Leadership Self-Efficacy and Organizational Commitment of Faculty Members: Higher Education

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Abstract: Education is one of the means of achieving sustainable development. Universities are responsible for training and generating skilled personnel needed in attaining holistic development; to accomplish the goals for which universities were established, effective leadership is required. The beliefs upheld by leaders about their ability to accomplish targets and deliver as expected is an indispensable constituent of university administration. Therefore, this research study examined connections between leaders' self-efficacy and faculty members' organizational commitment in Saudi Arabian universities. Therefore, 400 faculty members were randomly selected from three different public universities in the central, south-western and northern part of the country. Using the Pearson product correlation coefficient, it was found that positive connection occurs amongst leaders' self-efficacy and affective commitment. Additionally, there is a positive association among leaders' self-efficacy and continuance commitment. Leadership self-efficacy has a positive connection with normative commitment. In order to improve organizational commitment of faculty members, leaders must step up their self-efficacy and provide an enabling environment for team work and innovation.

Keywords: leadership; self-efficacy; organizational commitment; faculty members; universities

1. Introduction

Education is conceived as a means of ensuring sustainable human and economic development. In responding to the global and societal needs, higher education institutions are conceived as an instrument for developing human capital required for attaining economic growth and development (Findler et al. 2019; Sady et al. 2019; Kruss et al. 2015; Wals 2014). For these institutions to achieve the goals for which they were established, leadership is an essential ingredient that will stir this (Bellibas and Gumus 2019; Gedminiene and Kaminskiene 2016; Bush 2011). Leaders can foster growth and development of educational institutions and foster students' achievement due to their numerous roles (Cruickshank 2017; Black 2015; Karadağ et al. 2015). Academic leaders' roles include motivating faculty members, promoting effective collaboration on research, enhancing effective teaching and learning, strengthening research towards solving complex societal and human society, among others (Anum et al. 2011; Shahmandi et al. 2011; Bail 2007).

Tertiary education system in Saudi Arabia, unlike other countries, aims at ensuring sustainable educational development. As a result, the university system in the country is controlled by National Council which is headed by the King with the Minister of Higher Education and other appointees as members. The national council oversees educational matters, approves establishment of universities and appointment of university management in the Kingdom. It also ensures that universities' policies are structured in-line with the national philosophy of the country. Here, universities are managed by the governing council headed by a president appointed by the Minister of Education. In order to ensure uniformity and compliance with national philosophy, the government of Saudi Arabia organized the Academic Leadership Center saddled with the responsibility of training academic leaders and making them more productive (Gonaim 2019). It aims at refining university education in

the country. In addition, Saudi Arabia university education is built upon innovation and sustainable development in line with national philosophy (Khayati and Selim 2019). Therefore, universities worked towards improving quality research, teaching and learning, industrial engagement and incorporating an e-learning system (Aljaber 2018; Tausif 2017). As a measure towards enhancing quality university education system, the government of the country has increased its spending on higher education (Khayati and Selim 2019).

In spite of the rise in government spending on universities in the country, the quality of output is still low (Khayati and Selim 2019; Alkhazim 2003). Decline in quality of education can be engineered by poor quality of leadership, teaching and learning activities (Kezar 2014). Some of those charged with leadership responsibilities are not performing to expectations. This later reflects in the quality of educational outcome and service delivery. Poor higher education leadership was adjudged to be a disaster to the progress of university education in this country (Smith and Abouammoh 2013). Previous study has not been undertaken on the effects of leaders' self-efficacy on faculty members' commitment in Saudi Arabian public universities. Therefore, this research study decided to fill the vacuum and solve the problem by investigating the effect of heads of department's self-efficacy on organizational commitment of faculty members in public universities in the country.

Theories and Conceptual Framework

Two theories guided this research: self-efficacy theory and a three-component model of organizational commitment. Self-Efficacy theory was propounded by Albert Bandura, a Canadian-American psychologist. He perceived people as proactive, self-regulating, driven by impulses, self-organizing and self-reflecting. According to Bandura (1997), people are a product of behavioral, personal and environmental forces which he described as Triadic Reciprocity. This interplay affects people's perception of their ability in relation to delivering or accomplishing tasks. He further grouped them into two categories based on their self-efficacy: low and high self-efficacy. He stressed that a person with a high self-efficacy is proactive, always ready to take new challenge and persevere with given tasks even if the task is difficult or hard. Conversely, a person with a low self-efficacy tends to avoid tasks, always complain when given additional tasks and dislike innovation (Bandura 1997).

Furthermore, the three-components model of organizational commitment was proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991). The model stressed that people have three distinct components which corroborate with different psychological states. According to Meyer and Allen (1991), the three-components are continuance, affective and normative commitment. They further argued that affective commitment relates to the emotions that workers attached to organizations. Due to this positive emotional attachment, workers will want to remain with their organizations. Furthermore, this strong positive emotional attachment will prevent workers from seeing some shortcomings of their organizations and keep them going even when the road is tough (Mercurio 2015). Secondly, continuance commitment implies commitment of employees which occurs as a result of fear of loss. This affects employee's decision to remain or leave an organization (Singh and Gupta 2015). Therefore, employees will think carefully about their decisions before leaving an organization. Normative commitment denotes an employee's obligation to organizational norms and values. As a result, such an employee may feel he or she should stay with such organization.

From the theory and model explained earlier, below is the conceptual framework for this study.

As shown in Figure 1 above, when leaders in academic institutions display high self-efficacy, this will improve commitment of faculty members. The end result of these relationships is that it will improve employees' job satisfaction. Once there is an improvement in faculty members' job satisfaction, there will be an upgrade in their job performance which will later increase faculty members' organizational commitment. Therefore, the following hypotheses guided this study:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *There is a significant connection between leadership self-efficacy and affective organizational commitment of faculty members.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *There is a significant connection between leadership self-efficacy and continuance organizational commitment of faculty members.*

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *There is a significant connection between leadership self-efficacy and normative organizational commitment of faculty members.*
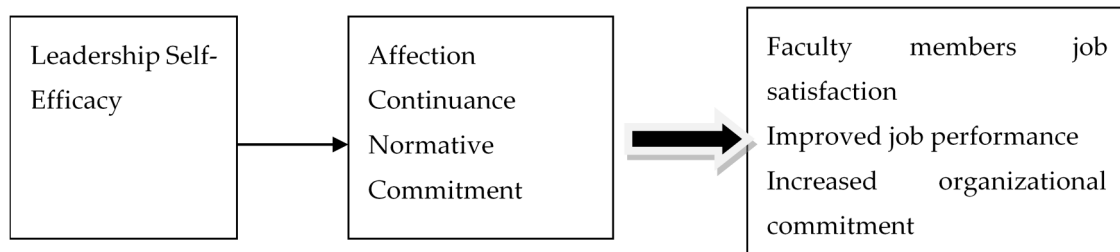
Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Concept of Leadership Self-Efficacy

The term leadership has been viewed differently by scholars. The variation in views and definitions shows the elusiveness of the concept (Yukl 2010). Additionally, Whitaker (1998) conceived leadership as referring to the provision of support in a work environment which enhances commitment of followers. House et al. (1999) defined leadership as the capability of a person to inspire others towards achieving organizational goals. Bush and Middlewood (2005) stressed that the accomplishment and setback of education institutions depend on the quality of leaders.

Different researchers perceived self-efficacy in different ways. Adewale et al. (2017) defined self-efficacy as people's decision about their capability to carry out a specific duty or task. Similarly, Lunenburg (2011) argued that self-efficacy is the task-specific characteristic of self-esteem which augments people's capacity to motivate, acquire and increase performance. Bandura (1997) conceived self-efficacy as the certainty in one's competences to implement and establish a course of action needed to manage a certain situation. It implies that the way people perceived their competences in discharging certain assignments. A careful compression of these two concepts leads to emergence of leadership self-efficacy. Adewale et al. (2018) conceived the term leadership self-efficacy as the confidence maintained by leaders about their ability to accomplish certain task.

2.2. Meaning of Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is an important concept to employers, governments and entrepreneurs. Therefore, Meyer and Allen (1997) argued that there are various reasons why employees' affection to their organizations remains important and will continue to be relevant in the future. Battistelli et al. (2006) perceived organizational commitment as psychological state which characterized an employee's association with the organization where he or she works and later informed the decision to remain with such an organization. According to Mowday et al. (1982), organizational commitment implies an employee's willingness to work for an organization and his or her readiness to continue work for such organization. Raza and Nawaz (2011) argued that organizational commitment is the bond which individual employees form with his or her employer's organization. Al-Jabari and Ghazzawi (2019) argued that organizational commitment can influence organizational citizenship behavior of employees in an organization.

2.3. Types of Organizational Commitment

Meyer and Allen (1991) viewed all the definitions provided by scholars and researchers on organizational commitment and categorized them into three main streams: affective, continuance and normative commitment.

Affective commitment: employees' emotional affiliation to and bond identified with an organization (Battistelli et al. 2006). It is perceived as the fundamental aspect of organizational commitment (Mercurio 2015).

Continuance commitment: according to Meyer and Allen (1991) this type arises due to fear of loss. Here, employees will weigh the consequence of what they will lose if they leave their current workplace or organization. Therefore, Gagne and Deci (2005) argued that continuance commitment is not self-determined, it rather occurs, due to external constraint.

Normative commitment: this occurs as a result of moral obligation which employees show towards their organizations. Meyer and Parfyonova (2010) stressed that normative commitment manifests in two distinct manners, either as a moral obligation or a form of gratitude with each impacting on work behavior of employee. An employee with a strong moral obligation or attachment will be likely to remain with his or her organization.

2.4. Connection between Leaders' Self-Efficacy and Employees' Organizational Commitment

Bandura and Adams (1977) opined that self-efficacy influences people's selection of activities, the effort they commit into a certain action or task and their behavioral settings. Zeb and Nawaz (2016) found that self-efficacy has a positive connection with organizational commitment of members of academic staff in Pakistan universities. Similarly, self-efficacy has positive connection with organizational commitment of employee in small scale industries in China (Lin and Wang 2018). Rhoades et al. (2001) also argued that employees' affective commitment to an organization can be influenced by organizational support which include support from the leader whom they worked for. This support of the leader will be geared by their self-efficacy (Bandura 1997). This shows that self-efficacy of leaders contributed to the kind of support they rendered to their subordinates which later influences organizational commitment and performance of employees. Additionally, continuance commitment of employee has a positive association with organizational performance (Suliman and Iles 2000). Saremi and Rezeghi (2015) found a relationship between normative commitment and self-efficacy. All these findings show that self-efficacy of leaders can impact on the organizational commitment of employees in any workplace or setting.

3. Methods

Research Design: the procedure for collecting, analyzing and reporting research (Creswell 2012). In this research study, the descriptive design was used. This helps researchers in describing the relationship between variables (Berg and Lune 2014). Therefore, this research studied the effects of leaders' self-efficacy on organizational commitment of faculty members in public universities in Saudi Arabia.

Population and sampling technique: in this study, the population comprises of faculty members in three different public universities in Saudi Arabia. These universities are University of Jazan based in South-Western part of the Kingdom, Majmah University located in Southern part of Majmah province and University of Hail, Hail province of the Kingdom. Population of faculty members in these three public universities is around 10,000. Out of this, samples were drawn. A total of 400 faculty members were selected across these three public universities based on suggestions of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) who suggested that a sample of 285 is appropriate. However, the researcher increased it to 400 in order to reach out to more faculty members and encouraged participation of more universities across the country. Lastly, the study adopted a random sampling technique in selecting faculty members.

This gave every faculty member equal chance of partaking in the study without any form of bias or prejudice (Nishishiba et al. 2014)

Instrumentation: this study used a survey questionnaire from the study of Adewale et al. (2018) on leadership self-efficacy and Meyer and Allen (1997) on organizational commitment. The instrument consists of 28 items divided into five sections of A to E. Section A centers on demographic information of respondents. Section B focuses on leadership self-efficacy, Section C relates to questions on affective commitment, Section D looks at continuance commitment while Section E focuses on normative commitment.

Administration of the instrument: the questionnaire was compiled by the researcher and sent to the respondents in their respective universities. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the respondents face-to-face. Clarifications were made where necessary. Respondents were given ample time to digest and fill in the survey questionnaire at their convenience. At agreed dates and times, the respondents went back for collection of the survey questionnaire.

Reliability and validity test: Cronbach's Alpha was adopted in testing reliability of the items in the survey questionnaire. This was adjudged to be the most used adopted indicator for testing internal consistency (Pallant 2011). Scholars differ on the appropriate value for the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. DeVellis (2003) argued that the value of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of a scale must be greater than 0.7. In contrast, Briggs and Cheek (1986) recommended 0.2 to 0.4 as the optimal range for Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Below is the value of the Cronbach's Alpha for each construct.

As stated in the instrumentation section earlier, the 28 items were subjected to reliability testing. Eight items were deleted because they did not meet the condition for reliability testing and the remaining 20 were retained. Table 1 shows the items retained and deleted for each construct. It further shows leaders' self-efficacy with four items and a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.714. Affective commitment has six items and a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient value of 0.717. Continuance commitment has five items with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.727 while normative commitment has five items with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.715. It was found that the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for each of the four constructs are above the recommended value of 0.7 suggested by DeVellis (2003). Therefore, the items fulfilled reliability testing.

Table 1. Reliability tests for the constructs.

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items	Retained Item Deleted
Self-Efficacy	0.714	4	3
Affective Commitment	0.717	6	1
Continuance Commitment	0.720	5	2
Normative Commitment	0.715	5	2

In addition, factor analysis was used in validating the instrument. It assists researchers in reducing large data set into a meaningful subscale (Pallant 2011). The result of the validity test is presented below.

The 20 items of the Leadership Self Efficacy and Faculty Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (LSEFOCQ) were exposed to principal components analysis, using SPSS version 21. Preliminary analysis was conducted to ensure that all the items were fit for factor analysis. A cross examination of the correlation table revealed the presence of some coefficients greater than 0.3. The value of the KMO was 0.738 which is greater than the commended value of 0.6 suggested by Kaiser (1974) while the Bartlett's test was statistically significant with *p*-value of 0.000. These show the factorability of the correlation matrix. Furthermore, the PCA indicated the presence of four components with eigen-values exceeding 1 and explaining 20.83%, 17.36%, 15.16% and 12.90% of the variance, respectively. By means of Catell's scree test (Catell 1966), it was concluded to retain four components. The four-component solution explained a total of 66.26% of the variance; component 1 contributed 20.8%, component 2 contributed 17.4%, component 3 contributed 15.2% while component 4 contributed 12.9%.

4. Results

According to Table 2 above, 269 (67.3%) of the respondents are male faculty members while the remaining 131 (32.7%) are female faculty members in Saudi Arabian public universities. In addition, 150 (37.5%) of the respondents are working in Humanities/Social Sciences, 140 (35.0%) are working in Sciences while the remaining 110 (27.5%) are faculty members working in Engineering in Saudi Arabian public universities. It was further found that 140 (35.0%) of the respondents were from University of Hail, 130 (32.5%) of the respondents were working with University of Jazan and the remaining 130 (32.5%) were working with Majmah University. In addition, 100 (25.0%) of the respondents worked for less than 5 years in their universities, 170 (42.5%) of the respondents served their universities for 6 to 10 years while the remaining 130 (32.5%) worked for their universities for over 10 years. Lastly, 190 (47.5%) of the respondents are assistant professors, 140 (35.0%) are associate professors while the remaining 70 (17.5%) are professors working in Saudi Arabian public universities.

Table 2. Demographic distribution of respondents.

Items		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	269	67.3
	Female	131	32.7
Specialization	Humanities	150	37.5
	Science	140	35.0
	Engineering	110	27.5
University	Uni. Of Hail	140	35.0
	Uni of Jazan	130	32.5
	Majmah Uni	130	32.5
Experience	<5 years	100	25.0
	6–10 years	170	42.5
	>10 years	130	32.5
Rank	Assistant Prof.	190	47.5
	Associate Prof.	140	35.0
	Professor	70	17.5

After presenting the demographic information, the study went further by testing the hypotheses. Before presenting the result, of the normality test as shown below.

As indicated in Table 3 above, it was observed that all the 20 items are within the tolerable limit and values of skewness and kurtosis. Therefore, they do not violate the test of normality. After fulfilling the assumption of normality, the researcher went further to test the hypotheses as presented below.

Table 3. Normality test for the constructs.

Items	X	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
LSE1	4.59	1.14	−0.706	0.645
LSE2	4.13	1.05	−0.718	0.838
LSE3	4.24	1.16	−0.721	0.514
LSE4	4.35	1.19	−0.772	0.615
AFC1	3.36	1.57	0.821	0.749
AFC2	3.27	1.35	0.783	712
AFC3	3.48	1.32	0.723	0.619
AFC4	3.56	1.63	0.747	0.781
AFC5	3.53	1.58	0.745	0.75
AFC6	3.58	1.47	0.762	0.65
COC1	3.7	1.07	−0.75	0.856
COC2	3.76	1.02	−0.736	0.834
COC3	3.67	1.06	−0.562	0.66

Table 3. *Cont.*

Items	X	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
COC4	3.8	1.07	−0.652	0.56
COC5	3.9	1.01	−0.737	0.539
NOC1	4.77	1.16	−0.9	0.764
NOC2	4.09	1.03	−0.675	0.761
NOC3	4.75	1.12	−0.881	0.87
NOC4	4.36	1.2	−0.814	0.675
NOC5	4.68	1.63	−0.736	0.83

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *There is a significant connection between leadership self-efficacy and affective organizational commitment of faculty members.*

The connection between leadership self-efficacy and affective commitment was examined using Pearson correlation coefficient. Preliminary investigations were made and there was no violation of fundamental assumptions. There exists a positive connection between leadership self-efficacy and affective commitment with $r = 0.521$, $n = 400$, $p < 0.05$. The table also revealed that the power of this connection is strong as suggested by Cohen (1988) who argued that a value from 0.50 to 1.0 is large (Table 4).

Table 4. Correlation.

		Leadership Self Efficacy	Affective Commitment
	Pearson Correlation	1	0.521 **
LSE	Sig (2-tailed)		0.003
	N	400	400
	Pearson Correlation	0.521 **	1
AFC	Sig (2-tailed)	0.003	
	N	400	400

** Correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). LSE = Leadership Self-Efficacy; AFC = Affective Commitment.

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *There is a significant connection between leadership self-efficacy and continuance organizational commitment of faculty members.*

The connection between leadership self-efficacy and continuance commitment was retained using Pearson correlation coefficient. A preliminary investigation was conducted and assumptions were not violated. A positive connection exists between leadership self-efficacy and continuance commitment with $r = 0.485$, $n = 400$, $p < 0.05$ (Table 5).

Table 5. Correlation.

		Leadership Self Efficacy	Continuance Commitment
	Pearson Correlation	1	0.485 **
LSE	Sig (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	400	400
	Pearson Correlation	0.485 **	1
COC	Sig (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	400	400

** Correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). LSE = Leadership Self-Efficacy; COC = Continuance Commitment.

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *There is a significant connection between leadership self-efficacy and normative organizational commitment of faculty members.*

An investigation was made on the connection between leadership self-efficacy and normative commitment using Pearson correlation coefficient. Preliminary assumptions were not violated. A positive connection exists between leadership self-efficacy and normative commitment with $r = 0.517$, $n = 400$, $p < 0.05$ (Table 6).

Table 6. Correlation.

		Leadership Self Efficacy	**Normative Commitment**
	Pearson Correlation	1	0.517 **
LSE	Sig (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	400	400
	Pearson Correlation	0.517 **	1
NOC	Sig (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	400	400

** Correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). LSE = Leadership Self-Efficacy; NOC = Normative Commitment.

5. Discussion

As indicated in the findings section above, this study found that leadership self-efficacy has a positive connection with faculty members' affective commitment. This is indicated in the *p*-value which is less than 0.05. This result indicated that whenever heads of department show a high self-efficacy like encouraging innovation and innovative ideas from faculty members and other staff, not complaining about difficult tasks and showing positive attitude to work, affective commitment of faculty members working under their supervision will improve; thereby, increasing the performance of faculty members in the university. This is in agreement with the position of Bandura and Adams (1977) who argued that self-efficacy influences people's selection of activities, effort they committed to a certain action or task and behavioral setting. Similarly, leadership self-efficacy has a positive relationship with continuance commitment of faculty members in universities. As indicated in the r value, the magnitude of the connection is medium. In spite of that, the result indicated that wherever heads of department show high self-efficacy towards work in the university, faculty members under them will increase their continuance commitment. It corresponds with the finding of Zeb and Nawaz (2016) who found that self-efficacy has a positive relationship with members of academic staff's organizational commitment in Pakistan universities. This relationship can enhance organizational performance as argued by Suliman and Iles (2000). Lastly, leadership self-efficacy has a positive relationship with normative commitment of faculty members as indicated in the *p*-value which is less than 0.05. This corroborates with position of Saremi and Rezeghi (2015) who found that the self-efficacy belief can impact on employee normative commitment.

Both practical and theoretical implications are applicable in this study. Theoretically, when self-efficacy of academic leaders is high, they will show strong commitment to staff and student development. As a result of this, organizational commitment of these faculty members will improve. In addition, high self-efficacy displayed by academic leaders like heads of department, deans and others will improve eagerness and self sacrifice of faculty members because they will shun all acts that will jeopardize progress of the organization and be prepared to contribute their best at all times. This is in consonance with the position of Bush and Middlewood (2005) who argued that leadership can make or mar an organization.

Practically, self-efficacy of leaders is a key factor which can influence outcome and performance of members of staff in an organization. Whenever academic leaders show a positive attitude to work, never complain of any difficult task and give room for creativity and innovation, faculty members

under their control will be likely to copy or imitate their leaders. These faculty members will not be lazy to work, they too will not complain whenever a difficult task is given to them. All they will engage in is how to solve these complex tasks and deliver their responsibilities effectively and efficiently. This shows that self-efficacy concept is very essential in university setting as argued by Bandura (1997) that this concept will help to improve individuals within an organization. Furthermore, when leaders in universities show a high self-efficacy towards their work, they will gain support and cooperation of their subordinates and lead the path of change and innovation diligently. As a result, it will improve the team work in the academic setting. This corresponds with the study of Adewale et al. (2018) who found that leader's self-efficacy can increase organizational citizenship behavior of staff in higher education institutions. Moreover, university administrators and government must strive to improve the efficacy of academic leaders as measures towards revitalizing the system and increasing performance of faculty members. This can be done through carefully planned developmental programs for academic leaders.

This study is limited to three different public universities in Saudi Arabia due to financial constraint and the diverse nature of the study. It was also limited to prominent universities in the selected provinces in order to ascertain the originality of the concept among faculty members in public universities in the Kingdom.

6. Conclusions

The result that emerged from this study shows that self-efficacy of academic leaders is an important tool which can both stir or reduce the organizational commitment of faculty members in universities. Whenever leaders in a university setting exhibit a high self-efficacy, it will stimulate the level of commitment which faculty members will put into work. As a measure towards enhancing quality and an effective university education system, leaders in universities must upgrade and improve their self-efficacy in order to achieve high faculty member and staff commitment and achieve the goals of their institutions.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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