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Leadership and Job Satisfaction: The Case of Civilian Technical Employees of the Ministry of National Defense †

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Abstract: The present research attempted to investigate the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction for civilian personnel of the Ministry of Defense. The research was carried out during the months of May and June in the year 2022. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (M.L.Q.-5X) and the Employee Satisfaction Inventory (ESI) were given via the Internet in digital form to 127 participating technical employees and civilian personnel who served in this specific period in various services of the Ministry of National Defense of Greece. The survey data were statistically analyzed using SPSS program v.22. The results of the dimensional correlations between leadership styles and job satisfaction showed that idealized influence (both attributes and behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, and contingent rewards were positively related to overall employee satisfaction. In contrast, management by exception (active) was not correlated with overall satisfaction. Furthermore, management by exception (passive) and laissez-faire leadership were negatively correlated with overall job satisfaction. Accordingly, the statistical findings of the dimensional correlations concerning the relationship between the three dimensions of leadership outcomes and job satisfaction showed that extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction with leadership were positively related to overall satisfaction. Higher effect sizes were reported for the correlation between the contingent reward dimension of process leadership and employee satisfaction, indicating that processing leadership has a stronger effect on the satisfaction of the technical employees of the Ministry of National Defense compared to transformational leadership dimensions. We assume that this result is due to the special characteristics of the Ministry of National Defense workplace.

Keywords: transformational leadership; processing leadership; leadership styles; job satisfaction; Hellenic army

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1. Introduction

Job satisfaction is an important factor in the work of employees and organizations [1] Job satisfaction is a positive reflection of the emotion experienced by the employee and concerns their work and the aspects that distinguish it [2,3]. Essentially, satisfaction, according to Spector, expresses the degree of pleasure or displeasure that the employee feels about his/her work. According to [4], job satisfaction is not a single construct but consists of several parts characterized as intrinsic (for example, variety of activities, application of skills, creativity) and extrinsic satisfaction (for example, working conditions, hours, wages) which reflects the degree of satisfaction the employee experiences from his employment.

Research on public sector workers, especially in sensitive sectors such as national defense and security, is limited worldwide, and Greece is no exception. Furthermore, there is very limited evidence on the relationship between job satisfaction in armed forces personnel (military and civilian) and leadership style. According to [5] "Leadership can be considered the ability and behavior of certain individuals to "lead" forward, changing the

existing situation through their influence on others, whether they are their subordinates, their collaborators, or their followers".

Military leadership differs in that, along with the trust the leader must have in his subordinates, intense control of every decision, movement, or strategy implemented by them is also required. The military leader should make decisions often that are legal, ethical, and fair while ensuring the proper training and appropriate working conditions of his subordinates, as well as their inspiration and motivation, within the context of discipline in military behavior. Strictness, and to some extent authoritarianism, is necessary when subordinates do not possess the appropriate experience and maturity [6].

From the above, it can be concluded that the leader in the context of the armed forces can shape the job satisfaction of his subordinates to a very large extent. Because of the decisive role that the leader plays in the armed forces, it affects the professional relationships between his subordinates, whether they are military or civilian personnel. In the latter case of civilian personnel, the peculiarities of military leadership, such as close control and strictness, do not guarantee that the desired results will be produced.

Civilian personnel in the Hellenic Armed Forces (permanent personnel with a private law employment relationship for a fixed or indefinite period) participate in the entire range of activities of the three types of general staff, staffing the military factories, combat wings, military schools, scientific services, research centers, nursing units, and logistic-administrative operational units and services. Today, according to the current Civil Staff Organization of the Ministry of Defense (Presidential Decree 79/2018), thirteen thousand nine hundred and twelve (13,912) jobs are planned, of which three hundred and fifty-nine (359) positions are made for specific roles, and the rest are permanent. Civilian personnel are subject to the civil service code, i.e., to the provisions of Law 3528/2007, "Sanction of the Code of Status of Public Civilian Administrative Servants and Employees of the N.P.D.D." and Presidential Decree 410/1988 "Codification in a single text of the provisions of the existing legislation, concerning the personnel with a private law employment relationship of the State, Local Self-Government Organizations and other Public Law Legal Entities". Based on these provisions, the obligations and rights of civilian personnel are differentiated from those of military personnel, who must comply with the military code. Nevertheless, both civilian and military personnel are commanded by leaders who have been nurtured in the military spirit and practice military leadership.

The purpose of this research was to study the relationship between leadership styles and the job satisfaction of technical employees and civilian personnel of the Ministry of National Defense (MND) to understand what the most important factors of leadership are that affect the satisfaction of technical employees from their work. The main research question is formulated as follows: how are leadership styles (transformational, progressive, passive) related to the job satisfaction of employees in the Ministry of National Defense?

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Sample

Demographic and occupational information of the studies sample are presented in Table 1. The sample consisted of 127 employees of the Ministry of National Defense (MND) and technical specialties. The men who participated in the survey totaled 120, which corresponded to 94.5% of the sample, and 7 women participated, which corresponded to 5.5% of the sample. The majority of participants belonged to the category from 41 to 67 years at a rate of 73.2% of the sample, while only 9.4% were under 30 years old. Therefore, most of the sample was over 41 years old. The largest majority were married (94 people) at a rate of 74%, and a small number were single (23 people) at a rate of 18.1%. Most participants belonged to secondary education (110 people) at a rate of 86.6%.

The participants work as part of the Army General Staff (54 people, a percentage of 42.5%), the Navy General Staff (44 people, a percentage of 34.6%), and the Air Force General Staff (29 people, a percentage of 22.8%) and the majority (94.5%) do not hold some position of responsibility. Sixty-eight (68) people, at a rate of 53.5%, stated that they

had been working at the MND for 22 to 31 years, and correspondingly a rate of 22.9% (29 people) stated that they had been working at the MND from 11 to 21 years. A rate of 38.6% (49 people) had no experience at all in the private or public sector related to their recruitment specialty at the Ministry. Correspondingly, 78 people, at a rate of 61.4%, stated that they had previous experience in the private or public sector related to their recruitment specialty at the Ministry of Defense.

Table 1. Description of sample demographic and occupational data.

		N	%
Sex	Man	120	94.5%
	Woman	7	5.5%
Age	18–30	12	9.4%
	31–40	22	17.3%
	41–50	46	36.2%
	51–67	47	37.0%
Marital status	Single	23	18.1%
	Married	94	74.0%
	Civil partnership	0	0.0%
	Divorced	9	7.1%
	Widowed	1	0.8%
Education level	Secondary education	110	86.6%
	University education	12	9.4%
	Postgraduate	4	3.1%
	Ph.D	1	0.8%
Staff I work for	Army General Staff	54	42.5%
	Navy General Staff	44	34.6%
	Air Force General Staff	29	22.8%
Job position	Employee	120	94.5%
	Head of Division	6	4.7%
	Deputy Director/Director	1	0.8%
Years of employment at the Ministry of National Defense	Up to 10 years	17	13.4%
	11–21 years	29	22.8%
	22–31 years	68	53.5%
	32–40 years	13	10.2%
Prior experience in the wider public or private sector related to my recruitment specialty	I have no previous experience	49	38.6%
	Related to my recruitment specialty, up to 7 years	69	54.3%
	From 8 years and above	9	7.1%

2.2. Questionnaire

To collect the data of the sample of the present study, a single tool (questionnaire) was used, with closed-ended questions consisting of three parts. The first part referred to the collection of demographic and work data of the participants (gender, age, marital status, level of education, the staff I work for, employment relationship, job position, monthly income, years of employment at the Ministry of National Defense [MND], and previous service in the wider public or private sector relevant to my recruitment specialty).

The second part of the research tool consisted of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) by Avolio & Bass (2004) [7,8]. More specifically, the type of questionnaire, the "rater form" of the MLQ category (5X-Short), was chosen, with which subordinates and partners were given the opportunity to evaluate their leaders at the level of individual characteristics and behaviors, as mentioned in [8]. The MLQ-5X consists of forty-five (45) questions on a 5-point Likert-type scale as follows: 1 = Not at all, 2 = A little, 3 = Quite a bit,

4 = A lot, and 5 = Very much. In the present research, the overall reliability of the subscales of leadership styles was satisfactory (Cronbach's alpha between 0.87 and 0.96).

The third part of the questionnaire aimed to measure the professional satisfaction of the technical employees of the MND, including the Employee Satisfaction Inventory (ESI) [9]. In the present research, the overall reliability of the ESI was satisfactory (Cronbach's alpha = 0.79).

2.3. Statistical Analyses

The statistical processing of the data was implemented with the statistical package SPSS v.28. The description of the demographic and work characteristics was implemented with fixed and relative frequencies (N, %). The reliability of the questionnaire's scales and subscales was checked by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The new variables created for leadership styles and job satisfaction were derived from the sum of the corresponding statements according to the instructions of the manufacturers of the questionnaires. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, median, skewness, and kurtosis) were calculated for each of the continuous variables [10]. Correlations between leadership styles, leadership outcomes, and job satisfaction were obtained using the Pearson r correlation coefficient [11]. A significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ was considered.

3. Results

Regarding the statistical analysis of the results of the MLQ-5X multivariate questionnaire concerning transformational leadership, we obtained the following data, which are shown in Table 2. The sample reports a moderate score on the scale of idealized influence—attributed (M = 3.21, SD = 0.86). Also, for the scale of idealized influence—behaviors—the mean value was moderate-to-positive (M = 3.47, SD = 0.81). For the inspirational motivation scale, the mean value was moderate to positive (M = 3.52, SD = 0.93). For the intellectual stimulation scale, the sample showed a moderate score (M = 3.38, SD = 0.97). For the individual consideration scale, the sample also presented a moderate score (M = 3.36, SD = 1.09).

Table 2. Description of sample items according to the MLQ-5X Multifactorial Transformational Leadership Questionnaire.

	Idealized Influence (Attributed)	**Idealized Influence (Behavior)**	**Inspirational Motivation**	**Intellectual Stimulation**	**Individual Consideration**
Mean	3.21	3.47	3.52	3.38	3.36
Median	3.00	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.75
Standard Deviation	0.86	0.81	0.93	0.97	1.09
Skewness	−0.221	−0.306	−0.514	−0.709	−0.704
Skewness SE	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215
Kurtosis	−0.463	−0.528	−0.144	0.051	−0.546
Kurtosis SE	0.427	0.427	0.427	0.427	0.427
Range	4.00	3.75	4.00	4.00	3.75

In addition, regarding the statistical analysis of the results of the questionnaire concerning processing and passive leadership as well as the outcome of leadership, we obtained the following data, which appear in Table 3. The sample reported a positive score on the contingent reward scale (M = 3, 82, SD = 1.05). On the management by exception (active) scale, the sample presented a moderate score (M = 3.42, SD = 0.75). For the management by exception (passive) scale, the sample showed a score below M (M = 2.78, SD = 0.67). For the laissez-faire leadership scale, the sample also scored below M (M = 1.95, SD = 0.93). The sample showed a moderate score on the extra effort scale (M = 3.13, SD = 1.07). On the effectiveness scale, the sample showed a moderate-to-positive score (M = 3.49, SD = 0.95).

For the satisfaction scale, the sample also presented a moderate-to-positive score (M = 3.54, SD = 0.98).

Table 3. Description of sample items according to the MLQ-5X Multifactorial Questionnaire of Processing and Passive Leadership and the Leadership Outcome.

	Contingent Reward	Management by Exception (Active)	Management by Exception (Passive)	Laissez-Faire Leadership	Extra Effort	Effectiveness	Satisfaction
Mean	3.82	3.42	2.78	1.95	3.13	3.49	3.54
Median	4.00	3.25	2.75	2.00	3.33	3.75	3.50
Standard Deviation	1.05	0.75	0.67	0.93	1.07	0.95	0.98
Skewness	−0.757	0.257	0.662	1.197	−0.472	−0.522	−0.804
Skewness SE	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215
Kurtosis	−0.422	0.092	0.961	1.020	−0.564	−0.398	−0.090
Kurtosis SE	0.427	0.427	0.427	0.427	0.427	0.427	0.427
Range	4.00	3.50	3.50	4.00	4.00	3.75	4.00

Table 4 shows in detail the descriptive data of the research sample regarding the variables of the ESI Job Satisfaction Questionnaire. More specifically, for the working conditions scale, the sample presented a moderate score with an increasing trend (M = 3.46, SD = 0.74). On the salary scale, the sample score was below M (M = 1.85, SD = 0.67). The same applied to the Promotion scale, with the sample's score being below M (M = 1.79, SD = 0.76). For the nature of work scale, the sample showed a positive score (M = 4.14, SD = 0.51). For the immediate supervisor scale, the sample showed a moderate-to-positive score (M = 3.90, SD = 0.91). For the organization as a whole scale, the sample showed a moderate score (M = 3.02, SD = 0.73). For the total satisfaction scale, the sample showed a moderate-to-positive score of 16 (M = 3.14, SD = 0.39).

Table 4. Description of sample items according to the Job Satisfaction Questionnaire—ESI.

	Working Conditions	Salary	Promotion	Nature of Work	Immediate Supervisor	Organization as a Whole	Overall Satisfaction
Mean	3.46	1.85	1.79	4.14	3.90	3.02	3.14
Median	3.50	2.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.18
Standard Deviation	0.74	0.67	0.76	0.51	0.91	0.73	0.39
Skewness	−0.664	0.561	0.934	−0.661	−1.417	−0.061	−0.995
Skewness SE	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215
Kurtosis	0.344	0.246	1.436	0.308	1.697	0.820	1.240
Kurtosis SE	0.427	0.427	0.427	0.427	0.427	0.427	0.427
Range	3.75	3.00	4.00	2.25	4.00	4.00	2.00

Above, in Table 5, the statistical results of the correlations of the dimensions concerning leadership styles and job satisfaction are shown. More specifically, overall satisfaction shows a statistically significant, positive, and moderate correlation with idealized influence that is attributed (r = 0.497, $p < 0.01$). Overall satisfaction shows a significant, positive, and moderately strong correlation with idealized effect in the form of behaviors (r = 0.458, $p < 0.01$). Overall satisfaction shows a statistically significant, positive, and moderate correlation with inspirational motivation (r = 0.455, $p < 0.01$). Overall satisfaction shows

a statistically significant, positive, and moderate-to-strong correlation with intellectual stimulation (r = 0.577, $p < 0.01$). Overall satisfaction shows a statistically significant, positive, and strong correlation with individual consideration (r = 0.637, $p < 0.01$). Overall satisfaction shows a statistically significant, positive, and strong correlation with contingent rewards (r = 0.658, $p < 0.01$). Overall satisfaction does not show any statistical correlation with management by exception (active) (r = −0.054, $p > 0.05$). In addition, the statistical findings show that management by exception (passive) presents a statistically significant, negative, and weak correlation with overall satisfaction (r = −0.278, $p < 0.1$), and laissez-faire leadership presents a statistically significant, negative, and moderate correlation with overall satisfaction (r = −0.460, $p < 0.1$).

Table 5. Pearson correlation coefficients between overall satisfaction and leadership style dimensions.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Overall job Satisfaction	-								
2. Idealized Influence (Attributed)	0.497 **	-							
3. Idealized Influence (Behavior)	0.458 **	0.731 **	-						
4. Inspirational Motivation	0.455 **	0.590 **	0.822 **	-					
5. Intellectual Stimulation	0.577 **	0.772 **	0.795 **	0.737 **	-				
6. Individual Consideration	0.637 **	0.772 **	0.791 **	0.705 **	0.869 **	-			
7. Contingent Reward	0.658 **	0.697 **	0.805 **	0.771 **	0.805 **	0.869 **	-		
8. Management by Exception (Active)	−0.054 *	0.008	0.265 **	0.309 **	0.141	0.060	0.209 *	-	
9. Management by Exception (Passive)	−0.278 **	−0.314 **	−0.294 **	−0.193 *	−0.315 **	−0.327 **	−0.300 **	0.266 **	-
10. Laissez-Faire Leadership	−0.460 **	−0.462 **	−0.461 **	−0.373 **	−0.499 **	−0.483 **	−0.515 **	0.143	0.702 **

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

Accordingly, Table 6 presents the statistical findings of the correlations of the dimensions concerning the relationship between the three dimensions of the outcomes of leadership and job satisfaction. In more detail, overall satisfaction shows a statistically significant, positive, and strong correlation both with extra effort (r = 0.718, $p < 0.01$), effectiveness (r = 0.724, $p < 0.01$), and leadership satisfaction (r = 0.763, $p < 0.01$), which are the outcomes of leadership.

Table 6. Pearson correlation coefficients between overall satisfaction and leadership outcomes.

	1	2	3	4
1. Overall satisfaction	-			
2. Extra Effort	0.718 **	-		
3. Effectiveness	0.724 **	0.855 **	-	
4. Satisfaction	0.763 **	0.840 **	0.911 **	-

Note. ** $p < 0.01$.

4. Discussion

The present research examined the relationship between job satisfaction and leadership among technical employees and civilian staff of the Ministry of Defense. The research sample consisted mainly of men over 41 years of age who had been working as Army General Staff, Navy General Staff, and Air Force General Staff (not in National Defense General Staff) for more than ten years.

The employee sample reported low levels of passive leadership style, moderate levels of transformational leadership, and moderate-to-high levels of processing leadership, thus supporting a leadership style with a mix of transformational and processing elements, with a predominance of processing leadership [12]. Also, job satisfaction was strongly correlated

with processing leadership, specifically the contingent reward dimension, as well as with the individual consideration and intellectual stimulation dimensions of transformational leadership. Passive leadership was negatively associated with job satisfaction.

These results are supported by previous research linking transformational and processing leadership to job satisfaction [12,13]. Also, Shon's (2015) research and Lee & Yi's (2015) research on Korean soldiers demonstrated that transformational and processing leadership styles positively affect job satisfaction [14,15]. In military technical personnel, the research of Shabane et al. (2017) showed that rewards as a dimension of processing leadership are positively and strongly related to job satisfaction [16].

Therefore, from the statistical findings that emerged, it appears that the style of processing leadership is the main factor related to the job satisfaction of technical employees and civilian staff of the Ministry of National Defense. We assume that this result is due to the special characteristics that govern the workplace of the armed forces and which modify certain fixed variables at regular intervals. More specifically, we should mention that the frequent change in supervisors, the geographical place of work, and transfers to other staff departments do not work positively in the application of a form of management that stems from the transformational leadership style as a result of which the technical employee seeks to only carry out the work assigned to him by his superior, who most of the time is military and not civilian personnel. Therefore, the elements of subordinate control, strictness, and perhaps authoritarianism often involved in the exercise of military leadership limit the application of the transformational style.

It should be noted that the sample generally reported moderate levels of job satisfaction, with low satisfaction in the dimensions of salary and promotion, moderate satisfaction with the organization and working conditions, and moderate-to-high satisfaction with the nature of the job and immediate supervisors. These results contradict the spirit of military leadership, specifically the military leader who must ensure the proper training and proper working conditions for all his subordinates. For example, in Greece, military personnel are compulsorily trained, and their careers are monitored and supported by their superiors, while on the contrary, for the technical and civilian staff of the Ministry of Defense, there is no corresponding progression path to positions of responsibility and their training is at zero levels.

The present research could further contribute to the study of the population of technical employees, who are part of many civilian personnel who provide their services in critical positions in the Ministry of Defense. It provides information to the Administration Ministry of National Defense regarding the form of administration that will satisfy technical employees to a greater extent for them to be more productive and efficient, preventing the occurrence of phenomena that will lead to difficulty, for example, burnout of staff, contributing substantially to the mission of the Ministry of National Defense.

Also, as addressed to the management, the research points out elements on which it is valuable for the leader to focus when administrating with the aim of realizing the vision and the work of the Ministry of National Defense, such as increasing the desire and willingness of the staff and the importance of creating a feeling of satisfactory cooperation between the employee and the supervisor, which, in turn, will increase their job satisfaction and motivate them to be more efficient.

5. Conclusions

From the present study and its results, the need for further investigation of the leadership styles that influence the satisfaction of a professional group of technical employees and civilian staff of the Ministry of Defense is highlighted. This fact will lead, in turn, both to the improvement of management methods and the working environment. The goal should be to increase the job satisfaction of civilian staff, especially in terms of training and professional development, since job satisfaction is a main factor for the performance of employees and the organization.

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