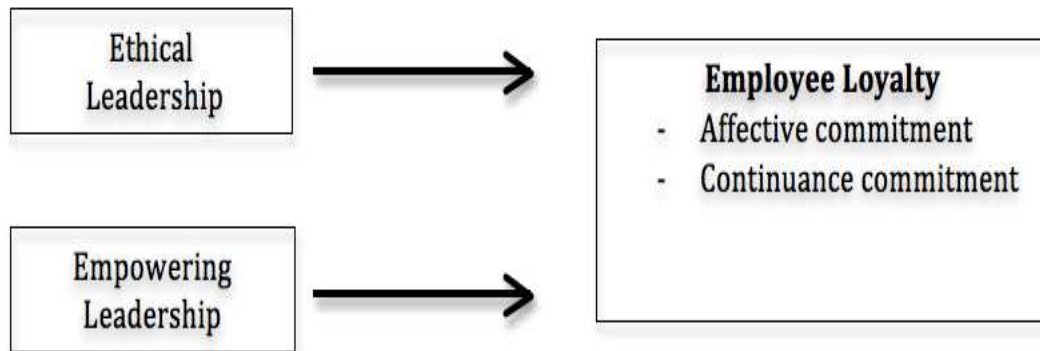


Figure 1: Conceptual model

RESEARCH METHODS

The sample for this study was employees working in the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, a lead institution in the Education private sector in Egypt. This study was performed in the College of Management and Technology (Alexandria). Kredjice and Morgan (1970) declared if a population is 150, a sample size should be 108. Thus, the population is composed of all academic staff (144). Table 1 illustrates the actual sample size selection by the researchers.

The employees were selected using a probability sample, specifically random sampling. In order to have a random selection method, the researchers made sure that the different units in the population (the Arab Academy) have equal probabilities of being chosen. This was done by obtaining a sampling frame, the list of the academic staff employed at the college from the human resource department. Next, the researchers practiced various random selections, picking a name out of the list.

Data for this study were collected by a personally administered questionnaire. The researcher personally distributed the questionnaire to the respondents. An integrated questionnaire combining instruments of the different variables and demographic questions was developed for this research. The questionnaire consisted of four parts which are: Ethical Leadership; Empowering Leadership; Employee Loyalty; and Demographics (gender, age, level of education, Position). After thoroughly describing the theory about the concepts of ethical leadership, empowering leadership and employee loyalty, the appropriate instruments were recognized and used in this research.

The scale measuring Ethical Leadership was adapted from Brown et al., (2005), a 10-item Likert scale that included: My leader... "Listens to what employees have to say", "Disciplines employees who violate ethical standards" and "Conducts his/her personal life in an ethical manner". The scales used to measure empowering leadership were adapted from Xue, et al., in 2011, composed of 16-items Likert scales that include My leader...:"Sets high standards for

performance by his/her own behavior”, Encourages team members to solve problems together” and “Encourages team members to exchange information with one another”. The two dimensions that were used to measure loyalty are namely, Affective Commitment and Cognitive Commitment. A 15-item Likert scale was adapted from previous research by Meyer and Allen (1991). Nine items measured AC and six items measured CC. it included: “I really feel as if the organization’s problems are my own”, “I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization”, and “It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now even if I wanted to”

Table 1: Sample Size and Selection

Staff Position	Actual Number of Staff in Organization		Sample Size	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Graduating Teaching Assistant	6	4.17	5	4.17
Teaching Assistant	81	56.25	60	56.25
Assistant Professor	23	15.97	17	15.97
Associate Professor	28	19.44	21	19.44
Professor	6	4.17	5	4.17
TOTAL	144	100%	108	100%

RESEARCH FINDING

This study conducted several analyses using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software, version 21. The analyses conducted were: Reliability analysis, Frequency analysis, Correlation analysis, and Regression Analysis.

The Reliability analysis was run to uncover the extent to which the scales used to measure the variables in the study are suitable and consistent. Cronbach’s Alpha (α) reliability measure is used to measure the consistency of scales. Based on the results presented in the following table, it is concluded that all the scales used in the study were reliable, thus can be used to measure the variables under study. Table 2 illustrates the result of this analysis.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis

Variable	Number of Items	Current Research Cronbach’s Alpha
Ethical Leadership	10	0.931
Empowering Leadership	16	0.967
Affective Commitment	9	0.926
Continuance Commitment	6	0.861

Correlation analysis was used to test the relationship between the variables. Thus, this analysis verifies the hypotheses of the research (H1, H2, H3, and H4). Correlation determines whether and how strong pairs of variables are related, using the Pearson correlation coefficient. This coefficient indicates the direction and the strength of the linear relationship between two variables. The Pearson’s correlation coefficient (r) can vary from -1 to +1. The greater the value of (r), the stronger the relationship between the variables. A coefficient of +1 indicates a perfect positive relationship and a coefficient of -1 indicates a perfect negative relationship. 0 indicates that there is no linear relationship between the variables (Field, 2009). In this study, all the relationships were positive and significant. The following are the hypotheses and the results of the correlation analysis:

- **Hypothesis 1:** *There is a positive relationship between Empowering leadership and Affective commitment.* This relationship is strong, significant and positive ($r=0.752^{**}$ and $p=0.01$).
- **Hypothesis 2:** *There is a positive relationship between Empowering leadership and Continuance commitment.* This relationship is weak, significant and positive ($r=0.265^{**}$ and $p=0.01$).

- **Hypothesis 3:** *There is a positive relationship between Ethical leadership and Affective commitment.* This relationship is strong, significant and positive ($r=0.695^{**}$ and $p=0.01$).
- **Hypothesis 4:** *There is a positive relationship between Ethical leadership and continuance commitment.* This relationship is moderate, significant and positive ($r=0.462^{**}$ and $p=0.01$).

The multiple regressions first evaluated the model significance as a whole (the interrelationship among the set of variables). The researcher examined the ANOVA (Analysis of Variance), which tested whether the overall regression model was a good fit for the data. The results showed that the model predicted the dependent variable. The variables were significant with an ANOVA value of 0.000. The researcher examined the adjusted R Squared value (coefficient of determination), which expressed how much of the variance in the dependent variable was explained by the model. In this study, the analysis showed that the adjusted R squared value was 0.161. This means that the creative advertising dimensions in the proposed model explained 16% of the variance in the consumers' intentions to purchase automobiles.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of ethical leadership and empowering leadership on employee loyalty according to their continuous and affective commitment in the Egyptian Education Private sector. This paper hypothesized that: (H1) *There is a positive relationship between Ethical leadership and Affective commitment;* (H2) *There is a positive relationship between Ethical leadership and continuance commitment;* (H3) *There is a positive relationship between Empowering leadership and Affective commitment;* (H4) *There is a positive relationship between Empowering leadership and Continuance commitment.*

The sample for this study was employees working in the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, a lead institution in the Education private sector in Egypt. This study was performed in the College of Management and Technology (Alexandria). Kredjice and Morgan (1970) declared if a population is 150, a sample size should be 108. Thus, the population is composed of all academic staff (144). Table 1 illustrates the actual sample size selection by the researchers. The researchers used the SPSS to test the hypotheses. According to the analysis, there is a positive and significant relationship between Empowering leadership and Affective commitment. There is a positive and significant relationship between Empowering leadership and Continuance commitment. There is a positive and significant relationship between Ethical leadership and Affective commitment. There is a positive and significant relationship between Ethical leadership and continuance commitment.

The results are consistent with prior theory predictions (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1961). The findings are consistent with the idea that ethical and empowering leader behaviors provide employees with feelings that allow them to develop open and trusting relationships with their leaders. These characteristics that the leaders hold may strengthen their emotional attachment to the work unit and modify their perception of leader effectiveness (Huang et al., 2010; Konczak et al., 2000).

The findings of this research have important managerial implications. Managers are facing difficulty in finding ways to enhance staff work motivation and organizational commitment regarding teaching loads and administration loads. This research suggests that managers in educational institutions can use ethical and empowering behaviors to create quality relationships with the staff, which will lead to positive outcomes. The content of the scales used to measure ethical and empowering leadership practices provide suggested guidelines for using these behaviors effectively, and other guidelines can be found in Yukl (2013). Ethical leadership behaviors that managers can learn to use include: "*communicating*

relevant values and ethical guidelines, modeling ethical behavior, encouraging ethical practices, holding subordinates accountable for ethical practices, and opposing unethical practices”.

Like any research, this study faced several limitations. When developing the model, the researchers focused on two characteristics, ethical and empowering leadership, neglecting other vital traits that a leader should have. This study used focused on educational institutions, neglecting other work fields. This study focused on only one private university, neglecting other private and public universities. Survey studies in an organizational setting should collect data from multiple sources in order to avoid common method bias. This study focused on academic staff samples, which may allow outcomes not to be generalized to administrative staffs. The next limitation pertains to the use of cross-sectional data. The use of cross-sectional data limits the extent to which causality can be inferred.

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