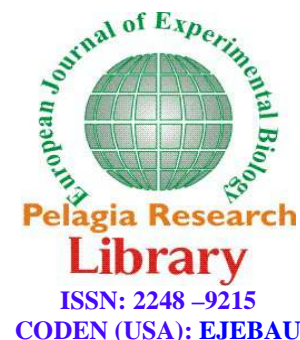




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The relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership in sports managers

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership in the sports managers of Alborz province, Iran. The method of the study was correlational. The research population consisted of 101 sports managers in Alborz province in 2012. Since the population size was limited, all members of the population were considered as the sample. The data was collected using Cyberia-Shrink Emotional Intelligence test (CSEI) (1999; Moradi, 2005) and Bass's Multifactor Leadership questionnaire (1985). The reliability of the scales was calculated to be 82% and 73% for CSEI and Multifactor Leadership questionnaire, respectively, using Cronbach's alpha formula. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics including mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum scores, Pearson correlation formula, independent t test and multiple regression analysis. The results revealed significant positive correlations, both simple and multiple, between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership style in the sports managers in Alborz province. From among the components of emotional intelligence, motivation had a greater role in predicting transformational leadership in the sports managers of Alborz province. Since emotional intelligence and its components are learnable, it is recommended that emotional intelligence be included in the educational planning of sports managers.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Transformational leadership, Sports managers

INTRODUCTION

Bass was the originator of transformational leadership theory in 1998 that can be considered as the conscious process of exerting influence on people or groups in order to create intermittent changes in the status quo and organizational functions as a whole [1]. Effective managers are the most essential and rarest assets of an organization. An organization's failure to achieve optimal productivity may be somewhat associated with ineffective leadership [2]. Although leadership is considered as the inherent ability to influence others through controlling the behavior of other group members, there is more to full-fledged leadership styles than influence so much so that they address such issues as creating motivation and ability in people to achieve organizational goals [3]. The contemporary research mainly focuses on the discovery of behaviors contributing to effective leadership. Transformational leadership consists of the behaviors addressing certain common behavioral properties such as reinforcement of teamwork and subordinates' skills as well as providing support for the individuals in reaching goals. This is characteristic of an original transformational leader since it contributes to commitment and productivity in members of the organization [3]. Bass defines a transformational leader as one who empowers his

followers, motivates them to act beyond their expectations and encourages them to pursue collective rather than personal benefits [4]. De cremer and vandijike [5] believe that fair decision-making and organizational procedures creates positive perceptions in the employees toward the organization and managers. These perceptions underlie transformational leadership. Bass [6] contends that leaders create changes in their followers through transformational leadership behaviors. That is, the followers are transformed into committed group members rather than being self-centered. Thus, they can perform beyond the levels commonly expected of them. Transformational leaders provide a foundation for long-term organizational changes that facilitate the achievement of higher-order organizational goals. In sum, the works of Bass and his colleagues provided a clear context for scientific study of transformational leadership [7].

Research has shown that emotions can increase mutual trust, loyalty and commitment in the employees and enhance organizational productivity when they are used in effective and suitable manners. Besides, they can also augment innovation and employee cooperation, hence the improvement of organizational performance [8]. In this regard, Goleman [9], contend that the leaders who are emotionally intelligent can control their feelings through self-consciousness, improve them through self-regulation, perceive their effects through empathy and behave in a way to improve the morale in others through the management of relations. Such leaders can easily deal with the problems, offer better solutions, prevent non-flexible decisions and create trust and a sense of cooperation in their followers [10]. Thus, Goleman firmly believed that emotional intelligence (EI) was a prerequisite of successful leadership so that the people with higher EI are more interested in transformational behaviors [11]. Torkan and Ahmadi [12] reported a positive correlation between transformational leadership and 15 components of Bar-On's EI except for empathy. Keyvanlu [13] concluded that there was a significant positive correlation between EI and transformational leadership while increased age and employment history strengthens this relationship. Fazeli et al. [14] found that there was a significant positive correlation between EI and transformational leadership style. Therefore, it seems that EI is an important prerequisite of transformational leadership. It is thus assumed that EI most probably prepares the leaders for the application of transformational behaviors. However, can the relationship between transformational leadership and EI be generalized to sport managers? Does increased EI lead to increased transformational leadership in sport managers? Will EI be a reliable predictor of transformational leadership in sport managers? What component of EI has a greater share in predicting transformational leadership in sport managers? The study aims to address these questions while investigating the relationship between EI and transformational leadership in the sport managers with Alborz province Office of Sports and Youth.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method of the study was descriptive-correlational. The research population consisted of 101 sport managers in Alborz province in 2012. Since the population size was limited, all members of the population were considered as the sample. The data was collected using Cyberia-Shrink Emotional Intelligence test (CSEI) [15] and Bass's Multifactor Leadership questionnaire (1985). The reliability of the scales was calculated to be 82% and 73% for CSEI and Multifactor Leadership questionnaire, respectively, using Cronbach's alpha formula. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics including mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum scores, Pearson correlation formula, independent t test and multiple regression analysis.

RESULTS

The results revealed significant positive correlations, both simple and multiple, between EI and transformational leadership style in the sports managers in Alborz province. From among the components of emotional intelligence, motivation had a greater role in predicting transformational leadership in the sports managers of Alborz province (Table 3 and Table 4).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of sport managers

Demographic characteristics		No.	Percent
Sex	Male	53	52.47
	Female	48	47.52
Marital status	Single	9	8.91
	Married	81	80.19
	No answer	11	10.89
Education	Diploma and lower	16	15.84
	Associate degree	28	27.72
	B.S	45	44.55
	M.S and higher degrees	12	11.88
Work experience	Less than 5 years	49	48.51
	6-10 years	14	13.86
	11-15 years	11	10.89
	Over 15 years	19	18.81
	No answer	8	7.92
Total		101	100

Table 2. Mean, SD, minimum and maximum scores of transformational leadership and EI

Variable	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	No.
Transformational leadership	3.32	0.73	1.23	4.88	110
EI	3.20	0.49	1.31	4.40	
Self-awareness	3.37	0.70	0.88	4.88	
Self-regulation	3.19	0.68	0.86	4.71	
Motivation	3.42	0.68	1.14	4.71	
Empathy	3.09	0.70	1	4.67	
Social skill	2.97	0.68	0.80	4.40	

Table 3. Simple correlation coefficients of EI and its components with transformational leadership in sport managers

Criterion variable	Predictor variable	r	P	No.
Transformational leadership	EI	0.646	0.0001	101
	Self-awareness	0.406	0.0001	
	Self-regulation	0.417	0.0001	
	Motivation	0.841	0.0001	
	Empathy	0.276	0.0001	
	Social skill	0.365	0.0001	

Table 4. Multiple regression coefficients of predictor variables (EI components) with transformational leadership in sport managers

Predictor variables	R	R2 Coefficient of determination	F	P	β	t	P
Self-awareness	0.850	0.723	49.50	0.0001	0.085-	1.208-	0.23
Self-regulation					0.11	1.28	0.08
Motivation					0.823	12.59	0.0001
Empathy					0.078	1.24	0.21
Social skill					-0.008	0.126	0.900

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of testing research hypotheses on the relationship of EI and its components with transformational leadership showed a significant positive correlation between EI and transformational leadership in the sport managers of Alborz province ($r=0.646$, $P=0.0001$). In other words, increased EI leads to increased transformational leadership behavior in sport managers. The results also showed a significant positive correlation of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skill with transformational leadership in the sport managers. This is consistent with the findings of Abedi Jafari et al. [16], Torkan and Ahmadi [12], Keyvanlu [13], Beikzad et al. [17], Droodgar et al. [18], Moghadami et al. [19], Farhangi et al. [20], Jafari et al. [21], Arastoo and Ansari Renani [22], Abedi Jafari et al. [16], Hebert [23], Fazeli et al. [14], Vivekananda and Madhusudhan [24], Burkham [25], Yung-Shui and Tung-Chun [26], Soriano [27], Brown et al. [28], Hoffman and Frost [29], and Gardner and Stough [30]. The present findings, however, are inconsistent with the findings of Lindebaum and Cartwright [31], Brown et al.

[28], and Palmer et al. (2001). This inconsistency may be associated with the use of different scales in measuring EI and specific conditions of different studies. Lindebaum and Cartwright [31] used TLQ-Public scale (Alban-Metcalfe et al., 2001) and Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) (2002) to measure transformational leadership style and EI, respectively. Brown et al. (28) used Bar-On's emotional intelligence questionnaire that is different from the scale used in the present and other consistent studies.

Overall, considering the present and previous findings, one may accept a relationship between EI and transformational leadership. Thus, it seems that EI is one of the main factors contributing to transformational leadership, which was confirmed in Sports and Youth managers of Alborz province. Different reasons may account for the relation between EI and transformational leadership. First, by knowing and managing their emotions, managers can remain happy, provide a model for their followers and win their followers' respect and trust. Second, the leaders with higher EI can emphasize the perception of others' feelings and realize increasing expectations of their followers, which is a demonstration of inspiring motivation. Third, the ability to understand the needs and interact with the followers is one of the components of attention to others. The leaders with higher EI are likely to show considerate behavior toward others by emphasizing empathy and the ability to manage the relations positively (Arastoo & Ansari Renani, 2008). Fourth, effective leadership requires EI so that leaders need EI in order to transform their environment and adapt to quick changes induced by information and technology [32].

The findings also revealed multiple correlations between EI components (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skill) and transformational leadership in the sport managers of Alborz province ($F=49.50$, $P<0.05$). In this regard, EI components were found to account for 72% of variance in transformational leadership in the sport managers of Alborz province. Motivation was found to have a greater share in predicting transformational leadership in the sport managers. This finding is consistent with the findings of Droodgar et al. [18], Torkan and Ahmadi [12], Moghadami et al. [19], and Abedi Jafari et al. [16]. The greater share of motivation in predicting transformational leadership may be due to the reason that motivation is the only characteristic shared by all successful managers. Successful managers may use organizational commitment, developmentalism, optimism and strong motivation to achieve success. Highly-motivated managers are more interested in the work per se rather than financial rewards and promotion. They derive energy from work. The managers with transformational leadership style do their best in doing the tasks and reaching the goals. They do not feel bored and never blame themselves for failure. They are prepared to resist any barriers that prevent them from reaching their goals. Therefore, it seems that managers need motivation in order to use more of transformational leadership style. In theoretical terms, transformational leaders help their followers look at old issues through new lenses. They stimulate and motivate them to have extraordinary efforts and think beyond their personal goals and interest. Thus, the leaders should have enough motivation themselves. Consequently, it seems reasonable that motivation had a greater share in predicting transformational leadership in the sport managers.

Considering the present findings and since EI is learnable despite IQ or cognitive intelligence [32], it is recommended that EI be included in the educational planning of sports managers. Managers and employees should not receive unilateral training on EI; rather they should be exposed to leadership situations and guided by mentors.

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