THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND MANAGERS LEADERSHIP STYLES (A CASE STUDY ON 2ND DISTRICT OF ARDABIL CITY MANAGERS, IRAN)

VAHID FALLAH, ELHAM ABOLFAZLI, FARHAD NOORAEI, MAHNAZ KARGAR

Department of Humanities, Islamic Azad University, Sari Branch, Sari, Iran

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to compare the relationship skills in terms of gender between the managers who follow task-oriented leadership style and those who follow relation-oriented leadership style. The statistical population consisted of 232 managers of Ardabil schools among which 147 managers were selected as the sample population via random sampling method. The measurement tools of this study were Lutans leadership styles and Barton. J. A communication skill questionnaires with reliability coefficients of .75 and .88 respectively which were fulfilled by the managers who were in the selected statistical population. The gathered data was analyzed using two-factor variance analysis test. The obtained results revealed that: a) there is no difference in relationship skills between the managers who follow different leadership styles; b) there is no difference in relationship skills between male managers and female managers and c) managers (separated by gender) have no significant difference in relationship skills with respect to their leadership styles.

KEYWORDS: relationship skills, relation oriented leadership, task oriented leadership

1. INTRODUCTION

In the first decade of the third millennium, there was a deep attention towards the educational leadership phenomenon. The reason of this intensive attention was the importance as well as the vital role of the quality of the educational leadership in the generation of a significant difference between schools outcomes. This means that the main task of managers is to establish relationships with society and train talented people in order to meet the mentioned objectives as well as to enable them to understand the necessities of a society and respond them. Modern organizations require leaders who can excite commitment and fervency among fellow workers.
through their personal characteristics and special charisma, high penetration capacity and wide vision in order to use their ultimate talents and efforts in realization of organizational objectives. (Javdani 2011). Relying on Longman's vision, Nicknami, Taghipour, Delavar & Ghafary, (2009-2011) recognize school management as the most important factor in creating change and innovation in education affairs. Each organization however, suffers from shortages and deficiencies of organizational design and setting. Leadership is an essential factor for solving these problems and coordinating activities for doing necessary tasks (Hatala, 2009) because school manager deals everyday with students and teachers with different mental and physical conditions as well as different monetary and moral necessities and these are the managers who should try to perform their tasks and prepare conditions for progressing educational targets aimed at meeting necessities and developing appropriate human relations among them. Whenever managers fail to follow an appropriate style in doing their tasks and leadership duties, they create an undesirable atmosphere and consequently undesirable organizational behavior in schools which has destructive influence on the behavior of the members of that organization resulting in dissatisfaction, non-efficiency and loss of organizational effectiveness. (Seyyed Gharaeini & Seyyed Abbaszadeh, 2008). Leadership style is a key concept in the process of studying leadership behaviors. (Gholipour, 2001) which are specific behavioral patterns appearing during continues organizational activities by which others know the characteristics of a person. (Hersey & Blanchard KH, 2005)

Some of pioneer works in the field of leadership styles have stated three clusters or three main styles. (Ehrht & Klein quoted from Dowling and Callanan, 2009). The first cluster of leaders is the task-oriented leaders who focus on planning, coordination and supplying of necessary resources in order to assure the realization of the scheduled plans and ideas. Likert belongs to this group (see the same reference). Task-oriented managers are become satisfied when they could do their duties in accordance with clear instructions and in the case of lack of any instruction, they will try to create it. The managers take steps for increasing production rate as well as the efficiency of the organizational structures using task-oriented leadership style and through concentration on organizational resources. (Safi quoted from Tajvar, 2009). The second group of leadership is the relation-oriented managers who excite and drive employees to more actions and works. (Patterson, Warr & west, 2004). The third group is the high charisma leaderships who try to spread general, challenging, inspiring, contributed and innovative targets and objectives. (Callanan, Dowling and Moss, 2009). It could be referred to the presence of mind, awareness, paying attention to others, cooperation, right vision, restraining during stress and verbal skills as the most obvious characteristics and personalities of these managers. (Mousakhani & Mohammadnia, 2006). Tennenbaum defines leadership as an interpersonal influence applying in one or more specific situations through communication process for realizing individual or organizational objective/objectives. It is interesting that this definition indicate the dependency of leadership on relationship. This means that the leadership is not available by itself without relationship. (Namvar et al, 2011). Forrester states that within organizations managers should not only content with saying that from today we will work as a team. An organization should show mutual effects of the group members’ relationships on vital variables. Managers should clarify and lighten the path of development as well as group survival and continuity. Burt recognizes that the participation rate of employees in doing organizational works and tasks depends on the rate of their relationships. Thus, organizations should promote the relations between work group members and in general the relations between individual
employees. These intergroup relations between individuals are considered as the social capital of organizations. (Quoted from Haji karimi et al, 2011). Modern organizations need leaders who are able to drive commitment and excitement in fellow workers by the aid of their personal characteristics and specific charisma, high penetration and wide vision in order to use the most of their talents and efforts in realizing organizational objectives. (Quoted from Javedani, 2011). Managers should be equipped with necessary skills in order to successfully implement organizational strategies and make interactions with employees and respond them in an appropriate manner. Establishing effective relationship is one of the vital skills in human resource management. (Hope-Haily, Gratton and Truss, 2002). The studies of Kennedy, Deeter-Schmelz and wech (2009) show that regarding the effects of cross sectional levels, relations between a group and its members have positive influence on the innovative behaviors as well as problem solving capability of individuals. The influences would be beyond the influences of relations between leader and employees. Members of a workgroup who benefit from high quality relations between the group members exhibit higher levels of performance as well. Of course, job performance could be attributed to the individual relationships of the people with managers and their leadership styles. Limited interaction between manager and employees results in employees' discouragement because they feel that managers don’t understand their problems. In other words, they are deprived from a powerful amity source (Godson, quoted from Hashemian and Moazzen, 2010). Since the issue of relationship is a wide spread field in organizations, it could be claimed that most of organizational and social problems are likely originated from relationship weakness. Effective relations are important in that they provide managers with a process facilitating works like planning, organizing, directing and leading and control and help managers to realize their coordinating duty as well as optimum use of time. (Rezaeian, 2006). In other words, "relationship is a tool for creating the main responsibilities of managers. In fact, better establishment and formation of an organization will result in better relations between its employees." (Doaei 1994:36). In order to establish ideal relations, one should get familiar with relationship skills. Relationship skills are a kind of skills by which individuals could deal with interpersonal interactions and relation process. They include different types. The most important are verbal skill, effective listening and feedback. (Chari and Delavarpour, 2007). Generally, relationship skills have three components as follows: a) verbal skills, b) effective listening skill and feedback. (Moghimi, 2007).

1) Verbal skill: includes the words which we utter. In fact, a set of relations generated via speech and dialogue is called verbal skill. Indeed, verbal skill is the consciously use of verbal symbols for exciting others to work. (Mortazavi and Mehrban, 2004 quoted from Keshtkaran, Heidari and Bastani, 2011).

2) Listening skill: Zalewski (2007) believes that listening is a commitment and a kind of welcome and agreement. A commitment which is necessary for understanding each other and achieving a consensus. Therefore, effective listening is an active participation in a dialogue i.e. an activity which helps a speaker to transfer his/her opinion. In other words, listening is an active exploration of the meaning of words. It simplifies understanding the real content of a message. (Abbaspour and Baroutinan, 2010).

Feedback skill: feedback is the final loop in the process of relationship. The feedback returns a message to the sender of it and enables him/her to control and make sure that
the receivers have fully understood it. (Arabi and Rafiei, 2000). The use of feedback prepares a mutual relation. It not only improves relations but also results in effective management as well as better organizational performance. Thus, this component could be promoted to a high extent through giving appropriate feedbacks to employees in the process of organizational decision making, facilitating the process of receiving answers from master members and eliminating the concern of employees about the probable responses of managers. (Abbaspour and Baroutina, 2010). Therefore, managers should consider the following notes in order to remove the obstacles of effective relationships:

Managers should:

- Pay attention to feedbacks
- Have sufficient concentration when they listen others
- Improve the ability of controlling emotions.
- Pay attention to non-verbal relations
- Pay attention to the mental and moral conditions of addressees
- To be intimate with addressees (Rezaei, 2005).

Indeed, organizations are interconnected units and their success depends usually on the understanding and cooperation of employees and managers. This requires however to know how we should deal with people. Benefiting from relationship skills not only results in the development of managers and their professional improvement but also it is a necessary item for establishing an appropriate atmosphere in educational environments. Since in every organization, managers are located at the center of a relationship system, in order to empower themselves to catch different information and compile them, they should establish the capacity

2. Research method

The research method for the present research is of survey type (causative-comparative). The statistical population of this study consisted of 232 managers of primary, high schools from regions 2 of Ardabil city in 2013-2014, school year. The sample volume was assessed with 147 people, 5% error and 95% confidence level. The study tools were Lutans leadership style questionnaire with 35 items which evaluated both task oriented (autocratic) leadership style and humanism (freedom, relation oriented) leadership style as well as Barton's (Barton J. A.) questionnaire of relationship skills. It evaluated different types of relationship skills in the frameworks of verbal skill, listening skill and getting feedback skill through 18 questions.

The reliability coefficients of the leadership style and relationship skills questionnaires were calculated using Cronbach’s alpha to be .75 and .88, respectively. Two factor variance analysis was used to analyze the gathered data.
3. Findings of Study

Is there any difference in relationship skills in terms of gender between managers with different leadership styles?

Table 1 the descriptive indices of the relationship skills of managers with different leadership styles in terms of gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>5.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation-oriented</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>5.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>46.14</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task-Oriented</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>46.14</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>47.32</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>46.46</td>
<td>6.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>147</td>
<td>46.86</td>
<td>6.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to table 1, it could be found that the average of relationship skills of the relation-oriented managers is 47.800 with a variance of 5.73 while this is 47.88 in task-oriented managers with a variance of 6.15. In both task-oriented and relation-oriented groups, female managers have higher average in relationship skills compared to male managers.

Table 2 comparison of the relationship skills of managers with different leadership styles in terms of gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type111 Sum</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.87</td>
<td>.587</td>
<td>.624</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding table 2 it could be found that the obtained $F_{(1,147)} = 0.811$, regarding that $P > 0.05$, is not significant in the confidence level of 0.95. In other words, in a confidence level of 95%, there is no significant difference in relationship skills between managers who follow different leadership styles. Also, the obtained $F_{(1,147)} = 0.214$ in gender factor shows that there is no difference in relationship skills between female and male managers. Finally, the obtained value for the interaction of leadership style and gender factor is $F_{(1,147)} = 0.1$ which is not significant in the confidence level of 0.95 with respect to $p > 0.05$. This means that with the confidence level of 95% it could not be argued that leadership style with respect to gender affects relationship skills.

![Fig 1: relation-oriented Task-oriented](image-url)
4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that leadership style in terms of gender has no influence on relationship skills. Also, no significant difference was observed in relationship skills between task-oriented and relation-oriented managers. There was no significant difference in relationship skills between female and male managers. Eventually, it was concluded that the relationship skills of the managers who follow task-oriented leadership style and those who follow relation-oriented leadership style are not different in terms of gender.

The results of this study, which indicate that there is no difference in relationship skills between task-oriented managers and relation-oriented managers, do not confirm with those of Holloway & Hepworth, Bogdewic and Mc Daniel (2009) studies as their findings show a significant relation between relation-oriented leadership style and relationship skills. Also, this finding that there is no difference in relationship skills between female and male managers do not confirm with the findings of Keshtkaran (Keshtkaran et al, 2011) which indicate a significant relation between verbal skills, effective listening and feedback and gender of managers. In this line, Fallahi (2010) believes that collaborative style employed by a manager could promote relations. Abbaspour and Baroutina (2010) found a positive correlation between effective relations, active listening and emotion control.

More studies have considered the importance and vital role of relations and interactions between managers and employees as well as their effects on the success, survival, innovation and performance of an organization. The reason that it is emphasized on the importance of effective relations of managers is that in all activities of a manager, the footprint of relations is clearly apparent.

The conflict between the mentioned studies and the present study could be explained based on Amirian (1996) findings which state that education managers have insufficient skill and science about relationship skills, since the weakness of relationship skills has been apparent in both styles.

5. References


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