

Original Article (Quantified)

Analyzing the effects of transformational leadership on performance with the mediating role of work stress and burnout

Asra Hossein Mohammad¹ , Mohammad Hassani² , Sohaila Ahmadi³ 

1- PhD student, Department of Educational Management, Urmia University, Urmia, Iran.

2- Professor, Department of Educational Management, Urmia University, Urmia, Iran

3- Department of Educational Management, Urmia University, Urmia, Iran

Receive:

05 February 2024

Revise:

10 May 2024

Accept:

26 May 2024

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to analyze the effects of transformational leadership on performance with the mediating role of work stress and burnout. The current research is applicable in terms of purpose, and descriptive-correlative in terms of its nature; with path analysis approach. The statistical population of the research includes 800 employees of al-Mustansarih University of Baghdad, 260 of whom were selected by simple random sampling using Morgan's table. To collect research data, four standard questionnaires of transformational leadership by Bass and Olive (1997), work stress by Hellrigan and Slocum (2000), job burnout by Meslech and Jackson (1981), and Patterson's occupational stress (1990) were used. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed through experts in educational sciences and management and factor analysis, and the reliability of the tool was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient in a preliminary study; for the transformational leadership questionnaire 0.90, work stress 0.87, job burnout 0.88, and job performance at 0.91. Data analysis was done using Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis and path analysis in SPSS and Lisrel statistical software. The results showed that the effect of transformational leadership, work stress, and job burnout on employees' performance is significant. It was also found that the effect of transformational leadership on performance with the mediating role of work stress and job burnout is positive and significant.

Keywords:

transformational leadership, performance, work stress, burnout.

Please cite this article as (APA): Hossein Mohammad, A., Hassani, M. and Ahmadi, S. (2025). Analyzing the effects of transformational leadership on performance with the mediating role of work stress and burnout. *Management and Educational Perspective*, 7(2), 338-356.



10.22034/jmep.2024.336121.1108



Authors retain the copyright and full publishing rights.

Published by Research Center of Resource Management Studies and Knowledge-Based Business. This article is an open access article licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

Publisher: Research Center of Resource Management Studies and Knowledge-Based Business

Corresponding Author: Asra Hossein Mohammad

Email: a.hosseinmohammad@urmia.ac.ir



Extended abstract

Introduction

Today's organizations are characterized by dynamism, complexity, ambiguity and aversion to tradition; and they are constantly influenced by their surroundings, and accept change as an inevitable necessity (Mayer 2008). With the understanding that change is an integral part and essence of organizations in the third millennium, the ability to adapt to recent developments in various economic, social, and educational fields increases when organizations have competent and eligible human resources (Singh Bhatt 2011; Elisabeth 2019). In this regard, continuous performance improvement creates synergy for organizations that can provide growth and development. Governments and organizations are putting a lot of effort into this. Continuous performance improvement will not be possible without checking and gaining information about the progress and achievement of goals and identifying the challenges facing the organization and getting feedback and knowing about the level of implementation of formulated policies and identifying things that need improvement (Lin et al, 2020). In order to achieve their goals, the employees and the organization need to have knowledge and understanding about their performance, so that they can improve their performance based on that and provide the organization with a positive transformation. The lack of adequate and comprehensive information about the opportunities, capabilities, threats and potential weaknesses of performance is rooted in the lack of comprehensive and correct assessment of managers and officials about the quantity and quality of the organization's performance (Shorvarzi & Davodi, 2017).

Studies show that burnout (Theodosiou et al, 2020), transformational leadership (Semuel et al, 2018), informational capital (Hu et al, 2017), intellectual capital (Zhicheng et al, 2016), technology and innovation (Cui et al, 2015), organizational stress and pressures (Zhao et al, 2015), and strategic orientation (Spanjol et al, 2012) have a positive and significant effect on employee performance. By understanding what was raised, the current research seeks to answer the question of whether there is a significant effect of transformational leadership on the performance of employees with the mediating role of work stress and job burnout.

Theoretical Framework

Transformational Leadership

The transformational leader informs employees of the mission or vision of the organization and develops higher levels of ability in colleagues and followers. In addition, the transformational leader motivates colleagues and followers to look beyond their own interests to interests that benefit the group (March et al, 2015).

Job stress

It should be mentioned that one of the factors that endangers people's mental health is job stress. The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health considers occupational stress to be caused by many problems in the work environment, continuous out of control changes, constant relocation, overtime working, long working hours, and irregular working hours. Researchers believe that high job stress leads to job burnout, when a person experiences high, continuous and uncontrolled stress in the work environment. The demands of the work environment are more than the person's ability and they cannot reach their goals, and also people who have a low tolerance threshold and are unable to cope with stress are more exposed to job burnout (Atebaei Tabari, 2020).

Burnout

Job burnout is one of the occupational hazards that have been noticed in recent years, and it is used to describe human responses to experienced psychological pressures. In the definition of job burnout, it can be said that job burnout is a symptom of emotional collapse after years of

engagement and employment. The signs of career collapse are characterized by lack of enthusiasm, feeling of deprivation and failure, absenteeism, disinterest in accepting responsibility, depression, and physical symptoms. There are many causes of career collapse. Some causes are external (tasks of the work environment) and some are internal causes (too much involvement in work and unrealistic expectations about what can be done) (Koshki, 2020).

Job Performance

In a comprehensive definition, job performance means both process and output. A person's behavior is never separate from himself, that's why performance turns from a subjective concept into an objective and measurable one. Based on this, the performance of people in work situations can be measured (Allen et al, 2013).

Vaghri & Jalili Filshor (2024) investigated the effect of transformational leadership on organizational performance. The findings indicate that transformational leadership has an impact on organizational performance.

Dadashi & Pali (2023) examined the test of the causal model of job performance based on communication skills with the mediation of job conflict in teachers. The results showed that there is a relationship between communication skills and job involvement with an impact factor of 0.67, between communication skills and job performance with an impact factor of 0.79, and between job involvement and job performance with an impact factor of 0.76. On the other hand, communication skills have an indirect relationship with job performance with an impact factor of 0.50. In other words, job involvement has played a mediating role in the relationship between communication skills and job performance.

Research methodology

The current research is applicable in terms of purpose, and descriptive-correlative in terms of its nature; with path analysis approach. The statistical population of the research includes 800 employees of al-Mustansarih University of Baghdad, 260 of whom were selected by simple random sampling using Morgan's table. To collect research data, four standard questionnaires of transformational leadership by Bass and Olive (1997), work stress by Hellrigal and Slocum (2000), job burnout by Meslech and Jackson (1981), and Patterson's occupational stress (1990) were used. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed through experts in educational sciences and management and factor analysis, and the reliability of the tool was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient in a preliminary study; for the transformational leadership questionnaire 0.90, work stress 0.87, job burnout 0.88, and job performance at 0.91.

Research findings

Data analysis was done using Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis and path analysis in SPSS and Lisrel statistical software. The results showed that the effect of transformational leadership, work stress, and job burnout on employees' performance is significant. It was also found that the effect of transformational leadership on performance with the mediating role of work stress and job burnout is positive and significant.

Conclusion

The present study was conducted with the aim of analyzing the effects of transformational leadership on performance with the mediating role of work stress and burnout. The findings are consistent with the results of researches by Rahabi Farjad & Farkhojasteh (2021), Khani (2020), Samuel et al, (2018), Samad (2012), Elenkov (2012), Ramadani Rachmah et al,



(2022), Boamah (2022), and Davoudian (2023), because they reached similar results. Davoudian (2023) showed that the mediating role of burnout in the impact of transformational leadership on employee performance was significant.

In line with the results obtained, it is suggested that in creating a vision of the future of the university and in the state of its educational system as a whole, and establishing organizational values and foundations, special focus and attention should be given, and organizational values and frameworks and behavioral characteristics and its examples should be designed and implemented in line with the realization of the goals with a deep look and taken from the organizational priorities in the leadership and management of the organization. Also, by holding workshops and training courses, university managers will get to know the characteristics, dimensions, components, and characteristics of transformational leadership so that more effective steps can be taken in order to transfer and implement it in the direction of employees' performance.