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CONTENTS

- 1** * **Corruption: The Ultimate Cancer.**
- 1** * **Job Stress and Job Dissatisfaction: Meaning, Measurement and Reduction -- A Teaching Note.**
- 10** * **The 2008 Financial Meltdowns: Were Early Warning Signs Detected and Disclosed by Management and Auditors?**
- 18** * **Organizations Should Capitalize on Employees' Zone of Proximal Development While in the Midst of Change.**
- 25** * **Failure and Recovery: An Opportunity to Reconnect and Recommit to Customers After Service Failure in the Internet-Based Service Encounters.**
- 33** * **Toward a General Holistic Theory of Risk.**
- 39** * **Relationship Marketing in the American and Canadian Export Sectors: A Matter of Trust.**
- 47** * **Management Responses to Current Stock Prices.**
- 55** * **Do Large Projects Affect Agency Conflicts? Evidence from the Movie Industry.**
- 62** * **U. S. Unemployment Is Not What is Officially Reported.**
- 69** * **Revising Mortgage Financing and Social Security: A Financial Partnership.**
- 75** * **Financial (IL) literacy of College Students.**
- 83** * **Reinvigorating the Caribbean and Central American Common Market.**
- 91** * **The International Competitiveness of Jamaican Manufacturing Firms: A Qualitative Inquiry.**
- 100** * **Trends in Outsourcing and Its Future.**
- 107** * **The Importance of Non-Equity Alliances and a Descriptive Assessment of Member Needs from a Commodity Beef Association.**
- 114** * **Critical Evaluation of Solutions to the Too Big to Fail Problem.**
- 124** * **The Effect of Online Seller Reputation on Consumer Willingness to Pay: An Empirical Study.**
- 130** * **Narrative: An Alternative Way to Gain Consumer Insights.**
- 137** * **Banking and Financial Market Regulation: An analysis of the Effectiveness of Prudential Controls in Australia.**
- 144** * **The Opportunity Recognition Framework in the Hong Kong SMEs context.**
- 150** * **Approaching Family Businesses: Contextual Factors and Implications on Research Strategies.**
- 156** * **Market-Based Instruments and Economic Indicators for Climate Change and Water Pollution Control.**
- 164** * **A Study on Consumer Behavior for Green Products from a Lifestyle Perspective.**
- 171** * **Assessing Hotel Managerial Efficiency Change in Taiwan.**
- 178** * **Different Ethnicities: An Impact of Ethnic Language on Consumer Response to Price-Off Advertising.**
- 185** * **Barriers to E-Government Implementation and Usage in Egypt.**
- 198** * **Innovativeness and Business Performances: Empirical evidence from Bosnia and Herzegovina's Small-Sized Firms.**
- 206** * **Jordanian Income Tax and Sales Assessors' Reliance on the Requirements of IAS No. (12)**
- 217** * **Impact of External Knowledge in the Product Life Cycle of Electronic Devices.**
- 224** * **Destination Image and Marketing Strategy: An Investigation of MICE Travelers to Taiwan.**
- 232** * **The Costs and Benefits of Corporate Social Responsibility.**
- 238** * **Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches of Incubators as Value-added: Best Practice Model.**
- 246** * **Lessons From Experience With Wage Flexibility in Asia.**
- 253** * **The Impact of Change in Federal Funds Rate Target on the Stock Return Volatility in the Stock Exchange of Thailand: A Firm Level Analysis.**
- 261** * **Relationship between FDI and Industrial Categories in Thailand.**
- 270** * **The Effect of Age on Charitable Giving in Taiwan: Is Afterlife Consumption a Driving Force?**
- 278** * **Measuring the Effects of Learning on Business Performances: Proposed Performance Measurement Model.**
- 285** * **Individual Behavior Change Through Economic Shocks Exposure: Empirical Evidence from Romania.**
- 293** * **Does Shareholder Retention Matter in Explaining the Under-Pricing Phenomenon of Malaysian IPOs?**
- 300** * **Collective Efficacy as A Mediator: The Effect of Relationship Oriented Leadership and Employee Commitment Toward Organizational Values.**

310	* Timing the Taiwan Stock Market: Simple Rotation vs. Sector Rotation.
318	* The Impact of Using Information Technology on Accounting Systems Used in Jordanian Telecommunications Companies.
327	* Factors Influence Student's Choice of Universities in Egypt.
335	* Advantages and Disadvantages of Commercial Alternative Dispute Resolutions.
343	* How to submit a paper?
344	* Index.

Collective Efficacy as A Mediator: The Effect of Relationship Oriented Leadership and Employee Commitment Toward Organizational Values

Dr. Pieter Sahertian, Kanjuruhan University of Malang, Indonesia
Dr. Christea Frisdiantara, Kanjuruhan University of Malang, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Research in leadership has not given serious attention to employee expectation with an emphasis on the mediation of the impact of objectives to behavior. One important employee expectation is the belief in individual capabilities, which can produce sufficient progress and performance outcomes.

This research aims to study the mediating effect of employee efficacy by testing two models constructed based on Bandura's cognitive social theory. Model 1 hypothesizes that relationship-oriented leadership will contribute to employee commitment to organizational values through their collective efficacy while Model 2 hypothesizes that relationship-oriented leadership will have a direct effect on employee commitment to organizational values and indirect effect on employees' personal efficacy. The sample for this research includes 135 respondents from a loan bank/rural bank (*Bank Perkreditan Rakyat*) in the area of Probolinggo and Lumajang, East Java. Data were analyzed using AMOS 4.0.

The findings provide strong support for Model 2. Relationship-oriented leadership has an impact on employees' collective efficacy. Meanwhile, employees' personal self-efficacy can predict their commitment to the collaboration with the customer. Relationship-oriented leadership can also directly and indirectly affect employees' commitment to the organizational mission and the improvement of effective performance.

Keywords: relationship-oriented leadership, commitment, collective and personal efficacy, organizational values

INTRODUCTION

Previous research has shown that relationship-oriented and task-oriented leadership can make different contributions to the performance expected from employees. Superior Employees with a superior who applies relationship-oriented leadership will likely be satisfied with their superior and will exert their maximum effort to achieve effective performance, thereby increasing their commitment to the organization.

In a study examining the leadership of schoolmasters, Ross and Gray (2006) found that transformational leadership has a direct effect on commitment. Pillai and William (2004), Yousef (2000), Judge and Bono (2000), Walumba, Wang, and Lawler (2003), and Sahertian (2010) found similar results. Research has also shown that relationship-oriented leadership has a direct effect on employees' personal capability (Felfe & Schyns, 2002; Pillai & Williams, 2004; Sahertian, 2008). However, in an analysis of the leaders of BCA Bank in the Malang region, Sahertian (2010) found that relationship-oriented leaders have an insignificant impact on employee commitment. Similar results were found by Muchiri (2001) and Brown (2003).

Various studies have examined the impact of leadership behavior on employee efficacy and found that belief in one's own capability both personally and collectively can impact the performance of the organization, such as achievement and commitment of the organization. Evidence related to employees' personal impact on performance has been found, but research on the collective efficacy of employees remains relatively scarce.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employees' Collective and Self-efficacy

Bandura's cognitive social theory states that an individual's self-efficacy can act on something independently (i.e., agency), which serves as the basis for an action. Self-efficacy or belief in the capability of oneself is "the belief of one's own ability in organizing and producing actions required to achieve certain outcomes" (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy has a direct impact on the individual's behavior and objectives, expected outcome.

ception of obstacles and socio-cultural opportunities (Bandura, 2000). Collective efficacy is the activity of all members of the team who work together to achieve a collective result; individual actions often cannot be separated from one another. Individuals who feel that they will be successful in a task would have a greater ability to succeed because they are faced with a challenging objective, endeavor to achieve it, persist in trying to do so despite failures, and ultimately develop a mechanism for managing their emotional conditions.

The relationship between the belief in one's self-efficacy and performance is reciprocal; thus, the result of the effort influences the belief in one's capability. Increased belief contributes to greater achievement and reduced belief results in lower achievement. The level of self-efficacy tends to be stable over time; thus this reciprocal causal relation can produce a circular process that repeats itself so that changes in efficacy have a large impact on the ensuing process (Lindsley, Brass & Thomas, 1995), where the first variable impacts the second variable and the changes in the second variable have a reciprocal impact on the first variable. In their study, Navon and Erez (2011) found that collective efficacy can build up a team's performance.

Collective efficacy is the common or shared belief of a group about their capability as a whole to organize and carry out the actions required to achieve their objectives (Bandura, 1997). Ross and Grey (2006) found that collective efficacy can contribute to organizational effectiveness in various contexts, such as a sports team (Larson et al., 2001), nursing team (Gibson, 2001), and student groups engaged in brainstorming sessions (Gibson & Kenicki, 1996). Evidence further suggests that employees' collective efficacy can contribute to organizational commitment in university work teams (Riggs & Knight, 1994) and employee groups in banks (Wang, Wang & Lawler, 2003).

Numerous studies (cited in Navon and Erez, 2011) have examined the antecedents and behavioral consequences of self-efficacy in work organizations, particularly with regard to individual tasks (Bandura, 1997; Gist, 1992; Locke & Latham, 2002; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). However, the meaning of self-efficacy may differ in highly interactive tasks. Here all team members jointly work toward a collective outcome, and individual actions often cannot be distinguished from each other.

Employee efficacy is a set of several personal capabilities among individuals in relation to specific fields of professional behavior. The result of a study by Ross (cited in Ross and Gray, 2006) shows that self-efficacy is a factor that should receive attention from researchers examining organizational improvement. Self-efficacy has been shown to be capable of consistently predicting the level of employees' willingness to try new methods of working.

Employees' collective efficacy is a specific belief in the collective ability of a group of employees. Collective efficacy is the perception of employees in an organization that the effort of all employees in combination as a whole would positively impact performance (Goddard & Hoy, 2000). Employees' collective efficacy differs from self- or personal efficacy in the sense that collective efficacy is the expectation of an employee regarding the effectiveness of all employees whereas personal or self-efficacy is the expectation of an employee regarding his or her own ability in working. Members of a group believe that the capability of their group should be greater than to carry out their duties in a greater amount collectively than what each of them can personally do (Kozlowski and Klein, cited in Navon and Erez, 2011).

In the latter case, the group is a consequence of the emergence of bottom-up processes, where lower level elements combine to form collective phenomena (Chan, 1998). According to this alternative, collective-efficacy is the sum of the individual perceptions of self-efficacy. Rather, the group as a higher-level entity focuses on members' shared perceptions of their team's efficacy, or collective-efficacy. Collective-efficacy is an emergent group level property that reflects the way team members perceive their team reality or "what we think of our team" (Gibson & Northcraft, 1997), and consequently, influences team performance (Bandura, 2000).

Collective efficacy and self-efficacy are correlated to one another (Goddard, 2001), but the two are different concepts. The functional relation between employees' self-efficacy and reported performance in organizations with high employee collective efficacy have higher performance than organizations with a low level of employee collective efficacy (Bandura, 1993; Goddard, 2001). In addition, evidence indicates that collective efficacy is related to the characteristics of the organization, similar to performance as discussed, and to the level of involvement in organizational decision making.

To summarize, previous research has shown that belief in one's own capability in a personal sense and collective efficacy can influence the performance of the organization through the achievement of objectives and organizational commitment. The evidence on the impact of personal employee efficacy on performance has been well documented, but research on employee collective efficacy is relatively rare.

Two models are tested in the current research. Model 1 includes paths from the relationship-oriented leadership to employees' collective efficacy and from employees' collective efficacy to each of the three variables of employee commitment to organizational values. Meanwhile, Model 2 hypothesizes that relationship-oriented leadership has both direct and indirect impacts on employee commitment toward organizational values through employee collective efficacy.

Effect of Relationship-oriented Leadership on Employee Commitment

Studies on relationship-oriented leadership have been carried out since the 1950s (Brown, 2003) and have made significant contributions to the literature on leadership theory. One such contribution is the distinction between relationship orientation and leadership behavior. Another is the use of concepts of relationship-oriented leadership to measure the effectiveness of individuals and organizations.

The essence of relationship-oriented leadership is the dedication of the leader in encouraging the growth of the organizational members and improving the commitment of organizational members by elevating their objectives. On the other hand, a task-oriented leader would endeavor to achieve organizational objectives without trying to elevate the motives of the followers or human resources of the organization (Burns, 1978). The dynamics of the role of relationship-oriented leaders and the rationale for considering relationship-oriented leadership to be superior to other leadership concepts have been discussed within the context of various organizations (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 1990; Pillai & William, 2004; Judge & Bono, 2000; Walumbwa & Lawler, 2003; Avolio et al., 2004; Sahertian, 2010). Relationship-oriented leadership is a theoretical framework that is more useful for interpreting the behavior of leaders compared to other theoretical frameworks.

Stronger evidence has been obtained for the relationship between leadership and expected outcomes among employees. Findings obtained by the research measures are still mixed, but literature reviews have shown that relationship-oriented leadership can consistently predict the ability of the employees to exert extra effort and change their work style and/or attitude or view. The most consistent findings have shown that a relationship exists between relationship-oriented leadership and organizational learning, effectiveness, and culture.

Theoreticians of organizational science believe that the impact of relationship-oriented leadership is possible due to social identification, which enables the followers to let go of their personal interests for the greater good of the group (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994). Walumbwa et al. (2003) stated that inspirational dimension of relationship-oriented leadership would accelerate the emergence of self-identification with the group. The collective/shared identity that emerges from this process can serve as a benchmark for measuring the self-esteem of each individual (i.e., group member) in dealing with those from outside their own group.

In a study on the implementation of leadership in institutional organization, Leithwood (1993) found that contribution from leadership for the development of a strong organizational culture is a very important mechanism for supporting collaboration among staff in maintaining the collective identity. The literature review from Leithwood et al. (1999) demonstrated that 50% of the effect of transformational or relationship-oriented leadership comes from the dimension of vision while most of the rest comes from intellectual stimulation and individualized support from the leader to the followers. According to the motivational perspective of viewing leadership, relationship-oriented leadership would improve the aspirations of the followers and align the followers' objectives with the organization's. One important mechanism for this process is the improvement of employees' belief in the support from the organizational culture in their work to achieve organizational objectives (Leithwood et al., 1999).

As discussed in this section, research on relationship-oriented leadership has shown a consistent empirical relation between relationship-oriented leadership and the outcomes expected from employees. Research has thus far focused on the implementation of relationship-oriented leadership—namely, the impact of relationship-oriented leadership on employee commitment toward organizational values. Previous research has shown that relationship-oriented leadership positively impacts organizational value, but thus far no research has examined whether the effect can be explained fully by the collective efficacy of the employees (Model 2) or whether it can be only be partially explained by employees' collective efficacy (Model 2).

The Impact of Relationship-oriented Leadership on Employees' Collective-efficacy

Previous research has examined the relationship between leader behavior and employees' self-efficacy. In such research, employee self-efficacy is measured at the individual level, not the collective level; such research has usually found that leaders with relation orientation are more likely than leaders without such orientation to improve the ability of their employees (Hipp, 1996; Hipp & Bredeson, 1995; Mascall, 2003). Although this finding is consistent with other research, the correlation tends to be small, which may be due to the fact that employee self-efficacy is measured at the generalized level of individual employee but interpreted at the generalized collective level. These studies also do not provide adequate theoretical explanations about the relationship between leadership and employee efficacy.

According to Bandura (1986), the source of information for personal efficacy is similar to the source of information for collective efficacy. The most influential source of information for self-efficacy is work experience. Employees who feel successful in carrying out a task, either individually or as part of a group, are more convinced that they can carry out the task and thus would not hesitate to do so in the future. Previous research treats the result of obligatory assessment as part of the experience in work; these studies have identified a consistent relationship between employee self-efficacy and experience of success in the organization—both before and after (Ross and Gray, 2006). However, although employees consider the evaluation from others to be a valid assessment of their success, their interpretation of the meaning of the evaluation is still influenced by the explanations from the leader. The feedback from organizational leadership is even more influential on employees' evaluation of the current organizational practices.

For example, the leader can influence the interpretation of employees in defining what can be termed as success and what cannot, since leaders are usually more experienced and have formal authority; therefore, leaders are in a position to determine objectives and interpret the data of achievement as evidence of success or failure in achieving the objectives of the organization. Earley (cited in Ross and Gray, 2006) found that members of business organizations with a high status make greater contributions to the collective efficacy than other members with a lower status in the organization.

Leaders have greater influence when they relate the outcome expected from the employees with certain acts carried out by the employees. In their theoretical analysis on collective efficacy, Lindsley, Brass, and Thomas (1995) concluded that leaders should avoid the ups and downs in the relationship between achievement and self-efficacy as such movement would alternately create overconfidence and lack of confidence and would create obstacles to organizational learning. They stated that leaders should encourage the emergence of self-correcting cycles by redefining the success of relationship-oriented leadership—namely, viewing failure and success as opportunities for finding what works best.

Lindsley et al. (1995) described a strategy of making interventions before the ups and downs occur by giving accurate and timely feedback to pinpoint the causal relations, thereby enabling the leader to guide the development of employee collective efficacy. Other than influencing the interpretation on past experience, leaders can also improve the probability for the mastery experience of work tasks by giving employees the opportunity to acquire and hone new skills.

Leaders can also influence employees' beliefs concerning their ability through persuasion, such as by sharing visionary and inspirational visions with the whole staff and dealing with low expectations for certain individual employees. Leaders can also improve employees' self-efficacy through vicarious experiences, such as by providing examples of successful teamwork and providing opportunities or facilities for employees to observe one another by arranging their work mechanism. What is no less important is the potential role of the leader in reducing employee stress, such as by protecting staff from the initiative of local and central government or by defending staff when dealing with excessive demand from the public. In short, a leader is in an important position influencing the beliefs of employees about their own collective efficacy.

The Impact of Employee Collective Efficacy on Employee Commitment

Various definitions exist for employee commitment, but the essence is the identification with and understanding of organizational mission: "employees report that organization has several objectives and values which have been agreed upon and that the employees agrees with the primary missions of the organization". Studies measuring employee self-efficacy at the individual level have reported that employee self-efficacy can predict employee commitment through the impact of agency beliefs on goal determination, where the greater belief in one's

own ability, the more challenging the goal chosen. (Riehl and Sipple, 1996; Reames & Spencer, 1998; cited in Ross and Gray, 2006)

The high level of personal efficacy is found to be related to the commitment to collaborative culture in an organization (Chester & Beaudoin, 1996). In a longitudinal study examining the fluctuation in employee self-efficacy during a period of stress, Ross, McKeiver and Hogaboam-Gray (1997) identified a reciprocal relation between employee self-efficacy and collaboration. Employees were confident in their own ability, felt quite strong, and did not hesitate to express their weaknesses to their co-workers, thereby creating an atmosphere of helping one another. Through this collaboration, employees can develop new ways of working; consequently, they can improve their effectiveness and in turn improve the sensitivity of their perception of the success they have achieved, ultimately improving their expectations for the future.

In this way, group performance is influenced not only by their individual capability and effort, but also by the nature of the relation among group members and group processes such as coordination and collaboration. When group tasks require a high level of interdependence among team members, they have the opportunity to develop a shared mental model and use their shared knowledge to guide their behavior (Cannon-Bower & Salas, 2001). When their work tasks require a high level of interaction between team members, the effectiveness of individual perception may not be enough to explain the performance of the group since perception does not reflect the evaluation process of group members, which has important influence on team or group performance (Shamir, 1990; Weldon & Weingart, 1993).

Commitment to collaboration would be more likely to influence employee self-efficacy when the employee can control his or her decision making in work (Moore & Esselman, 1994). Employees' collective efficacy has been shown to be related to the level of employees' ability to influence decision making in the organization (Goddard, 2002a) and their willingness to help one another beyond their formal job in the organization (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2000).

Concepts of Framework and Hypothesis Model

In brief, previous research has provided support for Model 1 (employees' collective efficacy as a mediator of the relationship between organizational leadership and employee efficacy) and Model 2 (relationship-oriented leadership has a direct effect on employee commitment and indirect effect on employee commitment through employees' collective efficacy). Thus far, no study has compared the two models.

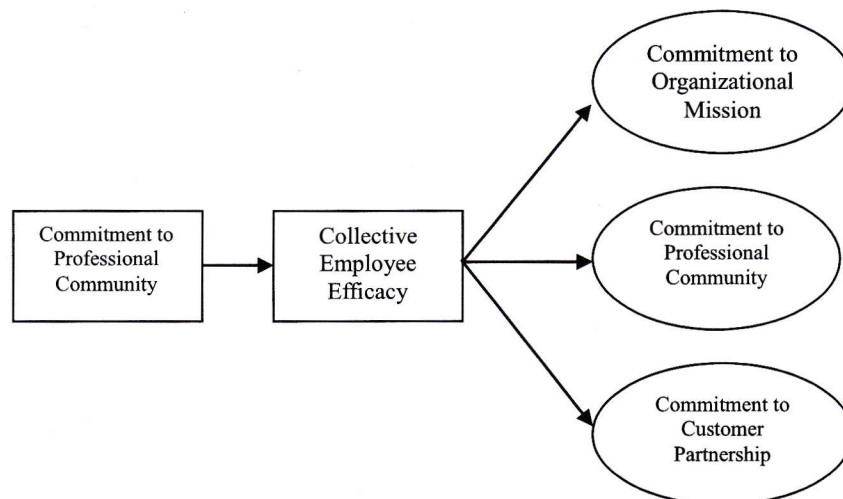


Figure 1: Hypotheses of Model 1 linking leadership, collective employee efficacy, and commitment to organizational values

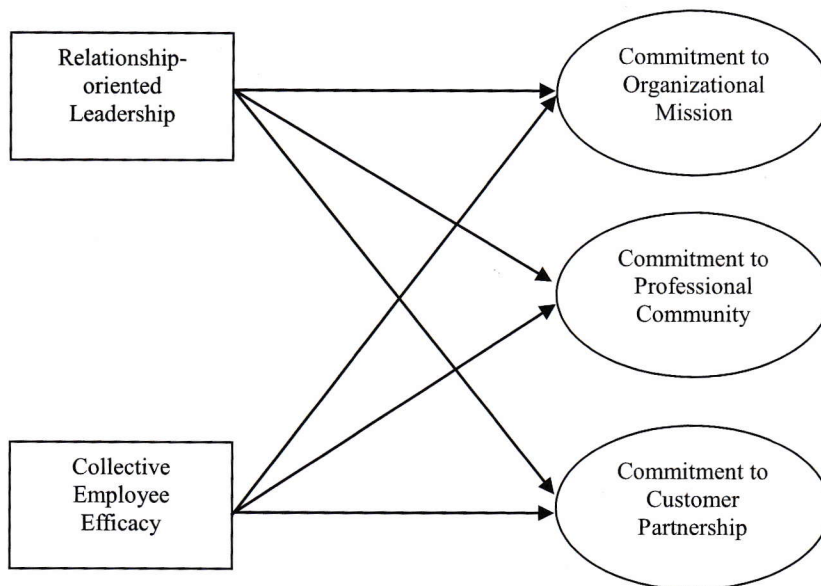


Figure 2: Hypotheses of Model 2 linking leadership, collective employee efficacy, and commitment to organizational values

Based on the concepts of the framework depicted in the figures, we propose the following hypotheses for testing:

- H1: Relationship-oriented leadership significantly affects employee commitment to organizational values through collective employee efficacy.
- H2: Relationship-oriented leadership significantly and directly affects employee commitment to organizational values.

METHODOLOGY

The 135 respondents for the current research are employees of a loan bank/rural bank (*Bank Perkreditan Rakyat*) in the area of Probolinggo and Lumajang. Data for this research were elicited from responses to a survey using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." All items in the survey were taken from previous research (Goddard et al., 2000; Leithwood, Aitken & Jantzi, 2001; Brown, 2003; Ross & Grey, 2006).

The relationship-oriented leadership scale consists of 12 items measuring employees' perception that relationship-oriented leadership has led their organization by developing the capacity of the organization and its members to meet the ever-changing demand of the environment. The scale for employee collective efficacy consists of 11 items, which reflect two dimensions of employees' collective efficacy; seven of these items have the highest loading on task factors while the remaining seven have the highest loading for the perception on the performance factor in working.

The commitment to organizational mission scale consists of 12 items measuring employees' level of awareness of organizational mission, their belief that the mission is also shared by other staff, and their commitment to the organization mission regularly. The commitment to organization as a professional community scale consists of 5 items capturing employee commitment to share ideas in working with co-workers. The commitment to organizational partnerships with customers scale consists of 4 items measuring the commitment of employees to the customer in determining the direction of the organization. The adequacy of the commitment variable is confirmed by confirmatory factor analysis.

The two models in Figure 1 and 2 are described using structural equation modeling (SEM). Raw data were analyzed using LISREL software, and the variance-covariance matrix was analyzed using the maximum likelihood method (Jöreskog, 1993; Solimun, 2002). AMOS can create a modification index that would point out the paths to be added or deleted to improve the fit of the model. Simulation studies (as reviewed by Kline, 1996)

showed that re-specification based on empirical observation can sometimes be misleading. Even when the researcher relies on theory in trimming and building a model, there is always a risk that the application of such theory is influenced by the need to obtain convincing empirical evidence. In order to prevent inference based on mere coincidence, the current research applied the strategy of cross-validation.

RESULTS

The confirmatory factor analysis findings related to the three variables of organizational value. Table 1 shows that the first organizational value—namely, commitment to organizational mission—produces a significant chi-square and an AGFI which is a bit lower than the criterion. However, the relative value of the chi square (i.e., chi square divided by degree of freedom) was found to be relatively adequate. According to Kline (1998), a score of three or less is acceptable. The RMSEA was found to be equal to the criterion. All goodness-of-fit criteria were fulfilled for the second variable (i.e., professional community) and the third variable (i.e., commitment to partnerships with customers).

Table 1. Results of CFA on Employee Commitment Variables

	Chi-square	df	p	Chi-Square/df	AGFI	RMSEA
Commitment to organizational mission	129.677	57	.001	2.275	.861	.077
Commitment to professional community	6.715	4	.152	1.678	.953	.056
Commitment to customer partnership	1.597	1	.206	1.597	.963	.052

Table 2 presents findings for the five research variables. The table indicates that all of these variables demonstrate sufficient reliability and a normal distribution (where all Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests show statistically insignificant results).

Table 2. Description of Study Variables

	Mean (SD)	Alpha	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	Kolmogorov-Smirnov p
Commitment to organizational mission	4.69 (.42)	.92	0.766	.601
Commitment to professional community	4.71 (.46)	.91	0.810	.528
Commitment to customer partnership	4.61 (.52)	.83	1.161	.135
Relationship-oriented leadership	4.54 (.40)	.95	0.913	.287
Collective employee efficacy	4.79 (.46)	.91	0.985	.287

The correlation matrix in Table 3 shows that employees' collective efficacy is correlated with relationship-oriented leadership and with three variables of employee commitment. This is the absolute condition, so that employee collective efficacy can mediate the relation between leadership and employee commitment.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix of Study Variables

	Commitment to school mission	Commitment to professional community	Commitment to customer partnership	Relationship-oriented leadership
Commitment to organizational mission	-			
Commitment to professional community	.64	-		
Commitment to customer partnership	.46	.38	-	
Relationship-oriented leadership	.82	.63	.44	-
Collective employee efficacy	.52	.41	.81	.45

The findings of path analysis for the calibrated sample in Model 1 (employee self-efficacy as a mediator of the relationship between leadership, with outcomes expected from the employees) are found to have an adequate fit with the data. All paths are positive and significant statistically. Relationship-oriented leadership can contribute to employees' collective efficacy. Employees' efficacy contributes to the three variables of employees' commitment, especially commitment toward professional community and commitment toward community partnership. However, such a good fit is obtained only after correlating the residual variance of the three variables in the model—namely, leadership and mission, self-efficacy and professional community, and mission and community. It may be possible that modification of the model plays an important role. When two variables are similar to one another in their error

terms, it is possible for a third variable to influence them both. Error terms that correlate between the two variables may provide evidence of the effect of paths eliminated from the model. The standardized regression weight for the path from employees' efficacy to employees' commitment toward professional community is also greater than 1.0.

The result from Model 2 shows that the model also has a good fit with the data. The path between employees' collective efficacy and employees' commitment is all statistically significant, although commitment to the professional community is smaller than in Model 1. In Model 1, commitment to the professional community is the biggest path coefficient in the model; in Model 2, commitment to the professional community is very small—even smaller than the coefficient for the path from employees' collective efficacy to commitment and organizational mission. The path coefficient from employees' efficacy to customer partnership is found to have a high coefficient, and the magnitude is almost unchanged in Model 2.

The new path (in Model 2) from relationship-oriented leadership to organizational mission and professional community is found to be positive and significant, indicating that the collective efficacy of the employees is not a full moderator for the relationship between leadership and employee commitment. The path from leadership to customer partnership is not significant.

The fit of Model 2 with the data may be achieved by making one small modification to the error term model for organizational mission and professional community (which are found to be correlated, although less than 5% from the shared variance of the two variables). Although the difference in statistical property in the fit of Model 1 and Model 2 is very small, Model 2 provides a more solid interpretation to the data than Model 1. Relationship-oriented leadership is found to have both a direct and indirect effect on employee commitment.

Table 4 summarizes the effect of relationship-oriented leadership on employee commitment. For every increase of 1 standard deviation on relationship-oriented leadership, it is estimated that an increase of .81 standard deviation will occur in employee commitment to the organization's mission, .64 standard deviation in employee commitment to the organization as a professional community, and .37 standard deviation in employee commitment to community partnership.

Table 4. Direct and Indirect Effects of Relationship-oriented Leadership on Employee Commitment

	Direct effects	Indirect effects	Combined effects
Commitment to organizational mission	.75	.42(.14) = .06	.81
Commitment to professional learning community	.53	.42(.21) = .09	.64
Commitment to community partnership	.04	.42(.79) = .33	.37

DISCUSSION

The primary findings of this research indicate that collective efficacy of employee groups is partial and not a full mediator for the relationship between relationship-oriented leadership and employee commitment to organizational values (where organizational values are anything considered to be valuable by the organization). Model 1 has good fit with the data, but Model 2 (using direct and indirect paths from leadership to evident outcome on the employee) has a better fit. This finding is similar to those in previous research on the effect of relationship-oriented leadership on bank employees' attitude toward work in India and China (Walumbwa et al., 2003). Sahertian (2010) also found that relationship-oriented leadership has an indirect and significant effect through personal efficacy of the employee. In previous research, leadership influences job satisfaction and organizational commitment both directly and indirectly through collective efficacy.

This research offers three special findings. First, relationship-oriented leadership affects employees' collective efficacy in the organization. The standardized regression weight for the path from leadership to employees' collective efficacy in this research is similar to the coefficient for the path from leadership to employee efficacy reported by Walumbwa et al. (2003). The relationship between relationship-oriented leadership and employees' collective efficacy in the current study is important because strong evidence has been documented for employees' collective efficacy with their performance (Bandura, 1993; Goddard, 2002b; Goddard et al., 2000).

This research is not designed to identify the mechanism used by organizational leaders to influence employees' ability; however, cognitive social theory implies that the primary contribution of organizational leadership comes from the influence of leaders on staff members' interpretation of their own effectiveness. This research recommends that further studies should examine the relationship between leadership and collective efficacy

in greater depth so as to identify the relationship between dimensions of relationship-oriented leadership and the behavior of organizational leaders in improving agency beliefs of the organization's staff.

Second, employees' collective efficacy can predict their commitment to partnerships with customers. The influence of organizational leaders on customer partnership is fully mediated by employees' collective efficacy. A group of staff with high self-efficacy would feel that they are capable of dealing with the problems that emerge when customers are dealing with the organization. The impact of leadership on employees' commitment to customer partnership through collective efficacy is an important effect, as supported by the findings of strong and consistent relationships with community involvement (Brown, 2003; Navon & Erez, 2011). Evidence also supports the findings of this research by showing that customer involvement in organizations (e.g., banks) would contribute to the success of the organizational process itself. For instance, Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (1998) found that school councils that do not empower the public (i.e., parents) would result in great effects on the organizational activities or educational progress. In the current study, we focused on the willingness of employees to involve customers in making contributions such as positive feedback to improve organizational performance. We recommend that other researchers examine the kinds of customer partnerships closest to the collective efficacy of the employees.

Finally, this research found that relationship-oriented leadership has a direct effect on employee commitment that is not influenced by agency belief. Commitment to organizational mission is the strongest result, which is critical, especially due to the evidence that commitment to the organization's mission is a strong predictor for group effectiveness. O'Leary-Kelly, Martocchio, and Frink's (1994) meta-analysis found an effect size of .92. Commitment to professional community is also important due to the relationship between professional community and productive changes in the organization. In this research, professional community is focused on the willingness of employees to share ideas and work methods with co-workers; however, other researchers have defined the term in a broader meaning. For instance, Louis and Marks (1998) suggested that five elements exist in a professional community: shared values, focus on work, partnership, disseminated practice, and reflective dialogue.

Other researchers have also defined leadership in a broader manner than in the current study. Leithwood et al. (1999) identified six dimensions of transformational leadership relevant to the organization. We used the general criteria from relationship-oriented leadership, which is a combination of four of the existing six dimensions: symbols of good professional practice, availability of individual support, availability of intellectual stimulation, and high expectation of performance. We do not include the dimensions of vision inculcation and collaborative decision making since we believe that these two dimensions are too close to the variables studied here (i.e., employee commitment to organizational mission and employee commitment to professional community).

This research recommends that further studies re-examine the relationships between leadership and employee commitment and elaborate upon the constructs used here, where each construct is viewed as a set of multidimensional beliefs. Such research would enable the researchers to reconsider the problem of how organizational leaders can influence employee commitment. This research obtained partial support for the agency factor (self-efficacy) as a mediating variable. This research also supports the perspective of social identification theory in explaining the source of organization leaders' influence on employees (which has been described in general terms by Bass & Avolio, 1994).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Previous studies have found that relationship-oriented leadership can contribute to the outcomes expected by employees, including commitment to organizational values. Previous research has not examined the mechanisms of organizational leaders' influence on employees. This research found that employees' collective efficacy is an important mediator for the commitment to partnership between organizations and customers as well as a partial mediator for commitment to the organizational mission and the organization as a professional community. The role of organizational leadership presents various opportunities for improving agency beliefs of employee staff. Three recommendations have been put forth.

- (1). Organization leaders need to exert their influence openly on employees' interpretation of the data of organizational situations and achievements. An important task of leadership is to assist employees in identifying the causal relationship which relates employee actions with expected outcomes. Employees should understand how their skills can contribute to achievement so that they can control their mastery and use of such skills as well as understand that they must be responsible for their successes and failures. Most importantly, the creation of an environment that is able to correct itself would enable self-perception to be convincingly related with the achieved outcomes while employees

could avoid the feeling of despair caused by a downward spiral, thereby avoiding the upward spiral which would result in unreasonable beliefs.

- (2) Organizational leaders should assist employees in determining reasonable short-term objectives so as to improve the probability of job mastery experience. For example, Gibson (2001) found that training in objective determination can contribute to the individuals' self-efficacy and collective efficacy of nurse teams.
- (3). Organizational leaders should enable employees to develop themselves professionally and with high quality while providing constructive feedback on the skill mastery endeavored by the employees. We believe that self efficacy would have a strong influence when such a belief is based on an accurate self-assessment.

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