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Perceived leadership styles and employee motivation: A research in Turkish hotel context

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore if there is any significant relationship between the perceived leadership styles and employee motivation within the hotel context in Turkey. Survey technique was used in the data collection process of the research. The link of the online questionnaire was delivered to the accessed employees working in the five-star hotels in Turkey and 385 questionnaires were filled appropriately. The items on the questionnaire were about the examined leadership styles and employee motivation. It was found in the study that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and employee motivation whereas no significant relationship was found between transactional, Laissez-faire and employee motivation. Relevant recommendations have been provided for the role of leadership styles within the hospitality organisations for their effective management in the future.

I. Introduction

Leadership affects the way employees perform their tasks and obtaining good organizational outcomes. This research paper intends to examine the relationship between certain leadership styles and employees' motivation at the hotel enterprises as leadership styles is considered good predictors of organizational performance ensuring good employee performance. For long years, the term of "leadership" and how leadership styles lead to different reactions of employees have been examined in various researches (Bass, 1985; Davis, 2004; Drucker, 1999; Grensing-Pophal, 2002; Root, 2015; Sehić – Kršlak, 2021; Šehić – Kršlak et. al. 2021; Wheatley, 1999). Leaders and thus their leadership styles are claimed to have had key roles in the achievement of the organizations (Bass, 1985). In this study, which has been designed as a descriptive study, the aim is to find out the hypothesized relationships through a quantitative research approach at the five-star hospitality organisations in Turkey.

Leadership, as a term, could be defined as a process through which ideas could be communicated, and the adopted organisational vision could be presented to employees in the organisation to encourage them to adopt and support the ideas and organisational visions and thus lead the organisation to expected achievement (Achua and Lussier, 2013). Concerning this, Naile et al. (2014) highlighted that leaders are not only managers but also those owning the ability to influence their employees by their nature, claiming that some individuals might have the skills that both a leader and a manager could possess.

Drucker (1999) claims that leadership tends to ensure the quality of work that employees produce and also ensures that the time and resources that organisations have are spent on the benefits of the organisation most effectively. Considering this, it could be concluded that the skills that leaders have are closely related to setting priorities and management of resources that organisations have to fulfil the organisational goals.

One important characteristic of leadership is to delegate the past for the future benefit of the organisation. In other words, leaders are responsible for predicting the failures well in advance and preventing them before their effects come true within the organisation. Leaders are also supposed to keep themselves and their teammates motivated to serving the shared organisational purpose as well as acting out the assigned roles within the organisation.

Drucker (1999) points out that leaders are often supposed to highlight the goals and objectives of the organisation that they are responsible for and remind employees of the benefits that team members could have if they remain stick to them. Employees should often be reminded of organisational goals by leaders as well as the strategies to be used in achieving these goals. According to Drucker's definition, leaders are presented as a team player, and leaders could adopt various leadership styles in organisational management.

2. Significance of the Study

Motivation and achievement have been claimed to be closely related to one another (Lock, 2001) and motivated employees have always been high achievers. There are various ways of increasing the motivations of employees such as using materialistic rewards, but it is not the only way to achieve this. Leaders and the leadership styles that they have adopted have significant effects on employee achievement, and so leaders cannot ignore individual needs of their employees if they wish their employees' full contribution to the organisation and if they wish their employees feel the work they do is meaningful to them (Morse, 2003). Therefore, further research is needed in various fields to find out the relationship between leadership styles and employee motivation. The relevant literature is full of research on motivation but the number of research on leadership styles and motivation specifically in a tourism context, where the higher motivation of employees is needed as it is a service-oriented sector, is very limited. This paper is considered significant as it;

- Identifies the strategies that leaders at hospitality organisations could employ to create a motivation-increasing atmosphere,
- Adds to new understandings about the relationship between the perceived leadership styles and employees' motivation, organisational well-being.

For this purpose, five-star hotels and their employees were chosen as the research population in this study. The researcher ensured that the chosen hotels have considered effective management of their human resources could provide advantages. In other words, they claim that achieving the organizational objectives is closely dependent on the leadership styles that leaders adopt when managing the employees because the knowledge, skills, and expertise that employees have are the key elements in growing, surviving and remaining competitive in the relevant sector.

1.2 Scope of the Study

This research is limited to the employees of only five-star hotels operating in different geographical regions of Turkey as they were considered to have more mature and professional organisational management systems. The research assumed that the employees who volunteered to participate in the research had spent a significant amount of time in the examined hotels and all of them have been affected by the managerial practices which could affect their views regarding EM.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Transformational Leadership (TRFL)

"TRFL" is defined as a leadership style that aims to change individuals and the

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social system around them. In other words, this system aims to establish a positive environment within the organisation and thus this environment could raise future leaders for the benefits of the organisation (Kendrick, 2011). TRFL speaks to employees' moral values. Thus the consciousness level of employees rises, and they become prepared for reforming their institutions (Yukl, 2014). When TRFL is employed, employees develop positive feelings towards their leaders, and employees also perform better than organisational expectations. It is important to highlight here that leaders can transform their employees in three ways; increasing their employees' awareness regarding the importance of outcomes of the assigned tasks, increasing their interest for the benefit of their team or organisation, activating their higher-order needs (Yukl, 2014). Kendrick (2011) describes TRFL under four categories; Individual Consideration – making employees feel that their contributions to the organisation are unique, idealized Influence **–** when a healthy relationship between leaders and employees begin following the establishment of trust, Intellectual stimulation – leaders expect employees to come up with innovative solutions, inspiring motivation – the leader shows employees what is the right path or right thing to do.

2.2 Transactional Leadership (TL)

Burns (2010) defined TL as a work-related relationship in which a bidirectional interaction between managers and employees are encouraged. Burns went on to claim that the aims and objectives of the organization adopting this leadership style are the priorities of organisations for transactional leaders and they make it clear that these aims and objectives have been understood by every employee very well. Such leaders tend to ignore the private interest of employees, and they do not care about their emotions. They have a very clear style, and they make employees feel that if they do something they will get something. Burns (2010) claims that this kind of leadership is a "favour-for-favour" exchange. In other words, it is a kind of trade-off of wants, and the primary purpose is the satisfaction of all parties involved in the interaction at the organisation in achieving organisational objectives. The leader adopting this style insists on properly performing the assigned tasks without any exception. This type of leadership has three sub-categories; a- Contingent Rewards b- Management by Exception (passive) and c- Management by Exception (active) (Burns, 2010).

2.3 Laissez-Faire Leadership (LFL)

LFL style, which is also known as delegative leadership, is about avoiding responsibilities and involvement in decision-making (Luthans, 2011; Robbins and Judge, 2013). The leaders adopting an LFL style avoid working with employees that they are responsible for. Therefore, it has always been difficult to observe their leadership style within organizations. The leaders adopting this style are considered passive leaders (Hinkin and Schriesheim, 2008). Therefore, their management style negatively affects employees' performance (Judge and Piccolo, 2004). Such leaders are more likely to put a distance in their social relationships with their employees as they usually avoid interacting with their employees, which also negatively affects businesses and their operations. As such leaders tend to avoid from their employees, they rarely face the business needs and organizational goals and objectives, so businesses tend to fail to satisfy higher expectations. Concerning this, Hinkin and Schriesheim (2008) state that laisser-faire leaders are closely related to absent leaders. Laisser-faire leaders avoid their decision-making responsibilities and thus leave some of their leadership responsibilities to their employees. As a consequence of this, their employees do not consider them as their leaders rather they consider them as the authority assigning the work-related tasks. However, Wong and Giessner (2016) claimed some positive aspects of this type of leadership. Similarly, Chaudhury and Javed (2012) agreed with that claiming that when leaders and employees have equal motivation and expertise through the application of LFL, the organisation could most benefit from this situation.

2.4 Employee Motivation (EM)

The word "motivation" is rooted from the Latin-origin word "mover" meaning "to move". Motivation is defined as "the process that accounts for an individual's intensity, direction, and persistence of effort toward attaining a goal" (Robbins, 1994). Bartol and Martin (1998) claimed that motivation is "the forces that energize behaviour, gives direction to behaviour and underlines the tendency to persist". In almost all definitions, motivation is closely linked to some words such as "effort". Motivation is also linked to success at work or achievement of organisational goals (McClelland, 1985; Miner, Smith and Bracker, 1989). Some research highlight that work-related values can influence the satisfaction levels of employees from their jobs (Chaves, 2001).

A leader could also be defined as someone motivating employees to achieve a shared objective (Sougui et al., 2017). Organizations need enthusiasm as an effective means of motivation to fulfil their goals. Based on this fact, it could be concluded that satisfaction of individuals' needs could increase their motivation (Haque, Haque and Islam, 2014). Haque, Haque and Islam (2014) also claimed that motivation is closely related to achieving organisational goals. With the help of motivation, employees' voluntary actions could be directed to the benefit of the organisation (Mitchell, 1982). Motivation is a fact which could change from person to person, and it could even change within the same individual (Robbins and Judge, 2013).

To be able to fully comprehend what motivation is, motivation theories should be understood well. Mayo, McGregor, Maslow, Vroom and Hertzberg have contributed to the field of motivation theories (Davis, 2004). Maslow suggested one of the most popular theories on motivation, which is named as the Hierarchy of Human Needs Theory (Huit, 2002). This theory claims that people's needs could be ordered as physiological, safety, belonging, self-esteem and self-actualization. Grensing-Pophal (2002) claims that the first of these levels need to be satisfied, and then people need to move to the next level. This chain improves in this way from the first level to the fifth level, which is the final level. Meeting the psychological needs used to be considered enough in the past, but today people tend to have higher needs that they feel they have to satisfy (Creech, 1995),

Another theory on motivation is the theory suggested by McGregor, and it is named as the X and Y Theory. This theory puts people into two groups; X group interested in rewards and compensation and the Y group who is self-directed and needs further challenge (Cited in Grensing-Pophal, 2002). Herzberg (1993)suggested another theory on employee motivation and grouped motivation into two as motivators and hygiene. Hygiene factors are about the extrinsic motivators, and the motivators are intrinsically oriented (Herzberg, 1968). Vroom (1964) suggested the Expectancy Theory for work environments. This theory claims that employees tend to choose one specific behaviour rather than another considering that the chosen behaviour will bring about positive and wanted outcomes. All of these theories still seem to be valid for motivation at today's work environments (Davis, 2004), and the focus in today's work environments is on intrinsic factors influencing employees' motivation (Kotter, 1999; Wheatley, 1999).

Motivation could direct employees in the right direction and help them meet their basic human needs (Kotter, 1999). Different leadership styles have been claimed to have affected employees motivation (Root, 2015). Root (2015) claimed that Autocratic leadership could be beneficial in quick decision making, and thus employees could feel more comfortable and more motivated. Root (2015) claimed that Democratic leadership helped employees feel included in decision-making processes and valued. Root also claimed that in Quiet leadership style, managers delegate some of the qualified employees and thus they feel empowered. The last styles that Root (2015) discussed are the TRFL style in which managers establish a clear vision for the organisation (employees as well), and they are expected to achieve the set vision.

As suggested by Hislop (2003), companies are dependent on their employees to survive in their sector and to succeed in their goals. Similarly, Michie, Oughton and Bennion (2002) claimed that motivated employees are keys for the productivity and quality of the work done. Michael and Crispen (2009) suggested that a motivated workforce leads companies to competitive advantage and higher productivity. Motivation leads employees to higher performance and best work, by saving time and effort (Michie, Oughton and Bennion, 2002; Michael and Crispen,2009).

2.5 Relationship between Leadership and Motivation

Leadership and motivation have caught significant attention in the literature on management (Schaffer, 2008) and they have been often used two collocating words (Sougui et. al., 2017). Leadership, as mentioned before in this paper, has been defined as the ability to influence group members to get the highest productivity from them (Schaffer, 2008). It could be concluded from what has been mentioned about leadership and motivation is that leaders cannot be successful at an organisation without increasing the motivation of employees because motivated employees tend to perform their best in their work. Their best effort is closely related to the satisfaction of their individual needs. Therefore, leadership styles used at an organisation is supposed to directly contribute to employee performance.

As mentioned in Goal-Setting Theory, establishing reasonable and challenging goals can lead to a motivating business environment (Locke and Latham, 1990) because employees perceive that establishing organisational goals for employees is a signal for employees regarding leaders' expectations. In establishing goals, leaders are expected to be careful that the set goals are not too hard or too easy not to make employees feel that they are wasting their time on a task which they cannot complete successfully. Leadership styles could also be based on Expectancy Theory. According to this theory, the individual level of

expectation could contribute to their motivation (Van Eerde and Thierry 1996). In such cases, employees have a strong will to meet their personal goals.

3. Method
3.1 Purpose of the Study

The results to be obtained with this study are expected to determine which organizational leadership styles should be adopted to make hotel employees more motivated and committed to their organizations and thus to increase the sense of trust and loyalty to their organizations. This will also help such organizations in the relevant sector to manage the challenges regarding employee retention in the competitive world and delivering the highest quality services in the sector. This research aims to find out the possible relationship between leadership styles and employees' motivation. For this purpose, the following research hypotheses have been developed in the study;

H1: There is a significant relationship between transformational leadership (TRFL) style and employee motivation (EM).

H2: There is a significant relationship between transactional leadership (TL) style and employee motivation (EM).

H3: There is a significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership (LFL) style and employee motivation (EM).

3.2 Research Design

This paper adopted a cross-sectional and descriptive survey design in the data collection to find out the relationship between three leadership styles and EM. This research used primary data sources because the paper focused on the human aspect. The data were gathered from a sample of employees in the chosen five-star hotels through online closed-ended questionnaires.

3.2 Sampling

This research was conducted at some five-star hotels of Turkey regardless of their geographical regions. The target population of the study was chosen as the full-time employees working at the five-star hotels. The number of certified 5-star hotels was found to be around 720 (TURİZMAKTÜEL, 2020). Each of the hotels was predicted to currently employ about 100 employees and the research population was calculated to be about 72.000. Based on this figure, the sample size was planned to be at least 383 employees from the chosen hotels (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). The convenience sampling method was employed in the research because of cost and time-related concerns. The managers and human resource (HR) departments of the accessed hotels was sent a personal e-mail and phoned through the contact numbers available on the corporate web sites. The accessed managers or HR responsible were briefed about the aim of the research, its possible outcomes and the methodology of the study. They were made sure that all the data collected regarding their organisation will be kept confidential. They were requested to share the contact numbers of their employees or share the link of the research questionnaire in their organisational communication platforms. They were allowed to check the content of the questionnaire first, and they were provided with any detailed explanation upon their request. After that, all employees whose contact details were taken from their managers or HR departments were sent an e-mail with the link of the research questionnaire. Each participant was also provided details about the research, aims and procedure as done for the managers and HR responsible. They were told that it was optional to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was planned to take 10-15 minutes, and the survey was administered between June and July 2020. Before the administration of the general survey, a pilot study on 10 participants was carried out to see if there is any further revision in the questionnaire. Relevant revisions were made on the questionnaire based on the received feedback and the questionnaire was finalised.

Questionnaire technique is the most commonly preferred tool for data collection in such research. The questionnaire was designed to be a close-ended questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire was also conducted. Reliability is often used to refer to random errors in the measurements. Reliability indicates the accuracy of the research instrument used in the measurement (Norland, 1990).

The questionnaire used in data collection was designed to measure different variables:

1. Part A Measured Demographic details
2. Part B measured Leadership Styles (under three factors)
3. Part C measured Employee Motivation

To conclude the results, correlation analysis and descriptive statistics were applied. The analyzed data was then interpreted to infer relevant conclusions and to report the findings in line with the objectives of the study.

3.3 Research Instrument

This study was designed as a descriptive research and administered as a self-administered questionnaire. The relevant literature on leadership style was reviewed in detail by the researcher, and Multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) which was developed by Bass and Avolio (2000) was chosen as the most appropriate data collection instrument in the research. A pilot test was also conducted to make the research tool more effective. The basis of the MLQ was developed from Bass's (1985) Augmentation Theory of TLl and TRFL. For data collection regarding EM, the motivation scale (MS) used in the research was taken from Mengesha (2015). In this study, participants were asked to rate their managers as their leaders considering their managerial behaviours. The MLQ form was employed to measure the TRFL, TL and LFL style. This research included only 21 items from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and 10 items from the MS. Each item of the scale was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, which ranges between 1 (Strongly Disagree) and 5 (Strongly Agree).

The validity and reliability of the MLQ and MS were tested and empirically validated in the relevant literature. When the results of the relevant research conducted on different organizations, the used questionnaire were found to have a satisfactory level in terms of internal consistency (Bass and Avolio, 2000) as the reliability score was above .70 (see Table 2), which is the standard reliability cut-off score as suggested by Hair et. al. (2013).

4. Analysis and Results

When the data collection was completed, the collected data were transferred to SPSS 22.00 program for relevant statistical analyses. The data was first submitted for normality test before further tests. The normality test revealed that the Skewness value of the data was -,248 and the Kurtosis value was -,924, which indicated that the collected data had normal distribution as Skewness and Kurtosis values ranged between -1 to +1. (Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson, 2013). Then descriptive analyses were performed on the data. Of the 385 respondents, 78 were found to be female and the remaining 307 male. The questionnaire was administered as an online questionnaire, and no respondent was allowed to leave any of the items blank before submission of the questionnaire.

The items asked in the questionnaire to determine the leadership styles at the hotel organisations and employees' motivation level are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Items on the leadership styles and motivation scale

TRFL
S/he makes others feel good to be around him/her
Others have complete faith in him/her
Others are proud to be associated with him/her
S/he expresses with a few simple words what we could and should do
S/he provides appealing images about what we can do
S/he helps others find meaning in their work
S/he enables others to think about old problems in new ways
S/he provides others with new ways of looking at puzzling things.
S/he gets others to rethink ideas that they had never questioned before.
S/he helps others to develop themselves
S/he lets others know how S/he thinks they are doing
S/he gives personal attention to others who seem rejected
TL
S/he tells others what to do if they want to be rewarded for their work
S/he provides recognition/rewards when others reach their goals
S/he calls attention to what others can get for what they accomplish
S/he is satisfied when others meet agreed-upon standards
As long as things are working, S/he does not try to change anything
S/he tells others the standards they have to know to carry out their work
LFL
S/he is always content to let others continue working in the same ways.
Whatever others want to do is OK with him/her
S/he asks no more of others than what is essential
Motivation
Motivating others and being a good role model for her/his staff contributes towards excellence within the organization
Developing staff and creating opportunities for them to grow in their job is an integral part of her/his job
Providing staff with vision through clear goals and objectives is an important part of the job for her/him
S/he really feels as if this organization's problems are his/her own and make a constant effort to pursue the corporate mission and targets
S/he is able to personally identify with the organizational mission
Rewarding good performance is a very important part of his/her job
S/he believes in empowering staff to take charge of their own development
S/he is very proud of having a high level of personal job satisfaction
Personal development and need for achievement are more important for his/her than the needs and goals of the organization as a whole
S/he welcomes others constructively criticizing our work as it provides a learning opportunity

The reliability scores of the scale used in the research are given in Table 2 below. As could be seen, all of the scales were found to have a score above 0.70 and highly reliable (Hair et. al., 2013).

Table 2: Reliability Statistics for the Research Scales

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
TRFL	0.84	12
TL	0.88	6
LFL	0.78	3
EM	0.89	10

The mean of participants' ages was found to be 30.07. Of the 385 participants, 37 of them were found to be in a managerial position, and the rest of the participants were found to be in a non-managerial position. Of all the participants, 120 of them were found to have a higher education diploma whereas the rest was found to have a diploma of high school and below. The average year of experience in the sector was found to be 5.

4.1 Hypotheses

The first hypothesis of the research predicted that there is a significant relationship between TRFL and employees' motivation level. Therefore, Pearson Correlation statistics were conducted on the data to find out any significant relationship. The independent variable was taken as TRFL and the dependent variable was taken as EM. As could be seen in Table 3 below, there is a significant relationship between TRFL and EM (r=.469, p <.000).

Table 3: Correlation analysis between TRFL and employee motivation

		EM	TRFL
EM	Pearson Correlation	1	,469**
	Sig.		,000
	N	385	385
TRFL	Pearson Correlation	,469**	1
	Sig.	,000	
	N	385	385

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

EM= Employee Motivation, TRFL= Transformational Leadership

The second research hypothesis developed in the study predicted that there is a significant relationship between TL and EM. Pearson Correlation statistics were performed on the data to find out any relationship. The independent variable was set as the TL variable and the dependent variable was set as the EM. As could be seen in Table 4 below, no significant relationship was found between TL and EM (r=-.079, p<,266)

Table 4: Correlation analysis between transactional leadership and employee motivation

		EM	TL
EM	Pearson Correlation	1	-,079
	Sig.		,266
	N	385	385
TL	Pearson Correlation	-,079	1
	Sig.	,266	
	N	385	385

EM= Employee Motivation, TL= Transactional Leadership

The third hypothesis of the study predicted that there is a significant relationship between LFL and EM. Pearson Correlation statistics were performed on the data as done in the other hypotheses of the research. The independent variable was set as the LFL and the dependent variable was set as the EM. As could be seen in Table 5 below, no significant relationship was found between LFL and EM (r= -,191, p <,065).

Table 5: Correlation analysis between laissez-faire leadership and employee motivation

		EM	LFL
EM	Pearson Correlation	1	-,191
	Sig.		,065
	N	385	385
LFL	Pearson Correlation	-,191	1
	Sig.	,065	
	N	385	385

EM= Employee Motivation, LFL= Laissez-faire Leadership

5. Discussion

The findings of this research supported the hypothesis suggesting that there

is a significant relationship between TRFL and EM at hotel organisations in Turkey, where this study was conducted. However, the findings have not supported the hypotheses suggesting that there is a significant relationship between TL, LFL and EM. This finding is partly in line with those claimed by Bass and Avolio (1994). This finding also partly supports Bass' Augmentation Theory, which claims that leaders are both transformational and transactional. The significant relationship between TRFL and EM, as found with this study, could also be supported by the fact that TRFL tends to focus on individuals and their traits more than other leadership styles. As claimed by Carlson and Perrewe (1995), when TRFL is adopted at an organisation, employees tend to focus on their self-interest less, and they try to be more beneficial to their organisations, which are the hotel organisations in this case.

This study suggested that there is a significant relationship between consideration of individuals and EM, and this finding is consistent with the research suggesting a significant positive relationship between TRFL and EM (Avolio, 1999; Bass, 1998; Chiok Foong Loke, 2001; Shim et al. 2002; Waldman et al 2001). With this study, TRFL was found to have a significant relationship with work motivation. Therefore, it could be claimed that the results obtained with this study confirm the findings of the earlier research in the field, the definitions suggested for TRFL in the relevant literature and the claims that majority of respondents considered their heads transformational (Bass, 1998; Avolio, 1999). The finding of this research also supports the literature claiming that leaders adopting TRFL style affect their followers and encourage them to move from caring for their self-interest to a focus on organisational interest (Bass, 1998).

5.1 Conclusion

This paper focused on how adopted leadership style could affect EM as a determinant of employee performance. The relevant literature strongly claims that leadership style is a significant determinant in employees' motivation and organisational success. This study tested this view in some hotel organisations, which are the key elements of the tourism sector in all countries. Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that leaders' consciousness level should be raised about the roles and significance of the adopted leadership style in managing employees effectively and achieving organisational goals. Thus hotel organisations, as service delivering organisations, could deliver higher quality services to their clients with the effective use of leadership styles to have more motivated employees. Organisations, as should be in all sectors, could develop some training programs for their supervisors and leaders and their leadership behaviours could be improved for the benefit of the host organisation as well as the customers receiving their services. In such training programs, employee and organisational needs could be focused. As found with this study, leaders of our quick-changing era and business environment are recommended to adopt a TRFL style to improve their employees' work performance and organisational success. Another conclusion of the research, based on its findings, could be that leaders of hotel organisations adopting TRFL style are more likely to establish a motivation-increasing atmosphere in their work environments.

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