



FULL LENGTH ARTICLE

A structural model for transformational leadership style based on job alienation in District 2 of Islamic Azad University

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ABSTRACT

This study is conducted with the aim at investigating the relationship between the transformational leadership style and reduced job alienation among the employees in District 2 of Islamic Azad University. This research is applied in terms of objective, and descriptive-survey according to the data collection method, and also correlative in terms of relationship between the research variables. It is specifically based on the structural equation modeling. The statistical population consists of all 1604 official employees in District 2 of Islamic Azad University situated in cities of West Azerbaijan, Ardebil and Zanjan provinces in 2013. The sampling method has relative simple random method and the sample size is obtained equal to 310 through Kerjcie and Morgan Table; data is collected through Bass & Avolio leadership style and Melvin Seeman's job alienation questionnaires. It has the content validity and the reliability of questionnaire is equal to 0.98 for transformational leadership questionnaire and 0.99 for job alienation by Cronbach's alpha method. The results of hypothesis test by structural equation analysis indicate that the transformational leadership style has the important impact on the reduction of university employees' job alienation and its dimensions (emotional exhaustion, decreased personal efficiency, and depersonalization).

Keywords: Transformational leadership, job alienation, emotional exhaustion, decreased personal efficiency, depersonalization

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INTRODUCTION

The importance and necessity of leadership in the organization is raised since there are always the weaknesses and shortcomings in designing the organizations and a leader is needed as a potential and trusted factor to make the necessary coordination among the members and their activities and leadership. Furthermore, according to the current changing environment under which the organizations are faced with rapid and complex changes in their status, the leader plays the essential role in rapid adaption of organization with conditions of changing environment and maintaining the stability of organization [8].

The transformational leaders address the followers' basic needs (such as the need for self-actualization according to Maslow's theory) and lead them to higher levels of motivation [8]. One of the main concerns of management is how they should effectively utilize the employees or in what way they can motivate them to have higher efficiency, and how they can reduce the manpower turnover and in what way they can make the overall job satisfaction in them [7]. The results of various studies indicate that the transformational leadership leads to the acceptable results in organizations. For instance, these leaders increase the subordinates' organizational commitment and on the other hand they enhance their subordinates motivation, thus numerous researchers have sought to identify the factors which lead to the transformational behavior [6]. Bess defines the transformational leader as the one who makes a positive relationship with subordinates, encourages the employees to go beyond their personal needs and work in line with the desires and objectives of group and organization in order to enhance the employees and organization's performance. The transformational leaders motivate their subordinates to do what they can do [2].

On the other hand, the human resource is among the most valuable capital of any organization because other factors such as the technology, capital, etc, depend on the manpower. Despite the new technical advances, there is not still any factor which is can be replaced by the manpower, and the human is

considered as a key factor in the organization. Considering this point, the leader should properly identify this capital, grow his hidden potential and talents and effectively utilize them to achieve the objectives of organization [1]. However sometimes, the leader fails to utilize these human resources and thus the staff will suffer from job alienation due to the stressful situations caused by the inappropriate nature, type or conditions [12].

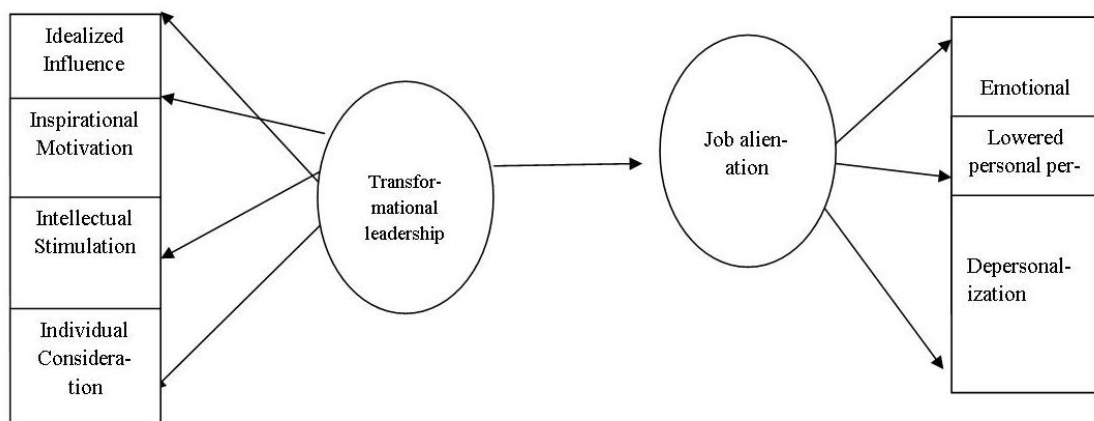
Both Marx and Weber suggest that the job alienation refers to a state or feeling based on which the individual job is considered as an external factor and thus he will have no sense of independence [9].

Some researchers' findings suggest that the transformational leadership style acts as an important and interventional strategy in adjusting the job alienation because the transformational leaders demonstrate the more diversified and personal points of view and allow the staff to develop and complete their ideas and have broader participation in the workplace affairs and strategic business fields, and thus this managerial approach leads to the reduced alienation. The managers can reduce the employees' job alienation by adopting the appropriate leadership style and adjusting the appropriate organizational structure along with the effective organizational culture [3].

Theoretical framework of research:

The theoretical framework is a conceptual model which is based on the theoretical relationships among a number of factors which are identified important for the research issues. This theoretical framework logically flows by examining the research records in the field of issue. According to the provided definitions and previous research as well as the hypotheses, the researcher has provided the following conceptual model for investigating the influence of transformational leadership on reduced job alienation.

Figure 1 - Conceptual model of research



MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is a fundamental research and is considered as the descriptive-survey studies in terms of data collection method; it has the correlative type according to the relationship between the research variables and is based on the structural equation modeling. Numerous methods are proposed to examine the relationships among the variables in recent decades. The structural equation modeling or the multivariate analysis with latent variables is one of these methods. The structural equation modeling is a comprehensive statistical approach to testing the hypothesis about the relationships between observed and latent variables. Through this approach, we can test the acceptability of theoretical models in certain communities, and since most of the available variables in management research are latent, it has become necessary to apply these models [10].

Research hypotheses

Main hypothesis: There is an inverse relationship between transformational leadership and job alienation. The following subsidiary hypotheses are investigated for explaining the effect of transformational leadership on job alienation.

Sub-Hypothesis 1: There is an inverse relationship between transformational leadership and emotional exhaustion.

Sub-Hypothesis 2: There is an inverse relationship between transformational leadership and decreased personal efficiency.

Sub-Hypothesis 3: There is an inverse relationship between transformational leadership and depersonalization.

Research Variables:

The transformational leadership variable is considered as the independent variable, and the job alienation variable and its dimensions as the dependent variables.

Statistical population and sample:

The statistical population consisted of all 1604 official employees in district 2 of Islamic Azad Universities in West Azerbaijan, Ardebil and Zanjan in 2013. The sampling method had simple random type and the sample size was equal to 310 according to Kerjcie and Morgan table and thus 340 questionnaires were distributed and 310 ones collected.

Data collection tool:

The questionnaire was the main data collection tool. The multi-factor transformational leadership questionnaire was designed by Bass & Avolio's scale (1990) and the job alienation questionnaire by Melvin, Seeman's scale (1959). Then, these two questionnaires were put under the confirmatory factor analysis. The exploratory factor analysis was done by SPSS16 software and the confirmatory factor analysis (measurement model) by LISREL8.54 software.

Validity and Reliability:

Cronbach's alpha coefficient is equal to 65% for transformational leadership scale and 91% for job alienation scale indicating the reliability of research tool. Furthermore, both the content and factor validity are applied for testing the reliability of questions. The experts and university professors' viewpoints are applied to measure the content validity of questionnaire. At this stage, the necessary modifications are done by conducting different interviews and getting those individuals' opinions, and thus it ensures that the questionnaire examines the target characteristics. In this regard, the professors' viewpoints were so consistent with each other. The factor validity test of questionnaire is done through the confirmatory factor analysis through LISREL software. It should be noted that the indexes of measurement model or confirmatory factor analysis should have appropriate fit in order to validate the model, and also the t-values of standardized coefficients should be significant. If the value of chi-square is small, Chi-square per degrees of freedom (df) is smaller than 3, RMSEA smaller than 0.05, and GFI and AGFI higher than 90%, it can be concluded that the model has appropriate fit. If the value of T is higher than 1.96 or smaller than -1.96; it is significant at the level of 95%.

RESULTS

Spearman's rank correlation test through SPSS16 software is applied to test the hypotheses and measure the correlation between the variables. Then, the causal relationship between the independent and dependent variables of research is tested through the structural equation modeling and Lisrel8.54 software. Table 1 shows the results of correlation between two main variables of research.

Component	Transformational leadership	Job alienation
Transformational leadership	1	
Job alienation	1	-0.639

Structural equation modeling

The structural equation modeling is applied to assess the causal relationship in research hypotheses. Despite the fact that this is the final step in confirmatory factor analysis, which was earlier done on the research measurement scales, it also indicates the validity of suggested conceptual model through the fit indexed of model.

As shown in Figures 2 and 3, the appropriate validity and fit of models are confirmed since the values of chi-square, RMSEA, and the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom are less than 3 in all models, and the values of GFI and AGFA are above 90% in all models. Figure 2 shows the result of this test in standard mode. This figure, which is obtained by LISREL software, indicates the suggested standardized coefficients between transformational leadership and job alienation. Figure 3 also displays the result of this test at the significant level. This figure, which is obtained by LISREL software, shows the proposed significant factor (causal relationship) between the transformational leadership and job alienation. Table 3 represents the results of testing the research hypotheses (main hypothesis and relevant sub-hypotheses) by this model. As shown in Figures 2 and 3, the transformational leadership has an inverse significant effect on the job alienation. Furthermore, an inverse significant relationship is confirmed between the transformational leadership and dimensions of job alienation. All values are significant and higher than -0.96. The t-value

indicates the confirmed main and sub-hypotheses. Moreover, the Table 2 shows the results of causal analysis through the structural equation modeling for testing the main and sub-hypotheses.

Table 2- Results of hypotheses test (main and sub-hypotheses) using the structural equation modeling by LISREL software

Hypotheses	Standard Coefficient	t- value	result
Transformational leadership→ decreased personal efficiency	-0.78	-15.84	Confirmed
Reduced emotional exhaustion→ transformational leadership	-0.86	-18.27	Confirmed
Increased personal efficiency→ transformational leadership	-0.86	-18.27	Confirmed
Transformational leadership→ reduced depersonalization	-0.89	-19.34	Confirmed

$\chi^2 = 30.22$ $df = 13$ $RMSEA = 0.051$ $GFI = 0.98$ $AGFI = 0.96$

$\chi^2 = 43.26$ $df = 16$ $RMSEA = 0.059$ $GFI = 0.96$ $AGFI = 0.92$ All t-values are significant

Investigating the relationship between transformational leadership style and employees' reduced job alienation

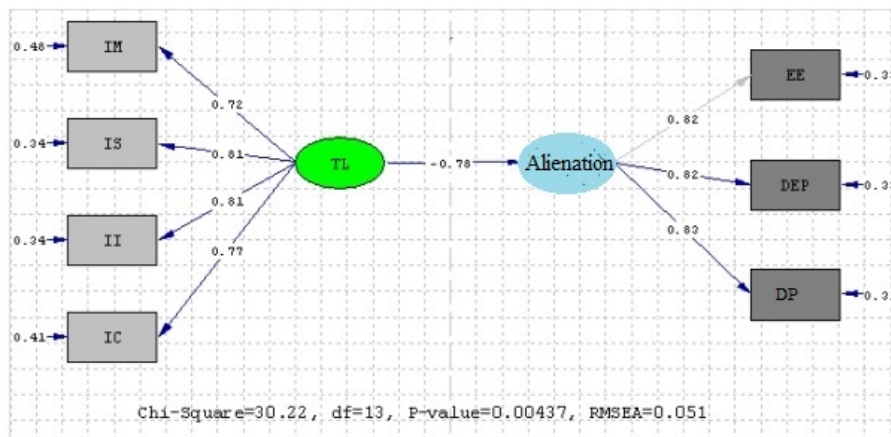


Figure 2- Structural equation modeling (standardized coefficients)

The Transformational Leadership is shown by TL, inspirational motivation IM, Intellectual Stimulation IS, Idealized Influence II, job alienation with alienation, emotional exhaustion EE, decreased personal efficiency DEP, and depersonalization DP in Figures 2 and 3.

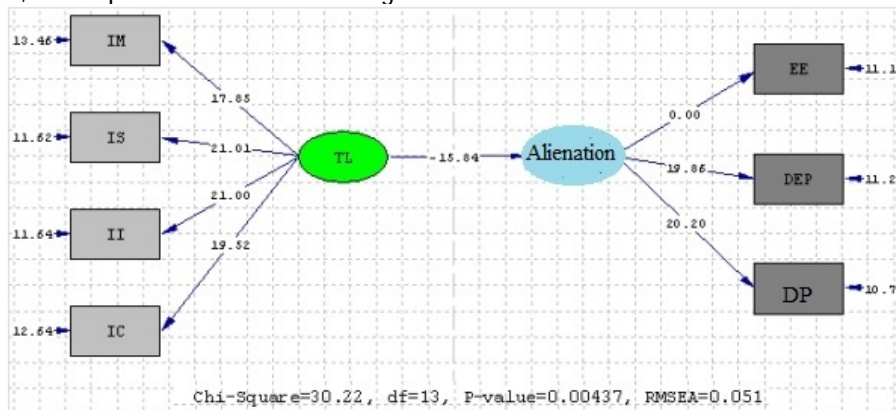


Figure 3

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The transformational leadership is introduced by Bass in 1985. It is not a temporary concept and in fact the transformational leadership style is more effective than the interactive leadership style. The studies of recent two decades have confirmed the importance of transformational leadership style in the success of organizations. Therefore, it is essential to determine the consequences of this type of leadership. The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of transformational leadership as an influential factor in reducing the job alienation in District 2 of Islamic Azad University. The results of hypotheses test indicate that the transformational leadership has an inverse significant effect on the job alienation and its dimensions. The significant factor of causal relationship between those factors is equal to -15.84 indicating that the transformational leadership can reduce the job alienation. This confirms the results of previous theories and research on the effectiveness of programs for changing the employees such as the impact of transformational leadership style on the job alienation and its complications ([11]; [5]).

The transformational leaders guide and motivate the others through the inspiration and creating the perspective instead of orders. When the components of transformational leadership are applied as the complements of other leadership measures, they can become a source of competitive advantage for university employees, and the use of this competitive advantage may significantly help the strategic competition and gaining the higher efficiency in short and long terms. In fact, the employees are less likely to give better or satisfactory performance while facing with environmental challenges without a transformational leadership. The transformational leaders utilize the optimism, intelligence and a lot of other personal abilities to develop the other individuals' ideals and lead the individuals and organization towards higher level of efficiency. [4].

By deep self understanding, the transformational leaders internalize the idea of development through relying on the individuals' capabilities in the organization and seek to make a strong relationship with staff for familiarizing them with new strategic perspectives and objectives and satisfying their higher needs. In other words, the transformational leadership develops the followers and gives them more freedom to control their own behavior. The transformational leaders develop the subordinates' attention in psychological needs (such as self-esteem and self-actualization) and prevent from the employees' depersonalization. According to the research findings, the following strategies are recommended to decrease the job alienation:

1. The facilities should be provided to enhance the individual skills based on their responsibilities because if a person fails to dominate his job, he will suffer from high stress.
2. The increased employees' participation and involvement in the academic affairs by supervisors as the transformational leaders reduces the level of job alienation among them.
3. Making the balance between the work and personal life and avoiding the work-familial life conflict among the employees reduce the job alienation and increase the optimal use of time and expertise to solve the clients' problems.

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