

## EXAMINING THE EFFECTS OF MORAL LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEES IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR

AHLAKİ LİDERLİK TARZININ ÜRETİM SEKTÖRÜNDEKİ ÇALIŞANLAR ÜZERİNDE  
ETKİLERİNİN İNCELENMESİ

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### Abstract

In today's competitive environment, both leadership styles and the attitudes and behaviors of employees have become critically important for the performance of companies. How successful companies are managed in their sector is the subject of many studies. In particular, some psychological factors that employees experience in the organization have positive or negative effect. Indeed, leadership style is one of the most important factors among these psychological effects. Within the scope of the study, the aim is to analyze the relationship among moral leadership, creativity, effective communication, emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation variables on engineers working in the manufacturing sector. When the data was analyzed, it was concluded that emotional exhaustion had a negative effect on performance, but intrinsic motivation had a positive effect on employees. The research was conducted by collecting questionnaires from 427 white-collar employees working in companies producing white goods in the manufacturing sector in Istanbul. SPSS 25 program was used to analyze the data. Since the questions were asked on a Likert scale, firstly the factor and reliability analysis were performed, then the correlation analysis, regression analysis, and the sobel test and Hayes process were used in the analysis of the mediation variable effect.

**Keywords:** Moral Leadership, Creativity, Effective Communication, Emotional Exhaustion, Intrinsic Motivation

**JEL:** L290, M100, M510, M540

### Öz

Günümüz rekabet ortamında liderlik tarzlarının ve çalışanların tutum ve davranışları şirketlerin performansı açısından fazlasıyla önemli hale gelmiştir. Şirketlerin buldukları sektörde başarılı olabilmeleri için nasıl yönetildikleri birçok araştırmaya konu olmaktadır. Özellikle çalışanların örgüt içinde yaşadıkları psikolojik etkenler, olumlu yada olumsuz yönde etki etmektedir. Bu olumlu yada olumsuz yöndeki etkiler genellikle çalışanların ve örgütün performansında ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı da üretim sektöründe çalışan mühendisler üzerinde ahlaki liderlik, yaratıcılık, etkili iletişim, duygusal tükenme ve içsel motivasyon değişkenleri arasındaki ilişkilerin analiz edilmesidir. Çalışmada analizler sonucunda, duygusal tükenmenin çalışanlar üzerinde negatif etkisinin olduğu, içsel motivasyonun ise olumlu yönde etkisinin olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Araştırma İstanbulda üretim sektöründe bulunan beyaz eşya üretimi yapan firmalarda çalışmakta olan 427 beyaz yakalı çalışandan anketler toplanarak yapılmıştır. Verilerin analiz edilmesinde SPSS 25 programı kullanılmıştır. Araştırma da sorular likert ölçeğinde sorulduğu için öncelikle faktör ve güvenirlik analizi yapıldıktan sonra korelasyon analizi, regresyon analizi ve aracı değişken etkisinin analizinde sobel testi ve hayes process yapılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ahlaki Liderlik, Yaratıcılık, Etkili İletişim, Duygusal Tükenme, İçsel Motivasyon

**JEL:** L290, M100, M510, M540

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 1976, Silin described moral leadership as a leadership style with unselfish behavior. Twenty years later, Westwood (1997) supported Silin's (1976) study and added the concept of "role model" along with "not behaving selfish". Moral leadership greatly contributes to the psychological response of the employees, not only showing their commitment to the organization but also showing better job performance (Cheng et al., 2004). Emphasizing the personal honesty and dedication of leaders, moral leadership creates a trust and supportive environment and contributes to the increase of psychological empowerment among employees (Chan et al., 2008). Moral leadership has the characteristic of constructive behavior in providing performance feedback that enables employees to evaluate their own competencies and improve themselves (Cheng et al., 2000). Emotions of employees towards their organizations take the form of emotional reactions to events in the organization and as a result, it is stated that an employees' motivation, performance, loyalty, and long-term job satisfaction are affected (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Since employees need to manage their emotions in the face of situations that may occur in the organization, it is impossible to define the behaviors of the employees without considering the emotional situation in the employees' behaviors (Sliter et al., 2010). However, when individuals express feelings that are incompatible with their personality, negative effects are likely to occur: individuals prone to negative emotions tend to be exhausted (Diefendorff et al., 2005). Hence, leadership plays an important role in the reduction or elimination of these negative emotions since employees are more likely to develop a strong identity with Moral Leadership (Wu et al., 2012), and in fact, has been shown to have a significant effect on respect for employees, giving them autonomy within their areas of responsibility. Thus, commitment to work and organization is stronger in employees. Moral leadership supports employees' participation in decision-making and allows them to increase their effectiveness on organizational results by management's ability to listen to their ideas. In eliminating emotional exhaustion and providing internal motivation and creativity, moral leadership creates a reliable, supportive, and encouraging climate within the organization. We assume that this sincere and supportive leadership enhances the effective communication between employees, supposing that employees share the self-concept and similar values with the leader. In order to establish effective communication among employees in organizations, it is necessary to share information in a timely and accurate way, either officially or informally (Sharma & Patterson, 1999). At the same time, the quality of the information exchange among employees is explained as effective communication (Sanzo et al., 2003). In terms of enhancing communication, creativity is a complex and detailed structure that has been defined in many ways. Creativity, according to the most widely accepted definition, includes the development and conceptualization of ideas, actions, and procedures developed by employees or a group of employees (Shalley et al., 2000). Creativity allows the original ideas of employees to be useful inventions for organizations and society. It may not always be possible to give both the creative ability and the opportunities to use this ability to the staff. However, in cases where there is an opportunity to benefit from this ability, it should be used as a job satisfaction means. It should be taken into consideration that employees can be more productive in an organizational environment where people can apply their thoughts for testing, try different things, find opportunities to work on their own, and do original projects. Based on both theoretical and empirical studies in the literature, in this study, research was designed to determine the effects of moral leadership, intrinsic motivation, and emotional exhaustion on creativity and effective communication. The research was carried out between white goods manufacturers in Istanbul. It is thought that researching a sample of engineers with some different characteristics constitutes the original aspect of this study. In addition, it is hoped that the results obtained will contribute to the literature and practitioners in business life.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Moral Leadership

Moral leadership gives employees confidence and strength, in other words, good motivation. Employees' assessment related to reliability of the leader within the organization depends primarily on the personal character of the leader. It is suggested that moral leadership can create a sense of trust in mutual relations with employees within the organization (Butz et al., 2001). Employees will not trust managers unless they are absolutely certain of the moral excellence of the manager. Moral leadership is seen by employees as ideal leaders who display honesty and behave with goodness rather than personal interest, who are respected and admirable (Niu et al., 2009), and are trusted. The moral evaluation of leaders (and their personality characteristics) depends on the confidence process aroused in the followers as a result of measuring their attitudes and behaviors (Colquitt et al., 2007). When Chinese family enterprises are examined in the literature, it can be seen that the concept of moral leadership is unique to the traditional family enterprises in China. It is emphasized that the characteristics of moral leadership are determined to meet the needs of contemporary Chinese family enterprises (Farh et al., 2008)”: personal honesty, selfishness, work commitment and serving as a model. Moral Leadership is especially important for employees because of Confucianist ideology and morally focused values (Chen & Farh, 2009), and in addition moral leadership has an effect on the internal motivation and trust of the leader, which can affect the behavior and performance of the employees (Li et al., 2012). Serving as a role model is an important aspect of moral leadership (Westwood, 1997), because it is a process in which employees shape their perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors. Chen et al. (2014) argue that moral leadership is an important leadership style in terms of the high sense of trust the employees have given. In a study conducted by Moye et al. (2005), it is explained that trust is the most important element in ensuring a positive working environment among employees. It is emphasized that employees are more willing to perform their duties from the moment they start to feel that they are respected and supported by their managers and that the trust towards their organizations' managers is strengthened. If employees trust their managers, they can behave more positively within the organization and feel that they receive more support from their managers. In this case, employees will tend to work more unselfishly, and, in terms of intrinsic motivation and mental fatigue, these characteristics will be lessened. If employees do not trust their managers, their behavior within the organization may be negative and they may feel that they receive less support from their managers. In the face of this situation, both the employees' internal motivation will be extremely low and they will also feel mentally tired. Therefore, we investigate the effects of moral leadership on employees. Examined and tested hypotheses;

H1: Moral leadership in organizations has a positive effect on intrinsic motivation

H2: Moral leadership in organizations has a positive effect on emotional exhaustion

H3: Moral leadership in organizations has a positive effect on creativity

H4: Moral leadership in organizations has a positive effect on effective communication

### 2.2. Creativity

Every person has certain skills that can be expanded upon by exploring new areas. The fact that employees in organizations want to make new inventions and/or make creative efforts make them not only an organizational benefit but also a motivational factor within their environment. In this case, the employees remain satisfied with the work, produce

creative solutions for the problems they face or encounter, and as a result, are able to present beneficial results, not only to themselves but also to the organization and the society (Eren, 1998). Organizational studies on leadership and creativity indicate that creative employees have the intention of quitting if this freedom is tamped down by the organization (Myatt, 2013). In a study conducted by Janssen et al. (2004), they emphasized the importance of creativity and stated that “this is an important concept that brings together individuals and groups, and in fact, these ideas form the basis of innovation along with discussions.” Creativity is therefore very important to the long-term success of organizations in a highly competitive environment. Mayfield and Mayfield (2007), found (in a study of the relationship between creativity and intentions to leave from the work) that if employees were encouraged to be creative within the organization and a creative environment was perceived, their intention to leave was reduced. In this case, both the support of the employees and the high level of intrinsic motivation of the employees increase creative activities. Creative employees tend to pass to another organization, in other words leave the current organization in search of an environment where they feel happy or perform creative activities at the desired level all dependent on whether they are satisfied with the opportunities offered to them in organizations and do not encounter career opportunities (Shih & Susanto, 2011). However, if we take a critical approach, we can state that this perspective is a very complex cycle when we consider the impact of real-life workers and in which sector, in which task, in which responsibilities, and in which organizational climate and organizational culture they work (Rosso, 2014). Therefore, in the study, the relationships between them were examined by considering certain variables. Examined and tested hypotheses;

H5: Intrinsic motivation in organizations has a positive effect on creativity

H7: Emotional exhaustion in organizations has a negative effect on creativity

### **2.3. Effective Communication**

In the literature, the researchers emphasized the importance of communication, and in particular stated that an effective approach to eliminate mutual doubt should be timely, accurate and useful communication (Yousafzai et al., 2005). Effective communication is important in terms of maintaining healthy communication between individuals and maintaining clear and comprehensible messages (Olkkonen et al., 2000). One of the most important problems in organizations is the disruption in the tasks as well as tasks that occur due to an insufficient level of communication. These disruptions also reflect unrest and performance within the organization. The quality of communication is one of the most important issues that managers should pay attention to in their relationship with employees. In order to achieve this, the importance of increasing the quality of the relationship between managers and employees through effective communication should be given greater importance (Yen et al., 2011). Characteristics of effective communication are multiple: it is bi-directional, formal and informal, meaningful and regular. These characteristics are very important in the relationship between the employees in the organization and the relationship between manager and subordinate because the culture of the organization can also become stronger through effective communication. The lack of conflict between managers and employees or between employees in organizations depends on high levels of effective communication. Through effective communication, the conflict situation that may occur within the organization is kept to a minimum, the uncertainty in the organization disappears, and most importantly, a strong dialogue is established between all the stakeholders of the organization (Massey & Dawes, 2007). Thanks to healthy communication established within the organization, the definitions of duties and responsibilities in the manager-subordinate relationship can be comprehensively fulfilled. If effective communication cannot be

established in conflicts between employees or internal stakeholders, it is stated that productivity has started to decrease (Jehn & Mannix, 2001). In organizations with high levels of effective communication, it is expected that there will be minimal conflict of duties between the employees, the expectations of the employees are met, and the level of satisfaction in the work they do will be higher. However, the decrease in the satisfaction of the attitudes and behaviors of the employees is explained as a sign that there is no positive feedback expected from the managers and that conflicts of duties have started to occur among the employees. Therefore, the effects of moral leadership, intrinsic motivation, and emotional exhaustion on effective communication are examined in scope within this model of research. Examined and tested hypotheses;

H6: Intrinsic motivation in organizations has a positive effect on effective communication

H8: Emotional exhaustion in organizations has a negative effect on effective communication

#### **2.4. Intrinsic Motivation**

Decisions taken by managers within their organizations and insufficient investments can cause employees to be stressful because their expectations are not met (Hobfoll, 1989). This stress among the employees in the organization causes emotional exhaustion and may decrease their internal motivation. This situation in the organization encourages the managers to find the sources of the stress and to find ways to prevent stress from occurring again (Hobfoll, 1988). One of the most important factors in helping employees benefit from their organizations is their intrinsic motivation (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Intrinsic motivation expresses the pleasure of the employee and the desire to work more (Amabile, 2018). Employees experiencing emotional exhaustion show less effort and lower intrinsic motivation. Similarly, employees' intention to leave is very high, as their emotional exhaustion weakens their commitment to the organization and to the work. The intrinsic motivation to be provided by the managers in the employees will ensure both the willingness of the employees and their commitment to the organization. It is an undeniable fact that internal motivation is important for employees to engage in creative activities (Elsbach & Hargadon, 2006). With the internal motivation of leaders within the organization, significant improvement can occur in an employees' desire to learn, interest in the job, and an expansion in their curiosity (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Particularly in terms of achieving the continuity principle, which is one of the aims of the organizations, employees with high levels of motivation and creativity are needed. For this reason, it is important for the continuity of organizations to provide intrinsic motivation in relations and communication between employees (Shalley et al., 2004). It is accepted that internal motivation is an important function in terms of continuous development of creativity and dynamic structure in employees (Amabile, 1988). Intrinsic motivation helps employees to tackle challenging and complex tasks, while encouraging confidence and engagement to deliver greater concentration (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to investigate the mediation effect of intrinsic motivation as indicated in the research model between moral leadership, creativity, and effective communication. Examined and tested hypotheses;

H9: Intrinsic motivation has a mediation variable effect on the relationship between moral leadership and effective communication in organizations

H10: Intrinsic motivation has a mediation variable effect on the relationship between moral leadership and creativity in organizations

## 2.5. Emotional Exhaustion

It is emphasized that emotional exhaustion has an effect, resulting in the beginning of symptoms of stagnation within workers, cooling off from their work, feeling emotionally tired, and the resulting decline in the working procedures of the organization and an inability to perform designated tasks (McCarthy et al., 2016). With the occurrence of emotional exhaustion, especially in employees, a decrease in work desires and energy is observed (Hobfoll & Shirom, 2000). Leaders who give importance to work in an organizational sense give importance to the high energy of the employees by offering continuous motivating activities that prevent employees from experiencing emotional exhaustion. Otherwise, with the emergence of emotional exhaustion in employees, they start to behave more slowly in performing their duties, have a decrease in the commitment to the organization, and the intention to leave the organization (Bronkhorst & Vermeeren, 2016; Chi & Liang, 2013). In the event of emotional exhaustion within the employees, the willingness of the employees to voluntarily help in fulfilling and achieving the goals of the organization is eliminated. Indeed, employees experiencing emotional exhaustion are less motivated to undertake behaviors that can be considered beneficial to the organization (Aryee et al., 2008). On the other hand, employees who do not experience emotional exhaustion and who have high levels of intrinsic motivation are more willing to help the organization achieve its goals (Hobfoll, 2001). Emotional exhaustion is defined as a psychological response to the intensity of work-related stress accumulated by employees (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). According to this theory, employees are faced with various demands in their organizations, and emotional exhaustion begins to occur in the event of intense energy being used to deal with the needs of their organizations. Therefore, employees need to make both physical and psychological efforts to meet the demands from their organizations. Researchers state that emotional exhaustion affects work performance (Rutherford et al., 2009) and that emotionally depleted employees exhibit negative reactions to their organization (Rutherford et al., 2009). Therefore, it is useful to examine the creativity of employees experiencing emotional exhaustion and the relationship between communication within the organization. In a recent study, it was found that emotional exhaustion negatively affected job satisfaction in organizations (Hur et al., 2015). The creativity and communication quality of the employees with low job satisfaction are analyzed by hypotheses. Examined and tested hypotheses;

H11: Emotional exhaustion has a mediation variable effect on the relationship between moral leadership and effective communication in organizations.

H12: Emotional exhaustion has a mediation variable effect on the relationship between moral leadership and effective communication in organizations.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted with a total of 427 white-collar employees (engineers) in white goods manufacturers in Istanbul. After performing factor analysis (explanatory and confirmatory) and reliability analysis using SPSS 25 and SPSS AMOS programs, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to test the hypotheses, Sobel test and Hayes process were performed for mediation variable analysis. A 6-question scale (Cronbach's alpha value is 0.88 in the present study) developed by Cheng et al. (2004) was used in the research in order to analyze moral leadership variables. In order to measure the emotional exhaustion, variable questions developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) (Cronbach's alpha value in the current study is 0.87) were used. In order to measure the intrinsic motivation, variable questions developed by Kuvaas et. al. (2017) (Cronbach's alpha value in the current study is 0.87) were used. In order to evaluate the creativity of the employees, the questions developed by Zhou and George (2001) (Cronbach's alpha value is 0.97 in the current study) and Liao and Chuang

(2004) (Cronbach's alpha value is 0.92 in the current study) were used. For effective communication scale, scales used by Sharma and Patterson in their 1999 study were beneficial.

### **3.1. Research Aim**

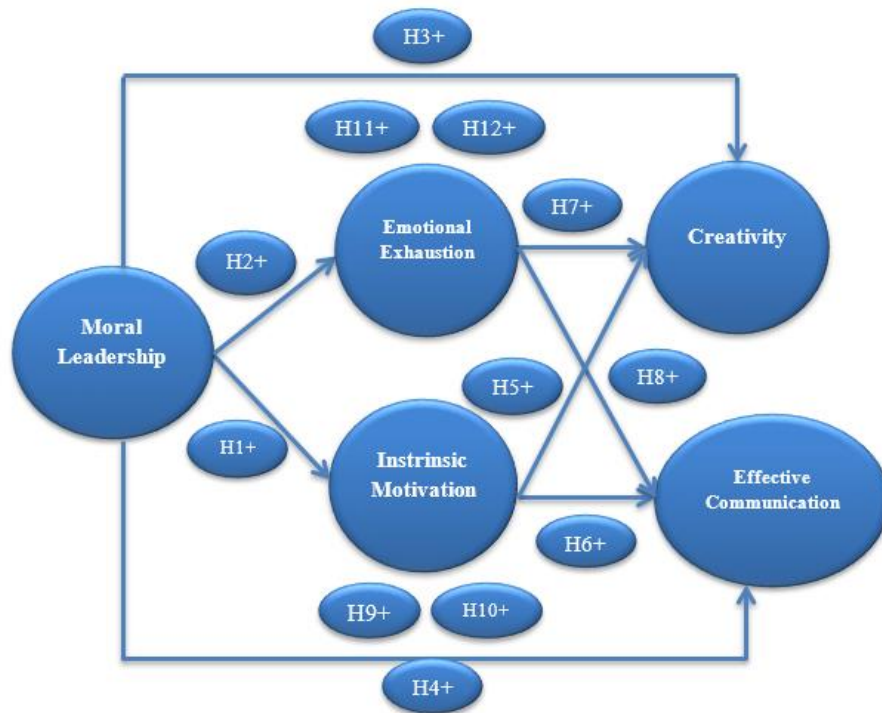
The research aimed to determine the effects of moral leadership as independent variables, emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation as both independent and mediation variables, and creativity and effective communication as dependent variables on white-collar (engineers) employees in manufacturing companies (companies producing white goods). The reason for the selection of the manufacturing sector is to investigate the importance of fatigue, motivation, and creativity within employees in the manufacturing sector. The reason why the sample was chosen from white-collar employees is that they take part in decision-making mechanisms, engage in creativity activities, in addition to motivation and fatigue playing a central role in the dilemma. Therefore, our research aim is to evaluate and analyze manufacturing companies in terms of both leadership and mental fatigue, intrinsic motivation, creativity, and effective communication. To test the propositions, a field survey was conducted using the survey.

### **3.2. Findings**

427 white-collars (engineers) answered our survey. 185 of the participants were females, 242 of them were males, and 36.7% of them were between the ages of 30-40 and 49.7% (of them between the ages of 41-50). The number of managers above the age of 51 is 13.1%. The level of achievement of the goals of the employees stated by 61 participants as “Too Low”, 67 of them as “Low”, 147 of them “Medium”, 106 of them “High”, and 46 of them “Very High”. Areas of activity of the institutions where the participants work are, 136 participants work in the “National”, 164 participants work in the “Regional”, and 127 participants work in “International” activities.

### **3.3. Research Framework**

Based on the literature review, the independent variable (IV) is moral leadership, mediation variables (MV) are emotional exhaustion and intrinsic motivation, and dependent variables (DV) are creativity and effective communication. In this study, analyzes were made in order to determine the relationship between the statistical concepts, and thus, a quantitative approach was adopted (Bell et al., 2018; Ghauri et al., 2020).



**Figure 1:** Research Model

### 3.4. Analyses

Factor Analysis is used to provide clues about the structure of the relationship between many variables which are thought to be related (İslamoğlu & Alnaçık, 2014). Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett tests are performed to test the suitability of the scales and data representing the variables for factor analysis (Ural & Kılıç, 2013). If the KMO test sample size is 0.7-0.8 good, 0.5-0.7 medium and should be at least 0.5, if less than 0.5, more data should be collected. Since KMO value; 0.929, exceeds 0.50 and Bartlett's test Sig. value is significant 0.000, the data set was found suitable for factor analysis. In the study, the scales consisted of 35 questions and the scales were prepared in 5-point Likert. As a result of factor analysis, 9 questions did not show factor distribution, as a result, the remaining 26 questions are distributed to 5 factors:

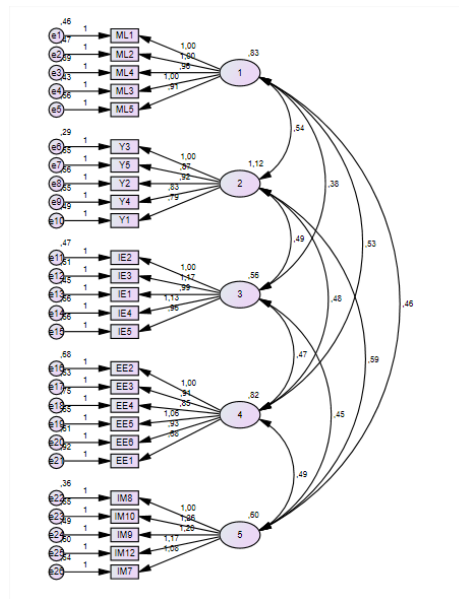


**Table 1.** Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>

Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>					
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
ML1. My manager takes care not to make a personal mistake by considering the public interest.	0.803				
ML2. My manager uses people according to their virtues and does not envy the abilities and virtues of others.	0.794				
ML4. My manager does not use my achievements and contributions for his/her own benefit.	0.768				
ML3. My manager does not use his authority to look for special privileges for himself.	0.761				
ML5. My manager does not take advantage of me for personal gain.	0.640				
C3. In the company I work with, there is the possibility to do new and original things that are their own invention.		0.851			
C5. In my company, there is always the possibility to try something different.		0.773			
C2. In my company, there is the opportunity to work independently.		0.756			
C4. In my company, there is the opportunity to work single-handedly.		0.728			
C1. In my company, there is the opportunity to apply my opinions.		0.616			
IE2. In my company, my colleagues explain some problems and suggestions in a meaningful way.			0.762		
IE3. In my company, employees in one department do not hesitate to give as much information as another department wants to have.			0.746		
IE1. In my company, my colleagues know very well what is going on with their duties.			0.679		
IE4. In my company, my colleagues explain their mistakes without hesitation.			0.676		
IE5. In my company, my colleagues always share their successful experiences.			0.557		
EE2. I feel great until the end of the work day.				0.751	
EE3. When I wake up in the morning I feel tired and I have to face another day at work.				0.730	
EE4. It is really difficult for me to work with people all day.				0.667	
EE5. I feel I complain about my work.				0.642	
EE6. I am tired of my job.				0.640	
EE1. I feel emotionally exhausted due to my job.				0.575	
IM8. Because my job is my life and I do not want to fail.					0.691
IM10. Because this job gives me a certain standard of living.					0.682
IM9. Because my reputation depends on it.					0.671
IM12. I am doing this for a salary.					0.661
IM7. Because I have to be the best in my business, I have to be the "winner".					0.641

ML: Moral Leadership, C: Creativity, IE: Effective Communication, EE: Emotional Exhaustion, IM: Intrinsic Motivation

**Confirmatory Factor Analysis;** It is used to statistically define the questions representing the measured variables or the multivariate models observed in a large number within the research model (Brown, 2015).



ML: Moral Leadership, Y: Creativity, IE: Effective Communication, EE: Emotional Exhaustion, IM: Intrinsic Motivation

**Figure 2:** Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Model Fit: It is defined as GFI, CFI, NFI, IFI and RMSEA values are generally taken into consideration (Levine, 2015). It is possible to change the values according to the analysis method of the research. The values obtained as a result of confirmatory factor analysis;  $\chi^2 / df = 2.955 < 5$ ,  $0.90 < GFI = 0.924$ ,  $0.90 < IFI = 0.934$ ,  $0.90 < NFI = 0.948$ ,  $0.90 < CFI = 0.933$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.060 < 0.078$ , the compatibility values accord with the model.

As a result, the validity of the 5-variable structure was confirmed in the confirmatory factor analysis after the exploratory factor analysis. Reliability analyses for reliability and validity of scale developed in order to determine whether survey questions ensure integrity to explain or to query to a homogeneous structure and Cronbach alpha value, reliability coefficient, must be greater than  $\alpha=0,70$  for social sciences (Hair et al., 2014; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Reliability analyses results: Moral leadership (5 questions,  $\alpha=.895$ ), Creativity (5 questions,  $\alpha=.892$ ), Effective communication (5 questions,  $\alpha=.855$ ), Emotional exhaustion (6 questions,  $\alpha=.850$ ), Intrinsic motivation (5 questions,  $\alpha=.883$ ).

**Table 2.** AVE and CR values for factors

	AVE	CR
ML	.57	.87
C	.56	.86
IE	.47	.82
EE	.45	.83
IM	.45	.80

When the reliability table was examined, it was found that the values of cronbach's alpha coefficient were highly reliable for all factors. Since the reliability coefficients are very high, there is no need to cancel any survey questions. Correlation analysis as shown in Table 3, one-to-one relationships between variables were discussed.

**Table 3.** Correlations

		Correlations				
		Moral Leadership	Creativity	Intrinsic Motivation	Emotional Exhaustion	Effective Communication
Moral Leadership	Pearson Correlation	1				
Creativity	Pearson Correlation	.525**	1			
Intrinsic Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.581**	.649**	1		
Emotional Exhaustion	Pearson Correlation	.574**	-.463**	.609**	1	
Effective Communication	Pearson Correlation	.495**	.560**	.678**	-.586**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

ML: Moral Leadership, C: Creativity, IE: Effective Communication, EE: Emotional Exhaustion, IM: Intrinsic Motivation

As a result of correlation analysis, there is a reverse significant relationship between effective communication and emotional exhaustion. In this relationship there is a reverse but significant relationship where emotional exhaustion decreases in the organization where effective communication is present. At the same time, there is a significant negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and creativity: as emotional exhaustion increases, creativity decreases in employees.

**Table 4.** Results of Regression Analysis

IV	DV	Standart $\beta$	Sig.	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F Value
Moral Leadership	Intrinsic Motivation	.581***	000	.335	165.565
Moral Leadership	Emotional Exhaustion	.574***	000	.328	160.091
Moral Leadership	Creativity	.525***	000	.273	123.511
Moral Leadership	Effective Communication	.495***	000	.242	105.259
Intrinsic Motivation	Creativity	.649***	000	.420	236.620
Intrinsic Motivation	Effective Communication	.678***	000	.458	276.335
Emotional Exhaustion	Creativity	-.463***	000	.212	88.497
Emotional Exhaustion	Effective Communication	-.586***	000	.342	170.251

\*: p&lt;0.05

\*\*: p&lt;0.01

\*\*\*: p&lt;0.001

As a result of the regression analysis, the effect of other changes, except emotional exhaustion, was positive and significant in terms of sig values, and negative and significant in terms of emotional exhaustion variables. 8 hypotheses, which are accepted outside the effect of the mediation variable in foreseen study, are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Results of Research Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Supported / Unsupported	Significance Level (Sig.)
<b>H1:</b> <i>Moral leadership in organizations has a positive effect on intrinsic motivation</i>	<b>Supported</b>	<b><i>P&lt;0.001</i></b>
<b>H2:</b> <i>Moral leadership in organizations has a positive effect on emotional exhaustion</i>	<b>Supported</b>	<b><i>P&lt;0.001</i></b>
<b>H3:</b> <i>Moral leadership in organizations has a positive effect on creativity</i>	<b>Supported</b>	<b><i>P&lt;0.001</i></b>
<b>H4:</b> <i>Moral leadership in organizations has a positive effect on effective communication</i>	<b>Supported</b>	<b><i>P&lt;0.001</i></b>
<b>H5:</b> <i>Intrinsic motivation in organizations has a positive effect on creativity</i>	<b>Supported</b>	<b><i>P&lt;0.001</i></b>
<b>H6:</b> <i>Intrinsic motivation in organizations has a positive effect on effective communication</i>	<b>Supported</b>	<b><i>P&lt;0.001</i></b>
<b>H7:</b> <i>Emotional exhaustion in organizations has a negative effect on creativity</i>	<b>Supported</b>	<b><i>P&lt;0.001</i></b>
<b>H8:</b> <i>Emotional exhaustion in organizations has a negative effect on effective communication</i>	<b>Supported</b>	<b><i>P&lt;0.001</i></b>

In the research model, mediation variables; In order to determine the effect of intrinsic motivation and emotional exhaustion; Analyzing the role of mediation variable between moral leadership independent variable and effective communication and creativity dependent variables;

**Table 6.** Results of Regression Analysis of Mediation Variable (MV) Effect

Regresyon	IV	DV	Standart $\beta$	Sig.	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F Value
IV	Moral Leadership	Effective Communication	<b>.152***</b>	<b>002</b>	<b>.242</b>	<b>105.259</b>
MV	Intrinsic Motivation		<b>.590***</b>	<b>000</b>	<b>.472</b>	<b>146.495</b>
IV	Moral Leadership	Creativity	<b>.273***</b>	<b>000</b>	<b>.369</b>	<b>123.511</b>
MV	Intrinsic Motivation		<b>.451***</b>	<b>000</b>	<b>.481</b>	<b>134.832</b>
IV	Moral Leadership	Effective Communication	<b>.236***</b>	<b>000</b>	<b>.242</b>	<b>105.259</b>
MV	Emotional Exhaustion		<b>-.451***</b>	<b>000</b>	<b>.377</b>	<b>99.682</b>
IV	Moral Leadership	Creativity	<b>.387***</b>	<b>000</b>	<b>.273</b>	<b>123.511</b>
MV	Emotional Exhaustion		<b>-.241***</b>	<b>000</b>	<b>.310</b>	<b>74.202</b>

\*: p&lt;0.05

\*\*:p&lt;0.01

\*\*\*:p&lt;0.001

In order to explain the effect of the mediation variable, the variable between the IV and the DV must be a measured variable. One of the tests measuring the effect of this mediation variable is the Sobel (1982) test. It is calculated by using uncorrected regression coefficients and standard error values in conducting mediation analysis with the Sobel test. There are two main versions of the Sobel test: Aroian (1944/1947) and Goodman (1960).

**Table 7.** Mediation Variable (MV) Effect Analysis with Sobel Test

Analyzing the relationship between the mediation effect of intrinsic motivation and moral leadership and effective communication in the Sobel test							
Independent Variable	Moral Leadership		Input:		Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
		a	0.583	Sobel test:	8.81269	0.0349	0
Mediation	Intrinsic Motivation	b	0.529	Aroian test:	8.79862	0.0350	0
Dependent Variable	Effective Communication	Sa	0.045	Goodman test:	8.82683	0.0349	0
		Sb	0.044				
Analyzing the relationship between the mediation effect of intrinsic motivation and moral leadership and creativity in the Sobel test							
Independent Variable	Moral Leadership		Input:		Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
		a	0.583	Sobel test:	8.02703	0.0393	0
Mediation	Intrinsic Motivation	b	0.542	Aroian test:	8.01234	0.0394	0
Dependent Variable	Creativity	Sa	0.045	Goodman test:	8.04180	0.0392	0
		Sb	0.053				
Analyzing the relationship between the mediation effect of emotional exhaustion and moral leadership and effective communication in the Sobel test							
Independent Variable	Moral Leadership		Input:		Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
		a	0.543	Sobel test:	7.01205	0.0332	0
Mediation	Emotional Exhaustion	b	0.430	Aroian test:	6.99689	0.0333	0
Dependent Variable	Effective Communication	Sa	0.043	Goodman test:	7.02730	0.0332	0
		Sb	0.051				
Analyzing the relationship between the mediation effect of emotional exhaustion and moral leadership and creativity in the Sobel test							
Independent Variable	Moral Leadership		Input:		Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
		a	0.543	Sobel test:	4.06227	0.0355	0.00004
Mediation	Emotional Exhaustion	b	0.266	Aroian test:	4.05089	0.0356	0.00005
Dependent Variable	Creativity	Sa	0.043	Goodman test:	4.07373	0.0354	0.00004
		Sb	0.062				
In the Sobel test, the p value should be less than <0.05 in order to accept the mediation variable effect.							

After the sobel test in the mediation variable analysis, the Hayes process analysis, developed by Hayes (2017), was also performed. Mediation variable analysis was performed in model 4 in the Hayes process.

**Table 8.** Hayes Process Analysis

Analyzing the relationship between the mediation effect of intrinsic motivation and moral leadership and effective communication in the Hayes process	Analyzing the relationship between the mediation effect of intrinsic motivation and moral leadership and creativity in the Hayes process
Model: 4	Model: 4
Y: Communication	Y: Creativity
X: Moral	X: Moral
M: Intrinsic	M: Intrinsic
Sample	Sample
Size: 427	Size: 427
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:	Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:
Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI	Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI
Intrinsic .3084 .0383 .2346 .3852	Intrinsic .3160 .0452 .2327 .4070
Partially standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:	Partially standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:
Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI	Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI
Intrinsic .3642 .0389 .2883 .4422	Intrinsic .3210 .0413 .2441 .4053
Completely standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:	Completely standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:
Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI	Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI
Intrinsic .3425 .0394 .2639 .4190	Intrinsic .3019 .0406 .2252 .3817
Analyzing the relationship between the mediation effect of emotional exhaustion and moral leadership and effective communication in the Hayes process	Analyzing the relationship between the mediation effect of emotional exhaustion and moral leadership and creativity in the Hayes process
Model: 4	Model: 4
Y: Communication	Y: Creativity
X: Moral	X: Moral
M: Emotional	M: Emotional
Sample	Sample
Size: 427	Size: 427
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:	Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:
Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI	Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI
Emotional .2333 .0373 .1593 .3073	Emotional .1447 .0378 .0686 .2191
Partially standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:	Partially standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:
Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI	Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI
Emotional .2755 .0417 .1932 .3567	Emotional .1469 .0373 .0713 .2189
Completely standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:	Completely standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:
Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI	Effect BootSE BootLLCI BootULCI
Emotional .2591 .0393 .1790 .3344	Emotional .1382 .0358 .0651 .2079

In order to understand whether there is a mediation variable effect in Hayes process, it can be explained that if there is no "0" value between BootLLCI and BootULCI, there is a mediation variable effect. The variable effect of mediation is supported by the hypotheses in Table 9.

Hypothesis results;

**Table 9.** Hypothesis Results of Mediation Variables

Hypotheses	Supported / Unsupported	Significance Level (Sig.)
<b>H9:</b> <i>Intrinsic motivation has a mediation variable effect on the relationship between moral leadership and effective communication in organizations.</i>	<b>Supported</b>	<b>P&lt;0.001</b>
<b>H10:</b> <i>Intrinsic motivation has a mediation variable effect on the relationship between moral leadership and creativity in organizations.</i>	<b>Supported</b>	<b>P&lt;0.001</b>
<b>H11:</b> <i>Emotional exhaustion has a mediation variable effect on the relationship between moral leadership and effective communication in organizations.</i>	<b>Supported</b>	<b>P&lt;0.001</b>
<b>H12:</b> <i>Emotional exhaustion has a mediation variable effect on the relationship between moral leadership and creativity in organizations.</i>	<b>Supported</b>	<b>P&lt;0.001</b>

In the research model where the mediation effects of intrinsic motivation and emotional exhaustion are measured, it is supported by the hypotheses that intrinsic motivation mediation variable has a positively significant contribution, but conversely, emotional exhaustion has a negative part as it is supported theoretically. When emotional exhaustion occurs in the relationship between moral leadership and effective communication, the positive relationship becomes negative. This also kills the creativity of employees who are experiencing emotional exhaustion and can be inefficient in the organization. Therefore, the better the motivation and the morale of the employee in the organization, the better it will be for the healthy work of the organization.

#### **4. Discussion**

In the study we conducted on white-collar in the manufacturing sector, it was concluded that there are negative effects on an employees' creativity and communication in cases of emotional exhaustion. At the same time, the effect of moral leadership on the mediation and positive effect of moral leadership turns negative. We can conclude that the management styles of organizations should be such that they do not ignore the emotional exhaustion that employees can experience. Working conditions should be prepared with consideration for both the performance and efficiency criteria and in terms of the manufacturing sector. Performance and productivity criteria should not be met by intensive working hours but rather by conditions in which an organizational climate is provided in which employees can feel comfortable in physical and mental terms. Moral leadership is especially important for employees because of Confucianist ideology and morally focused values (Chen & Farh, 2009; Farh & Cheng, 2000). The reason why it is important is clear: employees who are managed with moral leadership feel better due to the fact that a healthy two-way communication can be established, as well, leadership provides motivation for employees and employees can be partners in the decision-making mechanism. Management style is important for institutions, especially in the manufacturing sector, in order for there to be energetic, highly motivated and creative environments for the employees who work at a busy pace (Brown & Treviño, 2006). The results of the analysis show that moral leadership is strongly associated with employee attitudes and behaviors (Farh et al., 2006). In working conditions where negative factors, such as intentions to leave, cynicism and exclusion are involved, Moral Leadership has a significant impact on employees' internal task motivation and trust in their leader (Li et al., 2012; Wu et al., 2012). Such a leadership style will positively affect an employees' behavior and performance. Recent research has shown, both directly and indirectly, the impact of leadership with moral values on the creativity of employees (Rego et al., 2012; Tu & Lu, 2013). Since the study is conducted only on engineers in the manufacturing sector, there are certain constraints. At the same time, it will be possible to create a general opinion with future studies to be done on employees in the senior management level (experts, department managers/officials) in the service sector. It will be possible to achieve better results not only among white-collars but also among blue-collar (workers) employees who are the backbone of the organization and carry all the workload of the organization, in addition to the factors that have an important role in the performance of employees, such as creativity, emotional exhaustion, and motivation.

#### **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

Moral leadership has an important place in leadership, as understood by Chinese Confucianism ideology. The expectation of employees in organizations for their leaders is that they have self-discipline, be virtuous, and reflect this attitude to employees while preserving their moral values. Leaders with these characteristics are known as moral leaders. When the research was examined between employees and moral leadership; there is a close

relationship between commitment, loyalty, and performance (Cheng et al., 2004; Liang et al., 2007). In the study conducted by Cheng et al. (2004), Moral Leadership provides respect and communication among employees and is suggested as the leadership style that organizations should have, especially in terms of the positive impact of moral leadership on business performance. As a result of the research carried out in the manufacturing sector, it is accepted as an important leadership style in terms of motivation and communication in the organizations to which employees' affiliated. Also, moral leadership positively impacts creative activities and ensures an employees' commitment to the organization. We can state that the intention of leaving is reduced or disappears in employees in organizations with high intrinsic motivation and effective communication. There is always a need for leadership understanding that keeps positive employee motivation because intrinsic motivation is an important fundamental mechanism connecting obligations and creativity (Shalley et al., 2004). In Amabile's (2018) study, it is stated that in an organizational structure where there are negative working conditions, resulting negative thoughts towards the organization start to increase because the intrinsic motivation of employees decreases. In order for future studies to be better, to create qualitative studies, and to create new theoretical concepts, it is necessary to focus more on the different effects of leadership styles and organizational structures on employees. By examining the differences between regions, it will be possible to introduce new concepts consisting of cultural effects, not only within the literature, especially in the field of management and organization, but also in the field of social sciences. The problems that arise in working life help to create new leadership and management styles as well as academically new concepts. Clearly, it is necessary to examine the problems experienced by the employees and present their solutions and suggestions, so it will be possible to gain new insights and concepts that may contribute to future literature.

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