

Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi

**THE IMPACT OF SPARKING LEADERSHIP ON BUSINESS  
PERFORMANCE PERCEIVED BY THE EMPLOYEES WITH GENDER  
AND SENIORITY INTERACTION\***

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**ABSTRACT**

*Increasing competition, challenging market conditions, accelerated business life with the contribution of technology, pandemics, and economic crises require more effective and efficient management of businesses. Factors that have a direct impact on organizations, such as remote working, with the fact that business life has become independent from physical space and technological opportunities increase, make the concept of leadership open to development. It is believed that businesses can be managed more efficiently and effectively with effective leadership behaviors. The virtualization of the leadership function, which adapts to modern times, results in becoming more inspiring. It is expected that the leader will demonstrate more supervision, interaction, and more exemplary and inspiring skills to overcome difficulties. There are only a few studies on sparking leadership in the literature. The effects on the business have not been measured. This study aims to investigate the effect of sparking leadership on the organizational performance perceived by the employees while revealing the characteristics of leadership. Another issue to be argued is whether the employees are affected differently by the sparking leadership style according to their gender and seniority. In the literature, the behavior patterns of the leaders according to their gender have been examined, but no study has been found about the impact of the leadership style according to gender and seniority. Although it is not possible to generalize, it is predicted that the study can contribute to this area*

**Keywords:** Sparking Leadership, Performance, Competition, Gender, Seniority.

**ATEŞLEYİCİ LİDERLİĞİN, CİNSİYET VE KIDEM ETKİLEŞİMİ İLE  
BİRLİKTE, ALGILANAN İŞLETME PERFORMANSI ÜZERİNE ETKİSİ**

**ÖZET**

*Artan rekabet, daha zorlu hale gelen pazar koşulları, teknolojinin katkısıyla hızlanan iş yaşamı ve yaşanan salgınlar ve ekonomik krizler işletmelerin daha etkin ve verimli yönetilmesini zorunlu kılmaktadır. İş yaşamının fiziki mekândan bağımsız hale gelmeye başlaması ve teknolojik olanakların artmasıyla birlikte uzaktan çalışma gibi işletmeleri doğrudan etkileyen faktörler liderlik kavramını da gelişime açık hale getirmektedir. Etkili liderlik davranışları sergilenmesiyle birlikte işletmelerin daha verimli ve etkin yönetilebileceği öngörülmektedir. Modern zamanlara uyum sağlayan liderlik fonksiyonunun sanallaşması daha fazla ilham verir hale gelmesiyle sonuçlanmaktadır. Liderin zorlukları aşmak için daha fazla nezaret, etkileşim ve daha fazla örnek olma ve ilham verme becerisi ortaya koyması*

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*beklenmektedir. Ateşleyici liderliğin çalışanı daha fazla güdüleyen ve yol gösteren tarzı ile bu çağa uygun bir liderlik anlayışı olabileceği düşünülmektedir. Ateşleyici liderlik hakkında literatürde az sayıda çalışma bulunmaktadır. İşletme üzerindeki etkileri ölçülmemiştir. Bu çalışma, ateşleyici liderliğin özelliklerini ortaya koyarken çalışanlar tarafından algılanan işletme performansı üzerine etkisinin araştırılması hedeflemektedir. Araştırılmak istenen bir başka konu ise çalışanların cinsiyet ve kıdemlerine göre ateşleyici liderlik tarzından farklı biçimde etkilenip etkilenmediğidir. Literatürde liderlerin cinsiyetlerine göre davranış biçimleri incelenmiş olup cinsiyetlerine göre liderlik biçiminden etkilenme düzeylerine ilişkin bir çalışmaya rastlanmamıştır. Genelleme yapmak mümkün olmamakla birlikte çalışmanın bu alana katkı sağlayabileceği düşünülmektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ateşleyici Liderlik, Performans, Rekabet, Cinsiyet, Kıdem.

## 1. Introduction

Destructive competition and other dynamic market conditions entailed by the business characteristics and adequacy of the internal resources make it impossible to define a single type of leadership approach. Diverse leadership understandings are required. While examining behavioral and situational leadership concepts, sparking leadership reminds us of whether all leaders need to behave in an igniter manner to motivate their followers and achieve positive results in business performance or not. It is observed that leaders can undertake more responsibility to facilitate the difficulties by igniting the employees to motivate them. Business lines and the current conditions are getting more complex and harder. Those brutal conditions can occur in unconventional routine situations such as excessive competition in the market, being a new line of business, stunning innovation, and declaring an assertive claim to penetrate the market. These challenges may require a more selective, meticulous, and exceptional leadership approach.

In a recent study Sparking leadership was defined by Bilginoğlu & Yozgat (2021) with the dimensions of motivation, inspiration, characteristics, and awareness of the employees. That study builds on fragmented and disparate extant work to conceptualize the nature of sparking leadership associated with work passion and job satisfaction of the employees. The purpose of this present study is to examine whether the sparking leadership has an impact on perceived business performance whereas gender, age, and seniority of the attendants may have different effects. Within the scope of the study, research and publication ethics were complied with.

## 2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Effective leadership involves the process of effectively delegating power to the followers. Leadership is not limited to the behavior of the leader; it is also a reflection of the leader's behavior toward the follower. Leadership is a dynamic process. The leader-follower relationship is a bilateral relationship, effective leadership should be carried out in this relationship by considering both followers and organizational performance (Mullins, 1996). Leadership, in a lean definition, can be expressed as the ability to influence a group of people to achieve a goal. The source of this influence can be either formal or informal (Özcan et. al., 2012:1).

Although as been a concept examined for many years, it has been observed that almost every researcher has different definitions of leadership. It is thought that the fact that there are so many definitions of the concept is due to the importance of leadership in daily life. As the leadership concept shifts from political charismatic leadership to opinion leaders and influencers, especially with the effect of social media, differences in leadership understandings are observed.

## **2.1. Types of Leadership**

The leadership styles frequently emphasized in the studies are stated as; autocratic, democratic, liberal, participatory, charismatic, transactional, and transformational leadership styles (Yılmaz, 2014). Managers are involved in achieving their corporate goals by penetrating the resources of the business according to the management culture determined and formed inside the company. According to the management culture determined by the senior management, the leadership approaches adopted by the managers in the enterprises can be autocratic, participatory, or extreme democratic (Akdemir, 2012). In the autocratic leadership approach, all decisions, plans, and controls are taken and implemented by managers. Subordinates must comply with the principles and rules set by their superiors. Power is concentrated in the leader himself/herself, all decisions in the organization are taken by the leader. Democratic leadership gives priority importance to human relations. Providing a good relationship and trusting environment between the leader and followers encourages them to settle their organizational goals, plans, and policies and to organize, delegate, and participate in decision-making processes (Şafaklı, 2005).

Liberal leadership style is defined as the leadership behavior that does not interfere with the employees and avoids conflict (Telli et al., 2012). It is predicted that a liberal leadership style is effective in organizations that have fewer employees in numbers but high experience and education levels. Participatory leadership can be defined as the share of the authority of the manager to make decisions with employees or involve them in the decision-making process. A leader's use of participatory decision-making power in the organization creates several potential benefits. It is easier to motivate the employees, while commitment to the organization and job satisfaction arises whereas qualifications of the employees can also develop (Somech, 2003).

Charismatic Leadership theory and research have identified some personal characteristics and behaviors that distinguish leaders who have the potential to "ignite a fire of charisma" within their subordinates. Within the literature on charismatic leadership, it is common to suggest that the personal characteristics and behaviors stated above make a leader "charismatic" or "distinguish charismatic leader." But it is more precise to say that charisma resides not in the leader but in the relationship between some leaders and subordinates (Klein & House, 1995). Transformative leadership as being future-oriented depends on imperative transformation and is based on a strong vision. Transformative leadership requires a radical business change, emphasizes organizational culture, and involves creating a strong future-oriented structure with a shared vision (Gümüş, 2010). These leaders enhance their follower's self-confidence and enable them to contribute more to the organization and motivate them in line with the vision they set (Halis, 2000). According to Leithwood (1992), transformative leadership stands for the organizational mission, vision, redefining responsibilities, and restructuring the organization to achieve the goals. Transformative leadership is based on encouraging employees. Followers

can be promoted to leadership positions, assuming the role of a leader spiritual intermediate (Eraslan, 2004). Transformational leadership increases the awareness of employees about desired results (Shadraconis, 2013; McCleskey, 2014).

Interactive leadership focuses on managerial tasks to achieve organizational goals. The interactionist leader is a business-oriented leader who sets goals for followers. Focuses on operational activities, and monitors those who fail in the business via control systems. The interactive leader can maintain his/her position with procedures, policies, and relationships in the business (Kılıç et al., 2014). Also, interactive leadership bases on “change” between the leader and employees. He/she tries to ensure that employees follow the leader through rewards and follows the rules correctly, thus requiring minor and regular changes (İşcan, 2006). According to Robbins and DeCenzo (2001), an interactive leader is defined as someone who gives followers complete freedom to make decisions and do their jobs as they wish. (Budak & Budak, 2010).

Types of leadership may acquire the attitudes of the leader personally. Also, the characteristics of the leader may have a significant role in the type of leadership.

## **2.2. Characteristics of a Leader**

It is significant in the characteristics that make up the behaviors of leaders as well as leadership types. Bakan (2009) compiles statements related to leadership as follows: Leadership is to persuade people toward specific goals (Erdoğan, 1997), it is the leader’s ability to direct followers to pursue goals (Ke & Wei, 2007) or the ability and process to direct or influence people’s efforts towards the achievement of specific goals or objectives (Akat, 1985, Özgen et al., 2001). The leader is the person who diverts the action of others in the direction he/she wishes (Bender, 2000: 14). When a leader asks for something to be done by the others, he/she is the one who provides the work to be done by their desire (Cemalcılar et al., 1985). In other words, the leader is the person followed by a group of people to act by his/her orders and instructions to achieve their personal and corporate goals (Ertürk, 2000; Koçel, 2007).

Today it is observed that when students face the question, of whom they call as a “leader” or who comes to their mind first when it is called “leader”, the answer is generally the names of the politicians of this era or who lived in recent history. Students employed in a company in business life occasionally pronounce the names of their general managers as leaders. The mention of the name of politicians suggests that the concept of charismatic leadership, which we will elaborate on in the study, coincides with the concept of leadership, and this concept mostly finds a place in the personality of politicians.

However, in today’s technology-driven and result-oriented dynamic conditions, we can define the leader as a person who creates value and contributes to the outcome by developing solutions from various perspectives and acting proactively rather than a charismatic person with a truly leading power and position. According to this definition, even a warehouse employee at the bottom level of the organization can be the leader of his own business, so he/she can initiate or even change the fate of the organization with the value addition to be created. It is believed that all types of leadership except the autocratic leadership support this actual situation mentioned above. Sparking leadership, as a relatively new concept, would contribute value addition and the total effectiveness of the enterprise.

Also, digitalization has a significant effect on leadership. In a study done by Hesse (2018) the findings were relevant for leaders, offering them a more integrative understanding of leadership in a digital environment. Categorizing the use of digital tools as new leadership practices enable leaders to promote participation.

Some leaders fan the flames, whilst others spark the fire. They inspire the people around them to be just a little better than they are. These unique leaders are called the “fire starters” (Davis et al. 2018) or the “sparking leaders”. They are the ones who provide the spark for the employees to create the fire (Chester, 2015).

### **2.3. Sparking Leadership as an Effective Leadership Style**

Leadership theories discuss the characteristics of leaders in general, the behavior of leaders, the environment and conditions affecting those behaviors and the effect of the leader on followers, and the sources of this effect (Çekmecelioğlu, 2014). In this context, the theories investigating the subject of leadership and leadership behaviors are classified in the literature as; trait theory, behavioral leadership theory, contingency leadership theory, and new approaches to leadership (Robbins, 1998; Koçel, 2007; Eren, 2016).

In organizations, the factor that determines the role of leaders in directing human resources and mobilizing in line with organizational goals generally consists of behavior (Eren, 2016). The behavioral theory examines those behaviors, arguing that the leader has some set of behaviors while performing the leadership role. Therefore, the behavioral theory has significance among other leadership theories. In this theory, behaviors such as the way the leader communicates with subordinates, whether delegates authority, planning, control method, and obtained goals are considered important factors that determine the effectiveness of the leader (Koçel, 2007). These behavioral factors distinguish the active leader from the ineffective and are used to train ineffective leaders. Leaders need to be well informed and aware of the best methods. In organizations, the decision-making process is also associated with good leadership. Leaders need to know what the consequences of their decisions are. Those decisions affect the entire organization. The success of organizations depends on the decisions made by leaders (Ejimabo, 2015).

Organizational performance is influenced by the variations in leadership styles (Stahl, 2007; Ireland & Hitt, 2005). While “the trait approach” focuses on determining the physical, intellectual, emotional, and other personal characteristics of effective leaders “behavior approach” focuses on the actions of the leader. “Situational Approach” argues that the most accurate method is to choose the leader suitable for the environmental characteristics. “Charismatic leadership”, “interactive leadership”, “transformational leadership”, “cultural leadership”, “strategic leadership”, “visionary leadership”, “servant leadership” and “ethical leadership” have been frequently emphasized in recent years (Sökmen et al., 2019).

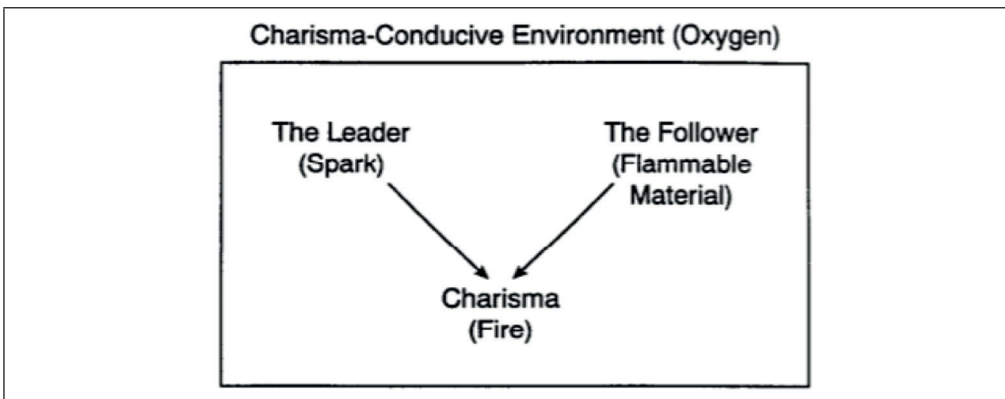
*It is believed that sparking leadership could be one of those effective leading styles with its powerful features like high motivation, eagerness, and participation.* As a contemporary, new concept, not many sources were found in the literature to define sparking leadership. A study has been done by Bilginoğlu & Yozgat (2018), which referred to as “sparking leadership reminds the question of whether every leader should already and naturally be an igniter, as having the responsibility to motivate the followers to achieve the financial goals”. Thus, creating

a pleasant and efficient working environment is also targeted. At first glance, this question can be answered as “yes” in general. However, this general positive answer raises the question of whether the same type of understanding of leadership will be valid for all businesses in all cases. Different conditions require different leadership styles.

For instance, if the task of a leader in a production facility is to concentrate mostly on removing physical obstacles faced by the employees to achieve the highest output in quantities, a routine and ordinary sense of leadership can be mentioned in this situation. On the other hand, with an assertive business model or an innovation, a stronger leadership effort may be required to achieve a mission that is called almost impossible. Sparking leadership might be required in a new business model or under the overwhelming conditions of disruptive competition to take part in a niche market. More roles and responsibilities might be imposed on the leader. In such cases, the leader may have to be an igniter, as a sparking leader. The leader’s determination of the sparking leadership can also contribute to enhancing the overall performance of the business, perceived positively by the employees. The leader should focus on lighting the little spark revealed inside the employee. It may be a spark of enthusiasm, a flicker of unrevealed potential, a flash of determination, the first flame of talent, or kindling of interest. These beginnings, internal motivations, can either be ignited or they can be immediately doused with indignities and put out (Calvert, 2013). The leaders should bring on the fire and use their passion to inflame the passions of others, not to quench their spirits (Lucas, 1999).

Does sparking leadership correlate with charisma? What characteristics distinguish followers who are most open or susceptible to charisma? Klein and House 1995 give three different answers to these questions that appear within the literature on charismatic leadership. The answer to the question is that the followers who are most open or susceptible to charisma are vulnerable and/or looking for direction or psychological meaning in life. The fire does not lite itself. There is spark and flammable material is required. In today’s business life it is described in Figure 1 with the metaphors as spark (the leader), flammable material (the follower), and fire (charisma).

**Figure 1: The Antecedents of Charisma**



**Source:** Klein, J.K & House, R. J., (1995). On Fire: Charismatic leadership and levels of analysis. University of Maryland Robert J. House the Wharton School, Leadership Quarterly, 6(2).

The second answer suggests that the followers in charismatic relationships are not weak but are instead compatible and comfortable with their leader's vision and style. The third answer suggests, implicitly, that followers in charismatic relationships do not differ significantly from followers involved in other, non-charismatic relationships (Klein & House, 1995). Brown (2016) and Whitehurst (2015) state that; once a leader notices that the employees are disengaged from work, he/she should take an active role in getting them engaged and keeping them that way. They should make themselves available for a constant dialogue with employees. That is the way of re-igniting the spark in them (Bilginoğlu & Yozgat, 2018).

Regarding sparking leadership, a question may arise whether every leader does not want to motivate the audience, activate them, or even ignite them or not? It is quite difficult to answer this question positively at once. The leadership style also varies according to the type of task to be executed. For instance, the leadership approach that will be shown in an environment that gives importance to quantitative measurement, in other words, aiming to produce the most in the shortest time, may consist of taking actions to keep production at the highest possible level. However, it is easier to state that sparking leadership gains importance under a claim that a task to be performed is called almost impossible. When the business characteristic requires to be innovative and appeals to the niche market many components need to come together to succeed in a start-up business including sparking leadership property.

It can be expected that this type of leadership style with more effort will positively affect business performance in general. A survey was conducted to investigate whether the performance was positively affected in an organization that developed sparking leadership behavior. As included in the previous scales (Bilginoğlu & Yozgat, 2018) questioned the characteristics of the sparking leader as if,

- The manager motivates his/her employees or not,
- He/she creates a continuous motivation environment or not,
- Allows employees to be aware of what they can do by igniting their passion or not,
- Inspire employees about how they can perform better or not,
- Employees can use their full potential or not,
- Employees create awareness of their skills or not,
- The manager is a role model for them by activating their passions or not,
- Inspire employees to deal with tough business challenges or not.

In addition to this study, the following methodology section questions the effect of sparking leadership on business performance perceived by the employees under the perspectives of gender and seniority. The research goals are to determine the perceived business performance, which is anticipated to be inherent to the sparking leadership; and to diversify with gender and seniority. Regarding business performance perceived by the employees; it has been questioned whether there is an increase in income of the company in recent years whereas financial indicators and profitability are relatively compared to competitors in the market.

## 2.4. Leadership and Business Performance, Deficits of Leadership Behavior in Business Productivity

Buckingham (2005) stated that; great leaders can communicate the organization's future path to a certain group of people effectively to work as one towards common goals. Regarding business performance and leadership, Ireland & Hitt (2005) underlined that leadership is relevant to an organization's success, and business performance, especially in a competitive environment. Transactional, transformational, and passive-avoidant leaders are part of the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) environment because they influence individual and organizational performance (Aziz, et al., 2013).

Deficits in business productivity caused by the behavior are considered a situation that can be encountered in almost every organization. Employees show undesirable behavior due to some reasons that may arise from the work they are in or from the environment in which they are enrolled. Those behaviors are shown because of the physical and psychological difficulties of the employees and come out from their characteristics. It is seen that the behaviors defined as the dark side of the employee behavior and the deliberate material and moral harm, defined as 'non-productivity business behaviors'. According to Spector & Penney (2006), anti-productivity business behaviors consist of certain behaviors performed by the employee at their own will, damaging or exhibited by partners such as managers, colleagues, and customers.

Business behaviors against productivity are defined as retaliation behavior, assault, deviation, antisocial behavior, maltreatment, revenge, psychological intimidation and bullying, organizational non-loyal behaviors, bad organizational behaviors, and workplace violence (Kessler et.al., 2013). It is possible to explain anti-productivity work behaviors with "Social Transformation Theory". Individuals tend to give the same response through positive attitude or behavior towards positive behavior against them. When employees face negative behavior, they reduce or withdraw their positive attitudes and behavior and instead turn towards negative behavior. According to the equity theory of Adams (1965), which is one of the most important social change theories, employees who are treated unfairly tend to display different behavior. According to this, employees are dissatisfied with the accuracy or inclusion of internal organizational procedures; productivity such as going to work late, dismissal, retarding work, unauthorized breaks, humiliating and cynical statements about managers, and being rude to other employees (Beauregard, 2014). Also, Kelloway, et al. (2010) expressed anti-productivity behavior as protest behavior.

It is thought that negative behaviors of employees can be prevented by showing effective and strong leadership behavior. If the leader believes in the sparking leadership style and strives in this direction, he/she can change the way the team works together. Based on the above-mentioned arguments, the following hypothesis has been proposed.

*H1: Sparking leadership has a positive impact on business performance perceived by the employees.*

According to the respondents, there is a significant impact of sparking leadership on perceived business performance.



## **2.5. Gender, Age, and Seniority Differentiation as Being Influenced by Leadership Style**

Leadership is an interaction. This interaction is, by its nature, influenced by intrapsychic processes, including gender-role orientation, the attitudes, and values associated with these roles. One of the biggest components that contribute to leadership style is the social interaction or relationship between a leader and followers.

While men use a task-oriented leadership approach, women are much more concerned with the bonds they have with their followers (Merchant, 2012). Researchers have also stated that women tend to emerge as more transformational leaders while men are likely to use a transactional leadership approach (Rosener, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1994). But how are women and men influenced by leadership types? In other words, what kind of different effects do leadership types have on women and men? Or are women and men affected by the same type of leadership at different levels? Within the scope of the study, answers to these questions were sought as a hypothesis.

*H2: There is a significant difference in the perception of women and men regarding the impact of sparking leadership on business performance.*

In the findings obtained because of the survey, it was revealed that women are slightly more affected by sparking leadership.

In the literature review, studies investigating the relationship between the age of the employee and his/her performance exist. However, no research has been found on the relationship between employees' age and seniority in line with the performance of the business perceived by employees. Do experience and seniority cause employees to think more tolerantly about their businesses' performance? It has been proposed by the hypothesis that the business performance perceived by employees may change positively as age and seniority increase.

*H3: Regarding the impact of sparking leadership age and seniority have a positive impact on business performance perceived by the employees.*

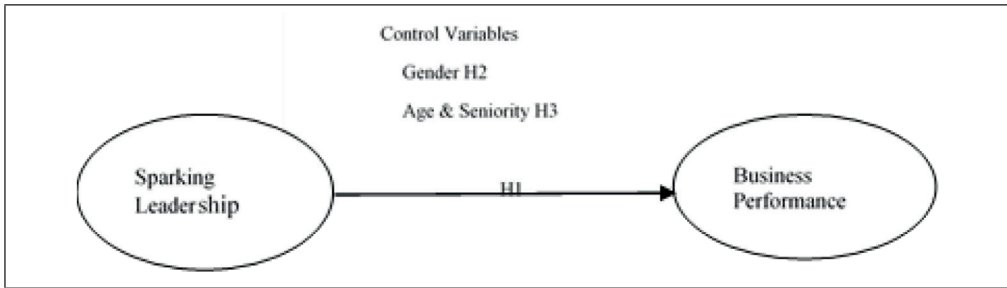
While the responses to the survey were analyzed, as the age and seniority increased, a positive change was observed in the perception regarding the performance of the business.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Research Model and Hypotheses**

The purpose of the research is to examine whether the sparking leadership has an impact on perceived business performance whereas gender, age, and seniority of the attendants may have different effects. The research was designed to determine whether sparking leadership has an impact on perceived business performance whereas gender, age, and seniority of the attendants or not. The conceptual model and hypotheses are shown below (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Hypotheses and Conceptual Model**



### 3.2. Procedures and Participants

Before the survey was conducted in January 2020, a pre-test study was carried out with the experts and academics. The survey has been applied after the minor changes. Data have been collected by online survey technique and evaluated with IBM SPSS 25 program. The convenience sampling method is used. 13 questions were asked in total, 8 questions were about sparking leadership and 5 questions were about the perceived business performance. With the contribution of a 7-point Likert scale, questions about sparking leadership, and perceived business performance were asked whereas demographic features were stated. On the scale of the study, statements which form the basis of the model created to determine the relationship between sparking leadership and perceived business performance were included. These statements are suitable for the study from the scales of Venkatraman & Ramanujan, (1986).

The population of the research consists of 265 participants who are employees of 33 companies in 29 different sectors, varying from banking, internet service provider, pay-tv platforms, and aviation to manufacturing, all operating in Turkey. The research sample consists of 40.8% of the respondents are female and 59.2% are male. 47.2% of respondents participating in the study are between 20-30 years old, 40.7% are between 31-40 years old, and 12.1% are between 41-60 years old whereas 70.6% of the respondents declared that they have been working in the same company for 0-5 years, 19.2% for 6-10 years and 10.2% for more than 10 years. The participants are highly young, and the experience period is mostly between 0-10 years.

### 4. Findings

Reliability and validity analysis of the scales used in the research were made primarily in the study, which was conducted to measure the effect of sparking leadership on business performance perceived by the employees. Due to the verification of the survey conducted, Cronbach's Alpha Analysis was used for the reliability, exploratory factor analysis was applied and KMO and Barlett's test was applied for the validity of the research.

**Table 1: Reliability and Validity Analysis**

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.94	13

Cronbach's Alpha analysis is performed for the sparking leadership and Perceived Business Performance scale consists of 13 variables. The alpha value is found as 0.940, due to the lower limit of a scale (0.70). It is determined that the scale used is reliable (Hair et al., 1998).

**Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test**

KMO and Bartlett's Test	
KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	0.943
	App. Chi-Square
	2908.9
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df
	28
	Sig.
	0

To determine whether the Perceived Business Performance (data group) is suitable for factor analysis the test statistics of "KMO and Bartlett's" have been examined. Result of 0.943 Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and 2.908,9 chi-square value of Barlett's test sig. was realized as  $p \leq 0.01$ . It is determined that the tested data group is suitable for factor analysis.

**Table 3: Exploratory Factor Analysis**

Component	Total Variance Explained					
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.337	66.827	66.827	1.337	66.827	66.827
2	0.663	33.173	100			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Factor analysis was used to determine the structural validity of the scale used in the research. Exploratory factor analysis was applied for scale validity and the following results were obtained. According to the results of the exploratory factor analysis applied, the total explained variance was realized as 66,827, which is confirmed.

Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between sparking leadership and their perceptions of business performance with gender and seniority interaction. Correlation analysis results are obtained as follows. In the study, the relationship between sparking leadership and business performance perceived by the employees was examined.

**Table 4: Sparking Leadership and Perceived Business Performance Relationship**

Correlations		
	PBP	SPL
PBP	1	0.337
SPL	0.337**	1

PBP: Perceived Business Performance, SPL: Sparking leadership, \*\*Correlation is significant at level 0.01

As presented in Table 5, there is a positive significant relationship at  $p \leq 0.01$  level between sparking leadership and perceived business performance. Based on the tables above, there is a positive correlation between sparking leadership and business performance. Regression analysis was applied to determine the relationship between sparking leadership and the perceptions of business performance.

*Verification of hypothesis 1;* Results of the regression analysis for H1 are as follows.

**Table 5: Regression Model Summary for H1**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.337 <sup>a</sup>	0.113	0.11	1.344

a. Predictors: (Constant), SPL

**Table 6: Anova Table for H1**

ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	60.681	1	60.681	33.59	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	475.111	263	1.807		
Total	535.793	264			

a. Dependent Variable: PBP b. Predictors: (Constant), SPL

According to the Anova table, the result obtained is significant at the level of 0.05.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient.		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	sig.
(Constant)	3.903	0.22		17.7	0
SPL	0.268	0.046	0.337	5.8	0

Dependent Variable: PBP

Based on the tables above, although sparking leadership does not have a very strong impact on business performance, *hypothesis H1 was confirmed.*

*Verification of hypothesis 2;* the results of the regression analysis for H2 are as follows.

**Table 7: Regression and Anova Table for H2**

Model Summary						
R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate				
0.113	0.11	1.34406				
0.156	0.149	1.31394				
0.169	0.159	1.3063				
a. Predictors: (Constant), SPL, b. Predictors: (Constant), SPL, Age, c. Predictors: (Constant), SPL, Age, Seniority						
ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	60.681	1	60.681	33.59	.000 <sup>b</sup>
2	Residual	475.111	263	1.807		
	Total	535.793	264			
2	Regression	83.468	2	41.734	24.174	.000 <sup>c</sup>
2	Residual	452.324	262	1.726		
	Total	535.793	264			
3	Regression	90.414	3	30.138	17.661	.000 <sup>d</sup>
3	Residual	445.379	261	1.706		
	Total	535.793	264			

a. Dependent Variable: PBP b. Predictors: (Constant), SPL, c. Predictors: (Constant), SPL, Age  
d. Predictors: (Constant), SPL, Age, seniority

Based on the tables above, Age and seniority have a positive impact on perceived business performance. *Hypothesis H2 was confirmed.*

*Verification of hypothesis 3* the results of the regression analysis for H3 are as follows.

**Table 8: Anova Table for H3**

Model Summary					
Model	R		R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	Gender= Women (Selected)				
	1	451 <sup>a</sup>	0.203	0.196	1.23154
a. Predictors: (Constant), SPL					
ANOVA <sup>a,b</sup>					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	41.030	1	41.030	27.052	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	160.770	106	1.517		
Total	201.800	107			
a Dependent Variable: PBP, b. Selecting only cases for which Gend =Women c. Predictors: (Constant), SL					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	1.875	0.264		7.112	
SPL	0.338	0.065	0.451	5.201	
Dependent Variable: PBP, Selecting only cases for which Gender= Women					

Based on the tables above, there is a significant difference in the perception of women and men regarding the impact of sparking leadership on business performance. Women are significantly more affected by sparking leadership under the perception of positive business performance. Hypothesis H3 was confirmed.

**5. Conclusion and Discussion**

In today’s business life, destructive competition rules companies to be managed more proficiently. Proficient management requires efficient use of scarce resources, as well as the development of management and leadership skills.

Consistent with the theoretical foundation behind previous research, the findings of the study done by Bilginoğlu & Yozgat (2021) reveal that sparking leaders have a positive effect on the subordinates’ work passion, which further leads to higher job satisfaction. This means that the sparking leaders create the fire in an organization so that their work passion energizes their subordinates. Findings such as the environment created by the manager regarding the sparking leadership, inspiration, motivation, and awareness levels of the employees were questioned. According to the research here, in this present study, a correlation has been determined between sparking leadership characteristics and business performance perceived by the employees as well as gender and seniority perspectives. Even so, survey respondents working in various industries do not establish a distinctly direct and strong relationship between sparking leadership and business performance. While considering the financial values of the company,

there is an impression that numerical figures and quantities still come to mind dominantly when considering the business performance. Even if it is not a very strong relationship between sparking leadership and the perceived business performance, it can be thought that the realization of the financials and achievement of the goals might be the result of sparking leadership along with effective management. More work on this subject can be expected to lead to more effective use of sparking leadership.

It is consistent to state that there is a positive relationship between age, seniority, and business performance perceived by the employees. With the increase in age and seniority employees have a better objective scope about the performance of the business and the company they belong to. Detailed studies can be performed about this aspect in the future.

Another issue to be argued in the study was whether the gender differences may affect business performance perceived by the employees regarding the impact on sparking leadership. The survey conducted determined that women are significantly more affected by sparking leadership under the perception of positive business performance. In the literature, there are several studies regarding the attitude of the leaders according to their genders. But no studies have been found about how the genders are affected separately by the leadership types. Differences between men and women in terms of affection by the leadership types can be an emerging subject to be investigated in future studies.

Effective management highly depends on effective leadership. Destructive competition forces companies to operate in more difficult conditions but with more profitable methods and areas. Therefore, it is not consistent to say that there are only several leadership styles that may be beneficial for all kinds of businesses. As the business management moves away from routine practices, the leaders need to motivate their teams better, even requires igniting them. As a result of this mutual sacrifice of leaders and viewers, thanks to sparking leadership, it would be possible to make the tasks easier which would be very difficult to handle.

The survey was conducted before the pandemic COVID-19 with the participants employed in Turkey. The following study can be arranged in different locations considering the effects of pandemics which are stated as “new normal”, according to the changing conditions of the era, significant as remote working.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest within the scope of the article.

### **Author’s Contribution Statement**

The same author contributed to all phases of the study.

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