

Explaining the Effects of Inclusive Leadership on Job Satisfaction with the Mediating Role of Work Engagement

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the effects of inclusive leadership on job satisfaction with the mediating role of work engagement. This mentioned trio relationship has been analyzed with 342 employees chosen by the convenience sampling method from the four and five-star hotels. The results showed that there are positive and significant relationships among all research variables. Inclusive leadership has positive and statistically significant effects on work engagement and job satisfaction. Work engagement as a mediator variable also has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. On the other hand, it has been found that inclusive leadership mediately and significantly affects job satisfaction. In this case, it is said that work engagement partially mediate to the effects of inclusive leadership on job satisfaction.

Keywords: Inclusive Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Work Engagement.

Introduction

It is considered that leadership is the most searched but underrecognized topic in organizational behavior literature (Bennis, 1959). The understanding of the categorization and different features of leadership will support to develop and increase job satisfaction and work engagement in today's competitive business environments. Efficient communications and relationships between the leaders and followers are prominent (Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon, and Ziv, 2010) to create job satisfaction in the workplaces. Inclusive leadership is one of the leadership levels and types which focuses on being open, accessible (Nembhard and Edmondson, 2006) "in their interactions" (Carmeli, et al., 2010), available, good listener (Edmondson, 2004) for the followers or members. Consequently, the first aim of this study is to examine the trio relationship among research variables and the second is to analyze the mediator effects of work engagement on the relationship between inclusive leadership and job satisfaction under the light of theoretical backgrounds in relevant literature.

Conceptual framework and hypotheses

This part of the study involves the bilateral relations of the variables

(inclusive leadership, job satisfaction, and work engagement) and the moderator effect of work engagement on the relationship between the inclusive leadership and job satisfaction. As planned, it is aimed to conceptually clarify the concepts of variables and empirically analyze the relationships and reciprocal influences.

Inclusive leadership and job satisfaction

The concept of leadership is not easy to fully understand and examine. In relevant literature, it is still hard to find the detailed and comprehensive definition about the term and types of leadership. Inclusive leadership and inclusive leaders necessitate to be open for the change, new ideas, environment...etc., accessible, and available about different interests, beliefs, thoughts, and “feelings of their followers” (Carmeli, et al., 2010, p.250). In general, inclusive leadership represents the participative management styles instead of enforcing employees for doing what the leaders want to do (Hollander, 2012) and lays emphasis on being well-known, revered, responsible, and responsive (Hollander, 2009). Again, according to Hollander (2009; 2012), inclusive leaders create participative work environment and supportive organizational climate, and rightfully appreciate employees' contributions in resolution process.

Job satisfaction which is generally linked with motivation but these two are different (George and Jones, 2008) can be considered as a combination of individuals' feelings and beliefs about their present jobs (Aziri, 2011). It is thought that leaders should be inclusive and integrative. This will help to develop job satisfaction for the workers. According to Xiaotao, Yang, Diaz, and Yu (2018, p.884) inclusive leadership can be defined as one of the types of leadership that leaders have some abilities associated with inclusiveness in business/work life to be able to create an inclusive and integrative work environment “where can satisfy employees' needs for belongingness and uniqueness”. Inclusive leaders have driving force to increase employees' motivation and energy and to create business-minded workers (Qi, Liu, Wei, and Hu, 2019). Thus, the following hypothesis (H1) is predicted:

H1: Inclusive leadership will be directly, positively, and significantly effective on job satisfaction.

Inclusive leadership and work engagement

As it is understood, inclusive leadership that requires openness, availability, accessibility and so on generally sends inspiring and apparent signals to reach the followers who are satisfied willing, and happy with their jobs on course for reaching the goals and new opportunities (Edmondson, 2004; Carmeli, et al., 2010). Work

engagement can be defined as the positive achievements for the individuals such as strong motivation (Schaufeli, 2012), positive emotions, job performance, well-being...etc. (Schaufeli and Salanova, 2008; Halbesleben, 2010). Nembhard, et al. (2006) emphasized that there are direct and positive effects of inclusive leadership on employees' engagement at work. According to Qi, et al., (2019), inclusive leaders are the good listeners and consider employees' opinions and suggestions. These leaders also have an encouraging attitude to rationally tolerate employees' mistakes and faults. Inclusive leaders also inspire their followers for the best contribution to the work and organization (Hollander, 2009). In addition to all, leader inclusiveness is an effective factor to provide followers necessary sources related to work and freedom at work (Carmeli, et al., 2010). This will help employees to increase their wishfulness level about their job and according to Garg and Dhar (2017), the level of aspiration which creates work engagement is depending on mutual interaction between the leaders and employees and psychological feeling of confidence. Therefore, it can be said that the quality of interaction between the leaders and followers will increase the level of work engagement (Qi, et al., 2019). Choi, Tran, and Park, (2015) and Wang, et al., (2019) noted that there is a positive and significant relationship between inclusive leadership and employee work engagement and it is seen in these researches that inclusive leadership positively and significantly affects work engagement as a basis of our predicted hypothesis (H2):

H2: Inclusive leadership will be positively and significantly effective on employees' work engagement.

Work engagement and job satisfaction

As mentioned before, work engagement defined by Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker (2002, p.74) refers to the positive outcomes of employees and defined as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption”. Vigor can be concerned as the “high levels of energy and mental resilience while working” and continuousness when employees face with the challenges in work environment. On the other hand, dedication goes by the name of commitment and altruism while absorption which can be considered synonymous with learning and devotion expresses “the state of being wholly concentrated on, and deeply engrossed in, one's work” (Choi, et al., 2015, p.933; Schaufeli, et al., 2002). The level of employees' work engagement is depending on “what happens during the day” (Schaufeli, 2012, p.5). Organizational HRM strategies will help to increase employee engagement at work (Schaufeli, et al., 2008). Job satisfaction can be

considered as one of the consequences of work engagement. Based on the relevant literature, it is also said that “engaged employees outperform satisfied employees” (Schaufeli, 2012 as cited in Rich, Lepine, and Crawford, 2010). So, the following hypothesis (H3) is also predicted:

H3: Work engagement will be positively and significantly effective on employees' job satisfaction.

Inclusive leadership, job satisfaction, and work engagement

It has been supported by different researches for years that leaders are the main factors to guide and support employees while being on course for satisfying and engaging their jobs. As George, and Zhou (2007) emphasized that most relevant research and researchers are generally focusing on detailed/overall leader support without making discrimination among the tasks and supports of the leaders at work. At this point, inclusiveness of the leaders has an importance for the overall support to create job satisfaction and work engagement. According to Hollander (2012), inclusive leaders can be defined as a nourisher for fairly understanding employees' reliance and faithfulness. Nembrand, et al., (2006) emphasize that inclusive leaders invite their followers to the decision making process in an organization to act for increasing their satisfaction and commitment.

In this study, it is aimed to analyze the effects of inclusive leadership on job satisfaction and see the change of these effects when included work engagement in this relationship. As noted by Avery, McKay, and Wilson (2007) and Hollander (2009), there is a positive influence of inclusive leadership on employees' work engagement which may increase job satisfaction. From this point of view, the following hypothesis (H4) is predicted:

H4: Work engagement has a mediating role in the effect of inclusive leadership on job satisfaction.

Methodology

This study aims to determine the mediating role of work engagement to the effects of inclusive leadership on job satisfaction. First of all information related to the sample and scales were given. Afterwards, the statistical model created under the light of data and analyses and findings were noted. Within this scope, confirmatory factor analyses were carried out and correlations among the variables were also determined and structural equation model were created. The results concerning with the regression analyses and the tests of hypotheses were presented. According to the research, Figure 1 can be seen below to be able to show the relationships among the mentioned variables.

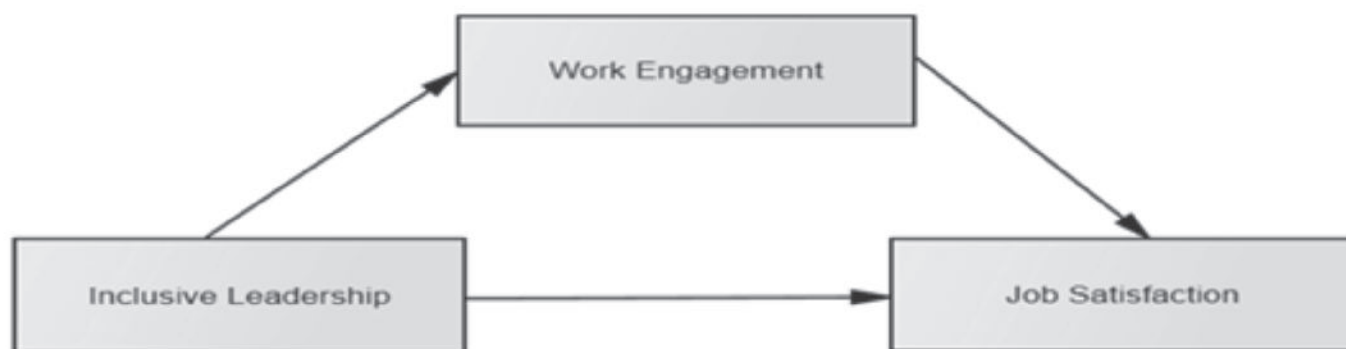


Figure 1. Relationships among the research variables

Samples and demographic features

The population of this research consists of the hotel employees. Employees who are working at four and five-star hotels were chosen by the convenience sampling method as the samples of this research. Due to the time and cost limitation, questionnaires were distributed 400 employees in randomly chosen 15 hotels. 359 out of 400 questionnaire forms were filled out but 342 of them found appropriate for the analyses. 81 of the participants were

female and 261 were male. 103 of the participants were between the ages of 18-30, 185 of them were between the ages of 31-45 and 54 of them had the age of 46 and over. Among these participants, 109 of them work in the front office, 125 work in the food and beverage department, 36 of them work in sales-marketing, 10 work in human resources and 62 participants work in the housekeeping department. 78 of the all participants have 1-5 year work experience while 189 of them have 6-10 year experience and 75 of

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Scales

Three different scales about inclusive leadership (IL), work engagement (WE), and job satisfaction (JS) were gathered by using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Inclusive Leadership Scale (IL) with the 9-item and 3 dimensions (openness, availability, and accessibility) constructed by Carmeli, et al. (2010) was used. Sample items were as follows:

“The manager is open to hearing new ideas” (openness),

“The manager encourages me to access him/her on emerging issues” (accessibility) and

“The manager is ready to listen to my requests” (availability). The Cronbach alpha for this measure was .94.

Work Engagement Scale (WE) created by Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova (2006) consists of 9 items and 3 dimensions including vigour, dedication and absorption. Sample items were as follows:

“At my work, I feel bursting with energy” (vigour),

“My job inspires me” (dedication) and

“I feel happy when I am work intensely” (absorption). The Cronbach alpha for this measure was .94.

Job Satisfaction Scale (JS) developed by Chen, Ku, Shyr, Chen, and Chou (2009) with 5 items and one dimension was also used in this research. The Cronbach alpha for this measure was found as .95.

Data analyses and findings

SPSS 21 and AMOS programs were used to analyzed the collected data. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to examine the structural validity of the measurement model in which all scales used in the study were examined together. According to the goodness of fit values ? ? obtained and presented in Table 1 below, it is seen that the scales and research model are in good agreement with the data (Meydan and Şeşen, 2015; Gürbüz and Şahin, 2016).

Table 1. The goodness of fit statistics of the scales and research model

Goodness of fit values	χ^2	df	CMIN /DF	SRM R	IFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Inclusive Leadership	50,18	24	2.091	.021	.991	.991	.987	.057
Work Engagement	48.50	24	2.02	.016	.991	.991	.986	.055
Job Satisfaction	12.00	5	2.40	.010	.996	.996	.992	.064
Measurement Model	283.04	22	1.281	.032	.992	.992	.991	.029

χ^2 =Relative Chi Square Index, df=Degree of freedom, SRMR=Standardized Root Mean Square Residual, IFI=Incremental Fit Index, CFI=Comparative Fit Index, TLI=Tucker-Lewis Index, RMSEA=Root Mean Square

The relationships among the variables, mean, standard deviation, mean variance (AVE) values, combined reliability (CR) values, Cronbach Alpha internal

consistency coefficients are shown in Table 2 below. When examined, positive and significant relationships were found among the research variables. In addition to this, it is seen that the CR values of the research variables are between .94 and .96; and AVE values are between .74 and .80 and CR>AVE.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients of the variables

	Mean.	SD	CR	AVE	1	2	3
1.Inclusive Leadership	3.70	1.05	.97	.80	(.94)		
2.Work Engagement	3.55	1.09	.96	.74	.557**	(.94)	
3.Job Satisfaction	3.92	1.10	.94	.78	.443**	.525**	(.95)

**p<.001, n= 342, Cronbach Alfa values are in parenthesis.

In order to examine the causal relationships and mediation effect based on the hypotheses, the causal structural equation model presented in Figure 2 below was analyzed. To test the mediation role, the significance of indirect effects was examined by using bootstrap method. The

highest likelihood method was used in the 95% confidence interval with 5000 samples and the Monte Carlo Parametric Bootstrap Option was selected. Lower Bounds and Upper Bounds of Bootstrap confidence interval ? ? ? ? are shown in Figure 2 below:

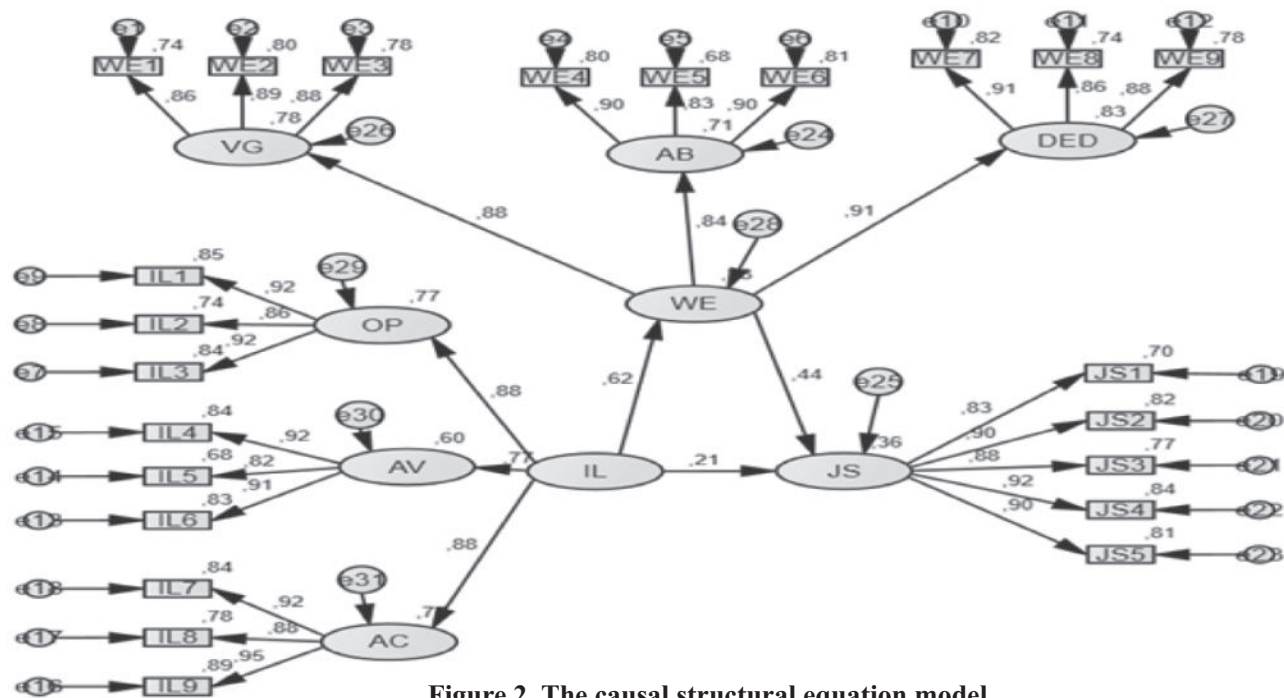


Figure 2. The causal structural equation model

Research hypotheses were tested on structural model with implicit variable. The research model provides the goodness of fit values ($\chi^2 / df = 1.28$; SRMR = 0.32; IFI = 0.99; TLI = 0.99; CFI = 0.99; RMSEA = 0.03).

As a result of the analysis, inclusive leadership has totally ($\beta = .483, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [.35, .60]$) and directly ($\beta = .208, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [.07, .35]$) positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. In this case, H1 is supported.

Besides, inclusive leadership has a positive and significant effect on work engagement ($\beta = .620, p < .001$). So, H2 is also supported.

Work engagement as a mediator variable, has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = .445, p < .001$). In this case, H3 is supported.

It was also found that inclusive leadership has an indirect ($\beta = .276, p < .001$) and significant effect on job satisfaction. So, H4 is supported.

According to the research findings, work engagement partially mediate to the effects of inclusive leadership on job satisfaction. Because bootstrap confidence interval values do not include 0 (zero) value.

Table. 3. Mediating analysis

Tested way			β	SE	BC %95 GA	
					LB	UB
Work Engagement	<---	Inclusive Leadership	0,620***	0,80	.49	.74
Job Satisfaction	<---	Work Engagement	0,445***	0,73	.29	.58
Job Satisfaction	<---	Inclusive Leadership				
Total Effect (c)			0,483	0,62	.35	.60
Direct Effect			0,208***	-	.07	.35
Indirect Effect (axb)			0,276***	-	.18	.38

Note: n= 342 (5.000 Bootstrap sample), YD %95 GA = Bias corrected %95 Confidence interval, X= Inclusive Leadership, Y= Job Satisfaction, M= Work Engagement, a= the effect of X on M, b= the effect of M on Y, c= the total effect of X on Y, c'= the effect of X on Y.
***p<.001

Conclusion and implications

It is possible to read from the relevant literature that job rotation and changing the work environment when needed are easy with engaged employees depending on the design and contents of the job, personal needs, conferring different jobs, and so on (Wrzesniewski, and Dutton, 2001). On the other hand, engaged and satisfied employees are more willing to follow the strategies and steps to create more effective work environment and improve their current jobs (Bakker, 2011). Inclusive leaders are the mentors to guide their workers and to find the best way for increasing work engagement and job satisfaction.

As Schaufeli (2012, p.4) noted and emphasized that some tasks among several tasks consisted in job may encourage employees and they can feel more engaged for doing these tasks rather than the remainders. On the other hand, it can be said that work engagement may reduce the burnout as Schaufeli emphasized it “as the positive antithesis of burnout”. People or employees engaged with their jobs are energetic, happy, effective, willing to do more, motivated rather than who are burned out (Maslach and Leiter, 1997; Schaufeli, 2012; Halbesleben, 2010). For this reason, different training and educational programs in an organization according to the needs and requests of the employees should be focused to increase job satisfaction and work engagement. Inclusive leadership necessitates the effective cooperation, humbleness, sincerity in today's competitive business environments.

Last but not least, all these mentioned variables and relationships among them can be explained with the Leadership Categorization Theory founded by Elenor Rosch in 1978 with the name of Categorization Theory. This theory has been adapted in the field of leadership by Robert Lord and co-workers in 1984 and named as Leadership Categorization Theory to be able to explain the term of leadership in terms of social cognition (Çalışkan, 2017). According to this theory, it is impossible to be a leader without the followers and leadership should be discussed within the three-step hierarchical structure. The top level of this structure includes the most inclusive leadership level in which the difference between the leaders and the others who are not the leaders can easily be seen by the audiences. As long as going down to the lower levels, the inclusiveness of the leadership decreases (Lord, Foti, and De Vader, 1984). Therefore, within the frame of leadership categorization theory, as the confidence level of the followers to the leaders increases, job satisfaction, organizational success, motivation, and leader-member interactions will also increase. So, it can be said that increased satisfaction, motivation, and beliefs will help to create work engagement as well.

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