The Relationship between Leadership Behaviors and Job Satisfaction: The Case of Athens Municipal Sector

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Abstract

Background: Effective leaders act in ways that have an impact on their subordinates and the organization as a whole. They are able to see the results of their actions, make a difference and be confident in their own abilities. A basic premise is that the leader's way of thinking, acting, and personality characteristics are critical factors affecting the employees' level of satisfaction, motivation, and performance. The objective of the study is to explore the relationship between leadership behaviors and job satisfaction.

Methods: Data were collected from 21 department managers and 229 employees in the City of Athens Cultural, Sports, and Youth Organization, 126 of them were women and 124 men aged from 29 to 63 years old.

The results: The results indicated that department managers and employees adopted a transformational, rather than a transactional leadership behavior, with significant differences in terms of gender, work experience, and tenure. Concerning job satisfaction, employees reported a moderate level of job satisfaction regarding the nature of work and the relationship with co-workers, being the most important dimensions. Job satisfaction was found to be affected by gender, age, educational background, marital status, and tenure. In addition, findings revealed a significant positive relationship between transformational and transactional leadership behaviors and job satisfaction.

Conclusions: The findings add new knowledge that can be used to improve organizational practices for the retention of high committed and satisfied staff members in the municipal service sector.

1 Introduction

Performance management has become a central priority for public organizations in OECD countries since the late 1980s under the New Public Management (NPM) movement. Transformation is a challenge and an opportunity to adapt to the continuous changes and improve organizations efficiency level by implementing goal alignment, which in turn increases employee motivation at all levels (Cunningham, 2016). Key institutional drivers of efficiency seem to be the functional and political decentralization, the appropriate human resource management policy and the increments of the operations scales (Curristine, Lonti & Joumard, 2007). Several environmental factors and challenges stand out in public context,

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such as political influence, increased bureaucracy, unclear goals, problems of coordination and collaboration, strong commitment to the public good and focusing on results (Burg-Brown, 2016; Akrivos & Koutras, 2009; Morse, Buss & Kinghorn, 2007).

On the other side, the New Public Service model emphasizes the increasing role of public administrators in achieving an optimal organizational performance and change (Muterera, Hemsworth, Baregheh & Garcia-Rivera, 2018; Hansen & Villadsen, 2010). One of the most important roles of public leadership is to create a common vision that influences employees in achieving the goals of the organization (Northouse, 2007). Within this concept, the distribution of leadership among all levels of the organization's hierarchy (Hall & Lord, 2005) maintains open lines of communication with employees (Aronson, Sieveking, Laurenceau & Bellet, 2003), and ensures joint work and shared accountability (Morse, Buss & Kinghorn, 2007). In the public sector, managers face the increased need for change and adaptation in order to deliver valuable services to the citizens. Change-oriented leadership behaviors have been found to improve the performance level of public organizations and increase job satisfaction (Fernandez, 2008; Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006).

Leadership styles in public sector

A substantial number of studies and meta-analysis in the public setting distinguished two major leadership styles, the transformational (Andersen, 2010; Hansen & Villadsen, 2010; Lowe, Kroeck & Sivasubramaniam 1996) and the transactional leadership (Akrivos & Koutras, 2009). The key assumption of transformational leadership is that it tends to be one of the most reliable predictors of desirable performance outcomes, not only on an individual level, but also in teams and in organization as a whole (Wang, Oh, Courtright & Colbert, 2011). Leaders that adopt transformational behaviours, have the ability to motivate and encourage followers to challenge their assumptions by making suggestions and generating new ideas (Avolio, Zhu, Koh & Bhatia, 2004). A main consequence of these leadership behaviors is to expect the motivation of employees to achieve performance beyond expectations, to facilitate creative thinking (Gong, Hung & Farh, 2009) and the creation of a strong commitment to change the organization's goals and strategy (Van Wart, 2014). One of the most determinant leader's roles in influencing the employee's willingness to cooperate is the quality of interpersonal relationships (Vigoda-Gadot & Beeri, 2011; Polychroniou, 2008). By adding those change-oriented behaviours of the followers, they are encouraged by exchange relationships and actions that support their needs and increase the sense of fulfilment of job duties.

There is evidence that government leaders, rather than business leaders, frequently engage in directive intellectually stimulating transformational behaviours (Arnold & Loughlin, 2013). Also, results have indicated that federal managers are perceived to exhibit high average of leadership behaviours that are related to individual consideration and low average of inspirational motivation (Trottier, Van Wart & Wang 2008).

According to employee's behavior and competence, the transactional leadership style is structured around reward or punishment (Xiaoxia & Jing, 2006). Transactional leaders are operating within and according to the framework of an existing system or culture, without trying to change. They introduce a strong sense of vision, work with the organization's culture, and follow existing rules, procedures, and operational rules (Van Wart, 2014; Bass & Avolio, 1993). Public managers appeared to use a combination of aspects of transactional and transformational leadership, when dealing with unique circumstances and environments (Aldoory & Toth, 2004). Finally, those managers who adopt passive leadership behaviors appeared to have provided very little or no supervision to their subordinates and let them have the freedom to carry out their assigned tasks without direct supervision (Wu & Shiu, 2009).

Several studies have examined the relationship of gender, age, education and other work experience variables, such as tenure and experience. As stated in Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt and van Engen, (2003) findings, older and more experienced women seem to exhibit more transformational leadership behaviors than men. In particular, employees of both genders have rated women leaders' transformational behaviors, such as charisma and individualized consideration, which appear more frequently on average than men (Bass, Avolio & Atwater, 1996). It is further supported that younger but tenured employees are more likely to be engaged in change-oriented citizenship behaviors (Vigoda-Gadot & Beeri, 2011). Similarly, Rasor (1995) found that younger leaders received higher evaluations by superiors and subordinates, and Vecchio and Boatwright, (2002) added that employees with a higher educational level and greater job tenure preferred less task oriented leadership behaviors.

Employee satisfaction in public sector & factors affecting the satisfaction level

Employee satisfaction in relation to the organization is considered as one of the most important factors for organizational success. In order to achieve goals and objectives, the organization creates a strong and positive relationship with the employees and directs their efforts towards high performance achievement (Vermeeren, Kuipers & Steijn, 2014; Moynihan & Pandey, 2007). The level of satisfaction is influenced by the extent to which the job and working environment meet the needs, desires and expectations of the employees. Employees through high exchange relationships perceive that the organization cares about their well-being and appreciates their contributions (Gould-Williams, 2007).

As job satisfaction is considered a multi-dimensional concept, it consists of a great variety of organizational and personal determinants. A great number of different job attitudes is perceived to be of greater value or worth to employees. Some examples are the actual work, the freedom to take initiatives, the degree of participation in decisions, opportunities for career development, promotion at work and recognition (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 2011).

According to Robbins, Judge and Langton, (2013), the number of organizational determinants can be classified into four primary categories. The first category is related to the level of how mentally challenging the work is, including working components such as offering employees a variety of duties, feedback and high levels of autonomy, as well as opportunities to use their skills and abilities. Public managers seem to value work environments that encourage high personal autonomy and participation in decision-making. It is argued that job autonomy is positively related to more participative leadership behaviors and lower levels of job autonomy to more directive leadership behaviors (Hansen & Villadsen, 2010). Furthermore, greater task communication and job autonomy were found to positively affect employee feelings of physical and mental level of employee engagement (Tummers, Steijn, Nevicka & Heerema, 2016) and less intent to quit the job (Lin, Lin, Lin & Lin, 2013). Also, the same authors (Lin, Lin, Lin & Lin, 2013) found that higher educational level and permanent staff were positively related to job autonomy, as well as older employees and those with high organizational tenure who had lower intention to leave their job.

Empirical research that examined the organizational variables that determine the employees' level of satisfaction in public organizations identified mission valence as the most significant, as well as the commitment to the organization, the person–job fitting, the work flexibility, the level of innovation, and the degree of involvement and trust (Cantarelli, Belardinelli & Belle, 2016). Additionally, the assumption of person-organization fit was found to partially mediate the relationships between work environment and job satisfaction (Langer, Feeney & Lee, 2017; Kim, 2012; Wright & Pandey, 2008).

The second category of determinants refers to salary and reward systems. Employees expect fair, reasonable and equitable salaries and rewards based on job demands and individual skill level. Research findings in public sector confirmed that job aspects of pay and

promotion have a significant and positive impact on employees' job satisfaction level. Managers increased their work effort in exchange of a fair salary for their efforts (Zahoor, Rafiq, Zia & Rizwan, 2014).

The third category is associated to the ideal working conditions, including all those quality-related work environment conditions such as lighting, clearness, temperature and noise that provide a feeling of safety and comfort. Based on Parvin and Kabir (2011) results, the dimension of work conditions proved to have significant influence, which appeared as the second most important factor of job satisfaction.

Work group is considered as the last determinant. Many employees consider the opportunity for social interaction with friendly and supportive coworkers and supervisors of great importance. According to a research conducted by Parvin and Kabir (2011), employee satisfaction depends largely on relationship with the group members, which is recognized as the highest perceived job satisfaction contributor. Significant contributors that affect the professional pride of employees' job are work related factors such as receiving social support, supervisory mentoring, and the sense of job security. In other words, the degree to which an individual appreciates the subject of the job plays an significant role in his/her level of satisfaction (Borst & Lako, 2017; Gould-Williams, 2007). Additionally, in the municipality sector, Vermeeren, Kuipers and Steijn (2011) recognized the significant effect of the supervisor role at the overall job satisfaction.

Furthermore, many researchers studied the impact of personal determinants on job satisfaction. It seems that powerful predictors of job satisfaction include the educational level and the professional membership. For instance, several studies (Moynihan & Pandey 2007; Steijn, 2004; Wright & Davis, 2003) suggested that higher levels of education and long organizational membership affect the level of job satisfaction. The significant role of the organizational tenure was also mentioned in a research conducted among civil servants (Kim, 2012), where the more experienced employees reported greater levels of satisfaction in their jobs and committed to the organization. Similar results in federal employees (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty & Keiser, 2012; Park & Rainey, 2008) supported gender differences in the perceptions of job satisfaction with females being more satisfied than males. Finally, Wright and Davis (2003) recognized the significant influence of age on job satisfaction, as they noticed that the levels of job satisfaction increased in ages 20-25, because of the greater amount of enthusiasm and decreased during the fourth decades (30-40 years old).

Correlation between perceived leadership behaviors and job satisfaction

The influence of leadership styles on employee job satisfaction is confirmed by several studies in the public sector. Positive leader behaviors that promote support and feedback, developing trust and acting with integrity are related to employees' affective well-being and less stress (Skakon, Nielsen, Borg & Guzman, 2010). For example, in Ethiopian Public Universities it was found that among the three leadership styles, only the transformational leadership style had a clearly positive significant effect on faculty job satisfaction. Academic staff expressed their preference for transformational leadership behaviors that seemed to increase their degree of autonomy (Kebede & Demeke, 2017). Similar findings within U.S. government agencies revealed that perceived level of CEO transformational leadership behaviors have a great impact on a subordinate's job satisfaction levels and well-being (Muterera, Hemsworth, Baregheh & Garcia-Rivera, 2018) and greater contribution to predicting or clarifying organizational performance rather than in the case of the transactional leadership style (Burg-Brown, 2016). It is further supported that those subordinates who perceived their leaders as transformational ones, appeared to be highly motivated to exert extra-role behaviors, feeling more committed and loyal to the organization and providing voluntary help on their co-workers (Bottomley, Mostafa, Gould-Williams & León-Cázares, 2016).

Additional evidence of the significant role of leadership style on employees' satisfaction is provided by Vermeeren, Kuipers and Steijn (2014) in Dutch municipalities. In particular, stimulating leadership style of supervisors appeared to have an important positive effect on employees' degree of satisfaction, while the correcting leadership style had a negative effect. According to authors, a stimulating leadership approach reflects the treatment of employees by paying attention to their values and needs. In this regard, Voon, Lo, Ngui and Ayob (2011) identified the most distinguished transformational behaviors that influence job satisfaction components. Apart from all four dimensions of transformational leadership, only contingent reward and active management, by exception, dimensions of transactional leadership, appeared to be positively related to working conditions, work and assignment satisfaction.

Objectives of the Study

The primary goal of the study is to explore the relationship between leadership behaviors and job satisfaction in a municipal context applying the Full Range Leadership Model. In order for this goal to be achieved, the following five research questions were addressed in this investigation: (1) Which leadership style is exhibited most frequently by department supervisors, as perceived by their subordinates? (2) Are employee perceptions of leadership style being affected by demographic variables? (3) Which job satisfaction dimensions are exhibited most frequently? (4) Is employee's satisfaction level being affected by demographic variables? (5) Is there a positive relationship between perceived leadership behaviors and job satisfaction?

2 Methods

Sampling

The target population for this study included the employees of Athens Municipal sector (N = 830). A total of 310 questionnaires were collected in the period from April 2017 to May 2017 and only 250 questionnaires (52% RR) were valid. Out of the total number of respondents, 229 were employees and 21 directors, of whom 126 were female and 124 male, with an average of age ($M = 44.66$) and the majority 34,8% belong to the age group of 41-45 years old.

Questionnaire

For the purpose of this study, two measurements scales were used. To capture perceptions of leadership, a 36-item scale of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was used, which developed by Avolio and Bass (2004). Employees rated how often their supervisor showed the specific behaviors on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from (0 = Not at all) to (4 = Frequently if not always). It measures three categories of leadership behaviors: transformational (20-items, $\alpha = .948$), transactional (8-items, $\alpha = .744$) and passive -avoidant leadership (8-items, $\alpha = .858$). More specifically, transformational leadership consisted of the following five sub-scales: (1) idealized influence –attributes, (2) idealized influence –behavior, (3) inspirational motivation, (4) intellectual stimulation, and (5) individual consideration. In addition, the following two sub-scales were used to measure transactional leadership: (1) contingent reward and (2) management by exception – active. The scales that measure passive - avoidant leadership appeared to be: (1) management by exception - passive and (2) laissez - faire leadership.

Job satisfaction was measured using items from the following three existed scales: (1) The JDI (Job Descriptive Index, Smith, Kendal & Hulin, 1969), (2) The MSQ (Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, Weiss, Dawis, England & Lofquist, 1967), and (3) and JSS (Job

Satisfaction Survey, Spector, 1985). The total number of questions was 16 including five factors: relationship with co-workers (α = .765), nature of work *(α = .728)*, opportunities for skills and personality development (α = .737), salary and evaluation (α = .775); and work conditions and safety (α = .708). Responders were asked to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each attribute using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Moreover, the first part of the questionnaire included questions in relation to demographic characteristics of the respondents such as: gender, age, educational background, marital status and tenure.

The content validity of the questionnaire was determined by a panel of experts, which consisted of four academics and practitioners in the fields of management. The cronbach α coefficient of the Multifactor Leadership scale was found to be α = .858 and the for job satisfaction scale α = .866.

Procedure

Data were gathered through a questionnaire and responders took 10-20 minutes of an average for its competition. The participants were informed about the right to privacy and voluntary participation, the anonymity and confidentiality.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed through the use of the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 23.0 software. In the descriptive section of the results, means and standard deviations presented for each of the leadership and satisfaction factors were measured. In the inferential statistics section, all the research questions were tested. In order to test which factors affect the perceived leadership and job satisfaction, t-test and ANOVA analyses were used. To test the existence of relationship between leadership and job satisfaction, the Person *r* correlation was performed. The statistical significance of all measures was set at the .05 level of confidence.

3 Results

Demographic Data

The total sample of this study consisted of 250 employees of Athens Municipal sector, 226 of whom were employees and 21 headmasters, with the majority being women (n = 126). Their age ranged from 29 to 63 years old, and the majority belonged to the age category of 41-45 years old (34,8%). The 61,2% of the participants had a bachelor's degree, (32%) high school/vocational studies diploma and the rest 6,8% a master's degree. Depending on their working department, the greatest part of participants worked in sport (n = 101), in music (n = 58), in financial (n = 24), in culture (n = 24), in management (n = 22), in the youth and vocational training center (n = 24) and four in the legal assistance department. As for their marital status, the majority of the sample was married with children (50,4%). Regarding their work experience, more than half (n = 54) had from one year up to five years experience, followed by those who had 12-14 years (n = 50) and those from six years up to eleven years (n = 49).

Perceived leadership behaviors from subordinates perspective

The most dominant leadership style of department supervisors, as perceived by their subordinates was the transformational one (*M* = 2,50, *SD* = ,79) with the highest rated behaviors being the idealized influence-behavior (*M* = 2,61, *SD* = ,81), followed by the idealized influence-attributes (*M* = 2,56, *SD* = ,96) and individual consideration (*M* = 2,51, *SD* = ,90). Referring to the idealized behaviors, public managers were perceived to focus on

values and beliefs, instill a sense of purpose, take moral and ethical decisions and instill a collective sense of mission to their subordinates. Regarding their idealized attributes, they seemed to focus on the benefit of the group and show respect. With respect to individual consideration, managers appeared to recognize the individual needs-abilities-aspirations and emphasize on people coaching and development.

The second most frequent leadership style was the transactional one (*M* = 2,31, *SD* = ,73). Public managers appeared to exhibit higher levels of management by exception-active (*M* = 2,34, *SD* = ,78) and less contingent rewards (*M* = 2,28, *SD* = ,84). Distinguished behaviors of management by exception-active were monitoring for problems when they arise and correcting these proactively. Correspondingly, those managers who adopted contingent rewards behaviors were clarifying what subordinates can expect when goals were achieved and expressed their satisfaction of a success.

Finally, it was found that employees also perceived a lower degree of poor leadership behaviors (*M* = 1,34, *SD* = ,86), with their supervisors adopting passive (*M* = 1,54, *SD* = ,92) and avoidant behaviors (*M* = 1,14, *SD* = ,92). Such poor leading actions were perceived to be the avoidance of even taking action in problems on time or making decisions when needed.

Norm Comparison of Subordinates' MLQ perceptions

In this section, comparing the participants' leadership scores against norms and ideal scores that derived from Avolio and Bass (2004) was considered important. The gaps identified between the subordinates' reported behaviors and those behaviors that are distinctive through norms and ideal scores, were estimated to provide useful insight for future supervisor leadership development plans. The overall scores of transformational leadership proved lower than norms and dissatisfaction within the ideal score, with the greatest score of difference found in challenging the assumptions of subordinates' beliefs (-0,66) and in representation of a vision by the leader (-0,62). Similarly, in transactional leadership behaviors they also scored lower than the norms, with the greatest deviation in proving rewards (-0,8).Finally, municipal leaders seem to exhibit passive leadership behaviors more frequently by not taking action during problems on time (+0,31) and avoiding involvement (+0,26). Table 1 summarizes the results of the norm comparison among subordinates' leadership perceptions scores.

Table 1: Norm Comparison of Subordinates' MLQ perceptions

MLQ Scale	Mean	Norm	Mean Difference	Ideal score
Transformational				>3.0 -<3.75
Idealized Influence (Attributed)	2,56	2,66	-0,1	
Idealized Influence (Behavioral)	2,61	3,21	-0,6	>3.0
Inspirational Motivation	2,46	3,08	**-0,62**	>3.0
Intellectual Stimulation	2,46	3,12	**-0,66**	>3.0
Individual Consideration	2,51	2,87	-0,36	>3.0
Transactional				2-3
Contingent Reward	2,28	3,08	**-0,8**	>2.0
Management-by-Exception (Active)	2,34	2,43	-0,09	<1.5
Passive/Avoidant Leadership				0-1

Management-by-Exception (Passive)	1,54	1,23	**+0,31**	<1.0
Laissez Faire	1,14	0,88	**+0,26**	<1.0

0=never, 1=once in a while, 2=sometimes, 3=fairly often, 4=frequently if not always

Differences in leadership behaviors based on demographic variables

From the demographic characteristics, only gender, tenure and work experience seemed to differentiate the perceived leadership behaviors. Analytically, male subordinates perceived their supervisors use more frequently transformational $t(214) = 2.21$, $p = .028$ and transactional $t(222) = 2.23$, $p = .027$ leadership behaviors than female ones. Regarding tenure, it was found that work experience in the same position had a main effect on the transformational $F(29,207) = 1,60$, $p = .033)$ and transactional $F(30,214) = 1,62$, $p = .028)$ leadership behaviors. Furthermore, the total years of job experience had a significant effect on the transformational $F(31,205) = 1,83$, $p = .007)$ and transactional $F(31,213) = 1,61$, $p = .027)$ leadership behaviors.

The most determinant dimensions of job satisfaction

As for the analysis of the results, employees seemed to be overall satisfied on a great level ($M = 3,55$, $SD = ,52$). The respondents' most important determinants of job satisfaction were: the relations at work, either superior-subordinate relationships or/and colleague satisfaction ($M = 3,95$, $SD = 0,76$); the nature of work ($M = 3,94$, $SD = 0,76$) and the salary and evaluation ($M = 3,34$, $SD = 0,68$). The lowest satisfaction level was found to be in the following two dimensions: skills and personal development ($M = 3,31$, $SD = 0,71$) as well as work environment and safety ($M = 3,21$, $SD = 0,87$).

Differences in job satisfaction based on demographic variables

The overall job satisfaction level was greater in men ($M = 3,63$) than women ($M = 3,47$) $[t(248) = 2.43$, $p = .016]$ in the following three dimensions (1) relations at work $t(248) = 2.32$, $p = .021$, (2) skills and personal development $t(248) = 2.05$, $p = .041$, and (3) and salary evaluation $t(248) = 2.24$, $p = .026$. Moreover, it was found that age influenced the level of satisfaction in the dimension of salary and evaluation $F(3, 246) = 3.22$, $p = .023$. More specifically, those employees aged 41- 45 were more satisfied than those aged 51-63. Similarly, in the dimension of work environment and safety $F(3, 246) = 3.68$, $p = .013$, those employees who belonged to the age category of 41- 45 years, were more satisfied than those being 51 - 63 years old. Regarding educational background, it was found that it significantly affects their appreciation of nature of work $F(2, 247) = 7.06$, $p = .001$, with graduates appearing more satisfied than postgraduates and high school graduates. Moreover, in the dimension of skills and personal development $F(2, 247) = 4.31$, $p = .014$, as well as salary and evaluation $F(2, 247) = 4.23$, $p = .016$, graduates were more satisfied than high school graduates. Marital status was also indicated from the analysis as having a significant effect on the dimension of relations at work $F(3, 246) = 2.78$, $p = .002$, with those employees being married with children being more satisfied than single ones. Lastly, a significant effect of tenure was found in the dimension of work environment and safety $F(4, 245) = 2.40$, $p = .012$, where employees with 12-14 years of experience in the same job expressed higher levels of satisfaction than those with 6-11 years of experience.

Correlation between the perceived leadership behaviors and job satisfaction

Finally, in an attempt to answer the fifth research question, regarding the perceived leadership behaviors, which relate to job satisfaction, Person *r* correlation coefficient was used. From the results of the analysis, there was a significant positive correlation between (a)

the transformational $r(250) = .45$, $p < .01$ and (b) the transactional leadership $r(250) = .42$, $p < .01$ and job satisfaction. Those employees who perceived higher transformational and transactional supervisor's behaviors were more satisfied with their job. In addition, a significant negative correlation was found between passive leadership $r(250) = -.34$, $p < .01$ and level of job satisfaction, with employees that rank their supervisors as highly passive leaders being less satisfied with their job.

4 Discussion

The main objective of the study was to explore the relationship between leadership behaviors and job satisfaction. In relation to the first research question, the descriptive statistics showed that department supervisors are perceived to exhibit higher levels of transformational rather than transactional competencies. The competences that seemed to stand out as the best ones were the Idealized Influence (behavioral) followed by the Idealized Influence (attributed). Supervisors are perceived to place greater emphasis on behaviors that instill pride in followers for being associated with the leader and to display a sense of power and confidence through a collective mission and a strong sense of purpose. The adoption of a more transformational leadership style than a transactional one in the public sector is consistent with the findings of previous studies (Andersen, 2010; Hansen & Villadsen, 2010; Lowe, Kroeck & Sivasubramaniam, 1996). However, the overall scores of transformational leadership proved lower than the norms and the ideal scores, with the lowest averages mentioned in competencies of intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation.

Recognizing the importance of change oriented leadership behaviors such as the questioning of old assumptions and beliefs (Muterera, Hemsworth, Baregheh & Garcia-Rivera, 2018; Fernandez, 2008; Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006), it is critical for public organization leaders to engage more in such behaviors that foster change in the lives of employees and their organizations. What is more important, is that transformational behaviors have been confirmed as having a significant input in the employees' well-being (Muterera, Hemsworth, Baregheh & Garcia-Rivera, 2018; Skakon, Nielsen, Borg & Guzman, 2010), the encasement of their degree of autonomy (Kebede & Demeke, 2017) and their job satisfaction (Muterera, Hemsworth, Baregheh & Garcia-Rivera, 2018; Bottomley, Mostafa, Gould-Williams & León-Cázares, 2016; Vermeeren, Kuipers & Steijn, 2014).

Referring to the transactional leadership style, public managers appeared to exhibit much higher behaviors than the ideal scores, which were recommended based on Full Range Leadership Model. More specifically, which focus on irregularities and mistakes by monitoring subordinate performance and taking corrective actions in case of deviations. Correspondingly, they seemed to provide continent reward lower than the norms. Taking into account that contingent reward and active management by exception competencies, are both positively related to working condition and work assignment satisfaction (Vermeeren, Kuipers & Steijn; 2014; Voon, Lo, Ngui & Ayob, 2011), it is crucial for public managers to increase the level of providing rewards and reduce their correcting leadership style approaches. Another interesting result was that public managers seemed to adopt high levels of passive leadership. In particular, they seemed to avoid intervening or accepting responsibility for subordinate actions. Such low quality relationships can cause low levels of job satisfaction, because passive/avoidant management is characterized as a reactive rather than a proactive way of leading. There is evidence that employees appreciate the level of task communication and job autonomy as they feel more engaged with the organization and more loyal (Tummers, Steijn, Nevicka & Heerema, 2016; Lin, Lin, Lin & Lin, 2013). Therefore, public managers should provide more supervision and task support to their subordinates by recognizing high levels of performance and intervene when needed, in order to prevent

serious performance mistakes in their beginning. Thus, it is recommended for public managers to maintain open lines of communication with employees (Aronson, Sieveking, Laurenceau & Bellet, 2003), in a context of joint work and shared accountability (Morse, Buss & Kinghorn, 2007).

With regard to the second research question, it was found that gender, tenure and work experience significantly influenced the perception of leadership behaviors. Based on gender, it was men, rather than women who perceived their supervisors use more frequently transformational and transactional leadership behaviors. This is a surprising finding as the majority of studies supported that women exhibit higher levels of transformational leadership compared to men (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & van Engen, 2003; Bass, Avolio & Atwater, 1996). Furthermore, it can be seen from the results that both tenure and the total years of working experience influenced the way that subordinates perceive transformational and transactional leadership behaviors. These findings are consistent with the existing bibliography (Vigoda-Gadot, Beeri, 2011; Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & van Engen, 2003; Vecchio & Boatwright, 2002).

The third research question investigated the most determinant dimensions of job satisfaction. As a result, the study herein showed that the overall job satisfaction score of public employees was high. In terms of the importance levels of each factor, the relations at work, the nature of work and salary as well as evaluation, were considered to be the most important ones. These results indicate, firstly, that relations among employees and with supervisors are recognized as the most determinant contributor of job satisfaction, which lies in accordance with previous findings (Vermeeren, Kuipers & Steijn, 2014; Parvin & Kabir, 2011; Gould-Williams, 2007; Moynihan & Pandey, 2007). Secondly, the nature of work was also found to positively affect the satisfaction level of public employees. Similar results that highlighted the significant role of the subject of the job exist in the respective bibliography (Borst & Lako, 2017; Gould-Williams, 2007). Particularly, a distinguished job attitude which appeared to be of greater value is the level of a mentally-challenging work which includes components such as a variety of duties, high levels of autonomy, as well as opportunities to use their skills and abilities (Tummers, Steijn, Nevicka & Heerema, 2016). The third most determinant job aspect was the salary and evaluation. Various researchers (Cantarelli, Belardinelli & Belle, 2016; Zahoor, Rafiq, Zia & Rizwan, 2014; Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 2011) have confirmed the significant role of pay and promotion in employee satisfaction.

In relation to the fourth research question, among all the demographic variables, gender, age, educational background, material status, and tenure seemed to significantly affect the job satisfaction level. Similar differences have been further supported in the public sector based on gender (Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty & Keiser, 2012; Park & Rainey, 2008), age (Wright & Davis, 2003) and educational background (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Steijn, 2004; Wright & Davis, 2003). Finally, it was also found that tenure affected job satisfaction in the dimension of work environment & safety, with 12-14 year-old employees in the same job expressing higher levels of satisfaction than those had 6-11 years. These findings are comparable to Kim (2012) research conducted among civil servants, which found the significant role of the organizational tenure on the satisfaction level of experienced employees. Finally, according to the results, there were significant differences in job satisfaction based on their marital status and tenure, where married with children and those employees with 6-11 years of working experience were more satisfied.

The last research question explored the relationship between perceived leadership behaviors and job satisfaction. In fact, those employees who perceived higher transformational and transactional behaviors by their supervisor were more satisfied with their job. In contrast, those employees that ranked their supervisors as highly passive leaders were less satisfied with their job. This positive relationship between perceived leadership and

job satisfaction lies in consistence with several studies in the public sector (Muterera, Hemsworth, Baregheh & Garcia-Rivera, 2018; Kebede & Demeke, 2017; Bottomley, Mostafa, Gould-Williams & León-Cázares, 2016; Burg-Brown, 2016; Vermeeren, Kuipers & Steijn, 2014). More specifically, it is supported that transformational leadership behaviors have a great impact on subordinate's job satisfaction levels by increasing their well-being, feeling of commitment and loyalty to the organization.

Limitations and Future research

Although this study provides important insight into the positive relationship between perceived leadership and job satisfaction in the municipal sector, the research sample consisted only of one single municipality of Athens because of time and access constrains regarding samples. Therefore, the application of findings could not be generalized to the public sector or private sport sector. Future research on public leadership and job satisfaction should be expanded to include several forms of public organizations. Furthermore, due to the nature of the study, where the participants were asked to evaluate their supervisors, this might affect the employee's intention to answer correctly and provide honest answers about the organization. This responding bias in turn can affect the quality of the data. In addition, despite the promise of a strong relationship between leadership behaviors and job satisfaction, more construct validity evidence is needed by expanding the investigated factors related to job satisfaction. Finally, it is necessary to carry out a future research to explore leadership behaviors in more detail in order to extract information about the behaviors and the personality of managers.

Implications

This study will contribute to the body of knowledge about leadership behaviors within the Full Range Leadership Model, by establishing the preferred leadership style from the employees' perspective in the municipal public sector. Through a better understanding of an employee's needs and work expectations, public managers should consider how they might satisfy them, via inspiration, individual attention, and intellectual stimulation. To this extent, it is recommended that the department supervisors try to adopt more attributes and behaviors associated with transformational leadership, in order to develop their full potential and abilities and ensure high levels of job satisfaction among subordinates. With such leading approaches, public managers may be able to influence subordinates and shape their actions to be oriented in work quality.

It is also important for municipalities to recognize that leadership is a functional competency that should be operationalized, by being part of all supervisor behaviors and practices. Effective leadership should be considered like a vaccine to be used by local governments plagued by the significant social, economic, environmental and technological challenges they are faced with today.

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