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INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT OF FACULTY MEMBERS OF ISLAMIC AZAD UNIVERSITY, NORTH TEHRAN BRANCH

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Resumen: El presente estudio tiene como objetivo investigar la relación entre las características del liderazgo transformacional y el concepto de compromiso organizacional y se intenta investigar los efectos de las diferentes dimensiones del liderazgo transformacional sobre el concepto de compromiso organizacional por separado. Las dimensiones del liderazgo transformacional son el carisma, la estimulación intelectual y la consideración individualizada. La población de este estudio incluye a miembros de la facultad de la Universidad Islámica Azad, North Tehran Branch, es decir, un total de 554 personas. De éstas, 383 personas fueron seleccionadas al azar como muestra del estudio. Se ha utilizado un cuestionario para reunir los datos requeridos. El análisis de los datos se ha realizado mediante análisis de correlación, regresión y trayectoria. Los resultados indican que el compromiso organizativo de los profesores está más justificado a través del estilo de liderazgo transformacional.

Palabras claves: Liderazgo transformacional, compromiso organizacional

Abstract: The present study aims to investigate the relationship between transformational leadership characteristics and the concept of organizational commitment and it is attempted to investigate the effects of different dimensions of transformational leadership on the concept of organizational commitment separately. The dimensions of transformational leadership are charisma, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The population of this study includes faculty members of Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch, i.e. a total of 554 people. Of this, 383 people were randomly selected as the sample of the study. Questionnaire has been used to gather required data. Data analysis has been carried out using correlation, regression and path analysis. The results indicate that the organizational commitment of faculty members is more justified through transformational leadership style.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, organizational commitment

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1. INTRODUCTION

Due to the increasing development of technology and changes in the environment, in addition to dealing with the threats of the external environment, organizations should also pay particular attention to internal environment such that organizational goals are not violated as a result of these changes. In this regard, they need leaders to be able to create high penetration and broad vision, commitment and enthusiasm necessary for subordinates to use the talent and effort to achieve organizational goals with the help of personal features and charisma (Burns, 1978). Idealized leadership is one of the newest concepts recently proposed in the management literature and is one of the greatest ranks enumerated for an ideal leader. Idealized leaders have the ability to create and articulate a clear, attractive, and desired vision for the future of their organization and are able to guide their followers in this direction (Latifi, 2008, 10). One of the issues that have recently grabbed the attention of researchers is what leadership behavior is useful in the process of organizational change. The fact that leaders should address high-level needs of followers and subordinates and encourage them in a transformational way has caused the formation of a leadership style called transformational leadership. Walton wrote that the basis for commitment strategy should be the existence of a management philosophy that verifies and certifies legal claims of organizationally committed stakeholders, such as owners, employees, customers and the public. At the heart of such a philosophy is a belief that creation of commitment among employees leads to their performance stimulation and improvement (Walton, 1985).

1.1. Definition and statement of problem

In today's condition that organizations are faced with global competitive environment, the need for radical changes and working creativity is always felt. Globally competitive force has made today's organizations adopt new working methods after decades of continuing their fixed working methods and procedures so that other organizations do not have working stability and have a kind of relative stability. In order to not fall behind, most organizations benefit from change management skills and try to make certain fundamental changes within

the organization with a certain courage and audacity (Geijsel et al., 2003). These organizations must be in a way that they quickly react to environmental threats and benefit from existing opportunities; in other words, they should have an agile structure and formation. This requires the creation of rapid and radical changes in organizations. The internal environment of the organizations should also be in such a way that the staff are fully aware of the reason and process of changes so as to have the adequate motivation. In such a situation, the role of transformational leaders will be more highlighted. In most cases, behavioral scientists have tried to understand on what features, capabilities, practices, power sources or relying on what aspects of the position, a leader and manager's influence on followers and achievement of group goals can be determined (Yukl, 2003, 2). Transformational leaders create extraordinary motivation in their followers and improve their performance. In addition, these leaders also increase confidence, commitment and group performance of followers (Arnold et al., 2001) and smoothen flow of organizational changes (Eisenbach et al., 1999). Transformational leadership is a complex and dynamic process where leaders affect their followers' values, beliefs, and goals. Hersey and Blanchard believe that transformational leadership is the process of conscious influence on individuals or groups to create discontinuous changes in the organization as a whole. Burns also believes that transformational leadership is a process in which leaders and followers are always trying to promote their emotional power and motivational force of each other to higher levels (Stone et al., 2004).

There are many reasons why an organization should increase its members' commitment levels (Steers & Porter, 1999, 290). Firstly, organizational commitment is a new concept and overall, it is different from dependency and job satisfaction (Greenberg & Baron, 2000, 182).

Secondly, research has shown that organizational commitment has a positive relationship with outcomes such as job satisfaction (Butmann and Strasser, 1987), presence (Matthew and Zajyk, 1990), meta-organizational behavior (O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986), and job performance (Meyer, Allen and Smith, 1933), and has a negative relationship with

desire to leave job (Moody, Porter, and Steers, 1982) (Shiuan, Relly, 2003). Creation of organizational commitment among the employees of the research community is to a great extent led by managerial and leadership behaviors of University managers and policy makers. The fact that how much transformational leadership styles affect the creation of organizational commitment among faculty members has attracted the attention of research and this study seeks to show whether there is a relationship between transformational leadership styles and organizational commitment of faculty members of Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch or not?

1.2. The importance and significance of study

One of the issues of great importance that managers are required to consider is the issue of leadership (Amirkabiri, 2006, 487). Leadership has long been a major topic that has attracted the minds of many researchers of organizational management. Thus, the researchers are in search of leaders that have an important role in guiding the community and the organization. In humanities, the issue of leadership has been studied more than any other issue and has been analyzed more than any other issue in the field of management (Daft, 2001, 986). Perception of and understanding the necessity that managers must perform leadership and management increases the importance of this issue. In fact, managers, due to the nature of official duties and responsibilities assigned to them, are expected to have the attributes of leadership. Recently, the term leadership is commonly used instead of manager. Even modern concepts such as facilitator, coach, mentor (supporter), and enabler are also gradually replaced in organizations. One of the main concepts of post-modern and contemporary approaches is the leadership concept. Based on the validity of the concept of leadership instead of "manager" who uses the authority relied on position, leadership is given priority (Amirkabiri, 2006, 477).

1.3. Research objective

1.3.1. Main objectives

The main objective of the present study is investigating the relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational

commitment of faculty members of Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch through the evaluation of studies related to transformational leadership concepts and organizational commitment of faculty members.

1.3.2. Secondary objectives

1. Investigating the relationship between transformational leadership style dimensions and organizational commitment of faculty members of Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch.

2. Ranking each dimension of leadership style in terms of their impact on organizational commitment of faculty members of Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch.

3. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

3.1. Research background

Transformational leadership literature dates back to 1978 and to Burns' works. Burns indicated that transformational leaders has a vision and challenge others to do exceptional things. In a study conducted by Bass and Olive in 1966, financial performance of teams in FedEx was studied. The researchers also conducted studies on Military Affairs' operators in United States of America, Canada and Germany, and all indicated that transformational leaders have a profound and positive effect on important organizational variables such as the attitudes of employees, organizational commitment, productivity and efficiency of employees (Ghadrdan, 2006, 6).

3.2. Defining leadership terms

3.2.1. Leadership

Leadership means influencing others (John Maxwell, 2007, 10).

Leadership means to bring people to the top of competencies (Latifi, 2008, 1).

3.2.2. Transformational leadership

According to Bass (1985), transformational leaders have a clear vision and are of the characteristic that they effectively convey their vision to their employees. The leaders act as role models and induce

employees to prefer the success of the organization to their personal interests (Patiar & Mia, 2009).

- A. Idealized influence and being a role model (charisma)

Idealized influence refers to leaders who have high moral and spiritual standards and a high level of respect among the followers, and cause loyalty (Bono & Judge, 2004).

- B. Intellectual stimulation

Intellectual stimulation refers to leaders who challenge organizational norms, encourage divergent thinking, and make their followers to develop innovative strategies (Bono & Judge, 2004).

- C. Individualized consideration

Individualized consideration refers to those behaviors of leaders that seek to recognize and acknowledge followers' needs of growth and development, and coach and give advice to their followers (Bono & Judge, 2004).

3.2.3. Organizational Commitment

According to Fred Luthans, organizational commitment is often defined as:

- A. a strong desire for the survival of a member in a particular organization
- B. desire for a huge effort in the organization
- C. unwavering belief in accepting the values and goals of the organization.

In other words, organizational commitment is an attitude about employees' loyalty to the organization and an ongoing process that brings attention to the organization and the success and welfare of organization through participation of individuals in corporate decisions (Moghimi, 2007, 392).

3.3. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework is a conceptual model based on theoretical relationships among a number of factors that have recognized to be important with regard to the research subject. The theoretical framework discusses internal links among the variables that ultimately are involved in the

dynamism of the position under study. This framework helps us consider and test certain relationships and improve our understanding of dynamism of the position the study is going to be carried out (Sokaran, 2007, 163). In general, it can be said that theoretical framework is a basis that the whole research is placed on (Khaki, 2008, 163). In this framework, transformational leadership style dimensions are considered as independent variable and organizational commitment of faculty members of Islamic Azad University, North Tehran branch is considered as the dependent variable.

3.4. Research model

The theoretical research model shown in Figure 1 has been developed as a result of management literature review and supply of the theoretical support related to the relationship between variables.

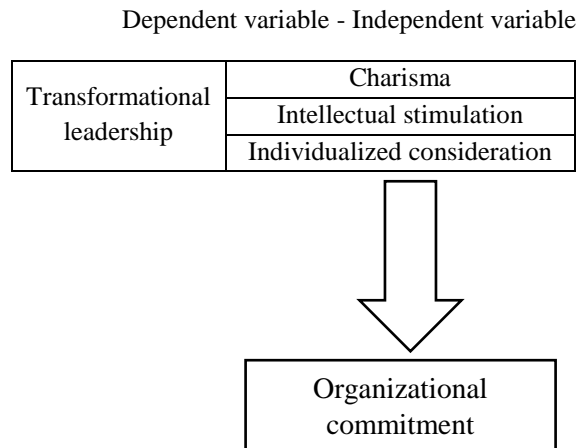


Figure 1. Research model

4. METHODOLOGY

This study is applied based on its objective because it attempts to improve the current situation at an organizational level with the application of fundamental or basic research that has already been done on theories of leadership and organizational commitment, and it is descriptive and correlation in terms of data collection method. The population of this study includes faculty members of Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch, i.e. a total of 554 people. Of this, 383 people were selected as the

sample of the study, which was calculated based on Cochran's formula.

A lose-ended questionnaire is used to collect the required data and 390 questionnaires were prepared and sent for all faculty members of Islamic Azad University, North Tehran branch, of which 5 questionnaires have not been returned and 2 of the questionnaires were excluded due to incompleteness. Finally, data were analyzed using 383 questionnaires.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, face and content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by experts and scholars and university professors in terms of unambiguity of items and their quantity and quality sufficiency. In addition, factor analysis technique has been used to test construct validity and based on factor

analysis, each of the questions has a non-zero factor loadings.

In order to determine the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient has been used, which turned out to be .91 indicating a high level of reliability.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESES TESTING

5.1. Correlation coefficient test for hypotheses testing

Results obtained from Pearson correlation coefficient test are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Hypotheses testing using Pearson correlation coefficient

	Hypotheses	R	Sig.	Results
Main hypothesis A	There is a significant relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational commitment of faculty members.	0.731	0	Accepted
Sub-hypothesis A1	There is a significant relationship between charisma aspect of transformational leadership style and organizational commitment of faculty members.	0.703	0	Accepted
Sub-hypothesis A2	There is a significant relationship between intellectual stimulation aspect of transformational leadership style and organizational commitment of faculty members.	0.666	0	Accepted
Sub-hypothesis A3	There is a significant relationship between individualized consideration aspect of transformational leadership style and organizational commitment of faculty members.	0.705	0	Accepted

5.2. Regression

Cause and effect relationships are not necessarily identified in correlation test and only significant relationship between a variable and other variables is specified. Therefore, statement of a causal relationship is just possible when all variables are under tight control in the study. Regression analysis is used for this purpose, which aims to predict changes of the dependent variable given the independent variables.

5.2.1. Univariate regression analysis of transformational leadership

HO: There is no linear relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment of faculty members.

H1: There is a linear relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment of faculty members.

Table 2 shows the correlation test result.

Table 2. Linear correlation test of transformational leadership

ANOVA			Regression equation			
Independent variable: transformational leadership			Dependent variable: organizational commitment			
Model	DF	F	Model	B	T	SIG
Linear regression	1	393	Intercept	1.782	16.7	0
			Transformational leadership	0.026	19.8	0
$R^2 = .508$						

Based on the significance value, which was less than .05, the null hypothesis is rejected and the linear relationship between the two variables is as follows:

$$\text{Organizational commitment} = 1.782 + .026 \text{ (transformational leadership)}$$

5.3. Path analysis

Results of multivariate regression used to measure the causal relationship of each aspects of transformational leadership that were stated in the form of sub-hypotheses are presented in Figure 2.

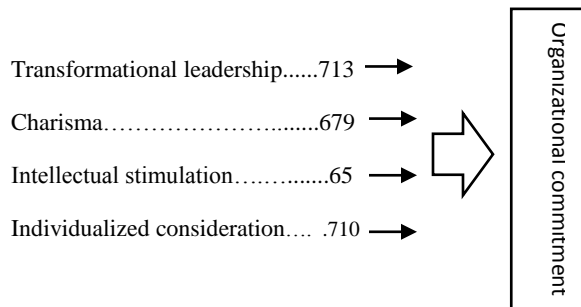


Figure 2. Path analysis

Coefficients shown in (B) the figure above have predicted changes in organizational commitment of faculty members of Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch, based on the independent variables.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Results of inferential statistics

6.1.1. Main hypothesis A

The relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment is tested in the form of the main hypothesis A. Different dimensions of transformational leadership in this study included charisma, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The correlation between the two variables ($r = .731$) was obtained based on responses, which is direct and incomplete. In other words, behaving based on transformational leadership style can be effective in improving organizational commitment of faculty members of Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch, and details are investigated in the form of sub-hypotheses.

6.1.2. Sub-hypothesis A1

The relationship between charisma and organizational commitment is tested in the form of this hypothesis, which confirmed the correlation between these two variables. Since the correlation between the two variables is $r = .703$, it can be said that there is a relatively strong significant relationship between the two variables, which is direct and incomplete because of being between 0 and 1. In other words, charismatic behavior of university authorities is effective in improving organizational commitment of faculty members of Islamic Azad University.

6.1.3. Sub-hypothesis A2

The correlation between intellectual stimulation and organizational commitment is tested in the form of this hypothesis. Intellectual stimulation means that managers and authorities in charge of leading the organization consider hypotheses and propose different methods and ideas and investigate various opinions, the correlation of which was $r = .66$, which is direct and incomplete. In fact, respondents believe that when behavioral components of intellectual stimulation dimension are institutionalized in leadership styles of university authorities, it can affect their commitment to the organization.

6.1.4. Sub-hypothesis A3

The correlation between individualized consideration (considering faculty members) and organizational

commitment is tested in the form of this hypothesis. Here, the correlation between components such as leaders and managers' focus on strengths of faculty members was tested with the goal of their improvement and employees' training with organizational commitment, which turned out to be $r = .705$ indicating that there is a relatively strong significant relationship between the two variables. In other words, when employees feel their presence is effective in the organization and can affect results, this feeling leads to the improvement of organizational commitment.

6.1.5. *Result of multivariate linear regression and path analysis*

Based on multivariate linear regression analysis, the linear (causal) relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational commitment was confirmed in the population under study. The linear relationship between each of the dimensions of the transformational leadership style and organizational commitment of faculty members was evaluated using stepwise multivariate regression, based on which from among the dimensions of transformational leadership style, individualized consideration and charisma justified organizational commitment in the population under study by .299 and .206, respectively and intellectual stimulation does not have a linear relationship with organizational commitment. On the basis of the coefficient of determination, organizational commitment of faculty members depends on individualized considerations and charisma by .522.

6.2. Recommendations

The findings suggest that transformational behavior should be taken into account in management style as a tool that can be effective in the creation of organizational commitment. In addition, the prevailing style to create organizational commitment in the research community has been transformational leadership style. The top management of the organization is recommended to consider the following points in order to strengthen transformational leadership style:

- Based on the main hypothesis A that behaving based on transformational leadership style can be effective in

improving organizational commitment of faculty members, top management of the organization under study is recommended to:

- Put faculty members in motion with an effective prospect.
- Give faculty members audacity in order to enable them deal with problems.
- Encourage them to accept group objectives.
- Participate faculty members in personal development activities.

A) In the form of sub-hypothesis A1, given the confirmation of the relationship between charisma and organizational commitment, the following points are recommended to the top management:

- Leader should provide followers with a sense of a clear objective in order to put them in motion.
- Leader is a role model for ethical behavior.
- Leader effectively states a clear objective to get the companionship of followers.

B) In the form of sub-hypothesis A2, given the confirmation of the relationship between intellectual stimulation and organizational commitment, the following points are recommended to the top management:

- Leader provides followers with correct and tested interrogation of problem-solving methods and also encourage them to question these methods in order to develop the methods they use.
- Leader provides followers with a thinking about the use of new methods related to problem, issue, and strategies related to work through giving them a new vision.

C) In the form of sub-hypothesis A3, given the confirmation of the relationship between individualized consideration (consideration of faculty members) and organizational commitment, the following points are recommended to the top management:

- Leader focuses on understanding the needs of each follower.

- Leader constantly attempts to develop potential power of followers.
- although the correlation analysis confirmed a positive relationship between transformational leadership and its dimensions: individualized consideration, charisma, and intellectual stimulation and organizational commitment and the simple linear regression equation confirmed it, the highest correlation coefficient is respectively for individualized consideration and charisma in the multivariate regression equation and path analysis. This suggests that top management must exercise over the individualized consideration and charisma.

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