

Transformational Leadership Behaviors and the Intrinsic Motivation of Employees in Turkey: The Role of Psychological Empowerment and Demographics

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ABSTRACT

Transformational leaders make a difference in organizations by inspiring and motivating employees. This makes the concept of transformational leadership a significant area of research. This article investigates the relationship between transformational leadership, psychological empowerment and intrinsic motivation in the Turkish workplace. The mediating role of psychological empowerment is also examined. Data was collected from 315 participants working in different sectors in Turkey and analyzed. We found that the transformational leadership behaviors of managers had a positive effect on psychological empowerment and intrinsic motivation. Moreover, the relationship between transformational leadership and intrinsic motivation was fully mediated by psychological empowerment. The article also tests whether employees' perceptions of transformational leadership, psychological empowerment and intrinsic motivation change according to demographics or not. The present study provides a comprehensive perspective on the psychological and motivational effects of leaders on employees.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, Psychological empowerment, Motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership in the private sector requires the morale and intellectual ability to imagine the best for a company and its employees. Leaders, regardless of whether they are in the public and private sector, are important to empowering employees at every level of their organizations. They also increase competitiveness. Most significantly, leaders associate the goals of the individual with those of the group and create team spirit. Leaders are seen as people who can take risks, initiate change, motivate individuals with organizational goals and visions, and challenge the status

quo in a competitive environment (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Transformational leaders are those who take risks and initiative in order to make a difference and develop their organizations and employees. The structure of transformational leadership, which attaches importance to motivation and supports development, competencies and autonomy, is associated with employees feeling strong psychologically (Yukl, 2010; Zhu, et al., 2012).

Transformational leadership is a leadership approach that encourages cooperation with employees, delegation of authority; creation of a learning environment by sharing experiences, participation in decision-making, and employees to create and implement innovative ideas (Gong, Huang, & Farh, 2009). With the effects they leave on their followers, transformational leaders increase motivation, job satisfaction, and work efficiency, and reduce turnover and absenteeism (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

When the intrinsic motivation variable in our research is examined, it is seen that the subject is related to the "self-determination theory", which focuses on the internal processes that are effective in the formation of personality development and individual behaviors. According to this theory, there are three fundamental requirements for wellbeing: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These requirements are universal and necessary for psychological health and development (Deci & Ryan, 1980). Fulfillment of these needs positively affects wellbeing, while lack of fulfillment decreases wellbeing. According to the self-determination theory, satisfying these fundamental psychological requirements of the individual is highly important for the formation and maintenance of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005). In this context, transformational leaders motivate their employees (followers) by reorienting their attitudes, beliefs, and values so that they can perform beyond expectations (Koçel, 2015). The concern of leaders for the needs of their followers is what makes them transformational and successful (Kovjanic et al., 2013).

Transformational leaders can make individuals feel stronger by enabling the formation of their social identities related to the group and organization they belong to (Avolio et al., 2004; Fuller, et al., 1999). According to the Social Identity Theory developed by Tajfel & Turner (1979), people often act not as individuals but as members of particular social groups. The theory is based on the idea that the concept of social identity that individuals create is shaped by the emotions they attribute to the group they belong to, and states that when the individual attaches importance to the group and organization he/she belongs to, he/she starts to use his/her social identity instead of his/her personal identity (Demirtaş, 2003, p. 128-129). Transformational leaders mobilize the higher-level needs of employees in order to transform them by encouraging them to surpass their own interests on behalf of the organization, and by raising awareness of the importance of organizational results (Kovjanic et al., 2013). The fact that leaders give equal importance to employees and to organizational goals supports the formation of their social and organizational identities.

Social identity theory postulates that the perception of being with or belonging to a particular social category, such as an organization or group, can intrinsically motivate individuals to achieve a collective good (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Edwards & Peccei, 2007). van Knippenberg et al. (2004) hypothesize that certain

personal characteristics of transformational leaders (such as behaving selflessly and confidently) positively affect the collective social identity development of subordinates. Transformational leaders assist employees to develop a sense of self-esteem, self-development, and self-worth, which are among the important social needs of employees, and enable them to establish a psychological bond with the organization (Tse & Chiu, 2014). There is evidence that transformational leadership not only enables subordinates to identify directly with their leaders, but also with their work units and colleagues (Kark et al., 2003; Tyssen et al., 2014).

This study investigates the importance of transformational leadership qualities in terms of the psychological empowerment and intrinsic motivation of employees in the Turkish business environment, which has social and organizational cultural characteristics defined as “collectivist” and “high-level power distance” (Hoftsedde, 1983; Sargut, 2001). It also examines the mediating role of psychological empowerment in the effect of transformational leadership on intrinsic motivation. In this context, it is thought that transformational leaders, who define the vision of the organization, assign roles to employees in line with this vision, organize their efforts and contributions, and support the development of individuals, will increase the psychological empowerment and intrinsic motivation of employees by inculcating an organizational identity within them.

This article also investigates if there is a difference in perception of psychological empowerment, transformational leadership and intrinsic motivation across different demographics such as age, gender, tenure length and education. Given their importance in social sciences and business research, demographic factors play an important role in explaining how people behave and feel (Mohammed et al., 2012). Gender, age, education, and tenure are key demographic factors to study how people perceive the world, and feel and interpret situations. Leadership styles, assumptions on how they (should) behave, and motivations might change according to gender, age and tenure (Eagly et al., 1994; Mohammed et al., 2012; Ng & Feldman, 2010). One study found that male leaders show more transformational leadership characteristics when it comes to setting goals (Gibson, 1995) but female leaders showed more transformational leader behaviors in general according to other studies (Rosenbusch & Townsend, 2004; Sharpe, 2000). However, some studies found no statistical difference between male and female leadership (Hall, 2011; Manning, 2002). Motivation is also a variable that differs based on demographics. There are studies indicating tenure might be negatively correlated with motivation, but also ones that indicate older people might have higher motivation (Boumans et al., 2011; Moynihan et al., 2007; Paynter, 2004). Although there are a significant number of factors determining leadership and motivation, it is important to consider demographics, which are often focused on less than other factors. Since the literature on this is contradictory, it might be beneficial to examine differences in terms of key demographics.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP, PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT, AND INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Transformational leadership is leadership that increases the competence and awareness of employees and facilitates their individual development, thus helping the growth of the organization (Bass, 1985; Jha, 2014). Transformational leaders, instead of responding to the immediate personal interests of followers with temporary solutions, increase the trust of followers, while awakening a high awareness of basic, group, and organizational issues in individual employees (Avolio & Bass, 1988). This style of leadership also ensures the realization of group and organizational goals by instilling mission, vision and strategy in employees, and directing their attention to other areas (Bass & Avolio, 1990). In the academic literature, transformational leadership is defined and measured with four basic components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1990; Robbins & Judge, 2017).

Idealized influence refers to leaders being charismatic, being a role model to their employees or followers, and subject to respect. Inspirational motivation is about increasing the motivation of employees, making them more optimistic and enthusiastic about doing something. It occurs when leaders act to increase the performance of and effort expended by employees by expressing important goals and high expectations in ways that they can understand. On the other hand, intellectual stimulation is when leaders encourage their followers to look at current situations and problems from different and creative perspectives. Thus, transformational leaders promote the intellectual development of employees by supporting innovative and original approaches to problem solving. Individual consideration is when leaders are interested in the needs of employees and contribute to them fulfilling their potential. Leaders help followers develop by coaching/mentoring, providing feedback on their work, and increasing their self-confidence (Bass & Avolio, 1990; Robbins & Judge, 2017).

Transformational leaders contribute to the formation of individual social identities by providing a bond between them and the group and organization they belong to and can make employees feel stronger (Avolio et al., 2004; Fuller, et al., 1999). They also ensure employees feel stronger and more valuable, and increase how much they value their work by instilling a purpose and vision in them (Zhu et al., 2012). This leadership style assists psychological empowerment by encouraging employees to ask questions and solve problems, providing feedback on performance, mentoring, supporting the increase of competencies, and providing freedom in certain areas. Transformational leaders increase their followers' feelings of commitment and empowerment, leading to positive organizational results, by promoting identification with the goals, values, and members of the organization (Kark et al., 2003; Ilies et al., 2006) and activating employees' desires for self-development, success, and satisfaction. Many empirical studies claim transformational leadership has a positive effect on psychological empowerment (Dvir et al., 2002; Kark et al., 2003; Khanmohammadi & Mohseni, 2010; Kim & Shin, 2019; Pradhan et al., 2017). Based on theoretical explanations of transformational leadership and the research findings cited above, the following hypothesis is put

forward regarding the effects of transformational leadership on psychological empowerment:

Hypothesis 1: Transformational leadership positively affects psychological empowerment.

Transformational leaders are seen as visionary leaders with innovative perspectives, goal-oriented and supportive. They raise the motivation of employees, enhance job satisfaction and work efficiency, and reduce turnover and absenteeism (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Studies have shown that transformational leadership increases the motivation and emotional commitment of employees (Akbolat et al., 2013; Cappelli 2020; Çetin et al., 2017), and is associated with creativity and innovation (Shafi et al., 2020). In addition, in studies conducted on 1,481 teachers working in private and public schools, it was determined that the relationship between transformational leadership and intrinsic motivation was mediated by three different basic needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness). (Jensen and Bro (2018) Similarly, in a study examining the relationships between intrinsic motivation, transformational leadership and job performance in the pharmacology sector in Vietnam, it was found that transformational leadership style, ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration have a positive effect on intrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation positively affects job performance (Nguyen, et al., 2019). Therefore, in this study, it was assumed that transformational leadership would positively affect the intrinsic motivation of individuals, so the following hypothesis was developed:

Hypothesis 2: Transformational leadership positively affects intrinsic motivation.

Empowerment is a very interesting subject and the number of studies related to the subject is high, leading to the development of various approaches to the subject and its definition with different concepts. In the literature, the concept of empowerment has been defined as ensuring the participation of employees in their work (Kanter, 1977), motivating individuals with “resource and power sharing” (Burke, 1986; Conger & Kanungo, 1988), autonomy (Aquino, Grover, Bradfield, & Allen, 1999, p. 260), and active participation of a person in their work with a sense of control over it (Çekmecelioglu & Eren, 2007). In light of these definitions, empowerment has been expressed and measured as a motivational concept consisting of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact, all dimensions related to the work of the individual and arising from job characteristics (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995; 1996; 1997; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990;). Studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between psychological empowerment and intrinsic motivation (İhtiyaroglu, 2017; Li et al., 2015; Özcan & Çekmecelioglu, 2021; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Therefore, in this study, it is hypothesized that psychological empowerment will positively affect intrinsic motivation. The following hypothesis is put forward:

Hypothesis 3: Psychological empowerment positively affects intrinsic motivation.

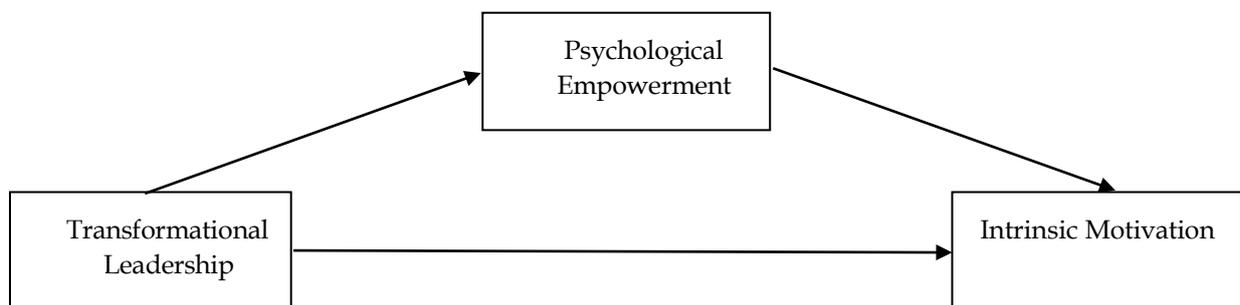
According to the self-determination theory, satisfying basic psychological needs such as the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness for wellbeing of the individual is very important for the formation and maintenance of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1980; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005). By meeting the high-level needs of the employees, transformational leaders ensure that employees act in line with the organizational purpose and vision (Kovjanic et al., 2013). In this way, they contribute to the formation of intrinsic motivation by making employees feel psychologically strong. Some studies show that empowerment mediates the effect of transformational leadership on work attitudes (Lan & Chong, 2015). Similarly, it was determined that transformational leadership positively affects creative behavior and psychological empowerment has a mediating role in this effect (Afsar et al., 2017). Similarly, in studies conducted in Turkey, it has been found that transformational leadership has a positive effect on psychological empowerment and that psychological empowerment has a mediating role in the effect of transformational leadership on innovation (Sağnak et al., 2015). Therefore, in this study, it is considered that psychological empowerment plays a mediating role in the effect of transformational leadership on intrinsic motivation, and the following hypothesis is put forward:

Hypothesis 4: Psychological empowerment has a mediating role in the effect of transformational leadership on intrinsic motivation.

METHODOLOGY

This article aims to examine the relationship between psychological empowerment, transformational leadership, and intrinsic motivation. The research model was established in line with the hypotheses and literature and is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1



DATA COLLECTION & INSTRUMENTATION

The article used a cross-sectional design to collect data through surveys. Research participants were employees from various industries in Kocaeli. As of 2021, the total number of employees (official and insured) in Kocaeli was 579,062

(İŞKUR, 2021). Since it is not possible to survey them all, 325 questionnaires were collected through the convenience sampling method. The research data were obtained through online questionnaires sent to the participants between January and April 2021. Among the 325 returned questionnaires, 315 completely coded questionnaires were included in the analysis. In one study, a sample of 384 people was deemed sufficient in a population of 1,000,000 or more (Yazıcıoğlu & Erdoğan, 2004). Given the population in this study, it can be said that a sample of 315 people is sufficient.

This study was approved by the Kocaeli University Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee. Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study. The questionnaire prepared within the scope of the research included demographic information, a psychological empowerment questionnaire, a transformational leadership questionnaire and an intrinsic motivation questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised 37 items measuring transformational leadership, psychological empowerment, and intrinsic motivation as well as demographic characteristics such as age, gender, tenure, and education.

In this study, the scale developed by Bass & Avolio (1995) was used to measure transformational leadership. A multifactor leadership questionnaire was designed on the basis of evaluating the behavior of leaders and includes expressions that measure not only transformational leadership but also transactional leadership. Transformational leadership was conceived as having four dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention (Bass, 1998; Stewart, 2006). For the purpose of the study, only twenty expressions measuring transformational leadership were used and distributed to the participants in the form of a five-point Likert type scale, been translated into Turkish by Çekmecelioğlu et al. (2018). The Cronbach Alpha scale is 0.976. The psychological empowerment questionnaire was developed by Spreitzer (1996) and follows meaning, authority, effectiveness, and autonomy. Each section consisted of three expressions for a total of twelve. The questionnaire was distributed to participants in a five-point Likert type scale. It was translated into Turkish by Çekmecelioğlu et al. (2018). The Cronbach Alpha of the scale was 0.881. The intrinsic motivation scale was adapted by Tierney et al. (1999) from the intrinsic motivation scale of Amabile et al. (1994) and consists of five statements. It was presented to the participants as a five-point Likert type scale. The questionnaire was translated into Turkish as part of a study by Çekmecelioğlu et al. (2017). The evaluation statements in the five-point Likert type questionnaires were arranged from 1 - "I totally disagree" to 5 - "I totally agree". The Cronbach Alpha of the scale was 0.821.

RESULTS

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to measure the validity of the scales in this study. CFA uses observed variables to validate the pre-constructed factor structure of a scale. CFA can be used to decide whether a scale is valid or not by looking at the goodness-of-fit values. According to CFA, the values related to the scales were acceptable. During the analysis, an expression related to the intrinsic motivation variable was excluded from the model because the regression coefficient was below 0.50.

Table 1*CFA results.*

Measure	Criterion	T.L.	P.E.	I.M.
CMIN/DF	<5	3.986	3.106	2.819
NFI	>0.90	0.913	0.936	0.995
TLI	>0.90	0.921	0.921	0.982
IFI	>0.90	0.934	0.934	0.997
CFI	>0.95	0.937	0.956	0.997
GFI	>0.85	0.826	0.927	0.997
RMSEA	<0.08	0.098	0.082	0.076

Note: T.L. = Transformational leadership, P.M. = Psychological Empowerment, I.M. = Intrinsic Motivation.

Correlation and regression analysis were performed to measure the relationships between the variables examined within the scope of the research. Table 6 shows the mean, standard deviation, and correlation values of the variables. The mean values of the variables are between 3.51 and 4.54. The standard deviation values are between .54 and 1.05. There is a positive relationship between the transformational leadership and psychological empowerment values of the participants ($r = .449, P < .01$). A positive relationship was also observed between transformational leadership and intrinsic motivation ($r = .286, P < .01$). At the same time, a positive relationship ($r = .428, P < .01$) was observed between psychological empowerment and intrinsic motivation.

The relationships between the dimensions of psychological empowerment, intrinsic motivation, and transformational leadership were also examined. Meaning ($r = .268, P < .01$), impact ($r = .395, P < .01$), competence ($r = .279, P < .01$), and autonomy ($r = .358, P < .01$) and dimensions of psychological empowerment and intrinsic motivation were found to be positively related. Meaning ($r = .276, P < .01$), impact ($r = .181, P < .01$), competence ($r = .384, P < .01$), and autonomy ($r = .431, P < .01$) as dimensions of psychological empowerment and transformational leadership levels were found to be positively related.

Table 2*Correlation matrix.*

Factors	Mean	S.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
T.L.	3.51	1.05	1	0.449**	0.276**	0.181**	0.384**	0.431**	0.286**
P.E.	4.18	0.58		1	0.640**	0.680**	0.820**	0.815**	0.485**
Meaning	4.44	0.73			1	0.407**	0.315**	0.272**	0.268**
Competence	4.54	0.54				1	0.429**	0.385**	0.395**
Autonomy	3.95	0.85					1	0.612**	0.279**
Impact	3.78	0.96						1	0.358**
I.M.	4.09	0.79							1

Note: T.L. = Transformational leadership, P.M. = Psychological Empowerment, I.M. = Intrinsic Motivation.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis was performed using Amos to test the hypotheses of the research. Table 8 shows the results of the regression conducted to examine the effect of transformational leadership on psychological empowerment and intrinsic motivation, and the mediating effect of psychological empowerment on the relationship between transformational leadership and intrinsic motivation.

Figure 2

First model.

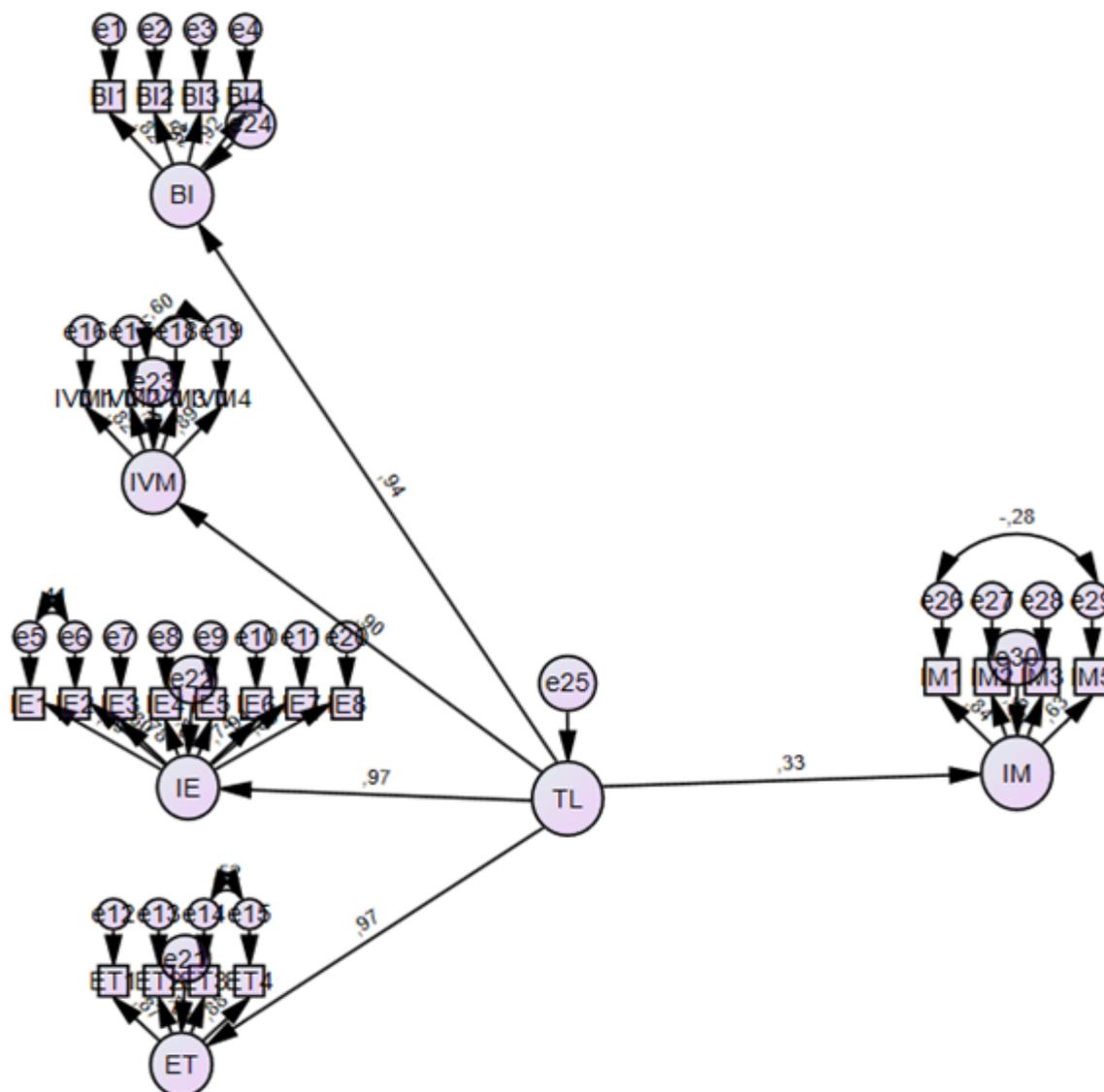


Table 3*SEM Analysis.*

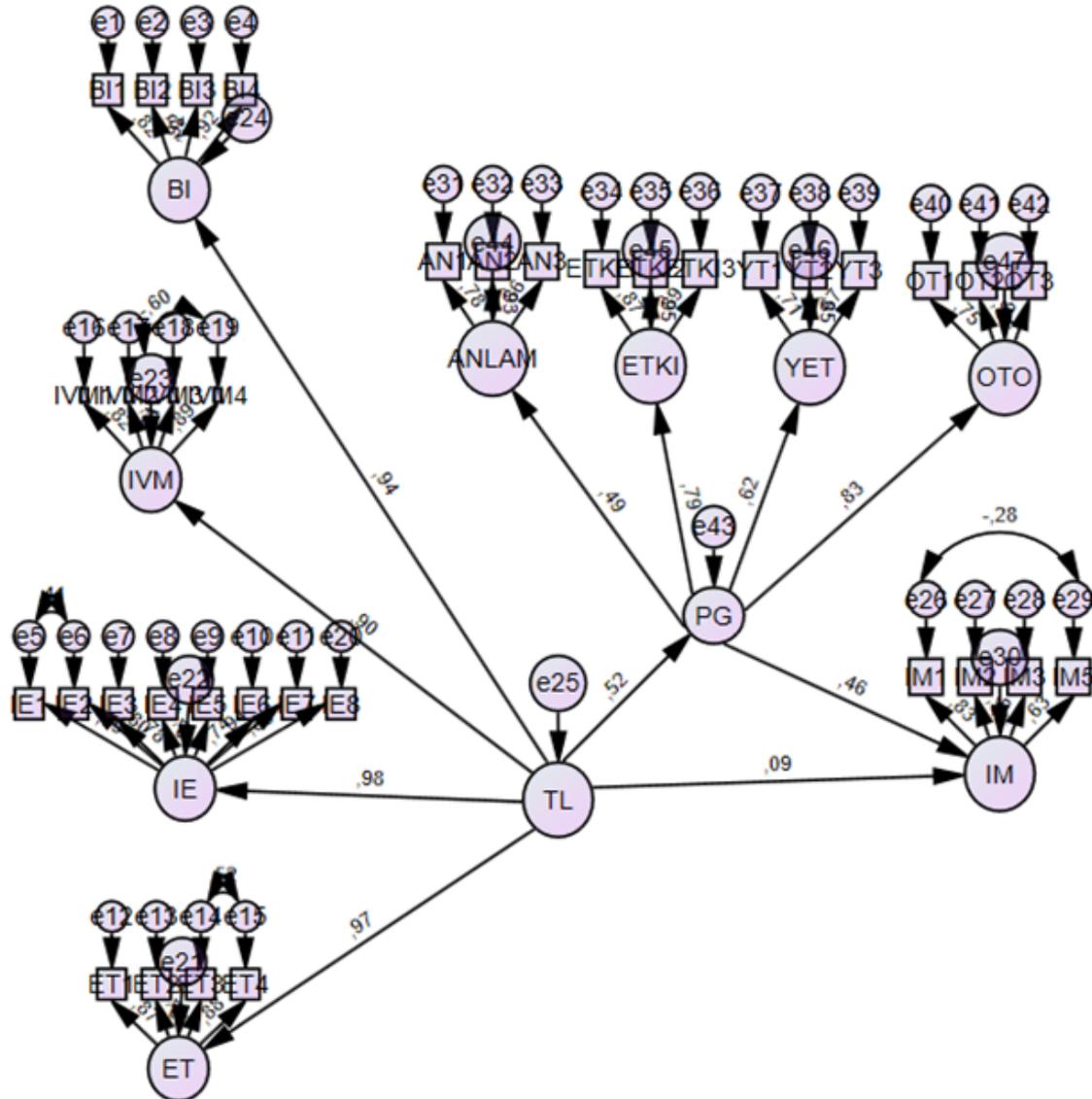
Measure	Criterion	1. Model	2. Model
CMIN/DF	<5	3.233	2.540
NFI	>0.90	0.891	0.870
TLI	>0.90	0.922	0.909
CFI	>0.95	0.932	0.916
GFI	>0.85	0.827	0.794
RMSEA	<0.08	0.084	0.070

In order to conduct a mediation analysis, steps developed by Baron & Kenny (1986) were followed. Firstly, to reveal whether the condition for the independent variable to affect the dependent variable in the mediation analysis was met, the path analysis was performed to examine the effect of transformational leadership on intrinsic motivation as shown in Figure 1. Goodness-of-fit values for the first model were CMIN/DF= 3.233, CFI=.932, GFI= .827, TLI=.922, NFI=.891 and RMSEA=.084 and are shown in table 7. As can be seen, the goodness-of-fit values for the first model are at acceptable levels. The results obtained in the first model are given in table 8. Accordingly, we find that transformational leadership has a positive effect on intrinsic motivation ($\beta = .333$; $P < .01$).

The second model created to test the mediating role of psychological empowerment in the effect of transformational leadership on intrinsic motivation is shown in Figure 3. When the goodness-of-fit values for the second model are examined, it is seen that the values are at acceptable levels: CMIN/DF = 2,540, CFI = .916, GFI = .794, AGFI = .762, TLI = .909, NFI = .870 and RMS.

Figure 3

Second Model.



The results for the first and second models are shown in table 7 and results for the first model are explained above. When the results given in the second model are examined, it is seen that transformational leadership has a positive effect on psychological empowerment ($\beta = .514$; $p < .01$) and psychological empowerment ($\beta = .464$; $p < .01$) has the same effect on intrinsic motivation. These findings support hypotheses 3 and 1. When transformational leadership and psychological empowerment variables are included in the analysis to observe the mediation effect, we see that the effect of transformational leadership on intrinsic motivation ($\beta = .090$; $p > .05$) completely disappears. Accordingly, psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and intrinsic motivation. In line with these results, Hypothesis 4 is supported.

Table 4*Mediation Analysis results.*

Model	Path	β
1. MODEL	I.M. <--- T.L.	0.333*
2. MODEL	P.E. <--- T.L.	0.514*
	I.M. <--- P.E.	0.464*
	I.M. <--- T.L.	0.090
	Factor	R²
	Psychological Empowerment	0.264
	Intrinsic Motivation	0.270

Note: * = $P < 0.5$; T.L.=Transformational leadership, P.M.=Psychological Empowerment, I.M.= Intrinsic Motivation

Analysis of variance tests were carried out to see whether the psychological empowerment, intrinsic motivation and transformational leadership levels of participants changed according to demographic variables, and the results are shown in tables 6, 7 and 8. Demographic information regarding the sample of the study is shown in table 5 in detail: 50.8 per cent of the participants are female and 49.2 per cent are male.

A total of 29.8 per cent of the participants were 30 years or younger; 26.7 per cent were between the ages of 31 and 35; 22 per cent were between 36-40 years old and 18.2 per cent were between 41 and 50 years old. Only 3.2 per cent of participants were aged 51 years or older. A significant majority of the participants have a bachelor's degree (54.3 per cent), 7.6 per cent of the participants had a high school education, 10.5 per cent had an associate degree and 27.6 per cent had postgraduate education. Finally, 30.2 per cent of participants had between 1-5 years of professional experience, 29.2 per cent had between 6-10 years, 22.9 per cent had between 11-15 years, and 17.8 per cent had 16 years or more.

Table 5*Descriptive statistics.*

Category		Frequency	%
Gender	Female	160	50.8
	Male	155	49.2
	Total	315	100
Age	Under 30	94	29.8
	31-35	84	26.7
	36-40	70	22.2
	41-50	57	18.1
	Over 51	10	3.2
	Total	315	100
Education	High School	24	7.6
	Associate degree	33	10.5
	Undergraduate	171	54.3
	Graduate	87	27.6

Category		Frequency	%
	Total	315	100
Tenure	1-5	95	30.2
	6-10	92	29.2
	11-15	72	22.9
	16 + years	56	17.8
	Total	315	100.0

According to ANOVA and t-test results, psychological empowerment and transformational leadership levels do not differ by age, gender, and tenure. Moreover, as can be seen in table 8, the intrinsic motivation level of the participants does not differ according to age and gender but does differ by tenure. As a result of the Tukey test, the internal motivation levels of employees with 6-10 years of experience are higher than those who work for 16 years or more.

Table 6

Test of mean differences based on gender.

Factor	Groups	N	Mean	S.S.	t	df	P
Psychological Empowerment	Female	160	4.10	.61	-2.300	313	0.521
	Male	155	4.25	.54			
Intrinsic Motivation	Female	160	4.05	.78	-.714	313	0.872
	Male	155	4.12	.79			
Transformational Leadership	Female	160	3.42	1.09	-1.489	313	0.506
	Male	155	3.60	1.02			

Table 7

Test of mean differences based on age.

Factors	Groups	N	Mean	S.S.	F	p
Psychological Empowerment	Less than 31	94	4.1048	0.6179	0.880	0.476
	31-35	84	4.1657	0.5587		
	36-40	70	4.2507	0.5834		
	41-50	57	4.2361	0.5490		
	51 and above	10	4.2917	0.6469		
Intrinsic Motivation	Less than 31	94	4.1170	0.8318	1.592	0.176
	31-35	84	4.2213	0.6996		
	36-40	70	4.0743	0.8037		
	41-50	57	3.9231	0.8458		
	51 and above	10	3.8000	0.6036		
Transformational Leadership	Less than 31	94	3.5516	1.0950	0.056	0.994
	31-35	84	3.5236	1.0996		
	36-40	70	3.4916	1.0208		
	41-50	57	3.5250	1.0324		
	51 and above	10	3,5164	0.9193		

Table 8*Test of mean differences based on tenure.*

Factors	Groups	N	Mean	S.S.	F	p	Tukey
Psychological Empowerment	1-5	95	4.1090	0.5754	1.34	0.260	
	6-10	92	4.1572	0.6323	5.00		
	11-15	72	4.2801	0.5381			
	16 and above	56	4.2269	0.5612			
Intrinsic Motivation	1-5	95	4.1389	0.8415	2.80	0.040	
	6-10	92	4.1597	0.6825	2.00		2-4
	11-15	72	4.0971	0.8013			
	16 and above	56	3.8253	0.7918			4-2
Transformational Leadership	1-5	95	3.7217	0.9473	2.44	0.064	
	6-10	92	3.3313	1.1398	8.00		
	11-15	72	3.5722	1.1047			
	16 and above	56	3.4004	1.0015			

CONCLUSION

In this study the relationships between transformational leadership, psychological empowerment and intrinsic motivation were examined. Our findings indicate that transformational leadership has a positive effect on psychological empowerment and intrinsic motivation. Accordingly, transformational leaders ensure their employees express themselves better in the business environment by supporting them; provide opportunities to increase their competencies; and empower them by helping them find meaning in jobs.

At the same time, transformational leaders give an identity to their organization by defining its vision and goals, and create an organizational identity in employees by assigning roles to the employees in line with organization's vision and goals, as well as organizing the efforts and contributions of the employees. This psychologically empowers employees (Avolio et al., 2004; Fuller, et al., 1999). These findings are in line with the results of previous studies. In empirical studies conducted in different sectors in China and India, it was found that transformational leadership positively affects psychological empowerment (Afsar et al., 2017; Jha, 2014). Similarly, a study conducted with 672 participants working in different sectors and regions in the United States of America found that transformational leaders empower their employees psychologically (Zhu et al., 2012).

This article's findings show that transformational leadership raises the intrinsic motivation of employees. This result illustrates that transformational leaders transform employees by triggering their higher-order needs, encouraging them to transcend their own interests on behalf of the organization, which has also been expressed theoretically (Kovjanic et al., 2013). Transformational leaders' interest in their followers' needs is one of the most important factors that make them successful. Transformational leaders ensure that employees act in line with organizational purpose and vision by meeting their high-level needs (Kovjanic et al., 2013). Both national and international field studies on this subject show that idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual

consideration, all have positive effects on the intrinsic motivation of followers (Akbolat et al., 2013; Çetin et al., 2017; Nguyen et al., 2019).

Another result obtained in the research is about the effect of psychological empowerment on intrinsic motivation. Psychological empowerment has a very strong positive effect on intrinsic motivation. This effect is greater than the effect of transformational leadership on intrinsic motivation. This shows that the intrinsic motivation of employees who find their job meaningful, have the necessary competence in their job, and have freedom in certain areas related to their job will increase. In the organizational behavior literature, psychological empowerment is an important issue that has received a lot of attention and has been found to be related to both individual and organizational outcomes. Meaning, competence, autonomy and impact dimensions of psychological empowerment were found to be associated with organizational commitment, job satisfaction, individual performance, and work-related stress (Chang, Shih, & Lin, 2010, p. 427; Lashinger et al., 2000; 2009; Liden, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2000: 407; Spreitzer, 1997;), intrinsic motivation and individual creative behavior (Aslam, 2017; Knol & Van Linge, 2009; Çekmecelioğlu & Özbağ, 2014; Çekmecelioğlu & Özbağ, 2016; Spreitzer, 1995; Zhang & Bartol, 2010), welfare of employees (Taştan, 2013; Wardani & Ameliah, 2020), organizational identification (Yılmaz & Tan, 2018), and proactive behaviors of employees (Huang, 2017). On the other hand, it has been determined that psychological empowerment also increases innovation (Çekmecelioğlu & Özbağ, 2014). These research results on psychological empowerment show that executives who want their employees to be more productive, motivated and dedicated to their work should emphasize employee empowerment.

Although it is clear that there are significant relationships between transformational leadership, psychological empowerment, and intrinsic motivation variables, in this study, in order to explore how relationships are formed, whether psychological empowerment has a mediating effect on the relationship between transformational leadership and intrinsic motivation was investigated. We found that psychological empowerment mediates the effect of transformational leadership on intrinsic motivation. In other words, transformational leaders increase the intrinsic motivation of their employees by making them feel psychologically stronger.

As expressed in the theory of self-determination, the basic psychological needs of the individual, such as the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness, must be satisfied for the formation and maintenance of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1980; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005). In this context, in this study, it has been empirically proven that the formation and increase of intrinsic motivation of individuals is possible with psychological empowerment consisting of individuals' perceptions of meaning, competence, autonomy and influence. As stated in the literature, research supports the claim that employees who feel psychologically empowered are prone to take responsibility in their business life, find their work more meaningful, and be more motivated (Spreitzer, 1996). The finding that transformational leadership affects the intrinsic motivation of employees through psychological empowerment is also supported by the results of other studies (İhtiyaroğlu, 2017; Jensen & Bro, 2018; Masood & Afsar, 2017; Shafi et al., 2020; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Similarly, some studies show that empowerment

also mediates the effect of transformational leadership on work attitudes (Lan & Chong, 2015).

This study also analyzed whether the transformational leadership, empowerment and intrinsic motivation perceptions of employees differ in terms of demographic variables or not. It was found that transformational leadership and motivation scores did not show differences according to age, gender, tenure or education. Looking at the literature, neither transformational leadership nor motivation scores change in terms of education and age (Greiman et al., 2007; Hall, 2011). Although there are studies indicating that there may be differences in leadership styles in terms of gender, some studies found no significant difference, like the current study. According to our results, the only statistically significant relationship is between the tenure of the employees and intrinsic motivation scores of employees. People who have more than 16 years of experience are less motivated than people who have less than 10 years' experience. The literature on job tenure focuses mainly on its effects on employee performance. Job design studies emphasize a fall in motivation as tenure increases—especially in the same organization or job (Ng & Feldman, 2013). The reason may vary according to several factors such as organizational and job characteristics, personality, and health, or it may be simply because of boredom.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This article contributes to the organizational behavior and leadership literature by examining the relationships between psychological empowerment, transformational leadership and intrinsic motivation in the context of Kocaeli, Turkey, an industrial city. The study empirically demonstrates that individuals working in today's dynamic and complex organizational environment feel psychologically empowered and have intrinsic motivation thanks to transformational leaders who contribute to their followers' individual and intellectual development, inspire them, and organize groups' efforts in line with the vision and mission of the organization.

The research presents empirical findings that transformational leaders create a social identity in individuals by emphasizing the group and organizational goals, as expressed in Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and increase psychological empowerment and intrinsic motivation in this way. Moreover, empirical findings for self-determination theory were also obtained in the study. According to this theory, it is very important for an individual's wellbeing to have basic psychological needs satisfied, such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness, to form and maintain intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1980; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005). Our findings provide support this theory by showing that there are both direct and indirect effects between transformational leadership, psychological empowerment, and intrinsic motivation.

The results obtained in this study prove that transformational leaders are very important in terms of psychological empowerment and intrinsic motivation of employees in the Turkish business environment, with its particular social and organizational cultural characteristics (Hoftsede 1983, Sargut, 2001). For this reason,

it is important to develop transformational behaviors in leaders and to subject them to training and development programs for organizational success and economic growth, as well as for psychologically empowered, intrinsically motivated human resources, playing a key role in employee job satisfaction.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Since the aim of this study is to clarify the relationship between transformational leadership, psychological empowerment, and intrinsic motivation, it should be noted that a comprehensive model of all the antecedents of the intrinsic motivation process is not presented. Future research can contribute to a better understanding of the intrinsic motivation process, which is considered the driving force for increasing the number of desired behaviors of employees in the organization, by considering the mediator and regulatory effects with different variables. In addition, since the organizational structure, which affects the behavior of all organizational employees, can affect the leadership style and motivational processes of employees, research that includes organizational structure elements can help us better understand the subject. For example, Walter & Bruch (2010) found that centralization restricts the relations between transformational leadership and organizational energy, whereas formalization practices improve these relations. Therefore, when interpreting the results of the study the organizational structure elements that can have strong effects on the intrinsic motivation and transformational leadership process should be kept in mind.

As our study focused only on relationships at the individual level, the psychological and motivational effects of transformational leadership on teams have not been fully considered. Future research may examine the empowering and motivating effect of transformational leaders on a team or unit basis and allow comparisons to be made. In addition, this study could be expanded by considering other dimensions of transformational leadership and analyzing the connections between intrinsic motivation and psychological empowerment. As it is well known, cross-sectional studies are not suitable for testing causal relationships due to the uncertainty in the direction of relationships. For example, employees who have high self-confidence and see their job as meaningful and important may attribute these positive feelings to the leadership provided by their managers. In other words, employees may have evaluated their leaders as transformational leaders because they had satisfactory experiences with their work and themselves. Therefore, the results of the present study are relational in nature and caution is required when making causal inferences from the findings. Finally, it should be kept in mind that since the participants rated both transformational leadership and psychological empowerment, the relationships between study variables may have been over- or under-evaluated due to common method bias. Despite all the limitations listed above, this study reveals important results about the psychological and motivational effects of leaders on employees.

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