

## Relationship between Personnel's Organizational Commitment with Managers' Leadership Styles in Sport Organizations of Iran

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The Objective of the current research is to study and analyze two important variables affecting organizational success and efficacy of organizations; these variables are leadership style and organizational commitment.

**Methods:** This research is a description-correlation study and was conducted as a field survey. The research sample consists of 141 individuals including personnel and managers of the Physical Education Organization of East Azerbaijan Province. The following questionnaires were used for data collection: personal features, organizational commitment, leadership behavior description (duty-driven), and leadership style (Transformational and interactive). Deductive statistics, Spearman correlation coefficient in significance level of  $\alpha=0.05$  were used for data analysis, and descriptive statistics were used for describing the respective variables.

**Results:** The results showed that transformational leadership style has a positive and significant correlation with organizational commitment while interactive leadership style exhibits a negative and significant relationship with organizational commitment. No significant correlation was observed between duty-driven leadership and organizational commitment. Based on the findings of the current research, the relationship of transformational leadership in most cases is stronger and firmer than those of interactive and duty-driven leadership, and, transformational leadership style contributes to greater organizational commitment for the personnel under supervision.

**Conclusion:** Taking into account the features such as observance of respect, reliance, and admiration of staff besides assigning authorization to the personnel and clarification of organizational objectives, transformational leadership style can transform its followers' expectations and motivate them to have further committed to the objectives and the organization.

**Keyword:** Iran, Leadership Styles, Manager, Personnel, Sport Organizations.

## Introduction

The emergence and dominance of the attitude that success and effectiveness of organizations rely on appropriate management of resources, especially human resources, has led to devoting remarkable attention to studying and analysis of leadership style and its influence on personnel's attitudes and behaviors, including organizational commitment. According to the results of a couple of researches conducted in this respect, loyalty and commitment to an organization could result in further effort and stronger willingness for maintaining the organization by the personnel. On the other hand, most of the formerly conducted researches in the field of leadership behavior and its associated organizational consequences have focused on duty-based leadership styles and organizational relations (Soucie, 1994). Studies such as de Sá and Lemoine and Bycio, Hackett and Allen show that leadership style influences the organizational commitment of individuals (Bycio et al., 1995; Soucie, 1994). High levels of commitment, according to Kongo (2015), are not sustainable without working conditions that support the employee (Khuong & Nhu, 2015). In order to keep them committed over time it is necessary that they can rely on the organization's support for two main elements: optimized functions and an environment of support. In both, there is direct action from managers. According to some researchers, situational leadership approaches that substituted the former approaches do not take into account many situations such as the mechanism of subordinate's insight about leader and quality of leader-follower relations including how the subordinates think of leader's eligibility, motives, and personal characteristics. It must be also noted that some researchers also hold the opinion that new leadership approaches are capable of leaving more favorable

impacts on followers' attitudes and behaviors (Doherty & Danylchuk, 1996). Considering that the contemporary competitive environment of organizations has led to the understanding that their employees are their most valuable assets, leadership and commitment are being identified as the key assets of high performance organizations (Bycio et al., 1995). Organizational commitment among academic staff in public universities in Uganda depends on the age of the academic staff, length of service, position level, leadership styles employed, and job satisfaction. Findings further show that job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment (Mwesigwa et al., 2020). The findings of research revealed that there was a positive and significant effect of leadership styles and work climate on job performance. Furthermore, organizational commitment was significantly mediated the relationship of leadership styles and work climate with job performance (Zamin & Hussin, 2021). Soltan Hossaeini demonstrated that the number and dimensions of faculty members cause a significant difference in their perception of managers' leadership styles. In this regard, transformational and interactive leadership as the newest leadership theories with a relatively higher level of comprehensiveness has been warmly adopted and considered by many experts and thinkers of management science (Hosseini et al., 2005). Interactive leadership is established between the leader and followers and believes in promoting motivation of personnel through granting situational rewards while transformational leadership is founded on personal and emotional relations between leaders and subordinates and aims at motivating and spurring the followers to yielding a performance beyond the expectations. In the opinion of many researchers, behaviors of new leadership play an effective role in

promoting the followers' motivation to work (Pillai et al., 1999). Since the identification of managers' behavioral patterns and its relationship with efficacy, efficiency, and effective guidance of human resources working in the organizations is among the essential and key management issues, this status has provided the grounds for designing and codifying diverse attitudes of management experts and also implementation of numerous studies.

In the same scope, organizational commitment of personnel i.e. positive and negative attitudes of individuals towards the organization is one of the issues requiring further research and investigation. Research results are indicative of the fact that commitment contributes to a high level of knowledge about objectives and values of the organization as well as a strong tendency for staying in the organization influenced by different personality, organizational, occupational, and non-occupational factors. Leadership style is among the most crucial parameters affecting the organizational commitment of personnel. McShane attested that leadership styles lead to organizational commitment (O'Neill et al.). Adopting suitable leadership styles, managers can provide the personnel with favorable and appropriate conditions for doing the tasks with commitment; this, in turn, results in the promotion of organizational commitment. As a confirmation for this assertion, Gardner & Avoid quoted Conger as saying: followers are upgraded by effective managerial techniques of a leader. Some researchers believe that former theories of leadership behavior had concentrated mostly on two dimensions of duty-based and relation-based leaderships and sufficient attention had not been paid to human acts in the outcome of these two continua for motivating the followers to work. Hosseini and Mehdizadeh suggested that there exists a direct relationship between organizational

commitment and satisfaction with the superintendent. New leadership approaches specifically pay attention to perceptions of subordinates about the leadership (Hosseni, 2010). Rezaie and Saatchi hold the opinion that a significant correlation holds between the leadership style of managers and the organizational commitment of subordinates. Therefore, guidance and motivation of followers through financial incentives are further taken into account (Rezaie, 2009). Marmara found a significant relationship between organizational commitment and interactive and transformational leadership (Marmaya et al., 2011).

Researches and studies conducted in the scope of sport management concerning these leadership theories imply that the investigations have failed to achieve consistent results about the impact of such leaderships on performance and motivation of personnel. Whereas transformational leadership based on emotional and personal relations between the leader and subordinates considers guidance and motivation of followers to exhibit a performance beyond the expectations. It also personally takes into consideration the follower's requirements and problems in order to improve their efficiency through practical or inspirational motives. Many researchers believe that this sort of leadership behavior contributes to respect, commitment (loyalty), and acclaim of the followers toward the leader and the respective organization (Koene et al., 2002).

Koene believes that leadership is a process transformation that leaves the utmost impact on changes in attitudes of organization members and the creation of commitment to objectives and strategies of the organization (Koene et al., 2002). Karama indicated that there is a significant and positive correlation between "organizational culture and commitment" and "transformational and interactive leadership

styles". To corroborate this statement (Karmminia, 2010). Pilai & Williams realized through research that transformational behaviors eventually lead to personnel's loyalty to the leader and the organization through inspiring reliance and envisioning insight of leadership and subordinates. Nevertheless, little fundamental researches are available about testing communication channels between this sort of leadership and its impact on the followers (Pillai et al., 1999).

Furthermore, although many research works have mentioned the existence of a significant relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment for identifying the variables affecting the organizational commitment a couple of studies suggest different results. In research on the relationship between organizational commitment and transformational and interactive leadership. (Noorshahi, 2004) also thinks that the transformational leadership style plays an effective role in the improvement of satisfaction and organizational commitment of personnel as well as their beyond-expectation efforts. On contrary, Doherty & Daniel Chuck reported no significant correlation between the transformational leadership of sport managers and organizational commitment (Doherty & Danylchuk, 1996). Also, while some researchers like Goodwin and Tomas obtained a positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment (Goodwin et al., 2001). Others including Bass Haul & Avolio about transformational leadership and its effects on common organizational variables including organizational commitment are indicative of a positive and significant correlation between these two parameters (Bass & Avolio, 2000).

For the organization under study, this article offers empirical insights to the leaders,

Human Resource Managers, and other stakeholders interested in understanding the extent of relationship that exists between leadership styles and organizational' commitment. It will help them to be aware of the specific leadership style that relates more with employees' commitment. Ultimately, based on the recommendations proffered in this article, organizational policies and strategies will be re calibrated for leadership styles that will enhance organizational performance. The findings in this study open up a new research vista for further studies, especially the need to take into consideration the influence of demographic variables on the relationship between organizational' commitment and leadership styles in Iran. However, none of them presents the perspective adopted in this study involving, simultaneously, the managers' leadership styles in sport organizations of Iran. In view of the above, this raised interest in answering the following question: What are the relationships between personnel's organizational commitment with managers' leadership styles in sport organizations of Iran?

In order to address the proposal of this study, the following specific objectives were outlined :

- Leadership of managers would signify more organizational commitment of the personnel working under their supervision.
- The organizational commitment of personnel under supervision will decline with the increase in managers' interactive leadership.
- The leadership style of managers has relationship with the organizational commitment of personnel under their supervision.

## Materials and Methods

The current research is a descriptive-correlation study conducted as a field survey. Statistical population and sample consist of all office personnel and managers working in the Physical Education Organization of East Azerbaijan Province in 2020-2021. 141 persons participated in this research thanks to having access to the whole statistical population. The questionnaires used for collecting the needed research data included: questionnaire of personal features, organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ), description of duty-based leadership, and questionnaire of leadership style (transformational and interactive). These questionnaires have the required reliability because of being designed and codified by

prominent thinkers and experts of organizational behavior and also considering their usage in the research works conducted both domestically and globally. Validity coefficients of the questionnaires were reported as follows: Organizational commitment: 0.89, duty-based leadership: 0.83, and transformational and interactive leadership: 0.80. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the variables under study. Also, deductive statistics, Spearman correlation coefficient in p-value  $\alpha = 0.05$  were applied for data analysis.

## Results

The data of personnel's organizational commitment is presented in table (1)

**Table 1. The statistical indices related to personnel's organizational commitment**

| Examinee  | Organizational Commitment |                    |
|-----------|---------------------------|--------------------|
|           | Mean                      | Standard Deviation |
| Personnel | 48.25                     | 5.77               |

The results obtained from the description of statistical data related to manager's

leadership styles are included in the table (2).

**Table 2. Statistical Description of data related to managers' leadership styles**

| Leadership Style            | Mean  | Standard Deviation |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------------------|
| Transformational leadership | 23/45 | 3/34               |
| Interactive leadership      | 35/76 | 3/41               |
| Duty-based leadership       | 12/23 | 3/85               |

The results derived from statistical analysis are suggestive of a positive and significant correlation between managers' transformational leadership style and personnel's organizational commitment and the relationship between interactive

leadership. It is also observed that personnel's organizational commitment is significant but negative.

Additionally, no significant linkage was observed between the manager's duty-driven leadership style and personnel's

organizational commitment. The results are obtained in a table (3).

**Table 3. The statistical indices related to personnel's organizational commitment**

| Leadership Style | Organizational Commitment |                    |
|------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
|                  | Correlation               | Significance value |
| Duty-driven      | -0.31                     | 0.145              |
| Interactive      | -0.87                     | 0.014              |
| Transformational | 0.87                      | 0.001              |

## Discussion

The modern management era regards human resources as one of the major organizational capitals. Based on this conclusion, it seems vital to have knowledge and awareness about organizational behaviors and also to emphasize human affairs in sport organizations to enhance efficiency and effectiveness levels in the organization. In this regard, leadership acts of managers and their resulting organizational consequences including organizational commitment have recently attracted the attention and willingness of many experts and specialists of management science. Through statistical analysis of results, it can be deduced that the further transformational leadership of managers would signify more organizational commitment of the personnel working under their supervision. These findings are similar to research results of Eliyana & Ma'arif, Emery & Barker, Top et al, all asserting a significant and positive correlation between transformational leadership style of sport managers and organizational commitment of personnel (Eliyana & Ma'arif, 2019; Emery & Barker, 2007; Top et al., 2015).

According to the results, it can be concluded that the organizational commitment of personnel under supervision will decline with the increase in managers' interactive

leadership. This finding is in agreement with research results of Dawn Port, Goodwin & Bowler, Tangirala et al, all of which suggest a negative correlation between managers' interactive leadership and organizational commitment (Daven port, 2010; Goodwin et al., 2009; Tangirala et al., 2007). Yet, it is not in alignment with those reported by Doherty & Danylchuk, Goodwin et al, Hosseini, Marmaya et al and Pillai & Williams concerning the presence of a positive and significant correlation between interactive leadership and personnel's organizational commitment (Doherty & Danylchuk, 1996; Goodwin et al., 2001; Hosseini, 2010; Marmaya et al., 2011; Pillai et al., 1999).

Based on the results, one can infer that the duty-driven leadership style of managers has no significant relationship with the organizational commitment of personnel under their supervision. This style is characterized by the non-interference of leaders in the activities of the employees not only in decision-making processes but also not interested in the way and manner in which employees intend to accomplish organizational goals. These findings are alien to the reviewed literature and what this implies is that this style of leadership does not drive employees' commitment so it should not be encouraged. This finding matches the results obtained by Sherony and

Shrizhim who failed to discover any significant correlation between duty-driven leadership style and organizational commitment (Sherony & Green, 2002). However, it is not in agreement with results reported by leadership style Soucie who researched 1201 individuals in four non-sport organizations and reported a positive relationship between duty-driven and personnel's organizational commitment (Soucie, 1994). This duality may result from different statistical populations in the respective studies as the current research was conducted in a sports organization unlike the statistical population of the above-mentioned works which consisted of non-sport organizations. Data collection tools might be another reason for this contrast.

### Conclusion

Altogether, thanks to features such as observance of respect, reliance, and acclaim of personnel, assigning authorization to the personnel, and clarification of organizational objectives transformational leadership style could transform its followers' expectations and motivate them to exhibit further commitment. It can be deduced that the transformational leadership style has the greatest contribution to the enhancement of organizational commitment in the statistical population under study. Consequently, managers are required to rethink their managerial methods and deploy more efficient leadership styles for promoting organizational commitment in the personnel. The present study suggests that new studies should be carried out in order to confirm some of the results considered significant. Examples are: the relationship between organizational commitment and leadership constructs, with a focus on commitment and the relationship style; and the relationship between commitment and aspects of respondent profiles regarding gender and generation. These are results that were

encountered and that allow us to delineate hypotheses for other studies. It should also be considered that some factors constitute study limitations, such as the size of the sample surveyed, although it is sufficient from a statistical point of view; the strategy of collecting data of an exclusively quantitative nature, limiting the possibility of finding answers not provided in the chosen scales; and the non-delimitation of sector, region of the country, or a profession, meaning that the findings are to be considered generic.

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