School Principals Transformational Leadership and Organizational Health of Secondary School Teachers' in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the level of transformational leadership practices by school principals in the national secondary schools in the district of Kinta Utara, Perak, Malaysia. The four dimensions of transformational leadership studied were individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and idealized influence. The study also looks at the level of teachers' job satisfaction as well as the relationship with the practice of transformational leadership by the national secondary school principals'. The respondents consisted of 225 teachers employed in 15 national secondary schools in the district of Kinta Utara, Perak. The data obtained was analyzed using SPSS version 20.0. Descriptive analysis and Pearson Correlation Coefficient were used to analyze the strength of the relationship. The results showed that the practice of transformational leadership by school principals' in the district of Kinta Utara, Perak was high and the job satisfaction of secondary school teachers' was satisfactory with a significant relationship between the level of transformational leadership and job satisfaction. The implication of this study is that the school principals should always ensure that their leadership performance is always kept high to have a significant relationship with the job satisfaction of secondary school teachers'.

Introduction

The transformational leadership paradigm has rapidly become the choice for current research and application of leadership theory (Bass & Riggo, 2006). Transformational leadership focuses more on change and inspires followers to "commit to a shared vision and goals for an organization or unit, challenging them to be innovative problem solvers and developing followers' leadership capacity via coaching, mentoring and provision of both challenge and support" (Bass & Riggo, 2006). Historians have long recognized that the concept of leadership exceeds a mere social exchange between leader and followers. Supporting this notion, Bass and Riggo (2006) state "leadership must also address the follower's sense of self-worth to engage the follower in true commitment and involvement in the effort at hand". Transformational leaders accomplish this by employing the four behavioral components synonymous with transformational leadership practices. These components, often referred to the Four I's by Leithwood (1994), are as follows: (a) individual consideration, (b) intellectual stimulation, (c) inspirational motivation, and (d) idealized influence.

Individual consideration. By acting as a coach or mentor, transformational leaders pay special attention to each follower's needs for achievement and growth. Individualized consideration occurs when new learning opportunities are created in conjunction with a supportive climate. In their demonstration of individual consideration, the transformational leader is an effective listener, and recognizes and is accepting of employee's individual differences. Two-way communication is encouraged, and interactions with followers are personalized. An individually considerate leader will delegate tasks as a means of developing followers. Delegated tasks are monitored to determine whether the followers need additional direction or support and to assess progress; however, the followers do not feel they are being checked on or monitored (Bass & Riggo, 2006).

Intellectual stimulation. Transformational leaders encourage innovation and creativity by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways. In addition, leaders who practice a transformational leadership style solicit new ideas and creative solutions to problems from followers, who are included in the process of addressing problems and finding solutions. When individual members make mistakes, the transformational leader does not publicly criticize them nor are their ideas criticized because they differ from the leaders' ideas (Bass & Riggo, 2006).

Inspirational motivation. Transformational leaders demonstrate behaviors that inspire those around them by providing meaning and challenge to their followers' work. They also arouse team spirit, enthusiasm and optimism. Transformational leaders involve their followers by clearly communicating stated expectations they followers to meet and also demonstrate commitment to goals and a shared vision. These leaders articulate a compelling vision of the future (Bass & Riggo, 2006).

Idealized influence. Transformational leaders demonstrate behaviors that allow them to serve as role models for their followers. In addition to admiring, respecting, and trusting them, followers tend to identify with the leaders and want to emulate them. Followers view their leaders as having extraordinary capabilities, persistence, and determination. In addition, leaders who exhibit idealized influence are willing to take risks and are consistent. They can be counted on to do the right thing as they demonstrate high standards of ethical and moral conduct (Bass & Riggo, 2006).

As has been shown through the discussion of literature thus far, transformational leadership has been recognized as a powerful model of leadership in the military, political, and

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industrial organizational environments (Bass, 1985, Bass & Riggo, 2006). However, evidence from compelling research shows that transformational leadership is important and is a powerful tool for fostering group goals and evoking positive changes in the educational field. Various approaches to school leadership have been tried. Some have been more popular and widely accepted than others. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the instructional leadership paradigm was thought to serve schools well (Leithwood, 1992) and was considered to be the most popular model of educational leadership (Marzano, et al., 2005). Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (1999) note that the concept of instructional leadership is one of the most frequently mentioned educational leadership models, yet lacks clear definition. Leithwood, Jantzi, et al., (1999) cite various models of instructional leadership in which leadership is defined along multiple dimensions, each of which incorporate a variety of practices. The effects of these practices are then evaluated on important outcomes.

Although this model served the educational field for the past two decades, the current demands for educational reform have forced many school leaders to reevaluate and adapt their leadership style to meet current demands. Many educational leaders are beginning to embrace and put into practice a school model of transformational leadership. This leadership model is espoused by school leaders because it "aspires, more generally, to increase members' efforts on behalf of the organization, as well as to develop more skilled practice" (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999). There is compelling evidence that transformational leadership behaviors, significantly affect teachers' psychological states, such as, teaching efficacy, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Bass & Riggo, 2006; Leithwood, Jantzi, et al., 1999).

A review of relevant literature reveals various definitions theorists have generated from their own investigations of job satisfaction. Locke (1969) defined job satisfaction as a positive or pleasurable reaction resulting from the appraisal of one's job, job achievement or job expenses. Vroom (1982) simply states that job satisfaction is an emotional orientation toward one's current job roles. Spector (1997) defined job satisfaction as people's affective response to how individuals feel about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs. Although these definitions vary somewhat in content, most agree that job satisfaction is an effective response to one's job as a whole or to particular facets of the job.

Empirical studies across most every occupational field, including the field of education, have shown that leadership behavior consistently and profoundly influences employees' job satisfaction (Nguni, Sleegers, & Denessen, 2006). Moreover, studies examining leadership behaviors show that transformational leadership is positively correlated with employees' job satisfaction (Bogler, 2001; Griffith 2004). Leaders who practice transformational leadership reportedly have more satisfied and committed followers than do leaders who practice a non-transformational style of leadership (Bass & Riggo, 2006).

The field of educational research is abounding with empirical studies that heavily document various factors affecting job satisfaction. Among these studies, the factor of supervisory and/or principal leadership behaviors is consistently documented as a significant determinant of teachers' job satisfaction and teacher retention (Betancourt-Smith, Inman, & Marlow, 1994; Billingsley, 2005; Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Bogler, 2001; Gersten, et al., 2001; Griffith, 2003; Heller, Clay & Perkins, 1993; Littrell & Billingsley, 1994; & McLeskey, et al., 2004).

Furthermore, a review of school leadership research reveals that school leaders who demonstrate transformational leadership behaviors have staffs who report higher levels of job satisfaction (Bogler, 2001; Griffith, 2004; A. Arokiasamy et al., 2015)), which is consistent with Bass and Riggo's (2006) claim.

Problem Statement

A good and responsible teacher is highly important to create a successful nation. As their job scopes become bigger, cover tasks such as teaching, educating and administrative work, they are more or less will affect teacher's emotion, such as tension, fatigue and less attention were paid to the student during class session. At the same time they also have to comply with the directives and rulings of the ranking of the principals to assure the school's vision and mission set is made. Different leadership styles found that job satisfaction affects different teachers. Transformational leadership practiced by school principals can motivate teachers to change their attitude and values by being committed towards the mission and vision of education. The practice of transformational leadership is said to be able to move the organization closer to their targeted goals (Amin, Shah & Tatlah, 2013). Teacher's job satisfaction combined together would provide a broad measure of individual and organizational effectiveness that directly impacts on student learning (Fullan, 2001; Sergiovanni, 2001; Harris, 2003), the researcher therefore attempted to explore and find out if there is any significant correlation between different leadership styles and teachers' job satisfaction; and this finding offers a way to further explore the subject of transformational democratic leadership. This study hence was conducted to test the relationship between principal's leadership styles and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Malaysia.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to investigate the practice of transformational leadership and its relationship to job satisfaction. In particular, the objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the level of transformational leadership among school principals in the district of Kinta Utara, Perak, Malaysia according to teachers' perceptions.

2. To identify the level of job satisfaction of secondary school teachers in the district of Kinta Utara, Perak, Malaysia.

3. To identify if there is a relationship between transformational leadership practices of school principals and secondary school teachers' job satisfaction.

Significance of the Study

Findings of this study are important to:

• Help the school to identify leadership styles exhibited by their principal.

• Help the school to identify the job satisfaction among their teachers which are the main roles in school.

• Assist the school to carry out leadership activities and in order to maintain and enhance the job satisfaction of the teachers in their workplace.

Research Framework

The research framework in this study is built upon the literature review. It is therefore theorized that each variable in transformational leadership style has an influence on job satisfaction of teachers. Figure 1 below depicts the research framework of this study.

Research Methodology

Research Design and Population Sampling

This study used a quantitative approach to measure the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction. Quantitative methods provided a framework for the study and statistical persuasion became critical to validity.

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of the Transformational Leadership Style

Scale	Mean	Std. Dev.	Level
Idealized influence	3.47	0.62	High
Inspirational motivation	3.69	0.79	High
Intellectual stimulation	3.56	0.87	High
Individualized considerations	3.86	0.79	High
Overall Total	3.79	0.65	High

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation for Secondary School Teachers Job Satisfaction

No.	Item	Mean	Std. Dev.	Level
1.	Number of students under your responsibility	3.86	0.82	High
2.	Opportunity to advance in your profession	3.69	0.72	High
3.	Your trust in the administrators	3.78	0.76	High
4.	Your career in the school system	3.81	0.77	High
5.	Your opportunity to advance in your chosen interest	3.71	0.69	High
6.	The physical facilities at your school	3.84	0.79	High
7.	The number of subjects taught	3.79	0.74	High
8.	Appropriate teaching facilities	3.67	0.83	High
9.	The number of tasks performed by you	3.72	0.78	High
10.	Professional competency of the administrators	3.69	0.88	High
	Overall Total	3.86	0.59	High

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Coefficient Matrix

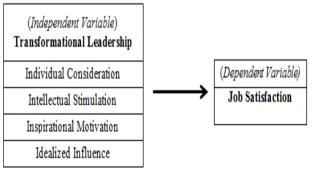| Variable	Transformational Leadership Level		Strength
	R	sig. (p)	
Job satisfaction	0.578	0.000	Moderate

** p < 0.05

Figure 1. The Research Framework

Quantitative strategies allowed measurement with greater control and as recommended by Saunders et al., (2009) allowed greater amount of reliability and generalizability. The primary research tool that was adopted was questionnaire survey using five point Likert scale. A 32-item questionnaire was constructed and 24 items were allocated to both transformational leadership and job satisfaction questionnaires.

In this study, the targeted population was teachers from national secondary school from the Kinta Utara district, Perak. A cover letter informed the participants that the aim of this research was to examine attitudes about work and leadership style and that they were to return the completed questionnaires in sealed envelopes within three to five days. Participants were encouraged to respond as accurately and honestly as possible, and they were assured that their participation would be kept confidential, anonymous and used strictly for academic research purposes only. A total of 260 structured questionnaires were distributed to teachers from 15 schools around Kinta Utara, Perak. The respondents were randomly selected by means of systematic random sampling, whereby 100 percent of the respondents were secondary school teachers.

A total of 235 questionnaires were received and out of this, 10 sets of the questionnaires were considered unusable because over 25 percent of the question in Part 1 Section A of the questionnaire were not answered (Sekaran, 2003). It was assumed that the respondents were either unwilling to cooperate or not serious with the survey. Therefore, only 225 usable sets of received questionnaires were used for the data analysis indicating a response rate of 86 percent.

Data were analyzed using SPSS v. 20 for Windows PC and is reported in percentage, frequency, mean and standard deviation. Descriptive statistics were used to obtain the frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The inferential statistics of t-test and Pearson Correlation Coefficient Matrix is used to identify whether there is a relationship between schools principal's transformational leadership with secondary school teacher's job satisfaction.

Findings

Level of Transformational Leadership Practices among School Principals

Descriptive analysis was used to explain the results of the study on the secondary school teachers' perception towards transformational leadership style of school principals in the 15 secondary schools in the district of Kinta Utara, Perak while inferential analysis was used to determine the relationship between secondary school teachers' job satisfaction.

Table 1 shows the transformational leadership practices among the secondary school principals is at a high level with a mean of 3.79 and standard deviation 0.65. The overall mean score for all the items of transformational leadership are in the range of 3.41 to 4.20. The findings show that most of the teachers perceive that the practice of transformational leadership by secondary school principals in the district of KintaUtara is relatively high.

Level of Secondary School Teachers Job Satisfaction

Table 2 shows that the job satisfaction level of the secondary school teachers in the district of Kinta Utara, Perak is at a high level (mean = 3.86, standard deviation = 0.59). The overall mean score for all the items of job satisfaction among secondary school teachers' are 3.41 to 4.20. This indicates that most of the teachers agree that the level of their work satisfaction is very good and contented.

Relationship between Transformational Leadership Style of Principal and Secondary School Teacher's Job Satisfaction

H_0: There is no relationship between the level of transformational leadership of school principals and teacher's job satisfaction

H_1: There is relationship between the level of transformational leadership of school principals and teacher's job satisfaction

The association between independent variables and dependent variable were explored by using the correlation analysis. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was performed to identify independent variables that individually correlate with the dependent variable. The correlation matrix shows a significant relationship between the levels of transformational leadership to job satisfaction of secondary school teachers.

Table 3 shows that there is a significant relationship between the level of transformational leadership style of secondary school principals and teachers' job satisfaction. The value of r = 0.578, p = 0.000 (p < 0.05). The r value indicates a positive correlation coefficient at a moderate level. This resulted in the rejection of the null hypothesis H_0. Thus, the results show that there is a significant relationship between the levels of transformational leadership to job satisfaction of secondary school teachers in the district of Kinta Utara, Perak.

Conclusion

The results showed that transformational leadership practices among school principals and teachers' job satisfaction are at a high level and there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership level and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers. Although many leadership approaches being practiced, transformational leadership practices according to Hallinger (2007) is the best example for this leadership approach could drive change to the many behaviors of the members in the organization. This assertion is consistent with Selamat, Nordin, and Adnan (2013) who noted that a transformational leader is a change agent who will drive change in the organization or school. School organization is in dire need of leadership formula like this, especially in terms of judgments and teacher development as an individual. The results of this study support the findings of A. Arokiasamy (2014); Amin, Shah, and Tatlah (2013); Abas (2011); Aydin, Savier, and Uysal (2013); and Top et al. (2012) which showed that one of the factors that respondents have job satisfaction is the transformational leadership practices of the principal/ headmaster. Such leader is capable of working and influencing teachers to work together in achieving the mission and vision of the school. They will support and strengthen the individual who is always ready to excel. If the practice of transformational leadership can be enhanced, job satisfaction of teachers in schools will also be enhanced and work potential can be developed to achieve organizational goals. Principals must be committed to building a capacity of school leadership by adding value to the four dimensions in the practice of transformational leadership which are fostering an ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and provide individualized attention to all subordinates in the hope that job satisfaction is attained and committed to the task given and can achieve excellence in the vision and mission targeted by the school and the Ministry of Education.

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