LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS IN UNIONIZED WORK ENVIRONMENT: A STUDY ON THE PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

Leadership effectiveness has been the central theme in most leadership research in early years of the 20th century. Behavior of the leader stands prominent as a determinant of leadership effectiveness in organizations. Understanding of effective leadership requires understanding both transactional nature of leadership as explained by existing theories, and the transformational influences of leadership. However, very few studies have been carried out on transformational and transactional leadership in unionized work context. Public sector organizations in Sri Lanka are characterized with high unionization of employees. Further, majority of the unions are politicized in terms of affiliation with main stream political parties. This situation has created a context where administrators of public sector organizations face context specific challenges and issues. With the common allegation leveled against the public sector organizations over their ineffectiveness, it is the leadership of these organizations which comes under criticism over their leadership effectiveness. However, no systematic study has been done to explore this issue in a managerial perspective. This paper proposes to examine the leadership effectiveness of the public sector organization under unionized work environment in Sri Lanka.

Background Of The Study

Sri Lanka, known as Democratic Social Republic of Sri Lanka, located at the south of Indian peninsula, having approximately 2.04 million population, has recorded an average of 5.5% GDP growth rate over the past years (Central Bank, 2009). Despite its modest economic growth rate, Sri Lanka has been cited as a country with higher Human Development Index, (.759 in 2009). This has been attributed to the welfare facilities provided by the government through its chain of public sector organizations.

With the introduction of the open economic system in 1978, the public sector organizations of Sri Lanka were expected to play a significant economic role in keeping with the economic policy of the government. With the aim of improving the contribution of the public sector organizations to the national economy, the government of Sri Lanka has been providing them the required resources over the past years. The current transfers to the public corporations and institutes from the government grew from 7358 Million Rupees in 2000 to 37293 Million Rupees in 2009. On the other hand, capital transfers increased from 26569 Million Rupees in 2000 to 138089 Million Rupees in 2009 (Central Bank, 2009).

Despite the commitment of the government to the public sector organizations, they have been criticized over their mismanagement and organizational ineffectiveness (Ranasignhe, 1992). The public sector industry output index has been decreasing over the past years indicating the deteriorating situation of their effectiveness. It recorded a value of 91.4 in 2001 but it was reduced to 82.8 in 2009.

On the other hand, the public sector organizations in Sri Lanka have been characterized with a higher level of unionization of their employees (Nanayakkara, 1988; Biyanwilla, 2003). Cabral (1992) argued that unionized environment of the public sector organizations has negatively affected the productivity level of these organizations.

Aggravating to this situation is the fact that majority of these trade unions are politicized and have a political agenda other than their demands for employees' rights (Nanayakara, 1988). Biyanvila (2003), identified it as

"Political Unionism" which is a unique character in Sri Lanka and other South Asian Counties. Anyway, with the increasing public awareness, and competition, public enterprises are pressurized by both the public and the government to be more effective. There is growing evidence that public sector organizations are faced with increasing economic and social pressure to reform their managerial and organizational practices (Samaratunge & Bennington, 2002).

Thus, a heavy responsibility lies on the shoulders of the administrators of the public sector to meet the expectations set on them by both the government and the public. Kakabadse, Korac-Kakabadse, & Kouzmin, (2003) claimed that policy makers are pressured for more effective leadership to improve the performance of the public sector organizations which is evident in the U.S.A., U.K., and other countries.

At any rate, a unionized working environment provides a unique context for the administrators of public sector organizations in the area of management. Researchers provide evidence that a unionized workforce imposes both constraints and opportunities for managers. For instance, Iverson & Kuruvilla, (1995) claim that the presence of unionized labour force has been a contextual constraint on the school district's ability to be innovative and to adapt to environmental change.

Individual behavior of unionized employees and union behavior as an aggregate unit have been evident of affecting to the organizational outcomes. Among these outcomes affected by unionism are productivity (Ronald, Daniel and Joshua, 1983), quality and efficiency (Lasierra, 2007) productivity (Cabral, 1992) and are prominent. Public sector managers find it challenging to achieve the organizational goals with this unionized context (Ranashinghe, 1992). But they are supposed to deliver results in line with the New Public Management Strategy of the government and their performance is evaluated in terms of goal achievement (Public Administration Circular, No.234, 2007). Promotions and annual increments for the public sector administrators are being linked with the outcomes of these assessments (Samaratunge & Bennington, 2002).

In these evaluations, both effective and ineffective administrators in terms of organizational performance are found. A problem lies worth investigating here. Almost all of the public sector organizations have somewhat similar organizational culture (Nanayakkara, 1988) and the administrators are appointed from the Sri Lanka Administrative Service (SLAS) and other aligned services with same level of academic qualifications and experiences. Why is there a difference in leadership

effectiveness of these administrators? Is it the type or the degree of unionization of employees which affects this difference? This is exactly what the present study intends to do.

Problem

Behavior of the leader is a key determinant of leadership effectiveness in organizations (Jaussi and Dionne, 2004). This is so evident with the fact that almost all leadership theories have included leadership behavior in their explanation of leadership effectiveness. Among the vast array of leadership behavior such as Charismatic leadership, (Conger, 1989), Visionary leadership, (Sashkin, 1988), Authentic leadership, Servant leadership, Spiritual leadership, Shared leadership, and Ethical leadership, (Avolio, Walumbwa, and Webb, 2009), transactional and transformational leadership behavior have been dominant in leadership effectiveness studies.

Transactional and transformational leadership, were first developed by Burns (1978) and expanded by Bass (1985), Bass and Avolio (1992) with the argument that understanding of effective leadership requires understanding of both transactional nature of leadership as explained by existing theories, and the transformational influences of leadership. The transactional and transformational leadership theory received an immense research follow up resulting in refining and developing it further. It was considered as Full Range of Leadership Theory (FRLT) (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003). Stordeur et al., (2001) argued that transactional and transformational leadership is a significant area of studies among academics and practitioners, and providing a main avenue for leadership studies. Robbins and Coultar (2005) have termed the transformational and transactional leadership as "Cutting Edge Leadership Theory" based on the fact that the theory has underpinnings of all approaches to leadership.

The extensive research on transactional and transformational leadership has accumulated a vast body of knowledge explaining leadership effectiveness. Majority of research on full range theory of leadership have explored the effect of transformational and transactional leadership on various organizational outcomes. The list of organizational outcomes which are affected by full range leadership is very comprehensive including, performance (Burton & Peachey, 2009), commitment, (Lo, Ramayah, & Min, 2009), follower development (Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002), leader's trust, (Ismail, Mohamad, Mohamed, Rafiuddin,

& Pei Zhen, 2010) ,employee citizen behavior, (Wang et al., 2005), innovation process (Adegoke, Natasha & Fred, 2009) , organizational identification (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005), value congruence (Jung & Avolio,2000) and followers' emotions (Rowold & Rohmann, 2009). Lowe, Kroeck, and Sivasubramaniam (1996) claimed that transformational leadership behavior predictive of positive individual and organizational outcomes, have become a somewhat axioms in leadership literature.

However, leadership and transactional and transformational leadership in particular have not been explored adequately in different contexts for its contextual validity. Porter and McLaughlin (2006) noted that contextual impact on leadership has not been much explored. Therefore, it needs further research in this line for the development of knowledge on leadership (Hanna, Uhl-Bien, Avolio, & Cavarretta, 2009). Wang & Rode, (2010) noted that the vast majority of research has implicitly assumed the effects of transformational leadership to be context free and with few exceptions, organizational or workgroup level variables have largely been excluded from empirical research models. Even earlier research on transformational leadership has stressed the importance of understanding the context where leadership operates (Pawer & Eastman, 1997). Criticizing the past leadership research on that they all have considered that leader follower relationship exist in a vacuum, House and Adithya (1997), stressed the importance of considering the contextual factors associated with leadership. However, emerging research suggests that contextual factors may play an important role in the process though which transformational and transactional leadership affects certain behavioral outcomes (Wang and Rode, 2010).

Contextual perspective of leadership is one that recognizes that leadership is embedded and socially constructed in and from a context. Osborn, Hunt and Jauch (2002), claimed that leadership and its effectiveness in large part are depending on the context. Change the context, leadership changes. The major assumption of this perspective is that volatility and complexity are key characteristics of context and leadership and leadership effectiveness are bound with them (Osborn and Marision, 2009). The objective of the contextual perspective is to develop mid-range theories of leadership that are tailored for certain context, but that are not presumed or expected to apply to others (Hackman, 2010).

Factors or variables operating in particular organizational context may affect leadership behavior in two ways. First, contexts in organizations operate in such a way that it provides constraints and opportunities for

leadership behavior and attitudes in organizational setting and effect on relationship between variables (Johns, 2006). Second, it may contain certain variables operating differs from each other or mediators altering or fostering the effect of leadership on variables (Poter & McLaughlin, 2006; Johns, 2006; Hanna et al., 2009).

Among the contexts explored in transformational and transactional leadership process, are Virtual Work setting (Purvanova & Bono, 2009), Organizational change (Currie, Lockett, & Suhomlinova,2009) , Organizational Cultures ; learning culture (Waldman, 1993) innovative culture (Jung, Chow, & Wu, 2003), Small and Medium industry (Chen., 2004), and Unionized work settings (Harriet, 1989; Chan, 2007), National cultures (Jung, Yammario, & Lee, 2009), and nonprofit organizations (Rowold & Rohmann, 2009).

With particular relevance to the present study, comparatively very few studies have been carried out on transformational and transactional leadership in unionized work contexts. Harriet (1989) had explored the leadership effectiveness of unionized and non unionized leaders but not with employee unionization. The effect of leader communication approaches on job satisfaction of unionized employees had been explored in unionized work context (Chan, 2007). However, these studies have taken the leadership process in disjointed manner and have not included the contextual variables into their examination. It is just a mere sample selection not a contextual exploration as per the criticism of Poter & McLaughlin, (2006) who claimed that close consideration reveals that most of contextual studies are usually sample participant category. Very seldom was there an intentional assessment of impact of any part of the organizational context on leadership effectiveness .

Researchers have explored the specific variables associated with employees'behaviour in unionized work environment. Among these variables ,union commitment (Sadler, 2009), union loyalty (Iverson & Kuruvilla, 1995), union membership behaviour (Renaud, 2002), union member participation (Cregan & Brown, 2010) and employee politization (Neeta, 2008) are mostly researched.

Among these unionization variables, union commitment is found to be associated with employees outcomes , namely job satisfaction, commitment and performance (Chan, Tong-Qing, Redman, & Snape, 2006) which are also the outcomes of transactional and transformational leadership (Chen., 2004; Nguni et al., 2006). Research has been carried

out to explore the relationship between union commitment and employee outcomes (Chan et al., 2006) , and leadership behaviour and union commitment (Sadler, 2009). However, there is differs from each others in leadership literature not exploring the effect of leadership behaviors on employee outcomes with the intervening effect of union commitment of employees in leadership studies.

Given that union commitment is correlated with both leadership behaviour and employee outcomes, it can reasonably argue that union commitment may effect the relationship between transactional and transformational leadership and leadership effectiveness in term of employee outcomes, in unionized work environment. But no evidence is traceable for examination of the effect of union commitment on transactional and transformational leadership process in unionized work environment.

On the other hand, certain characteristics of employees have been taken as moderating factor on transactional and transformational leadership process. Among such characteristics explored are educational backgrounds and gender (Chen, Chen, & Chen, 2010), motive pattern (Wofford et al., 2001), subordinates attitudes (Jung et al., 2009), and individual differences (Epitropaki & Martin,2005) can be cited. Relatively little research attention has been placed on moderating role of employee beliefs in transactional and transformational leadership process. In line with this argument is the fact that though, the political belief of employees has been cited as a possible moderator on perceived management performance (Boxall, Haynes, & Macky, 2006; Charlwood, 2002), a negligence is noticed in exploring the effect of employees' politcal belief on transactional and transformational leadership process.

Given the above accounts, it is clear that there is a void in the leadership literature of not exploring the effect of union commitment and employee political belief on the relationship of transformational and transactional leadership and their effectiveness. Eventhough, such an exploration is only possible in unionized work environment where union commitment and politicization are contextualized, no evidence is traceable for such exploration in the field of leadership .

Therefore, the present study explores how employees' union commitment and politicization affect the relationship of transactional and transformational leadership and effectiveness in term of employees' outcomes in the public sector organizations in Sri Lanka.

Literature Review

Transactional and Transformational Leadership

Transformational and transactional leadership theory developed by Burns,(1978) in the political context was further refined by Bass (1985) and Bass and Avolio (1992) and introduced to the organizational context. Transformational leaders transform and motivate employees by 1) making them more aware of the importance of task outcomes, 2) inducing them to trancend their own self interest for the shake of the organization, 3) and activating their higher order needs (Bass, 1985). On the other hand, transactional leadership engages in exchange process resulting followers' complience with leader's request but not with enthusiasm and commitment (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). Transactional leadership concerns the exchange relationship between leader and followers. He clarifies his performance expectations and the exchange rewards for performance achievements to his employees. He inspects the performance of subordinates and rewards the achievement of performance target and punishes subordinates for not achieving performance target (Zagorsek et al., 2009).

The influencing process of transformational and transactional leadership differs from each other, while transactional leadership uses instrumental compliance; subordinates compliance to the direction of the leader so that they receive certain rewards or avoid punishments (Yukl, 2006), transformational leader uses internalization as influencing strategy; bounding organizational goals with subordinate personal values and attitudes (Bono & Judge, 2003).

Leadership effectiveness of transactional and transformational leadership is measured largely by the effect of leader's behaviour on followers and the resultant outcomes (Webb, 2007). Empirical evidence is abundant that transactional and transformational leadership behaviours are associated with many organizational outcomes. Some meta- analytical studies have provided evidence on positive effect of transformational and transactional leadership on both employee outcomes and organizational outcomes (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Further, these meta-analyses showed that in general, transformational leadership was more strongly associated with outcome criteria than was transactional leadership. Among such organizational outcomes, affected by transformational and transactional leadership behaviour are, organizational learning (Zagorsek et al., 2009), innovation and creativity (Adegoke et al., 2009), performance (Bass et al., 2003), organizational identification (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005), and

followers' emotions (Rowold & Rohmann, 2009), employees' trust in leader (Ismail,et al.,2010), job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour (Nguni et al., 2006). However, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and performance of employees have been found predominantly affected by transactional and transformational leadership.

Organizational Commitment

Definitions of OC have been in vast array from simple such as binding of an individual to an organization (Gordon, Philpot, Burt, Thompson, & Spiller, 1980) to a broader definition which is a manifest of 1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organizational goals and values 2) a willingness to exert a considerable amount of efforts on behalf of the organization and 3) a desire to remain within the organization (Poter, Richard, Mowday, & Paul, 1974). Among these antecedents, leadership behavior of the managers in organizations has been identified as key determinant of organizational commitment of employees (Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004). Among the leadership behaviors affecting organizational commitment of employees, transactional and transformational leadership behaviors are found to be more dominant in leadership literature.

Transformational leadership bears positive impact on organizational commitment of employees in different contexts (Avolio et al., 2004).It is not only the transformational leadership, but transactional leadership is also associated with organizational commitment (Chen et al., 2010). However, transformational leadership is positively and significantly associated with commitment than transactional leadership behaviour (Nguni et al., 2006).

Job Satisfction

Job satisfaction is defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job and job experiences and as a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one's job and what one perceives as its offering (Locke, 1976). Researchers' interest on job satisfaction of employees is based on the fact that it can be a major determinant of organizational performance and effectiveness (Lok & Crawford, 2004). Job satisfaction has been observed to be affecting to the level of absenteeism, grievance expression, tardiness, low morale, high turnover, quality improvement and participation in decision-making and performance (Yiing & Bin Ahmad, 2009). Scholars have observed a

direct implication of leadership on employees' job satisfaction. Emery & Barker,(2007) observed that a major determinant of an employee's attitudes is his/her perception of his immediate supervisor. Further, a leader's behavior or leadership style may influence the subordinates level of job satisfaction (Al-Hussami, 2008).

Transformational and transactional leadership are the two types of leadership styles which have been explored with job satisfaction.Both transformational and transactional leadership seem to bear significant impact on job satisfaction of employees (Emery & Barker, 2007).

It seems that some components of transactional and transformational leadership are associated with job satisfaction. Yin Ho, Gun Fie, Ching, & Ooi, (2009) provided evidence that only inspirational motivation and individual consideration of transformational leadership have significant impact on job satisfaction. Judge & Piccolo, (2004) found in their meta-analysis that there is a positive relationship between contingent rewards and followers' satisfaction.

Employee Performance

Organizations irrespective of their type and nature are concerned with employee performance since it has a direct implications for organizational performance and effectiveness. Scholars have distinguished performance as a multidimensional construct (Shaw, Delery, & Abdulla, 2003). Motowidlo & Van Scotter,(1994) distinguished between task performance and contextual performance dimensions of employee performance. Task performance is job behaviors that bear a direct relation to the organizational technical core whereas contextual performance supports the broader organizational, social and psychological environment in which technical core must function. Recent attention was paid to other aspects of employee performance , literally known as helping behavior and later developed as organizational citizenship behavior(Organ, 1997).

It is a common ascertain that transformational leadership causes employee performance than transactional leadership. Vigoda-Gadot, (2007) concluded that transformational leadership was found to be positively correlated with in-role performance while transactional leadership is negatively related.While finding a positive relationship of transformational leadership with employee performance over transactional leadership, Limsila & Ogunlana,(2008) found a positive relationship of transactional leadership with performance.

Union Commitment

Union commitment has been defined based on the traditional organizational commitment definition, as relative strength of members' identification with , and involvement in an union (Mowday, et al,. 1979). However, Gordon et al., (1980) conceptualized union commitment has having four factors. They are , union loyalty; reflecting a sense of pride and an awareness of the benefits of union membership, responsibility to the union; willingness to fulfill day-to-day obligations to the union, willingness to work for the union; willingness to participate in union activities, and belief in unionism; reflecting general belief in the concept of trade unionism. Snape et al., (2000) distinguished between affective and instrumental union commitment. Affective union commitment refers to a sense of shared values, identity and pride in the union while instrumental commitment is the attachment to the perceived benefits flowing from the union. They further postulated that a particular employee takes much time to build affective commitment compared to instrumental commitment towards the union.

Union commitment is caused by both organizational and individual factors and bearing many organizational implications (Bamberger, Kluger, & Suchard, 1999). Among them, Iverson & Kuruvilla, (1995) observed positive and negative affectivity of employees, job related variables such as job dissatisfaction and organizational variables like leadership behavior are mainly causing union commitment. Felt grievances and dissatisfaction with management are positively associated with administrative and supportive union participation of employees which is an outcome of union commitment (Parks et al., 1995).

Union commitment have found to be correlated with organizational commitment (Edsnape & Redman, 2006; Goeddeke & Kammeryer-Mueller, 2010), job satisfaction (Hammer & Avgar, 2005; Renaud, 2002), and performance (Filipkowski & Johnson, 2008) of union member employees. Given the fact that union commitment are correlated with both leadership behaviour of managers and leadership outcomes, it can reasonably be assigned a mediating role in the relationship between leadership and employee outcomes in a unionized work environment.

Union Politicization

Though trade unions are conceptually viewed as employee organizations which represents the employees' interests, researcher claimed that they have a political dimension too. Hyman & Gumbrell-McCormick,(2010)

proposed that trade unions are not merely economic actors, they are necessarily acting in the political arena.

Unions engage in political activities for different reasons .One such thesis was that employee unions are attached to political parties for increasing their influencing power, (Sturmthal, 1972). Other reasons for unions to be politicized are , as a strategy for mobilizing more employees for their union actions, (Daley, 1992) and to balance the power in context where economic power is eroding (Piazza, 2001). Researchers have identified two dimensions related to union politicization which has some implications on management of unionized organizations. They are the political instrumentality and political belief. Political instrumentality is the perception of union members that how far political activities of the union benefit them (Fiorito, 1987). On the other hand, political belief is the degree of belief of the members that unions have a political role as well other than economic role (Kelly, 1994). He claimed that political belief alters individual perception of employees on advantages and disadvantages of unions. An employee with left wing political ideology perceives that unions provide more advantages. On the other hand, an employee with right wing political view, perceives the opposite (Kelly, 1994). Further, left-wing employees perceive management performance less effective while right-wing employees tend to perceive management performance relatively high effective indicating a moderating effect of political ideology of employees (Boxall et al., 2006). These assertions hint a possible moderating role of political belief of union members plays in an unionized work environment.

Objectives Of The Study

1.   To examine the effect of transformational leadership behavior of managers on job satisfaction, commitment and performance of employees
2.   To examine transactional leadership behavior on job satisfaction, commitment and performance of employees
3.   To compare the effect of transformational leadership behavior and transactional leadership behavior on Job Satisfaction, commitment and performance of employees
4.   To assess the moderating effect of union politicization on the relationship between leadership behaviors and job satisfaction, commitment and performance of employees
5.   To assess the mediating effect of union commitment on the relationship between leadership behaviors and job satisfaction, commitment and performance of employees

Research Questions

1. Is there any significant relationship between transactional leadership behavior and employees' job satisfaction, commitment and performance?
2. Is there any significant relationship between transformational leadership behavior and employees' job satisfaction, commitment and performance?
3. Does transformational leadership increase the leadership outcomes than transactional leadership?
4. Does union politicization moderate the relationship between leadership behaviors and employees' job satisfaction, commitment and performance?
5. Does union commitment mediate the relationship between leadership behaviors and employees' job satisfaction, commitment and performance?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study was developed based on the identified variables and relations through the literature review pertaining to the research problem of the study.

Leadership and Leadership Outcomes

The central focus of most of the leadership studies is to examine the leadership effectiveness of leadership process (Yukl, 2006). This is due to the fact that effective leadership is instrumental not only to the growth, but also to the survival of the organizations in highly dynamic and competitive environment. Among the factors identified for leadership effectiveness, leadership behavior stands prominent (Jaussi & Dionne, 2004).

Among the leadership effectiveness studies in term of leadership behavior, transactional and transformational leadership behaviors are the mostly researched leadership behavior in leadership studies (Kirklbride, 2006). Effectiveness of transactional and transformational leadership is largely measured by the effect of leader behavior on followers (Webb, 2007). The effect of transactional and transformational leadership on followers has been assessed in term of behaviors and factors associated with subordinates. These behaviors and factors range from, commitment (Chen et al.,2010), performance (Wang et al., 2005), job satisfaction (Al-Hussami, 2008), loyalty, organizational citizenship

behaviors (Nguni et al.,2006), innovation (Adegoke,et al., 2009), learning (Zagorsek,et al., 2009) to identification with the organization (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005). However, the present study uses the effect of transformational and transactional leadership only on performance, commitment and job satisfaction of employees for conceptualizing the leadership effectiveness. This is in congruence with the argument of Shaw et al., (2003) that inclusion of highly correlated variable related to the phenomena under study is critical. Wlliams & Anderson, (1990) claimed that obtaining significant finding for variables is spurious, representing the fact that the others were not included in the study.

Transactional and transformational leadership records a significant positive effect on performance, commitment and job satisfaction of employees (Nguni,et al., 2006; Emery & Barker, 2007; Al-Hussami, 2008). The present study takes the aggregate effect of transactional and transformational leadership on outcomes variable not the effect of each component. It is because first, the focus of this study is to assess the overall leadership effectiveness of transactional and transformational leadership. Therefore, aggregate behavior is more appropriate for this purpose. Second, many studies use only the composite score, rather than component behavior in assessing transactional and transformational leadership behavior (Yukl, 2006).

It is a long standing interest of researchers to explore the influencing process of the two leadership behaviors on employee outcomes. While some have examined the direct effect of transactional and transformational leadership, others have explored it through moderating and mediating mechanism.

Identification of Mediator and Moderator of the Model

Some specific leadership contexts provide factors which may operate as moderators or mediators in the leadership process. Unionized work environment provides such a context for managers of them. Union commitment and politicization have been identified as contextual factors of the present study. Context in organizational behavior studies is defined as situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and meaning of organizational behavior as well as functional relationships between variables (Johns, 2006). Context, in terms of leadership, is defined as the set of overall demands, constraints, and choices for leaders, and can be characterized as ranging from stability to chaos (Osborn et al.,2002). In his context-specific and context-free research purpose distinction, Blair & Hunt, (1986), refers context to organizational type. A more elaborative list of contextual factor are

organizational environment, life-cycle stage, technology, tasks, goals, structure and culture, leaders level, and circumstances surrounding the leader bearing implications for leadership (Shamir & Howell, 1999). Johns, (2006) provides two conceptualization of organizational context for behavioural studies. They are Omnibus and Discreate Context. According to the author, Omnibus refers to context that encompasses many features and particulars. Descrete context refers to the particular contextual variables that shape behavior or attitude. The author can be quoted saying that discrete context can be viewed as nested within omnibus context such that the effect of omnibus context are mediated by discrete context variables or their interactions . The most important implication of this is that it provides a guide for researchers to identify the contextual variables as moderators and mediators. The distinction is that descrete context can be taken as mediator variables in contextual studies. Descrete context refers to specific situational variables that influence directly or mediating relationship between variables concerned while omnibus context variables can be seen as moderating (Johns, 2006).

In congruence with Johns (2006), unionized work environment can be cited as omnibus context given that there are particular factors and variables such as , union commitment, union loyalty, and union participation, operating within. Union commitment can be seen as discrete contextual variable. Therefore, union commitment can be assumed to be mediating in interactions occurring in the unionized working environment.

Further, given the fact that union commitment of employees is correlated with both leadership behavior and outcomes variables, it is considered as mediating variable operating within leadership and outcomes. Baron & Kenny, (1986) claimed that if a variable is to considered as mediating variable it should a) dependent variable must be significantly associated with the variable, b) independent variable must be associated with the variable and c) when the effect of the concerned variable is controlled, the relationship between independent and dependent is no longer significant. Further, an additional condition for mediator identification is that there must be a significant association between independent and dependent variables (Holmbeck, 1997).

However, Baron & Kenny, (1986) claimed that when the relationship between dependent and independent variable becomes zero when control for mediator, the variable is said to be dominant mediator. If the relationship between independent and dependent variable just reduces but significant, it is known as partial mediation (Avolio, et al.,2004). They further claimed that in most areas of psychology and sociology,

the partial mediating effect is more common. Since union commitment has been found to be associated with organizational commitment, job satisfaction, performance, and leadership behavior, it can be taken as mediating variable given that it fulfills the two conditions of mediator identification criteria of Baron & Kenny, (1986) and (Wnner,1971).

On the other hand, Liden et al.,(2003) took agency commitment as mediating between organizational commitment and procedural justice in dual commitment context. Given that transactional and transformational leadership are associated with procedural justice (Ismail et al., 2010), it can reasonably argue that union commitment may mediate in the relationship of leadership and outcome variables, since it is also a form of commitment to another organizations in employees.

Politicization of union is considered in this study as a moderating variable. Researchers have stressed the moderating role of political belief of employees in unionized work environment (Kelly, 1994; Boxall et al., 2006). Given that left-wing political employee peceive higher union benefits and lower cost, while right-wing employees believe the opposite (Kelly, 1994) left wing employee may weaken the relation between the organization and strengthen the relation between union altering the effect on outcomes. Further, since left-wing employees perceive management performance less favorable than the right-wing employees (Boxall et al., 2006), it may also result in altering their relations and effects on outcomes. Therefore, union politicization is assumed to be playing moderating role between leadership and leadership outcomes.

Based on the above arguments, the theoretical framework of this study can be depicted as follow.

Figure 1. Theoretical Model
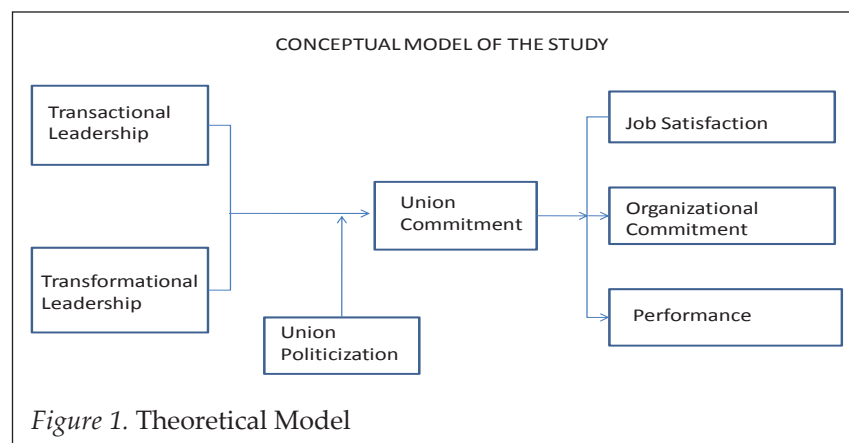
Hypotheses

- H1: There is significant relationship between transactional behavior of managers and job satisfaction of employees in the public sector organizations in Sri Lanka.
- H2: There is significant relationship between transactional behavior of managers and commitment of employees in the public sector organizations in Sri Lanka.
- H3: There is significant relationship between transactional behavior of managers and performance of employees in the public sector organizations in Sri Lanka.
- H4: The higher the transformational leadership behavior of managers, the higher will be the job satisfaction of employees in the public sector organizations in Sri Lanka.
- H5: The higher the transformational leadership behavior of managers, the higher will be the commitment of employees in the public sector organizations in Sri Lanka.
- H6: The higher the transformational leadership behavior of managers, the higher will be the performance of employees in the public sector organization in Sri Lanka.
- H7: There is a mediating effect of union commitment of employee on the relationship between transformational leadership behavior and leadership outcomes.
- H8: There is a mediating effect of union commitment of employee on the relationship between transactional leadership behavior and leadership outcomes.
- H9: There is a moderating effect of politicization of employee on the relationship between transformational leadership behavior and leadership outcomes.
- H10: There is a moderating effect of politicization of employee on the relationship between transactional leadership behavior and leadership outcomes.

Scope Of Study

This study explores the leadership effectiveness of managers in the public sector organizations in Sri Lanka. Leadership behavior will be assessed with transactional and transformational leadership theory while leadership effectiveness is to be assessed in terms of performance, satisfaction and commitment of employees. Employee unionization will be taken as the contextual variable of the study.

This study is carried out in the public sector organizations of Sri Lanka since employee unionization; the contextual variable of the study is largely nested in them. Only commercial ventures among the public sector organizations are taken for the study on the ground that they have more economic implications than other types of public organizations in Sri Lanka. Further, the study involves both managers and the employees of the public sector organizations.

Significance Of Study

There are a scant of studies on leadership effectiveness in a unionized work environment. Though, relatively few researches have been done on this issue, even they have not taken the leadership process together. This has resulted in a void in the leadership literature. The present study is intended to fill this gap by exploring the leadership effectiveness of the transformational and transactional leadership behaviors in unionized work environment. Therefore, this study makes a significant contribution to the body of knowledge by adding new knowledge on leadership and leadership effectiveness in unionized work context.

On the other hand, the knowledge generated and the suggestions and recommendations of this study will be an immense value for leaders operating in unionized work environment. The study will shed light on how employee unionization might affect to their leadership effectiveness. They can opt for better behavioral strategies for leadership effectiveness on this understanding.

Since this study is done in the public sector organizations in Sri Lanka, this study will be significant for public sector managers in improving their leadership effectiveness. They can make a contribution to the enhancement of the effectiveness of the public sector organizations in the long run.

Conclusion

This paper highlights the possible moderating and mediating effect of union commitment and union politicization in the relation of transactional and transformational leadership behaviors of managers with employee outcome variables namely organizational commitment, job satisfaction and performance. Given the fact that studies on the effectiveness of transactional and transformational leadership behavior in unionized

work context are scant, a significant contribution to the body of knowledge can be made by doing such a contextual study. Even though, such an exploration is possible only in unionized work environment with politically affiliated unions, it can add a new knowledge, especially in relation to the role of union commitment and politicization in the leadership process. The public sector organizations in Sri Lanka, being highly unionized with political unions provide a rich context for such examination. Therefore, the present paper proposes a study to examine the mediating and moderating role of union commitment and union politicization in the relation of transactional and transformational leadership behaviors of managers of the public sector organizations in Sri Lanka.

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