No Teacher Left Behind: The Impact of Principal Leadership Styles On Teacher Job Satisfaction and Student Success

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Understanding the impact of leadership and leadership styles on job satisfaction and organizational success is critical when hiring a school principal. This study explores the impact of leadership styles on teacher job satisfaction; assesses the affect that principals have on student success; and explores key leadership behaviors. This researcher examines existing literature on the subject of transformational leadership in general, as well as its application in the field of education and in terms of principals' leadership in their schools. The study focuses particularly on literature that addresses leadership styles in terms of the impact those styles have on teachers, on students, and on the overall school climate.

Keywords: Principal Leadership, Student Success, Job Satisfaction of Teachers

Understanding the impact of leadership and leadership styles on job satisfaction and organizational success is critical when hiring a school principal. The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of leadership styles on teacher job satisfaction; to assess the affect that principals have on student success; and to explore key leadership behaviors. The study begins with a review of the existing literature on the subject of transformational leadership and addressing ways that transformational leadership can be used in various circumstances. The study then goes on to discuss the literature on leadership in the framework of education, particularly in terms of how the principals' leadership styles are intimately linked to teachers' experiences. Finally, the paper concludes with a summarized discussion of the related studies.

Transformational Leadership and Motivation

The concept of transformational leadership is one of the most significant leadership models put forward in relation to the advancement of the educational field (Hallinger, 2003). In education, studies suggest that transformational leadership has an effect on teachers' commitment and on their attitudes toward their jobs (Hallinger, 2003). The term transformational leadership was coined by Bass (1985), referring to a theory that is considered one of the most popular theories among the various inspirational theories of leadership (Yaslioglu & SelenayErden, 2018). According to Bass and Avolio (1993), the four domains of transformational leadership are: (a) charisma or idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration. These notions are built upon the proposition that transformational leadership is a more effective form of leadership than transactional leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

Avolio & Yammarino (2013) refer to idealized influence as behavioral charisma. In this context, leaders strive to gain trust, loyalty, admiration, and respect from the teachers on their staffs through the application of a charismatic vision and through leading by example. The dimension of idealized influence demands that the principal lead by example, act confidently with optimism, share risks associated with the application of theories, and reinforce values through a high level of ethical behavior (Alzoraiki, Rahman, & Mutalib, 2018). Principals that lead with idealized influence instill a sense of faith for a better future in all members of their organizations, including the students (Berson & Oreg, 2016).

Through the use of inspiration, the transformational leader encourages the teaching staff with new ideas and motivation (Alzoraiki et al., 2018). Furthermore, by developing a shared vision, setting high standards, and promoting a culture that appeals to the follower's self-interests, the principal creates a sense of meaning in the work that the teachers perform. According to Avolio (2014), by helping teachers to set goals, principals provide cultures that are both meaningful and challenging, thereby directly impacting teachers' job satisfaction.

Developing leadership attitudes is critical in promoting support to students and the entire school community (Gibson, Dollarhide, Conley, & Lowe, 2018). Principals in this dimension of transformational leadership encourage teachers to think in terms of innovation and creativity, while providing a culture void without fear of ridicule or punishment (Alzoraiki et al., 2018). According to Bass & Avolio (1993), principals encourage teachers to be innovative and creative in the classroom, so they adopt a critical view of traditional methods and assumptions.

The last domain espoused by Bass and Avolio (1993) is individualized consideration. In individualized consideration, the principal treats each teacher as an individual rather than as an employee, placing them in positions and grade levels that are appropriate for their individual skill sets, talents, and knowledge. Listening is a significant function of this domain, since individual needs and concerns must be addressed to foster self-confidence. In the transformational leadership context, principals are responsible for offering praise to teachers for achievements, for initiative, and when they accomplish their targeted levels of potential (Alzoraiki et al., 2018). Through this culture of collaboration, principals and teachers focus on the common good of the students and the

attainment of the organizational goals (Eliophotou-Menon & Ioannou, 2016).

For leadership to be transformational, the conditional benefits between the leaders and the followers must not be mere promises of external rewards, but must focus on relationship building, character building, and creating a supportive environment for the followers (Yaslioglu & SelenayErden, 2018). According to Northhouse (1997), transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms teachers and the district as a whole. Transformational leadership focuses on the ability of leaders to prompt individuals to desire change, transformation, and improvement and entails followers becoming leaders themselves (Eliophotou-Menon & Ioannou, 2016).

Burns (1978) articulated the difference between transactional and transformational types of leadership by noting that transactional leadership entails an exchange of something of value, while transformational leadership fosters involvement and shared commitment to a greater goal among followers. The role of the transformational leaders is to use strategic communication to enhance organizational performance (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). The transformational leader can promote excellent performance among members, relying on organizational change through the overall improvement of the members (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders are responsible for the empowerment of organizational members, focusing more on the process than the end product (Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002). When principals focus on employee job satisfaction, teachers will place their focus on the end products – in this case, student success. According to Sinek (2017), principals who create cultures that are free from fear are able to focus on and foster student success.

Impact of Transformational Leadership

Leadership is innately related to employee motivation (Fiaz, Qin, Ikram, & Saqib, 2017; Zareen, Razzaq, & Mujtaba, 2015) and to communication behaviors (Men, 2014; Yanfei, Yangliu, & Yu, 2018). As such, transformational leadership has been studied in a myriad of contexts involving motivation of employees and the general culture of the workplace (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Francis, 2017; Ladan, Nordin, & Belal, 2017; Ng & Rivera, 2018; Yanfei et al., 2018). For instance, Campbell (2018) concluded that transformational leaders are those leaders who are effective in developing strong and loyal teams with high productivity. This is because trans-formational leaders lead with vision and are able to communicate that vision to the organization and implement it with their teams (Campbell, 2018; Ladan et al., 2017). Leaders who are able to emotionally connect with the team members are better situated for motivating their team members and, therefore, increasing productivity (Baesu & Bejinaru, 2015; Sasikala & Anthonyraj, 2015).

Transformational leadership can influence employee behaviors and, consequently, affect workplace productivity (Ladan et al., 2017; Le Ba, Lei, & Than Thanh, 2018; Yanfei et al., 2018). Ladan et al. (2017) investigated the impact of transformational leadership on knowledge hiding and found significant implications regarding the mediating role of organizational psychological ownership on the association between transformational leadership and employee knowledge hiding. Knowledge hiding and knowledge sharing can be explained by the levels of trust in leaders that employees have (Ladan et al., 2017; Le Ba et al., 2018). Sinek (2017) argued that trust is the central component for knowledge sharing and that it originates out

of safe environments cultivated by leaders. Le Ba et al. (2018) further posited that the use of transformational knowledge could provide efficient means for cultivating knowledge management in the workplace. Le Ba et al. (2018) gathered and analyzed information from 368 workers at 63 Chinese companies in order to study the effect of transformational leadership and trust in leaders on knowledge collecting and sharing. They discovered that trans-formational leadership had a significant effect on knowledge sharing, while trust in leaders had a more significant impact on knowledge collecting (Le Ba et al., 2018). These studies offer an understanding of the relationship of transformational leadership to various employee behaviors and demonstrate how transformational leadership can be used to foster productivity in the workplace (Ladan et al., 2017; Le Ba et al., 2018).

In another study focused on com-munication within the workplace, Yanfei et al. (2018) studied the critical role of psychological capital as a primary mechanism through which transformational leadership can influence employee voice behavior. In addition, Yanfei et al. (2018) studied how employee organizational identification or belongingness can moderate this relationship. Men (2014) posited that not only is transformational leadership influential on internal communication, but it is also a significant correlate of the relationship between employees and organizations. The use of this style of leadership may improve internal relationships between leaders and employees and has important implications for creating supportive cultures for employees (Men, 2014; Yanfei et al., 2018). Transformational leadership is also linked to the psychological well-being of employees (Arnold, 2017; Hildenbrand, Sacramento, & Binnewies, 2018). While situational context is essential

for the types of leadership that are most effective, Herold, Fedor, Caldwell, & Liu (2008) argued that leaders are effective when they can motivate and inspire employees through trust-building. A transformational leader is visionary and promotes trust, involvement, and collaboration among followers (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

The literature on transformational leadership demonstrates the efficiency of that leadership style for increasing employee motivation and trust within the workplace. There is evidence that the four dimensions of transformational leadership (charisma or idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration), were extensively used to support efforts to understand the significance of transformational leadership style on employee motivation and workplace behavior. However, it is important to understand that while this type of leadership is efficient, it cannot be concluded to necessarily be the best and most effective kind of leadership across all circumstances and contexts. Thus, it is critical for leaders to recognize the importance of context-specific factors in order to adopt efficient leadership strategies.

Leadership in the Educational Context

The leadership behaviors of principals can influence teachers' experiences and work lives (Ch, Ahmad, Malik, & Batool, 2017; Kars & Inandi, 2018; Rana, Malik, & Hussain, 2016). The leadership behaviors of principals have been found to be intimately linked to teachers' sense of self-efficacy (Mehdinezhad & Mansouri, 2016), which could have a long-lasting effect on teachers' overall job performance and organizational commitment. For instance, in a study focused on school principals' leadership behaviors and teachers' organizational trust,

Kars and Inandi (2018) concluded that principals carry the feelings of trust among teachers. While there is not a universal definition of trust, Cook and Wall (1980) laid out a frequently used definition of trust as "the extent to which one is willing to ascribe good intentions to, and have confidence in, the words and actions of other people"(p. 39). When there is trust in the workplace, teachers are less hesitant to share ideas with other teachers and their leader (Shih, Chiang, & Chen, 2012). Kars and Inandi (2018) investigated the link between school principals' leadership behaviors and teachers' organizational trust and explored whether leadership behaviors can significantly predict the dimensions of teachers' organizational trust and job satisfaction. A total of 722 participated in the correlational survey study, identifying three dimensions of organizational trust – principal trust, trust in colleagues, and trust in students and parents (Kars & Inandi, 2018). Findings showed that democratic leadership behaviors had a positive and significant relationship to all dimensions of organizational trust, while autocratic and laissez-faire leadership behaviors were negatively associated with all dimensions of organizational trust (Kars & Inandi, 2018). Kars and Inandi (2018) also found that democratic leadership behaviors were the strongest predictors of principal trust.

Zeinabadi and Rastegarpour (2010) conducted a quantitative research study of 652 primary school teachers in Iran, examining the relationships among the factors of transformational leadership style, job satisfaction, and trust with the principal. Results indicated a positive relationship between transformational leadership style and trust between the teachers and the principal (Zeinabandi & Rastegarpour, 2010). The results affirmed the finding of Kars & Inandi (2018) that trust is a central component to organizational success and teacher job satisfaction.

Ch et al. (2017) studied the association between principals' leadership styles and teachers' job satisfaction. A total of 200 teachers were randomly selected to answer a questionnaire that focused on questions about demographic variables, principals' leadership styles (autocratic and democratic), and job satisfaction (Ch et al., 2017). Based on the Pearson's analysis, Ch et al. (2017) concluded that most of the principals used a democratic type of leadership, as reflected by their efforts to take suggestions from teachers and the cooperation and support they provided to teachers. However, the operational goals and policies of the schools were determined primarily by the principals (Ch et al., 2017). Study findings also revealed that democratic leadership was significantly linked to teachers' job satisfaction. Thus, Ch et al. (2017) argued that principals are tasked with improving the participation of teachers in the decision-making processes of school communities.

Rana et al. (2016) investigated the impact of perceived positive leadership styles (i.e., transformational and trans-actional leadership) on teachers' job involvement. A total of 250 public and private teachers responded to items on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and Job Involvement Scale (Rana et al., 2016). Findings demonstrated that transactional and transformational styles and their subscales were significantly and positively related to job involvement (Rana et al., 2016). Furthermore, Rana et al. (2016) found that idealized influence and intellectual stimulation, both sub-facets of trans-formational leadership, were predictive of job involvement.

Balyer (2012) argued that trans-formational leadership style is necessary in order for principals to increase job

satisfaction among teachers and to improve overall school performance. Thus, it is quite essential to understand principals' leadership behaviors and how teachers perceive them (Balyer, 2012). A total of 30 teachers participated in the semi-structured interviews (Balyer, 2012). Findings showed that the participants perceived a high level of characteristics of transformational leadership, specifically: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Balyer, 2012). These results supported the notion that this type of leadership is related to better performance and job satisfaction (Balyer, 2012; Fiaz et al., 2017; Zareen et al., 2015). Balyer (2012) further posited that principals should receive training regarding how to develop transformational leadership characteristics.

Stewart-Banks, Koufie, and Hakim (2015) focused on the relationship between principal leadership styles and the morale and work performance of teachers. The researchers were able to identify the school principals' characteristics that could contribute to teachers' job commitment (Stewart-Banks et al., 2015). They found that communication, relationships, open-mindedness, approachability, enjoyment of education, and being knowledgeable in the education field were characteristics that significantly impacted teacher work performance and morale (Stewart-Banks et al., 2015). Stewart-Banks et al. (2015) further argued that a principal's leadership behaviors are foundational to the school's improvements and to an increase in the staff's work morale. Aydin, Sarier, and Uysal (2013) similarly suggested that a principal's leadership style is significantly influential on the effective organizational commitment of the school's teachers. These results demonstrated the powerful position of principals as a central personnel figure who has a wide range of influence on various stakeholders within the school and the community (Aydin et al., 2013; Okoji Olufemi, 2015; Stewart-Banks et al., 2015).

In addition to influencing teachers' job satisfaction and perception (Ch et al., 2017; Kars & Inandi, 2018; Rana et al., 2016), principals' leadership abilities can also affect student performance (Sebastian, Allenworth, & Huang, 2016; Tatlah, Iqbal, Amin, & Quarishi, 2014). To understand the pathways through which principals affect school organizational processes, Tatlah et al. (2014) investigated teacher leadership and how effective principal leadership can be used to alleviate the school learning climate. The researchers found that school climate and teacher perceptions of their principals are two significant pathways through which principals' leadership behaviors influence students (Tatlah et al., 2014). In addition to identifying specific avenues through which principals can influence students, Tatlah et al. (2014) produced findings that can assist principals in adopting the specific leadership behaviors that produce optimal results (Tatlah et al., 2014). This is especially critical in light of the fact that principals are charged with prioritizing the welfare of both teachers and students (Sebastian et al., 2016; Tatlah et al., 2014).

Not only are principals influential with regard to school policies (Ch et al., 2017; Kars & Inandi, 2018; Rana et al., 2016), they also contribute to the overall lived experiences of teachers, students, and other stakeholders within their educational institutions (Sebastian et al., 2016; Tatlah et al., 2014). Principals establish the overall school climates, thus directing the entire institution (Aydin et al., 2013; Okoji Olufemi, 2015; Stewart-Banks et al., 2015). Principal leadership has been found to be significantly linked to teacher job satisfaction and work performance and to student performance. Thus, it is important

also to understand the perceptions of the stakeholders regarding leadership behaviors.

Summary

The literature on leadership reflects the dynamic role of leaders in various contexts (Al-Abaneh, 2013; Fiaz et al., 2017; i Solà, i Badia, Delgado Hito, Campo Osaba, & Del Val García, 2016; Sahoo & Dash, 2017). Although transactional and transformational leadership styles are both related to the motivation of the followers, it is important to note that transactional leadership entails an exchange of something of value, while transformational leadership has been shown to nurture involvement and shared commitments to greater goals (Burns, 1978; Yaslioglu & SelenayErden, 2018). The behaviors of school leaders profoundly impact the experiences of the teachers as well as the overall performance of the school.

Principal leadership plays a significant role in determining the experiences of teachers, the experiences of students, and the overall school climate. Previous research has shown that principals can influence teacher job satisfaction and work performance and can impact student performance (Ch et al., 2017; Kars & Inandi, 2018; Mehdinezhad & Mansouri, 2016; Rana et al., 2016). Studies focusing on the experiences of principals emphasize the perceived characteristics of school leaders, including the ability to understand the politics of their positions and their capacity for meeting the expectations of the community (Hansen, 2018; Beam, Russell, Claxton, & Smith, 2016). Furthermore, it is critical for principals to receive professional support and training from experienced school leaders.

About the Author

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