Relation between leadership style and organizational culture and commitment in military forces

Karaminia R. PhD, Salimi S. H. PhD, Amini A. BSc

Abstract
Aims: Efficient human resource, due to its value is a matter of concern of reliable organizations and institutions, and recruitment of human resource requires competent leaders and the use of effective leadership styles, in order to enhance the organizational commitment and creating a desirable organizational culture. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between leadership style and organizational culture and commitment.

Methods: The present study is a cross-sectional one and was conducted by correlation method on 237 employees of a military force using random sampling method. The leadership style was analyzed based on multi-factorial leadership questionnaire (MLQ), organizational culture based on the Queen & Garrett model and organizational commitment based on the Meyer & Allen model. Data were analyzed using the SPSS 11 software and one-way \(^2\) test and Pearson correlation coefficient.

Results: From the staffs’ point of view, the leadership style used by the commanders was interactive or exchange style. The dominant organizational culture was rational culture. The highest mean score of organizational commitment was attributed to obligating commitment. There was significant and positive relationship between the exchange and change-inducing leadership style and organizational culture and commitment. There was a significant and inverse relationship between the laissez-faire leadership style (free) and organizational culture and commitment.

Conclusion: Leadership style used in military forces is associated with organizational culture and commitment of forces that can be direct or inverse.

Keywords: Leadership Style, Organizational Culture, Organizational Commitment, Military Force

Introduction

Efficient human resource is the most valuable property of each country. Most of societies despite having abundant natural sources do not have the capability of using the divine gifts due to the lack of efficient human resources. Other nations despite the lack of natural resources, because of having efficient human resources have achieved welfare and comfort and they pass the development path with long, strong strides. Military organizations are not excluded as well. Efficient human resources will increase their fighting power. Quick economic, political, and sociological technology’s change has led managers to face with new issues about the type of treating the staff of organizations. Anyway, organizational behavior seeks scientific and applicable methods with the purpose of increasing efficacy and staff effectiveness in organizations. In fact, the knowledge of organizational behavior has gone beyond organization and management theories. Human resource can step positively in the line of organizational aims by proper behavior and by misleading and the lack of guidance human resources will step in the opposite direction of organization aims. According to these issues, recognizing the human resource behavior in management is particularly important [1]. Of course this recognition and preserving of human resources is not only keeping individuals in the organization; but also connecting them to the organization and creating unity between the individual and organization. Perhaps some individuals stay in the organization for years, but the force factor is the reason of their stay. In this case, they not only decrease any burden of the organization, but also they will increase the burdens of the organization if they find the chance [2]. Therefore, to increase the morale, job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the staff, it is necessary to pay attention to their needs at work. Only managers that are able to create appropriate physiological space (organizational space) inside the organization can provide the possibility of dispelling the needs of the top rank staff that are under the supervision [3]. The staff’s commitment to organization will generate hidden wealth. In recent years, organizational commitment has been the important chapter of organizational studies and the focus of studies, since the relation with the quality of organizational life has

* Correspondence; Email: reza.karaminia@gmail.com  
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been proven. The researches show that staff's commitment is considered as the powerful and effective force in organization successes [4]. Organizational commitment is the attitude towards the staff's loyalty to the organization and a continuous procedure that brings success and welfare to the organization through participation in organizational decisions, paying attention to individuals and the organization [5]. The performance of individual practices in the organization depends on the personality, organizational role and condition. The condition is studied under the title of environment or culture [6]. Organizational culture refers to a series of characteristics that distinguish one organization from another. As personality refers to the basic properties, culture is related to the sustainable features of organizations [7].

Regarding the issue that organizational culture flows in all aspects of the organization, it affects individuals' moods, while it influences the organizational behavior, including organizational commitment. These effects can cause motivation or weakness of the organization that anyway it is highly related to the correct use of human resources [8]. Generally, it can be stated that efficient human resources, is the superiority index of one organization to others. The existence of committed human resource holds the organization in the society and provides a base for organization's development [9]. Therefore, expert and committed staff who are compatible with organizational values and aims own strong motivation, committed to keeping the organizational membership are all regarded as the most important need of every organization, since the organization requires the staff that do the activities which are higher than their normal duties. The existence of such forces in every organization will cause significant increasing of the organization performance, spiritual exhilaration of staff and better manifestation of organization superior aims and the achievement of individual aims, while it will decrease absence, delay and transferring. The lack of commitment or commitment at the lower level may lead to negative results for the individual and organization. Leaving service, high absence rate and reluctance to stay in the organization are the results of low commitment to the organization.

According to Hershey and Blanchard, success of organizations and work places are completely related to the efficient use of human resources based on behavioral science, and this is the challenge that has increasingly engaged supervisors, managers and those involved in the work and organization affairs. Undoubtedly, conditions in which it is attempted to do some work can affect the effectiveness and the rate of attempt. When the work is done, the environment gets ready immediately according to its real capability to perform it. Considering the previous researches, it can be stated that commitment and organizational culture are very influential on organizational variables and each other. Among the effects of organizational commitment, it can be referred to the inverse effect on job leaving, absence and delay and among the positive effects; it can be referred to job satisfaction and marked increasing of performance. In addition, organizational commitment and job advancement have mutual relationship with factors such as organizational justice, change, and leadership style [10].

Organizational culture is related to many factors such as productivity performance and effectiveness, leadership style of transferring reduction, job satisfaction and organizational learning. The above mentioned factors manifest the significance of these two issues more than before especially in military organizations; since the staying of a fighter in field and defense needs high organizational commitment [11]. Emphasizing the effective factors on creating transformational leadership and assessing the dimensions in organizations, in a research, Moghali reviews the organizational results affected by this type of leadership such as job satisfaction, staff's attempts and commitments. In this research, it is stated that providing some change in leaders and followers' attitudes, the leadership pattern of organizations will possibly change in Iran [12].

Mohajeran concludes in his research that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between the transformation ability of managers and organizational commitment, but there is no meaningful relationship between managers’ participative and teachers' commitment [14].

In his research, Chori studies two variables effective in the success and effectiveness of the organization, i.e. leadership style and organizational commitment, and concludes that transformational leadership style has a positive and meaningful relationship with the staff's organizational commitment, but mutual leadership style has a negative and meaningful relationship with the staff's organizational commitment. Individual features (average salary, sex, and marital status) do not have any meaningful relationship with the staff's organizational commitment [15].

In a research, Ghaheemani-Tabrizi shows that there is a positive and significant correlation between organizational culture and creativeness and also
leadership style and creativity [16].

In his research, Aghaz investigates the relationship between transformational leadership and cross-organizational culture in the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security. Results show that leaders assess themselves transformational, but followers do not know their leaders transformational and culturally, leaders and followers of both groups announce low solidarity and identity [17].

Soltanhosayn's research in the University of Egypt shows that there is a meaningful relationship between mutual and free transformational leadership and organizational commitment and there is not any meaningful relationship between job experience and leadership style [18].

Therefore, organizational culture and commitment and the effective factors will gain double importance. One of these effective factors is the managers' leadership style. Improper leadership style can spoil a large portion of capital producers and proper staff's attempts to achieve the organizational productivity level [19]. Therefore, the present study was done with the general purpose of determining the relationship between leadership style and culture and organizational commitment in a military force.

**Methods**

This field study was conducted by cross-sectional and correlation methods. The study population was the staff of a military force in 2009. Based on Morgan's table, 234 samples were determined and were selected by stratified random sampling method. To control the interfering factors, people with a history of drug abuse or mental disorders were excluded.

First part of the questionnaire included the data related to personal features and the second part included three questionnaires related to leadership style, organizational and cultural commitment. Bass designed multi-factorial leadership questionnaire (MLQ) in 1985 for the first time with five-scale idealistic intrusions, development-oriented supports, provocation of knowingness, conditional bonus, and management based on design exception. Bass and Avolio revised it in 1995 and changed it to nine scales (idealistic influence of the leader's characteristics, behavioral idealistic influence of the leader, inspirational motivation, and provocation of knowingness, individual considerations, and conditional bonus, management based on active exception, management based on passive exception and non-interference). These nine scales were sorted out in three groups of transformational leadership, participative leadership, and laissez-faire leadership. This questionnaire contained 36 questions that were sorted out based on Likert five-option scale. The validity and reliability were reviewed and approved in 1382 by Moghali. The validity of the questionnaire was approved by Delphi method, preliminary distribution of questionnaire and corrective comment reception. To determine the stability of the questionnaire, first 36 people were selected as the sample and then through data collection and statistical analysis, Chronbach’s alpha was obtained [12]. To assess the organizational culture Queen and Garret's organizational culture questionnaire was used that contained 32 questions based on Likert's five-option scale. Queen et al divided the cultural organization to four groups of rational, ideological, partnership and agreements and hierarchical, then Nine major variables of the organization (the aim, the performance criteria, reference power in organization, power source, mode of decision, leadership style, following style and acceptance, evaluation criteria of members and staff's motivation) were introduced [20]. To determine the validity of this part, formal validity through faculty members and advisors and experts was used. The stability was calculated by Chronbach’s alpha to be 94% [21]. Hajipour reported the coefficient of Chronbach’s alpha 98%.

To study the organizational commitment, Meyer and Allen's organizational commitment questionnaire was used. The questionnaire consisted of 17 seven-choice questions that measured three levels of emotional commitment, continuous commitment and obligatory commitment. The validity of the questionnaire was approved by presenting it to the supervisors and advisor. The stability of the questionnaire was determined 87% by Chronbach’s alpha method [22]. To determine the correlation rate between the leadership styles and organizational culture Pearson's correlation coefficient was used. To determine the demographic relationship, one-way ANOVA test and paired t-test were used.

**Results**

All of studied samples had a relatively young population (73.4% were between 20-30 years) and 65% were married (Table 1). Age group of 20-30 years (2.55±0.73) gained higher scores than younger group of 21-30 years (2.33±0.56) in organizational culture, and there was a meaningful difference between the two groups. Considering the type of responsibility and experience, no meaningful
The dominant leadership style was participative style (3±0.66). The transformational leadership style got the second place with the average of 2.91±0.89 and laissez-faire style (free) got the third place (2.59±0.77). Regarding the subscales of transformational leadership style, the highest average belonged to ideal behaviors (3.47±0.96) and the lowest average (2.79±0.82) belonged to individual considerations.

In examining the organizational culture, rational culture was dominant (75.23). Among the Subscales of organizational culture, the Leadership style gained the highest average (2.87±0.76) and organizational aim gained the lowest average (2.35±0.77). In examining the organizational commitment, the highest average score related to obligatory commitment (5.66±1.73) and the lowest average score related to continuous commitment (4.15±1.61).

**Discussion**

The most important issue in an organization is the human resource that is influenced by the management or commander's behavior and manner. Therefore, to increase the productivity level in the organization, special attention to the commanders' leadership style, organizational commitment and staff's organizational culture is required. Little attention to the composition of individual features of military employees, is seemingly supposed to result in numerous problems of the young military population who are not separated from Iran young generation. Expenses and housing are regarded as the serious problems of this age group who are mostly married. These issues effective have undesirable effect as external organizational factors and on the other hand, according to low education and loss of experience and specialty, there is no possibility of sufficient income outside of the organization in order to solve the problems. Therefore, in the analysis of organizational commitment, low or moderate organizational commitment level is achieved, and obligatory commitment will obtain the highest average.
score. It means that if a better employment possibility happens, they will certainly leave the organization and there is no emotional commitment to the organization. On the other hand, lack of appropriate leadership style of commanders will intensify this situation. Because as it was mentioned earlier, one of the major effective factors in organizational commitment and culture was the commanders' applied leadership style and the highest correlation existed between transformational leadership style and commitment and organizational culture that unfortunately commanders did not commonly use the mentioned style. The dominant leadership style in military forces was the participative style that can have various reasons including commanders' lack of familiarity with the effective leadership styles in successful organizations or not passing of management courses, which are regarded as the general deficits of the organization. Another issue that can be mentioned and is about the commanders' behavior is the need for alteration of their behavior towards the staff, because regarding the results of previous researches, the commander has the most role in the culture and commitment of the organization. Among the other possible reasons of commanders' low influence, dynamism and performance is the lack of motivation to suffer, help the staff, make much effort and become a model for others.

Conclusion

Considering the managers' performances, creating motivation in staff and managers' attention to them can cause interest and commitment to the organization and can cause the increase of their potential abilities and performance promotion. A manager can create motivation only when he is motivated himself and is aware of the effect of staff's attitude such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment on the performance of organization.

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