

Leadership Behaviors and Its Relation with Principals' Management Experience

Vali Mehdinezhad^{1*}, Zaid Sardarzahi²

¹Department of Education, University of Sistan and Baluchestan, Iran {valmeh@ped.usb.ac.ir}

²University of Sistan and Baluchestan, Iran {zsardarzahi@yahoo.com}

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at studying the leadership behaviors reported by principals and observed by teachers and its relationship with management experience of principals. A quantitative method was used in this study. The target population included all principals and teachers of guidance schools and high schools in the Dashtiari District, Iran. A sample consisting of 46 principals and 129 teachers was selected by stratified sampling and simple random sampling methods. A leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) developed by Kozes and Posner (2001) was used for data collection. The obtained data were analyzed using one sample and independent t-test, correlation coefficient and crosstabs pearson Chi-square test. The results showed that teachers describe leadership behaviors of their principals relatively well. However, principals themselves evaluated their leadership behaviors as very well. Comparing between leadership behaviors self-reported by principals and those observed by teachers, a significant difference was found between the views and evaluations of teachers and principals on all components of leadership behaviors of principals, except that regarding empowerment. In fact, principals described their leadership behaviors better and at a more appropriate level than teachers. From the perspective of both teachers and principals, there was no significant relationship between any of the components of leadership behaviors and management experience of principals.

KEYWORDS: LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS, MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE, SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, TEACHER

1 INTRODUCTION

The word of leadership is more like the words freedom, love, and peace. Although each person intuitively knows the meaning of each of these words, any of these words can have different definitions for different people. Once everyone starts to define leadership, he/she immediately realizes that there are many definitions of leadership. In the last fifty years, more than sixty-five different systematic classifications have been provided to define the criteria of leadership (Fleishmann, Mumford, Zaccaro, Levin, Korotkin, & Hein, 1991). In a definition with emphasis

on the relationships between people, leadership is defined as influencing the subordinates through communicating with them in order to achieve organizational goals (Alvani, 1993). Knowing the great roles of technology today, educational leaders are challenged to find which leadership practices effectively influence teachers to improve their instructional techniques and to continue their professional development and growth, in addition to focusing their attention, and the attention of the entire school community, on student learning (Jabor, Sale, Deba, Musta'mal, & Sadiq, 2013).

Previous studies conducted on leadership behaviors have obtained various results. Alaei (2010) compared the importance of leadership and managerial behaviors from the perspective of teachers and principals of schools in Zahedan. The results showed that teachers and principals value leadership and managerial behaviors equally. However, among the components of leadership, principals believed that modeling is more important than managerial behaviors. Both teachers and principals stated that managerial behaviors outweigh challenging and female principals considered more value for managerial and leadership behaviors than men. Goudarzi (1996) stated that there is no significant difference between principals from public and private schools in terms of effectiveness of leadership behaviors and also there is no significant relationship between academic qualifications of principals and efficiency of their leadership behaviors.

Findings by Naeemollah and Hafiz (2010) showed that female managers exhibit show managerial behaviors better than men. Pingle and Cox (2007) stated that, from the perspective of teachers, principals displaying higher levels of leadership behaviors are more successful. Carr (1988) found that male and female principals of public high schools have different views on leadership behaviors (including mutual trust, mutual respect, friendship, and cordiality between themselves and employees under their supervision). Different demographic parameters such as age, education, and work experience have a significant impact on attitudes of principals towards leadership. Manning (2004) showed that female principals pay more attention to the activities of teachers and understand their expectations better than male principals. Umbach (1993) found a significant difference between views of faculty members about leadership behaviors of male and female principals. Results by Long (1991) suggested that empowering others is the most important leadership strategy in order to achieve the best personal performance, and other priorities, in order of preference, include inspiring a shared vision, modeling, reassuring, and challenging.

*To whom correspondence should be addressed:

University of Sistan and Baluchestan, Zahedan
 University Boulevard, P.O.Box 98155-987
 Zahedan, Iran

Robinson (1996) studied the views of teachers on leadership behaviors of principals of primary schools and found a significant relationship between effectiveness of leadership behaviors of principals and their age, gender, and ethnicity. Findings of Berumen (1992) indicated that empowerment and reassuring behaviors are less used by principals. Ayman and Chemers (1983) used a Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire to study 142 employees in nine sections of a large industrial company in Iran in order to assess the generalizability of their leadership behaviors to the samples obtained in studies conducted in Europe and the US. The results of their study showed that Iranian employees believe that a good manager is one who is benevolent and treats the employees like a father. Dhanasobhon (1982) concluded that gender, educational background, and work experience in the present job have no effect on leadership styles observed in principals of high schools. Tanner (1981) found that factors that can easily be altered, such as leadership styles are more effective in leadership effectiveness rather than characteristics such as age, gender, race, and experience of principals or demographic characteristics of students. Since leaders and managers influence others through their behaviors, subordinates' impression of management and leadership is affected by leadership behaviors of leaders and managers. This implies that knowing the difference between leadership and managerial behaviors is very important in the establishment of an organization, making organizational changes, and guiding organizational teams. Managers and leaders are different in their orientations towards objectives, business concepts, personal styles, and perceptions. The duty of educational leaders of schools is to improve education quality and students' learning. The role of school principals is to guide activities in order to achieve the objectives and establish a desired order and discipline in their school. Leadership is associated with changes whereas management centers on maintaining the usual running of activities. Leaders are not only aware of current issues but also see their hidden aspects.

The main purpose of this study was to evaluate the leadership behaviors of the schools' principals. In Kouzes and Posner's studies (2002b), effective leaders were able to 1) Model the way, 2) Inspire a shared vision, 3) Challenge the process, 4) Enable others to act, and 5) Encourage the heart.

According to Kouzes and Posner (2002a) "Modeling the way is essentially about earning the right and the respect to lead through direct involvement and action. People first follow the person, then the plan" (p. 15). For Kouzes and Posner (2006: 93), "the quest for leadership, therefore, is first an inner quest to discover who you are, and it's through this process of self-examination that you find the awareness needed to lead".

Leaders inspire a shared vision, the ability to anticipate opportunities and attract others in the field. According to Kouzes and Posner (2007, p. 18) "leaders breathe life into the hopes and dreams of others and enable them to see the exciting possibilities that the future holds. Leaders forge a unity of purpose by showing constituents how the dream is for the common good. Kouzes and Posner (2003, p. 13) believed that "Leaders inspire a shared vision by envisioning the future and enlisting others in a common vision".

According to Kouzes and Posner (2003, p. 4) effective leaders refuse to settle for the status quo, so they experiment and take risks in an effort to improve organizations. In fact, "Leaders challenge the process by searching for opportunities and by experimenting, taking risks, and learning from mistakes". Covey (2005, p. 33) found out "Leaders who challenge the process

create a safe environment where the staff feels comfortable when they experiment only to fail. Effective leaders increase confidence in their staff by building on successes and accepting failures as critical learning opportunities".

Enable others to act is a team effort. Leaders make possible for others to do good work. Therefore, Empowerment is crucial to achieve results (Satia, Kumar, & Liow, 2014, p. 144). According to Kouzes and Posner (2007) effective leaders create an atmosphere of trust so that followers will feel capable enough to work towards meeting goals.

Leaders who want to **encourage the heart** must model the behaviors described within the first six essentials. Setting the example for encouraging the heart begins with giving oneself permission to do so (Kouzes & Posner, 1999). Kouzes and Posner (2003) included seven essential components in describing encourage the heart: set clear standards, expect the best, pay attention, personalize recognition, tell the story, celebrate together, and set the example.

According to all mentioned above, the present study seeks to answer the following questions: What's the teachers' perception of leadership behaviors of their principals? What's the principals' perception of their own leadership behaviors? Is there any significant difference between leadership behaviors reported by principals themselves and those observed by teachers? Is there a relationship between leadership behaviors and management experience from the perspective of principals and teachers?

2 METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive-correlative research. Target population included all principals and teachers (N=315) of middle and high schools in Dashtiari District, Iran. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) on determining sample size, 175 subjects were selected as the sample by stratified sampling and simple random sampling methods (Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1. The population and sample size

	Group	Population	Sample
Teachers	Male	155	86
	Female	78	43
Principals	Male	47	26
	Female	35	20
Total	Male	202	112
	Female	113	63
		315	175

Table 2. The details of sample (N=175)

	Group	N	%
Age	20-25	20	11.4
	26-30	64	36.6
	31-35	50	28.6
	36-40	41	23.4
Education level	Associate's degree	58	33.1
	Bachelor's degree	107	61.1
	Master's degree	10	5.8
Job experience	<= 5 year	28	16.0
	5-10 year	94	53.7
	>=11 year	53	30.3
Management experience	<=5 year	26	56.5
	>5 year	20	43.5

According to the nature of the research topic, Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) developed by Kozes and Posner (2001) was used in two forms of self-reporting by principals and leadership behaviors observed by teachers. This questionnaire consists of 30 items in a five-point Likert scale from very low=1 to very high=5. The minimum score for each component is 6 and the highest score was 30. The questionnaire had 5 components and each had 6 items which included: model the way, inspire shared visions, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. Internal consistency of the questionnaire was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha coefficient. This coefficient obtained 0.97 for the questionnaire form on leadership behaviors observed by teachers and 0.74 for the questionnaire form on self-reporting by principals. A number of experts in the field of Educational Sciences confirmed the validity of this questionnaire. Data analysis was done using statistical methods such as frequency, mean, standard deviation, correlation coefficient test, one sample, independent t-test and crosstabs pearson chi-square test in SPSS 20 software.

3 RESULTS

The first question was: What's the teachers' perception of the leadership behavior of their principals?

Table 3. One sample t-test about teachers' perception of leadership behavior of their principals (N=129)

Variables	Mean	Std.D	T-Value	t-test	df	Sig.
Model the way	23.93	4.68		14.36		0.001
Inspire a shared vision	23.83	4.85	18	13.63	128	0.001
Challenge the process	23.33	5.27		11.47		0.001
Enable others to act	22.84	5.23		10.49		0.001
Encourage the heart	23.95	5.07		13.31		0.001
Total	117.88	24.08	90	47.09		0.001

The results of one sample t-test in Table 3 show that in total and in all components of leadership behaviors, the calculated mean is more than the assumed mean (T-Value) and significant (P<0.001). In fact the teachers surveyed rated their principals highly in each of the five leadership categories. The mean scores were between 23.33 and 23.95. The standard deviations ranged from 4.68 to 5.27. Teachers in this study rated their principals most favorably in the leadership area of encourage the heart and model the way with a mean score of 23.95 and 23.93. Teachers in this study rated their principals least favorably in the area of enable others to act with a mean score of 22.84. Overall, it appears that teachers in this study view their principals' leadership behaviors favorably.

The second question: What's the principals' perception of their own leadership behaviors?

Table 4. One sample t-test about the principals' perception of their own leadership behaviors (N=46)

Variables	Mean	Std.D	T-Value	t-test	df	Sig.
Model the way	26.23	7.83		7.13		0.001
Inspire a shared vision	25.50	3.01	18	16.86	45	0.001
Challenge the process	24.95	2.94		16.02		0.001
Enable others to act	24.43	2.92		14.68		0.001
Encourage the heart	25.84	2.45		21.65		0.001
Total	126.84	19.15	90	76.34		0.001

According to Table 4, in total and in all components of leadership behaviors, the calculated mean is more than the assumed mean (T-Value) and significant (P<0.001). In other words, the principals surveyed rated themselves relatively very high on each of the five leadership components. The mean scores ranged between 26.23 and 24.43. Principals in this study rated themselves most favorably in the leadership area of model the way with a mean score of 26.23. Principals also in this study rated themselves least favorably in the area of enable others to act with a mean score of 24.43. Based on the data, principals in this study view their overall leadership behaviors very favorably.

The third question: Is there any significant difference between leadership behaviors reported by principals themselves and those observed by teachers?

Table 5. Independent t-test about difference between leadership behaviors reported by principals themselves and those observed by teachers (N=175)

Variables	G.	N	Mean	Std.D	t-test	df	Sig.
Model the way	T.	12	23.9302	4.68739	-		.01
	P.	9	26.2391	7.83208	2.36	9	
Inspire a shared vision	T.	12	23.8295	4.85754	-		.030
	P.	9	25.5000	3.01662	2.18	17	
Challenge the process	T.	12	23.3333	5.27721	-	3	.050
	P.	9	24.9565	2.94359	1.97	7	
Enable others to act	T.	12	22.8372	5.23628	-		.06
	P.	9	24.3261	2.92160	1.82	9	
Encourage the heart	T.	12	23.9535	5.07731	-		.01
	P.	9	25.8478	2.45825	2.42	6	
Total	T.	12	117.883	24.08891	-		.01
	P.	9	126.869	14.0263	3.03	8	
		6		4			

Table 6. Correlation coefficient test on relationship between leadership behaviors and management experience of principals from the perspective of teachers (N=129)

	N	r	Model the way	Inspire a shared vision	Challenge the process	Enable others to act	Encourage the heart	Total
Management experience	T 129	P. Chi-Sq	.118b	.842b	.978b	5.475b	1.411b	.740b
	df=3	Sig.	.990	.839	.807	.140	.703	.864
	P 46	P. Chi-Sq	1.649c	2.919c	1.344c	1.431c	1.183c	1.048c
	df=2	Sig.	.438	.232	.511	.489	.277	.306

P=Principals T=Teachers

b. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .85.

c. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .48.

The results of the independent t-test show that there is a significant difference between the views and evaluations of teachers and principals on all components of leadership behaviors of principals, except enable others to act. In fact, the teachers rated the principals lower in all categories than the principals rated themselves. The teachers and principals have the same rating to Enable others to act.

The fourth question was: Is there a relationship between leadership behaviors and management experience from the perspective of principals and teachers?

The results of table 6 show that there is no significant relationship between any of the components of leadership behaviors and management experience from the perspective of principals. In other words, leadership behaviors of experienced (>5) and inexperienced (<=5) principals are relatively the same and generally acceptable.

According to table 6, there is no significant relationship between any of the components of leadership behaviors and management experience from the perspective of teachers. In other words, teachers believe that leadership behaviors of both experienced (>5) and inexperienced (<=5) principals are relatively passable. Overall, based on the results it can be deduced, that there isn't any difference because principals and teachers don't evaluate principals better when they have >5 experiences or alike.

4 DISCUSSION

The analysis of data from the LPI-Observer indicated that teachers rated their principal high in all areas of leadership. This result is not consistent with the findings of Kursunoglu and Tanriogen (2009) who reported that teachers evaluated the leadership behaviors of their principals as moderate. The results are somewhat consistent with LPI-Observer reported means reported by Kouzes and Posner (2003) for the general population. From the perspective of teachers, there is no significant relationship between any of the components of leadership behavior and management experience of principals. In other words, leadership behaviors of both experienced and inexperienced principals are relatively the same and generally acceptable. This is consistent with the findings of Johnson (2004) who showed that there is no significant relationship between experience and leadership behaviors of managers.

The analysis of data from the LPI-Self indicated that principals rated themselves very high in all areas of leadership which is inconsistent with the results of Long (1991) who stated that empowering others is the most important leadership strategy in order to achieve the best personal performance. Also according to Long (1991), other priorities, in order of

preference, include inspiring a shared vision, modeling, reassuring, and challenging. The results in this study also are partially consistent with LPI-Self reported means for the general population reported by Kouzes and Posner (2003). From the perspective of principals, there is no significant relationship between any of the components of leadership behaviors and management experience of principals. In other words, leadership behaviors of both experienced and inexperienced principals are relatively the same and generally acceptable. This is consistent with the findings of Johnson (2004) who showed that there is no significant relationship between experience and leadership behaviors of managers.

The results showed that there is no significant difference between self-reported leadership behaviors by principals and those observed by teachers on enable others to act. In terms of other components a significant difference was found between self-reported leadership behaviors by the principals and those observed by teachers. The results of the present study showed that leadership behavior reported by principals and observed by teachers are at a favorable level which is consistent with the findings of *Kouzes and Posner (2001)*. This study suggested that principals have a better perception of their own leadership than teachers. The leadership behavior of modeling acquired the highest score among both principals and teachers which is not consistent with the findings of Pingle and Cox (2007). These results also were similar to the norms provided by Kouzes and Posner (2003) for the general population. This study found that principals view their own leadership behavior more favorably than the teachers perceive their principal's leadership behavior.

Although the leadership behaviors of principals were evaluated proper by both principals themselves and teachers, principals gave higher scores to their own leadership behaviors in all components. Brubacher and Rudy (2005) believe that self-awareness and self-reflection allow leaders to have a better understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses and facilitates making changes in their own leadership behaviors. Managers may give high scores to their own performance because of lack of assessment skills and having a wrong understanding of self-assessment methods. Managers should give honest answers to achieve a valid and authentic assessment. *Kouzes and Posner (2001) discuss honest responses in self-assessment and point out that managers should be honest with others in assessing their behaviors and the feedback in order to develop and improve their profession.* By asking others, managers can better understand their own actions and behaviors of others. High awareness of managers acknowledges the necessity to increase leadership trainings under the title of self-awareness.

5 CONCLUSION

Although the scores teachers gave to leadership behaviors of principals were less than the scores principals gave to their own leadership behaviors, there scores were at an acceptable and satisfactory. We can conclude that the greater variability in the teachers' observer ratings of their principal's leadership behavior the more realistic the perception of their principal's leadership behavior. This is supported by research which has revealed that a leader's effectiveness is largely determined by the perceptions of followers. According to Nye (2002) respective research suggests that "leadership is in the eye of the beholder". *Kozes and Posner (2001) state that the skills a manager needs in this regard include development of cooperation and taking advantage of other people with a shared purpose and vision.* Brubaker and Coble (2005) believed the self-awareness and self-reflection associated with this type of data collection allow leaders to make changes to their leadership behaviors by better understanding their strengths and weaknesses. Gonyea (2005) believed that self-reported data can generally be trusted but makes recommendations for using self-reported data in research.

Leaders who empower others to act are actually making lively groups and get others actively involved in decision-making. They respect others and create an atmosphere of trust. This trust gives power and self-confidence to others and helps them obtain outstanding results. Getting employees involved in decision-making has the greatest impact on student's achievement and teacher's morale. When teachers participate in decision-making, it gives them a sense of power and ability. Teachers can work and cooperate with principals in information exchange and resolving the issues related to the planning and providing educational programs to students. Authorities and officials recommended to take measures such as transforming the system of recruitment and preparing school principals with an emphasis on leadership behaviors providing training courses on leadership behaviors. Undoubtedly, school principals are the main target readers of the results of this study, in addition to researchers. Given the current situation in our country's schools, employing the teachers who conform with leadership behaviors of principals is vital. In addition, principals can develop these beneficial behaviors in teachers by equipping themselves with leadership capabilities. Since a principal, in addition to monitoring the general affairs of a school, should play his/her management and leadership roles, it is suggested that educational managers be trained to modify their expectations of their duties and properly put into action leadership and management behaviors. Training of managers should include opportunities for managers to learn more on self-assessment and their academic major. Managers should broaden their knowledge on five styles of leadership proposed by *Kozes and Posner (2001), because these styles represent the leadership behaviors of an effective management.* This can be useful to managers because when they demonstrate best practices, the organization members will act according to its fullest potential. *Organizations and particularly education organization, to ensure that principals do their management task properly, inevitably should carefully review the character of principals before appointing them to managerial positions and somewhat ease their mind about proper and correct implementation of administrative tasks in schools by selecting the principals with desirable personality characteristics.*

6 STUDY LIMITATIONS

To finish, one of the most important limitations of this study is the use of self-reported data. Therefore, scores obtained from self-reported data is greater than the scores obtained from observed data. The results of this type of research can be useful for managers, because they need a better understanding of their own leadership behaviors and using teachers' perception of leadership behaviors can be helpful.

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