



THE EFFECT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON JOB SATISFACTION: AN INVESTIGATION ON ACADEMIC STAFFS AT FACULTIES OF SPORTS SCIENCES IN TURKEY

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Abstract:

Transformational leadership and job satisfaction are among the topics that attract the most attention of researchers. This is due to the role that both topics play in employee performance. In this study, it is aimed to investigate the effect of transformational leadership on job satisfaction of academic staff working in higher education institutions. Data were collected from academic staff (n=208) working in the faculties of Sport Sciences within 6 universities, in Turkey. As a data collection tool, Bass and Avolio's (2000) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire to measure transformational leadership, and job satisfaction scale developed by Chang and Chang (2007) to measure job satisfaction, were used. Descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analyses were used as statistical analysis. The results of the analysis showed that transformational leadership had a significant and positive effect on job satisfaction ($\beta=.375$; $p<0.001$).

Keywords: transformational leadership, job satisfaction, academic staff, university

1. Introduction

Since 1978, it has been pointed out that in the leadership literature, it is necessary to make a new distinction in addition to classical leader behavior styles. For this distinction, the term transformational leadership is used. Transformational leadership is geared towards innovation, change, and reform, and maximizes leader-member relations and success. Burns (1978) put forward the concept of transactional leadership in order to create a contradiction, and with this concept, he talked about the leadership style that is more

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connected to the past and traditions. Although transformational leadership is taken up by different scientists, the most obvious common point is that transformational leadership is a leadership style that can be successfully applied to realize fundamental changes in organizations. The transformational leader directs its members through superior values such as freedom, success, equality, and humanity. At the same time, he/she sets a common vision for transformation, maximizes the potential of the members, motivates the members, provides them new perspectives and becomes a role model (Bass, 1993).

Today's intense competitive environment, which is formed by constantly developing knowledge and technology, makes it compulsory for organizations to cope with many difficulties in their development and achievement of their goals (AlBar and Hoque, 2019). The reason for the success of organizations in the competition is to keep talented employees by increasing their quality of work life. Employees who have skills and holders of knowledge represents a tool for the generation of innovations. Thanks to their personal creativity, their knowledge, and abilities it is possible to generate new innovative ideas that will help organizations to achieve a competitive advantage (Urbancova, 2013).

As in all sectors, competition between higher education institutions (HEIs) in the education sector is increasing day by day (Mazzarol and Norman Soutar, 1999). HEIs, which want to maintain their existence successfully in such a dynamic environment and provide a competitive advantage, need academic staff performing at high standards (Rogach, Frolova, and Rvabova, 2017). Academic staffs have a very valuable position in HEI in terms of providing a competitive advantage. Therefore, there is a greater need for leaders who can efficiently manage human resources with effective leadership styles in organizations (Rao, 2014). Transformational leadership, which is one of the leadership styles, is an important instrument that enables academic staff to reach their potential by contributing to job satisfaction, motivating them to exhibit extra-role behavior (Katz and Kahn, 1978), and even exceeding their limits and contributing to achieving high performance (Weller, Süß, Evanschitzky, and Von Wangenheim, 2019).

Job satisfaction is a concept that expresses the emotional evaluations of employees against their work in general (Arnett, Laverie, and Mclane, 2002). Spector (1997) defined job satisfaction as an employee's sense of work or attitude towards various aspects of work. Job satisfaction is considered as the degree of difference between the expectations of the employees from their jobs and the ones obtained from their organizations (Shiu and Yu, 2010). Employees demonstrate their mental, physical and social skills to achieve their individual goals in a work environment. During this process, a number of emotional reactions arise from the work and work environment. In time, they directly or positively affect the performance of the employee and indirectly of the organization. For this reason, job satisfaction is one of the most important facts for organisations (Bakotic, 2016).

Job satisfaction has many antecedents, transformational leadership is one of them (Kim et al., 2019; Medley and Larochelle, 1995). There are a number of studies examining the impact of transformational leadership on job satisfaction of academic staff in the

higher education environment (Bateh and Heyliger, 2014; Mert, Dördüncü, and İncaz, 2019; Sadeghi and Pihie, 2013). These studies generally emphasize that transformational leadership positively affects job satisfaction. There are no studies in the literature that include academic staff working in the faculties of sports sciences. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the effect of transformational leadership on academic staff working in sports sciences faculties in order to contribute to leadership literature.

2. Method

2.1. Sample Size and Procedure

The data used in this study were obtained from six universities (Gazi, Adnan Menderes, Firat, Atatürk, İnönü, and Mugla Sitki Kocman), in Turkey. The communication with academic staff was provided via pollsters. First, the participants were informed about the purpose and content of the study and were distributed to 228 academic staff to voluntarily participate in the study. Then, 210 voluntary participants were identified. As a result of the examination, 2 forms were lacking information and therefore 208 forms were found appropriate for the analysis to test the relationship between the variables identified.

2.2. Measurement Instruments

To measure the transformational leadership level, the transformational leadership part of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), originally developed by Bass and Avolio (2000) and adapted by Bolat (2008) to the Turkish, was used. To measure academic staff's job satisfaction, the job satisfaction scale developed by Chang and Chang (2007).

Both scale items were measured on a five-point Likert type scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

3. Analysis and Findings

3.1. Sample Characteristics

Descriptive analysis showed that majority of the study participants were male (79.3%), married (73.1%), between the ages of 36-45 (30.3%), and held a doctorate degree (77.4%). With respect to the academic rank, majority of the subjects were associate professors (24%) and instructors (24%). Twenty-one percent indicated that they had various administrative duties (Table 1).

Table 1: Sample characteristics

Gender	f	%
Female	43	20.7
Male	165	79.3
Marital status	f	%
Single	56	26.9
Married	152	73.1
Age	f	%
Less than 25	5	2.4
26-35	55	26.4
36-45	63	30.3
46-55	54	26.0
More than 56	31	14.9
Degree	f	%
Undergraduate	10	4.8
Master	37	17.8
Doctorate	161	77.4
Academic rank	f	%
Research Assistant	44	21.2
Instructor	50	24.0
Assistant Professor	46	22.1
Associate Professor	50	24.0
Professor	18	8.7
Administrative responsibilities	f	%
No	164	78.8
Yes	44	21.2
Income (USD)	f	%
Less than 800	3	1.4
801-1000	47	26.6
1001-1200	77	37.0
More than 1201	81	38.9
Total number of years employed (year)	f	%
1-5	35	16.8
6-10	36	17.3
11-15	23	11.1
16-20	40	19.2
21-25	36	17.3
More than 26	38	18.3

3.2. Test for Reliability

Since the validity analysis of both scales was performed several times by different studies before, only reliability analysis was performed in this study. Reliability analysis results yielded an excellent coefficient alpha score for the MLQ ($\alpha=0.977$), and for the satisfaction scale ($\alpha=0.855$).

3.3. Correlation Analysis

The result of the correlation analysis in this study indicated that job satisfaction did not have any relation with demographic variables. The other hand, there was a significant,

positive and moderate level correlation between transformational leadership and job satisfaction ($r=0.356$; $P<0.01$). The variables of education degree and academic title had a significant and negative relationship with transformational leadership. Therefore, it can be said that academic staff with higher education degrees and higher titles need less transformational leadership than others (Table 2).

Table 2: Results of correlation analysis

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Gender	1								
2. Marital status	.065	1							
3. Age	.205**	.400**	1						
4. Degree	.158*	-.027	-.107	1					
5. Academic rank	.171*	.359**	.542**	.389**	1				
6. Administrative responsibilities	-.026	.235**	.156*	.196**	.417**	1			
7. Income	.276**	.315**	.371**	.379**	.651**	.394**	1		
8. Total number of years employed	.169*	.412**	.878**	-.051	.584**	.173*	.412**	1	
9. Transformational leadership	-.135	-.092	-.023	-.163*	-.163*	.076	-.090	-.089	1
10. Job satisfaction	.058	-.053	.030	.026	.019	.093	.068	.018	.356**

* $P<0.05$; ** $P<0.01$

3.4. Hierarchical Regression Analysis

The results of the two-stage hierarchical regression analysis are given in Table 3 where job satisfaction was used as dependent variables one at a time and transformational leadership was considered as independent variable. Regression analysis results showed that job satisfaction was positively and significantly affected by transformational leadership ($\beta=0.375$; $p<0.001$). On the other hand, there was no significant causal relationship between control variables and job satisfaction (Table 3).

Table 3: The results of the hierarchical regression analysis aiming to identify the relationship between job satisfaction and independent variables

Independent variables	Step 1			Step 2		
	Beta	t	p	Beta	t	p
Gender	.049	.647	.519	.090	1.274	.204
Marital status	-.100	-1.252	.212	-.063	-.848	.397
Age	.074	.487	.626	-.030	-.212	.832
Degree	.005	.053	.958	.045	.552	.582
Academic rank	-.080	-.686	.494	-.003	-.032	.975
Administrative responsibilities	.114	1.421	.157	.050	.655	.513
Income	.070	.708	.480	.047	.502	.616
Total number of years employed	-.015	-.099	.921	.066	.457	.648
Transformational leadership	-	-	-	.375**	5.450	.000
F		.614			3.925	
R ²		.024			.151	
Adjusted R ²		-.015			.113	

Note: Standardized beta values were used. ** $p<0.001$

4. Conclusion

In the literature, there are many studies examining the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction in other sectors (Morçin and Çarıkçı, 2016; Turhan and Helvacı, 2018). There was also research on the relationship between the two variables in HEIs (Mert et al., 2019). However, no research has been found on academic staff working in the faculties of Sport Sciences. Therefore, this study was designed to investigate the effects of transformational leadership behaviors on job satisfaction of academic staff working in the faculty of sport sciences and to present the research results to the literature.

Bateh and Heyliger (2014) found in their research conducted in a university in the USA that higher scores on the transformational leadership increased the odds of faculty members of the university was satisfied. Similarly, Sadeghi and Pihie (2013) found in their research conducted in a university in Malaysia that transformational leadership had a significant and positive effect on job satisfaction ($\beta=.304$; $p<0.01$) of academic staff. Chen, Beck, and Amos (2005) studied the impact of transformational leadership on the nursing faculty's job satisfaction at a university in Taiwan. The results of their studies found that transformational leadership had a significant and positive effect on job satisfaction ($\beta=.194$; $p<0.05$). Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016) found in their research at private and public universities in Lithuania that transformational leadership was the most effective leadership style on job satisfaction of academic staff. The relationship between the two variables was very strong and positive. Much of the research emphasized that transformational leadership was more effective than transactional leadership (Afsar et al., 2017; Masa'deh, Obediat, and Tarhini, 2016). Therefore, they advised leaders to adopt a transformational leadership style from their leadership style in their organization (Cheung and Wong, 2011; Mahdinezhad et al., 2013). The findings of our study are similar to the results of the above-mentioned studies. Therefore, our study provides evidence that transformational leadership has a significant and positive effect on job satisfaction in the context of academic staff of sports faculties. As can be seen from all the research results mentioned above, it can be said that there is a consensus that transformational leadership, regardless of culturally, has a positive effect on the job satisfaction of academic staff.

Leadership processes are also considered as an element of internal marketing in some studies conducted for academic staff in HEIs (Vel at al., 2019). For example, the leader can provide a vision for his / her employees, support the development of their skills, involve them in decision-making processes and so on (Yildiz and Kara, 2017). In addition, the leader can influence its members by improving the quality of leader-member exchange. It is argued that extra-role behaviors (Yildiz, 2011) and job satisfaction of the employees (Lings and Greenley, 2010) will increase as a result of such efforts. Moreover, it is emphasized that these efforts will attract employees to their jobs, and they will also support the development of organizational citizenship behavior (Yildiz, 2016).

In summary, since the performance of HEIs depends on the high performance of the academic staff, first of all, the job satisfaction of the academic staff should be ensured and the expectations and needs of the staff must be met for this purpose (Sharma, Kong, and Kingshott, 2016). Since the provision of the necessary motivation is among the expectations and needs of the academic staff, the executives at the upper level should perform transformational leadership behavior more effectively (Munir, AbdulRahman, Malik, and Ma'amor, 2012). Transformational leadership behavior and job satisfaction will not only contribute to the personal development of academic staff, but also will contribute to the overall performance of the university such as academic publications, student satisfaction, and collaboration with colleagues.

In the faculties of sports sciences, in order to increase the job satisfaction of the academic staff (and consequently for the acquisition of features such as organizational commitment, organizational citizenship, organizational trust, productivity, and performance), it can be suggested that the personnel in the managerial position should adopt transformational leadership and exhibit the necessary behaviors in this context. Thus, the leader can create a common vision, inspire and energize, create a climate suitable for development and enable the current potential of the academic staff in a subordinate position. As a result, more effective and efficient academic staff can contribute more to the performance of the HEI.

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