

Explaining the Role of Political Skills in the Relationship Between Transformational Leadership Style of Managers with Staff Job Satisfaction (Case Study: Municipality of Bandar Abbas)

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Abstract: Transformational leadership is one the leadership paradigms in organizational psychology which has been surveyed a lot. Transformational leadership increases subordinates satisfaction and their trust to leadership and also their emotional commitment. The purpose of the present research is to explain the role of political skill in relationship between transformational leadership style with staff job satisfaction. The research population were managers and contract and official employees in Bandar Abbas municipal (300 people) that due to limitation of the population, research sample is as many as the population. The data analysis was performed using multivariate analysis methods (structural equation) by LISREL Software. The results show that variables of political skills and leadership style of managers effect on job satisfaction of staff in the organization. On the other side, variables of political skills increase staff job satisfaction by effecting on transformational leadership style.

Key words: Political skill, transformational leadership style, job satisfaction, commitment, population

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, many of offices are subject to change and any change requires employers and managers who are associable and compatible with the changes. Meanwhile, social interaction in a worthy and fruitful manner is increasingly important for most managers and leaders as key of organizational changes management. Studies have shown that the manager who can connect with their human resources effectively and fruitfully will win the competition in future. There is such a belief among scientific and academic societies that organizations have political nature. Accordingly, it is assumed that beside need to intelligence and perseverance, function, fruitfulness and job success need other factors like social cleverness, positioning and smartness. Some have mentioned the characteristics that makes a person to be able to have a successful leveraging as interpersonal style, perception and political skills (Ferris *et al.*, 2005a). Political view to organizations believe that people should have political tendency (willingness) and also, political skills to not only be successful but also survive in organization. Although, tens of topics about politic in organizations were researched, just recently, researchers have started an organized study of political skill (Liu *et al.*, 2007).

In general, interest in social skills have increased in recent years and it has been introduced under different topics like social intelligence, emotional intelligence, ego resiliency, self-monitoring and practical intelligence. Even

though, each of these concepts are a little different from each other, all of them are recognized as a part of the total concept of social skill that implies the ease of interaction with other people. Although, much of the social skills used in everyday life are applicable to the workplace, some of the underlying dynamics are unique in organizations which pleas a kind of special social skill in order to be expanded in social and political realities of organization (Ferris *et al.*, 2007; Porter *et al.*, 2003). In fact, political skill is a unique kind of social skill that with the passage of time, may vary through training, experience and supervision . Although, concepts of social skill and political skill look alike so much they have some differences, too. Social skill implies facilitating communication and comfort in interpersonal interaction. Political skill is beyond facilitation and comfort of interaction and focuses on management of interaction with others effectively in a way that it leads to individual and organizational purposes to come true (Ferris *et al.*, 2005b).

Instrumental nature of political skills will be associated with achieving the goal while social skill is as sub-member of effective communicative manner. Therefore, political skills as distinct from social skills that its aim is to achieve success and the goals of individual and organizational level. This skill can happen out of territory of organization but its goal is organizational influence and success (Ferris *et al.*, 2008).

In this regard, the political leaders of higher level skills are able to codify the values that are accepted to

employers and organization and this function eases the process to improve workplace potential. Therefore, emotional intelligence and political skill can be considered as an index for recognizing and selecting organizational leaders. About job satisfaction and leadership styles it can be said that many scholars have mentioned the importance of anthropocentrism and its role in creating satisfaction, totally they believe that people may lose their interest in their job gradually in traditional leadership system and management and feel dissatisfaction from their jobs. But in a human value oriented system, subordinates motivation will increase.

In this survey we will investigate one of the most popular social structures, political skills (Ferris *et al.*, 2005) that a few researches have been performed about employers 'view toward their jobs. The main purpose of the present study is to discover the relations between managers' political skill with the adopted leadership style by them and the effect of it on employers' job satisfaction.

Theoretical framework

Transformational leadership style: One of the concerns of organizations and researchers in four decades ago has been leadership it has been attempted to perform this phenomenon with a number of academic criterion. One of the newest approaches to study leadership is transformational leadership. Transformational leaders Raise the needs and processes of followers and makes a significant change in individuals, groups and organizations. In accordance with the theory of transformational leadership, a leader needs to use internal agents (actors) to do necessary duties for organization in order to achieve desirable goals. In this context, it is the goal of transformational leadership to assure that the path to reach to goal is clearly understood by the agents. Transformational leader is a person who in order to improve function of employers and organization has a positive relation with subordinates and encourages employers to go beyond individual needs and work in the field of group and organization.

Components: Transformational leader needs four components or factors which are known as composing elements.

Idealized influence: In this state, the characteristics of its charismatic leader is the trusted and admired by subordinates, subordinates know him as a model and try to be like him.

Inspirational motivation: Leader encourages employees to believe in objective and achieving it by trying. These people are usually optimistic to future and goals being achievable.

Intellectual persuasion: Intellectually, leader motivates the employees. This will motivate the leaders and followers to be creative in solving problems and perform innovative solution techniques.

Personal considerations: Leader should fulfill emotional needs of the subordinates. These leaders recognize people's needs and help them to grow the necessary skills to achieve the goal.

Nature of political skill: Three decades ago in 1980s, political skill structure was introduced to organizational science literature by Fefer which was common with the Independent and parallel work carried out by Mintzberg.

Mintzberg introduced political skill as a prerequisite merit for job success that includes leverage by encouraging, manipulation and negotiation (Ferris *et al.*, 2005) and by use of tactics and strategies, organizational policies will be expanded. He knows poverty of political skill as a personal characteristic that is used in describing effective political skill in order to achieve or expand determined structural power. In his idea, power reflexes leverage. Policies are strategies that are utilized to make or gain power and political skill provided a collection of skills to effectively apply resources and perform political behavior (Ferris *et al.*, 2009). This concept is somehow like "political efficacy" structure in science literature meaning that political and social alteration is possible and citizens can have a role in making these changes.

Totally, political skill concept was raised for the first time by Fefer in order to describe individual characteristics in effective conduct of political dimension of life. But researching about is continued by Ferrizo research at the end of 1990s. They started about appropriate use of political behaviors as a collection of skills which guarantee good performance and results of successful work. Although, Mintzberg was willing to relate political skill to official authority such a skill is more related to "leveraging without any official authority" recommended by some of the researchers (Perrewe and Nelson, 2004). His logic was that prior to being involved in political behavior, people need political will and political skill. People who have much political skill are very shrewd and considerate about the communication they make with other people, they induce trust and confidence to people to permit them to manage this social invest effectively.

In Ferrizo ideal, political skill should create self-confidence and personal security because people will experience others' control over the work and necessary strategies to gain what they themselves, want (Perrewe and Nelson, 2004). Believes that a successful

administrative manager know when to stimulate passion, affection, love, concern, courtesy, reliability and control, when to laugh, laugh with who and how to be intimate with others. If these actions are successful, the person will have a personality in harmony with the environment. Political skill represents an interpersonal capability that is so much like other organizational talents like negotiation, open conflict, self-control and network development which will influence on positive results like pay and promotion and reduces undesirable consequences like job demands and interpersonal conflict to the least (Kapoutsis *et al.*, 2011).

Conceptual and experimental studies define political skill as “ability to effectively understand others and opportunities in job and make use of such a knowledge to influence on others to act in a manner that enhances one’s individual or organizational goals (Ferris *et al.*, 2005; Liu *et al.*, 2007; Perrewe and Nelson, 2004; Ferris *et al.*, 2009). According to this definition, it can be induced that political skill includes ability to effectively connect to others. Although, this skill is not urgent for job it will be promoted for function and survival in today’s dynamic and complex organizations.

Political skill dimensions: As Ferris *et al.* (2005) supposed, political skill is a multidimensional structure and is made of separated but connected components including: social awareness, interpersonal influence, networking ability and distinct intimacy (Ferris *et al.*, 2005, 2008).

Social awareness (cleverness): It refers to the ability of individuals to have a detailed understanding of social situations that includes their own and others behaviors (Perrewe and Nelson, 2004). Socially clever people have much self-awareness and insight in social environments. This specification was brought up under the title of “being sensitive toward others” (Ferris *et al.*, 2008). People who have social cleverness are constantly observant of others and social conditions and adjust their own behavior based on them and are able to identify social conditions and personal interactions that occur in these conditions. They have great ability to persuade others and make use of this skill for different goals (Ferris *et al.*, 2008). Social merits of these people increases the possibility of realization of individual and organizational goals through understanding and influencing on others in social interaction research (Blickle *et al.*, 2010; Liu *et al.*, 2007). Socially, clever people are able to interpret other people’s behavior understand social situations and have creativity in their relation with other people. This form of political skill

will effect on evaluation of the best time and method for starting a change. These people are clever observers of their social environment they understand not only complexities around them but also other people (Ferris *et al.*, 2009).

Interpersonal influence: Refers to ability of people with political skill to influence on those who they interact with (Perrewe and Nelson, 2004). And it means ability to make desirable changes in other people. Mintzberg mentions negotiation ability and influence in others as a potential characteristic of political skill (Ferris *et al.*, 2009). Those who have more influence in other are able to strategically change their behavior with other people in various environments (Ferris *et al.*, 2009). They are modest and convincing with is conceptually like Fefer’s concept for flexibility that is as personal ability for adaptability. These people make use of a convincing clever style to influence in others.

Networking capability: As one of the dimensions of political skill refers that political people have skills in making communication, friendships and unities. This capability (social invest) requires to equip people with more resources in order to achieve goals (Perrewe and Nelson, 2004). Those who have appropriate networking capability are able to successfully set an effective and profitable association with others in the user’s location. Networking capability is the strongest predictors of intrusion tactics, upward request, alliances and determination (boldness) (Ferris *et al.*, 2009). Persons who have political skill identify people who have profitable resources or communication and make social networks with them and in this way they will have social capital and social protection (Perrewe and Nelson, 2004). In addition, skillful political people are able to effectively administrate conflict and negotiations that reinforce the probability of making a strong communication between them and other people (Ferris *et al.*, 1989).

Apparent sincerity: Refers to having credibility, honesty and integrity. People who have apparent sincerity will attract their colleagues’ trust and support when being involved in their attempts to influence (Blickle *et al.* 2011; Liu *et al.*, 2007). Among four dimensions of political skill, apparent sincerity pays attention to successful influence potential (Ferris *et al.*, 2008). These people are intimate, confidant, righteous and honest (Perrewe and Nelson, 2004). Because of apparent sincerity their actions are not treated as deception and others see them trustworthy. By having self-confidence and personal security, other people will be attracted to person induces relief. Those

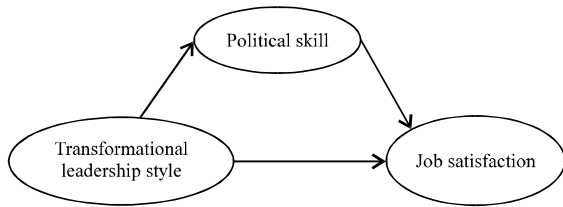


Fig. 1: Model

people who have political skill, not only do know what to do in different social situations but also knowhow to do it to conceal any self-service motivation and their work will be interpreted genuinely and honestly (Liu *et al.*, 2007).

Job satisfaction: Scholars believe that job satisfaction is a kind of attitude and in its definition they say job satisfaction is a person’s attitude about job and to simply say, a person emotion to his job and its different aspects (Javadin and Reza, 2008). Researches show that the reason of positive and negative attitudes of people toward their jobs and works is as follows show in Fig. 1.

- Factors related to policies and organization process
- Factors related to job conditions and/or how to set on-site research
- Factors that are associated with staff ‘s individual characters

Totally, job satisfaction is an attitude. In past , job satisfaction was done according to Maslow’s hierarchy and focus was on satisfying the physical and psychological needs such as payment of wages, dignity and respect for individuals (Porter *et al.*, 2003) but nowadays, researchers pay more attention to cognitive processes rather than basic and fundamental needs. According to what has been said, the following assumptions and conceptual model are presented:

Assumption 1: Leadership style has an impact on the political skill managers.

Assumption 2: Political skills influence on the job satisfaction of employees of municipal managers.

Assumption 3: Managers’ transformational leadership style is effective on job satisfaction.

Assumption 4: Political skills increase positive relationship between managers transformational leadership style with employee’s job satisfaction.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample: Sample of this survey is managers and contract and official employers in Bandar Abbas municipality with 300 participants. Out of 300 questionnaires distributed, 285 of employers and managers answered the questions with return rate of 95% . From the returned questionnaires, 35 of them were excluded from analysis because of incomplete answers. The number of valid participants were 250 people. The 52% of respondents were formed by men and the remaining was women. in managers group, respondents were in the age range of 32-50. In employers group they were in age range of 26-52. All the sample had associate degree and higher. Percentage of job experience was in the range of 2-32 years.

Measuring instruments and statistical techniques: Data for transformational leadership were obtained through multi-factor leadership questionnaire designed by Bath and Avolio. With merging of questions related to three styles of leadership; transformational, transactional and non-interferer, the questionnaire put the participants in a condition to mark what is nearer to reality. The questionnaire was consisted of 36 questions and it was in a 5 item Likert scale and was set in two forms, one special for leaders and one special for followers which investigate leadership style of a person from his own point of view and his followers’ view. Data for political skill was evaluated from translation of Ferris political skill questionnaire which includes 40 questions and is in a 5 item Likert scale. Besides, Minnesota questionnaire with 40 questions were used to analyze data about job satisfaction. One of the strongest and most suitable methods to analyze in behavioral science and social science researching is multi-variable analysis. Because nature of this kind of subjects is multivariate and they cannot be solved in a two-variable method (that each time one independent variable and one dependent variable are considered). Analysis of multivariate refers to a series of analysis methods that their basic characteristic is real-time analytics K independent variables and the dependent variable N. Analysis of covariance structures or causal modeling or structural equation modeling is one of the major methods of analysis for structural data. Therefore, as there are some independent variants in the present study that their effect on dependent variant should be studied, using structural equation modeling is necessary.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As Table 1 shows , the results indicate the suitability of the RMSEA index. Amount of RMSEA is equal to

Table 1: Model fitting indicators

df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	p-values	GFI	AGFI	NFI
485	2.18	0.078	0.107	0.91	0.93	0.95
>0	<3.00	<0.080	>0.050	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90

Table 2: Confirm or reject the study hypotheses

Hypotheses	Effect amount			Significance of direct effect	Confirm/reject
	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect		
Leadership style has an impact on managers' political skill	0.56	--	0.56	5.46	Confirm
Political skill has an impact on job satisfaction	0.38	--	0.38	3.21	Confirm
Leadership style of managers has an impact on employers' job satisfaction	0.41	0.56×0.38	0.62	3.92	Confirm

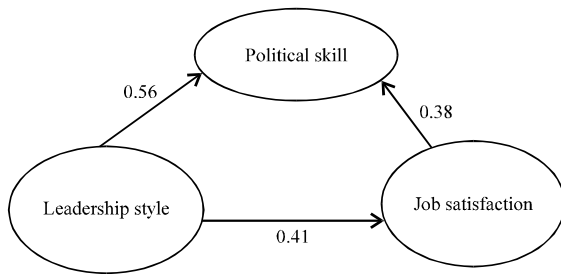


Fig. 2: Model

0.078. The limit if RMSEA is 0.08. According to the LISREL output, calculated amount of χ^2 is 1058.97 which is number <485 degrees of freedom and according to not being significant, p-value is indicative of the goodness of fit chi-square statistics. GFI, AGFI and NFI indexes, respectively are equal to 0.91, 0.93, 0.95 that represent quite a high fitness.

Hypotheses testing: Results of confirmation or rejection of hypotheses can be seen in Table 2. Results of the test show that variants of political skill and managers' leadership style have an impact on job satisfaction of the employers. On the other side, the variant of political skill will increase job satisfaction of employers by influencing on transformational leadership style (Fig. 2).

CONCLUSION

Some researchers have associated political skills with leadership effectiveness and suggested that political skill is an important component of leadership effectiveness. They suggest that political skill facilitates working with others, employers will be more effective network makers and coalition-makers and ability to create social investment will increase. Therefore, in the present survey it has been tried to investigate role of political skill and transformational leadership style on employers' job satisfaction in Bandar Abbas municipality. The attained results from the first hypothesis showed that managers' transformational leadership style has a direct impact on

political skill and this result was confirmed in other researches, too. Ferris *et al.* (2005) detected that subordinates' perceptions of political leadership skills and social skills after controlling for demographic variables importantly predict leaders leadership effectiveness ranking. Irene found out that political skill of manager is a positive predictor of function of the team. The attained results of the second hypothesis test showed that political skill have a direct effect on job satisfaction. Results of other researches, also confirm this result. Political perspective draw organizations as political fields in which negotiating, bargaining, trading, exchanging desirability and forming alliances are done to progress works and matters. According to political nature of organizations ,the person's ability to effectively conduct this field will eventually lead to a successful career (Blickle *et al.*, 2010). Job success is determined based on promotions people get, level of salary and payment of them during professional period. People who have political skill are able to put themselves in some conditions that can create opportunities or benefit from the created opportunities. They do so by understanding other people and influence penetrating in networks which provide possibility of access to information and sources. Political activities of employers have an important role in forming others' perceptions and evaluating their personalities. These perceptions, in turn and create positive images in different operating environments, particularly, images that have an impact on the evaluation of professional performance and potential. Ferris *et al.* (2007) know political skill as a comprehensive model of social competence with the cognitive, emotional and behavioral effects. Trodoy suggested that one of the major benefits of political skills is the ability to effectively conduct multiple domains to create and manage created positive perceptions by the observers. In today's organizations those who have political skill are able to manage divergent interests. In new meta-analysis, political knowledge and understanding is associated with salary and payment, promotion and job satisfaction. Opportunities for advancement or promotion are usually the most political decisions in organizations (Blickle *et al.*, 2011).

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