

Perceptions Of Dental Interns On Transformational Leadership And Job Satisfaction In Level-III Public Hospitals In Metropolitan Lima

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Resumen

El estudio tuvo como objetivo general determinar el tipo de relación entre las variables, Liderazgo transformacional percibido y la satisfacción laboral del interno de odontología en hospitales nivel III de Lima metropolitana. Metodológicamente el estudio es no experimental, transeccional. 213 internos de odontología constituyeron la muestra. Se utilizó la *Escala de satisfacción laboral* y el *Cuestionario de liderazgo transformacional*. Se llegó a concluir, que existe relación baja, directa y estadísticamente significativa entre la satisfacción laboral del interno de odontología y su percepción sobre el liderazgo transformacional del coordinador.

Palabras clave: internos de odontología, liderazgo transformacional, satisfacción laboral

Abstract

This study aimed to determine the type of relationship between the perceived transformational leadership and job satisfaction of dental interns in level-III public hospitals in Metropolitan Lima. This non-experimental, cross-sectional study involved a sample of 213 dental interns. The *Job Satisfaction Scale* and the *Transformational Leadership Questionnaire* were used. Results showed a low, direct, and statistically significant relationship between dental interns' job satisfaction and their perception of the supervisor's transformational leadership.

Keywords: dental interns, transformational leadership, job satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction is a variable determined by multiple interactions. One of the intrinsic factors is the leadership of managers, which as a conceptual category involves cognitive, affective and procedural components. In exercising their authority, according to the contributions of psychology and sociology, managers are increasingly turning into a democratic approach. Friendly, horizontal treatment, that is, leadership focused on employees' wellbeing to offer good service to users. Therefore, this research is aimed to study the two following variables: job satisfaction of dental interns and transformational leadership of their supervisor. That is because they unravel important aspects of Peruvian social reality and its fundamental oral health needs both preventive and curative care. According to Torres' study results, in Peru, public health policies have not given priority to oral health. This lack of policies is evidenced by the fact that almost 95% of the population is affected by dental caries and public hospitals do not have the relevant means to provide quality care, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) standards, nor do they meet the expected coverage. The overall picture is discouraging and, although it may have multiple determinant factors, this study aims to approach this issue from the possible relations between job satisfaction and the transformational leadership of supervisors in twelve level III-1 public hospitals in Lima. In view of the above data on Peruvian oral health, the training perspectives of dental professionals are being redirected towards the care of the impact that their performance as dentists has on society. Thus, the reorientation of professional training, which highlights the provision of professional specialization skills, managing developmental

approaches in user care and the relevant instrumentation, is aimed to ensure that, in the last year of undergraduate studies, dental students conduct their internships in different hospitals of the country under the teaching in-service modality, that is, applying the theory received in classes. However, facts show that the perceived advantage is actually a difficulty, as the demand for students is high, the conditions of medical campuses are unsatisfactory, and the combination of leadership and satisfaction decreases mainly due to the difficulties related to the suitability and assertiveness of the designated supervisors. In other words, although supervisors may be very competent in their specialty, they do not necessarily have leadership skills, assertive communication, or empathy, which causes low job satisfaction for dental interns. Thus, the job satisfaction of dental interns and their perception of the transformational leadership of their supervisors in level III-1 public hospitals in Lima becomes an issue of significant importance for both higher education processes and the management of professional teaching centers. In this context, the present study aims to provide theoretical and methodological contributions to dentistry schools and hospitals, in order to enrich the affective aspects that develop in hospital internships as well as in the interactions of managers, university students, and service users.

This study uses Herzberg's two-factor theory based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, as cited in Gutierrez (2017). Herzberg states that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are two different concepts. Likewise, to Herzberg, motivators are linked to working conditions, that is, salary increases, while dismissing or omitting improvements in working conditions and personal aspects would not be a motivating factor. The following table shows the two factors of Herzberg's theory.

Table 1 Factors of Herzberg's Theory

Intrinsic or Motivating Factors	They depend upon each employee, which leads to job satisfaction Work performance, creativity, recognition, and professional and personal development.
Extrinsic or Hygiene Factors	They do not depend upon employees. They are related to dissatisfaction: Environment, salaries, administrative policies, type of supervision, and working environment.

Note. Taken from J. Casaverde and M. Mejía (2019). Dental Interns' Job Satisfaction and Perceptions on Transformational Leadership in Level III-1 Public Hospitals (Satisfacción laboral del interno de odontología y su percepción sobre el liderazgo transformacional del coordinador en hospitales nivel III-1). [Master's Thesis in Spanish] Lima. Peru. Universidad Particular Marcelino Champagnat (Marcelino Champagnat Private University)

Regarding leadership, this study uses the Transformational Leadership approach as initially defined by Burns (1978), where transformational leaders have the ability to inspire their followers and work together in pursuit of common goals by increasing the level of morality and motivation. Cardona (2002) states that transformational leaders clearly visualize the goals to achieve, and, according to the circumstances, motivate their followers with positive and innovative attitudes, producing changes in individuals, organizations and society, making this type of leadership beneficial to the community. According to Bass (2006), transformational leadership encompasses five basic dimensions: i) Idealized influence describes, according to Bass and Avolio (2006), transformational leaders as role models to followers and, due to their ethical behavior, as capable of achieving a better and higher level of performance to meet the proposed goals. ii) Intellectual stimulation involves, according to Bass and Riggio (2006), facilitating followers with new ideas in the process of finding creative solutions to issues through critical and creative thinking. iii) Inspirational motivation involves providing followers with an optimistic vision inspiring them to reach new goals by identifying threats and opportunities. iv) Psychological tolerance means that transformational leaders motivate teamwork and use said ability to generate a friendly environment, directing actions toward the achievement of common goals, developing creativity, and motivating students to reach beyond their own expectations. Finally, v) individualized consideration means, according to Bracho and Garcia (2013), that leaders show great capacity for listening, assertive communication, and empathy; grant individualized attention; delegate activities; and provide constructive critical feedback.

In summary, transformational leadership in the context of higher education is characterized by multiple interactive processes, including the communication between leaders, colleagues, and their students as a means of integration and experience of values, beliefs, and virtues.

RESULTS

Results were determined by using IBM SPSS software version 24.0 and a significance level of 0.05. Likewise, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test was applied. Spearman correlation coefficient was also used at a 95% confidence level as data was not adjusted to a normal distribution.

The descriptive analysis aimed to recognize the levels of job satisfaction of dental interns doing their hospital internship. To this end, instruments' direct scores were converted using the benchmarks found in the pilot study, determining the cut-off points at the three levels: efficient, moderate, and deficient, allowing a better interpretation of data.

The data obtained in the following table reports that scores for job satisfaction are homogeneous.

Table 2 Descriptive Analysis of Job Satisfaction

Variables	Me	SD	CV	Minimum	Maximum
Job satisfaction	49.02	11.25	23%	11	70

Dental interns rated their level of job satisfaction during their hospital internship, here the predominant level was moderate over efficient or deficient. The χ^2 was used to define whether the differences between the three levels were significant. A value equal to 20.48 was found with a p -value lower than 0.01, which indicates a greater presence of a moderate level of job satisfaction among dental interns in public hospitals.

Clear evidence of homogeneous scores on the levels of transformational leadership was found. The mean score was 239.74, with a standard deviation of ± 41.30 , reaching a coefficient of variation of 17%, where the level of moderate satisfaction was higher and reaches 50%, while deficient and efficient levels reached only 25% each.

Outcomes regarding the relationship between interns' job satisfaction and their perception of the supervisor's transformational leadership showed a Spearman correlation coefficient of 0.30 and a $p < .01$. This depicts a statistically significant relationship with a positive trend. The effect size is 8.70%.

Furthermore, the assessment of the relationship between job satisfaction and transformational leadership dimensions was considered important. Thus, a statistically significant relationship between low level and positive trend was found, with a proportion of variance which refers to a small effect.

DISCUSSION

Low levels of correlation reported between the two study variables may be due to the fact that, as Yukl (2008) states, the measurement of both instruments was subjected to the students' perception, which made their detection complicated. The small-effect sizes found are due to the fact that the job satisfaction test assessed the relationship between the supervisor and the intern as an integrating part of a general or global job satisfaction, and not exclusively. Results confirm the validity and relevance of Herzberg's (2016) and Bass' (2006) theories, which claim that the level of job and emotional satisfaction of workers is intricately linked to the leadership style of their boss or leader as argued by Herzberg, et al. (2017) and Manso (2002). The relationship between intrinsic or motivating factors and extrinsic or hygiene factors, such as organizational climate, supervision, and management, is strong. This is depicted when dental interns assess other elements (logistical, economic, and infrastructure) when reporting their job satisfaction.

It was also confirmed that interns' job satisfaction and their perception of their supervisor's leadership reached moderate levels, which agrees with the research by Páez (2016) who assessed a group of nurses from the same hospital. In contrast, these results differ from those found by Bobbio and Ramos (2010) and by Carrera (2014) who, when assessing job satisfaction in a sample of medical and non-medical workers, reported a low level of job satisfaction. For Mejía and Casaverde (2019), this difference may be due to the fact that the sample, both this study and Páez's, was homogeneous, which means, participants had the same occupational and academic levels. Whereas the studies by Bobbio and Ramos, and by Carrera, assessed health area personnel, in general.

Job satisfaction and the five dimensions of transformational leadership (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and psychological tolerance) showed a low, statistically significant, positive-trended correlation with a proportion of variance that refers to a small effect. Thus, results of this study contrast with those presented by Omar, who found a moderate correlation between the variables. This may be due to age differences between samples. The mean age of the Argentine group was 34 years and that of the Peruvian sample was 24 years. Likewise in the Argentinian sample, men prevailed, while, in this study, women did. This quantitative difference between men and women is a limitation, as it may give a distorted view of the results. The correlation coefficient increases in direct proportion to the size of the sample. In this research, significant values were found in the female interns' group, which is the largest.

Results of this research agree with those found by Yang cited in Omar, which stated that the correlation between job satisfaction and transformational leadership can provide a suitable environment for interns to strengthen and apply their theoretical knowledge received in classrooms for the benefit of patients, the hospital and the country. Difficulties related to infrastructure and working conditions cannot be solved without a proper policy, but future dentists can be trained to show tolerance towards these situations and, at the same time, find creative solutions. It is important, therefore, that workshops be held to encourage supervisors to develop their transformational leadership with interns while changing the criteria for the distribution of interns in hospitals and the selection of supervisors.

CONCLUSIONS

- Statistically significant relationships were found between interns' job satisfaction and their perception of the supervisor's transformational leadership in groups of students whose ages range from 24 to 25 years and from 26 to older.
- Regarding the sex of interns, it was found that there were positive and statistically significant correlations in the dimensions of intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation, but not in the individualized consideration, idealized influence, and psychological tolerance.

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