Leadership Style, Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction: A Case Study on High School Principals in Tehran, Iran

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Teachers' job satisfaction and commitment depends upon the leadership style of high schools principals. This study clarifies the relationship between principals' leadership style, organizational commitment and job satisfaction. A quantitative questionnaire using Likert-type scales was administered to 357 high school teachers and principals in Tehran, Iran. The study samples were selected through stratified sampling technique. The data was tested for reliability and results presented based on the study objectives. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to explain teacher job satisfaction and commitment by leadership style. The results revealed positive and significant relationships between leadership style, organizational commitment and job satisfaction. This study also clarifies the relations of job satisfaction and commitment, and highlights the crucial role of leadership style in teachers' job satisfaction and commitment. Hence, the school principals should select the best leadership style according to the organizational culture and employees' capacity. Implications of the study are discussed in relation to managers and principals, as well as to policy makers at the educational level.

Keywords: Organizational commitment, job satisfaction, leadership style, management

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between manager's leadership style, organizational commitment and job satisfaction of high school teachers in Tehran, Iran. Job satisfaction and commitment of the teachers are the important elements to increase the productivity of a school. The benefits of organizational commitment have been well documented in the extant management literature. Principals' leadership style imposes great influence on the working attitudes, and performance of employees.

In particular, supportive leadership can give rise to employees' reaction, generating significant and positive relationship with employees' job satisfaction (Samuel 2011). Committed employees are less likely to develop patterns of tardiness or to be chronically absent from work (Angle & Perry, 1981; Bateman & Strasser, 1984; Porter et al., 1974, Davenport, 2010). Employees that are committed are also less likely to leave the organization to explore other opportunities (Yukl, 2003, Allen & Meyer, 1996).

Despite the large number of studies on organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Price & Mueller, 1981; Allen & Meyer, 1996), the influence of leadership style on organizational commitment and job satisfaction has received little attention. Hence, this study attempts to establish the relationship between leadership style organizational commitment job satisfaction high school teachers in Tehran, Iran

Literature Review

Leadership style

An important issue to address in this literature review is leadership because so much job satisfaction depends on leadership style (Aref, Montgomery & Ma'rof). Leadership is defined as the ability to influence a group towards the achievement of goals (Robbins, 1993). It is widely recognized as a critical factor in the success or failure of an organization (Hasbullah, 2008). Leadership enables an organization to translate its potential for good performance into productivity (Samuel, 2005). Fiedler (1967) believed that leadership is a kind of relationship to apply power and influence to make people work together and accomplish common goals (Wu et al., 2006). Leadership is a social influence process in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates in an effort to reach organization goals (Omolayo, 2000).

Daft (2005) defined leadership as an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes and outcomes that reflect their shared purposes. Previous research has linked supportive leadership style to delivery of job satisfaction. Singh

(2000) found that frontline employees felt that supervisory support enhanced their performance levels. Brown and Peterson (1993) found that contact employees who believed their manager showed concern for them exert more effort in the workplace.

Leaders should understand that the issue of employees' organizational commitment is a crucial element to be addressed to (Tushman & O'Reilly; Nadler, 1997).

The existing leadership and management research suggests that the leadership style of principals can lead to higher measures of organizational commitment in their direct reports. Bass, (1985); Hersey & Blanchard, (1977); and Stogdill, (1963) demonstrated positive relationships between numerous leadership styles and employee attitudes, motivation and performance; all of which can affect to organizational commitment levels.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is influenced by the job environment created by the employee's supervisor. This organizational environment, together with the employee's ability and motivation, will largely determine eventual performance (Cummings & Schwabs, 1973). Organizational commitment has also been shown to positively affect motivation, organizational citizenship, and job performance (Meyer et al., 2002).

Organizational commitment is regarded as a mental contract connecting the individual's identification and attribution with the organization and performing his duty (Wallace, 1995). Organizational commitment is able to facilitate voluntary cooperation within an organization (Wu et al., 2006).

Despite the sense that organizations are enacting strategies that imply less commitment toward employees, Scott-Ladd, Travaglione, and Marshall (2006) suggest that organizational commitment continues to be a powerful attitudinal response in employees. A good portion of the research on organizational commitment has focused on the possible antecedents of organizational commitment. However, the benefits of organizational commitment have well been documented: satisfaction, performance, lower turnover and lower absenteeism.

Organizational commitment means the degree of one's identification with, and participation in, a certain organization. It includes three characteristics: (a) one believes in, and accepts, organizational goals and value (value commitment), (b) one is willing to make an effort (effort commitment), and (c) one has a strong desire to remain a member of the organization (retention commitment) (Porter, Steer, Mowday & Boulian, 1974, Wu et al., 2006).

Morris and Sherman (1981) indicated that organizational commitment is able to effectively predict the employee's performance and turnover. Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, & Jackson (1989) also found that organizational commitment was a proper indicator of work performance. It is important for managers and leaders to pay more attention to the employee's organizational commitment (Wu et al., 2006).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been described as the most important predictor for employees' intention to remain employed (Cowin, 2002. Job satisfaction is a result of employee's perception of how well their job provides those things that are viewed as important. According to (Mitchell & Lasan, 1987), Job satisfaction is simply defined as employees' feelings about different dimensions of their job; it is the degree of their pleasure in their job (Spector,1997). Job satisfaction is the attitude that an employee has towards his or her job (Robbins, 2003). Job satisfaction is an affective reaction to a job that results from a person's comparison of outcomes with those that are desired, anticipated or deserved (Oshagbemi, 1999).

Job satisfaction can be considered from a global perspective, such as the feelings and emotions perceived by the individual employee based on work experiences (Price, 2001 & Spector, 1997). It can also be explored through a facet approach, studying employee attitudes towards various aspects (facets) of their jobs.

Research objectives

i)   To examine the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment
ii)   To examine the relationship between Leadership style and job satisfaction
iii)   To establish the relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

Methodology

A quantitative questionnaire using Likert-type scales was used to obtain measures of leadership style, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The questionnaire was self administered for clarity purposes as it sought to find out respondents' opinions. A pilot study based on 30 returned questionnaires showed that respondents were clear about the content of the questions and instructions. The results of the pilot study revealed that

Cronbach's αcoefficients for the leadership style, organizational commitment and job satisfaction were 0.93 and 0.91, 0.89 respectively, which showed a high degree of reliability.

The study samples were selected through stratified sampling technique. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to explain teacher job satisfaction and commitment by principals' leadership style. The sample consisted of the high school teachers and principals drawn from four districts of Tehran including the district of 3, 11, 5 and 14.

A total of 357 questionnaires were gathered. The questions were generated through a literature review from House (1971); Fleishman, (1957); Stogdill, (1963), Faragher, Cass and Cooper, (2003).

Secondary data was obtained from existing literature in previous research paper findings, journal articles, text books, reports and conference proceedings.

Variables and their Measurement

Leadership style

Leadership style was measured on a 5-point likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) using 12-item of leadership style consisting of attributes like participative, supportive and directive (House 1971; Fleishman, 1957; Stogdill, 1963). It was based on statements such as "helps teachers to make working on their tasks more pleasant".

Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment was measured by the items of Meyer & Allen's (1997). The respondents were asked to indicate their opinion on a 5-point scale (1= strongly disagree, 5 =strongly agree). For example "I would be happy to spend the rest of my career with this school".

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction was measured by items adapted by Faragher, Cass and Cooper, (2003). It was based on a 5-point likert scale (1= Very dissatisfied, 5 = Very satisfied).

Findings

The results presented were guided by the research objectives which were:
(ii.) To investigate the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment.
(iii.) To establish the relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction.
(iv.) To examine the relationship between Organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

The objectives of the study were based on the relationships between principals' leadership style, organizational commitment, job satisfaction in high school teachers. In order to achieve this, the Pearson correlation coefficient was computed given the interval nature of the data and the need to test the direction and strength of relationships that exist among the study variables. Table 1 presents the correlation analysis results.

Table 1. Pearson correlations.

		Leadership Style	Organizational Commitment	Job Satisfaction
Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	357		
Organizational Commitment	Pearson Correlation	318**	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	357	357	
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	278**	331**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	357	357	357

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment

A positive and significant relationship was observed to exist between leadership style and organizational commitment (r=.318**, p<.01). This means that when the principals listen to teachers, encourage employee participation, team work, freedom in doing school activities, organizational commitment by teachers is enhanced. This commitment is

exemplified in the teachers' desire to spend most of their career in the school, believe in the mission and values of the institution. These results are in line with the previous studies in general and in specific with Drago et al, 1992; Samad, 2007; Opkara, 2004; Warsi,Fatima & Sahibzada;2009.

The relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction

The correlations indicate a positive relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction (r= .278**, p<.01). This observation signifies that supportive of principals tend to lead to increased employee job satisfaction. Job satisfaction may be seen when employees devote all their time and skills towards attaining school goals.

The relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction

The results indicated a positive relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction (r= .331**, p<.01). The results imply that organizational commitment lead to job satisfaction. This will lead to improvement in the willingness of the employees to help students, being never busy to respond to students requests and consistently being courteous with students.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study investigated the relationship between principals' leadership style, organizational commitment and job satisfaction of high school teachers in Tehran. The study found that there is a significant relationship between leadership style, organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Hence, schools should create environments where teachers can optimize their potential and add value to the educational aims. In these way high schools principals play a very important role in creating and maintaining these environments.

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