



PRINCIPALS' TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT OF THE TEACHERS' IN MIDDLE SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF BHUTAN: QUANTITATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

The study was aimed at answering the three important research questions: What is the level of principals' transformational leadership behavior as perceived by teachers? To what extent are Bhutanese middle secondary school principals' engaged within the four dimensions of transformational leadership? Is there any relationship between principals' transformational leadership behavior and organizational commitment of the teachers? The samples of 236 teachers were selected through simple random sampling method, and self-administered survey questionnaire was deployed to collect data. The result showed that the level of principals' transformational leadership behavior as perceived by teachers at a high level and their engagement in four dimensions of transformational leadership behavior were also shown at a high level. It was found that there was also a positive correlation between principals' transformational leadership behavior and organizational commitment of teachers in the middle secondary schools of Bhutan.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Organizational Commitment, Middle Secondary School.

Introduction

Mounting of researches has been done in other countries to confirm the relationship between principals' transformational leadership style and the organizational commitment of teachers in the school positively (Yu et al., 2002, and Liethwood et al., 1999, Feizi et al., 2014). However, a research needs to be carried out in order to investigate whether there is a relationship between principals' transformational leadership behavior and organizational commitment of teachers in Bhutanese school context. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the instructional leadership paradigm was considered to be the most popular model of educational leadership (Marzano et al., 2005). But it lacked clear definition (Leithwood et al., 1999). Although the instructional leadership model served the educational field for the past two decades, it has been found that with change in education system all over the world, many school leaders felt the need to reevaluate and adapt their leadership style to meet a change in the school reforms. Therefore, many educational leaders started to put in practice the model of transformational leadership to inspire followers, to increase members' efforts on behalf of the organization, as well as to develop more skilled practice significantly affect teachers' psychological states, such as, teaching efficacy, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Leithwood, 1999; Bass & Riggo, 2006). Therefore, the goal of the present study was threefold. First was to study the level of principals' transformational leadership behavior as perceived by teachers in the middle secondary schools of Bhutan. Second was to investigate to what extend are Bhutanese middle secondary school principals engaged within the four dimensions of transformational leadership? Third was to examine the relationship between principals' transformational leadership and organizational commitment of the teachers.

Literature review on transformational leadership and organizational commitment

The Transformational leadership theory was developed by Burns in 1978 during his study of political leadership. He defined transformational leadership, not as a set of specific behaviors, but rather an ongoing process by which "leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation". He further stated that transformational leaders offer a purpose that transcends short-term goals and focuses

on higher order intrinsic needs (Burn, 1978). With educational reforms taking all over the world, educational leaders started seeing transformational leadership style as effective in inspiring followers to achieve individual and group goals. Numerous educational leadership theorists have defined this leadership style according to its functions. Marshall Sashkin & Molly G. Sashkin (2003 cited in DuBrin, 2010) describes transformational Leadership as a leader's characteristics and his or her relationship with group member in developing and transforming people. Simola et al. (2012) explained that transformational leaders transform, motivate, and enhance the actions and ethical aspirations of followers through proper interaction." A similar explanation was also given by Geib and Swenson (2013) who stated that transformational leaders seeks positive transformations in followers, change and inspires the subordinates to achieve superior performance through innovation (Javdani, 2011; Bass & Riggo, 2006). The relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational commitment of teachers was positively confirmed in many countries (Rehman et al., 2013; Arnold et al., 2001 & Lee, 2005).

According to Bello (2012), commitment is the loyalty and attachment to the organization. Various definitions were put forwarded to explain the meaning and concept of organizational commitment. Wallace (1995) states that "Organizational commitment is regarded as a mental contract connecting the individual's identification and attribution with the organization and performing his duty". According to Wu et al (2006) organizational commitment is able to facilitate voluntary cooperation within an organization. Similarly, Robbins (2003) explains that organizational commitment is a working attitude of employees who have a sense of identification to accomplish organizational goals and wish to maintain good relationship with members within the organization. Like any other organization, school is an organization where individual commitment is seen as the most important factor in achieving school vision and mission. Therefore, teachers' commitment is a teacher's psychological identification on school goals and values and willingness to become a member of an organization to work considerably harder more than an individual benefit (Reyes and Pounder, 1993). In conclusion, organizational commitment is a connection of an individual person's sense of responsibility and emotional attachment towards the organization where he or she works.

Theoretical framework on the transformational leadership

The study centers on the work of Burns (1978) and Bass (1985 & 1999) theory on transformational leadership. Burns developed the theory in 1978 during his study of political leadership. According to Burns, transformational leadership can be seen when “leaders and followers make each other to advance to a higher level of morality and motivation.” Through the strength of their vision and personality, transformational leaders are able to inspire followers to change expectations, perceptions, and motivations to work towards common goals. According to Bass, transformational leadership can be defined based on the impact that it has on followers. Bass (1985 & 1999) explains that the transformational leader transforms and motivates followers through his or her idealized influence, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration. He further states that this leader encourages followers to come up with new and unique ways to challenge the status quo and to alter the environment to support being successful. The transformational Leadership has four important elements;

1. Individualized Consideration – the degree to which the leader attends to each follower's needs, acts as a mentor or coach to the follower and listens to the follower's concerns and needs. The leader gives empathy and support, keeps communication open and places challenges before the followers. This also encompasses the need for respect and celebrates the individual contribution that each follower can make to the team. The followers have a will and aspirations for self-development and have intrinsic motivation for their tasks (Bass & Riggo, 2006).

2. Intellectual Stimulation – The degree to which the leaders encourage their followers to be innovative and creative. They encourage new ideas from their followers and never criticize them publicly for the mistakes committed by them. The leaders focus on the “what” in problems and do not focus on the blaming part of it. They have no hesitation in discarding an old practice set by them if it is found ineffective (Bass & Riggo, 2006).

3. Inspirational Motivation – the degree to which the leader articulates a vision that is appealing and inspiring to followers. Leaders with inspirational motivation challenge followers to leave their comfort zones, communicate optimism about future goals, and provide meaning for the task at hand (Bass & Riggo, 2006).

4. Idealized Influence – the degree to which the leader acts as a role model for their followers. Transformational leaders guide followers by providing them with a sense of meaning and challenge. They work enthusiastically and optimistically to foster the spirit of teamwork and commitment (Bass & Riggo, 2006).

The goal of Bhutan's education system is to build world class education system that would prepare our younger generations to become globally competitive. To this end, the School leaders play an important role in the school performance through improving teacher morale and commitment. School principals in Bhutan are more bogged down with instructional roles in enhancing academic learning. However, with change in education system all over the world and in Bhutan, there has been a growing demand for more viable and democratic nature of leadership style that could enhance teachers' commitment to achieve organizational goals.

Theoretical Framework on Organizational Commitment

Of many model on organizational commitment of employees, the researcher has used the model developed by Myer and Allen in 1991. According to this model, the organizational commitment has three dimensions; affective, continuance, and normative commitments: (1) Affective commitment is the emotional feelings, identification, and involvement with the organization. It is the strong belief and acceptance of the goals and values of the organization. (2) Normative commitment is the extent the employee's belief on the organization and the willingness to make considerable efforts for the benefit of the organization. (3) Continuance commitment is defined as the perceived costs associated with leaving the organization. It is the willingness to remain in the organization because of the 'non-transferable investment' already committed such as retirement benefits, relationships with other employees, unique benefits from the organization among others (Myer & Allen, 1991).

Teachers in Bhutan are over burdened with the academic and non-academic activities in the school. On the other hand, deteriorating of education quality has become a talk of the town in the country although no study has been conducted. To this end, even the teachers' commitment to their work has been questioned. Myer and Allen's theory justifies the attachment of employees to its organization under various grounds.

Significance of the Study

Since most of the researches on the leadership are carried out in western context, this study would help Ministry of Education to find the level of principals' transformational leadership, their engagement in four dimensions of transformational leadership style and the relationship between transformational leadership and organization commitment in Bhutanese context. In addition, the findings from this research study would add literature on transformational leadership and organizational commitment of teachers in the Bhutanese context.

Research Methodology

The study adopted quantitative approach using survey questionnaire as this type of methods used to answer questions on relationships within measurable variables with an intention to explain, predict and control a phenomena (Leedy, 1993). The population of the study was the 2432 middle secondary school teachers (National Education Statistics, 2017). The samples of 236 teachers were selected through simple random sampling method (Krejice & Morgan, 1970). The data was collected using five point likert scale survey questionnaire (Best & Kahn, 1998). The instrument consisted of two parts: part I consisted of 24 items questionnaire on transformational leadership practices of school principals and part II consist of 14 items on organizational commitment developed after literature review. The questionnaire was checked for reliability test to 30 teachers that was not in the sample. The Cronbach's α (alpha) reliability coefficient was calculated at .860 and .851 respectively. The data was collected using a self administered questionnaire from the middle secondary schools teachers. The data was analyzed using SPSS descriptive analysis to find out the level of principals' transformational leadership behavior and the engagement level of Bhutanese middle secondary school principals within the four dimensions of transformational leadership. To study the relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational commitment of teachers in the middle secondary schools Correlational analysis to was carried out.

Finding of the Studies & Discussion

The study was carried out to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of principals' transformational leadership behavior in middle secondary schools in Bhutan as perceived by the teachers?

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis on the level of middle secondary school principals' transformational leadership Behavior [N = 236]			
Transformational Leadership behavior	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Transformational Leadership	236	3.90	.333

The data in table 1 revealed that in overall the level of principals' transformational leadership behavior as perceived by the teachers in the middle secondary schools of Bhutan was shown at high level with the mean score at 3.90 and SD = .333.

2. To what extend are Bhutanese middle secondary school principals' engaged within the four dimensions of transformational leadership?

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis on the middle secondary school principals engagement level on the transformational leadership behavior [N = 236]			
Transformational Leadership behavior	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Idealizes Influence	236	3.83	.440
Inspirational Motivation	236	3.96	.419
Intellectual Motivation	236	3.69	.528
Individualized Consideration	236	4.12	.312

From the data presented in the table 2, it can be concluded that in overall, Bhutanese middle secondary school principals' engagement level within the four dimensions of the principals transformational leadership behavior was found at high level. From the four dimensions of transformational leadership style, Bhutanese middle secondary school principals' engagement level in individualized consideration as perceived by teachers' ranked first with mean score of 4.12 & SD = .312; Inspirational motivation ranked second with mean score 3.96 & SD = .419; idealizes influence ranked third with mean score 3.83 & SD = .440 while intellectual motivation ranked fourth with mean score 3.69 & SD = .528.

3. Is there any correlation between principals' transformational leadership behavior and organizational commitment of the teachers?

Table 3: The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between principal's transformational leadership behavior and teachers organizational commitment [N = 236]	
Principals' Transformational Leadership Behavior	Organizational Commitment
Idealizes Influence	.035
Inspirational Motivation	.043
Intellectual Motivation	.040
Individualize Consideration	.033
Transformational Leadership	.049
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01level (2-tailed)	

The result in the table 3 revealed that there was a positive relationship between principals' transformational style and organizational commitment of teachers in the middle secondary schools of Bhutan with $r = .049$ at significance level .01. In addition, the result analysis also indicated that there was a significant relationship between the four dimensions of principals transformational leadership style and the organizational commitment of the teachers with the Pearson r ranks from the highest to the lowest as follows: inspirational motivation ($r = .043$), intellectual motivation ($r = .040$), idealizes influence ($r = .035$), and individualize consideration ($r = .033$) with $p < .01$.

Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to study the level of principals' transformational leadership behavior as perceived by teachers in the middle secondary schools of Bhutan, to investigate Bhutanese middle secondary school principals' engagement level within the four dimensions of transformational leadership and to examine the relationship between principals' transformational leadership and organizational commitment of the teachers in the middle secondary schools of Bhutan.

The findings from this study revealed that the level of principals' transformational leadership behavior as perceived by the teachers in the middle secondary schools of

Bhutan was shown at high level. The findings support the earlier work of Chirchir et al. (2014) who did a study on leadership style and teacher's commitment in public primary schools in Bomet County, Kenya. Similarly, a study conducted by Tshewang (2013) on the principal's transformational behavior and teachers' job satisfaction of secondary school teachers under Chukha district, Bhutan found that principals' in the schools exhibited high level of transformational leadership behavior.

In addition, the Bhutanese middle secondary school principals' engagement level within the four dimensions of the transformational leadership style was found at high level. The study was in agreement with the findings of Imo and Ekpenyong (2018) who did a study on principals' transformational leadership practices as determinants of organizational commitment and value reorientation among secondary school teachers.

The study revealed that there was a positive relationship between principal's transformational leadership style and organizational commitment of teachers in the middle secondary schools of Bhutan as perceived by the teachers. However, the strength of the relationship between the principals' transformational leadership style and organizational commitment of the teachers was found to be at low level. It was also found that there was a significant relationship between all the four dimensions of principals' transformational leadership style and organizational commitment of the teachers in the middle secondary schools of Bhutan. The finding of the study was consistent with the study of Omidifar (2013) who did a study on leadership style, organizational commitment and job satisfaction and found that when the head teachers practice transformational and transactional leadership approaches such as listening, motivating, encouraging, working with the team, reward, among others, the level of commitment of teachers is enhanced. Furthermore, Yukl (1998) explains that transformational leadership empowers employees and when employees get empowerment, they experience a sense of identification and they get committed to the organization. Furthermore, a study conducted by Reman et al. (2015) with sample size of 235 secondary school teachers' found that there were a positive relationship between principal's transformational leadership style and teachers' commitment.

Recommendations

From the finding of this study, the level of the principal's transformational leadership behavior and their engagement level in all the four dimensions were found at a high level. At the same time, positive relationship between transformational leadership behavior of the school principal and organizational commitment of teachers in the middle secondary school was found, therefore, the Ministry of Education should encourage principals at all level to practice four dimensions of transformational leadership to boost up teachers' commitment to achieve school goals.

The findings from this study would also help the school principals to understand their role as a transformational leader to further improve and enhance the organizational commitment of teachers' to achieve school goals.

Although, positive relationship was found between transformational leadership style and organizational commitment of teachers, the strength of relation was found to be low. Therefore, the Ministry of Education could initiate training programs for all principals in Bhutan to build transformational leadership skills to accelerate the commitment level of teachers in the school.

Future Researches

The study was mainly based on the perceptions of the middle secondary school teachers over their school principal's transformational leadership behavior. Thereafter, further studies should include both perception of the school principals and the teachers all levels of school.

The study was a quantitative approach, furthermore, to get a wider perspective and more accurate findings-a mixed method approach could be carried out including teachers and principals of primary, lower, middle and higher secondary schools in Bhutan

It would be more authentic and reliable if research could be conducted focusing on the other factors affecting the organizational commitment of teachers like salary, working environment, school size and location, etc.

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