

The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Organizational Commitment: An Exploratory Study in Duhok Governorate

Dönüşümsel Liderliğin Örgütsel Bağlılık Üzerindeki Etkisi: Duhok Valiliği'nde Keşfedici Bir Çalışma

ABSTRACT

Human resources in the organization are a source of competitive advantage, and it was found that 90% of the success of modern organizations is due to organizational commitment (OC). On the other hand, transformational leadership (TL) is among the most significant forms of modern leadership, but many leaders still struggle to survive using traditional leadership techniques. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate the impacts of transformational leadership on organizational commitment between the heads of administrative departments in a number of general directorates in Duhok Governorate. Samples of 130 persons from the head direction of the administration department of the directorate general of Duhok province were selected using convenience sampling. In total, 130 questionnaires were distributed; a total of 124 valid questionnaires were collected, and 95.38% of the participants responded. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Statistics software was utilized for data analysis. The results of linear regression show that transformational leadership has a positive and significant impact on employees' organizational commitment. Also, the average score of transformational leadership and organizational commitment in the sample group is significantly higher than the average level of society at the 99% confidence level.

Keywords: Duhok Governorate, leadership, organizational commitment, transformational leadership



ÖZ

Örgütteki insan kaynakları, rekabet avantajının bir kaynağıdır ve modern örgütlerin başarısının %90'ının örgütsel bağlılıktan kaynaklandığı bilinmektedir. Öte yandan, dönüşümcü liderlik, modern liderliğin en önemli biçimlerinden biridir, ancak birçok lider hala geleneksel liderlik tekniklerini kullanarak hayatta kalma mücadelesi vermektedir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmanın amacı, Duhok Valiliği'ndeki genel müdürlüklerdeki daire başkanları arasında dönüşümcü liderliğin örgütsel bağlılık üzerindeki etkilerini araştırmaktır. Örneklem, Duhok ili Genel Müdürlüğü mülki idare amirliğinden 130 kişiden kolayda örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilmiştir. Araştırma kapsamında 130 anket dağıtılmış; toplam 124 geçerli anket toplanmış ve yanıt oranı %95,38 olarak belirlenmiştir. Verilerin analizinde SPSS programı kullanılmıştır. Doğrusal regresyonun sonuçları, dönüşümcü liderliğin çalışanların örgütsel bağlılığı üzerinde pozitif bir etkiye sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Ayrıca, örneklem grubundaki ortalama dönüşümcü liderlik ve örgütsel bağlılık puanı, %99 güven düzeyinde toplumun ortalama düzeyinden önemli ölçüde yüksektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Liderlik, dönüşümcü liderlik, örgütsel bağlılık, Duhok Valiliği

Introduction

Human resources are the lifeblood of any organization, serving as its most valuable asset. The commitment and dedication of employees play a pivotal role in the success and growth of the organization. Research has convincingly demonstrated that an organization's survival and prosperity hinge on the level of commitment displayed by its workforce, which goes beyond mere adherence to routine tasks (Mishra & Upadhyay, 2022). Committed employees are characterized by their high morale, unwavering dedication, and a profound sense of pride in their work. Their positive attitude and enthusiasm create

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a vibrant and healthy organizational environment, contributing to the overall success and achievement of organizational objectives (Mishra & Upadhyay, 2022). However, fostering organizational commitment is not an instantaneous process. Several factors can influence the level of commitment among employees. Rapid changes in the work environment, increasing job complexity, and evolving challenges can erode employee commitment over time (Top et al., 2013). As commitment decreases, organizations face the risk of higher turnover rates and escalating costs associated with recruitment and training (Camilleri & Van Der Heijden, 2007). Thus, it becomes imperative for organizations to cultivate and sustain a committed workforce through effective management and leadership practices.

In the realm of the public sector, a notable concern arises from the evidence indicating relatively lower job commitment compared to other sectors (Goulet & Frank, 2002). Leadership plays a significant role in shaping employees' attitudes and behavior. A leadership style that has garnered considerable attention in recent decades is transformational leadership (Mishra & Upadhyay, 2022). It encourages employees to go above and beyond in achieving organizational goals and fosters a culture of continuous improvement. Despite the growing body of research on transformational leadership, there is a need for further exploration, particularly in the context of the public sector, especially in non-Western countries like the Middle East (Mishra & Upadhyay, 2022). The current study aims to address this gap by examining the impact of transformational leadership on the organizational commitment of administrative department heads in the Duhok Governorate. In this region, traditional leadership styles often prevail, and concerns about employee retention and commitment are prominent (Dema et al., 2021). As such, this study seeks to shed light on the effectiveness of transformational leadership in a non-Western public sector setting and its potential implications for enhancing employee commitment. The findings of this research could hold significant value for public sector organizations in the Duhok Governorate. They emphasize the importance of adopting transformational leadership, inspiring employees to contribute to the organization's success, fostering dedication, innovation, and continuous improvement. This approach may result in higher employee satisfaction, reduced turnover, and increased organizational effectiveness.

Literature Review

Transformational Leadership

For almost three decades, leadership that is transformational has been at the heart of the leadership literature. It is known as a leadership style that raises organizational members' understanding of the need of teamwork. Transformational leaders will inspire their employees to strive for the greater benefit of the business in four ways: encouraging inspiration, exemplary strength, individual judgment, and intellectual stimulation (Harb & Sidani, 2019). Leaders of intellectual stimulus motivate their people to be creative and innovative in solving old problems in new ways. Individual interest is demonstrated by leaders in order to approach the follower as a specific person and take into consideration their individual requirements, desires, and capabilities. Individual leaders empower followers in developing their own skills and devote time to guiding and educating followers (Busari et al., 2019). This has something in common with charismatic leadership, although charisma is simply one component of transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The term "transformational leadership"

refers to leadership that fosters individual achievement and personal growth, while simultaneously encouraging the growth of groups and organizations. The transformational leaders enhance trainees' understanding of major issues, while improving their self-confidence, transforming their goals from survival to greater success, progress, and self-development (Abazeed, 2018). Transformational leaders aim to influence those they lead. They can handle intelligent, self-rehashing movement by acting as needed. Transformation lists utilize learning, power, control, and vision to alter everyone around them in a way that makes them fundamentally supportive, rather than merely employing the power of identity (gravity) or management (consideration-based) to affect loved ones. Buy those excellent parts even if the manufacturer is no longer in business (Gareth & Gill, 2012). Tanjung et al. (2020), in this sense, believe that it is a leadership approach that prioritizes creating value systems, inspiring and developing employees, helping individuals to achieve corporate goals, altering behaviors, and motivating their followers toward the work above and beyond the expectation of organization.

Organizational Commitment

Several researchers and scholars have been concerned with organizational commitments, as they are seen as an essential factor influencing employee behavior at work in the organization (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). Furthermore, according to Krishna and Marquardt (2007), a crucial aspect is commitment in organizations to promote organizational performance and survival. Organizational commitment, according to Mukulu and Sakwa (2014), is a component that connects employees to organizations.

Organizations are made up of individuals who collaborate to achieve common aims. The capacity of a company to achieve goals is highly related to how its personnel behave in accordance with the objectives. Employees who are devoted to the company should work in accordance with the organization's goals. Educational institutions confront comparable difficulties (Demirtaş, 2010). The amount of organizational commitment shows the organization's level of loyalty. Organizational commitment suggests that employees want to be a large part of the organization by adopting the aims and values of the business (Özdevecioğlu, 2003). Employee commitment, according to Khan, Khan, Hamid, and Nawaz (2013), is considered to be an ongoing event that includes perspectives and attitudes about the organization. Furthermore, employee commitment is critical in attaining the organization's long-term goals, which have far-reaching repercussions.

The Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Organizational Commitment

Numerous studies have been conducted to examine the connection between organizational commitment and transformational leadership. This is a summary of the most relevant ones. Simon (1994) conducted a survey of his 228 employees in three different companies in the United States to examine the effect of transformational leadership on organizational engagement. The leader's ability to spread out transformational behaviors (such as idealistic influence, intellectual stimulation, and individual concern) was discovered to be a critical factor of organizational commitment in the research. In order to evaluate the connection between transformational leadership and organizational effectiveness, Bono and Judge (2003) conducted research on 247 leaders and 954 followers of these leaders and a number of traits associated with their followers (self-conformity, job satisfaction, and job performance).

In addition, additional research in this area revealed a significant and positive connection between organizational commitment and transformative leadership. An exploratory study was carried out by Emery and Barker (2007) to investigate the effects of transformational and transactional leadership on the commitment to the organization and job satisfaction of bank and supermarket customer service employees. The researchers assessed leadership and organizational commitment in 77 branch managers from three regional banking organizations and 47 store managers from one national food chain using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and a 15-item questionnaire developed by Porter et al. (1974). The research found that organizational commitment was strongly correlated with three transformational leadership elements: intellectual stimulation, individual concern, and charisma.

The principles of social exchange and reciprocity can be used to describe the reciprocal effects between transformative leaders and their followers. Economic rewards, trust, and long-term purpose completion are critical features of this trade partnership between these leaders and followers. Transformational leaders force their followers to rely on long-term interest rather than self-interest (Sheehan et al., 2020). Previous researchers have found the significant impact of transformational leadership on workers behaviors and attitudes such as work satisfaction, Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), confidence sharing in knowledge, commitment, and task performance (Lussier & Achua, 2015). Additionally, in numerous organizational contexts, transformational leadership has been found to directly correlate with organizational commitment (Top et al., 2015). Mohammed et al. (2020) investigated the impact of the five components of transformational leadership on employee performance among 76 workers of the Ministry of Scientific Research and Higher Education of the North of Iraq Government. The findings revealed that inspiring motivation has an impact on employee performance.

Material and Methods

This section summarizes the research approach used to investigate the impact of transformational leadership on organizational commitment in public organizations. A descriptive study design was used with a structured questionnaire as the primary source of data. The population surveyed consisted of heads of administrative departments from various general directorates in Duhok Governorate and neighboring areas. The sample size consisted of 194 heads of department, with 124 valid questionnaires collected through convenience sampling. The questionnaire included sections measuring transformational leadership and levels of organizational commitment using established scales. We used transformational leadership scale developed by Carless et al. (2000) with seven items, and organizational commitment scale developed by Mowday et al. (1979) with 15 items.

Data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Statistics version 24.0 software (IBM Corp.; Armonk, NY, USA), using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The chapter stresses the importance of carefully selecting a representative sample to ensure the scientific validity of the study's conclusions.

Results

Description of the Participants

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the demographic characteristics of the study sample. It highlights the gender distribution, with 57.3% males and 42.7% females. The age distribution

shows the highest proportion of participants in the 30–39 age group (43.5%), followed by the 40–49 age group (29.8%). In terms of years of service, the majority had 11–15 years of experience (30.6%), followed by those with more than 20 years (28.2%). With regard to the educational level, most of the participants had a university degree (67.7%), and a smaller percentage held secondary qualifications (25.8%). The marital status data indicates that the majority of the respondents were married (87.1%), while a smaller percentage of them were single (12.9%). Finally, job level data reveals that the role of department head was the most common (50.8%), followed by head of administrative department (25.0%) and head of administrative unit (24.2%). Overall, this demographic profile provides valuable insights into the characteristics of the study sample, allowing a better understanding of the heads of administrative departments in the various general directorates in Duhok Governorate.

Relationships Between Variables

According to the findings in Table 2, Pearson correlation coefficients between transformational leadership and organizational commitment is .466 and more than .3, which indicates a moderate and parallel relationship. This finding indicates that as the level of transformational leadership increases, so does employee organizational commitment.

Next, among the demographic variables, the results showed that there is an inverse and significant relationship between age and transformational leadership ($-.240$), which shows that with increasing age, the employees' score of transformational leadership decreases. Further, the relationship between year of service and transformational leadership was reversed and significant ($-.187$), which is consistent with previous outcomes and shows that with an increase in year of service, employees' scores on

Table 1.
Demographic Profile of Respondents

Gender	N	%
Male	71	57.3
Female	53	42.7
Total	124	100
Age		
20–29 years	4	3.2
30–39 years	54	43.5
40–49 years	37	29.8
50–59 years	24	19.4
More than 60 years	5	4
Total	124	100
Year of service		
Less than 5 years	4	3.2
6–10 years	33	26.6
11–15 years	38	30.6
16–20 years	14	11.3
More than 20 years	35	28.2
Total	124	100
Educational level		
Elementary level	3	2.4
Secondary level	32	25.8
University level	84	67.7
Postgraduate	5	4
Total	124	100
Marital status		
Married	108	87.1
Single	16	12.9
Total	124	100
Career level		
Head of the department	63	50.8
Head of the administrative division	31	25
Head of the administrative unit	30	24.2
Total	124	100

Table 2.
Relationships Between Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
TL	38.177	8.990	1							
OC	76.081	15.137	.466**	1						
Gender	1.427	0.496	-.034	-.091	1					
Age	2.774	0.935	-.240**	.126	-.176	1				
Years of service	3.346	1.236	-.187*	.117	-.071	.785**	1			
Educational level	2.733	0.571	.122	.003	.003	-.204*	-.328**	1		
Marital status	1.129	0.336	.108	-.061	-.041	-.217*	-.226*	.307**	1	
Career level	1.7339	0.82746	.116	-.013	.081	-.288**	-.227*	-.013	.153	1

Note: *Correlation is significant at the .05 level (two-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (two-tailed).

TL, Transformational Leadership; OC, Organizational Commitment.

transformational leadership decrease. The relationship between education, gender, marital status, job level, and transformational leadership was not significant. Also, the relationship between organizational commitment and any of the demographic variables is not significant.

Regression Model

As shown in Table 3 of the study, R^2 is equal to .217. This means that 21.7% of the dependent variable, which is organizational commitment, can be justified by the research predictor, which is transformational leadership style. However, the remaining 78% can be explained by other factors that were not included in this study because it only focuses on one leadership style. The second most important value shown in the table is the adjusted R^2 , which is .211 and can be used as a cross-validation to fit the model. In this case, the difference between the two values of adjusted R^2 and R^2 , which is equal to .006, means that if the sample was taken from the entire population, a change of 0.6% would occur.

As shown in Table 4, the analysis shows that the model is statistically significant with a 99% confidence level. Transformational leadership has a positive and moderate impact on organizational commitment among staff ($\beta = .466$). The regression equation is organizational commitment = .784 (transformational leadership) + 46.136.

Discussion and Conclusions

The current study aimed to determine the relationship between transformational leadership on organizational commitment among the heads of administrative departments in a number of general directorates in Duhok Governorate. The result found that the correlation coefficient between the two variables of organizational commitment and transformational leadership was significant .466, which shows that these two variables have a correlation coefficient and are moderately positive. The results of the regression analysis showed that 21.7% of the dependent variable, organizational commitment, is predicted by the transformational leadership style. It was also found that, at the 99% confidence

level, the effect of transformational leadership style on organizational commitment is statistically significant and positive ($\beta = .466$; $T = 5.815$; significance $< .001$).

Based on these results, by strengthening the transformational leadership style, organizational commitment will increase significantly in these organizations. As Mowday et al. (1982) claimed, leadership is a vital determinant of organizational commitment, and many researchers specifically emphasized the importance of transformational leadership with respect to organizational commitment. Likewise, this hypothesis has been confirmed in several studies (Baek, 2012; Eliyana & Ma'arif, 2019; Liu, 2013). Based on what was said in the literature, the transformational leadership style acts as a behavioral mechanism that guides and shapes the attitudes and behaviors of the followers. According to Peng et al. (2020), transformational leaders may employ symbolic behaviors, inspirational and visionary messages, and nonverbal communication to create a positive job attitude in employees. Despite such a positive attitude, employees tend to feel a deeper commitment to their organization. In this regard, Puni et al. (2020) found that transformational leadership style increases employee commitment in developing countries, which is in line with the results of this study. It has also been stated in previous research that the variable of transformational leadership can have positive effects on some human resource outputs of an organization, such as job satisfaction (Shibru & Darshan, 2011), organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Beck & Wilson, 2000), organizational learning (Abazeed, 2018), and performance (Jamali et al., 2022), which explains and confirms the findings of this study. However, it should be noted that based on R^2 , 21.7% of organizational commitment changes are explained by transformational leadership, and another 78% are predicted by other variables that were not investigated in this study. This suggests that other leadership styles, when combined with transformational leadership, may have a greater predictive power of organizational commitment. In this context, Baek (2012) found that the two styles of transformational and transactional leadership should be considered complementary as vital elements of effective leadership. Therefore, the effect of using other leadership styles as a supplement to transformational leadership on organizational commitment can be considered by researchers and policymakers.

The present study aimed to determine the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment

Table 3.
Model Summary of Transformational Leadership Effect on Organizational Commitment

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.466*	.217	.211	13.449

Note: *Dependent variable: organizational commitment.

Table 4.
Linear Regression Analysis of Transformational Leadership Effect on Organizational Commitment

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Significance	ANOVA	
		B	Standard Error	Beta			F	Significance
1	(Constant)	46.136	5.289		8.722	.000	33.814	.000
	Transformational leadership	0.784	0.135	.466	5.815	.000		

Note: ANOVA = analysis of variance.

among the heads of administrative departments in a number of general directorates in Duhok Governorate. The findings found a positive and significant relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment.

This study underscores the importance of transformational leadership in enhancing organizational commitment among administrative department heads in the public sector. The findings provide valuable insights for organizational leaders and policymakers in the Duhok Governorate to adopt and promote transformational leadership techniques to drive greater commitment and success within their organizations. The positive correlation between transformational leadership and organizational commitment reinforces the significance of modern leadership practices in achieving sustainable growth and competitive advantage in today's dynamic and rapidly changing organizational landscape.

This study adds to the existing literature by highlighting the significance of transformational leadership and organizational commitment in public organizations. Unlike previous studies that primarily focused on business organizations, this study addresses the unique context of bureaucratic structures in public organizations. It underscores the increasing trend of developing countries adopting new leadership styles like, transformational leadership, while acknowledging the scarcity of empirical evidence in this area. Furthermore, the study broadens the literature by examining the impact of transformational leadership on managers' organizational commitment, an aspect often neglected in prior research. Overall, the findings contribute valuable insights to the field of public organizations in developing countries.

The results of this study have practical implications for managers and policymakers in the public sector. First, the study highlights that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in predicting managers' organizational commitment. Therefore, organizations should prioritize training and developing managers with transformational leadership characteristics to foster and maintain commitment. Additionally, attention should be given to organizational structures, delegating power and autonomy to leaders and followers, which facilitates a conducive environment for transformational leadership even in bureaucratic settings.

The study also suggests focusing on job inspiration to enhance organizational commitment among middle and senior managers. Building a strong emotional connection with subordinates, providing individual attention, and considering their needs can promote organizational commitment in public organizations. Moreover, it is recommended to consider the transactional leadership paradigm as a complementary construct alongside transformational leadership to improve the predictive power of the model, warranting further investigation in future research.

Limitations of the Study

This study faced certain limitations that offer valuable directions for further research. First, the use of self-administered questionnaires may introduce bias in responses, as they rely on managers' perceptions of their own behavior, potentially not reflecting employees' views accurately. To address this, future research should adopt a more objective approach by considering both leaders' and followers' perspectives on organizational commitment and leadership behaviors, providing a more comprehensive understanding. Second, the study was limited to administrative departments in specific general directorates in the governorate of Duhok, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to

other contexts. To enhance generalizability and provide insights into the dynamics of transformational leadership and organizational commitment over time, longitudinal studies with larger and more diverse samples should be conducted. Third, the cross-sectional nature of the study hinders the ability to establish causality or observe changes over time. To address this limitation, conducting a longitudinal study would allow for a more comprehensive review. Last, the short form of transformational leadership used in the study lacks the ability to explore the impact of each dimension of transformational leadership on organizational commitment. Future research should investigate the separate impact of individual dimensions of transformational leadership on organizational commitment in the public sector to gain more nuanced insights into their specific contributions.

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