

The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Organizational Climate of Elementary Schools in Tehran City

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ABSTRACT: The aim of the present study has been to explain the impact of transformational leadership on organizational climate of elementary schools in Tehran city. Research methodology has been descriptive-correlational and applied in terms of nature and method of conduction, and purpose respectively. Statistical population of the study included all the elementary school teachers in Tehran, and sample size of 377 persons was selected based on Morgan's table and proportional stratified random sampling. In order to collect data, two standard questionnaires of Bass and Avolio's (2000) transformational leadership and Siegel and Kymer's innovative organizational climate were used. In order to measure the reliability of the questionnaires, Cronbach's alpha (0.78 for transformational leadership and 0.76 for innovative organizational climate) was adopted. Besides, content-related validity was used for measuring validity. In order to analyze the data, Pearson's correlation and multiple regressions were used through SPSS software. Research results indicated that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and its dimensions (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration) and innovative organizational climate. Besides, the results related to regression analysis confirmed the impact of transformational leader and its dimensions on innovative organizational climate.

Key words: Transformational Leadership, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Motivation, Organizational Climate, Elementary Schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Education department as one of the most basic organizations of Iran has the responsibility to maintain values, educate and train the generation who are the future executives and operators of the society. Mission, objectives and duties of the education department are complicated and its burden of responsibility is heavy; management at its different levels and sections is among the difficult and sensitive tasks. Education department is the most important social entity emerged from the context of society, and at the same time, it develops and constructs the society. And the impact of this organization is totally tangible (Imani, 2012). Education system has greatly developed in contemporary societies. The result of this development is the transformation of educational system into a great organization which deals with many students. This organization has employed many teachers and employees, and fulfills numerous tasks and eventually, produces lasting results. Effectiveness of the activities of such an organization undoubtedly requires guidance and leadership by qualified managers (Amin Bidokhti and Parvaresh, 2008). For the effectiveness of such broad educational system, effective leaders are required to be able to assist the educational system in attaining its noble objectives by utilizing existing resources; leaders who can motivate the employees and appropriately employ them to reach organizational objectives. However, it is observed in some organizations that values, beliefs and underlying assumptions of the organization's members and leaders are not properly aligned which causes some problems in employees' commitment to

the organization, and consequently, results in low performance, absenteeism and desertion by the employees. Therefore, application of appropriate leadership style is critical for the enhancement of employees' commitment in order for the success of the organization (Hoseini Sarkhosh et al., 2009). Leaders who can gain employees' commitment to the achievement of goals and can develop the abilities required to achieve these goals in them are called transformational leaders. These leaders influence their followers' beliefs, values and goals and greatly affect them. They also transform the whole organization through their conduct and behavior; the followers of such leaders have a sense of trust in and loyalty to them (Mir Kamali et al., 2012). In order to achieve this goal, leaders should try to establish organizational culture and climate conducive to these goals. The dominant climate of the organization definitely affects the morale of the members of the organization, and consequently, results in job satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the people working for that organization. If the people working in an organization are not satisfied with their job, this will decrease the effectiveness and efficacy of the organization, and the organization will not achieve its goals and objectives (Imani, 2012). There are several evidences which show that transformational leadership has a positive impact on the followers' attitudes and performance (Zhu et al., 2012). What is certain is that this impact does not occur in a vacuum, but requires a desirable climate and atmosphere.

The concept of transformational leadership was first proposed by Burns. This concept was later

developed by Bernard Bass, and it is one of the renowned concepts in organizational studies today. Transformational leadership is in nature the process of building commitment to the organizational objectives and empowering followers in order to attain those goals (Bakhti et al., 2011). Transformational leader tries to bring about and cause transformation; the goals pursued by the transformational leader are ultimate values such as liberty, justice and equality. Such kind of leaders promotes their follower to higher levels of ethics and morale (Mir Kamali et al., 2012). Besides, in Spondee's opinion (2009), transformational leaders deal with values, morality, standards and long-term goals, and focus on the followers' performance and their development in order to increase their potential capacity. Individuals who are transformational leaders often have a series of ideals and strong inner values (Shoghi and Shoghi, 2012, p. 43). Transformational leaders change the organizational culture and structure for compatibility with management strategies in order to achieve organizational goals and take followers to high levels of motivation and morale, and foster high levels of needs based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In addition, the degree of being transformational of a leader, in general, is measured in terms of his/her impact on the followers; in such a way that transformational leaders' followers have a sense of trust, loyalty and respect towards him/her and admire the leader and the followers themselves are motivated to more work than expected (Yukel, 2001). Leaders can assist in the development, building and maintaining organizational culture and leaders affect innovation through a series of new common values (Roshini, 2012). Transformational leadership is consisted of four components: charisma or idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Zhu et al., 2012).

Transformational leaders act as role models for the followers; in such a way that followers tend to emulate them and establish their identity through them (Bass and Riggio, 2006). They exhibit a set of high standards for moral guidance, are assured of the future and have high standards for competition; these factors are indicative of the idealized influence of transformational leaders (Zhu et al., 2012). Inspirational motivation includes challenges posed for followers and is a meaning for getting involved in common goals and becoming committed to them. Team spirit lifts in this leadership style. According to a study conducted by Bakhti et al., (2011), there is an indirect strong relationship between transformational leadership and team effectiveness.

This happens through showing empathy and optimism, involving the followers in presenting future

outlooks and having high expectations of them (Bass and Riggio, 2006). The results of the study conducted by Sarros et al. (2008) indicated that providing individual support and offering outlook affect innovations. Transformational leaders challenge followers through intellectual stimulation to be creative and innovative and pose questions for followers in the long run. According to the Soonhee's (2009) study, the variable of managers' leadership style has a positive, direct and significant relationship with variables of employees' creativity and innovation. Besides, variable of organizational climate has a positive and significant impact on variables of creativity and innovation. It means that the more appropriate the organizational climate is and the more it supports culture of creativity and innovation, the more innovation increases in that organization. Transformational leaders try to meet the followers' needs and fulfill their wishes for future development through paying particular attention to their needs for personal growth and desire for success (Zhu et al., 2012).

Over the last couple of decades, several definitions are proposed for organizational climate and each one of definitions stress an aspect of the features of organizational climate. Some of the definitions are as follows. Who have been the pioneers of objective assessment of organizational climate defined it as the internal features of an organization differentiating it from others and affecting its members which is assessed through the employees' perceptions and their descriptions of the organization's internal features (Amin Bidokhti and Parvaresh, 2008). Organizational climate is an environment in which the employees work and it reflects the employees' attitude and management style of the organization. In another definition, organizational climate refers to the common perception of policies, habits and formal as well as informal procedures. Besides, organizational climate incorporates a value system; it means that it determined how the work is done and what behaviors are rewarded. Organizational climate includes all the internal aspects of an organization, which are specified by the high ranking individuals in the organization and affect the behaviors of all its members. Furthermore, it is explicitly understood by the members of the organization (Mohammad Kazemi et al., 2012). There are two principles in several definitions presented for the organizational climate:

- Cognitive system or intellectual element. It indicates value systems of the organization.
- Collective perception or emotional element. It is derived from policies, performances and procedures of the organization.

Therefore, organizational climate is an aspect of the superficial features of culture, which is resulted from employees' perception and attitudes. In fact, climate is the observable aspect and culture is the invisible aspect of the organization, such as an iceberg floating in water.

Managers of the organization should also think of improving and reforming the organizational climate, in addition to maintaining it efficiently and effectively, in order to motivate individuals and meet their material and spiritual needs (Mohammad Kazemi et al., 2012). According to a study conducted in JNTU University in Hyderabad, India, the results revealed that the skills of university's senior managers affect instructors' job satisfaction (Roshini, 2012). In a desirable organizational climate, employees have a considerable job satisfaction and are sufficiently motivated to overcome problems. Besides, under such circumstances, they have the required motive for arranging the works and maintaining the organizations' dynamism. Furthermore, employees are proud of working for their organization and work well with each other and fully perform organizational tasks in a desirable organizational climate. According to Di Paola's (2001) study, there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational citizenship and school organizational citizenship behavior, and it is possible to provide a more desirable organizational climate through policies of encouraging citizenship behavior and methods of performance improvement.

The results of Lyman's study indicated that policies, plans and financial status cannot alone turn the organization into an appropriate environment for working, but it is the feeling of the employees towards the workplace i.e. organizational climate that transforms the organization into an ideal and desirable workplace (Magahi et al., 2012). The sublime organizational climate reduces turnover costs as well as their resistance to change on one hand, and improve the products quality, foster innovation and increase risk-taking on the other hand; the ultimate result of these impacts will be increased profitability and customer loyalty. Vijayakumar (2007) stated that management skills play a major role in building a friendly climate and atmosphere in educational organizations, and from among these skills, human skills have the highest impact.

Saatchi et al. (2010) conducted a study titled "a Study of the Relationship between Transformational Leadership Style and Employee's Creativity in Governmental Organization of Neyriz City". Their findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and its dimensions, and employees' creativity. Hoseini Sarkhosh et al. (2009) believed that transformational leadership can affect organizational commitment

through promoting competitive and hierarchical cultures.

Transformational leadership affects the followers by motivating them, developing their abilities and paying special attention to their needs, and it employs them in order to achieve organization's objectives. Based on the previous studies, transformational leadership affects many variables in the organization at individual and organizational levels. However, these studies did not address the impact of transformational leadership on innovative organizational climate very much; in such a way that it is seen as a gap in many studies. The present study tries to answer whether transformational leadership affect innovative organizational climate.

In this regard, research hypotheses are as follows:

1. Transformational leadership affects innovative organizational climate.
2. Idealized influence affects innovative organizational climate.
3. Inspirational motivation affects innovative organizational climate.
4. Intellectual stimulation affects innovative organizational climate.
5. Individualized consideration affects innovative organizational climate.

Finally, the conceptual framework of the study is presented in Figure 1.

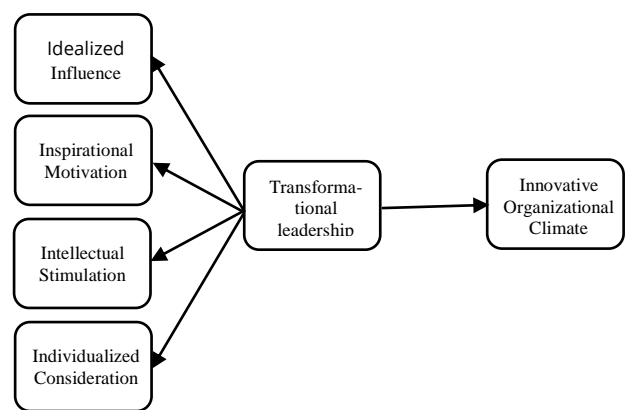


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

METHODOLOGY

Since the present study intends to measure the relationship between variables, i.e. transformational leadership and its dimensions, and innovation, research methodology has been correlational and it is considered an applied research. Statistical population of the study included all the elementary school teachers of Tehran amounting to 15377. The sample size consists of 377 persons based on Morgan's table. In order to collect the required data from the

statistical population, stratified random sampling was used; because of its breadth, the city of Tehran was divided into four geographical regions (north east, northwest, south east and south west). After preparing the list of elementary schools of Tehran and considering the sample size in terms of type of schools (girls' and boys'), 42 schools were selected through simple random sampling. Then, 400 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 359 questionnaires could be used for analysis.

The main research instrument has been questionnaire. Transformational leadership questionnaire contains 20 questions and innovative organizational climate questionnaire contains 24 questions. In order to measure transformational leadership, MLQ questionnaire proposed by Bass and Avolio (2000), which is consisted of four dimensions of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration was used. In order to determine the reliability of measurement instruments, Cronbach's alpha was adopted, which was 0.78 for transformational leadership. Besides, it was also adopted in order to measure the innovative organizational climate questionnaire proposed by

Siegel and Kymer (Saatchi et al., 2010), which is consisted of two dimensions of supporting creativity and providing resources for organization's innovation. The Cronbach's alpha calculated for innovative organizational climate questionnaire was 0.76. In order to measure validity of measurement instrument, content-related validity was adopted and the validity of these two questionnaires was approved of by experts.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

In order to examine the relationship between the variables, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used. The results related to this test are presented in Table 1.

According to the above results related to Pearson's correlation coefficient, there is a significant relationship at the confidence level of 99% between transformational leadership and its dimension, and innovative organizational climate. The following table shows the results related to regression analysis for variables in order to understand the impact of transformational leadership and its dimensions on innovative organizational leadership.

Table 1. Pearson's correlation coefficient

Dimensions	Individualized consideration	Intellectual stimulation	Inspirational motivation	Idealized influence	Transformational leadership	Innovative organizational climate
Innovative organizational climate	1					
Transformational leadership	0.844**	1				
Idealized influence	0.715**	0.912**	1			
Inspirational motivation	0.705**	0.863**	0.701**	1		
Intellectual stimulation	0.74**	0.831**	0.67**	0.642**	1	
Individualized consideration	0.752**	0.786**	0.604**	0.599**	0.578**	1

** Significant at the confidence level of 99%

Table 2 shows the results of regression analysis; this finding is also consistent with the results related to the previous correlation test. Correlation test was used for both variables separately; and all the independent variables are inserted together and their impact on dependent variable has been measured.

The obtained Coefficient of Determination (R2) has been 74.5% which indicates high predictability of innovative organizational climate variable.

Table three shows the results related to testing hypotheses, based on which all the hypotheses are confirmed.

Table 2. Results of multiple regressing analysis related to the impact of variables

Model	Non-Standardized		Standardized	T Value	Significance
	Constant Value	Standard Deviation			
Constant Value	10.420	2.482		4.1999	0.000
Idealized Influence	0.513	0.129	0.168	3.966	0.000
Inspirational Motivation	0.769	0.187	0.169	4.120	0.000
Intellectual Stimulation	1.606	0.207	0.303	7.743	0.000
Individualized Consideration	2.103	0.204	0.374	10.307	0.000

Table 3. Results related to testing hypotheses

No.	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Type of Hypothesis	Degree of Impact	Result
1	Transformational Leadership	Innovative Organizational Climate	Main	0.84	Confirmed
2	Idealized Influence	Innovative Organizational Climate	Sub	0.168	Confirmed
3	Inspirational Motivation	Innovative Organizational Climate	Sub	0.169	Confirmed
4	Intellectual Stimulation	Innovative Organizational Climate	Sub	0.303	Confirmed
5	Individualized Consideration	Innovative Organizational Climate	Sub	0.374	Confirmed

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study has been to explain the impact of transformational leadership on organizational climate in elementary schools of Tehran. The results of the study are as follows. Transformational leadership has a direct and significant impact on organizational climate in elementary schools of Tehran. And dimensions of transformational leadership can predict innovative organizational climate. Based on the results, transformational leadership and its dimensions can predict innovative organizational climate as much as 74.5.

Therefore, the results related to the main hypothesis are consistent with the research results of Roshini (2012), Vijayakumar (2007), Sarros et al. (2008), Di Paola (2001), Mir Kamali et al. (2012), Mohammad Kazemi et al. (2012), Taboli et al. (2011), and Hoseini Sarkhosh et al. (2009). Management skills, organizational culture and transformational leadership can somehow lead to the establishment of desirable organizational climate. In fact, managers and policymakers of the educational system can proceed to the development of innovative organizational climate by using the concept of transformational leadership. When managers possess the required skills for interacting and communicating with employees and guiding them, and when organizational climate encourages employees to achieve organization's goals, and transformational leadership motivates them, the managers can build a healthy organizational climate in the organization. In this regard, Sarros (2008) believed that only transformational leadership can appropriately create and develop the culture consistent with the changes. The obtained results revealed that idealized influence has a significant impact on innovative organizational climate, which is consistent with studies conducted by Roshini (2012), Vijayakumar (2007), Sarros et al. (2008), Di Paola (2001), Mir Kamali et al. (2012), Mohammad Kazemi et al. (2012), Taboli et al. (2011) and Hoseini Sarkhosh et al. (2009). Idealized influence shows itself as role model, sublime goals and confidence, and these factors considerably affect the employees' perception and can change it, while employees'

perception of concrete aspects somehow indicates organizational climate of the organization for which they work. According to the results, inspirational motivation has a direct and significant impact on innovative organizational climate. Transformational leaders create innovative organizational climate through setting common goals, gain commitment of the followers and posing challenges. It is consistent with the research results of Vijayakumar (2007), Mir Kamali et al. (2012), Mohammad Kazemi et al. (2012) and Hoseini Sarkhosh et al. (2009).

Based on the results obtained from testing hypotheses, intellectual stimulation has a direct and significant impact on innovative organizational climate. Transformational leadership tries to develop and expand the organization through building the culture of creativity and innovation and challenging the routines. They first affect the behaviors and foster their demands in the employees through unwritten rules and affect the organizational climate by influencing the workplace. According to the previous studies, research results of Roshini (2012), Vijayakumar (2007), Sarros et al. (2008), Di Paola (2001), Mir Kamali et al. (2012), Bakhti et al. (2011), Mohammad Kazemi et al. (2012) and Hoseini et al. (2010).

Finally, the results confirmed that individualized consideration has a significant impact on innovative organizational leadership, which is consistent with Roshini (2012), Vijayakumar (2007), Sarros et al. (2008), Di Paola (2001), Mir Kamali et al. (2012), Bakhti et al. (2011) and Mohammad Kazemi et al. (2012). Transformational leadership pays special attention to growth needs of individuals and tries to assist them in growing, so that they will have the required abilities for attaining sublime goals in future. This behaviour of transformational leadership is in such a way that the employees are surprised by the special attention of the managers to their needs and the high degree of paying attention to employees' needs helps the managers to gain their commitment and satisfaction, which affects organizational climate.

Recommendation

According to the above results, the following practical suggestions can be effective:

- Given the undeniable impact of desirable organizational climate on the increase of quality and efficiency of the educational system within schools, managers and planners should consider factors affecting the organizational climate and step towards innovative climate.

- It is suggested that educational system managers set a special goal clearly and specifically for the followers, so that they can understand the current situation and analyze it and even they will be motivated to fulfill tasks beyond what is expected from them.

- It seems that educational system managers can provide the necessary conditions for applying employees' new ideas as well as encouraging them to propose them and freely try out their innovative ideas through a little improvement in the organizational climate, and turn the education department into a completely innovative organization. It is better to be accompanied by applying employees' new ideas and encouraging them to propose such ideas as much as possible as well as giving them enough opportunity to freely test and operationalize these ideas.

- Educational system managers should foster an optimistic image of the future in their teachers, so that they will be more involved in achieving organizational goals.

- The main source of organizational climate is consisted of the individuals' perception of the concrete and tangible aspects of the organization and since humans are unique creatures, paying special attention to teachers' needs can affect their perception of the organizations' atmosphere.

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