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Role of Religious Commitment in Predicting Leadership Skills among Students at Abdulrahman Al-Sumait University

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Abstract:

A quantitative research aimed to study the religious commitment in predicting leadership skills among students at Abdulrahman Al-Sumait University. Research has shown that the impact of the religious commitment on students is important and that it affects their characteristics, habits, beliefs and their entire lives. The sample of this study includes counseling psychology department students of the arts faculty at Abdulrahman al-Sumait University (85) participants. The sample had been selected randomly. This study assumes that students whom have religious commitment are predicted to have higher degrees of leadership skills than students who are not in a religious commitment. The study selected descriptive methodology because it describes the characteristics of the population and phenomena that is being studied. To achieve this purpose, the researcher used two instruments: the RCI-10 Religious Commitment Inventory-10 and the Leadership Skills Questionnaire. The results obtained show that there is a significant positive relationship between religious commitment and prediction of leadership skills among students at Abdulrahman Al-Sumait University scales ($r=.689$, $p=.000$, two sided) (Table 7). As a conclusion we find that despite the fact that religious commitment plays an important role in promoting leadership skills, it is still considered as a topic to be avoided in our society. Thus this article attempts to underline that religious commitment is a part of personal characteristics of leadership and strongly affects the skills of an individual. This study adds a unique contribution in the domain of religious commitment and prediction of leadership skills.

Keywords: *Religious commitment, Religiosity, leadership, leadership practices, Abdulrahman Al-Sumait University*

INTRODUCTION

It is said that the solution to the crisis state of the postmodern man is ethical leadership. {3}. The highly industrialized and technologized postmodern era in which the human kind is living requires a

good understanding of leading and guidance in order to keep the social cohesion among individuals. In order to understand this, the definitions of ethics and leadership should be defined first. Leadership has been defined as 'the process of social influence in which one person is able to enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task'. Leadership nowadays is important in many areas of life and it helps to shape the societal structure within communities and organizations. More than ever, humanity seeks leaders who are able to keep together the balance of wisdom, religion and ethics.{3}.

Statistics show that the majority of the world population has a religion. Religion can be defined as an organized institutional or personal system of particular beliefs, values and practices which are related to the divine, the Higher Power. As of 2015, 6.1 billion out of 7.3 billion people in the world were affiliated to a religion, with Christianity and Islam being the largest religious organizations with respectively 2.3 billion and 1.8 billion followers PEW Research. Islam remains the fastest growing religion, mostly by natural increase.{8}. This means that there is a growth in births among Muslim communities, which outnumber the deaths in the same religious group. Worden. {9}. has found that elements of religion can enrich several components of strategic leadership. He further stated that when one's religion is salient to one's identity (i.e. the extent to which one's personality, beliefs and values are informed by his/her religion), it may have a role in managerial discretion. Furthermore, religion can impact a person's personality through aspiration, assumptions of causation, and goals. The latter two in turn can be in a leader's vision, which may operate in decision-making {5}. In another study, it is found that religious belief impacts cognition, which is also used in strategic choice, which in turn will affect the decision-making in leadership. {7}.

Religiosity in the context of leadership is closely tied with ethical leadership, because in the development of leadership, the development of personality plays an important role. One develops his/her personality with the innate values and practices, from which the majority comes with a religious upbringing and religion. {10}{3} further explains that ethical structures are embedded in both personal and organizational settings and involve structures such as integrity, humility, fidelity, temperance, courage, justice, patience, and modesty. Some researchers are convinced that daily meditation and prayers are the most important resources of regeneration, and thus these practices are an inherent spiritual dimension of leadership ethics and of an ethical leader personality{2}{6} argues that the modern-day leader should be charismatic, but also open to change and an interpersonal communicator towards his/her organization. He further states that a leader should promote a set of transparent values and show integrity. That is when a leader is called an ethical leader.

Ethical leadership, according to the findings of the study of Frunza.{4}, leads to personal transfiguration, organizational effectiveness, improved interpersonal communication, and the achievement of a joint platform for professional action. The roots of the benefits of ethical leadership are in the personal ethical action of a leader. Ethical leadership relies on the vocation of a

person to develop an ethical culture in professional situations and in all life experiences. One might begin to think that the extent of religious commitment may affect the leadership skills differently. Carlson and Linstead. (1) found in their study exploring the role of religion in leadership that Muslims are more likely to say that religious beliefs are important in selecting leaders. In this study, the aim is to explore the relationship between leadership skills and religious commitment. Holding in consideration the literature review, the hypothesis is that there will be a positive relationship between the two variables.

Method

Participants

This quantitative research was done by collecting data from students of the Sumait University, who are studying Counseling Psychology. There were 85 participants in total, with 41 females (41%) and 26 males (30.6%). There were 18 missing values, as the participants did not fill out their gender. The range of age was from 20 years old to 50 years old ($M=26.54$, $SD=6.509$).{ Table 1 }

Instruments

There were two scales that have been used to survey the students. These are the Leadership Skills Questionnaire (LSQ) and the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10). The LSQ contains 18 items that aim to measure the leadership skills of the participants. An example of an item is '*I work hard to find agreement in conflict situations*'. The items are all scored on a Likert-scale, ranging from 1 to 5, with score 1 being 'Not true' and score 5 being 'Very true'. All items are positively phrased. The maximum score for this scale is a 90, with the higher scores indicating more leadership skills.

The RCI-10 has 10 items that aim to measure the religious commitment of the participant and an example of an item is 'Religious beliefs influence all my dealings in life'. The scale is scored on a 5-point Likert rating scale like the LSQ from 1 ('Not at all true of me') to 5 ('Totally true of me'). All of the items are positively phrased like the LSQ. The highest score on this inventory is 50, with a higher score indicating more religious commitment.

Prior to analyzing the outcomes of the study, a validity and reliability analysis was done for both scales. The validity of the Leadership Skills Questionnaire was done using a bivariate correlation between the items and the scale as a whole. It was found that all of the items had a significant relationship with the scale, having values ranging from $p=0.000$ to $p=0.034$ (two-sided). The reliability of this scale was acceptable, with a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = 0.731$. The validity of the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 was likewise analyzed with the bivariate correlation. All of the significance values between the items and the scale as a whole were $p = .000$ (two-sided), which makes this scale a valid scale. With a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = 0.715$, the inventory had an acceptable reliability. The Cronbach's alpha if deleted values was less than the overall reliability of the scale, which suggests that the items paired well together to make up the scale.

Procedure

Participants were recruited in Counseling Psychology classes by either their fellow students, who were the class mentors of that time, or their teachers, who were also the researchers for this paper. They completed each questionnaire on campus after being handed over the questionnaires. The questionnaires were returned shortly after filling out. The whole duration of distributing and recollecting the data was one week. Out of the 100 questionnaires that were distributed, 85 were returned for analysis.

Data analysis

The data was analyzed using the statistical program SPSS v. 16.0. In the analysis, the descriptive statistics and the Pearson's correlation were used to analyze the data.

Results

The aim of this study was to have a closer look at the relationship between the leadership skills and the religious commitment of the participants. Before analyzing the correlation between these two scales, a general analysis was done to see the statistics of the participants on the two scales. In the descriptive statistics of the leadership scale LSQ, authors see that there were 85 participants whom had filled out the questionnaire, with the minimum score being 11 and the maximum score being 89 ($M=67.357$, $SD=13.318$) (Table 1). Both male and female students had a high score on the LSQ, with a mean of 68.32 ($SD=11.92$) and 70.27 ($SD=9.06$) respectively. The age of the participants had no significant correlation with the leadership skills ($r=-.0006$, $p=.961$) (Table 3). The religiosity scale RCI-10 had a minimum score of 9 and a maximum score of 49 ($M=37.167$, $SD=7.634$), with the same amount of participants (Table 3). Both male and female students had a high score on the scale, with a mean of 38.461 ($SD=6.586$) and 38.825 ($SD=5.509$) respectively. There appeared to be a weak ($r=-.226$), but significant ($p=.066$, two-sided) relationship between the age of the participants and the religious commitment (Table 4). This indicates a slightly negative relationship between age and religious commitment, which may suggest that religious commitment decreases with increasing age. This finding is not further explored in this research. After the preliminary analyzes, the actual analysis was done to find the relationship between the scales LSQ and RCI-10. After summing up the items to form the scales in the statistical program, a Pearson's bivariate correlation was run. The findings showed that there was a strong positive relationship between the two scales ($r=.689$, $p=.000$, two sided) (Table 6). This finding indicated that leadership skills and religious commitment are in a positive relationship with each other. the authors can draw from this finding that leadership skills increase as religious commitment increase, or the other way around.

The same analysis was done by dividing male and female students to explore results. It was found that in both male and female students there was a significant positive relationship between leadership skills and religious commitment, however the male students' relationship was stronger. The male students had a Pearson's correlation of $r=.636$ ($p=.001$, two sided) between leadership skills and religious commitment. This indicates a stronger relationship between the two scales

among males. This may mean that the leadership skills increase as the religious commitment increases in male students (Table 7).

Among the female students, the relationship was also significant ($p=0.047$, two sided), however this relationship was weak, with a Pearson's correlation of $r=.316$. This indicates a weak relationship between the two scales; the leadership skills may increase slightly with increasing religious commitment (Table 7).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Age	26.54	6.509	68

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Age	26.54	6.509	68
LSQ	67.3571	13.31784	85

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Female/Male		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
.	LSQ	59.3889	19.57832	18
	Age	26.00	.000	2
Female	LSQ	70.2683	9.05545	41
	Age	26.50	7.362	40
Male	LSQ	68.3200	11.92239	26
	Age	26.65	5.381	26

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Age	26.54	6.509	68
RCI	37.1667	7.63447	85

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics

Female/Male		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
.	Age	26.00	.000	2
	RCI	31.6111	10.46079	18
Female	Age	26.50	7.362	40
	RCI	38.8250	5.50937	40
Male	Age	26.65	5.381	26
	RCI	38.4615	6.58623	26

Table 6: Correlations

		LSQ	RCI
LSQ	Pearson Correlation	1	.689**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	84	83
RCI	Pearson Correlation	.689**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	83	85

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7: Correlations

Female/Male			LSQ	RCI
.	LSQ	Pearson Correlation	1	.841**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	18	18
RCI	RCI	Pearson Correlation	.841**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	18	18
Female	LSQ	Pearson Correlation	1	.316*
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.047
		N	41	40
RCI	RCI	Pearson Correlation	.316*	1

		Sig. (2-tailed)	.047	
		N	40	40
Male	LSQ	Pearson Correlation	1	.636**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
		N	25	25
	RCI	Pearson Correlation	.636**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
		N	25	26

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

This study aimed to explore the relationship between leadership skills and religious commitment. Good leadership is needed in the postmodern times in which the humanity lives. Good leadership is associated with a good developed personality, which has its roots in the upbringing of an individual and the religious and spiritual aspects that come with this upbringing. This is also called ethical leadership. {4}. Ethical leadership has been shown to be an important part in empowering the followers for better action-taking and decision-making.

This study, in which Counseling Psychology students of Sumait University participated by filling out the Leadership Skills Questionnaire and the Religious Commitment Inventory-10, has found that there was a significant positive relationship between the two variables. This shows that leadership skills might be increasing together with increasing religious commitment. However, the study did not point out which aspects of leadership skills and what aspects of religious commitment were determinants for the increase in either one or both of the variables. It is highly recommended to conduct this research on a larger scale, since in this study only 85 students from a specific specialization were included. The Leadership Skills Questionnaire might be interpreted differently by individuals who have more experience in the working field. Further studies should include students, but also graduates who have already experienced working life. Other recommendations are to explore the relationship between the gender and ages of the participants together with leadership skills and religious commitment as variables. Lastly, for further research it will be valuable to have a closer look at the religiosity of individuals by exploring the Islamic religion and commitment deeper.

COUNCLOUSION

The main findings of the research indicate a strong positive relationship between the leadership skills and the religious commitment, which is also statistically significant.

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