Research Paper Education

A Comparative Study of the Leadership Styles of Principals of Secondary Schools as Perceived by Self and Teachers in Relation to School Effectiveness

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ABSTRACT

The researcher, in the present paper, attempts to study the leadership styles of principals of secondary schools in relation to school effectiveness. The theory of transformational and transactional leadership styles were considered for the study. The study is a descriptive research as it attempts to describe the leadership styles of principals as perceived by self and teachers on the basis of experience of principals and gender of teachers. The questionnaires for leadership styles and school effectiveness were administered on 42 principals and 608 teachers in the region of Greater Mumbai. The data obtained were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics. It was found that there is no significant difference in the leadership styles of principals and school effectiveness with respect to experience and gender.

KEYWORDS Leadership Styles, School Effectiveness, Principals, Teachers

INTRODUCTION

'As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others.' - Bill Gates

The success of an organization usually relies on the effective management by its leader. Any organization would never succeed without an effective and inspiring leader who can motivate his followers to work toward the accomplishment of the group's vision. Thus, the key to high achievement lies in consistency and coherence among three elements; a leader's personal values, a leader's aspirations for his organization and a leader's actions (John Storey, 2004, p. 44).

Of the several theories proposed, transactional and transformational theories have been taken into consideration in the present study.

Transactional theory was first described by sociologist Max Weber in 1947, and further explored by Bernard M Bass in the early 1980s. According to this, leadership is based on a system of rewards and punishments. The transactional leadership style is composed of three dimensions like contingent reward, active management-by-exception and passive management-by-exception.

Concept of transformational leadership was initially introduced by James MacGregor Burns (1978). Transformational leadership style has been known as one of the effective leadership styles in recent theories. It is composed of four dimensions, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Storey, 2004).

Besides these transactional and transformational leadership constructs, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1989) also measures a non-leadership dimension known as laissez-faire.

The main issue in this study was to find out the leadership styles applied by the principals of secondary schools as perceived by self and teachers, in Greater Mumbai in relation to school effectiveness.

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDY

Several studies have been conducted across different cultures and countries on transactional and transformational leadership styles. Most of these studies have been conducted either abroad or in the corporate world. Studies found in the field of education are not many. Also, based on the literature review, it is observed not many researches are found that are in the Indian context pertaining to the school system.

Studies on Leadership Styles

Heba Alfahad, Salem Alhajri and Abdulmuhsen Alqahtani (2013), revealed that transformational leadership style was prevalent among principals. Shibru Bekele and Darshan G M (2011), tried to describe the concept of transformational leadership and its correlation with subordinate satisfaction with the leader. The study confirmed that transformational leadership is an important leadership style to increase subordinate satisfaction with the leader. Deota N. P. (1990), studied the characteristics of effective leadership behaviour of secondary school Principals and found that there was positive and significant correlation between administrative behaviour and leadership behaviour.

Studies on School Effectiveness

Obasanmi Jude & Obasanmi Pius Olu (2012), indicated that a balance of school effectiveness characteristics and indicators are required to render an overall quality programme for the benefit of the students. Ekundayo (2010), examined the relationship between principal's leadership behaviour and effectiveness of secondary schools in Nigeria. Liang Xin, He Bin & Landry Richard (2002), examined the content validity of a locally developed questionnaire to measure school effectiveness for NCA COS (North Central Association of Commission on Schools) accreditation in a rural Midwestern school district.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference in leadership styles of principals as perceived by self with respect to their experience

(i) Less than 5 years
(ii) More than 5 years

2. There is no significant difference in leadership styles of principals as perceived by teachers with respect to their gender :

(i) Males
(ii) Females

3. There is no significant difference in school effectiveness as perceived by self with respect to their experience :

(i) Less than 5 years
(ii) More than 5 years

4. There is no significant difference in school effectiveness as perceived by teachers with respect to their gender :

(i) Males
(ii) Females

METHODOLOGY

The present research was conducted as a controlled quantitative research study in which data was collected from the secondary school principals and the teachers of the same schools.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

In the present study, 42 principals and 608 teachers from 42 schools were selected on the basis of stratified random sampling technique.

TOOLS

The following ready-made tools were used :

(a) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ, Form 5X, Short, Bass & Avolio, 1997)
(b) NCA School Improvement Questionnaire (Liang Xin et al, 2002)

DATA ANALYSIS

For the present study, the descriptive statistics used were mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis. The inferential statistics used was t-test for comparing the means.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no significant difference in leadership styles of principals as perceived by self with respect to their experience

(i) Less than 5 years
(ii) More than 5 years

Table 1 shows the significance of means of leadership styles of principals as perceived by self with respect to the experience of principals.

Table 1
Comparison of perception scores of Leadership Styles by Self

LS	Group	N	df	Mean	SD	t	Level of Significance
TF	Less than 5yrs	9	40	3.404	0.338	0.050	Not Significant (p = 0.960)
	More than 5 yrs	33		3.411	0.405		
TS	Less than 5yrs	9	40	2.750	0.247	0.986	Not Significant (p = 0.330)
	More than 5 yrs	33		2.596	0.448		
LF	Less than 5yrs	9	40	0.824	0.503	2.998	Very Significant (p = 0.005)
	More than 5 yrs	33		0.318	0.434		

(LS: Leadership Styles, TF: Transformational Style, TS: Transactional Style, LF: Laissez-faire Style)

(a) From table 1, it is noted that the t-ratios for transformational and transactional styles are not significant. Hence, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis.

(b) However, for laissez-faire style, the t-ratio is very significant at 0.005. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

2. There is no significant difference in leadership styles of principals as perceived by teachers with respect to their gender :

(i) Males
(ii) Females

Table 2 shows the significance of means of leadership styles of principals as perceived by teachers with respect to gender of teachers.

Table 2 Comparison of perception scores of Leadership Styles by Teachers

LF	Group	N	df	Mean	SD	t	Level of Significance
TF	Males	124	606	3.139	0.598	1.209	Not Significant (P = 0.227)
	Females	484		3.211	0.584		
TS	Males	124	606	2.761	0.521	1.409	Not Significant (P = 0.159)
	Females	484		2.687	0.524		
LF	Males	124	606	1.048	0.938	3.185	Very Significant (P = 0.002)
	Females	484		0.753	0.917		

(a) From table 2, it is noted that the t-ratios for transformational and transactional styles are not significant. Hence, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis.

(b) However, for laissez-faire style, the t-ratio is very significant at 0.002. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

3. There is no significant difference in school effectiveness as perceived by self with respect to their experience :

(i) Less than 5 years
(ii) More than 5 years

Table 3 shows the significance of mean scores of school effectiveness as perceived by self with respect to their experience :

Table 3 Comparison of perception scores of School Effectiveness by Self

SE	Group	N	df	Mean	SD	t	Level of Significance
AC	Less than 5 yrs	9	40	3.962	0.492	0.083	Not Significant (P = 0.934)
	More than 5 yrs	33		3.948	0.429		
IS	Less than 5 yrs	9	40	4.047	0.472	0.716	Not Significant (P = 0.479)
	More than 5 yrs	33		3.931	0.421		

(SE: School Effectiveness, AC: Academic Domain, IS: Infrastructure Domain)

(a) Table 3 indicates that the t-ratios for academic as well as infrastructure domain are not significant. Hence, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis.

4. There is no significant difference in school effectiveness as perceived by teachers with respect to their gender :

(i) Males
(ii) Females

Table 4 shows the significance of mean scores of school effectiveness as perceived by teachers with respect to their gender.

Table 4 Comparison of perception scores of School Effectiveness by Teachers

SE	Group	N	df	Mean	SD	t	Level of Significance
AC	Males	124	606	4.152	0.530	0.321	Not Significant (P = 0.749)
	Females	484		4.167	0.459		
IS	Males	124	606	4.002	0.489	0.860	Not Significant (P = 0.390)
	Females	484		4.045	0.497		

(a) Table 4 indicates that the t-ratios for academic as well as infrastructure domain are not significant. Hence, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

1(a) There is no significant difference in the perception scores of transformational and transactional style of principals as perceived by self with respect to experience of principals.

(b) There is a significant difference in the perception scores of laissez-faire style of leadership of principals as perceived by self respect to experience of principals.

The principals do not feel that their transformational and transactional styles are different with respect to experience. However, the perception of principals having experience less than 5 years is greater in case of laissez-faire style as compared to that of principals having experience of more than 5 years. This may be due to the fact that, with experience they tend to believe they become more responsible.

2(a) There is no significant difference in the perception scores of transformational and transactional style of principals as perceived by teachers with respect to gender of teachers.

(b) There is a significant difference in the perception scores of laissez-faire style of leadership of principals as perceived by teachers respect to gender of teachers.

The teachers do not feel that their principals are different in transformational and transactional styles with respect to gender. However, the perception of male teachers is greater in case of laissez-faire style as compared to female teachers. This may be because male teachers do not interact with their principals as often as the female teachers do.

3. There is no significant difference in the perception scores of academic as well as infrastructure domains as perceived by self on the basis of the experience of principals.

The principals' perception of their school effectiveness do not differ with respect to experience.

4. There is no significant difference in the perception scores of academic as well as infrastructure domains as perceived by teachers with respect to gender of the teachers.

The teachers' perception of their school effectiveness do not differ with respect to gender.

CONCLUSION

Leadership style of the head of organizations is an important aspect to be studied and researched. With recent changes brought about in the education system and everyday challenges faced by the organization, it becomes all the more important to expect a competent leadership functioning from the head of the school.

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