

## THE IMPACT OF PRINCIPALS' TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON TEACHERS' SATISFACTION: EVIDENCE FROM GREECE

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### ABSTRACT

**L**eadership and job satisfaction has been important issues in Human Resources management and in empirical educational research. The main interest of this study is to examine the effect of principals' transformational leadership on teachers' job satisfaction across 77 different Greek elementary and secondary schools during a difficult economic period for Greece and other European countries. For the analysis of the above effect multilevel SEM analysis was conducted using the approach of Muthén (1997) and the software package MPlus (Muthén & Muthén, 2001). For the purpose of this study psychometric properties of Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ) were examined in the Greek educational context using structural equation modeling techniques. The results revealed that general factor, representing the items of PLQ have an effect upon all Teacher's Satisfaction Inventory (TSI) constructs. The originality of the present study highlights the interpretation of two concepts; transformational leadership and job satisfaction based on a centralized educational system. Conclusions on implications, suggestions for future research and limitations of the findings are drawn.

**Key Words:** (transformational leadership, job satisfaction, education, SEM multilevel analysis)

## 1. Introduction

Plethora of findings indicates that school leadership is the success' key of the effectiveness of school organizations (e.g. Brauckmann & Pashiardis, 2009; Kythreotis & Pashiardis, 2006; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Over the past decades, transformational leadership has become increasingly popular. The main goals of transformational leadership are to increase group's level motivation, and morality, to support a common purpose, and to be able to develop major social changes (Burn, 1978). As Rost said (1993) the most important part of leadership is not the leader, but the relation between leader and the followers. Several studies in schools suggest that leaders who can develop a positive school culture they can improve the quality of teachers' job and teachers' job satisfaction (Nguni, 2006; Leithwood, 1994). Lawler (1973) refers to overall job satisfaction as a term encompassing all those things an individual expects to receive from his/her job and all those things he/she actually receives. Several studies in schools had shown a relationship between the transformational leadership of schools' principals and teachers' job satisfaction (Afsheen, Rabis, & Arshad, 2010). Recent studies in Greece suggested that teachers of public schools (Aspridis, 2013) were satisfied with the job itself and their supervision, whereas they were dissatisfied with pay and promotional opportunities.

However, the majority of these empirical studies have been conducted in countries where schools are highly decentralized and there is no empirical studies in Greece. Although trust worthiest instruments have been developed for measuring transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bass & Riggio 2006; Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996), there were not a Greek instrument measuring transformational leadership in education. In the present study, teachers job satisfaction was measured by using the Teacher's Satisfaction Inventory (TSI) (Gkolia & Koustelios, 2014).

The present study was designed to meet two requirements: a) to adapt the Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ) developed by Jantzi and Leithwood (1996) to Greek and b) to investigate the relationship between principals' transformational leadership and teachers' job satisfaction in Greek educational context.

## 2. Transformational leadership

Leadership is one of the most important issues in Human Resources Management. Numerous theories have been laid down; Traditional leadership theories which focus on individualistic attributes of leaders: Great Man Theories, Trait-based Theories, Behavioral Theories, Situational Theories, and Contingency Theories; Contemporary Leadership Theories: Transactional Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Strategic Leadership, Educative leadership, Organizational leadership, and Teacher Leadership. Each theory of leadership has its own characteristics (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano, & Dennison, 2003; Tng, 2009). It is socially accepted that people's knowledge is based on the education that they received from school and/ or college/ university. The study of educational leadership has been a concern for many researchers for the past few decades. Leadership philosophy must respond to the innovative challenges of schools, producing high quality teachers and students' achievements (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). A school's principal holds the main position in deciding the way a school works. It has been observed that the development of a teacher's leadership leads to inspired visions and new hope, improving the quality of a teacher's job and the effectiveness of the school.

## 3. School's transformational leadership

Over the past four decades, Transformational Leadership has become increasingly popular. According to Burn (1978), transformational leadership is the engagement among people. Bass (1985) defined transformational leadership as the most effective leadership for the success of an organization. Moreover, Bass (1990) supported that transformational leadership can be learned and be the subject of

management training. One of the most important duty of a principal is to excite teachers with vision, and encourage them to work all together as a team (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Fernandez, 1994). Leithwood (1994), based on the works of Burns (1978), Bass (1985), and Bass and Avolio (1994), created a model for school leadership. This model includes six dimensions: 1) *Identifying and articulating a vision*. Behaviour on the part of the leader aimed at identifying new opportunities for their school, and developing, articulating, and inspiring others with a vision of the future. 2) *Fostering the acceptance of group goals*. Behavior on the part of the leader aimed at promoting cooperation among staff and assisting them in working together toward common goals. 3) *Providing individualized support*. Behavior on the part of the leader that indicates respect for individual members of staff and concern about their personal feelings and needs. 4) *Intellectual stimulation*. Behavior on the part of the leader that challenges the staff to reexamine some of the assumptions about their work and rethink how it can be performed. 5) *Providing an appropriate model*. Behavior on the part of the leader that sets an example for staff members to follow, which is consistent with the values the leader espouses 6) *High-performance expectations*. Behavior that demonstrates the leader's expectations for excellence, quality, and high performance on the part of staff (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996: 515).

#### **4. Job satisfaction**

Job satisfaction has concerned researchers in the past, mainly due to its connection with important organizational results, including turnover, absenteeism and organizational effectiveness (Currivan, 1999; Nguni, 2006; Van Scooter, 2000). Job satisfaction is closely related to the performance and quality of work performed by an employee, and translates into the success of an organization. Only a satisfied employee participates and builds in the success of an organization. Numerous studies have been conducted analyzing individual characteristics of job satisfaction. (Belias & Koustelios, 2014).

Although numerous definitions have been given to job satisfaction, there is no consensus on how it should actually be defined. The claim that a different meaning should be given to job satisfaction depending on the research field of interest appears reasonable. It has also been claimed that job satisfaction is the overall evaluation that somebody receives from his/her working environment. This overall evaluation is connected with high levels of motivation and productivity (Greenberg & Baron, 1995) and it is also correlated to the norms, values and expectations of an individual (Schneider & Snyder, 1975). Furthermore, Brooke, Russell and Price (1988) as well as Okoye (2011) defined job satisfaction as a measure to check whether a person is satisfied or not with his/her job.

It has also been an effort to define job satisfaction as a dependent variable explained by different factors. People have different ideas about affairs, which are satisfactory for them and those that satisfy them (Evans, 1998). Numerous researchers divided the numerous factors of job satisfaction into two categories: The extrinsic and intrinsic factors (Warr, 1987; Hirschfeld, 2000). Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959), with his theory, Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, differentiates between those factors which cause satisfaction (motivators) and those that cause dissatisfaction (hygienes). In 1969, Smith and his colleagues suggested several different aspects of job satisfaction such as the work itself, pay, opportunity for promotion, supervision and coworkers. Later, Locke (1976) supplemented four others aspects of job satisfaction: recognition, working conditions, company and management. Thus, there is evidence that job satisfaction can be described and treated mostly as a multidimensional construct with different facets of latent factors than an overall measure.

## 5. Job satisfaction in educational context

In the literature, job satisfaction has been a significant issue in empirical educational research (Dinham & Scott, 2000; Trivellas & Dargenidou, 2009). Heller, Clay and Perkins (1993) argue that “schools must pay more attention to improve teacher’s job satisfaction” (p. 75). Zigarelli (1996), in an attempt to search for the underlying characteristics that lead to effective schools, has suggested the need to investigate the following factors: Selection of qualified teachers, teacher morale and satisfaction of teacher and school culture and principal autonomy. According to the study by Zembylas and Papanastasiou (2004) job satisfaction refers to all those feelings of satisfaction that teachers find in their job and lead them to be highly committed. Additionally, further research indicated a strong relationship between different aspects of the school environment and teacher’s job satisfaction. In other words, teachers with a higher level of job satisfaction could manage the classroom more effectively and resolve several school problems by retaining good interpersonal relations with the student’s parents, their colleagues and their principal (Henke, Choy, Geis, & Broughman, 1996; Whiteford, 1990). For example, recent studies in Greece indicated that teachers from public sector schools were satisfied with their job as well as with their supervisor, whereas they were dissatisfied with their salary and their promotional opportunities (Koustelios, 2001; Tsigilis, Zachopoulou, & Grammatikopoulos, 2006). In addition, another study in Greece demonstrated that the teachers’ autonomy was correlated with the teaching profession itself, supervision and the educational organization as a whole (Koustelios, Karabatzaki, & Kousteliou, 2004). Other studies indicated a negative correlation between a high level of stress in the teaching profession and emotional engagement of teachers with their students (Chang, 2009; Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011).

In addition, bad interpersonal relationships with coworkers are another reason of job dissatisfaction. Poor or unsupportive relationships and conflicts with colleagues and/ or supervisors lead to negative psychological intensions resulting in job dissatisfaction (Belias & Koustelios, 2014).

## 6. Method

### 6.1. Participants

Teachers from a randomly selected sample (n=640) participated in the present study. The teachers’ responses were collected from 77 schools from Northern and Southern parts of Greece. Both Greek elementary and secondary school teachers participated in the study. The sample consisted of 251 (39.2%) males and 381 (59.5%) females, whilst 8 (1.3%) of the 640 participants did not report their gender. Of these, 346 (54%) teachers teach in elementary schools and 294 (46%) teach in secondary schools. With respect to the age of the teachers, the mean age of 146 elementary school teachers was 46 years and ranged between 25 and 59 years, the mean age of 262 secondary school teachers was 48 years and ranged between 32 and 65 years, whereas 64 teachers did not provide that information. With regard to teaching experience, 225 (35.1%) teachers had acquired less than 15 years of experience and 392 (61.3%) had acquired over 16 years of experience, whereas 23 (3.6%) teachers did not provide that information.

### 6.2. Measures - Procedures

In the present study, teachers job satisfaction was measured by using the Teacher’s Satisfaction Inventory (TSI) (Gkolia & Koustelios, 2014). TSI consists of 20 items, which are divided into five constructs; principal, colleague, job itself, students and working conditions.

In addition, for the purposes of this study the Greek version of the *Principal Leadership Questionnaire-PLQ* (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996) was administered to 640 teachers. Furthermore, there is not any measurement in Greek that measure transformational leadership. PLQ is based on transformational leadership research in school context. The questionnaire consists of 24 items, which are divided into six factors. The six factors count a) Provides vision b) Models behavior, c) Fosters commitment, d) Provides individual support, e) Provides intellectual stimulation, and f) Holds high performance (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996).

All the appropriate procedures (translations, item pool reviewed by experts) were followed to adjust the translation to be realistic for Greek schools (DeVellis, 2003). Confirmatory Factor Analysis was conducted using the EQS software for Structuring Equation Modeling (Byrne, 1994) to examine the construct validity of the instrument. Each model which refers to the measurement of each transformational factor of the questionnaire was estimated by using normal theory maximum likelihood methods (ML). More than one fit indices were used to evaluate the hypothesized measurement model. Specifically, model fit evaluation relied on the scaled Chi-square test (Bentler, 1990), ratio Chi-square/*df*, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (*RMSEA*) and Comparative Fit Index (*CFI*) (Marcoulides and Schumacker, 2001). Finally, the underlying factor parameter estimates for the model with tenable fit were tested to help interpret the models.

The model that were used was assumed to test the direct effect of school-factors (principal's transformational leadership factors) on classroom-level factors (teachers' job satisfaction factors). For the investigation of the effect, multilevel SEM analysis was conducted using the software package MPlus (Muthén & Muthén, 2001). Classic multilevel regression analysis and path analysis does not satisfy the needs to examine the conceptual model (Kyriakides and Creemers, 2012). Thus, in this article this technique is used to examine direct effect of factors of transformational leadership upon teacher's job satisfaction. Since factors of transformational leadership are situated at the highest level (school-level factor), they just appear once in the analysis. For the purpose of this study Muthén's maximum likelihood (MUML) estimator was used to estimate the parameter. Missing data problem did not exist and this because even when some teachers did not respond to some questions we could estimate school scores by aggregating at the level of the school.

## 7. Results

### 7.1. Adaptation of PLQ in Greek

#### 7.1.1. Construct validity - Reliability

CFA results for the single-factor model one single factor, a second order factor and a bi-factor model showed that bi-factor model ( $\chi^2(75)=243.17$ ,  $p < .00$ ,  $RMSEA=.059$ ,  $CFI=.97$ , 90% *C.I.* of  $RMSEA$  [.05, .07]) had the most tenable fit to the empirical data comparing to the rest models. The findings of the Maximum Likelihood estimates for a bi-factor model a single ability of transformational leadership factor that underlies each of the 15 items of instrument, the model consist of different content areas such as models behavior, fosters commitment, provides individual support, holds high performance, with pretty high reliability of the overall score of PLQ and of each latent factor (see table 1). The parameter estimates were calculated and are shown in Figure I.

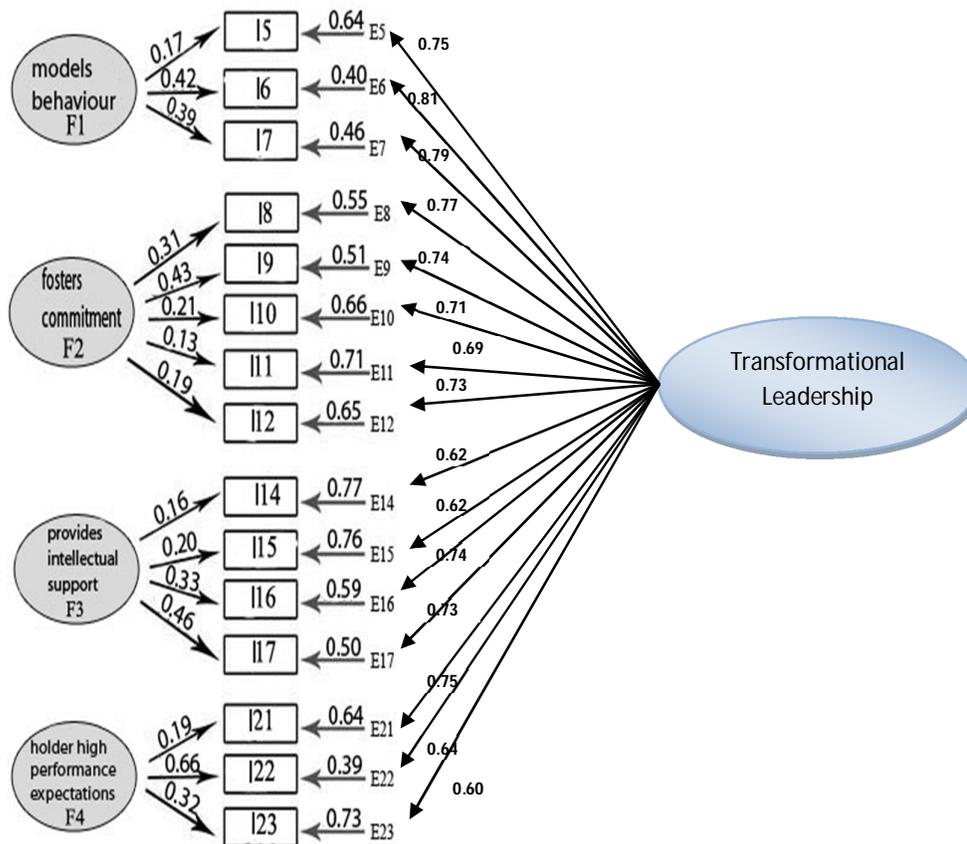
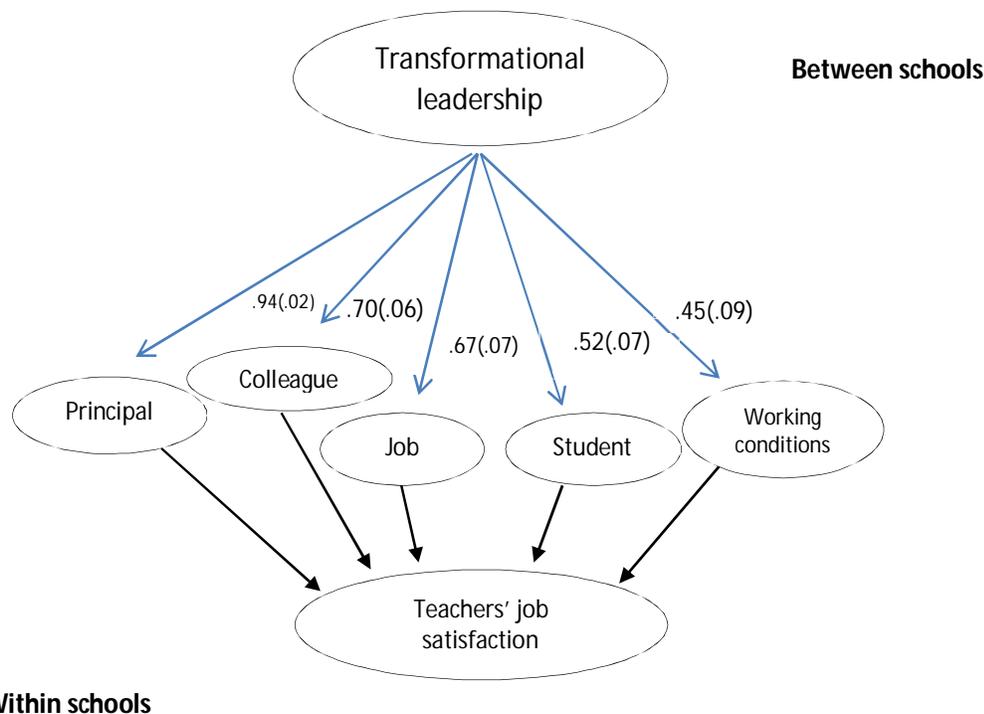


Figure I: Bi-factor model of PLQ with factor parameter estimates (n = 640).

**Note:** The symbol key (i.e. indicators) can be found in Appendix A

### 7.2. The fitting model: Transformational leadership, job satisfaction

In addition, the findings revealed that general factor of PLQ have an impact on TSI constructs (principal, colleagues, job itself, students, and working conditions) among 77 schools. Figure II indicates the fitting model in transformational leadership and job satisfaction and the estimated standardized parameters. The model reveals that all principal's transformational leadership general factor (school-level) has a significant effect on all factors of teacher's job satisfaction (classroom-level). In this study, teachers reported feeling satisfied when they observe a transformational type of leadership on their principal and support that teachers prefer to work with a principal who exhibits a transformational type of behavior.



**Figure II.** Direct effect of transformational leadership factors upon self-efficacy factors

## 8. Conclusion

In this article, we examined whether the principal's transformational leadership general factor (school factors) have an effect upon teachers' job satisfaction factors (classroom factor). In order to provide an answer to the above, teachers answered two instruments: PLQ and TSI. CFA was conducted to identify the factor structure of PLQ. As a consequence one multilevel model was generated. One bi-factor model fits best the data of PLQ. The results of multilevel SEM analysis revealed that the general factor of PLQ has an effect on five factors of teacher' satisfaction. Specifically, a principal with transformational characteristics may improve the relationship between principal, students and teachers as well as the relationship among colleagues. In addition, a transformational principal may affect teachers working conditions creating an appropriate educational environment. These results of the study confirm results obtained in other studies conducted in educational context (e.g. Freund, 2005; Loke, 2001; Mahmoud, 2008; Nguni, 2006; Yoon & Thye, 2002; Bogler, 2001; Dinham & Scott, 2000; Lee, 2005; MA & MacMillan, 1999; Maeroff, 1998; Ostroff, 1992; Rossmiller, 1992). School's principal must be an example for the teachers, assist teachers to work together toward common goals, indicates respect and concern about teachers personal feelings and needs, and expecting only quality and high performance on part of teachers.

These results provide a closer look in the relationship between principal and teachers' behavior and it might be worthwhile for the Ministry of Education to pay attention and strengthen the position of principals with transformational characteristics and as consequence to enhance teachers' job satisfaction. It is necessary that the difficulties that secondary school teachers are likely to face are taken into serious consideration by the Ministry of Education. Also, the fact that the way teachers relate to individual students is a fundamental aspect of teaching should be taken into consideration by the Ministry's decision-makers, in order to design and apply appropriate policies that will maximize school autonomy and minimize the impact

of the centralized educational system. It might also be worthwhile for the Ministry of Education to create different professional development training programs in order to provide principals with suitable knowledge relate to transformational leadership.

This study may provide first steps in a line of research transformational leadership in Greek educational context. Future research using longitudinal approaches in the investigation of the effect of transformational leadership on teachers' job satisfaction is needed. Using carefully designed longitudinal studies in different academic years would enhance the attempt to investigate consistency in different outcomes in the same outcomes over time, across different academic years and across the same individuals (Kyriakides and Creemers, 2008). A promising direction for future research is to test whether satisfied teachers with transformational leaders are likely to influence students' achievement As a result, findings of future research might provide valuable advice for researchers and practitioners who are involved in teacher educational programs.

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## **Appendix A**

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- 11.** My principal leads by “doing” rather than simply by “telling”.
  - 12.** My principal symbolizes success and accomplishment within the profession of education.
  - 13.** My principal provides good models for faculty members to follow.
  - 14.** My principal provides for our participation in the process of developing school goals.
  - 15.** My principal encourages faculty members to work toward the same goals.
  - 16.** My principal uses problem solving with the faculty to generate school goals.
  - 17.** My principal works toward whole faculty consensus in establishing priorities for school goals.
  - 18.** My principal regularly encourages faculty members to evaluate our progress toward achievement of schools goals.
  - 19.** My principal provides the necessary resources to support my implementation of the school’s program.
  - 110.** My principal treats me as an individual with unique needs and expertise.
  - 111.** My principal takes my opinion into consideration when initiating actions that affect my work.
  - 112.** My principal behaves in a manner thoughtful of my personal needs.
  - 113.** My principal insists on only the best performance from the school’s faculty.
  - 114.** My principal shows us that there are high expectations for the school’s faculty as professionals.
  - 115.** My principal does not settle for second best in the performance of our work as the school’s faculty
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