

A Study of the Relationship between Principals' Leadership Styles and Job Burnout (Case Study: High School Teachers in Nour Abad City)

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted with the aim of studying the relationship between principals' leadership styles and job burnout among teachers of high schools in Nour Abad city of Iran in educational year 2013-14. Research methodology has been descriptive-correlational, and it has been applied in terms of purpose. Statistical population included all the teachers of high schools in Nour Abad city. A sample size of 118 people were selected by using Morgan table through random sampling method. In order to measure the principals' leadership style from teachers' viewpoint, the Fred Luthans' questionnaire (researcher-made and containing 35 questions) was used; its reliability was measured as 0.90 by using Cronbach's alpha. For measuring job burnout, Maslach's job burnout questionnaire (containing 22 questions in Likert scale) has been used, whose reliability was measured as 0.71 by using Cronbach's alpha. Besides, questionnaires' validity was approved of by the experts. The findings obtained from questionnaires were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics (t-test, Pearson correlation coefficient and variance analysis) through SPSS software. The results are as follows: principals are oriented more toward task-oriented leadership styles and teachers' job burnout can be predicted through principals' task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership styles. Principals' task-oriented leadership style results in teachers' job burnout. Of course, employees' (male and female) opinions about teachers' job burnout is not the same and there is a difference between the degrees of teachers' job burnout in terms of years of service, and there is no difference between the degrees of teachers' job burnout in terms of education.

KEY WORDS: high school, principals, teachers, opinions.

INTRODUCTION

Today, education is very important and has great value in all countries, and its role in economic, social, cultural and political development and growth is undeniable (Vakilian, 2006).

Education experts generally believe that the quality of educational activities management is the most important indicator of quality level and effectiveness of all educational programs. It is because management, with its decisive and effective role in leading the education processes towards its goals, can both result in its progress and cause its breakup (Niknami, 2004, p. 5).

The need for management and leadership in all areas of social activities is tangible and vital. Huge human and material resources are going to be destroyed and vanished soon without competent leadership (Alaghemand, 1996, p. 1).

Schools' management and leadership is among the most difficult, most important and most critical types of management in public and state organizations. In educational centers, educational management and leadership has acquired a special status because of complex and very broad goals, numerous activities and various procedures (Asgarian, 1989, p. 107).

Most of the management experts agree to this point that leadership style is a set of principals' attitudes, traits and skills, which forms on the basis of four factors of system of values, trust in employees, leadership tendencies and feeling of security in critical situations. Leadership style is the outline of leader's measures in such a way perceived by the employees. Leadership style indicates way of thinking, ideology and personality of leaders (Jafari & Yousef Nezhad, 2002).

The significance of studying the leadership style and principals' performance and efforts to improve it is not the reason that leadership style can be a tool for educational progress of students and increased efficiency. This important matter is achieved in the light of applying performance indices and its relationship with the

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concerned leadership style in the school environment. The concerned leadership styles in this study are task-based and relationship-based, and the scope of each is as follows.

Task-Orientation

It is the extent to which a manager directs his (or her) subordinates' efforts towards goal attainment, characterised by planning, organising and controlling.

Relationship-Orientation

It is the extent to which a manager has personal job relationships, characterised by mutual trust, respect for subordinates' ideas and consideration for their feelings (Reddin, 1970).

One of the major occupational issues which is seen as a reaction to job and organizational pressures among human services employees is the phenomenon of job burnout. Job burnout is the individual's loss of adaptability by stressors and syndromic causes, composed of physical and emotional exhaustion which leads to negative self-concept in the individual, negative attitude towards job and lack of sense of communication with clients while performing tasks (Almasian & Rahimikia, 2011). Today, stress has attracted the attention of scientists as the main cause of mental, physical and behavioural illnesses of humans, and these stresses play a major role in creating mental and physical problems of humans. Harmful effects of stress also greatly affect employees' performance and it seems that principals can reduce their employees' job burnout by adopting appropriate management practices and useful leadership styles. Therefore, principal's leadership style and his/her relationships with teachers and employees or the staff can be a beginning for recognizing employees' job satisfaction and burnout (Moghimi, 1998).

Job burnout in education is important from two aspects: first, job burnout affects individual's mental health and leads to job dissatisfaction, absence from work and job change. Second, job burnout reduces the qualitative level of the education. Thus, identifying ways to prevent and reduce job burnout raises the level of individuals' mental health and improves the qualitative level of education. Besides, these peoples' burnout wastes capitals and reduces efficiency. Hence identifying the human resources exposed to burnout and applying therapeutic intervention such as teaching skills to cope with stress in prevention or reduction of these people's burnout is essential (Khaleghi Nezhad, 2009).

Given the highly critical mission of the educational principals and their complex roles in management of the school and with regard to principals' broad human relationships with large groups of teacher, student, family and society, educational responsibilities of the principals are beyond those that could be ignored. In the meantime, paying attention to matters affecting how to fulfil these duties is very important. So in this study the relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' job burnout is studied and hereby it becomes clear that which leadership style is useful and appropriate for reducing the level of teachers' job burnout in Nour Abad city, so that from now on, the necessary suggestions regarding the type of management in schools will be offered to the people involved, according to the research results. With respect to the current research topic, there have been studies inside and outside Iran, some of which are mentioned here as follows:

Salimi et al. (2012) in a study titled "the Effect of Leadership Style on Job Burnout among Employees of Tax Administration of Gilan Province" concluded that transformational leadership style has a negative effect on employees' job burnout. Besides, transactional leadership style has negative effect on their job burnout, but passive/ avoidance leadership style has a positive impact on employees' job burnout.

Almasian & Rahimikia (2011) in a study titled "a Study of the Relationship between Managers' Leadership Style and Staff Job Burnout in Medical University of Lorestan Province" concluded that there is a significant reverse relationship between managers' leadership style and employees' job burnout with the confidence of over 99% and the existence of a relationship between managers' leadership style and employees' job burnout requires greater attention of the managers for the staff and use of scientific methods of management.

Seyed Gharaeyni & Seyed Abas Zadeh (2009) in their study titled "a Study of the Relationship between Principals' Leadership Styles and Teachers' Job Burnout in High Schools in Oroumieh City in Educational Year 2006-07" concluded that the degree of teachers' job burnout, whose principals adopt participative leadership style is greater than those teachers whose principals follow a relationship-oriented leadership style. Besides, there is a significant difference in the dimensions of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization at the levels of 0.05 and 0.0001, and the degree of male teachers' job burnout is higher than females in these two dimensions. However, there is no difference between the performance of men and women in the dimension of individual's failure.

Lee & Cummings (2008) in their study examined the relationship between director leadership practices and manager work-life and burnout and found that directors may improve the work life of managers by using transformational leadership practices to address the amount of control and appropriateness of rewards to positively influence the job satisfaction of managers.

Another study was conducted by Stordeur et al. (2001). They examined the effect of work stressors and head nurses' transactional and transformational leadership on the levels of emotional exhaustion experienced among their staff. This study provided, for the first time, a test of the influence of leadership on burnout among

nurses, taking into account the role of work stressors. The findings indicated that different leadership styles have different effects in prevention or creation of stress or job burnout.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Given the purposes and subject of the research, the present study is applied and descriptive in terms of purpose and data collection method, and a branch of field studies. Besides, it is a correlational study in terms of the relationship between the variables of the study. The statistical population of the study included all the teachers of high schools in Nour Abad city amounting to 173 male and female teachers. A sample size of 118 teachers were selected through random sampling method using Morgan table. In order to collect the required data, field study of the principals' styles as well as opinions and status of the teachers, two questionnaires were employed. These two questionnaires have been completed by the teachers. One of them is leadership style questionnaire (Fred Luthans) containing 35 questions. Its purpose is to evaluate the principal in conditions of relationship-orientation and task-orientation and outlines the profile related to leadership styles in three spectrum of authoritarian, delegative and democratic. The other one is job burnout questionnaire (Maslach) containing 22 questions and covers three components of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. In this study, the Conbach's alpha was used in order to determine reliability. For this purpose, a preliminary sample including 30 questionnaires was pretested, then based on the results obtained from these questionnaires, the Conbach's alpha was 0.90 for principals' leadership style and 0.70 for job burnout. Therefore, the questionnaires of the present study has an acceptable reliability. Validity of the questionnaires was also approved by the respective experts.

Findings

Main question of the study: Toward which leadership styles (task-oriented or relationship-oriented) are more oriented the principals, from teachers' viewpoint?

Table 1. Mean comparison of principals' leadership style in Nour Abad city

Mean rank	Max.	Min.	Standard deviation	mean	Number of respondents	Leadership style
1.60	42.32	39.24	8.33	43.78	115	Task-oriented
1.40	60.17	56.17	10.82	61.17	115	Relationship-oriented

Table 2. One-sample t-test results related to each variable

result	Confidence interval 95%		Mean difference	Significance level	Degree of freedom	Statistic t	Variables of the study
	Upper bound	Lower bound					
Desirable and significant	42.32	39.24	40.78	0.000	114	52.46	Task-oriented
Desirable and significant	60.17	56.17	58.17	0.000	114	57.62	Relationship-oriented

We can compare the mean rank of the principals' leadership styles in the above table. The results of t-test suggest desirability and significance in all dimensions (t statistic is above +1.96 and the confidence interval has positive upper bound and lower bound). Thus, from respondents' viewpoint, these indices have a desirable and successful status. As it is seen, there is a difference between the mean ranks of principals' leadership style from teachers' viewpoint, there is a statistical significant difference between mean ranks of principals' leadership styles from viewpoint of Nour Abad teachers. Therefore, we conclude that principals are more oriented toward task-oriented leadership styles from teachers' viewpoint.

First main hypothesis: there is a relationship between components of principals' relationship-oriented leadership style and teachers' job burnout.

Table 3. Pearson correlation coefficient test for the first main hypothesis

Relationship-oriented leadership style		Pearson correlation coefficient test	
-0.337	correlation coefficient	Job burnout	
0.000	Significance level		
115	number		

Table 4. Coefficient of correlation between principals' relationship-oriented leadership style and various components of teachers' job burnout

Job burnout			Predictor variable
Reduced personal accomplishment	depersonalization	Emotional exhaustion	
-0.315	-0.263	-0.292	
0.001	0.005	0.002	
115	115	115	
			Relationship-oriented leadership style
			correlation coefficient
			Significance level
			number

The above table shows that the value of significance level is 0.000 which is below 0.05, thus this hypothesis is confirmed at the significance level of 0.05. As a result, there is a significant relationship between components of relationship-oriented leadership style and teachers' job burnout. And this is also true for components of job burnout; in other words, teachers' job burnout can be predicted by principals' relationship-oriented leadership style.

Second main hypothesis: there is a relationship between principals' task-oriented leadership style and teachers' job burnout.

Table 5. Pearson correlation coefficient test for the second main hypothesis

Task-oriented leadership style		Pearson correlation coefficient test
-0.371	correlation coefficient	
0.000	Significance level	
115	number	
		Job burnout

Table 6. Coefficient of correlation between principals' task-oriented leadership style and various components of teachers' job burnout

Job burnout			Predictor variable
Reduced personal accomplishment	depersonalization	Emotional exhaustion	
-0.354	-0.319	-0.309	
0.000	0.001	0.001	
115	115	115	
			Task-oriented leadership style
			correlation coefficient
			Significance level
			number

The above table shows that the value of significance level is 0.000 which is below 0.05, thus this hypothesis is confirmed at the significance level of 0.05. As a result, there is a significant relationship between components of task-oriented leadership style and teachers' job burnout. And this is also true for components of job burnout; in other words, teachers' job burnout can be predicted by principals' task-oriented leadership style.

Sub-hypothesis 1: there is a difference between the degrees of teachers' job burnout in terms of gender.

In order to answer this question which is resulted from demographic variables (two groups) and dependent variable, the t-test is used as follows:

Table 7. Two-sample t-test and the result of sub-hypothesis 1

The result of the hypothesis	significance level	F statistic	mean	number	Research hypothesis	
Not confirmed	0.158	2.017	34.94	57	male	The degree of job burnout
	>0.01		32.20	58	female	

According to the results of statistic of t-test presented in the table, the gender variable is not correlated with job burnout variable at the confidence level of 95%. Based on the above table, the value of significance level is 0.158 and since it is above significance level of 0.05, it is concluded that two variable of gender and teachers job burnout are independent of each other and the hypothesis H0 is accepted with the confidence of 95%. Therefore, there is no difference between the degrees of teachers' job burnout in terms of gender.

Sub-hypothesis 2: there is a difference between the degrees of teachers' job burnout in terms of marital status.

In order to answer this question which is resulted from demographic variables (two groups) and dependent variable, the t-test is used as follows:

Table 8. Two-sample t-test and the result of sub-hypothesis 2

The result of the hypothesis	significance level	F statistic	mean	number	Research hypothesis	
Not confirmed	0.664	1.189	31.46	13	single	The degree of job burnout
	>0.01		33.83	102	married	

According to the results of statistic of t-test presented in the table, the marital status variable is not correlated with job burnout variable at the confidence level of 95%. Based on the above table, the value of

significance level is 0.664 and since it is above significance level of 0.05, it is concluded that two variable of marital status and teachers job burnout are independent of each other and the hypothesis H0 is accepted with the confidence of 95%. Therefore, there is no difference between the degrees of teachers' job burnout in terms of marital status.

Sub-hypothesis 3: there is a difference between the degrees of teachers' job burnout in terms of education.

For the above hypothesis, one-way analysis of variance was used, and its results are presented in the following table:

Table 9. One-way analysis of variance for sub-hypothesis 3

Analysis of variance		frequency	Job burnout	education
Significance level	F value	6	diploma	
		31	Associate degree	
0.867*	0.242	68	BA	
		10	MA or higher	

NS: not significant ** significance at the level of 0.01 * significance at the level of 0.05

Based on the data presented in above table, since the significance level of 0.867 is above 0.05, the hypothesis is not significant; it is concluded that there is no significant difference between job burnout and education of respondents and the hypothesis H0 is accepted with the confidence of 95%.

Sub-hypothesis 4: there is a difference between the degrees of teachers' job burnout in terms of age.

For the above hypothesis, one-way analysis of variance was used, and its results are presented in the following table:

Table 10. One-way analysis of variance for sub-hypothesis 4

Analysis of variance		frequency	Job burnout	age
Significance level	F value	23	Below 30 years old	
		53	Between 31 to 40	
0.020*	26.595	31	Between 41 to 50	
		8	Above 51 years old	

NS: not significant ** significance at the level of 0.01 * significance at the level of 0.05

Based on the data presented in above table, since the significance level of 0.020 is below 0.05, the hypothesis is significant; it is concluded that there is a significant difference between job burnout and age of respondents and the hypothesis H1 is accepted with the confidence of 95%.

Sub-hypothesis 5: there is a difference between the degrees of teachers' job burnout in terms of years of service.

For the above hypothesis, one-way analysis of variance was used, and its results are presented in the following table:

Table 11. One-way analysis of variance for sub-hypothesis 5

Analysis of variance		frequency	Job burnout	Years of service
Significance level	F value	34	Between 1-10 years	
		42	Between 11 to 20	
0.008*	84.26	39	Between 21 to 31	
		0	Above 31 years	

NS: not significant ** significance at the level of 0.01 * significance at the level of 0.05

Based on the data presented in above table, since the significance level of 0.008 is below 0.05, the hypothesis is significant; it is concluded that there is a significant difference between job burnout and years of service of respondents and the hypothesis H1 is accepted with the confidence of 95%.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The main purpose of the present study has been studying the relationship between principals' leadership style (task-oriented and relationship-oriented) and teachers' job burnout in high schools in Nour Abad city of Lorestan Province of Iran.

The result of main question: given the mean comparison of leadership styles among principals in high schools in Nour Abad city, since the mean for task-oriented style equals 43.78 and for relationship-oriented style equals 61.17 and their ranks are 1.6 and 1.4 respectively, it can be stated that there is a difference between mean ranks of principals' leadership styles from teachers' viewpoint. Besides, the t-test indicates that the status of the management style in the form of task-oriented or relationship-oriented is at a desirable and significant level and it can be stated that these indices have a desirable and successful status from respondents' viewpoint. As it is seen, there is a difference between the mean ranks of principals' leadership style from teachers' viewpoint; therefore, we conclude that principals are more oriented toward task-oriented leadership styles from teachers'

viewpoint. It means that principals believe that task-oriented leadership style is adopted more in schools, which is consistent with research results of Gharaeini & Abas Zadeh (2009).

The result of first main hypothesis: given the Pearson correlation coefficient test, since the value of significant level is 0.000, the research question is confirmed. As a result, there is a significant relationship between components of principals' relationship-oriented leadership style and teachers' job burnout. And this is also true for components of job burnout; in other words, teachers' job burnout can be predicted by principals' relationship-oriented leadership style. Since the correlation coefficient of job burnout and relationship-oriented style equals -0.337, this relationship is at a good level and because the obtained result is negative, this is a reverse relationship. However, components of job burnout have the following correlation coefficients: emotional exhaustion: -0.292, depersonalization: -0.263 and reduced personal accomplishment: -0.315. Consequently, all the components of job burnout, which were introduced earlier, have a strong relationship with relationship-oriented leadership style and all these relationships are negative and reverse. It means that if one decreases another one increases and vice versa. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with the findings of Gharaeini & Abas Zadeh (2009), and Jafari & Yousef Nezhad (2002).

The results of the second main hypothesis: given the Pearson correlation coefficient test, since the value of significant level is 0.000, the third research question is confirmed. As a result, there is a significant relationship between components of principals' task-oriented leadership style and teachers' job burnout. And this is also true for components of job burnout; in other words, teachers' job burnout can be predicted by principals' task-oriented leadership style. Since the correlation coefficient of job burnout and task-oriented style equals 0.371, this relationship is at a good level and because the obtained result is positive, this is a direct relationship. However, components of job burnout have the following correlation coefficients: emotional exhaustion: 0.309, depersonalization: 0.319 and reduced personal accomplishment: 0.354. Consequently, all the components of job burnout, which were introduced earlier, have a strong relationship with task-oriented leadership style and all these relationships are positive and direct. It means that if one decreases another one decreases and vice versa. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with the findings of Gharaeini & Abas Zadeh (2009), and Jafari & Yousef Nezhad (2002).

The result of sub-hypothesis 1: given the two-sample t-test, since the significance level equals 0.158, it is concluded that two variables of gender and teacher's job burnout are independent of each other. Therefore, the opinions of the employees (male and female) about teachers' job burnout is not the same. Consequently, employees' opinions about job burnout is different whether they are male or female. The result of this hypothesis is consistent with findings of Ghadimi Moghadam & Tabatabaei (2006) and inconsistent with findings of Shabani Bahar & Kounani (2012).

The result of sub-hypothesis 2: given the two-sample t-test, since the significance level equals 0.664, it is concluded that two variables of marital status and teacher's job burnout are independent of each other. Therefore, the opinions of the employees (single and married) about teachers' job burnout are different. Consequently, employees' opinions about job burnout are different, whether they are single or married. It is consistent with research results of Habibi et al. (2008).

The result of sub-hypothesis 3: given the one-way analysis of variance, since the significance level equals 0.867, it is concluded that two variables of education and teacher's job burnout are independent of each other. Therefore, the opinions of the employees (holders of diploma, associate degree, BA and MA or above) about teachers' job burnout are not the same. Consequently, there is a difference between the degrees of teachers' job burnout in terms of education. And it is consistent with research results of Koushki et al. (2010).

The result of sub-hypothesis 4: given the one-way analysis of variance, since the significance level equals 0.020, it is concluded that two variables of age and teacher's job burnout are not independent of each other. Therefore, the opinions of the employees about teachers' job burnout are the same. It means that there is a difference between the degrees of teachers' job burnout in terms of age; this result is consistent with research results of Gharaeini et al. (2009).

The result of sub-hypothesis 5: given the one-way analysis of variance, since the significance level equals 0.008, it is concluded that two variables of years of service and teacher's job burnout are not independent of each other. Therefore, the opinions of the employees about teachers' job burnout are the same. It means that there is a difference between the degrees of teachers' job burnout in terms of years of service, which is not consistent with research results of Etemadi & Faghieh (2008).

Suggestions

The task-oriented style is common in schools, but it'd better to adopt relationship-oriented approaches more because of the teachers' participation advantage. It'd better that principals learn relationship-oriented styles in schools to interact more with teachers in order to reduce their job burnout. It is needed to learn how to manage stress and practice the skill of being happy and stress management. The task-oriented styles should be lessened and the opportunity for teachers' participation and educational progress should be provided. Appropriate leaves should be granted to teachers for continuing their education. Teachers should be aided in

paying university fees. Recreational programs should be provided for the employees at all ages. Sports programs should be provided for employees. Teachers should be rewarded and acknowledged for all years of service.

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