

## THE ROLE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE, COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT AND MARKETING TRENDS IN THE PERFORMANCE OF URBAN SERVICES AND WASTE MANAGEMENT COMPANIES

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### ABSTRACT

*Municipalities and waste management organizations of the country have, in recent years, outsourced urban services activities as one of their most important duties to the private sector companies. Studies have shown that sometimes by outsourcing such activities, the level of services to the customers and citizens is reduced. Regarding the short time that has passed from privatization of these activities, much studies and investigation have not been conducted concerning the performance of such companies; this point makes clear the necessity to investigate this issue. In this research, the relationship between transformational leadership and competitive environment and marketing trends with organizational performances in urban services and waste management companies has been investigated. The present research is applied in terms of purpose, and it is descriptive of correlation type in terms of method. The statistical population of the research is composed of the executive companies of waste management in 31 centers of the provinces, that the sample size have been determined out of 121 companies, using Cochran method, and 191 questionnaires were collected. The data collection tool is a questionnaire that structural equation modeling and multiple regressions were used for its analysis. The results obtained from testing the hypotheses showed that competitive environment and marketing trends affect organizational performances (financial and non-financial), and transformational leadership only affects financial performance of the companies through competitive environment and non-financial performance, and these results indicate that competitive environment and marketing trends as a powerful variable affect the relationship of transformational leadership with organizational performances.*

**Keywords:** Outsourcing, Transformational Leadership, Competitive Environment and Marketing Trends, Organizational Performances, Urban Services and Waste Management Companies.

### INTRODUCTION

Urban services and garbage collection and urban cleaning activities are among the intrinsic duties of municipalities (in accordance with Article 55 of the Municipal Law), on which a large amount of money is spent annually; for example, Karaj municipality, has allocated about 500 billion riyals (according to the budget supplement) of its annual budget to provide urban services, that by generalizing this amount to all centers of the provinces, it can be deduced that the process of waste management of urban services, which is one of the main duties of municipalities, is vital and costly.

The municipalities have taken action in line with numerous assumptions about outsourcing of waste management and urban services activities to the private sector. The theories such as

transaction cost economics (Bajari, Tadelis, 2001), believed that organizations should decide on the implementation or purchase to minimize costs (outsourcing is made when the cost is lower than implementation). The resource dependence theory (Cro, Piskorsky, 2005) argued that organizations have basically no resources and facilities and they must outsource in order to communicate with others. In many outsourcing studies, it seems that (cost-benefits) is a compelling argument for outsourcing services (Kakabadse, Kakabadse 2002).

Basically, the term outsourcing was first introduced in 1989 to describe Kodak's decision to assign IT activities to one of IBM's companies as a trading strategy (Rahanandehpour Langroudi, 2013). The HR outsourcing (that the waste management projects are also in this category in terms of human resources enjoyment) was increased dramatically in the 1990s (Nelson Oly Ndubisi, 2010). At least, one of the activities of HR aspects of 2.3 executives and organizations regards outsourcing (Bureau of National 2004); but, the conducted studies over the last decade show declines in outsourcing worldwide (Linder, 2004). Clearly, in some cases, outsourcing has reduced customer services (Nelson Oly Ndubisi, 2010). It is observed that outsourcing has a short life in the world, and consequently, there is not an extensive research on effective relationships in urban services companies and waste management, and there is a serious shortage of research in a wide range of outsourcing areas (Venkatesh, Morris, and Davis, 2003). Given the increasing trend in budget allocations for contracting matters in most of the country's organizations over the past few years, it can be concluded that the acceleration of using outsourcing has been increased, but its results have never been studied (Ashrafzadeh, 2005). Therefore, it is important to study the effective factors on organizational performance of urban services companies and waste management.



## THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

**1. Transactional Leadership:** The transformation and dynamism of the environment are one of the most prominent features of today's world. Increasing productivity, effectiveness, and the success and survival of organizations require the adoption of effective and change-oriented strategies. Although leadership styles reflect different outcomes in different contexts, the transformational leadership style has been emphasized in terms of effectiveness (Dionne et al., 2004).

Researchers and scholars have focused their attention on participatory and transformational charismatic leadership over the past decades (Zahedi et al., 2013). Transformational leadership focuses more on motivational, inspirational, and facilitation features (Madsen and Albrechtsen, 2008).

In general, transformational leadership means concentration of people on a common goal through self-enhancing behaviors that individuals obtain due to successful achievement of a goal, an internal reward, and satisfaction (Oke et al., 2009: 65).

First of all, these leaders make their employees satisfied, feel empowered, have self-esteem, and lead them to do tasks beyond their official roles, and they also often make their employees have more than enough effort to do tasks and always try to be creative and effective in their jobs. Moreover, they reduce the level of pressure and burnout of their employees. At the group level, transformational leaders also create and enhance collective confidence and trust, moral commitment, and group and team motivation. All these features can lead to promotion of group

training level, effectiveness, creativity, and satisfaction from duty and leadership. These leaders are also able to create a common (shared) leadership, which is the same leadership through a team (in which leadership functions are distributed among the members of a group). Indeed, the major part of the focused dimensions refers to the motivational roles of transformational leadership (Gumusluoglu, Ilsev, 2009). The motivational roles of transformational leaders lead to job enrichment based on the existing theoretical and research background.

**2. Competitive environment and Marketing orientations:** Today, all economic activities are carried out in a highly competitive environment, due to rapid technological changes, awareness of customers with regard to quality and availability of a wide range of products and services, this will inevitably focus on concepts such as transformational leadership and the competitive environment and marketing orientations (Patiar Mia, 2013).

Focusing on resources and capabilities and ignoring the competitive position will make the company focus more on internal events, and thus increase the level of risks. Today, competitive strategies and their axial branches are considered to be a part of the management activities (Porter et al., 2004). Marketing orientation determines that the main tasks of each organization are to determine the needs, demands, and values of the target market and adapt the organization to their satisfaction in a more effective and efficient way than other competitors (Rousta et al., 2011). Marketing is a part of the management philosophy of managers. Managers must create value-added and achieve their customer satisfaction by knowing the needs of their customers; ultimately, they can benefit through selling their products. Market orientations are a group of activities that transform the marketing philosophy into action by producing, releasing and responding to market information (Kohli, Jeworski, 1990).

The close relationship between competitive and structural strategies is considered as a prerequisite for the success of favorable business operations. Adaptation of competitive strategies leads to moderation and correlation between the organizational functions (Munsung and Satish, 2013).

### **3. Organizational performances**

**Non-financial performance:** Today, companies have moved from the era of industrial competition to the era of information competition. Financial criteria such as operating profit and return on capital can assess the effectiveness of operational sectors; but today, companies need a new ability to succeed in market competition, the ability of a company to exploit intangible assets is much more important than the management of tangible and physical assets (Roohi and Azar, 2010). Using non-financial criteria in the company management control system has attracted many researchers. According to the researchers, the main reason for the use of non-financial criteria for evaluating the performance is the large impact of non-financial criteria on the financial performance of companies (Kaplan and Notron 1993). Non-financial criteria include market size (Martin-Consuegra and Esteban, 2007: 385), market share (Bergeron et al, 2004: 1009; Martin-Consuegra and Esteban, 2007: 385; Su et al, 2008: 815), new product development (Bergeron et al, 2004: 1009) and growth rate (Martin-Consuegra and Esteban, 2007: 385; Su et al., 2008: 815; Ke et al, 2008: 260).

**Financial performance:** Financial performance is defined in different ways. For example, the number and variety of customers (Wood, 2006: 443), and determination of a specific rate for future growth (Ke et al., 2008: 26) is considered as a measure of company performance (Wood, 2006: 443). Financial performance includes sales returns (Bergeron et al., 2004: 1009), return



on investment (Bergeron et al., 2004: 1009; Morgan and Strong, 2003: 165; Wood, 2006: 443), and earnings per share (Bergeron et al., 2004: 1009) or profitability in general (Morgan and Strong, 2003: 165; Wood, 2006: 443). The concept of financial performance is generally focused on efficiency and effectiveness because the company must be profitable for survival, financial performance is used as a result of financial performance (marginal profit, special benefit, return on capital investment, relative profitability) (Sandvik, 2003: 358-359). For survival and success of new companies, attracting new customers and retaining the previous customers is essential (Hughes and Morgan, 2007: 656). Therefore, customer performance measures include attracting and retaining customers as well as addressing their orders. On the other hand, production performance refers to market share and sales share. Market share is the key to success; the companies with the highest market share usually lead to lower costs. Since the market share and sales growth rate are the determining factors in the competitive position of each company, the relative success of the company's products in selling and acquiring market shares is as an indicator of the performance of production in business performance (Zahedi et al., 2013).

### The role of transformational leadership and competitive environment in organizational performance

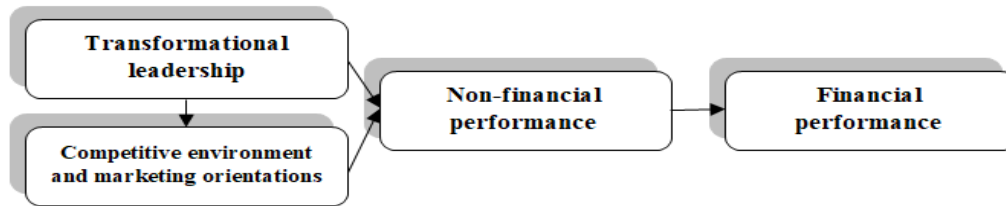


Figure 1: The conceptual model of the research (Patlar, Mia 2013)

In order to investigate the relationship between the above criteria, six hypotheses are considered. Each hypothesis is used to assess the research (the role of transformational leadership and marketing orientations on the organizational performance of the waste management companies).

Hypothesis 1: Transformational leadership affects non-financial performances.

Hypothesis 2: Transformational leadership affects the competitive environment and marketing orientations.

Hypothesis 3: Marketing orientations affect non-financial performances.

Hypothesis 4: Non-financial performances affect financial performances.

Hypothesis 5: Transformational leadership through non-financial performance affects the company's non-financial performance.

Hypothesis 6: Transformational leadership through competitive environment and marketing orientations affect the company's non-financial performance.

Hypothesis 7: Transformational leadership through a competitive environment, marketing orientations, and non-financial performance affects the company's non-financial performance.

## METHOD

In terms of the purpose, this research is applied and in terms of its implementation method, it is descriptive. In terms of method, this research is causal and finally, the data collection method is field type.

The measurement tools of this study were prepared from previous studies (questionnaire) and presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. The measurement tool**

Variable	Number of questions	Reference
Competitive environment and marketing orientations	15	Roger Bennett (2005)
Financial performance	6	Douglas, Vorhies (2000)
Non-financial performance	6	
Transformational leadership	20	Bass, Avolio (2003)

The validity of the measurement tool is confirmed as it is a standard tool; however, this tool was approved by the experts after preparation. The reliability of the measurement tool was also determined by calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.90 and 0.92 for competitive environment and marketing orientations and transformational leadership, respectively).

The statistical population of the study was 121 active companies in the field of urban services and waste management in 31 provinces of the country. According to the Cochran formula, the sample size was determined and the questionnaire was sent to 103 companies. A total of 191 questionnaires were returned from 93 companies for exploitation.

#### DATA ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESES TESTING:

In this study, structural equation modeling was used to analyze the theoretical framework and related hypotheses. Structural equation modeling is a very general and powerful multivariate analytic technique of multiple regression families and, more precisely, general linear model (GLM). This technique allows the researcher to test a set of regression equations simultaneously. Structural equation modeling is done in two ways such as covariance-based- structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) and partial least squares path modeling (PLS-PM). In this method, the second method, i.e. the partial least squares-path modeling or PLS-PM was used. This approach is a suitable approach for researchers due to less dependence on the size of the sample, the level of measurement of variables, the normalization of distribution and the use of embedded tools. In this study, due to the low sample size, this approach has been used.

**Table 2: Correlation and descriptive statistics along with the reliability of the research variables**

	Mean	Standard deviation	1	2	3	4
Competitive environment and marketing orientations	3.92	0.602	1			
Financial performance	3.90	0.452	0.67	1		
Non-financial performance	4.66	0.975	0.78	0.82	1	
Transformational leadership	4.61	1.04	0.81	0.55	0.66	1



Table 2 shows that the mean of all four variables is higher than the expected mean in Likert's five-point scale. Also, Cronbach's alpha of each variable is above 0.7, which indicates the suitable reliability of the measurement tool. The correlation coefficients between the research variables are also between 0.55 and 0.82, indicating a positive linear correlation between the research variables at the 95% level.

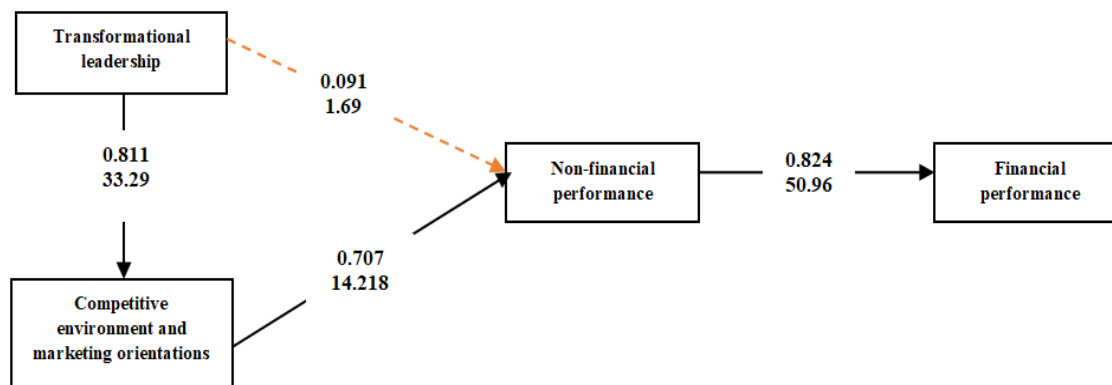


Figure 2. The result of testing the research model

- ❖ Note: In the above figure, the up numbers indicate the amount of impact and the down numbers represent the T statistics.
- ❖ In the above figure, the dotted line is not verified.

*Model diagram after the test*

*Evaluation of the structural model*

In order to measure the fitness of the measurement model and the fitness of the structural model, communality and R<sup>2</sup> were used, respectively. Communality represents a percentage of the changes in the indexes, which is explained by the corresponding structure. The acceptable level for statistical sharing is more than 0.5. As shown in Table 3, the statistical communality that represents the fitness of the model is more than 0.5 and the value of R<sup>2</sup>, indicates the ability of the model to describe the structure for dependent and mediator variables. These results indicate that the proposed model has an acceptable ability to describe the financial performance variable as the final dependent variable.

Table 3. Evaluation of structural research model

Fitness of Structural Model	Fitness of Measurement Model	
R <sup>2</sup>	Communality	Variable
0.65	0.60	Competitive environment and marketing orientations
0.67	0.82	Financial performance
0.61	0.85	Non-financial performance
-----	0.54	Transformational leadership

*Evaluation of Goodness of Fit index*

The overall model of each section includes the model of measurement and structural and, by confirming its fitness; the survey of the goodness of fit is completed. The general criterion

presented in the pls method to the investigation of the goodness of fit is reported by Tenenhaus et al. (2005) and the only existing criterion is currently computed as follows:

$$\text{GoF} = \sqrt{\overline{\text{Com}} \times \overline{R^2}_{\text{inner}}}$$

Where  $\overline{\text{com}}$  is the communality values of the variables of the model, and  $\overline{R^2}$ , is the mean of the coefficients for determining the variables of the research. Therefore, the amount of this statistics for the research model is:

$$\text{GOF} = \sqrt{0.702 * 0.643}$$

$$\text{GOF} = 0.451$$

Accordingly, three values of 0.1, 0.25 and 0.36, which are presented as weak, moderate and strong values for GOF (Wetzels et al., 2009), and the value of 0.451, represents a very suitable fitness for the model.

Finally, the hypothesis testing results are investigated. Since this study has a confidence level of 0.95 or error of 0.05, we are looking for hypotheses testing. For t-test, the numbers outside the range of 1.96 and -1.96 will be significant. This means that if the t-test is a numerical value between 1.96 and -1.96, it will be insignificant.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between transformational management and marketing orientations with organizational functions. In order to investigate the validity of research hypotheses, the conceptual model of research in urban service companies and waste management in provincial centers was tested. The investigation of the correlation between research variables shows the following results.

**Table 5. The result of testing the research hypotheses**

Hypothesis	Standard coefficient	T-Statistics	Result
Transformational leadership affects non-financial performances.	0.091	1.69	Not-confirmed
Transformational leadership affects the competitive environment and marketing orientations.	0.811	33.29	Confirmed
Marketing orientations affect non-financial performances.	0.707	14.218	Confirmed
Non-financial performances affect financial performances.	0.824	50.96	Confirmed
Transformational leadership through non-financial performance affects the company's non-financial performance.	(0.091) (0.824)	(1.69) (50.96)	Not-confirmed
Transformational leadership through competitive environment and marketing orientations affect the company's non-financial performance.	(0.707)(0.881)= 0.62	(33.29) (14.218)	Confirmed



Transformational leadership through a competitive environment, marketing orientations, and non-financial performance affect the company's non-financial performance.	(0.707)(0.881) (0.824)=0.51	(33.29) (14.218) (50.96)	Confirmed
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The positive relationship between marketing orientations and the performance of organizations has been experimentally confirmed in many studies (Cano et al., 2004). The intensity of market competition leads to customer orientation and ultimately increases non-financial performance (innovation) and financial performance (costs) (Maries et al., 2012). On the other hand, Sanjaghi et al. (2011) found that there is no significant relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performances, but in this research, marketing orientations as a powerful moderator variable have affected the organizational performance of transformational management. A similar study on Australian hotels confirmed that there is a positive relationship between transformational management with financial performances through non-financial performances (Patiar, Mia, 2013) (which accurately reflects the difference in the nature of the service of hotels with the services of urban service companies; hotel service recipients are the only passengers and specific class of the community; however, in urban service projects, all citizens are considered to be organizational stakeholders, and transformational management in these companies will only enhance the financial and non-financial performance due to the competitive environment and marketing orientations. Considering the significant effect of marketing orientations on the conceptual model of research (financial and non-financial performance of the organization) and considering the results obtained from the dependence level of the variables (Table 6), in particular (organizational performance relative to the competitive environment and marketing orientations), the following points are considered:

- In some cities (Shiraz and especially Qom), organizational performance is severely dependent on the competitive environment and marketing orientations, and it seems that employers have succeeded in creating an attractive competitive environment for companies. This is evident with the presence of prominent companies from different parts of the country in the above cities. The point is that in Isfahan, a high-level of non-financial performance is dependent on marketing orientations, but in terms of financial performance, this correlation coefficient decreases to a moderate level. Probably the reason for this is the assignment of a major market share to quasi-private companies (owned by the municipality), which has led to the creation of a false competitive environment, and in spite of the presence of transformational managers, the level of financial performance is related to marketing orientations and has led to average or insignificant financial returns.
- In some centers of the provinces (Mashhad and Tehran), the degree of dependence of organizational performances on the competitive environment is moderate, which should be carefully studied base on the level of non-financial activities of the companies in these provincial centers. The absence of non-native contractors in Mashhad has led to creation of a limited competition market between the companies, the stagnation of the environment and, finally, the analysis of their power, so that the level of organizational performance of the companies as well as their composition can be predicted to a large



- extent. However, due to a large number of contractors and the number of the received questionnaire, there is no specific comment on the cause of the correlation coefficients.
- In many cities (including Ahvaz, Yazd, etc.), the dependence of these performances is very low, which may be due to the poor financial situation of the municipalities or structural problems (like Sari, where its waste disposal center is located more than 100 kilometers from the city).
  - In some cities (such as Tabriz, Rasht, etc.), due to the low influence of non-native companies, despite the highly competitive environment, the marketing tendencies of companies have not been active and on the other hand, their organizational performance has a negative relationship with the competitive environment. It seems that the only competitive advantage in these cities is the company's bid price. This has undermined the growing marketing orientations of companies and their high tendency to keep the market closed, and practically kept their financial performance levels at a minimal level.
  - In some centers of the provinces (such as Shahrekord, Bushehr, and Birjand), due to its small size, only one company has been operated and generally led to the creation of a monopoly market.
  - Finally, in some centers of the provinces (such as Karaj, Ilam, Bojnourd, Khorramabad, Kerman, etc.) urban services are being carried out by municipalities, which there is no specific study in this research.
  - It is noteworthy that financial and non-financial performances are highly dependent on each other, and this is evident in all cities except Rasht, and the reason for this can be related to how the questionnaire is completed by the companies operating in the city or whether the newness of the outsourcing process.



**Table 6. Correlation between organizational performance and the competitive environment**

The competitive environment and marketing orientations in provincial centers		Transformational leadership	Competitive environment and marketing orientations	Non-financial performance	Financial performance
Qom	Pearson correlation	0.901	1	0.813	0.862
Esfahan	Pearson correlation	0.840	1	0.834	0.666
Mashhad	Pearson correlation	0.818	1	0.558	0.571
Ahvaz	Pearson correlation	0.745	1	0.348	0.240
Tabriz	Pearson correlation	0.776	1	-0.597	-0.668
Rasht	Pearson correlation	-0.775	1	-0.775	0.661

This study emphasizes the importance of the role of marketing and its orientations in the competitive market, and it seems that if employers act to create a suitable competitive environment for urban services and waste management, they promote the level of service of companies to citizens. It is suggested to the owners of the companies that by developing transformational leadership components and strengthening marketing orientations through the creation of parallel and team systems, they have expanded their marketing strategies to achieve

higher levels of financial and non-financial performance, while successfully in an existing competitive environment.

The study has inevitably encountered some limitations that have certainly affected the results and findings of the study.

- The present study considers only the managers of urban services companies as the main unit of analysis; while, in future studies it is better to consider other stakeholders (including citizens and employers) in particular to examine non-financial performances and marketing orientations of companies.
- On the other hand, the study has encountered an inherent limitation of the questionnaires for collecting data. The questionnaire does not fully assess the subjects' thoughts and opinion.
- In this research, cross-sectional data are used to evaluate the research model and hypotheses, while marketing orientations and organizational performances are dynamic structures that include time-related elements. Therefore, in future research, it is suggested that these elements be investigated over a long period of time.
- Finally, one of the important limitations of this study is the small size of the population and the sample for interpreting the relationships between the variables in different cities, considering the fact that this research has examined the companies operating in the provincial centers, it is suggested that future studies be investigated to the provincial markets (other cities of the province), because the strategic and operational patterns in the local competitive environment are likely to be very different.

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