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Influence of the Transformational Style of Leadership on Job Satisfaction in Healthcare Units in Poland

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Abstract

The presented paper addresses the relationship between the transformational style of leadership and job satisfaction. The theoretical part of the study discusses different variables and mutual relations between them. The empirical part contains the results of research carried out in 4 selected healthcare units among 525 employees. The conducted research indicates that it is necessary to strengthen the employee's position in order to increase their job satisfaction. In this way, initiation becomes a factor not only positively affecting job satisfaction, but also mediating in the relationship between the transformational leadership and job satisfaction. The presented findings suggest that this political intervention must include both transformational leadership and empowerment in order to increase job satisfaction among both medical and administrative staff.

Keywords: *Transformational leadership, job satisfaction, healthcare, Poland*

Track: *Management & Leadership*

Word count*: 5.162*

1. Introduction

The level of employee satisfaction in an organization is significantly affected by the work environment, which is determined by a number of factors of an economic, technological and social nature. The evidence in the form of both theoretical and empirical studies accentuates a number of factors determining the level of employee satisfaction. Although situational factors affect job satisfaction, the impact of individual factors has also been identified. Among these individual factors, some researchers mention the transformational leadership. (Hsieh, 2013). It is human capital that provides a competitive advantage due to its uniqueness – that is why it is one of the key resources supporting the mission of the organization (Holland et al., 2007). The value of human resources playing a role in organizational performance is based on a variety of factors. Some of these factors are directly or indirectly related to organizational culture and leadership style. The current shortage of human resources in the Polish healthcare sector forces the strategic approach of organization managers and leaders to the issue of employee satisfaction and increase in their commitment and work motivation.

2. Theoretcial background

Transformational leadership

For over 40 years, transformational leadership has been recognized as a key approach in leadership styles (Northhouse, 2010). In explaining the dominance of this style of leadership, Kirkbride (2006) argues that the motivation and inspiration of leaders encourage subordinates to greater job efficiency. Transformational leadership consists of four dimensions: idealized influence (strategy and vision, cohesion, respect, trust and synergy), motivation (setting ambitious goals), stimulation (creativity and innovation) and individualised consideration (support for development). These dimensions are confirmed by numerous studies (Luthans,

2005). Transformational leadership as an intuitive approach has a positive influence on the individual and organizational level (Schein, 2010). In addition, the transformational leaders promote support for cooperation between team members, emphasizing the needs of observers, values and morality, which is crucial for an innovative team, improving the efficiency of processes in the organization (Schein, 2010). Leaders adopting a transformational leadership style encourage subordinates to be innovative and creative, thus discovering new ways of solving complex problems (Schepers et al., 2005). Transformational leadership shows how the leader motivates and inspires their subordinates to bring out higher potential. This leadership style is based on encouragement, praise, consideration and trust (Mujkić, Šehić, Rahimić and Jusić, 2014).

Job Satisfaction

There are many premises confirming the need to take up job satisfaction issue (Spector, 1997). First, job satisfaction can, to some extent, reflect the way in which employees are treated with regard to consideration and justice. Second, job satisfaction can be an indicator of employee's mental and emotional health. Third, it can affect the employee's behaviour and, consequently, their accomplishment of organizational goals. What's more, job satisfaction may reflect organizational performance.

Job satisfaction is a topic that attracts not only the employees of the organization, but also numerous researchers (Lu et al., 2005). Job satisfaction is an emotional response of an individual to their work or workplace resulting from their work experience. Luthans (2007) defined job satisfaction as a 'pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience'. In the explanation of job satisfaction, job characteristics are not sufficient and we must also take personal characteristics into account for full understanding (Fried and Ferris, 1987). Okpara (2004) defined five dimensions of job satisfaction: pay, promotion, supervision, job itself and co-workers. In turn, Oshagbemi (2003) identified personal factors that relate to job satisfaction at British universities. He stated that seniority, age and the ability of a person to work contribute significantly to the level of job satisfaction. Many researchers have examined and defined many determinants of job satisfaction, such as the reward system, individual differences, and self-esteem (Chen and Silverthorne, 2008). Okpara (2004) investigated whether the personal characteristics of IT managers are responsible for job satisfaction or not. Personal characteristics are experience, age, education and gender.

The subject of employee satisfaction is attractive in the research perspective, with the exception of the managerial practice announced by Lu et al. (2005). Employee satisfaction is a deep reaction, which is emotional in nature, and has come out of the employee's professional experience. Employee's emotional perception of the job is an attribute of job satisfaction that is satisfying or not. Job satisfaction is often perceived as a multidimensional combination of emotions, values and perceptions of the individual about tasks related to their work (Chamberlain, Hoben, Squires and Estabrooks, 2016).

Job satisfaction ultimately translates into work efficiency and organizational commitment that ensures organizational success (Spector, 2003).

Transformational leadership and job satisfaction

Although there are many styles of leadership that can affect employee satisfaction and their organizational commitment, but the majority of research focuses on the transformational leadership. In a study by Cumming et al., it was suggested that transformational leadership should be introduced to improve employee satisfaction, improve the working environment and avoid staff turnover. Miles and Mangold (2002) stated that job satisfaction is easier to achieve thanks to transformational leaders and effective interaction with employees. The

leader's ability to identify and resolve employee conflicts determined the employees' perception of leaders' results. AL-Hussami (2007) stated that transformational leadership positively influences employee satisfaction. Hamidifar (2009) conducted a study at the Islamic Azad University in Tehran and confirmed that among various styles of leadership – the transformational style positively affects the job satisfaction of employees. Employees are more satisfied with transformational leadership than with any other style. A study by Choi et al. (2016) in Malaysian hospitals shows that transformational leaders are primarily influencing employee satisfaction. What's more, the quality of leadership has an indirect impact on the intelligence and experience of employees, whereas the direct impact is analyzed in the transformational behaviours of leaders (Cavazotte, Moreno and Hickmann 2012). Although many researchers have stated that transformational leadership is more strongly associated with employee satisfaction than transactional leadership, not all researchers have drawn such a conclusion (Burns, 2007). Bogler explains that transformational behaviours can affect job satisfaction by the perception of transformational leaders by employees. Such leaders increase employee expectations and consideration for their work, and reinforce such behaviours as individual attention, intellectual stimulation and motivation. Thus employees are more involved in their work and have a higher level of job satisfaction.
The table below presents the characteristics of selected studies on the relationship between the transformational leadership and job satisfaction.

Table 1. The relationship between the transformational leadership and the level of job satisfaction – selected empirical studies

Author (s) and publication year	**Level of analysis**	**Nature of the study**	**Description of the respondent population**	**Empirical data collectio methods**	**Conclusions**
Bushra, Usman, Naveed (2011)	member of the organization	Empirical	133 questionnaires	Survey	Managers adopting the behaviour of a transformational leader can achieve better employee satisfaction and commitment.
Al-Hosam, Ahmed, Ahmad, Joarder (2011)	member of the organization	Empirical	160 questionnaires	Survey	Job satisfaction is one of the main factors determining organizational success that brings growth and expansion of the organization. Direct influence on employee satisfaction is primarily exercised by the presented leadership style.
Malik, Javed, Hassan (2017)	member of the organization	Empirical	319 questionnaires	Survey	Transformational leadership encourages employees to innovate and be creative in a way that allows them to think outside the box and introduce new ideas that are valuable to the organization, thus contributing to their satisfaction.
Ghaffari, Mad	member of the	Empirical	93	Survey	The positive impact of the perceived leadership style on job

Author (s) and publication year	Level of analysis	Nature of the study	Description of the respondent population	Empirical data collectio methods	Conclusions
Shah, Burgoyne, Nazri, Salah Aziz	organization		questionnaires		satisfaction was indicated. In the examined dependencies, the role of an intermediary variable (mediator) – fair treatment was also indicated.
Barnett (2017)	member of the organization	Empirical	77 questionnaires	Survey	The research indicated the positive impact of transformational leadership on the satisfaction of employees with the simultaneous negative influence of the transfectionist leadership and the laissez-faire style.
Al-Sada, Al-Esmael, Faisal (2016)	member of the organization	Empirical	364 questionnaires	Survey	Positive impact between supporting management style and employee satisfaction.
Voon, Lo, Ngui, Ayob (2011)	member of the organization	Empirical	200 questionnaires	Survey	The style of transformational leadership has positive relationships with job satisfaction, while the style of transactional leadership has negative relationships with job satisfaction.
Alshamrani (2017)	member of the organization	Empirical	216 questionnaires	Survey	Positive relations between LMX and job satisfaction.
Ghaffari, Shah, Burgoyne, Nazri, Aziz (2017)	member of the organization	Empirical	93 questionnaires	Survey	The study examined the impact of employee consideration on the relationship between participant leadership and job satisfaction, and researchers suggest that future research has a significant impact on other performance indicators, such as productivity and commitment, because job satisfaction is just one of the organization's results.
Ekowati, Surachman, Achmad Sudiro (2017)	member of the organization	Empirical	140 questionnaires	Survey	Research results indicate that transformational leadership indirectly affects organizational behaviour mediated by job satisfaction and organizational commitment.
Markiz, Margono,	member of the organization	Empirical	151 questionnaires	Survey	Leadership styles have no impact on employee satisfaction, because in this study, job

Author (s) and publication year	Level of analysis	Nature of the study	Description of the respondent population	Empirical data collectio methods	Conclusions
Wirawan, Ainur (2017)					satisfaction results from such variables such as bonuses and rewards in the opinion of experienced people, as the aspects of the transaction are more specific. Thus it is necessary to conduct further research into the transactional style.
Ho, Dinh, Vu (2016)	member of the organization	Empirical	121 questionnaires	Survey	The significant impact of the style of transactional and transformational leadership on job satisfaction. However, correlations are not predominant in all dimensions of leadership styles. There is the need for further advanced research.
Malik, Farooqi (2013)	member of the organization	Empirical	171 questionnaires	Survey	The results showed that transformational leadership has a stronger impact on job satisfaction than 'Psychological Empowerment', and relationships were considered positive and meaningful. In addition, it was found that transformational leadership played the role of a moderator in the relationship between 'psychological empowerment' and job satisfaction.
Aydogmus, Camgoz, Ergeneli, Ekmekci (2017)	member of the organization	Empirical	221 questionnaires	Survey	A positive relationship between perceived transformational leadership and job satisfaction. Perceived transformational leadership serves as an 'information framework' in the study of job satisfaction predictors. This statement suggests that when employees regard their leaders as more transformational they become more satisfied in their workplaces.
Ghadi (2017)	member of the organization	Empirical	555 questionnaires	Survey	Research shows that transformational leadership is positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to intentions of resigning from work. Work commitment is the mediating variable in the

Author (s) and publication year	Level of analysis	Nature of the study	Description of the respondent population	Empirical data collectio methods	Conclusions
					conducted research.
Choi, Goh, Adam , Tan (2016)	member of the organization	Empirical	200 questionnaires	Survey	Positive influence of the transformational style of leadership on job satisfaction. The conducted research provides important knowledge for healthcare managers who want to increase job satisfaction among nursing staff.
Abourai a, Othman (2017)	member of the organization	Empirical	181 questionnaires	Survey	The transformational style of leadership is a tool through which one can increase job satisfaction and work commitment.

Source: own elaboration

Based on the above literature analysis, the following H1 hypothesis has been adopted: There is a positive relationship between the transformational style of leadership and the level of job satisfaction.

3. Research results

The description of the sample

The study was conducted in 4 different healthcare organizations based in southern Poland in May-July 2018. Data were collected in two hospitals and two care and treatment institutions, out of which two were publicly owned and two were private enterprises. Table 1 presents the units whose employees participated in the study.

Table 2. Sample characteristics

Healthcare unit	Public/private	Type of activity	Number of employees in the unit	Number of participants	Share % of respondents
				Employees (managers)	
A	Public	Hospital	582	331(33)	56.87%
B	Private	Hospital	202	80(11)	39.60%
C	Public	Care and treatment institution	63	49 (1)	77.77%
D	Private	Care and treatment institution	155	65(6)	41.93%
Total	-	-	1002	525(51)	52.4%

Source: own elaboration

The data collection process was performed using the pen-and-pencil technique – each employee was given the printed version of the questionnaire with an individual number and the number of a manager and was asked to return it to the sealed box. Every employee assessed the leadership style of their manager/supervisor and their own task complexity. Additionally, they provided information on their satisfaction and commitment. In total, we collected 525 responses from 1002 employees of the healthcare units under study. The main fields of responsibility for employees of those units were diversified, from serving and taking care of patients to carrying out medical procedures (86.10%), as well as performing administrative work (13.90%). The majority of respondents were women – 479 employees, which accounted for 91.24%, and 46 men – 8.76%. Nearly 50% of the respondents had higher education, 49% of employees had secondary education, and only 1% (7 respondents) had primary education only. Most respondents were either 41-50 years of age (38.1%) or above 50 years of age (42.29%). Nearly 15% of respondents were between 31 and 40 years old, and just below 5% (4.95%) were younger than 30 years old, hence, the sample structure. Respondents had extensive experience in the field of responsibility – most respondents had worked in the field for over 20 years (64.95%), over 16% of respondents (86 employees) had worked in the profession for 11 to 20 years, and 18% of respondents had less than 10 years' experience in the healthcare profession.

The description of the research tools

Transformational leadership

The transformational leadership style was measured with the tool developed by Carles, Wearin and Mann [2000]. In order to verify the reliability of the adopted scale, Cronbach's alpha analysis was conducted as a first step. The alpha coefficient of 0.842 for the whole scale indicated the high reliability of the selected measurement tool. Then factor analysis was carried out using the principal component method with Varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization. The KMO coefficient was 0.886, while Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant (approximate chi-squared = 1234.88), which allowed for the performance of factor analysis. The factor structure accounts for more than 57.32% of the variability of the entire construct.

Table 3. The matrix of rotational components, the values of arithmetic means and standard deviation for questions – Transformational leadership

	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Component Matrix[a]
The leader communicates a clear and positive vision of the future.	5.51	1.53	0.732
The leader treats employees as individuals, supports them and encourages their self-development.	5.10	1.23	0.583
The leader appreciates and encourages employees.	5.43	1.66	0.810

	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Component Matrix[a]
The leader fosters trust, commitment and cooperation between team members.	5.16	1.85	0.754
The leader encourages thinking about problems from different perspectives and questioning assumptions.	5.17	1.77	0.739
The leader clearly expresses her/his values and the methods adopted.	5.75	1.62	0.727
The leader fosters pride and respect in others and inspires me to become more competent.	5.20	1.85	0.689

Source: own elaboration

Based on the responses received, it can be inferred that the respondents most appreciate the clear expression of values and methods adopted by a superior as well as the communication of a clear and positive vision of the future. In order to conduct further analysis, metavariables were calculated as the mean values of the particular issues constituting the dimension – transformational leadership.

Job Satisfaction

The job satisfaction was measured with the tool developed by Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins and Klesh [1983]. In order to verify the reliability of the adopted scale, Cronbach's alpha analysis was conducted as a first step. The alpha coefficient of 0.789 for the whole scale indicated the high reliability of the selected measurement tool. Then factor analysis was carried out using the principal component method with Varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization. The KMO coefficient was 0.654, while Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant (approximate chi-squared = 528.21), which allowed for the performance of factor analysis. The factor structure accounts for more than 51.12% of the variability of the entire construct.

Table 4. The matrix of rotational components, the values of arithmetic means and standard deviation for questions – Job satisfaction

	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Component Matrix[a]
Overall, I'm satisfied with my work	5.77	1.41	0.892
All in all, I do not like my job	1.49	1.17	0.871

	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Component Matrix[a]
All in all, I like working here	5.94	1.33	0.747

Source: own elaboration

Based on the responses received, it can be inferred that the respondents most appreciate the clear expression of values and methods adopted by a superior as well as the communication of a clear and positive vision of the future. In order to conduct further analysis, metavariables were calculated as the mean values of the particular issues constituting the dimension – job satisfaction. In the case of the calculation of the arithmetic means in question No. 2 concerning job satisfaction, the reverse coding method was used.

Linear correlation analysis

The first step involved Pearson's linear correlation analysis performed to determine whether the constructs under study are interrelated. Based on the analysis of Pearson's linear correlation, it can be concluded that statistically significant relationships exist between the constructs adopted for analysis. Transformational leadership have a significant statistical impact on job satisfaction (Pearson's linear correlation coefficients of 0.359).

Table 5 Pearson's linear correlation coefficients between transformational leadership and job satisfaction.

		Job satisfaction
Transformational leadership	Pearson Correlation	0.359**
	P	0.000

Source: own elaboration

The adopted hypothesis H1 states that there is a positive relationship between the transformational leadership and job satisfaction of employees. Based on the above statistical findings, it was found that transformational leadership has a significantly positive impact on the level of overall job satisfaction. Transformational leadership brings 39% change in overall job satisfaction. Therefore, the study results confirm hypothesis H1 and prove that by adopting a transformational leadership style, leaders can achieve more satisfied employees. If employees are satisfied with their work, they will work better, which will lead the organization to greater efficiency.

This means that to increase job satisfaction among employees, it is necessary for superiors to actively take the initiative. In particular, it is necessary to focus attention on improving procedures so that employees can better perform their work, changing work organization aimed at increasing the effectiveness of implemented activities, proposing new solutions by supervisors for a team, implementing new work organization methods, eliminating or changing unproductive policies and principles, providing constructive comments to improve the functioning of the organization, improving the everyday practice of operations, eliminating recurring provisions, procedures and regulations, and implementing new solutions, structures, technologies aimed at increasing work efficiency.

On the basis of the static analysis, it was found that one can accept H1 hypothesis assuming the existence of a positive relationship between the transformational style of leadership and job satisfaction of employees.
In the further part of the conducted statistical analyses, a comparison of average levels of job satisfaction assessment was made depending on the level of employees' education, age, professional experience, gender and position according to the medical and administrative part of the group. In order to check statistically significant differences between particular groups of employees, a nonparametric analysis of variance (Kruskal-Wallis test) was used. The tables below contain average ratings of the level of job satisfaction in individual groups of employees along with the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test.

Table 6. Average rating of job satisfaction depending on the education level

Education level	Number of employees	Average job satisfaction rating (meta variable)	Average rank
Primary	9	6.44	336.61
Secondary	257	5.82	259.92
Incomplete higher	63	5.82	255.87
Higher	196	5.87	265.95
Total	525		

Source: own elaboration

Table 7. Kruskal-Wallis test statistics for the level of job satisfaction depending on the level of education

Chi-square	2.554
Asymptotic significance	.466

Source: own elaboration

Table 8. Average rating of job satisfaction depending on age

Age	Number of employees	Average job satisfaction rating (meta variable)	Average rank
20-30 years old	26	6.11	279.19
31-40 years old	77	5.85	270.78
41-50 years old	200	5.82	254.47
Over 50 years old	222	5.86	266.09

Age	Number of employees	Average job satisfaction rating (meta variable)	Average rank
Total	525		

Source: own elaboration

Table 9. Kruskal-Wallis test statistics for the level of job satisfaction depending on age

Chi-square	1.281
Asymptotic significance	.734

Source: own elaboration

Table10. Average rating of job satisfaction depending on the experience

Experience	Number of employees	Average job satisfaction rating (meta variable)	Average rank
Up to 5 years	40	6.01	288.83
6-10 years	58	6.00	271.61
11-20 years	86	5.72	244.67
Over 20 years	341	5.83	263.13
Total	525		

Source: own elaboration

Table 11. Kruskal-Wallis test statistics for the level of job satisfaction depending on the experience

Chi-square	2.726
Asymptotic significance	.436

Source: own elaboration

Table 12 Average rating of job satisfaction depending on gender

Gender	Number of employees	Average job satisfaction rating (meta variable)	Average rank
Female	479	5.98	264.35
Male	46	5.72	248.92
Total	525		

Source: own elaboration

Table 13. Kruskal-Wallis test statistics for the level of job satisfaction depending on gender

Chi-square	0.455
Asymptotic significance	.500

Source: own elaboration

Table 14. Average rating of job satisfaction depending on the position

Position	Number of employees	Average job satisfaction rating (meta variable)	Average rank
Administrative part	73	6.18	298.19
Medical part	452	5.80	257.32
Total	525		

Source: own elaboration

Table 15. Kruskal-Wallis test statistics for the job satisfaction level depending on the position

Chi-square	4.780
Asymptotic significance	**.029**

Source: own elaboration

Based on the conducted analyses, it can be noted that the highest level of satisfaction rating was obtained among employees with primary education. In the case of the highest age, the level of satisfaction rating was obtained in the 20-30 age group. The highest level of job satisfaction ratings by work experience can be noted for people working for up to 10 years. The received ratings also show that the level of job satisfaction was rated higher by women and people working in the hospital administration department. The results of the Kruskal Wallis test indicate that the differences between the average ratings of the level of job satisfaction in individual groups of employees are statistically significant only in the case of division into a medical and administrative part.

Conclusions

The presented research results show the important role of the transformational style of leadership in strengthening job satisfaction in selected healthcare units. The findings of the research should result in wider use of transformational leadership and empowerment as possible human resources practices in order to increase satisfaction and reduce the possible staff turnover in this sector. Therefore, a clear signal sent to healthcare managers is the need to promote in units such a style of leadership. However, it seems that just raising the level of

leadership may not be enough to achieve a high level of employee satisfaction. An important factor that may affect the increase in job satisfaction may be the increase in the level of independence in the performance of tasks by subordinates and the removal of various organizational barriers. An implemented transformational leadership style offering a faster decision-making process will alleviate work-related stress resulting in occupational burnout and thus contribute to higher job satisfaction. The behaviour of managers characteristic of leaders introducing changes is of particular importance for employee satisfaction. In particular, it is imperative that leaders encourage employees to work by communicating positive aspects resulting from organizational development activities, treat employees personally as well as support them and encourage them to develop and improve their competences, appreciate employees' efforts, strengthen trust and engagement by promoting cooperation among employees, encourage employees to think about new ways of performing tasks and question assumptions, clearly declare values and develop pride in work in the organization and a sense of mutual consideration, as well as inspire employees to be competent. The actions of the transformational style of leadership play an important role in raising the level of job satisfaction among employees, as well as in increasing the perception of employees in the field of psychological reinforcement (Syed A.H.N. et al., 2011). It has also been proven that psychological initiation is a good predicator of professional satisfaction (Sulieman et al., 2011), and it also results in job satisfaction. What's more, it also turns out that the relationship between the psychological activation of employees and professional satisfaction depends on the transformation leadership. In a broad sense, perceived transformational leadership has been positively associated with job satisfaction. Previous research has shown that transformational leadership behaviours can contribute to an increase in job satisfaction (Parry and Sinha, 2005; Nielsen, Hrivnak and Shaw, 2009), thus encouraging managers to adopt a transformational style by articulating vision, inspiring employees, identifying employees' needs and promoting creativity will most likely lead to greater job satisfaction.

Future research could focus on explaining other variables that affect the relationship between the transformational style of leadership and job satisfaction. The existing studies, according to a literature review, suggest that trust in managers (Sivanathan et al., 2004), employee self-esteem (Walumbwa et al., 2007), cultural values and individual differences (Zhu et al., 2009) may constitute part of the explained relationships among these variables. Future research can adopt these variables as mediators and use them to explore the mechanisms underlying the transformational leadership and employee satisfaction further. Future research may also include other variables, such as person-environment fit as well as personal and cultural differences.

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