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Effects of Authentic Leadership and Leader-Member Exchange on Employee Psychological Ownership and Organizational Commitment

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Abstract

Purpose – Small- and medium-sized enterprises often rely on the owner's personal characteristics. This study aims to verify the impact of the awareness of such a business leader's sincerity and the sincerity of their leader-member exchange (LMX) on employee psychological ownership and organizational commitment. The findings offer clues to how small- and medium-sized company leaders should engage with employees.

Research design, data, and methodology – A total of 289 valid questionnaires were examined using frequency, descriptive statistics, and correlation analyses and structured equation modeling.

Results – Authentic leadership and LMX were both found to have a positive impact on each trust factor, each trust factor had a positive impact on psychological ownership and organizational commitment, and psychological ownership had a positive impact on organizational commitment.

Conclusion – These results suggest that small- and medium-size company leaders should use self-awareness and self-regulation to encourage the recognition of their sincerity, and strive to achieve a positive relationship with employees. It also suggests that leaders should improve trust between employees and establish various strategies to enable employee psychological ownership.

Keywords: Authentic Leadership, Leader-Member Exchange, Psychological Ownership, Organizational Commitment, Multidimensional Trust.

JEL Classifications: L10, L29, M10, M12, N35.

1. Introduction

In this rapidly changing world economic environment, enterprises are facing various tasks to maximize substantiality with corporate strategic competitive advantage from the 'struggle for existence' dimension and their enterprise value based on stakeholder management. In particular, the recent changes in technology does not define the boundary and scope of the existing industry, but rather has a large influence in expanding or shrinking the boundary. In other words, technological change tends to be integrated or blended by increasing inter-industry relevance, whereas enterprises may narrow the boundary of the industry by focusing on the detailed areas of a particular value chain (Poter, 2008). Such a change requires a changed perspective on corporate organization management, because corporate officials' argument that although corporate efforts toward change raised employment instability and changed the characteristics of members, sacrificial human resource strategy is required through continuous employment in order to solve high job turnover rate of members who could not overcome job stress caused by corporate control(Wallace et al., 2000) is likely to reduce members' loyalty to their companies that they belong to.

In particular, small-and medium-sized enterprises are known to be greatly influenced by technological change and business fluctuation. Their business opening and closing rate is very high because they are relatively small-sized and easily influenced by external environment. This suggests that although small- and medium-sized enterprises have structural requirements to respond sensitively to changes and are able to be managed effectively and flexibly from the managerial aspect since their organization is relatively simple, many small- and medium-sized enterprises largely rely on company owner's own personal technologies or characteristics and so lack persistency. It also suggests that in the situations that lack managerial skills toward human resources acquired from relatively poor circumstances, frequent job turnover rate is an inevitable alternative, but if adopting this sacrificial human resource strategy, the company's survival rate is very low.

Therefore, this study aims to identify two big situations. First, by paying attention to the positive reliance on the simplified or-

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ganizational structure, one of the strengths of distribution related small-and medium-sized enterprises and the characteristics of the manager him/herself, it aimed to identify the impact of members' awareness of sincere mind of leader and leader-member exchange relationship(LMX) on psychological ownership and organizational commitment. This is expected to find which factors would be more important by comparison of leader-member exchanging degree discussed in leadership theory with the recently highlighted authentic leadership. Therefore, the findings from this study are expected to provide a clue to how the leaders of small- and medium-sized companies should be shown to members. In addition, this study classified the trust reported to have an important influence on organizational performance so far into calculation- based trust, knowledge-based trust, and identification-based trust and identified the influential relationship between psychological ownership and organizational commitment adopted as variables for members' awareness of leader and organizational effectiveness. Such findings will become evidence to check if the perspectives of members these days have changed compared to the past and are expected to provide indirect clues to the effectiveness of traditional HR strategy that was implemented by leaders in managing members.

2. Theoretical Background

Members' awareness of sincere mind of leader is a very important thing. In particular, in work places, leaders should perform various tasks, for example, encouraging, controlling, and motivating members for improving their performance. So if members feel that their leader's behavior is selfish from their perspective, diverse side effects may occur. In relation to this, the whole world as well as our country have focused on the importance of returning to 'authenticity' and ethical management in various fields of politics, society, business economics, and religion since early in 2000 (Sim & Shin, 2013; Yoon, 2012; re-quoted by Jung & Kim, 2013).

In this study, members defined awareness of sincere mind of leader as awareness of authentic leader. Authentic leader is a leader who is true to him/herself through self-awareness and self-regulation (Gardner et al., 2005). It is defined as a leader who continues to look for his/her identity as leader who was fostered within organization and who found his/her true self through self-awareness and reduce the gap between the current self and the ideal self through self-regulation. Therefore, such efforts of leaders are expected to allow members to recognize the authenticity of leaders toward their jobs given to them.

The theory on leader-member exchange relation was first proposed by Dansereau et al.(1975) in which he asserted that leaders and members have different level of exchange relation that exchange relation composes VDL(Vertical Dyad Linkage). The leader in an organization must full responsibility to create outcomes for the group, receiving restriction of resources such as time and ability is inevitable (Dansereau et al., 1975) that a

close and unofficial relation with an in-group among members is formed and important duties are given to them. High-level information and feedback that helps duty of in-groups is provided and it is practical that out-groups are controlled by official rights, institutions, or rules (Dansereau et al., 1975). Even in study results of many researchers (e.g., Howell & Hall_Merenda, 1999; Liden et al., 1993; Yukl, 1994), it is said that members with high quality LMX have smooth communication with leaders, develop relation, trust, respect with leaders, receive challenging tasks, gain much responsibility, and rights, and the leader actively gives help to those members.

In response to this question "Is what I feel mine?" regarding psychological ownership, Pierce et al.(2001) maintained that the key point of this concept is first, sense of ownership of outcome of labor, house, land, etc, second, relationship between individual and tangible/intangible object, which is very closely associated with self and individuals regard object as 'extended ego,' and third, complex and cognitive and emotional psychological ownership. On the other hand, Vandewalle et al.(1995) saw psychological ownership as being closely associated with sense of ownership that organizational members felt from their target objects despite the absence of legal requirements.

Yang et al.(2011) and Yang et al.(2012) stated that commitment is a combination of personal attitude toward organization and willed action and thus means possessing identity toward a particular target or contributing to a particular object by causing psychological attachment or desire for belonging based on the united values toward a particular target that an individual has (O'Reilly & Chartman, 1986). Organizational commitment is an extensive concept that represents attachment to organization as an abnormal reaction to work (Mowday et al., 1982) and so it was defined as the degree that an individual absorbs himself/herself to the organization that he/she belongs with sense of belonging (Yang et al., 2011; Yang et al., 2012). Mowday et al.(1982) asserted that the term organizational commitment includes three concepts: strong trust toward organizational goals and values and acceptance of them, willingness to devote considerable efforts to organization, and strong desire to remain as organizational member.

Trust is a concept that received attention from various social science disciplines (Lewicki & Bunker, 1995). This study focused on 3-step trust model made by Lewicki & Bunker (1996) who expanded Shapiro et al.(1992)'s model, with respect to trust in organization. This model specified how trust was damaged as well as how trust between two persons who had no connection between them in the past was changed or developed. The first thing of the 3-step model is calculation-based trust. Shapiro et al.(1992) told that people are afraid of the results when they did not put what they said into action and so try to practice it. But Lewick et al.(1995) stressed that trust is based on the compensation when it is maintained as well as the fear of the punishment when it is broken and that trust is formed by market-oriented and economic calculation because its values are determined by the outcomes obtained by continuously creating trust compared to the cost that it was maintained or broken. The second factor of trust is knowledge-based trust. This is

based on the predictability that behaviors can be predicted because they know others fully. It is characterized by reliance on information rather than suppression. Therefore, knowledge-based trust is a trust that can be formed when one can have generalized expectations of each other because others' behaviors can be predicted through the history of interaction between different parties and is likely to be developed over time (Lindsold, 1978). Finally, identification-based trust is a trust that is based on identification of others' desire and intention and so as different parties understand and acknowledge others' desires, they exist and such an interactive understanding means that one party acts as agency of the other party in interpersonal transaction (Deutsch, 1949). Therefore, various activities such as developing collective identity such as collective name, logo, etc within organization, creating collective products or goals, and committing to shared values reinforce identification-based trust (Shapiro et al., 1992).

3. Research Design, Data, and Methodology

This study expected that awareness of sincere mind of leader and positive exchange relationship between leader and member would be an important factor for enhancing members' psychological ownership and organizational commitment. This is based on many previous studies such as Avolio & Walumbwa(2006), Jeong & Kim(2013), Podsakoff et al.(1990), Walumbwa et al.(2010), Walumbwa et al.(2011), Woolley et al.(2011), Yang & Lee(2009, 2012), Yang et al.(2014) and Yukl(1994) that positive exchange relationship between leadership and leader enhances

organizational effectiveness (e.g. Lee, 2015; Han, 2015). Furthermore, the relationship between trust and leadership can be explained by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), reciprocity norm (Gouldner, 1960), and relational discrepancy theory (Robins & Boldero, 2003). On the other hand, awareness of sincere mind of leader and positive exchange relationship with leader may be influenced by trust as well as relationship between psychological ownership and organizational commitment and given Lewicki & Bunker(1996)'s 3-step trust model, are likely to have the most influence on identification-based trust in general. It's because from the relational discrepancy theory, if the conformity degree between the real self and the ideal self in the relationship between leader and members, a high level of intimacy, trust, and goal consistency can be expected (Robins & Boldero, 2003).

<Hypothesis 1> Authentic leadership is positively related to the calculus-based trust.

<Hypothesis 2> Authentic leadership is positively related to the knowledge-based trust.

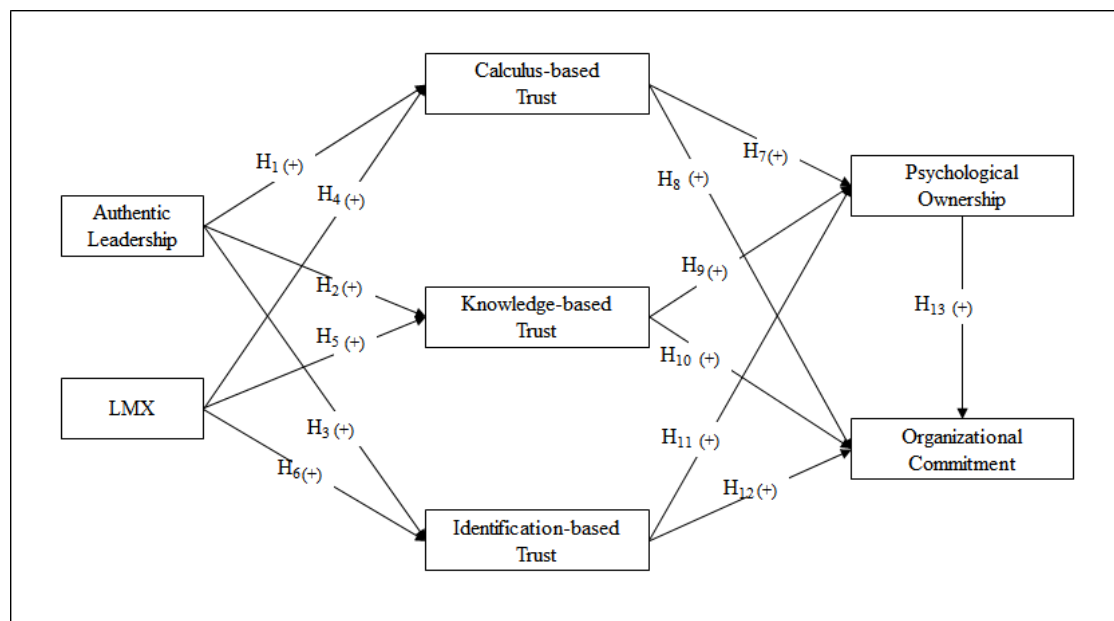
<Hypothesis 3> Authentic leadership is positively related to the identification-based trust.

<Hypothesis 4> LMX is positively related to the calculus-based trust.

<Hypothesis 5> LMX is positively related to the knowledge-based trust.

<Hypothesis 6> LMX is positively related to the identification-based trust.

<Hypothesis 7> Calculus-based trust is positively related to the psychological ownership.



Note: LMX: Leader-member exchange

<Figure 1> Research model and Hypotheses

- <Hypothesis 8> Calculus-based trust is positively related to the organizational commitment.
- <Hypothesis 9> Knowledge-based trust is positively related to the psychological ownership.
- <Hypothesis 10> Knowledge-based trust is positively related to the organizational commitment.
- <Hypothesis 11> Identification-based trust is positively related to the psychological ownership.
- <Hypothesis 12> Identification-based trust is positively related to the organizational commitment.

- <Hypothesis 13> Psychological ownership is positively related to the organizational commitment.

In this study we investigated 5 variables as follow: Authentic leadership was measured 16 items, Likert 6-point scale based on Walumbwa et al.(2008). LMX was measured 7 items and summed based on Graen & Uhl-Bein(1995). Trust was measured based on Lewicki & Bunker(1996). Specifically, calculus-based trust, knowledge-based trust and identification-based trust was each 5 items, Likert 5-point scale. Psychological ownership was measured 9 items, Likert 6-point scale based on Avey et al.(2009). And organizational commitment was measured 15 item, Likert 7-point scale based on Myer & Allen(1991), Allen & Meyer(1990) and Mowday et al.(1979). All variables were converted into z-score to make correction of difference of the scales.

To conduct this study, a survey was carried out Distribution related SME workers living in Seoul and metropolitan area. Total of 289 valid questionnaire were collected and utilized for analysis. Frequency analysis, descriptive statistic analysis, correlation analysis, and structured equation modeling(SEM) for path analysis were conducted using SPSS 19.0 and AMOS 19.0.

The demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in <Table 1>.

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<Table 1> Demographic characteristics

Variables	Sub-variables	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	250	86.5
	Female	39	13.5
Marital status	Married	178	62.0
	Unmarried	109	38.0
Age	less than 30	43	14.9
	30-34	106	36.7
	35-40	88	30.4
	more than 41	52	18.0
Continuous service year	less than 3 years	45	15.6
	3-7	152	52.6
	8-10	61	21.0
	more than 10 years	31	10.8

To find out if measurement items are internally consistent, reliability was verified using Cronbach α . Nunally(1978) argued that if Cronbach α is over 0.7, it is considered reliable. In this respect, the reliability of variables in this study was found to be 0.787~0.967. As a result of confirmatory factor analysis to verify feasibility of variables, all variables are expected to ensure the validity except organizational commitment was less than 0.5 to confirm validity by comparing between coefficient of determination of R-square and AVE.

<Table 2> Reliability and Validity

Variables	first item	final item	Cronbach's α	Construct Reliability	AVE
Authentic leadership	16	16	.967	.965	.637
Leader-member exchange	7	7	.870	.886	.527
Calculus-based trust	5	5	.932	.831	.731
Knowledge-based trust	5	5	.907	.817	.690
Identification-based trust	5	5	.949	.949	.789
Psychological ownership	9	9	.892	.937	.625
Organizational commitment	15	11	.787	.891	.431

4. Results

The directional nature and possible causal relationship between variables were identified through confirmatory factor analysis and the results from correlation analysis which was carried out to identify the validity of variables whose validity was not identified were presented in <Table 3>.

<Table 3> Results of Correlation analysis(n=289)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Authentic leadership (.637)							
2. Leader-member exchange .314** (.527)							
3. Calculus-based trust .652** .371** (.731)							
4. Knowledge-based trust .635** .272** .735** (.690)							
5. Identification-based trust .711** .344** .762** .795** (.789)							

6. Psychological ownership	.512**	.445**	.573**	.465**	.522**	(.625)	
7. Organizational commitment	.434**	.526**	.460**	.420**	.386**	.544**	(.431)
Mean	3.50	17.25	2.91	3.28	3.03	3.33	3.94
Standard Deviation	1.00	5.10	0.90	0.82	0.95	0.87	0.88

Note: ** $p < .01$, AVE marked in ().

The demographic variables were controlled such as gender, marital status, age and continuous service year for the verification of the direct effect and the regression analysis was performed.

According to its result, authentic leadership had statistically significantly positive influence upon calculus-based trust ($\beta = .640$, $p < .01$), knowledge-based trust ($\beta = .628$, $p < .01$) and identification-based trust ($\beta = .701$, $p < .01$), respectively. Therefore, hypothesis 1, hypothesis 2, and hypothesis 3 was adopted.

LMX had statistically significantly positive influence upon calculus-based trust ($\beta = .363$, $p < .01$), knowledge-based trust ($\beta = .267$, $p < .01$) and identification-based trust ($\beta = .337$, $p < .01$), respectively. Therefore, hypothesis 4, hypothesis 5, and hypothesis 6 was adopted.

Calculus-based trust had statistically significantly positive influence upon psychological ownership ($\beta = .550$, $p < .01$) and organizational commitment ($\beta = .403$, $p < .01$), respectively. Knowledge-based trust had positive influence upon psychological ownership ($\beta = .439$, $p < .01$) and organizational commitment ($\beta = .362$, $p < .01$),

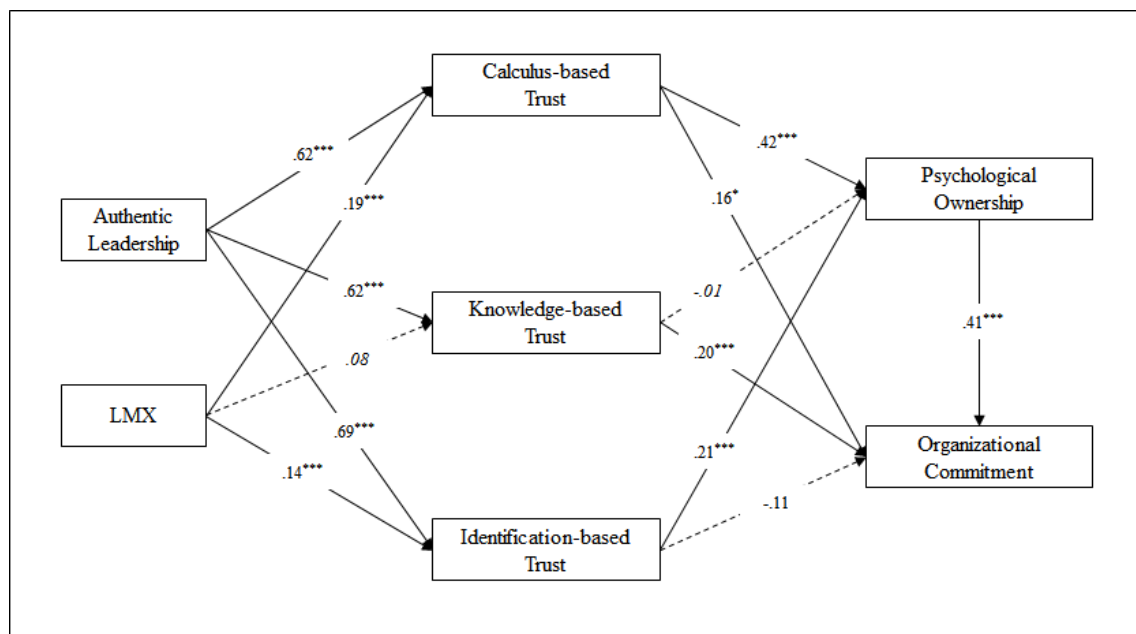
respectively. And Identification-based trust had positive influence upon psychological ownership ($\beta = .500$, $p < .01$) and organizational commitment ($\beta = .339$, $p < .01$), respectively. Therefore, hypothesis 7 to hypothesis 12 was all adopted, respectively.

Psychological ownership had statistically significantly positive influence upon organizational commitment ($\beta = .493$, $p < .01$). Therefore, hypothesis 13 was adopted.

And, path analysis was performed for which path affected among variables showed in <Figure 2>.

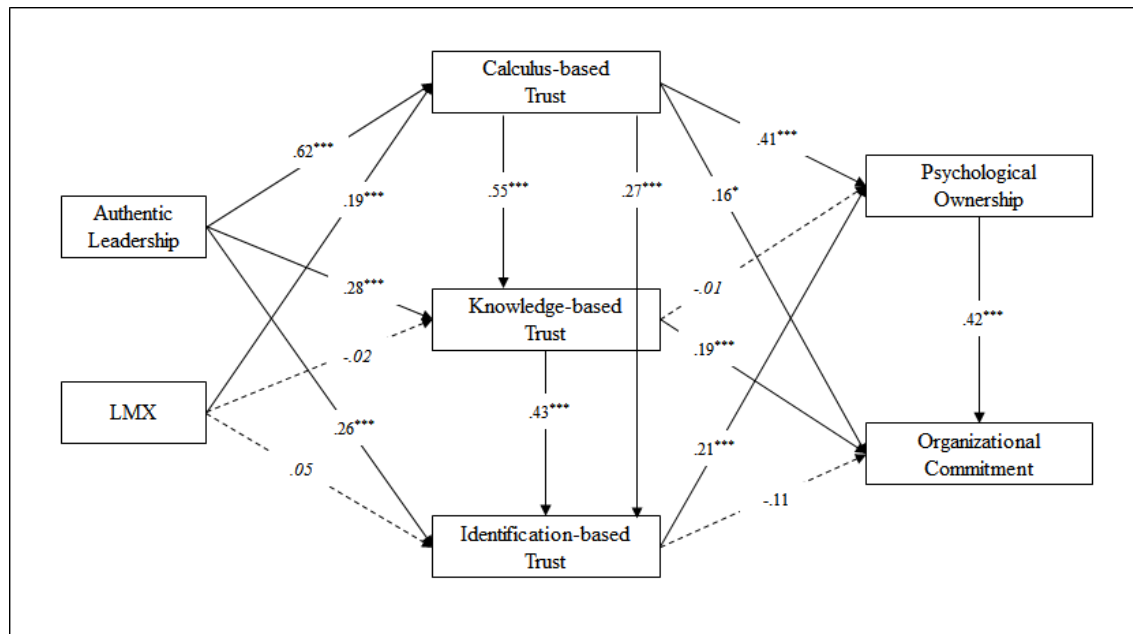
According to the verification result of the suitability of this model, the values were $\chi^2 = 384.050$, $d.f = 8$, $p = .000$, $GFI = .714$, $AGFI = -.003$, $NFI = .671$ and $RMR = .199$ etc and they did not reach each suitability index proposed. It was known about this result that after proposing a modified model which can enhance the suitability of the study model using the Modification Index (MI) proposed by Jöreskog & Sörbom (1981), the improvement level of the modified model can be verified through the comparison with the original model or composition of additional route, input of additional variable or replacement of variables which apply theoretical ground will be needed.

This study focused on Lewicki & Bunker (1996)'s 3-step trust model showing how trust is changed and developed between two persons, set an additional route of "calculation-based trust $\rightarrow$ knowledge-based trust", "calculation-based trust $\rightarrow$ identification-based trust" and "knowledge-based trust $\rightarrow$ identification-based trust," and verified the 3-step model that trust develops step by step better than the original model. The findings from this analysis are presented in <Fig. 3>.



note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

<Figure 2> Results of Path analysis



Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

<Figure 3> Results of Modified Path analysis

According to the verification result of the suitability of modified model, the values were $\chi^2 = 110.860$, $d.f = 5$, $p = .000$, $GFI = .906$, $AGFI = .473$, $NFI = .905$ and $RMR = .114$ etc. Although, they did not reach each suitability index proposed, it was found that the improvement over the research model.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to verify the effectiveness of traditional HR strategy. Specifically, that was implemented so far in managing members by confirming the impact of awareness of sincere mind of leader and leader-member exchange relationship(LMX) on members' psychological ownership and organizational commitment. And for the purpose of reinforcing the competitiveness of small-and medium-sized enterprises and discovering how sub-factors of trust are acting in this relationship through path analysis.

As a result of analysis, it was found that authentic leadership and LMX had a positive impact on each factor of trust, each factor of trust had a positive impact on psychological ownership and organizational commitment, and psychological ownership had a positive impact on organizational commitment. This result suggests that the leaders at the small- and medium-size companies should try to make members recognize their sincere mind through self-awareness and self-regulation and keep trying to achieve a positive relationship with members. It also suggests that leaders should make efforts to improve trust between members and establish various strategies to enable members to have an ownership.

Furthermore, as presented in Lewicki & Bunker (1996)'s 3-step trust model, trust was found to have been developed influencing each other by dimension. From this perspective, trust recognized by members in each dimension can be said as an important factor. Therefore, it is suggested that continuous trust formation should be achieved for giving economic benefits to members, information should be provided actively, and efforts for identification should be continued through various activities based on mutual understanding.

However, from the relational discrepancy theory, if the conformity degree between the real self and the ideal self is high in the relationship between leader and members, a higher level of intimacy, trust, and goal consistency can be expected. This is why it is expected that identification-based trust will have an effect on psychological ownership and organizational commitment. Regarding this expectation, the findings from the path analysis suggested that this should be interpreted carefully, showing rather different results. In other words, identification-based trust enhances organizational commitment through psychological ownership rather than having a direct impact on organizational commitment. Therefore, it is necessary to re-examine the traditional HR strategy that has been implemented in managing members by leaders at the small- and medium-sized companies until now. It's because up to recently, small- and medium-sized companies tried to obtain identification-based trust by members for various reasons including poor management environment, but as shown in this study, members raised their psychological ownership and organizational commitment directly through calculation-based trust rather than identification-based trust and had a

positive impact on organizational commitment through knowledge-based trust, whereas identification-based trust required the role of psychological ownership. Therefore, it can be found that the leaders at the small- and medium-sized companies need to make various efforts to encourage members to recognize tangible and intangible sense of ownership by distributing profits from the outcome of their labor actively as well as performing their tasks.

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