Comparative Study of Servant Leadership and Paternalistic Leadership on Employee’s Performance

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keywords: Servant Leadership, Paternalistic Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Workplace Deviance.

Abstract. This paper challenges a commonly believed academic view that paternalistic leadership is more suitable than other types of leadership style in the context of Chinese enterprises. Based on the analysis of the data collected from 302 employees using SPSS and LISREL software, the study has found that both leadership styles have significant and positive impact on employee's job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviors, as well as negative impact on employee's workplace deviance. However, servant leadership appears to have better outcomes than paternalistic leadership in the improvement of employee's job satisfaction and OCB, and the former is also more effective in controlling employee's workplace deviance than the latter. The results indicate that servant leadership seems to be more effective than paternalistic leadership to increase employee’s job satisfaction and OCB and reduce their workplace deviance in the enterprises in Mainland China.

Introduction

Due to the take-off and rapid growth of Chinese economy, many researchers are paying more attention to cultural factors in Chinese firms to explore the roots of success. Thus an indigenous theory of paternalistic leadership (PL) and a ternary model has been developed by Cheng, Chou, & Farh (2000), Paternalistic leadership is defined as a “style that combines strong discipline and authority with fatherly benevolence and moral integrity” Based on this definition, PL consists of three important elements: authoritarianism, benevolence, and moral leadership. Paternalistic leadership got a common identity and caused widespread interest and research in mainland China academia. However, Existence is not necessarily reasonable. This paper proposes a question that theoretical and practical circles should think deeply: paternalistic leadership must be the best choice of the Mainland enterprise managers? Therefore, this article take a comparative study of the two leadership style which are likely to be a profound impact in the Mainland China, in order to find which kind of leadership style is more suitable and effective for the Mainland China's enterprises and its employees.

Comparative Analysis of Servant Leadership and Paternalistic Leadership

Servant Leadership, Paternalistic Leadership and Job Satisfaction

In generally, people-oriented rather than work-oriented leadership style can enhance work satisfaction of employees effectively. The reason is that employees feel that they are important, enthusiastic and the true numbers of organization. Some scholars think that the biggest difference between servant leadership and other leadership is that servant leadership is people-oriented leadership style (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). The servant leadership is a humane leadership style. The servant leadership is good at listening and communication to achieve organizational goals. Barbuto & Wheeler (2006) point out that servant leadership is positively corrected to job satisfaction.
In contrast, there are negative interactions of benevolence and authority, moral and authority on performance of employees (Bor-Shiuan Cheng etc, 2003). Besides, there are some conflicts of three dimension of paternalistic leadership. It is difficult to make sure to the relationship between paternalistic leadership and work satisfaction. A study from Bor-Shiuan Cheng (2003) shows that benevolence and moral dimension are positively corrected to job satisfaction, while authority dimension is negatively correlated to job satisfaction. So, we propose the hypothesis 1 (H1): compared to paternalistic leadership, servant leadership increases job satisfaction of employees effectively.

**Servant Leadership, Paternalistic Leadership and OCB**

Organizational citizenship behavior is an individual and voluntary behavior which is not directly designed by the company’s formal reward systems; however, it improves the effectiveness and efficiency of organizational performance (Organ, 1988). The results show servant leadership is positively corrected to extra effort of employees (Barbuto & Wheeler 2006). Ebener & Connell (2010) point out that some behaviors such as appreciates, service and empowerment of servant leadership are positively corrected to OCB, for instance assistance, initiative, participation and promotion.

In comparison, A study from Bor-Shiuan Cheng (2003) finds that benevolence and moral leadership are positively corrected to extra behavior of employees, while authority is negatively corrected to it. Bor-Shiuan Cheng etc (2004) further point out that paternalistic leadership has a significant impact on OCB. The main effects of benevolence and moral are significant, while the main effect of authority is insignificant. It is difficult that paternalistic leadership provides subordinates with the equal individualized care. So, we propose the hypothesis 2 (H2): compared to paternalistic leadership, servant leadership enhances OCB of employees effectively.

**Servant Leadership, Paternalistic Leadership and Deviant Behavior**

Robinson and Bennett (1995) define deviant behavior as “voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and thus is perceived as threatening the well-being of the organization or its members”. Empirical research of deviant behavior is rare. Leader is regarded as an agent of the organization. Under servant leadership, the staff is even more easy to comply with organizational norms, and not prone to deviate from the behavior (Hepworth etc, 2004). The study from Sun Jianming and Wang Biying (2010) shows that servant leadership is negative corrected to abnormal behavior in workplace.

In contrast, Farh, etc (2000) show that authority dimension leads to resentment and resistance of employees, in particularly the young and high-knowledge members. Benevolence and moral are regarded as condescending graces to subordinates, which easily lead to unfair feeling of employees. Hepworth etc (2004) point out that too much control and command to employer will result in the sense of injustices of employees which easily lead to deviant behavior. So, we propose the hypothesis 3 (H3): compared to paternalistic leadership, servant leadership reduces deviant behavior effectively.

![Study model](image-url)
Research Method

Scale Selection

Our questionnaires consist of five scales and personal information. Servant leadership is assessed by a 15-item measure developed by Barbuto & Wheeler (2006) and revised by Chinese scholars Sun Jian Ming & Wang BiYing (2010). Paternalistic Leadership is assessed a 15-item measure developed by Bor-Shiuan Cheng (2000). Job satisfaction is assessed by 20-item measure of Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire developed by Weiss etc (1967). OCB is assessed a 13-item measure developed by Farh (1997). Deviant behavior is assessed a 15-item measure developed by ZhangYan (2010). Questionnaire is used Likert 6 to avoid the doctrine of the mean thought of Chinese. Each item is rated by respondents on six point Likert scales (1=strongly disagree and 6=strongly agree).

Study Objective

Convenient sampling method has been adapted to survey manager and employees from MBA trainee and corporate training member. Altogether 337 questionnaires have been distributed and 10 invalid questionnaires excluded. Finally, 302 valid questionnaires have been collected. The rate of valid questionnaires collected is 89.61%. Demographic profile of effective samples is shown in table 1.

Table 1. Demographic statistical profile of valid samples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable name</th>
<th>frequency (%)</th>
<th>variable name</th>
<th>frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>Under 25year</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>25-35 year</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 1 year</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>36-45 year</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 year</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>Above 45 year</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5year</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>Under college</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above5 year</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>college</td>
<td>50.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General staff</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>primary professional or manager</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>state-owned</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle professional or manager</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior professional or manager</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>Foreign-funded</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reliability Analysis and CMV Analysis

We adopt Cronbach \( \alpha \) coefficient to test internal consistency reliability of questionnaires through SPSS 17.0. The range of Cronbach \( \alpha \) coefficients of subscales is from 0.723 to 0.930, which are higher than habitual 0.70 standards, indicating good reliability of scales (see table 3).

Data Analysis and Study Result

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

We adopt confirmatory factor analysis to test construct validity of five scales through LISREL8.70. We use the following goodness of fit indices: (1) \( \chi^2/df \): \( \chi^2/df <3 \), indicating the model fit very well, \( 3<\chi^2/df <5 \), indicating the model can be accepted, \( \chi^2/df >5 \), indicating the model fit is poor. (2) RMSEA: RMSEA \( \leq 0.1 \) indicating the model can be accepted, RMSEA>0.1 indicating the model fit is poor. (3) NNFI and CFI: the closer values of NNFI and CFI are to 1, the better model fit. (4) SRMR, the smaller the value of SRMR, the better model fit. SRMR \( \leq 0.05 \), indicating the model fit very well, SRMR>0.05, indicating the model fit is poor (See table 1).
Table 2. The result of confirmatory factor analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>(\chi^2)</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>(\frac{\chi^2}{df})</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>NNFI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>SRMR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Servant leadership</td>
<td>163.25</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paternalistic leadership</td>
<td>221.96</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>712.35</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCB</td>
<td>280.74</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deviant behavior</td>
<td>300.96</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>0.089</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of confirmatory factor analysis show scales we adopted have good construct validity.

Correlation Analysis

We adopt Pearson correction analysis to calculate the correlation coefficient of variables (see table 3).

Table 3. Mean, standard deviation and correction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable name</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Servant leadership</td>
<td>3.557</td>
<td>.831</td>
<td>(.914)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Paternalistic leadership</td>
<td>3.555</td>
<td>.664</td>
<td>.654*</td>
<td>(.723)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. OCB</td>
<td>3.982</td>
<td>.779</td>
<td>.479*</td>
<td>.377*</td>
<td>.566*</td>
<td>(.905)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Deviant behavior</td>
<td>2.493</td>
<td>.823</td>
<td>-.244**</td>
<td>-.116</td>
<td>-.287**</td>
<td>-.407**</td>
<td>(.930)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(note: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, N=302, Cronbach’s \(\alpha\) in bracket of the diagonal)

The table 3 shows that servant leadership and paternalistic leadership are positively correlated to employees’ work satisfaction and OCB, meanwhile negatively correlated to their deviant behavior at workplace. The scale of the Cronbach’s \(\alpha\) is between 0.723–0.930, which is higher than the commonly used 0.7 standard, shows that the questionnaire has good reliability.

Comparative Analyses of the Impact Of Servant Leadership and Paternalistic Leadership

Firstly, it is necessary to separately analyze the impact of two leadership styles. We construct a structural equation, in which servant leadership is the independent variable; job satisfaction, OCB and deviant behavior are the dependent variables (shown in figure 2). Servant leadership has a significantly positive impact on work satisfaction (\(\beta=0.71, P<0.001\)), also has a significantly positive impact on OCB (\(\beta=0.64, P<0.001\)), meanwhile has a significantly negative impact on deviant behavior (\(\beta= -0.34, P<0.001\)). The model fit values respectively are \(\chi^2/df = 2.64\), RMSEA = 0.075, NNFI = 0.97, CFI = 0.97, SRMR = 0.064, indicating model fit is good.

![Figure 2. The impact of servant leadership.](image)

Similarly, the impact of paternalistic leadership on work attitude and behavior of employees is presented in the figure 3. The results show that paternalistic leadership has a significantly positive impact on work satisfaction (\(\beta=0.78, P<0.001\)), also has a significantly positive impact on OCB (\(\beta=0.77, P<0.001\)), meanwhile has a significantly negative impact on deviant behavior (\(\beta= -0.41, P<0.001\)). The model fit values respectively are \(\chi^2/df =3.28\), RMSEA=0.091, NNFI=0.95, CFI= 0.96, SRMR=0.063, indicating model fit is good.
From the structure equation model analysis above, separate analysis of the impact of servant leadership and paternalistic leadership on work attitude and behavior cannot compare effect size directly. Therefore, we constructed a structural equation, in which servant leadership and paternalistic leadership are the independent variables; work attitude and behavior are the dependent variables. The results show that servant leadership still has a positively effect on job satisfaction (β=0.45, P<0.001), while paternalistic leadership has no effect (t=1.53, P>0.05). Hypothesis 1 is verified. Servant leadership has a positive effect on OCB (β=0.40, P<0.001), while paternalistic leadership has no effect (t=1.38, P>0.05). Hypothesis 2 is verified. Servant leadership has a negatively effect on deviant behavior (β= -0.28, P<0.05), while paternalistic leadership has no effect (t=0.07, P>0.05). Hypothesis 3 is verified. These results explain that compared to paternalistic leadership, servant leadership has a more positive impact on work attitude and behavior. In other words, it can enhance work attitude and OCB and decrease deviant behavior more effectively. Additionally, the values of model fit respectively are χ²/df=2.55, RMSEA=0.075, NNFI=0.92, CFI= 0.92, SRMR=0.061, indicating model fit is good.

Conclusion and Advice

This study has found out that Servant leadership and paternalistic leadership are positively correlated with employees’ work satisfaction and OCB, meanwhile is negatively correlated to their deviant behavior at workplace. Servant leadership is more effective in promoting employees’ work satisfaction and OCB, and reducing their deviant behavior than paternalistic leadership. In fact, servant leadership may be a better alternative. So manager should adopt altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, wisdom, and organizational stewardship. As for the paternalistic leadership theory which is from Hong Kong and Taiwan, It can not to be accepted overall or blindly deny for management theory and practice circle of the Mainland.

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