Transformational Leadership Of School Principals And Organizational Health Of Primary School Teachers In Malaysia

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Abstract

Click here and insert your abstract text. This study aimed to determine the level of transformational leadership practices by school principals in the national primary schools in the district of Kinta Selatan, 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 primary school principals’. The respondents consisted of 275 teachers employed in 12 national primary schools in the district of Kinta Selatan, 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 Selatan, Perak was moderate and the job satisfaction of primary school teachers’ was below 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 ensure that their leadership performance is always kept high to have a significant relationship with the job satisfaction of primary school teachers’.

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1.0 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”.

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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 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). 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.

2.0 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 will be 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 is met. 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 transformational leadership styles and teachers’ job satisfaction; and this finding offers a way to further explore the subject of transformational leadership. This study hence was conducted to test the relationship between principal’s leadership styles and job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Malaysia.

3.0 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:

- To identify the level of transformational leadership among school principals in the district of Kinta Selatan, Perak, Malaysia according to teachers’ perceptions.
- To identify the level of job satisfaction of primary school teachers in the district of Kinta Selatan, Perak, Malaysia.
- To identify if there is a relationship between transformational leadership practices of school principals and primary school teachers’ job satisfaction.

4.0 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.

5.0 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:

![Figure 1: The Research Framework](image)

6.0 Research Methodology
6.1 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. 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 Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was constructed and 26 items were allocated to both transformational leadership and job satisfaction questionnaires.

In this study, the targeted population was teachers from national primary school from the Kinta Selatan 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 320 structured questionnaires were distributed to teachers from 12 schools around Kinta Selatan, Perak. The respondents were randomly selected by means of systematic random sampling, whereby 100 percent of the respondents were primary school teachers.

A total of 295 questionnaires were received and out of this, 20 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 275 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 if there is a relationship between school principal’s transformational leadership with primary school teacher’s job satisfaction.

7.0 Findings

7.1 Level of Transformational Leadership Practices among School Principals

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idealized influence</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational motivation</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual stimulation</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized consider</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Total</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows the transformational leadership practices among the primary school principals is at a moderate level with a mean of 2.59 and standard deviation 0.62. The overall mean score for all the items of transformational leadership are in the range of 2.44 to 3.67 (Creswell, 2005). The findings show that most of the teachers perceive that the practice of transformational leadership by primary school principals in the district of Kinta Selatan is relatively moderate.
7.2 Level of Primary School Teachers’ Job Satisfaction

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation for Primary School Teachers’ Job Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Number of students under your responsibility</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Opportunity to advance in your profession</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Your trust in the administrators</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Your career in the school system</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Your opportunity to advance in your chosen interest</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The physical facilities at your school</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>The number of subjects taught</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Appropriate teaching facilities</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>The number of tasks performed by you</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Professional competency of the administrators</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that the job satisfaction level of the primary school teachers in the district of Kinta Selatan, Perak is at a low level (mean = 1.86, standard deviation = 0.49). The overall mean score for all the items of job satisfaction among primary school teachers are below 2.44 (Creswell, 2005). This indicates that most of the teachers agree that the level of their job satisfaction is below satisfactory.

7.3 Relationship between Transformational Leadership Style of Principal and Primary School Teacher’s Job Satisfaction

**H0:** There is no relationship between the level of transformational leadership of school principals and teacher’s job satisfaction

**H1:** 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 primary school teachers.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Coefficient Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Transformational Leadership Level</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>sig. (p)</th>
<th>Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.138</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < 0.05

Table 3 shows that there is a significant relationship between the level of transformational leadership style of primary school principals and teachers’ job satisfaction. The value of $r = 0.138$, $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). The $r$ value indicates a positive correlation coefficient at a low 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 primary school teachers in the district of Kinta Selatan, Perak.

8.0 Conclusion

The results showed that transformational leadership practices among school principals and teachers’ job satisfaction are at a low level and there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership level and job satisfaction among primary 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. The results of this study does not 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 key factors for school teachers’ job satisfaction was the transformational leadership practices by school principals'. Such leader is capable of working and influencing teachers to work together in achieving the mission and vision of the school. 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.

References


