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**The Role of Identification in the Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Employee Citizenship Behaviors Case study: Rasht Rasool Akram Hospital**

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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** This study was aimed to investigate the effect of transformational leadership on citizenship behaviors with respect to the role of self-determination-based identification, supervisor identification and organizational identification .

**Methodology:** The present study is descriptive in terms of method and applied in terms of purpose. It is also considered a field study in terms of data collection. The data collection tool is questionnaire. The validity of the questionnaire was evaluated and confirmed by technical experts and experts of the hospital human resources department and, its reliability using Cronbach's alpha. The statistical population of the study is all the staff of Rasool Akram Hospital. Using Cochran's formula and simple random sampling method, 220 people were studied as the final sample of the research. Structural equation modeling and LISREL software were used to test the hypotheses .

**Findings:** The results showed that employees' identification (organizational identification, supervisor identification and self-determination-based identification) had a significant mediating role in the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior .

**Conclusion:** Finally, in order to promote identification with the aim of strengthening the citizenship behaviors of employees in this field of healthcare and treatment, practical suggestions were presented

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## 1. Introduction

The quality and effectiveness of human resources working in health care centers, especially hospitals, is a function of job identity and the degree of connection of the individual with the requirements and elements of his/her job. Various factors affect the process of identifying employees in these vital centers of society (Fani et al., 2010). In this regard, citizenship behavior is an extra-role behavior that people display spontaneously and voluntarily. Organizational citizen is a thought and idea that assumes that the various behaviors of employees such as accepting and assuming excess duties and responsibilities, following the rules and procedures of the organization, maintaining and developing a positive attitude, patience and tolerance of dissatisfaction and work problems is a matter based on the identity that one acquires from leadership and accepted leadership attitudes (Zhu, et.al, 2012). Accordingly, citizenship behaviors typically arise from positive job attitudes, job characteristics and leadership behaviors (Yaghoubi, et al, 2010).

On the other hand, transformationalism with the ability to motivate employees and develop organizational culture based on ethical practices is the second factor influencing this process of identification. Transformational managers form a picture of bright and needed future perspective in themselves and their employees (Ebrahimzadeh, 2011 and Aghaz, 2008). Transformational capabilities, both in the role of management and directing individual tasks, ensure the implementation of executive processes of organizations to respond quickly to the changing competitive conditions (Goodarzvand, et al., 2010). Transformational leadership behaviors are of a supervisory nature and aim to develop knowledge and skills related to the work of subordinates and facilitate the personal and professional development of employees. Under the influence of transformational leadership, employee behaviors take different forms such as supervision, guidance, counseling, feedback, norms and extra-role behaviors (Zhang, Chen, 2013; Prati, 2009).

Transformational leaders, through their role model capabilities, empower self-determination-based identification in the organization. Self-determination is the process of evaluating individuals in terms of how to communicate with themselves, communication partners or members of a group / organization (Rastegar, et al., 2012). At the individual level, individuals involved in the self-determination process should see themselves as an independent and unique identity, inclined to independence, assertiveness, and individual achievement. At the communication level, they think about social interaction with close people or personal relationships with other internal members of small groups, valuing interdependence, intimacy, and mutual commitment to others. Finally, at the collective level, they absorb the characteristics of the group and see themselves as members of a group rather than an isolated individual (Zhung and cheng, 2013). As a result, at the collective level, the individual no longer seeks to surrender personal interests and attitudes to the group and respects the collective interests. Self-determination has the potential to lead employees to the emergence of citizenship behaviors by creating contexts for extra-role behaviors (Zhu, et.al, 2012).

Transformational leaders influence employee organizational identification as a basis for extra-role behaviors. Organizations can greatly benefit from creating organizational and institutional identity in employees. In fact, in this climate, the most powerful organizational relationship is formed between the employee and his/her direct supervisor. The transformational behaviors of a leader are received as an intelligent stimulus through subordinates and lead to the creation of socio-emotional bonds (Alilou, et al., 2013). These emotional bonds have not the shape and nature of the cost-benefit exchange. This process, called supervisor identification, creates strong emotions in employees and results in a shared sense of values and expectations between the leader and the follower. In this process of identifying employees, they become coordinated with their direct supervisor to integrate with accepted leadership values and, on the other hand, to optimally fulfill job expectations (Sillince, 2006). This common mind also extends to performing extra-role behaviors. This lasting organizational relationship is formed not only between employees and their direct supervisor, but also between the organization and employees. In the process of

organizational identification, the managers of the organization are the full reflection of the whole organization in terms of organizational goals, expectations and processes. According to social exchange theory, organizational leaders are the developers of organizational policies, financial, and legal responsibilities. They are change agents of an organization (Tabarsa, 2009 and Gholipour et al., 2011). Organizational identification is created following a supportive atmosphere in an organization. A supportive atmosphere facilitates the formation of organizational identification. The collective and social identity created by the transformational leader, through creating motivational and behavioral consequences, accelerates and strengthens the process of expressing organizational citizenship behaviors (Zhang, Chen, 2013 & Empson, 2004). Transformational leadership teachings are also applied and effective in any organization with some different characteristics in terms of the nature of human resources. Service organizations such as medical centers and hospitals that have direct contact with clients are no exception to this rule. The importance of these social organizations is doubled when the client enters the context of these organizations in a situation requiring the most emotional and psychological supportive behavior (Moradi, 2008). Despite the importance of medical centers in the disease phase for the patient, his/her family on the one hand; personnel and labor as a source of income on the other hand; and for health policy makers in order to develop health, today in medical settings, especially hospitals, problems such as underemployment, aggression, waste of staff time during working hours, lack of proper communication between staff and patients, extensive stress among staff, lack of forgiveness and tolerance in non-ideal conditions, lack of responsiveness to health care stakeholders, and ultimately low quality of services have made the notion of citizenship behavior in these centers sometimes an unattainable dream. Meanwhile, the current trends in health policy-making are consistent with attracting more applicants, providing quality services, innovative policies, flexibility in programs, productivity and responding to external stakeholders (Rastegar, et al., 2012).

Despite the increasing attention and need to pay attention to the change and processes involved in bonding employees and supervisors of the organization, especially in service organizations such as hospitals that are in direct contact with the patient, this issue has received little attention in Gilan hospitals, especially hospitals affiliated to the social security organizations. However, the need for a rational link between the two aspects of spontaneous citizenship behaviors in the light of the effects of transformational leadership is possible only with regard to creating and promoting significant intrapersonal changes and identification in health care system employees. Therefore, by conducting this research in Rasool Akram Hospital in Rasht, the author intends to provide the results to policy makers and health planners, especially the Social Security Organization. Given the above, the main question of the research is whether there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior with respect to the mediating role of self-determination-based identification, supervisor identification and organizational identification.

According to the social exchange perspective, identification is function of the interaction of intrapersonal and extra personal factors (Ahmadi, et.al, 2010). Zhang and Chen (2013) in a study entitled Developmental Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Mediating Effects of Self-determination, Supervisor Identification, and Organizational Identification explored three levels of self-awareness in the workplace- including self-determination, management identification and organizational identification- to measure the effects between developmental leadership and organizational citizenship behavior (Zhang & Chen, 2013). For the authors, these voluntary citizenship behaviors, which are considered a set of spontaneous social behaviors, extra-role behaviors, task performance and an integral part of performance management, when providing service can, have a significant impact on customers' perceptions of quality (Chen, 2006 & Zhu, 2012). Accordingly, transformational leadership is an independent variable in this study in terms of power and ability to predict extra-role behaviors. Transformational leadership is one of the newest and most enduring approaches to leadership (Golparvar, et

al., 2011). Based on transformational leadership style approaches, leaders can use transformational leadership behavioral characteristics to lead their followers to perform more than expected (Zareei, et.al, 2006). These leaders increase expectations from followers' performance and seek to transform their values and self-concept and push them to higher levels of need for success. By supporting innovation and psychological empowerment, these leaders empower employees and create an innovative environment in the organization (Zhang & Chen, 2013).

Transformational managers, through help and support, a sense of power, control of work processes and feedback and recognition of the individual needs for success at work, cause employees to follow the rules and standards in good faith, motivating and ultimately leading to citizenship behavior. Because employee-supervisor relationships are the strongest organizational bond (Twigg, et. Al, 2007), this relationship forms a positive and functional self-concept, and then employees see the behavior of leaders as real signals in building a long-term relationship. They look for duration and commitment (Al Akubi, 2008). These leaders encourage employees to support the policies of the supervisor, causing a deep sense of values and the development of relationships and ultimately motivation in employees that can be a basis for extra-role behaviors (Kazemi, 2013). Transformational leaders facilitate the implementation of organizational policies through their inspirational influence on employees, and employees, by accepting the supervision of supervisors, help the organization achieve its goals and consider it a part of their identity as a member of the organization (Moghimi, 2006). This management support in the workplace has led to more attractiveness to the extent that employees prefer the values of the organization to their personal values, and this is itself a symbol of extra-role behaviors (Zhang & Chen, 2013).

Meta-analytical studies on the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and the factors affecting it indicate that four categories of these factors have been emphasized in research, which are personal characteristics of employees (employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, perception of justice and leadership support), job characteristics (job feedback, job duplication and job satisfaction), organizational characteristics (organizational reward and appreciation system and perception of organizational support) and leadership styles with an emphasis on transformational leadership (Nielsen et al, 2009 & Zhu, et.al, 2012).

Based on the causal and logical relationship of the mentioned variables, the following conceptual model can be depicted for research.

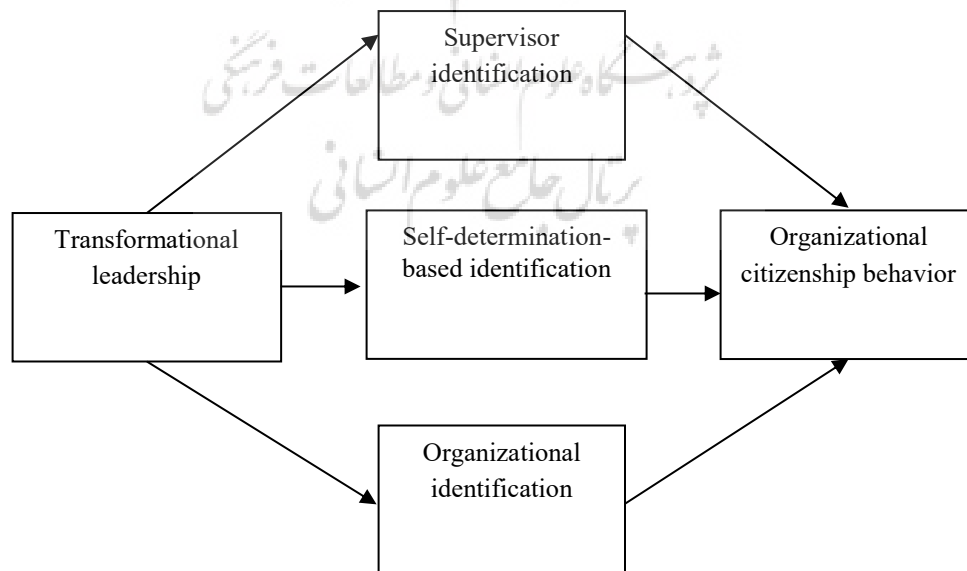


Figure1. Conceptual model of research

Research hypotheses: Based on the research model, the research hypotheses are as follows:

1. There is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior with respect to employees 'self-determination-based identification. 2. There is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior with respect to supervisor identification. 3. There is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and citizenship behavior with respect to organizational identification.

## 2. Methodology

The present research is applied in terms of purpose, survey in terms of data collection method, quantitative in terms of nature of variables, and descriptive-correlative in terms of data analysis method and specifically based on structural equation modeling. The statistical population of the present study includes all employees of Rasool Akram Hospital in Gilan province (410 people at the time of the study). Sampling in the present study was done by stratified random sampling method so that different wards of the hospital were considered as separate floors and within the floors, a simple random method was used to select the sample. The sample size was calculated using the Cochran sample size formula for a limited population of 210 people. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The research questionnaire is organized in two parts, the first part including general information about the respondents and the second part consisting of 58 questions. To measure the variable of organizational citizenship behavior, Moghimi's (2011) 26-item questionnaire; to measure transformational leadership, Raferty and Griffin's (2008) 18-item questionnaire; and to measure self-determination-based, supervisor and organizational identification, a 14-item researcher-made questionnaire was used. In order to evaluate the validity, the content validity method was used with the opinions of experts and construct validity to analyze the factor loads of the questionnaires. The result of calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient to confirm the reliability of the instrument, finally with coefficients above 0.7, indicated the strong reliability of the studied instrument. Finally, in order to analyze the data obtained from the survey, the structural equation modeling analysis method was used.

## 3. Findings

Research findings are presented in three sections: description of variables, conceptual model test and hypothesis test: Description of research variables

In this section, the main variables of the research are described: Description of the transformational leadership variable

According to Table 1, the average score of the transformational leadership variable for the respondents is 3.5078 and the standard deviation is 0.55351. The average obtained is higher than the expected average (score 3) and also the lowest score related to the transformational leadership variable for the respondents is equal to 2.06 and the highest score is equal to 4.88.

**Table1.** Description of the transformational leadership variable

Standard deviation	Average	Highest	Lowest	Number	
0.55351	3.5078	4.88	2.06	220	Transformational leadership

Description of the organizational citizenship behavior variable

As seen in Table 2, the average score of the variable of organizational citizenship behavior for the respondents is 4.0678 and the standard deviation is 0.50036. The average obtained is higher than the expected average and also the lowest score related to the variable of organizational citizenship behavior for the respondents is equal to 2.71 and the highest score is equal to 5.00.

**Table2.** Description of the organizational citizenship behavior variable

Standard deviation	Average	Highest	Lowest	Number	
0.50036	4.0678	5	2.71	220	Organizational citizenship behavior

#### Description of the self-determination-based identification variable

According to Table 3, the average score of the self-determination-based identification variable for the respondents is 3.9790 and the standard deviation is 0.67909. The average obtained is higher than the expected average and also the lowest score related to the self-determination variable for respondents is equal to 1.00 and the highest score is equal to 5.

**Table3.** Description of the self-determination-based identification variable

Standard deviation	Average	Highest	Lowest	Number	
0.67909	3.9790	5	1	220	Self-determination-based identification

#### Description of the supervisor identification variable

As shown in Table 4, the average score of the supervisor identification variable from the respondents' point of view is 2.0883 and the standard deviation is 0.49762. The average obtained is lower than the expected average and also the lowest score for the supervisor identification variable from the respondents' point of view is equal to 1.00 and the highest score is equal to 3.

**Table4.** Description of the supervisor identification variable

Standard deviation	Average	Highest	Lowest	Number	
0.49762	2.0883	3	1/00	220	Supervisor identification

#### Description of the organizational identification variable

According to Table 5, the average score of the organizational identification variable for respondents is 2.4570 and the standard deviation is 0.51907. The average obtained is lower than the expected average and also the lowest score of the organizational identification variable for the respondents is 1.20 and the highest score is 3.80.

**Table5.** Description of the organizational identification variable

Standard deviation	Average	Highest	Lowest	Number	
0.51907	2.4570	3,80	1/20	220	Organizational identification

The research conceptual model test: Figures 1 and 2 represent the structural equation model of the research hypotheses in the form of significance coefficients and structural coefficients, respectively.

Based on the significance values and factor loads presented in these figures, the direct and indirect effects of the transformational leadership variable on the organizational citizenship behavior variable can be shown through the variables of supervisor, self-determination-based and organizational identification. In addition, in order to determine the fit of the model with the experimental data, fit indices are provided.

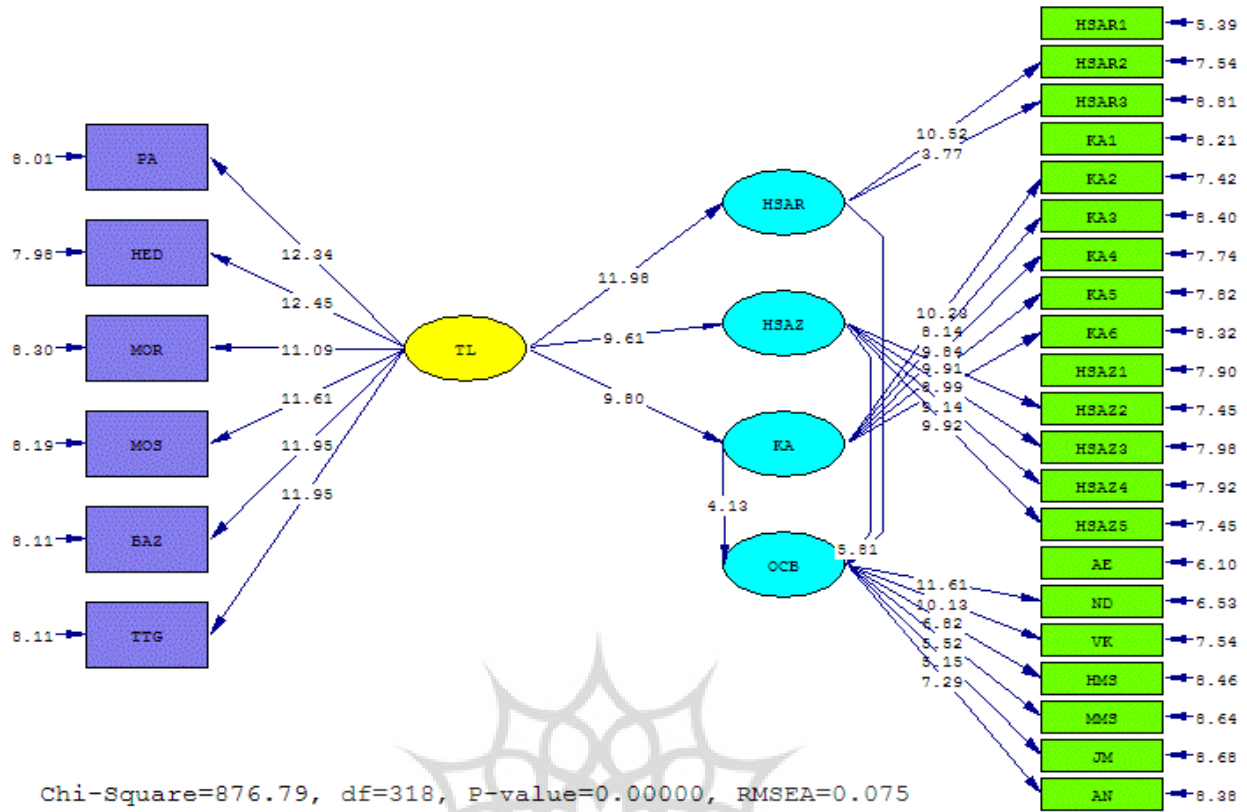


Figure1. Research model in the form of significance coefficients

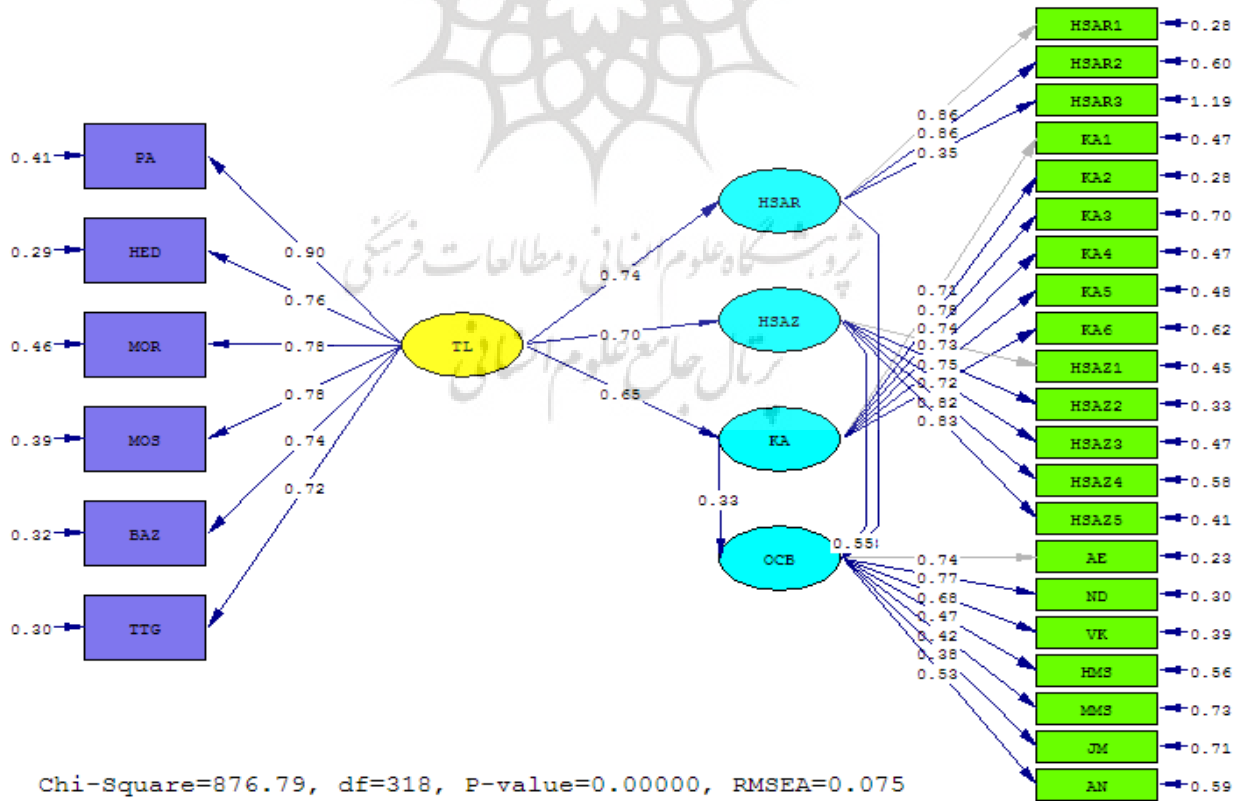


Figure2. Research model in the form of structural coefficients

Fit indices of the research model: The fit indices of the research model presented in Table 6 show that the model is appropriate with the experimental data and has a good fit.

**Table6.** Fit indices of the general research model

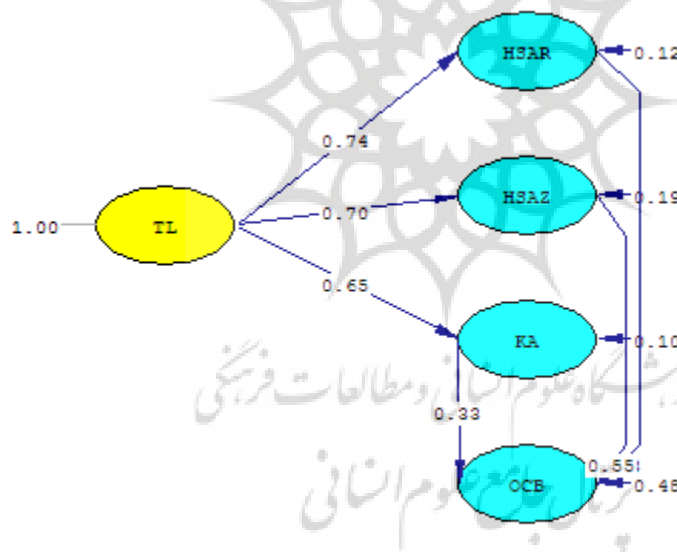
RMSEA	$\chi^2/df$	NFI	NNFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI	Index
0.075	2.757	0.94	0.95	0.96	0.91	0.84	Obtained value
0.08 >	3 >	0.9 <	0.9 <	0.9 <	0.9 <	0.8 <	Permitted value

Analysis of direct paths of research model: Table 7 shows all the direct paths in the research model as well as significance numbers and impact coefficients along with the coefficient of determination and, based on this we can comment on the confirmation or rejection of research hypotheses.

**Table7.** Analysis of direct paths

Result	R <sup>2</sup>	t statistic	Beta	Path
Confirmation	0.54	11.98	0.74	Transformational leadership to supervisor identification
Confirmation	0.49	9.61	0.70	Transformational leadership to organizational identification
Confirmation	0.42	9.80	0.65	Transformational leadership to self-determination
Confirmation		3.02	0.23	Supervisor identification to organizational citizenship behavior
Confirmation	0.52	5.81	0.55	Organizational identification to organizational citizenship behavior
Confirmation		4.13	0.33	Self-determination to organizational citizenship behavior

Analysis of indirect paths of research model: Based on Figure 3 and the path analysis model, the values of indirect path analysis can be presented as shown in Table 8:



Chi-Square=876.79, df=318, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.075

**Figure3.** Indirect path analysis model

Table 8 represents all indirect paths to test the research hypotheses.

**Table8.** Analysis of indirect paths

Hypothesis	Impact path	Coefficient	t statistic
1	TL → HSAR → OCB	$0.74 \times 0.23 = 0.17$	11.98 و 3.02
2	TL → HSAZ → OCB	$0.70 \times 0.55 = 0.385$	9.61 و 5.81
3	TL → FA → OCB	$0.65 \times 0.33 = 0.215$	9.80 و 4.13

As seen in Table 8, the t-statistic is significant for all indirect paths. According to the results, it can be stated that transformational leadership has a significant relationship with organizational citizenship behavior



through supervisor identification, organizational identification and self-determination-based identification. The highest value of these indirect relationships is related to the effect of organizational identity on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior, which is 0.385.

Research hypothesis test: Based on the analysis of direct and indirect paths, the results of the three research hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior with respect to the employees' self-determination-based identification.

According to the research model in the form of significance numbers, it was observed that the value of t-statistic is significant between the two variables of transformational leadership and employee self-determination and also between the two variables of employee self-determination and organizational citizenship behavior. And since these two values are outside the range [1.96 & -1 / 96], the first hypothesis of the research has been confirmed and the transformational leadership has a significant relationship with organizational citizenship behavior with respect to the employees' self-determination-based identification. That is, if transformational leadership improves, organizational citizenship behavior will also increase with respect to the employees' self-determination-based identification. This finding is consistent with the results of the study by Bartels (2006), Cole and Bruch (2006), Moradi et al. (2014) and, Zhu (2012).

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior with respect to supervisor identification.

According to the research model in the form of significance numbers, it was observed that the value of t-statistic is significant between the two variables of transformational leadership and supervisor identification and also between the two variables of supervisor identification and organizational citizenship behavior. And since these two values are outside the range [1.96 & -1 / 96], the second hypothesis of the research has been confirmed and the transformational leadership has a significant relationship with organizational citizenship behavior with respect to the supervisor identification. That is, if transformational leadership improves, organizational citizenship behavior will also increase with respect to the supervisor identification. This finding is in agreement with the results of the study by Gholipour et al. (2011), Prati et al. (2009) and Dhalla (2007).

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior with respect to organizational identification.

According to the research model in the form of significance numbers, it was observed that the value of t-statistic is significant between the two variables of transformational leadership and organizational identification and also between the two variables of organizational identification and organizational citizenship behavior. And since these two values are outside the range [1.96 & -1 / 96], the third hypothesis of the research has been confirmed and the transformational leadership has a significant relationship with organizational citizenship behavior with respect to the organizational identification. That is, if transformational leadership improves, organizational citizenship behavior will also increase with respect to the organizational identification. This finding is consistent with the results of the study by Alilou, (2013), Puusa (2006) and Zhu (2012).

#### 4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of transformational leadership on organizational citizenship behavior with respect to the role of self-determination-based identification, supervisor identification and organizational identification. Identification in both organizational and supervisor dimensions, as well as self-determination-based identification are job-oriented capabilities associated with the effective performance of critical health-related responsibilities. Based on the results of the present study, the existence of transformational characteristics and components in the hospital environment affects the process of staff identification and thus promotes the occurrence of extra-role and spontaneous behaviors

of employees that are necessary for their quality services in the field of healthcare. Given the obtained results and confirmed hypotheses and the positive relationship observed between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior through staff identification in Rasool Akram Hospital, the followings are suggested:

- It is suggested that senior managers and officials of different wards of the hospital continuously evaluate and monitor the performance of the staff of different wards of the hospital considering certain performance evaluation indicators and the ability and potential of individual employees, and the behavior and performance of employees, both positively and negatively, should not far from their view so that they can have a correct evaluation of each employee.

- It is suggested that senior managers and officials of different wards, as needed, with the aim of mentally motivating, guide employees on how to do things and consider this as one of their leadership and managerial duties and correct employees' mistakes by performing their leadership duties.

- It is suggested that senior managers and officials of different wards prioritize the role of coaching in relation to employees over the directive and command role in order to facilitate the work of employees with this approach.

- It is recommended to senior managers to provide a space in which employees can consult with experienced managers and hospital officials without restrictions in the case of ambiguity in their job or facing unanswered challenges. In addition, a specific unit should be considered to provide various types of job counseling to employees.

- It is suggested that senior managers and officials of different wards of the hospital use the feedback system for staff and in order to improve staff performance, provide the necessary feedback to them and hold many meetings to present corrective methods of working with staff.

- It is suggested that managers become a model for acquiring knowledge and skills for employees and encourage employees to acquire job skills and present the necessary mechanism and structure to provide job skills to employees according to their job needs.

- It is suggested to prepare and plan in order to promote the identity of employees, respect for job values, attention to employee needs and educational sessions on job needs..

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