

The Impact of Al-Ghazali's Virtues on Organizational Commitment and Performance: A Case Study at Private Education Institutions in Kurdistan Region of Iraq

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Abstract

Based on the contemporary leadership styles Spiritual, Ethical and Servant leadership theories are very popular among the scholars during the last decade. Although the virtues of leaders have been studied by scholars, it was seen on the literature that these virtues of leaders by Islamic values haven't been tested in enough number. Thus, this research studies the impact of four main virtues by Al-Ghazali on the organizational commitment and performance of the employees at private schools in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The results show that religiosity is an initiator factor that impacts wisdom and justice. Furthermore, wisdom is another important factor that impacts justice, temperance, courage, performance, and organizational commitment. This study includes theoretical and practical contributions to the literature.

Keywords: Leadership, Four virtues of Al-Ghazali, Organizational Commitment, Performance

1. Introduction

Leadership is one of the most investigated topic in Organization field. It can be defined generally as a process of influencing and motivating a group of people to achieve a certain goal. Murphy (1941) expressed leadership as a coordination and satisfaction factor in group. Stogdill (1950) stated that leadership is the process of influencing subordinates for reaching the organizational objectives. Most of the ideas about leadership are coming together on influencing, motivating and coordinating of members according to organizational objectives.

Based on the contemporary leadership styles Spiritual, Ethical and Servant leadership theories are very popular among the scholars during the last decade. Sıgrı and Basar (2015) have demonstrated that there is a negative relationship between ethical leaders and subordinates' intent for leaving the job, negligence and fatigue in their job. Some researchers have found that, personality, behavior and moral characters vary according to individuals religious faiths (Hage and Posner, 2015). In addition Faris and Parry (2011) concluded that managers who have more commitment to religiosity can get more

effective decisions and use the authority-delegation in a more useful way rather than less religious committed managers. Stouten, Van Dijke and De Cremer (2012) found that ethical leadership provides subordinates sustainability and encourage in the organization. Riggio et all (2010) have defined ethical leader as someone who has four cardinal virtues of prudence, fortitude, justice and temperance, which improved according to Plato's and Aristotle's concepts about the leaders. And they believe that leadership will be best represented if he or she has these cardinal virtues. Hence Secgin (2015) has searched in Turkey, these cardinal virtues of wisdom, justice, temperance and courage according to Al-Ghazalis' advises for leaders, and found that there is a significant relation between these virtues and leaders' religiosity (responsibilities and characteristic).

In Qur'an God signifies *"We have certainly created man in the best of stature"* (Quran: 95/4). In addition Prophet Muhammad (saw)³⁷ explained Ihsan to his companions, as you worship Allah as if you see Him, if you don't see Him, He sees you. Related to those sacred expressions an individual has to differ good from bad and choose the better attitudes as accepting the ethical sayings from Qur'an (Zaim, 2013). According to Al-Ghazali, individuals are responsible to improve their ethics through education so that pleasant morality (Hulk-ı Hasen) could be obtained and who fulfilled this duty can get closer to Allah (Durakoğlu, 2014). For Al-Ghazali the components of pleasant morality are four cardinal virtues of wisdom, justice, temperance and courage (Secgin, 2015).

Although the virtues of leaders have been studied by scholars, it was seen on the literature that these virtues haven't been tested in enough number (Mehmet, 1997; Sergiovanni, 2005; Riggio, et all, 2010; Hackett & Wang, 2012; Zhu, et all, 2015). Further, this kind of research yet hasn't been studied in Kurdistan Region of Iraq so far. From this point of view, we proposed this study in this region.

In this study, the use of four main virtues (wisdom, justice, temperance, and courage) of Al-Ghazali have been tested on the managers of private education institutions in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The impact of four virtues have been tested on organizational commitment of employees. The data have been analyzed using IBM SPSS 18 and AMOS. The results of analysis have been explained in the results and conclusion sections.

2. Theoretical Background

The term leadership is being mentioned since end of 1700s (King cited from Stogdill, King, 1990). But the scholars have stated their surveys on this topic in twentieth century (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Like Stogdill expressed, there are many definitions over leadership, but Burns (1978) stated that

³⁷ These words mean: may God send blessings and salutations on him.

“Leadership is one of the most observed and (Bass adds the second part) least understood phenomena on earth” (Bass & Bass, 2009). According to Certo (2011), leadership is the process of influencing others ahead to certain objectives and it is the prerequisite for the organizational success. And Daft (2007), asserted that leadership is imposing people new behaviors for the strategy of organization and he has defined it in his second book as, the ability to use person’s ability to construct a culture of performance, trust and collaboration (Daft, 2007a,b).

As Proctor (2004) asserted, some people born as leader and some can grow as leader. But the born leaders must improve their characteristics to be more successful as well. On the other hand Moten (2011) put forward that leadership will not be so effective from its developed place to another. Because these traits are affected through religion, moral and traditional indicators. That’s why scholars say that there is not any special and universal leadership trait, which can be considered for all situations and organizations (Moten, 2011).

The leadership history can be summarized as followed; firstly, researchers have focused on Great Man Theory and Traits of the Leaders in 1940 (King, 1990; Certo&Certo, 2006; Seters & Field, 2007). They have explained the term as inheritance from their ancestors (King, 1990). This followed by the discussion of the influence of leaders and their effectiveness to the organizations.

In 1977 leadership was stated as a subset of human behavior (Hunt, 1977). The Ohio State and Michigan University Studies have been found in these years (Mann, 1959; Stogdill & Coons, 1957; Northouse, 2015; Schriesheim & Kerr, 1974). In addition Managerial Grid Model and Theory X-Y have been conducted as trait theories of the leaders and followers.

In the next era scholars have discussed, how the situational factors can affect the traits of leaders. Based on these findings investigators stepped their writings forward and contributed to this field Contingency theory (Fiedler, 1964). Considered to this theory we can mention the Path Goal Theory and the Normative Theory (Fiedler, 1971; Donaldson, 2001; Keller, 1989; Wofford & Liska, 1993).

After this era scholars have brought new dimensions to leadership styles, and named as Transactional period. They have searched the relationship between leaders and subordinates, Vertical Dyad Linkage Theory, the Reciprocal Information Approach, Leader Member Exchange Theory, Social Ex..... Theory and Role Making Model symbolized the transactional theories. On the other hand, despite the wide studies over leadership, in 1975 Minor suggested to leaving the leadership studies (Minor, 1975). Pfeffer wrote in his article that the leadership is only a symbol and has a small effect on the success of organizations (Pfeffer, 1977). Nevertheless instead of leaving this field, studies over leadership have

always increased steadily. In our current time Contemporary Leadership Theories of Transformational, Transactional, Servant and Ethical leadership styles are highly investigated topics by the scholars.

One of the most important parameters of the leadership is its virtues. According to Plato and Stoics virtue is a skill (the skill of living), but Aristotle does not accept it (DePaul & Zagzebski, 2003; Broadie, 1993), for Aristotle virtue is desired ability and learned by trials and mistakes (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). On the other hand Al Ghazali mentions it as moral virtue, and sees it equal with loyalty and love for the Divine will. Hence he puts to the center of morality Allah and Religion (Attaran, 2015). In Aristotle's and Plato's view cardinal virtues are: prudence, fortitude, justice and temperance (Riggio, Zhu, Reina, & Maroosis, 2010; Pieper, 1965). Similarly Ghazali has defined four cardinal virtues: wisdom, courage, justice and temperance (Secgin, 2015). In this research the effect of leader, who has those virtues of Ghazali, to the organizational commitment will be investigated. Those virtues can be sequenced as (Sherif M. , 1975; Broadie, S. 1993; Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. 2004; Durakoğlu, A. 2014);

- 1- Wisdom
- 2- Courage
- 3- Temperance
- 4- Justice

Aristotle uses prudence instead of wisdom, and defines it the balance between two extremes. In another place he defines wisdom as deciding to do right thing according to the experiences (Riggio, Zhu, Reina, & Maroosis, 2010). For Ghazali wisdom is the knowledge of Allah. According to him whoever does not know Allah but knows everything is not a wise. (Sherif M. A., 1975)

According to Aristotle courage functions with fear. Without fear courage cannot be defined (Riggio, Zhu, Reina, & Maroosis, 2010). For Ghazali courage is the balance between cowardice and recklessness (Sherif M. A., 1975). And courage, foster individual to behave favorably, sustain the correct or righteous way and prevent from faulty or falsehood (Khadduri, 1984).

Temperance is the ability of managing individuals excels. It is the moderation of everything (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Ghazali remarks the temperance as the largest virtue with eighteen subdivisions and define the temperance balance between self-indulgence and insensibility. Hence he mentions some of these subdivisions as modesty, shame, liberality and contentment (Sherif M. A., 1975).

While temperance is the ability of ignoring the desires of body, justice is the hope for achieving to the heaven (Bejczy, 2011). According to Ibn Miskayawh, who is a philosopher and historian lived in the tenth century, justice is balance between doing injustice and enduring injustice. He asserts that justice

occurs when the other three virtues of wisdom, courage and temperance work in harmony, but conversely Ghazali does not accept this, according to him justice is an independent virtue and a control faculty of other three virtues (Quasem, 2017; Secgin, 2015B; Durakoğlu, 2014).

Organizational commitment could be defined as the loyalty (relationship with the other members in the group), identification (acceptance of the organizational objectives) and participation to the related goals of organization (John & Taylor, 1999). For Buchanan it is the psychological link between people and organization (Buchanan, 1974).

3. Methodology

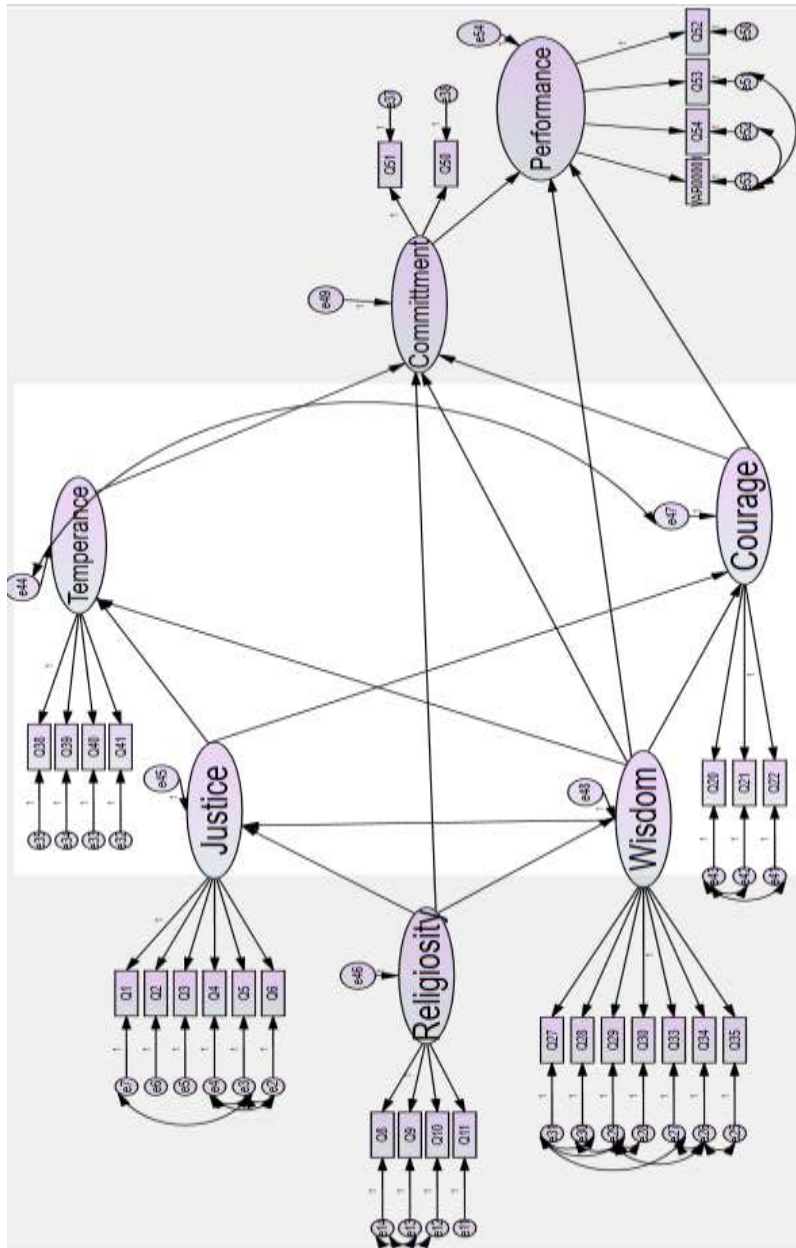
3.1. Research Problem

This study aims to determine the impact of Al-Ghazali's virtue theory on the organizational commitment of employees in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Hypotheses questions have been derived from the leadership problems those have been explained in the literature review section of the study. Thus, the questions of the study can be sequenced as;

1. Perceived religiosity of a leader significantly impacts the perceived wisdom of him/her
2. Perceived religiosity of a leader significantly impacts the perceived justice of him/her
3. Perceived wisdom of a leader significantly impacts the perceived justice of him/her
4. Perceived wisdom of a leader significantly impacts the perceived courage of him/her
5. Perceived wisdom of a leader significantly impacts the perceived temperance of him/her
6. Perceived justice of a leader significantly impacts the perceived courage of him/her
7. Perceived justice of a leader significantly impacts the perceived temperance of him/her
8. Perceived temperance of a leader significantly impacts the organizational commitment of employees
9. Perceived courage of a leader significantly impacts the organizational commitment of employees
10. Organizational commitment significantly impacts the employee's performance

As a result, the model of the study comes out as;

Figure 5 Model of the study



The sample of the population have been gathered from the private education institutions of the region. Totally 400 employees have answered the survey questionnaire. Moreover, 55 of the answers have been eliminated from the analysis due to some technical problems and 345 of the answers have been evaluated for the further analysis. IBM SPSS 23 statistical package software have been utilized to propose exploratory factor analysis and AMOS 23 software have been utilized for confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling. For the structural equation modeling, maximum likelihood method has been selected.

3.2. Findings of the study

3.2.1. Exploratory Factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis clusters the number of questions, those correlated to each other more than other question, under a latent factor. Doing this, we can reduce the number of variables for the ease and convenience of analysis. In this study, we have used varimax method for the rotation of the factors with the principles component analysis. Initially, KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) and Barlett's test of sphericity results have been considered in order to determine the adequacy of the sampling for this research. KMO level is expected to obtain minimum 0.7 and this value should be significant at $P < 0.05$. Table 1 below shows that both KMO test and Barlett's test of sphericity results with very adequate values.

Table 29 KMO and Bartlett's Test Results

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.921
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	7080.336
	Degree of Freedom	561
	Significance	0

Furthermore, the influential factor of exploratory factor analysis is determined by eigen values. The value of each factor is expected to be higher than one. The results of this research show that there are 7 main factors which has eigen value above one. These results show that there are seven main factors in this questionnaire. However, total variance explained for whole questionnaire is expected to be minimum 50%. The results in this study shows that these factors explain 67% of the overall variance.

Those factors have been named as religiosity of leader (Factor 2), justice of leader (Factor 4), courage of leader (Factor 7), wisdom of leader (Factor 1), temperance of leader (Factor 3), organizational commitment (Factor 6), and performance of employee (Factor 5). The factor loadings of each item under the concerning construct have been shown on the table below. Each item is expected to have minimum 0.3 factor load for sample size that is above 300. The factor loadings of each item under the concerning factor is adequate according to this standard.

In order to test the reliability of each factor, Cronbach's Alpha method have been selected. It was seen that justice factor had 0.886, religiosity factor 0.822, courage factor 0.735, wisdom factor 0.901, temperance factor 0.863, commitment factor 0.763, and performance factor had 0.866 Cronbach's Alpha value. Due to the expected Cronbach's Alpha value is equal or above 0.700, these results show that each factor is reliable enough to propose further analysis.

3.2.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis has been proposed for the model to validate each factor. The analysis is done to test the reliability of the factors either. This analysis measures the reliability of each factor for the adequacy to test the hypothesis of the whole study. It can be considered as a type of structural equation modeling. The parameters of evaluation are mainly as root mean square residual (RMR), root mean square of approximation (RMSEA), good fit index (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and incremental fit index (IFI). As parameters of measurement, GFI, CFI, and IFI values are expected to be above 0.90 for good fit. Moreover, RMR and RMSEA values are expected to be less than 0.1 for a good fit. Table below shows all the good fit indexes are adequate.

Table 30 Model Fit Index

Table 5 shows the factor loadings of each item in order to test the adequacy of them. The standardized estimates of each item should be above 0.5 to be acceptable. The results in this study shows that the factor loadings at each construct are well above 0.5. the details can be seen on the table 5.

Table 31 Factor Loadings of each Item

Q6	<---	Justice	0.669
Q4	<---	Justice	0.726
Q3	<---	Justice	0.810
Q2	<---	Justice	0.873
Q1	<---	Justice	0.778
Q11	<---	Religiosity	0.741
Q10	<---	Religiosity	0.703
Q9	<---	Religiosity	0.710
Q8	<---	Religiosity	0.717
Q35	<---	Wisdom	0.762
Q34	<---	Wisdom	0.703
Q30	<---	Wisdom	0.625
Q29	<---	Wisdom	0.713
Q28	<---	Wisdom	0.686
Q27	<---	Wisdom	0.705
Q33	<---	Wisdom	0.769
Q41	<---	Temperance	0.732
Q40	<---	Temperance	0.819

Q39	<---	Temperance	0.854
Q38	<---	Temperance	0.779
Q37	<---	Temperance	0.564
Q50	<---	Commitment	0.788
Q51	<---	Commitment	0.784
Q22	<---	Courage	0.817
Q21	<---	Courage	0.616
Q20	<---	Courage	0.704
Q55	<---	Performance	0.617
Q54	<---	Performance	0.703
Q53	<---	Performance	0.838
Q52	<---	Performance	0.760

For the further analysis, discriminant and convergent validity tests have been conducted to evaluate the construct validity of the model. Discriminant validity was conducted to test if the values of factors are distinct and uncorrelated and convergent validity have been proposed to test if the items of each construct are sufficiently intercorrelated. Convergent validity is measured by assessing average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR). The expected values of AVE shouldn't be less than 0.5 and CR 0.7. table above shows the results of convergent and discriminant validities.

3.2.3. Structural Equation Modeling

Structural equation modeling has been proposed among 7 variables by utilizing AMOS 23 software. The model fit indexes have the same threshold values as confirmatory factor analysis. it was seen that RMR value was 0.054, RMSEA 0.061, X^2/DF 2.269, CFI 0.92, GFI 0.90, and IFI 0.92. According to these results model is fit enough to be accepted. For the next step, results of the hypothesis can be evaluated.

As result of hypothesis, it was observed that perceived religiosity of a leader impacted the wisdom significantly ($\beta=0.577$, $t= 7.987$, $p<0.01$) and justice ($\beta= 0.373$, $t= 5.327$, $p<0.01$). These results support H1 and H2. Secondly, perceived wisdom of a leader impacted justice ($\beta= 0.483$, $t= 6.944$, $p<0.01$), temperance ($\beta= 0.630$, $t= 7.004$, $p<0.01$), and courage ($\beta= 0.539$, $t= 6.424$ $p<0.01$). This shows that H3, H4, and H5 also supported. It was also seen that perceived justice of a leader impacted courage ($\beta= 0.402$, $t= 5.119$ $p<0.01$) significantly. On the other hand, it has been observed that the justice doesn't have a significant impact on temperance ($\beta= 0.067$, $t= 0.853$, $p>0.05$). These results support H6 but not H7. Moreover, H8 and H9 supported due to courage ($\beta= 0.555$, $t= 6.337$ $p<0.01$) and temperance ($\beta= 0.205$, $t= 2.781$ $p<0.05$) has significant impact on organizational commitment.

Finally, it has been observed that organizational commitment significantly impacts the performance of employee ($\beta= 0.778$, $t= 10.327$ $p<0.01$).

4. Discussion:

The result of this study shows similar results with Gonzalez, Green and Chavez's (2012) research. But we couldn't find a significant relationship between justice and temperance as in their study. Moayed (2009) has found a significant relationship between religiosity of leader and organizational commitment, and this study also displays same result. In addition Abbasi, Rehman and Abbasi (2010) found that there is positive relation between ethical values and managerial performance. So that, they asserted if a manager can be a good example for the subordinates organizational value (shareholders' welfare) could be increased (Abbasi, Rehman, & Abbasi, 2010). According to this study when the organizational commitment through ethical values increased, organizational performance will be increased as well.

On the other hand Dyck and Kleysen (2001) found negative correlation between justice and wisdom, and between justice and courage. This research has found positive correlation between justice and wisdom, and justice and courage.

5. Conclusion:

Leadership is the most important tool that help any system be implemented successfully or fail. A leader is the person who should inspire his colleagues for the future innovations. It was thought that in Islam leadership is put into practice in a spiritual way and morality and some special virtues comes out in their leadership characteristics. To understand this, this study has been proposed.

Thus, the aim of this research was to study four virtues of Al-Ghazali's on the leader as leader characteristics. It was aimed to test the impact of these characteristics on the organizational commitment of an employee in education institutions of Kurdistan Region of Iraq. For this aim, 345 survey questionnaire results have been analyzed to test the concerning hypothesis.

Initially it has been observed that religiosity of a leader impacts wisdom and justice of him. By another meaning, if a leader is a religious person, this characteristics may help him be equitable with his decisions and to his subordinates. Furthermore, religiosity probability will make him become an erudite person. Religiosity virtue had significant impact on the organizational commitment, too. It shows that if a leader is a religious person, the subordinate probably will be committed to their organization more.

Secondly, it was observed that wisdom of a leader will impact him become equitable person. Moreover, this virtue might help him take his steps and decisions in courage. However, this virtue

impact his temperance and he may become more compassionate person toward his subordinates. This brings out that the wisdom is the most important virtue that impact other three virtues. It was also observed that wisdom virtue impact organizational commitment and performance positively. By another saying, if a leader has wisdom virtue, their subordinates probably will be committed to their organizations and their performance will be influenced positively. IT comes out from these results that wisdom is the most important virtue that a leader must have so that it impacts all other virtues and performances of the subordinates directly.

Another conclusion in this study is the impact of justice on temperance and courage. It was seen that justice had a significant impact on courage while it didn't effect temperance meaningfully. This shows that a person who is equitable, doesn't have to be compassionate also but probably will be brave while taking some decisions. The reason for not impacting temperance positively could be that justice virtue might require to be adequately tough rather than compassionate toward some actions.

Temperance virtue on a leader impacted organizational commitment positively. However, courage virtue also had the significant impact on the organizational commitment. It was seen that courage and commitment virtues have significant impact on the performance of the employees.

Finally, it can be said that ethical values and virtues of leaders impact their subordinates positively. Although such virtues as justice may consequently harm some employees, nevertheless, they are still ok with it.

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