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ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER

The Role of Gender, Education Level and Academic Degree of the School Principals on Their Selected Styles of Leadership



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between leadership styles, gender, level of education and academic degree of school principals of Sari. The method of the study was causal comparative (Ex-Post Facto) and the population consists of all school principal of Sari which was about 200 among which 145 subjects were selected through random sampling method and Krejcie & Morgan table. The data gathering tool was the Luthans' leadership questionnaire with the reliability of 0.72. In this research The F and T test was used for data analysis. The results showed that the relationship oriented style and the task oriented style is not different among principals of different levels of education and there is no difference between the relationship orientation of male and female principals. Also, there is no difference between the task orientation of principals with different degrees and relationship orientation of the principals with different academic degrees.

KEY WORDS: *Task-oriented leadership style, relationship-oriented leadership style, gender, Academic degree*

Introduction

Most theorists of management and organization consider the twenty first century as organizational leadership century. The researchers have demonstrated Organizational behavior in which that leaders can be the distinguishing factor among people. In fact, the leaders suggest their followers to recognize the optimal way and ask them to attempt to identify their leader and achieve a desirable situation he has determined.

Peterson states that organizations with dedicated leaders will achieve significant organizational achievements. The dedicated leaders have the same value for all members and provide the context for professional participation in organization for all. According to Manner wise leasers create new leaders through their own leadership (quoted in Farhangi, Mehregan and Damghanian, 2011). Leadership style consists of clear behavior patterns that frequently occurs in the flow of work in an organization and whereby others know the person (Hersey & Blanchard, 2005).

In recent decades there have been a flood management theories most of which aim to describe the conduct of leaders in special occasions. That is they try to indicate a number of values, attitudes and behaviors that leaders show. A number of pioneering works in the field of leadership styles have expressed three main clusters or styles (Ehrhart & Klein quoted in Moss, S. a., Dowling, N. D., Callanan, J, 2009).

- The first cluster includes the task oriented leaders who are focused on work planning, coordinating and providing the necessary resources to ensure that plans and ideas are implemented and Likert is one of them.
- The second cluster includes the relationship oriented leaders that emphasize the importance of trust and confidence in subordinates and act based on gratitude, respect and kindness.
- The third cluster includes charismatic leaders who strive to spread overall challenging, inspiring, shared and innovative goals and objectives (quoted in Moss, S. a., Dowling, N. D., Callanan, J, 2009).

Much research has been done on leadership styles. However, research and studies that have been conducted since 1940 have shown that there are two types of management roles: relationship oriented and task oriented. The relationship oriented behaviors focus on the interests, feelings and consent of the group members while task oriented behaviors focus on the satisfaction of organizational goals rather than the needs of group members.

“The task-oriented leaders rely solely on their legal obligations. In or bureaucratic management style the focus is strongly on regulations, hierarchies and formal relationships and there is a kind of self alienation and apathy among the employee and it causes depression, anxiety, and frustration in long term. The Inappropriate management style causes the students to lose their balance and creates a sense of outward fear and inward rebellion, they feel helpless and ignorant, and keep away from the school principal and become attracted to other situations“ (Mirkamali, 2005: 269).

Almasian & Rahimikia (2001) found that there was a significant positive relationship between the leadership style and personal performance of subordinate staff and the more orientation of the leaders toward relationship oriented leadership, they will see better personal performance of the employees and also there is no significant relationship between managers' leadership style, age, work experience, education, gender and marital status. Shokri (2009) showed that there is a relationship between leadership style and personality type and the age, gender and management experience of directors has an interactive role in this regard. There is a relationship between gender, personality, and task-oriented leadership style, in the sense that men with type (A) personality are more likely to have task-oriented leadership style than other groups.

Jafari (2009) found that there were a great difference between male and female managers in agreeableness and conscientiousness. Female managers were more agreeable and conscientious than male managers. Female managers were more relationship oriented than male managers. There was no significant difference in task orientation of male and female managers. Also Seyyed Gharaini & Seyyed Abaszade (2008) in their study “The relationship between leadership styles and frustration among high school teachers in Urmia” which was conducted on 152 teachers and 30 principle found out that there is a significant difference (0.001 level) between male and female leadership style and male principles are more relationship oriented than female principals but there was no significant difference between the leadership style and academic degree. Seyyed Kalan (2007)

showed that there was no significant difference between the leadership style of men and women in the analyzed population. Based on the above discussion we are going to answer the following research questions:

Research Questions:

1. Is there any difference between male and female leadership style?
2. Is there any difference between the leadership styles of different educational levels?
3. Is there any difference between the leadership style of the principals with different academic degrees?

Methodology

The study population included all school principals in elementary, middle and high school in the northern city of Sari in 2012-2013 school year among which 145 subjects were selected through random sampling method and Krejcie & Morgan table. The data gathering tool was the Luthans' leadership questionnaire with the reliability of 0.72. In this research The F and T test was used for data analysis.

In the present study statistical methods used for data analysis is descriptive and inferential and in order to analyze the data the spss16 software was used. Thus for the 1st question the T-test (two groups) and for 2nd and 3rd questions the F test were used.

The data gathering tool was the Luthans' leadership questionnaire. This 35-item questionnaire using a 5 degrees examines three styles of leadership including task-oriented leadership style (autocratic), humanism (liberal, relationship-oriented) and synthetic (Humanitarianism and task-oriented). On this scale 20 items (1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33) measure task-oriented leadership style and 15 items (3, 5, 8, 10, 15, 18, 19, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 35) to measure humanitarian leadership style. About scoring Luthans suggested that if the principals choose rarely or never to questions 35, 34, 30, 19, 18, 12, 8, and 17 they get 1 point, and if the answer is always, often, or sometimes they do not get any point. If they choose always or often for other questions they get 1 point otherwise they get no point. The highest point of the principals in humanitarianism is 15 and in task orientation is 20 which is totally equal with 35.

If the score of a principle which is obtained through linking humanitarianism and the task-orientation on Luthans' synthetic axis of leadership profile is less than 5.95 it means that the principle is using the weak synthetic style. If it is less than 10.99 it means that the principle is using the medium synthetic style and if the principle's score is above 11 it means that the principle is using the strong synthetic style. But in this study the synthetic style is withdrawn. "The validity of Luthans' leadership questionnaire (1985) is confirmed in many studies by the researchers. The validity of this questionnaire is also confirmed by Brdner7 Metzkas and Moghimi has mentioned it in his book" (Moghimi, 2007: 278).

Findings

1. Is there any difference between male and female leadership style?

Since in this research, relationship-oriented and task-oriented leadership styles have been studied and the principals may possess both characteristics. So, both characteristics are compared between male and female principals individually.

1-1- Is there any difference between male and female relationship oriented leadership style?

1-2- Is there any difference between male and female task oriented leadership style?

Table 1: The comparison between male and female leadership style

Style	Gender	number	Mean	Standard deviation	t	df	sig	Mean difference
Relationship orientation	Female	69	9.07	2.3	1.18	145	0.24	0.47
	Male	78	8.6	2.48				
Task orientation	Female	69	11.86	2.72	1.02	145	0.3	0.48
	Male	78	11.4	2.97				

Based on the data in Table 1, the mean of relationship orientation of female principals is 9.07, with a standard deviation of 2.3 and the mean of relationship orientation of male principals is 8.6 with a standard deviation of 2.48. In which $t_{(145)}=1.18$ with $P_0=0.24>0.05$ indicates that there is no significant difference between male and female relationship orientation.

Also the mean of task orientation of female principals is 11.86, with a standard deviation of 2.72 and the mean of task orientation of male

principals is 11.4 with a standard deviation of 2.97. In which $t_{(145)}=0.3$ indicates that there is no significant difference between male and female task orientation.

2. Is there any difference between the leadership styles of different educational levels?

As discussed before in this research, relationship-oriented and task-oriented leadership styles have been studied and the principals may possess both characteristics, so, both characteristics are compared between principals of different levels of education.

- 2-1- Is there any difference between relationship orientated leadership style of principals of different levels of education?
- 2-2- Is there any difference between task oriented leadership style of principals of different levels of education?

Table 2: Descriptive indicators of leadership styles of principals of different levels of education

Level	Number	Mean		Standard deviation	
		Task oriented/ relationship oriented	relationship oriented	Task oriented/ relationship oriented	relationship oriented
Primary school	52	10.99	9.02	2.9	2.4
Middle school	33	11.94	8.67	2.98	2.7
High school	61	11.8	8.8	2.8	2.27
Total	146	11.53	8.84	2.9	2.41

Based on the data in Table 2, the mean and standard deviation of relationship orientation of principals of primary schools are 9.02 and 2.4 and more than other groups and after that we have middle school principals with the mean of 8.8 and standard deviation of 2.27.

The mean and standard deviation of task orientation of principals of middle schools are 11.94 and 2.98 and more than other groups and after that we have high school principals with the mean of 11.8 and standard deviation of 2.8.

Table 3: The comparison between relationship and task oriented leadership styles of the principals of different levels of education

Style	Source	df	Total squares	Mean square	F	sig
Relationship orientation	Between groups	2	2.95	1.48	0.252	0.777
	Within groups	143	837.1	5.9		
	Total	145	840.05			
Task orientation	Between groups	2	24.7	12.4	1.52	0.223
	Within groups	143	1167.6	8.2		
	Total	145	1192.4			

Relationship oriented: Levene statistic: 0/505, sig = 0.6

Task oriented: Levene statistic: 0/085, sig = 0.92

In relationship orientation $F_{(2,143)} = 0.252$ with $P = 0.777 > 0.05$ which is not significant at 95% level. This means that we cannot say that there is a difference between relationship orientated leadership style of principals of different levels of education 95% sure.

In task orientation $F_{(2,143)} = 1.52$ with $P = 0.223 > 0.05$ which is not significant at 95% level. This means that we cannot say that there is a difference between task orientated leadership style of principals of different levels of education 95% sure.

3. Is there any difference between the leadership style of the principals with different academic degrees?

Just like the research question 1 & 2 the relationship and task orientation of principals with different academic degrees are discussed separately.

- 3-1- Is there any difference between relationship orientated leadership style of principals with different academic degrees?
- 3-2- Is there any difference between task orientated leadership style of principals with different academic degrees?

Table 4: Descriptive indicators of leadership styles of principals with different academic degrees

Level	Number	Mean		Standard deviation	
		Task oriented/ relationship oriented	relationship oriented	Task oriented/ relationship oriented	relationship oriented
Primary school	9	11	9.11	3.64	2.62
Middle school	116	11.73	8.72	2.78	2.41
High school	20	11	9.25	3.09	2.24
Total	145	11.58	8.82	2.87	2.39

Based on Table 4, the mean and standard deviation of relationship orientation of principals with associate's, bachelor and master degree are (9.11 ± 2.62 , 8.72 ± 2.41 , 9.25 ± 2.24) respectively and the relationship orientation of the principals with master degree is higher than the principals with associates degree.

The mean and standard deviation of task orientation of principals with associate's, bachelor and master degree are (11 ± 3.64 , 11.73 ± 2.78 , 11 ± 3.09) respectively and the task orientation of the principals with associates degree is higher than the principals with master degree.

The total mean of the relationship oriented principals is 8.82 with the standard deviation of 2.39 and the total mean of the task oriented principals is 11.58 with the standard deviation of 2.78.

Table 5: The comparison between relationship and task oriented leadership styles of the principals with different academic degrees.

Style	The source changes	Total squares	df	Mean square	F	sig
Relationship orientation	Between groups	5.52	2	2.763	0.479	0.621
	Within groups	819.81	142	5.773		
	Total	825.33	144			
Task orientation	Between groups	12.45	2	6.228	0.753	0.473
	Within groups	1174.716	142	8.273		
	Total	1187.172	144			

Relationship oriented: Levene statistic: 0/138, sig = 0.871

Task oriented: Levene statistic: 0/904, sig = 0.407

In relationship orientation $F_{(2,142)} = 0.479$ with $P = 0.621$ which is not significant at 95% level. This means that we cannot say that there is a

difference between relationship orientated leadership style of principals of different levels of education 95% sure. Also In task orientation $F_{(2,142)} = 0.753$ with $P = 0.473$ which is not significant at 95% level. This means that we cannot say that there is a difference between task orientated leadership style of principals of different levels of education 95% sure.

Conclusion

1. There is a difference between the leadership styles of men and women.

The results of this study show that there is no significant difference between the relationship oriented leadership style of men and women. Also there is no significant difference between the task oriented leadership styles of men and women and the hypothesis is rejected. This finding is in line with Steinberg & Shapiro (2006), Almasian & Rahimikia (2011), Jafari (2009), Seyyed Kalan (2007), Jafari & Yousefnejad (2002) and Ashkavndy (1992) showing that there is no difference between male and female principals' leadership style. Based on the mentioned studies and the conflicting results of two recent studies (Seyyed Gharaini & Seyyed Abbaszade 2008; Ardalan, 1991), the results of this study are logical. Because any organization demands its own leadership style, and insightful and logical managers take a step forward towards achieving organizational goals by selecting the appropriate leadership style. Cook & Russel claim: today's world requires that managers, regardless of gender, to be a leader and show their creativity and imagination to improve their leadership qualities, it can be said that both qualities are necessary for a good leader. Every male or female principle starts his/ her path of leadership from somewhere. No way is wrong but they are different and we need to know them. We need leaders who can think like others, put themselves in their shoes, know their position and see others with their own perspective (Translated by Irannejad, 2006).

2. There is a significant difference between the leadership styles of different educational levels

The results indicate that there is no difference in relationship and task oriented leadership styles of the principles of different educational levels.

3. There is any a significant difference between the leadership style of the principles with different academic degrees.

The results of this study show that there is no significant difference between the relationship and task oriented leadership styles of the principles

with different academic degrees. Although in this study the mean of relationship orientation of principles with master's degree was higher than other managers and the mean of task orientation of principles with bachelor's degree was higher than principles with associate's and master's degree, but there was no significant difference between the relationship and task orientation of the principles with different academic degrees.

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