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### TRILOGY: PASSIVE LEADERSHIP, JOB SATISFACTION AND INTENTION TO LEAVE

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#### **Abstract**

Turkey is one of the major global tourism markets. Recent research reveals that the employees of the Turkish tourism sector are dissatisfied with their jobs and employee turnover rates of the sector are very high, even higher than other sectors. Employee job satisfaction and retention are crucial challenges that face the tourism sector success and therefore they are in the focus of scholar interest. This study proposes to investigate the extent to which employees' intention to leave the organization are related to the job satisfaction and perceived passive leadership behaviors. As a result of the research conducted with 472 employees in the tourism sector in Istanbul, it was determined that the perceived passive leadership behaviors of the managers decreased employees' job satisfaction and increased their intention to leave. It was also found that job satisfaction has a partial mediating effect between perceived passive leadership and intention to leave.

**Keywords:** Intention to leave, Job satisfaction, Passive leadership, Laissez-faire leadership, Passive management by exception leadership.

# ÜÇLEME: PASİF LİDERLİK, İŞ TATMİNİ VE İŞTEN AYRILMA NİYETİ

### Öz

Türkiye, dünyanın en büyük turizm pazarlarından biridir. Son zamanlarda yapılan araştırmalar, Türk turizm sektörü çalışanlarının işlerinden tatmin olmadıklarını ve sektörde işgücü devir oranlarının çok yüksek, hatta diğer sektörlere göre daha yüksek olduğunu ortaya koymaktadırlar. Çalışanların iş tatmini ve elde tutulması, turizm sektörü başarısının karşı karşıya olduğu çok önemli zorluklardır ve bu nedenle bilim adamlarının ilgi odağında yer almaktadırlar. Bu çalışma, çalışanların örgütten ayrılma niyetlerinin iş tatmini ve algılanan pasif liderlik davranışları ile ne ölçüde ilişkili olduğunu araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. İstanbul'da turizm sektöründe 472 çalışan ile yapılan araştırma sonucunda yöneticilerin algılanan pasif liderlik davranışlarının çalışanların iş tatminlerini azalttığı ve işten ayrılma niyetlerini artırdığı ortaya koyulmaktadır. Araştırma sonuçları aynı zamanda algılanan pasif liderlik ile işten ayrılma niyeti arasında iş tatmininin kısmi aracılık etkisi olduğunu da ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: İşten ayrılma niyeti, İş tatmini, Pasif liderlik, Laissez-faire liderlik, İstisna ile yönetim pasif liderlik.

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#### Introduction

Turkey is one of the major global tourism markets (Ernst Young Kurumsal Finansman Danışmanlık, 2017, p. 5). The tourism sector which constitutes one of the most dynamic and thriving sectors in Turkey (Keskin & Cansız, 2010), extensively contributes to Turkey's gross domestic product (Türkiye Seyahat Acentaları Birliği, 2019a; 2019b). Thus, it is one of the most important pillars for the Turkish economy (İşbankası İktisadi Araştırmalar Bölümü, 2018, p. 34; T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2019). Because this sector is a major employer in Turkey and has particular significance in regional areas, it substantially contributes employment by providing jobs (Ministry of Labour and Social Security General Directorate of Labour, 2014, p. 59; World Tourism Organization & International Labour Organization, 2014).

However, recent research reveals that the employees of the Turkish hotel sector are dissatisfied with their jobs (Hatipoğlu et al., 2013, p. 43) and employee turnover rates in this sector are very high (Unur et al., 2019, pp. 321-322) even higher than other sectors (Aydın, 2005, p. 265). Employee job satisfaction and retention are crucial challenges that face the success of the tourism sector and therefore the subjects are in the focus of scholar interest (AlBattat et al., 2013; Bonn & Forbringer, 1992; Narkhede, 2014; Stalcup & Pearson, 2001). Although the leaders in this sector face the challenge of improving job satisfaction and employee retention (Faldetta et al., 2013; Sharon et al., 2014; Ismail, 2014), recent research reveals ironically that the leaders may be the very reason that employees are dissatisfied with their jobs (Kaya, 2010) and that they choose to leave (Maranto, 2018, p. 232; Reina et al., 2018, p. 5). The leadership style has a great deal of influence on the climate and outcome the work group (Marquis & Huston, 2009, p.39). Thus, it is advised to the leaders for keeping their teams' most talented members, it is high time to make a self-criticism and clearly understand the main reasons why they leave (Jackson, 2014). Recent research suggests that leaders in this sector should understand the most favorable strategies and policies to increase the employees' job satisfaction and retention (Marshall et al., 2015, p. 124). Consequently, examination whether leadership style represents an independent resource of tourism employees' job satisfaction and more over their turnover is important. This study proposes to investigate the extent to which employees' job satisfaction and intention to leave their organization are related to the perceived passive leadership behaviors in the tourism sector in Turkey.

### **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

### Perceived Passive Leadership (PPL)

Following the study of Kelloway et al. (2005, p. 92) perceived passive leadership represented in the present study consists of factors from both the laissez-faire leadership and passive management-by-exception styles (Bass & Avolio, 1990). Correlation between these behaviors is high, negatively associated with active leadership, which result into negative employee and organizational outcomes (Garman, Davis-Lenane & Corrigan, 2003; Mosson et al., 2018), previous research has also combined these two leadership styles to represent a generalized passive leadership construct (Bass et al., 2003; den Hartog et al., 1997; Derue et al., 2011; Garman et al., 2003; Harold & Holtz, 2015; Kelloway et al., 2005; 2006).

Passive leaders do not tackle but, instead, avoid workplace problems. They also avoid decisions, providing goals, clarifying expectations, specifying agreements and standards to be achieved by followers (Bass et al., 2003, p. 208; den Hartog et al., 1997, p. 23). In this way they fail to reinforce appropriate behavior or be a model (Harold & Holtz, 2015, p. 19). These leadership behaviors are regarded as poor (Kelloway et al., 2005) and ineffective leadership behaviors (Judge & Piccolo, 2004, p. 757).

Although there is a consistent and strong relationship between these two management styles (Rothfelder et al., 2012, p. 206; Tejeda et al., 2001; Yammarino & Bass, 1990) and research reveals that managers who tend to use passive management-by-exception also use laissez-faire leadership so the behaviors covary in tandem and furthermore the respondents of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) complain that the items measure these two leadership styles are tapping the same domain so they have difficulty in distinguishing between them (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008, p. 1236), it is important to note that they are not the same as each other (Hater & Bass, 1988, p. 697; Woods & West, 2010, p. 452).

#### Passive Management by Exception (PMBE)

A leader continuously monitors employees in order to find out whether anything goes wrong. In passive management-by-exception, the leader waits until the completion of the task and then determines whether things are going along all right. If there is a problem, he either criticizes the mistakes which means standards are only clarified after a mistake has occurred (Bass & Hater as cited in Hoover et al., 1991, p. 6; Howell & Avolio, 1993, p. 891) or important information or feedback are not provided to the employees (Neuman & Baron, 2005, p. 20). In this way, passive management-by-exception is a negative form of contingent reinforcement (Amos et al., 2008, p. 214).

#### Laissez-Faire Leadership (LFL)

Laissez-faire is a French phrase meaning "to allow to do; to let someone do something on their own" (Masters & Wallace, 2011, p. 154). In laissez-faire leadership, the leader gives the employees complete freedom (Moiden, 2003, p. 50) allows the employees to set their own goals, to take decisions and to implement those decisions themselves (Tulsian & Pandey, 2008). Laissez-faire leadership which basically refers to either the avoidance or absence of leadership (Judge & Piccolo, 2004, p. 765; Rothfelder et al., 2012, p. 206) or poor, ineffective leadership (Avolio, 2011, p. 67) is labelled by some researchers as non-leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 7) or "the antithesis of the leadership construct" (Tejada et al., 2001). It is the most inactive and ineffective leadership style (Hickman, 2010, p. 79). In many cases it is found to be unsuccessful and unproductive (Northouse, 2018, p. 155).

#### Job Satisfaction (JS)

Job satisfaction generally means positive and favorable attitudes towards the job (Armstrong, 2007, p. 264). Recent studies showed that employees' relationship with their leader carried a crucial impact on the employees (Friedrich, 2001, p. 28).

Based on these, the researchers would like to propose the following hypotheses;

- H<sub>1</sub>: Perceived passive leadership negatively effects employees' job satisfaction.
- H<sub>1a</sub>: Laissez-faire leadership negatively effects employees' job satisfaction.
- H<sub>1b</sub>: Passive management by exception negatively effects employees' job satisfaction.

### Intention to Leave (ITL)

Intention to leave the organization is conceptualized as "a conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organization" (Tett & Meyer, 1993, p. 262). Employees' job satisfaction and their retention in organizations are associated with their supervisors' leadership skills and styles (Kleinman, 2004; Ribelin, 2003; Shader et al., 2001).

Based on these, the researchers would like to propose the following hypotheses;

- H<sub>3</sub>: Perceived passive leadership increases employees' intention to leave the organization.
- H<sub>2a</sub>: Laissez-faire leadership increases employees' intention to leave the organization.
- H<sub>2b</sub>: Passive management by exception increases employees' intention to leave the organization.

The job satisfaction of the employees' is an important precursor of their turnover intention (George & Zakkariya, 2018, p. 89). Based on these, the researchers would like to propose the following hypotheses;

H<sub>3</sub>: Job satisfaction decreases employees' intention to leave the organization.

Finally, the following hypotheses would be proposed;

 $\rm H_4$ : Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between perceived passive leadership and employees' intention to leave the organization.

### Pamukkale Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, Sayı 48, Ocak 2022 E. Bilginoğlu, U. Yozgat

 $H_{4a}$ : Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between laissez-faire leadership and employees' intention to leave the organization.

 $H_{4b}$ : Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between passive management by exception and employees' intention to leave the organization.

#### Method

### **Research Model and Hypotheses**

Considering previous theories and research, the researchers hypothesized that perceived passive leadership decreases employees' job satisfaction and increases their intention to leave the organization.

The conceptual model and hypotheses are demonstrated in Figure 1.

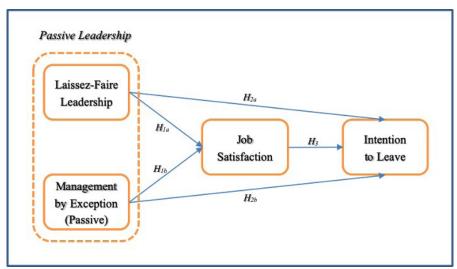


Figure 1. Hypotheses and conceptual model

### **Participants and Procedure**

Depending on the actual tourism operations by cities in Turkey, Antalya was leading with 883 hotels and 229.567 rooms, followed by Istanbul with 745 hotels and 71.893 rooms in 2019 (Horwath HTL, 2019, p. 147). The present research was conducted in Istanbul in the 3, 4 and 5 star hotels employees between October and December 2019. Convenient sampling method was utilized, 472 of the collected questionnaires (132/143/197) are eligible to analyze.

#### Measures

Passive management-by-exception (4 items) and laissez-faire leadership (4 items) were measured with items borrowed from the MLQ (Bass & Avolio, 2000). Job satisfaction is measured using 5-item short version adapted by Judge, Bono and Locke (2000) and developed by Brayfield and Rothe (1951). The 3-item questionnaire developed by Blau (1985) is used to measure employees' intention to leave. The participants marked each statement between 1 (totally agree) and 6 (totally disagree) depending of their perceptions.

### **Findings**

#### **Demographics**

The sample consisted of volunteers with age ranged from 19 to 60 years old (M = 30.54, Std.Dev. = 8.28), were married (54.4%), mostly male (58.5%), and have a university degree (46.8%).

### **Hypotheses Testing**

This study used SPSS to analyze the correlations between the studied variables. Regression models were estimated through structural equation modeling (SEM) using LISREL to determine the effects of the hypothesized variables based on 5000 bootstrap samples and requested for 95% confidence intervals for Bias-corrected option formula by Preacher and Hayes (2004).

Table 1 shows factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and construct reliability of the scales used in this study. The minimum cut-off points .50 for items' factor loadings and .70 for construct reliability were fulfilled (Hair et al., 2005).

Table 1. Factor loadings, AVE and CR values of scales

Items	Items' Factor Loadings (r>0.5)	AVE (AVE>0.5)	Construct Reliability (CR>0.7)
Laissez-Faire Leadership		.612	.863
My manager takes a long time to respond to urgent matters.	.823		
My manager avoids getting involved when important matters arise.	.793		
My manager is absent when they need him.	.766		
My manager avoids making decisions.	.745		
Passive-Management by Exceptions		.592	.853
My manager shows he believes in "if it isn't broken, don't fix it".	.786		
My manager waits for things to go wrong before beginning to act.	.777		
My manager demonstrates that problems must become chronic before he acts.	.770		
My manager does not interfere in problems until they become serious.	.744		
Job Satisfaction		.722	.886
I consider my job to be pleasant.	.855		
I find real enjoyment in my work.	.851		
I feel fairly satisfied with my present job.	.843		
Intention to Leave		.667	.857
I intend to search for another job.	.832		
I intend to quit my job.	.818		
I think of quitting my job.	.799		

Regarding discriminant validity to assess whether the constructs are sufficiently distinct from each other, Table 2 indicates that the value of square root of AVE for all latent constructs were higher than the correlation coefficient between the focal and other constructs. Accordingly, it testified the "reasonableness" of the constructs used in this study.

Table 2. Mean, standard deviation, AVE, correlation matrix of the latent constructs

Constructs	Mean	Std.Dev.	AVE	1	2	3	4
Laissez-Faire Leadership	2.971	1.262	.592	(.833)			
Passive-Management by Exceptions	3.183	1.183	.566	.454***	(.821)		
Job Satisfaction	3.790	1.539	.838	316***	313***	(.914)	
Intention to Leave	2.764	1.491	.813	.368***	.361***	674***	(.889)

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> p < 0.001.

Note: The squared root of AVE of each construct presented on the diagonal.

Depending on the mean values of the variables the sampled employees are satisfied with their job (3.790), their perception for their managers' laissez-faire leadership (2.971) and passive-management by exceptions (3.183) are average.

Depending on the correlation values there exist negative correlations between laissez-faire leadership, passive-management by exceptions and job satisfaction where positive correlation between leadership styles and intention to leave.

The parameters; factor loadings > .50, ( $\mathcal{X}^2$ /df) < 5.0, RMSEA < .08, GFI) > .90, CFI > .90, IFI > .90, and TLI > .90. were considered to determine the model fit for both measurement and structural models in SEM analyses. The structural model's fit indices were presented in Table 3. Hooper et al. (2008) suggested that the researcher should choose the fit indices that indicate the best fit. According to results displayed in Table 3, where indices' values exceeding .90 signifies a good model fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 2016), it was indicated acceptable fit for proposed structural model.

Table 3. Fit indices of proposed structural model

CMIN (x²)	$(x^2/df) \le 5.0$	GFI ≥ .90	CFI ≥ .90	TLI ≥ .90	IFI ≥ .90	RMSEA ≤ .08
95.389	1.093	.972	.992	.974	.992	.027

Table 4 illustrates that laissez-faire and passive management by exception leadership significantly influenced job satisfaction ( $\beta = -.316***/-.313***$ ) which approve the hypotheses  $H_{1a}$  and  $H_{1b}$ , and intention to leave ( $\beta = .368***/.361***$ ) which approve the hypotheses  $H_{2a}$  and  $H_{2b}$ . The results also indicated that job satisfaction effects intention to leave ( $\beta = -.674***$ ), where H3 is approved.

Table 4. The regression weights in the direct hypothesize model

Hypothesis	Beta	t-value	ErrorVar	R <sup>2</sup>	
LFL → JS	435	-8.578	.811	.189	H <sub>1a</sub> ✓
PMBE → JS	422	-8.332	.822	.178	H <sub>1b</sub> ✓
LFL → ITL	.494	9.456	.756	.244	H <sub>2a</sub> ✓
PMBE → ITL	.486	9.324	.763	.237	H <sub>2b</sub> √
$JS \rightarrow ITL$	753	-15.121	.433	.567	H <sub>3</sub> √

In accordance, the determination of job satisfaction's mediation effect in the relationships between passive leadership and intention to leave strictly follows the rules suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986).

To test the mediating effect of job satisfaction between laissez-faire leadership and intention to leave the organization, where the hypotheses  $H_{1a}$  (LFL  $\rightarrow$  JS),  $H_{2a}$  (LFL  $\rightarrow$  ITL) and  $H_{3}$  (JS  $\rightarrow$  ITL) were approved, at the last step LFL and JS were entered together to the model. Observed increase in R<sup>2</sup> (.237/.567  $\rightarrow$  .588) and decrease in standardized beta values by the input constructs improved the partially mediating effect of JS between LFL (.494  $\rightarrow$  .184) and ITL (-.753  $\rightarrow$  -.679) (Baron & Kenny; 1986). And  $H_{4a}$  hypothesis has been accepted (Table 5).

Likewise, where the hypotheses  $H_{1b}$  (PMBE  $\rightarrow$  JS),  $H_{2b}$  (PMBE  $\rightarrow$  ITL) and  $H_{3}$  (JS  $\rightarrow$  ITL) were approved, at the last step PMBE and JS were entered together to the model. Observed increase in R² (.244/.567  $\rightarrow$  .590) from and decrease in standardized beta values by the input constructs improved the partially mediating effect of JS between PMBE (.486  $\rightarrow$  .190) and ITL (-.753  $\rightarrow$  -.680) (Baron & Kenny; 1986). And  $H_{4b}$  hypothesis has been accepted (Table 5).

Hypothesis	Beta	t-value	ErrorVar	R <sup>2</sup>	
LFL → ITL	.184	4.361	442	500	
JS → ITL	679	-13.642	.412	.588	H <sub>4a</sub> √
PMBE → ITL	.190	4.530	440	500	
JS → ITL	680	-13.717	.410	.590	H <sub>4b</sub>
LFL → ITL	.112	2.224			
PMBE → ITL	.127	2.551	.407	.593	
JS → ITL	659	-13.280			

Table 5. The regression weights in the mediated model

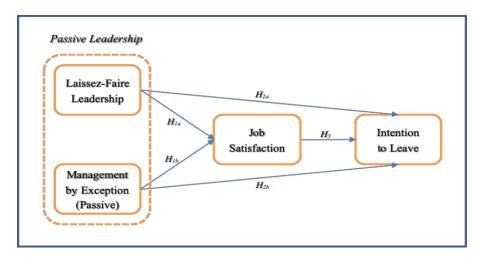


Figure 2. Final model

### **Conclusion and Discussions**

The motivation of this study is to investigate the extent to which employees' intention to leave the organization is related to the job satisfaction and perceived passive leadership behaviors in the tourism sector in Istanbul, Turkey.

The findings support the hypotheses of the present study and reveal that perceived passive leadership significantly reduces subordinates' job satisfaction and significantly increases subordinates' turnover intentions. These findings are consistent with the study of Tepper (2000) showed that the perceived leadership style has a significant effect on the subordinates' intention to quit and furthermore for remaining ones, the perceived leadership style supervision was associated with lower job satisfaction.

The findings of the present study reveal that laissez-faire leadership is conceptually correlated to the passive management-by-exception. These findings are consistent with the findings of the studies of Antonakis (2012, p. 268), Rothfelder et al. (2012, p. 206), Tejeda et al. (2001) and Yammarino and Bass (1990).

The finding that passive management-by-exception has a negative effect on job satisfaction is consistent with the studies of Lok and Crawford (2004), Tsai (2011), Kuria et al. (2012), Kara et al. (2013) and Mathieu et al. (2016) that leadership styles are important organizational antecedents of job satisfaction but inconsistent with the studies of Lam et al. (2001) and Al-Ababneh and Lockwood (2010) where the relationship was not found.

The finding that laissez-faire leadership has a negative effect on job satisfaction is in line with the study of Dumdum et al. (2002, p. 49) which reveals that laissez-faire leadership has the strongest negative relationship with satisfaction among the full-range leadership scales and the study of Westlund (2013, p. 213) as well as the assertion of Avolio (2011, p. 65), and also consistent with the study of Erkutlu (2008) which found that laissez-faire leadership style is negatively related to subordinates' job satisfaction in a hotel setting.

The finding that passive management-by-exception increases employees' intention to leave their organizations is consistent with the study of Kuria et al. (2012) and Qiu et al. (2015) that leader-related factors are a predictor of turnover intentions in hotel sector.

The finding that laissez-faire leadership increases employees' intention to leave their organizations is consistent with the assertion of Lipman (2015, p. 3) that people join companies, but they leave managers and supervisors and the studies of Tanrıverdi et al. (2016) and Ntenga and Awuor (2018), whilst inconsistent with the study of Puni et al. (2016).

The finding that employees' job satisfaction negatively effects their intention to leave their organization is matching with the studies of Ghiselli et al. (2001), Karatepe et al. (2006), Yang (2008), Hatipoğlu et al. (2013, p. 64), Marshall et al. (2015), Dusek et al. (2016) and Holston-Okae (2018) in the tourism sector.

In the "Era of Human Capital", the employees have become the most valuable asset of an organization (McGowan, 2020; 2021). Considering the correlation between job dissatisfaction and turnover intentions of the employees, the key goals of the leaders should be to improve their leadership style.

This study has several contributions to the current literature; first it contributes to the leadership literature by providing insights into how leadership attributes such as being perceived as passive is often seen as an important element for employee job satisfaction and employee turnover intention. Second, the least studied two dimensions of passive leadership behavior of the MLQ, laissez-faire and passive management by exception leadership (Dumdum et al., 2002, p. 1235) were investigated and their impact on employees' job satisfaction and their intention to leave their organizations were empirically tested in attempt to fill the gap.

#### **Limitations and Future Research**

The present study was limited and only focused on the effect of perceived passive leadership on the employees' job satisfaction and their intention to leave in the tourism sector in Turkey. Due to this limited access of the sample, further research is suggested to redesign or restructure the present research by collecting data from the employees of the tourism sector working in other cities in Turkey to be able to generalize the findings for the whole tourism sector or sample employees working in other sectors to validate the findings for Turkey.

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