12th International Strategic Management Conference, ISMC 2016, 28-30 October 2016, Antalya, Turkey

Leadership and Creativity: The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Individual Creativity

Hülya Gündüz Çekmecelioğlu[a], Gönül Kaya Özbağ[b*],

Kocaeli University, Kocaeli, 41500, Turkey

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between transformational leadership and individual creativity by focusing on four dimensions of transformational leadership in a sample of 275 respondents. Understanding the relationship between transformational leadership and creativity helps leaders to develop and cultivate employees' capacity for creativity. Results indicated a direct and positive link between intellectual stimulation and individual creativity. The results also indicate a positive link among inspirational motivation, idealized influence and individual creativity. However this positive relationship was significantly reduced when intellectual stimulation is included to the model.

1. Introduction

Importantly, since innovation at the organizational level is the result of creative efforts and achievements in manufacturing and commercial organizations, gaining an understanding of the effect of this form of leadership on organizational innovation is as important as understanding its effect on employees' creativity (Gümüşlüoğlu, İlsev, 2009,462). Therefore, this study intends to research the effects of transformational leadership on creativity at the individual level. In accordance with previous studies, in this study we expect to find significant relationships among four dimensions of transformational leadership and individual creativity. First, we present the relevant literature leading to our specific research hypotheses. This is followed by discussions of the method and results of our study. We

* Corresponding author. Email address:gonulozbag@gmail.com

conclude the article with the the implications of the study with regard to existing literature and suggestions for future research.

2. Literature Review And Hypotheses

2.1. Transformational Leadership and Individual Creativity

Many studies have suggested that transformational leaders have better relationships with their followers and play a key role in creation of a supportive climate that promote employee creativity (Cummings & Oldham, 1997; Scott & Bruce, 1994; Tierney et al., 1999). Aspects such as task meaning and challenge, freedom and autonomy, team cooperation and friendliness, leadership support and organizational encouragement have been brought forward as important features to perceive the organizational climate as being supportive of creativity (Abbey & Dickson, 1983; Scott & Bruce, 1994; Amabile et al. 1996; Anderson & West, 1998; Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993; Shalley, 1995; Cummings & Oldham, 1997). Furthermore, Oldham and Cummings (1996) found that high job complexity, supportive supervision, informational feedback, freedom and low oversight control facilitate creative and innovative behaviour of the employees (Oldham and Cummings, 1996).

According to Dunegan et al. (1992) divisional affiliation, work group interactions, and the quality of exchange between leader and subordinate significantly predict the perceptions of employees of climate factors believed to encourage creative activities in the firm (Mohammad; Rickards, 1996; 110). Scott and Bruce (1994) also have suggested that innovative behavior is related to supervisor-subordinate relationship. Some others have noted that trust and openness, challenge and involvement, debate, risk-taking, and and a tolerance for diversity among organizational members (Tidd and Bessant; 2009; Siegel and Kaemmerer, 1978; Kanter, 1983) are critical for support creativity.

These aforementioned factors have been identified in the creativity researches as instrumental to enhance individual creativity and correspond to the behaviours of transformational leaders essentially. New learning opportunities are created along with a supportive climate in which change, divergent thinking and professional growth is emphasized. Relatedly, Siegel and Kaemmerer (1978) suggested that leaders who support for their members in functioning independently in the pursuit of new ideas facilitate their followers' effort to be innovative and creative. Following the reasoning described above one can conclude that leaders have great power and influence on employee creativity by providing support for creativity. Accordingly, the leadership literature indicates that transformational leaders have even more significant role of creating and shaping circumstances that facilitate individual creativity. In other words, the four dimensions of TL including idealized influence (or charisma), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration promotes individual creativity by creating a supportive organizational climate.

First of all, leaders expected to have transformational effects by intellectually stimulating their followers (Avolio et al., 1999; Bass et al., 2003). When transformational leaders intellectually stimulate, they promote their followers' effort to be creative by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways (Bass & Riggio 2006: 7). They enhance generative thinking by encouraging followers to think ''out of the box'' and to apply exploratory thinking processes (Sosik, Kahai & Avolio, 1998: 112). New ideas and creative solutions to problems come from followers who challenge their own traditions, beliefs (Jung, Chow, Wu, 2003: 529) and express themselves openly without fear of negative interpersonal consequences (Kahn, 1990). Accordingly, it is hypothesized;

H1: Transformational leadership's intellectual stimulation will be positively associated with individual creativity.

Secondly TL is also expected to be positively linked with creativity because of idealized influence. Idealized influence (or charisma) influence followers to perform beyond expectations (Bass, 1985, p. 32), make extra effort to accomplish tasks even when conditions are difficult and generate creative solutions for work related problems (Qu et al., 2015: 288). Followers admire, respect and trust leaders demonstrating idealized influence and view them as extraordinary and exceptional (Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003; Yukl, 1998). By appreciating and integrating different needs and viewpoints of group members and also by communicating confidence in their followers' ability to meet