

Explaining the Relationship between Lean Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior with Respect to the Mediator Variable of Organizational Commitment

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Abstract: The purpose of the present research is to present a comparative model based on explaining the relationship between lean leadership and organizational citizenship behavior with regard to the mediator variable of organizational commitment. The type of research is descriptive-correlation. The method of data collection is a combination of library and field studies and the main tool of data collection is a questionnaire. The research findings, while confirming the proposed model, showed that there is a direct relationship between lean leadership and components: the development of others, perseverance in lean thinking, aligning goals with vision with organizational citizenship behavior in public universities and Azad universities of Fars province. There is a direct relationship between commitment to self-development and creating a vision, determining effective and promoting organizational values with organizational citizenship behavior in the public universities of Fars province. There is no relationship between commitment to self-development, determining effective and promoting organizational values, and creating a vision with organizational citizenship behavior in the Azad universities of Fars province. There is a direct relationship between lean leadership and organizational commitment in the public universities of Fars province. There is a direct relationship between organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior in the public universities and Azad universities of Fars province. There is no relationship between lean leadership and organizational citizenship behavior with regard to the mediating role of organizational commitment in the Azad universities of Fars province. There is no

relationship between lean leadership and organizational commitment in the Azad universities of Fars province.
Keywords: Leadership, Lean Leadership, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Organizational Commitment

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is essential for the successful performance of any organization. Leadership researchers are trying to understand what factors lead to leadership success and organizational success (Ehsani Moghaddam, 2019). Leadership is an example and a role model for others to follow. An example and role model mean to prepare a superior standard for others, while the leader gives them motivation and encourages them to follow him and makes them passionate (Jafari H, 2018). In an organization, leaders shape the values of that organization, then expand them, and always protect and support them. Also, in order to preserve and expand these values more and more, they begin implementing them, and like the prophets through their behavior embody these values with the spirit of the organization. According to Bernes, leaders and followers increase each other's motivation and create the organization's progress through this bilateral relationship. The management performed based on the ethical and human criteria will lead to the growth and transformation of values in the leader and the organization under his guidance (Mortezaee, 2017). Understanding the functions of organizational leadership by providing a principled vision that is the overall identity tool of the system and its aim is to create and respect one another and to create systems that lead to effective communication among individuals is also essential (Khaleghi, 2015). Lean leaders have important capabilities and characteristics to lead in the organizations of the present era. They act in the role of a coach with flexibility and dynamism. Lean leaders nurture the leadership talent of their followers and share leadership (Khosrowshahi, 2016).

Voluntary behaviors performed in the societies according to the values and are manifested in the form of extra-roles within the organizations are named as organizational citizenship behaviors (Nesari, 2013). Hassani regards organizational citizenship behavior as useful behaviors not mentioned in the job description, but employees to help others in doing their duties manifest themselves evidently. One of the reasons leading to the success of large organizations is that they have employees who try beyond their official duties. Considerable researches have been conducted about desirable, while informal behavior in the organization. Such behavior is called organizational citizenship behavior or "Good Soldier Syndrome" (Hassani, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

The term organizational citizenship was first applied by (Hassani, 2019); though before them, individuals such as Kates and Kan by distinguishing between the performance of role and spontaneous behaviors in the 1970s and 1980s and before them Chester Barnard by stating the concept of willingness to cooperate in 1938 had considered this issue. Organizational citizenship behavior is the group of activities related to the role of individuals in the organization that is performed beyond the expectations of job duty and descriptions by an individual, and although the organization's formal reward system does not identify these behaviors, they are effective for the good performance of the organization. Other concepts related to the extra-role performance, which are very similar to organizational citizenship behavior are prosocial behaviors, spontaneous behaviors, extra-role behaviors, and contextual performance, but among them, organizational citizenship behavior has become more popular and in recent two decades, especially by the beginning of the 21st century, the number of researches in this field has grown dramatically. In these researches, the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and variables in various areas of management, such as

human resources, marketing, psychology, strategic management, international management, economics, and leadership has been measured (Hosseini & Mehdizadeh, 2018).

With the increasing complexity of today's societies, the organizations' mission to meet the expectations of individuals in the community is surely becoming more sensitive and more important. In general, it can be claimed that our world is the world of organizations, and as these forms are becoming more active, the problems of individuals in society can be removed. What is evident nowadays among the technicians is the essential role of man as the principal administrator of the organizations. Probably the most obvious consequences of the absence of citizenship behavior or good soldier syndrome mean inefficiency, job burnout, and absenteeism (Zareie Matin et al, 2012). In the bureaucratic system, all efforts of the managers have been towards acquiring more efficiency by preserving the pyramid hierarchy of the organization. Therefore, there are superficial and unreliable relationships among people. But in a human and democratic values system, accurate and reliable relationships are created among the people. In such an environment, the organization and its members are given the opportunity to go as far as they can. Accordingly, paying attention to the citizens in the democratic value system is increasing. Citizenship behavior is generally a valuable and useful behavior that people manifest voluntarily and intentionally of themselves. Thus, studying and investigating such behavior of individuals in the organization, which is known as organizational citizenship behavior, seems to be very important and essential (Rezaei, 2015).

The absence of citizenship behaviors means inefficiency, job burnout, deviant behaviors and absenteeism (Zareie Matin et al, 2012). If citizenship behavior is not dominant in the organization, people try to exaggerate the problems and complain about the status quo of the organization rather than finding solutions to go out from the problems. Damaging the organization and making disturbance and overburden are also created in the absence of citizenship behavior. Citizenship behavior is generally an innovative and spontaneous behavior and includes cooperating with others, protecting the organization, providing voluntary constructive ideas, self-training and maintaining a desirable attitude towards the organization, and since this type of behavior is not compulsory and is not among one's duties and responsibilities, the lack of the incidence of these behaviors is not measurable and can create many problems at the organization level (Moghimi, 2015).

Citizenship behavior is a valuable and useful behavior that people voluntarily and intentionally display of themselves. Organizational citizen-oriented behavior refers to fair and discretionary actions that promote the effectiveness of the organization (Rezaei, 2015). Hosseinian et al consider organizational citizenship behaviors to include voluntary cooperation beyond performing psychological duties and commitment towards the employer. The purpose of these behaviors is to help individuals or the organization and do not necessarily include job requirements, and on the other hand, they are not performed because of prizes and punishments either. divide the organizational citizenship behaviors into two classes based on the obtained benefits. One class of these behaviors is performed aiming to help individuals (colleagues and manager) and the other class is performed aiming to help the organization. They know the citizenship behavior of employees as positive measures of the employees to improve productivity, correlation, and cohesion in the working environment that are beyond organizational requirements (Hosseinian et al, 2017).

Commitment is one of the human traits, which seems to be the inherent trait of human beings. Commitment is a factor in establishing social relationships. In fact, the relationships of humans with each other have been based on commitment. Without commitment, human behaviors lose their meaning and sense. Any behavior that takes place in a particular situation to other individual indicates the commitment that one has to others (Farrokhnejad Kashki, 2014). One of the issues attracted researchers' attention in the field of commitment is the

various aspects of the concept of commitment, because employee's attachment and commitment are linked not only to the organization but also to other references such as profession, family, direct supervisor, religion, and so on. A loyal and committed human force, consistent with the organizational goals and values and inclined to maintain membership in the organization is ready to do activity beyond his assigned duties and can be an important factor in the effectiveness and productivity of any organization. The existence of such a force in the organization is associated with escalating the levels of performance and lowering the ratio of absenteeism, delay and dismissal of employees, manifesting the organization's image in the community appropriate, and providing the ground for the growth and development of the organization (Hosseinian et al, 2017).

However, one of the problems of today's organizations is the low commitment of individuals towards their organization and neglecting this issue results in not using human resources appropriately. Attempt to understand the ratio of individuals' commitment to the organization can provide a proper basis for managers' decisions at various stages of the human resources management process including recruitment and training, preserving and applying human resources (Mir Hosseini, 2017). Lack of employees' commitment as it leads to poorer performance and higher costs can be detrimental to the organization. Therefore, organizations should seek to find a way to increase organizational commitment and thus reduce the voluntary abandonment of the organization by its individuals (Buck and Watson, 2012, p. 228). One of the features and problems of most public and private organizations and companies of the country, compared to what is observed in foreign companies and organizations, especially in the West and Japan, is the lack of organizational commitment of the employees towards the organization in which they are working. When an organization is created, it needs resources and facilities to achieve its goals (Hosseinian et al, 2017).

Lean leaders consider spiritual leadership techniques and use spirituality to guide and motivate employees. Through focusing on both aspects of self-professional and self-personal of the employees and working on the morale of the followers at emotional, value, mental and technical levels, they focus on nurturing self-awareness, self-leadership, and continuous growth of the employees, and try to create and preserve trust in the organization. The capabilities and characteristics of this type of leadership, on the one hand, and the lack of internal and native study of organizational lean leadership have led the researcher to identify a model (dimensions, components, variables, and indicators) of lean leadership in a comprehensive research and extract the native variables and indicators of the model through in-depth and semi-structured interview with managers and experts in the field of organizational leadership. In other words, the main problem of this research is divided into two categories of the theoretical gap and practical gap:

The available theoretical gaps include:

- Absence of sufficient, coherent and consistent studies in the field of lean management and leadership,
- Absence of a comprehensive model theoretically and practically in the field of lean leadership,
- Shortage of definitions related to the concepts, dimensions, components, and variables of lean leadership.

The available practical gaps include:

- Lack of the tools necessary for lean organizational leadership,
- Providing a lean leadership model for the organizations,

- Effective and efficient use of the dimensions, components, and variables of the model that are completed in diverse and applied issues of the field of management and leadership including human resource management, structure designing, performance evaluation and management, service compensation, educational, and organizational behavior.

And filling and completing the above gaps in this research will be the same as research innovation in practice; in other words, in this research for the first time, a comprehensive model in the field of lean leadership will be presented. The dimensions, components, and variables of lean leadership will be identified and the tools necessary for organizational leadership will be presented.

Therefore, regarding what was proposed, the researcher seeks to answer this question that what is the validity of the lean leadership model in the Islamic Azad universities and Public Universities of Fars Province?

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research is descriptive of correlation type in terms of method and it is an applied-developmental in terms of goal that has been collecting data through field researches method. The statistical population of this research is two groups. The first group is the statistical population of the Islamic Azad University employees in Fars province with 650 people, of whom 240 people were selected as sample using Krejcie and Morgan table (Table 1). The second group was 1085 employees of public universities in Fars province, of whom 282 people were selected as sample using Krejcie and Morgan table.

Three questionnaires were used to collect the required data of the research. Two questionnaires were used to measure lean leadership for the two statistical populations of Azad and public universities because the components and sub-components of lean leadership in the two statistical populations were not identical by experts, and hence two questionnaires were designed and used to measure lean leadership. The second questionnaire was also used to measure organizational citizenship behavior. The third questionnaire was also used to measure organizational commitment. The statistical methods of confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modeling, and single-sample t-test along with SPSS version 23, and AMOS version 24 software were used to analyze the data.

3. RESULTS

1. Is there a relationship between lean leadership and organizational citizenship behavior in the public universities of Fars province? The standardized direct effect of lean leadership and organizational citizenship behavior is positive and significant; indicating the point that lean leadership and organizational citizenship behavior have a direct relationship and by increasing the ratio of lean leadership, organizational citizenship behavior will increase.

2. Is there a relationship between the components of lean leadership and organizational citizenship behavior in the public universities of Fars province? Regarding the establishment of structural equations presuppositions, the mentioned questions and hypotheses have been investigated and their results have been shown in (Diagram 1). The software output indicates the appropriateness of the research proposed model. So that the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is equal to (0.059). The normalized Chi-square value (CMIN / DF) is equal to (2.17) and the goodness-of-fit (GFI) indicator value is equal to (0.92). Other fit indicators of the research proposed model have been presented in (Table 2).

Table 1. Fit Indicators for Investigating the Relationship between the Components of Lean Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior in Public Universities

Indicator	Acceptable Limit	Reported Value
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	Equal to or lower than 0.08	0.059
Normalized Chi-Square (CMIN / DF)	Equal to or lower than 3	2.17
Goodness of Fit Indicator (GFI)	Equal to or higher than 0.9	0.92
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Indicator (AGFI)	Equal to or higher than 0.9	0.90
Comparative Fit Indicator (CFI)	Equal to or higher than 0.9	0.94
Normalized Fit Indicator (NFI)	Equal to or higher than 0.9	0.92
Tucker-Lewis Indicator (TLI)	Equal to or higher than 0.9	0.92
Incremental Fit Indicator (IFI)	Equal to or higher than 0.9	0.91

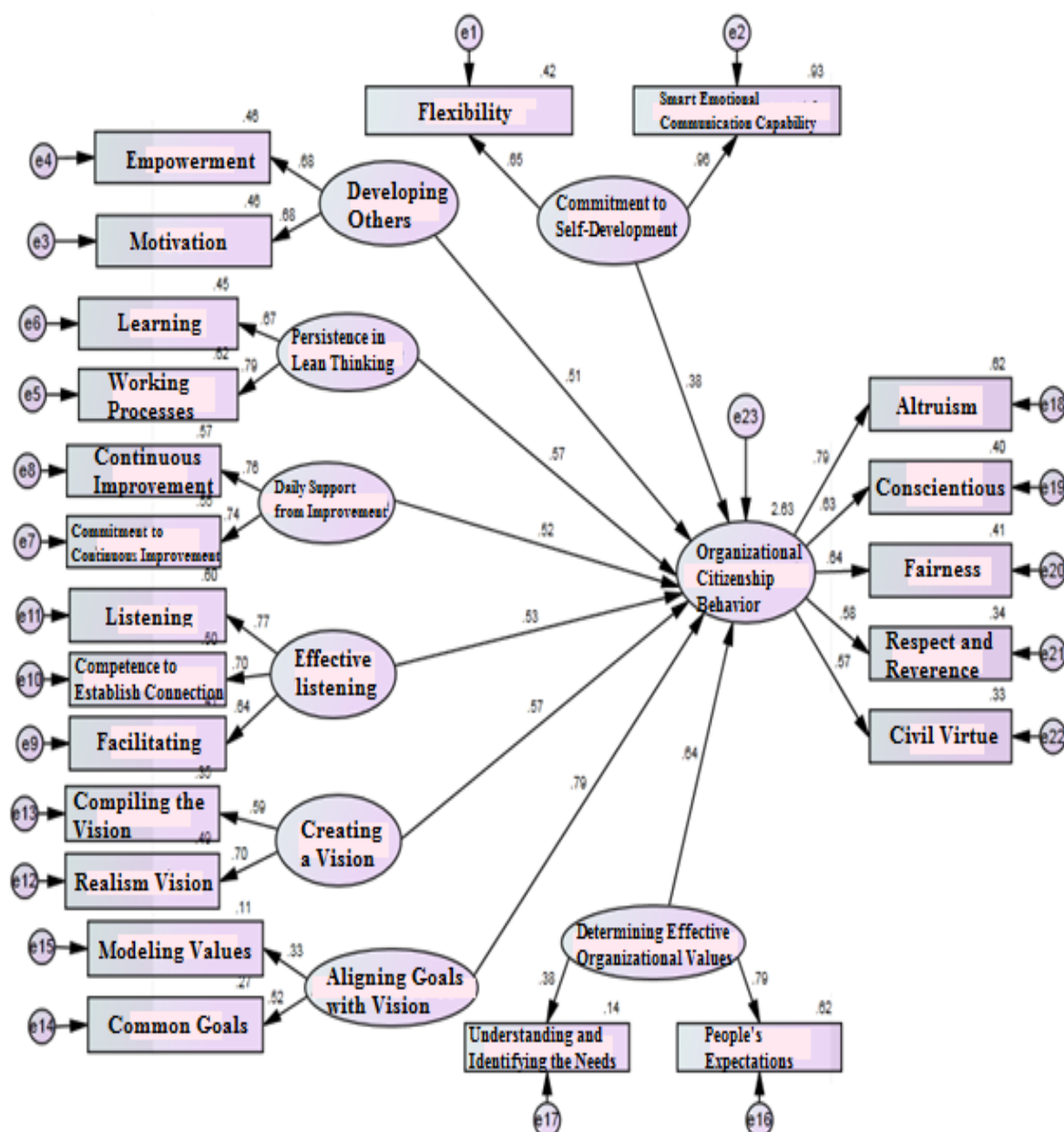


Diagram 1. Structural Equations Modeling Results to Investigate the Impact of Lean Leadership Components on Organizational Citizenship Behavior in Public Universities

Table 2. Route Coefficients and Their Significance in the Main Route Model

Relationship Investigated	Route Coefficient	P-Value	The Existence of Impact	Impact Type
Commitment to Self-Development Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.380	<0.001*	Has	Positive
Developing Others → Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.514	<0.001*	Has	Positive
Persistence in Lean Thinking → Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.573	<0.001*	Has	Positive
Daily Support from Improvement Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.516	<0.001*	Has	Positive
Effective Listening → Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.529	<0.001*	Has	Positive
Creating A Vision → Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.567	<0.001*	Has	Positive
Aligning Goals with Vision → Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.785	<0.001*	Has	Positive
Determining Effective and Promoting Organizational Values → Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.639	<0.001*	Has	Positive

* Significant at 0.05 level (P<0.05)

3. Is there a relationship between lean leadership and organizational citizenship behavior with respect to the mediating role of organizational commitment in the public universities of Fars province?

3.1 Is there a relationship between lean leadership and organizational commitment in the public universities of Fars province? The standardized direct effect of lean leadership and organizational commitment is positive and significant; indicating the point that lean leadership and organizational commitment have a direct relationship and by increasing the ratio of lean leadership, the organizational commitment will increase.

3.2 Is there a relationship between organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior in the public universities of Fars province? The standardized direct effect of organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior is positive and significant; indicating the point that organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior have a direct relationship and by increasing the ratio of organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior will increase.

Since both routes of lean leadership - organizational commitment, and organizational commitment - organizational citizenship behavior are significant, this point indicates that there is a relationship at 0.95 confidence level between lean leadership and organizational citizenship behavior with respect to the mediating role of organizational commitment in the public universities of Fars province.

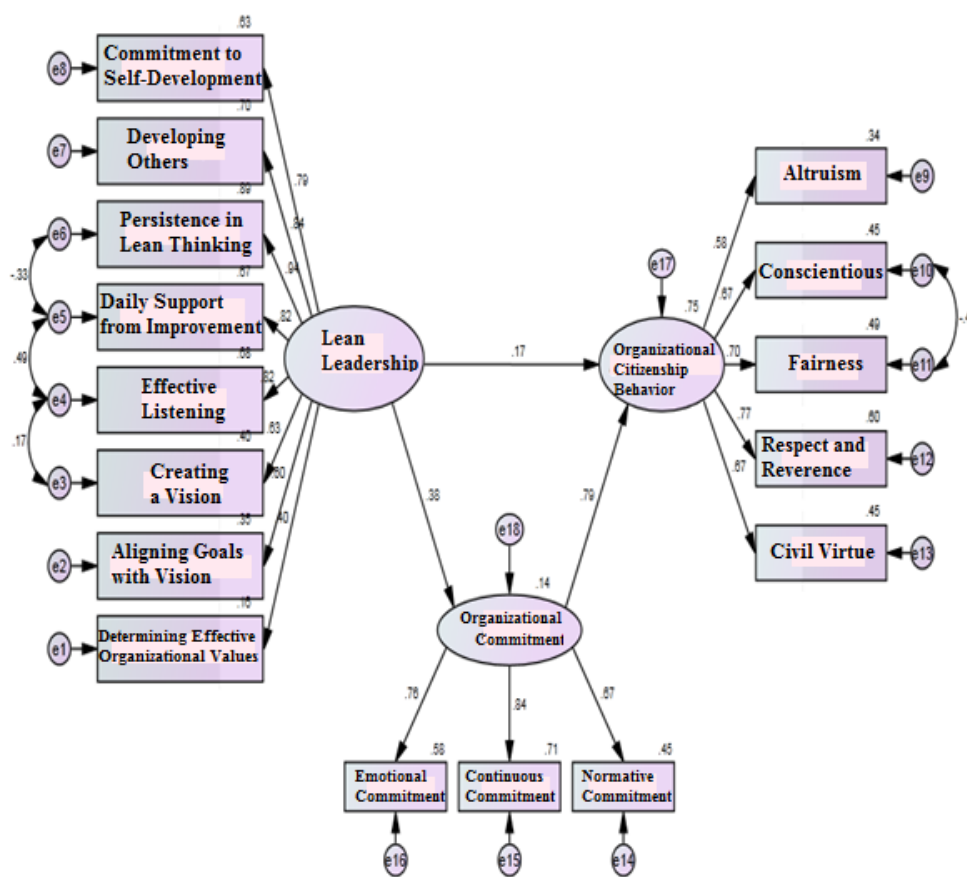


Diagram 2. Structural Equations Modeling Results to Investigate the Research Proposed Model in Public Universities

Table 3. Route Coefficients and Their Significance in the Main Route Model

Relationship Investigated	Route Coefficient	P-Value	The Existence of Impact	Impact Type
Lean → Organizational Commitment	0.376	<0.001*	has	Positive
Lean → Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.166	<0.001*	has	Positive
Organizational Commitment → Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.787	<0.001*	has	Positive

* Significant at 0.05 level (P<0.05)

4 - Is there a relationship between lean leadership and organizational citizenship behavior in the Azad universities of Fars province? According to (Diagram 2) and (Table 3), the standardized direct effect of lean leadership and organizational citizenship behavior (P <0.05) is positive and significant; indicating the point that lean leadership and organizational citizenship behavior have a direct relationship and by increasing the ratio of lean leadership, organizational citizenship behavior will increase.

5. Is there a relationship between the components of lean leadership and organizational citizenship behavior in the Azad universities of Fars province? Regarding the establishment of structural equations presuppositions, the mentioned questions and hypotheses are investigated

and their results have been shown in (Diagram 3). The software output indicates the appropriateness of the research proposed model. So that the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is equal to (0.066). The normalized Chi-square value (CMIN / DF) is equal to (2.88) and the goodness-of-fit (GFI) indicator value is equal to (0.91). Other fit indicators of the research proposed model have been presented in (Table 4) and (Table 5).

Table 4. Fit Indicators for Investigating the Relationship between the Components of Lean Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior in the Azad Universities

Indicator	Acceptable Limit	Reported Value
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	Equal to or lower than 0.08	0.066
Normalized Chi-Square (CMIN / DF)	Equal to or lower than 3	2.88
Goodness of Fit Indicator (GFI)	Equal to or higher than 0.9	0.91
Adjusted goodness of Fit Indicator (AGFI)	Equal to or higher than 0.9	0.90
Comparative Fit Indicator (CFI)	Equal to or higher than 0.9	0.92
Normalized Fit Indicator (NFI)	Equal to or higher than 0.9	0.92
Tucker-Lewis Indicator (TLI)	Equal to or higher than 0.9	0.91
Incremental Fit Indicator (IFI)	Equal to or higher than 0.9	0.91

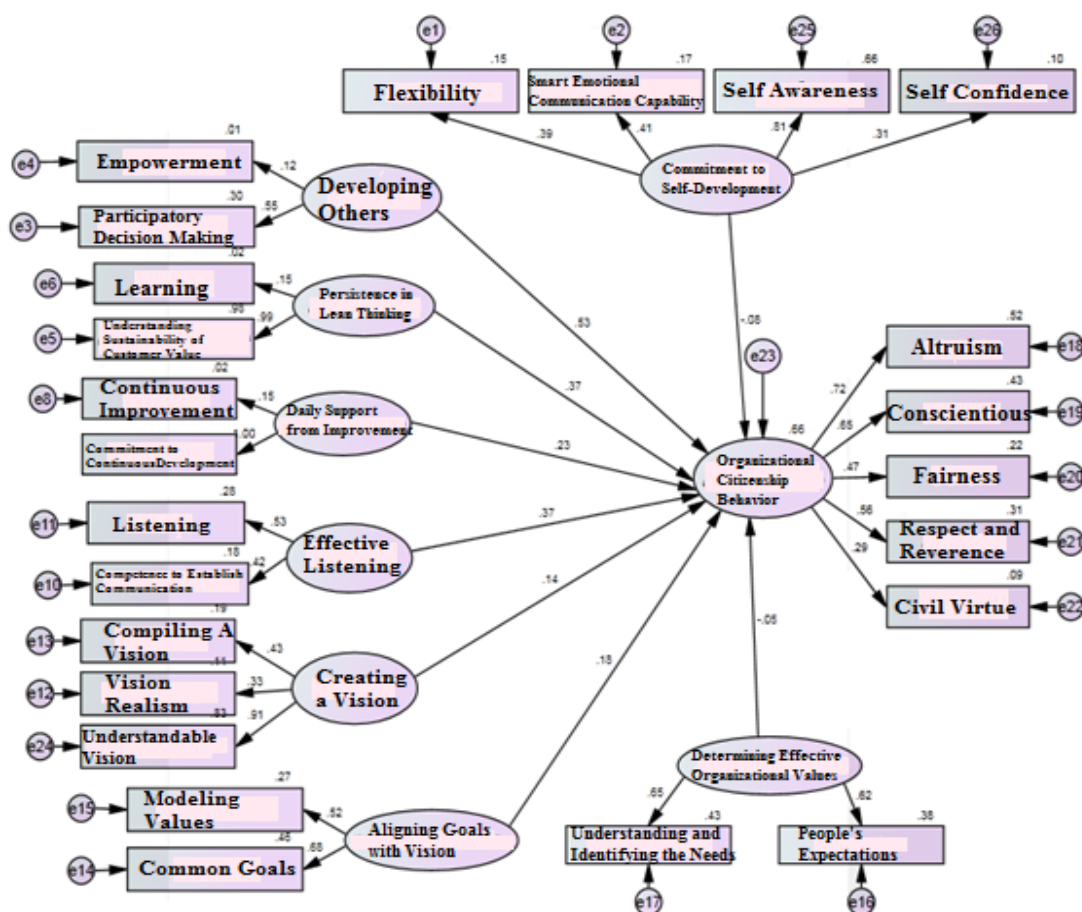


Diagram 3. Structural Equations Modeling Results to Investigate the Impact of Lean Leadership Components on Organizational Citizenship Behavior in the Azad Universities

Table 5. Route Coefficients and Their Significance in the Main Route Model

Relationship Investigated	Route Coefficient	P-Value	The Existence of Impact	Impact Type
Commitment to Self-Development Organizational Citizenship Behavior	-0.08	0.558	Does not have	-
Developing → Others Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.530	<0.001*	Has	Positive
Persistence in Lean Thinking Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.368	<0.001*	Has	Positive
Daily Support from Improvement Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.231	<0.001*	Has	Positive
Effective → Listening Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.367	<0.001*	Has	Positive
Creating → Vision Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.137	0.236	Does not have	-
Aligning Goals with → Vision Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.179	<0.001*	Has	Positive
Determining Effective and Promoting Organizational → Values Organizational Citizenship Behavior	-0.045	0.718	Does not have	-

* Significant at 0.05 level (P<0.05)

6. Is there a relationship between lean leadership and organizational citizenship behavior with regard to the mediating role of organizational commitment in the Azad universities of Fars province?

6.1 Is there a relationship between lean leadership and organizational commitment in the Azad universities of Fars province? The standardized direct effect of lean leadership and organizational commitment is not significant; indicating the point that there is no relationship between lean leadership and organizational commitment.

6.2 Is there a relationship between organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior in the Azad universities of Fars province? The standardized direct effect of organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior is positive and significant; indicating the point that organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior have a direct relationship and by increasing the ratio of organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior will increase (Diagram 4).

Since both routes of lean leadership - organizational commitment, and organizational commitment - organizational citizenship behavior are not significant (the former is non-significant - the latter is significant), this point indicates that there is a relationship at 0.95 confidence level between lean leadership and organizational citizenship behavior with respect to the mediating role of organizational commitment in the Azad universities of Fars province (Table 6).

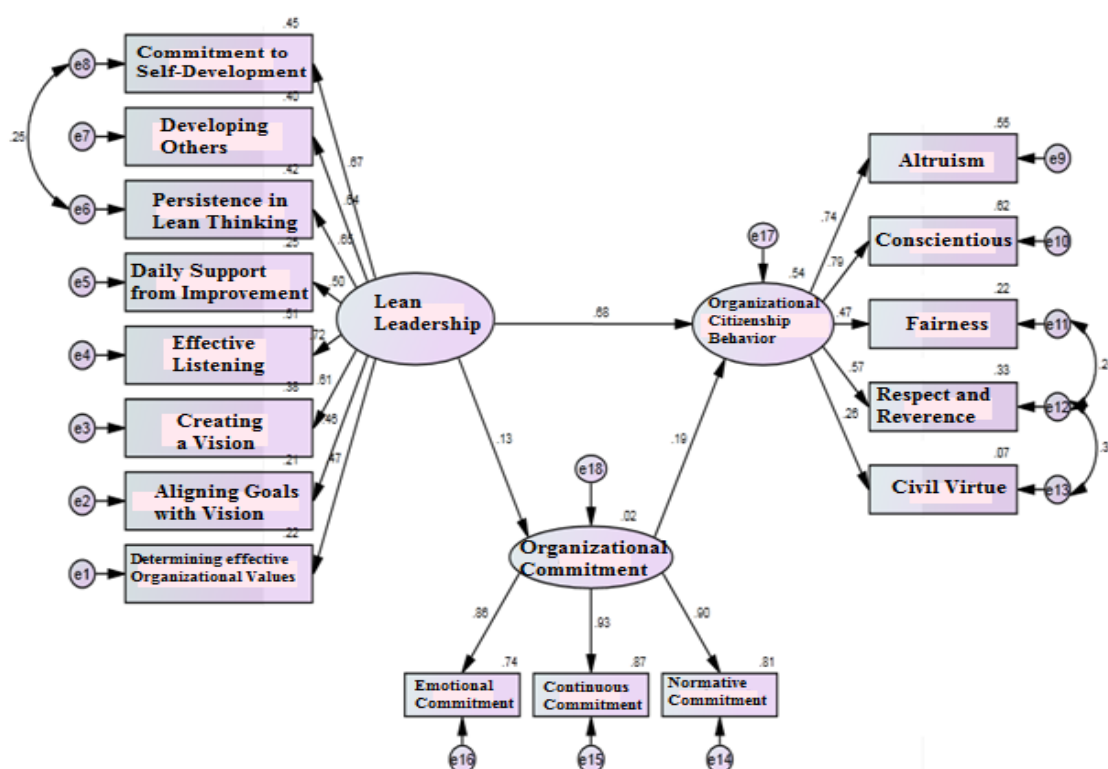


Diagram 4. Structural Equation Modeling Results for Investigating the Research Proposed Model in the Azad Universities

Table 6: Route Coefficients and Their Significance in the Main Route Model

Relationship Investigated	Route Coefficient	P-Value	The Existence of Impact	Impact Type
Lean Leadership → Organizational Commitment	0.131	0.078	Does not have	-
Lean Leadership → Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.683	<0.001*	Has	Positive
Organizational Commitment → Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.190	<0.001*	Has	Positive

* Significant at 0.05 level (P<0.05)

4. DISCUSSION

The research results specified that there is a direct relationship between lean leadership and organizational citizenship behavior in the public universities and Azad universities of Fars province. This result has been confirmed by previous researches: Organizational citizenship behaviors according to Hassani are the same as discretionary behaviors that have a basic role in the effectiveness of the organization and a place has not been considered for them in the organization's salary and reward system. Some examples of this kind of behavior, such as assisting a co-worker who is absent or volunteering for more work when needed are mentioned (Golparvar & Rafiezadeh, 2012). The behavior of the leader of any organization has an important impact on encouraging employees to show this type of behavior. A positive and significant relationship between leadership and organizational citizenship behavior was the result of the research findings of. In fact, there was a significant

and positive relationship between the variable of idealistic behaviors, inspirational motivation and individual variable with organizational citizenship behavior (Abili, 2011). (Aij & Teunissen, 2017) conducted a research to demonstrate the impact of spiritual leadership on organizational citizenship behavior and concluded that the leaders' values, attitudes, and behaviors have a positive impact on the employees, and also lead the employees to perform organizational citizenship behaviors such as altruism excellently to help co-workers and conscience responsibility about the organization.

Bess, in 1990, stated that leaders can guide their followers towards more than expected performance by using leadership behavioral attributes (Humphreys and Einstein, 2013: 2). (Hosseini & Mehdizadeh, 2018) in investigating the relationship between leadership styles and organizational citizenship behavior showed that transformational-oriented leadership behavior has significant and positive relationship with all five components of organizational citizenship behaviors of the Organ's model and among the interaction-oriented leadership behaviors, the two types of these behaviors have a significant relationship with the five elements of organizational citizenship behaviors that are: contingent rewarding behavior that has positive relationship, non-contingent punitive behavior that has negative relationship. (Hosseini & Mehdizadeh, 2018), (Nesari, 2013) and (Khaleghi, 2015). also found in their researches that there is a positive and significant relationship between leadership style and organizational citizenship behavior.

(Rezaei, 2015) and (Hassani, 2019) showed that there is a positive relationship between leadership and organizational citizenship behavior. (Farrokhnejad Kashki, 2014) found out in a research that the values, attitudes, and behaviors of the leaders have a positive impact on the employees, and in addition lead the employees to excellently perform organizational citizenship behaviors such as altruism to help co-workers and conscientious responsibility towards the organization. (Aij & Teunissen, 2017) found out in a research that there is a relationship between leadership and organizational citizenship behavior. (Mir Hosseini, 2017) has found out in a research that there is a significant and positive relationship between transformational-oriented leadership style and organizational citizenship behavior. According to the lean leadership, leaders identify problems and inform others about them, consult with the individuals of the organization to remove them and leave the employees free to find a solution for the problems, expecting employees to constantly try to improve and never be dissatisfied with the situation and conditions they have and continuously try for improvement and nurture this thought in the employees' heads that there is always a better way to do the work and promote curiosity and insatiability for improvement. When such attributes and principles govern the organization, each one of the employees shows spontaneous and voluntary behaviors of him/herself to realize these goals and to remove the senses of curiosity, insatiability, and so forth and thus organizational citizenship behaviors increase.

5. SUMMARY

There is a relationship between lean leadership and organizational citizenship behavior with regard to the mediating role of organizational commitment in the public universities of Fars province. The research results specified that there is no relationship between lean leadership and organizational citizenship behavior with regard to the mediating role of organizational commitment in the Azad universities of Fars province. (Golparvar & Rafieezadeh, 2012) have found out in a research that lean leadership enhances the organizational commitment of the employees. The lean leader is a person who is aware of all visions of the organization, knows the tools needed to achieve organizational goals, and establishing appropriate and constructive communication with the employees and attracting

their satisfaction and support for the organization provides the context to increase organizational commitment. However, the absence of relationship in this research has been confirmed in the statistical population of the Azad Universities of Fars province and this result may be because of the point that organizational leadership behaviors to fulfill organizational commitment are not performed or because the relationship between these variables is under the influence of intervening or intrusive variables, that the assessment of their impact has not been considered by the researcher.

6. SUGGESTION

It is suggested to create the necessary incentives for the employees' activity and to try to drive the employees toward organizational goals, employing methods and techniques that enhance organizational efficiency; giving reward to the employees who offer new ideas for the efficiency of work processes, to create coordination and integration between methods and procedures of doing the work; managers in the organization support improving work processes, collaborate with each other for work promotion, identify customers' needs, and try to meet them, so that in this way, they improve organizational citizenship behavior.

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