

Original Article (Quantified)

The role of leadership behaviors of school principals In teachers' team learning

Jamal Abdolmaleki¹ , Mohammad Ghafari Mejlej² , Masoumeh Mahboubi Ebrahimi³ , Faezeh Asadi⁴ 

- 1- PhD in Educational Management, Department of Educational Sciences, Bo Ali Sina University, Kurdistan, Iran
2- Assistant Professor, Curriculum Management and Planning Department, Chalous Branch, Islamic Azad University, Chalous, Iran.
3- Master of Educational Psychology, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran
4- PhD student in Curriculum Planning, Department of Educational Sciences, Islamshahr Branch, Islamshahr Islamic Azad University, Iran.

Receive:

05 May 2023

Revise:

07 July 2023

Accept:

12 August 2023




Abstract

The aim of the present study was to investigate the role of leadership behaviors of school principals in the team learning of teachers. The research population consisted of all primary school teachers of Qorve city, numbering 548 people, and a sample size of 225 people was selected from this population by simple random sampling based on Morgan's table. The research method was correlative and through structural equation modeling. To collect data, Strang's leadership behavior questionnaire (2005) and Bresó et al.'s team learning questionnaire (2008) were used. To determine the reliability and validity of the tool, Cronbach's alpha and confirmatory factor analysis techniques were used; the desired reliability and validity of the tool were indicated by the results. To analyze the data, structural equation modeling was used by Lisrel 10.20 software. The results indicated that: task-oriented leadership behavior of school principals had a positive, direct and significant effect (0.27) at the 0.05 level on teachers' team learning with a t value (4.98). Also, the Person-oriented leadership behavior of school principals had a positive, direct and significant effect (0.50) at the 0.05 level on teachers' team learning with a t value (9.34). The dual leadership behaviors of school principals are able to explain 38% of the variance of teachers' team learning, which has a t (8.41) and indicates the significance of the explained variance of teachers' team learning by the dual leadership behaviors of school principals.

Keywords:

Leadership Behaviors,
Team Learning,
Task-Oriented behavior,
Person-Oriented
behavior,
Dual behavior

Please cite this article as (APA): Abdolmaleki, J., Ghafari Mejlej, M., Mahboubi Ebrahimi, M., & Asadi, F. (2024). The role of leadership behaviors of school principals In teachers' team learning. *Management and Educational Perspective*, 5(4), 52-74.

Publisher: Iranian Business Management Association	https://doi.org/10.22034/jmep.2023.405790.1214	
Corresponding Author: Jamal Abdolmaleki		
Email: abdolmaleki1984@gmail.com	Creative Commons: CC BY 4.0	



Extended abstract

Introduction

Although team learning is one of the most effective and important processes in teams, through which teams are able to improve and develop their knowledge and skills (Shoukat et al., 2023), leadership plays a crucial role in the formulation, implementation, and development of team members' rules during teamwork to ensure successful team work (Hariharan & Anand, 2023). This is because team learning involves exchange, discussion, and development of knowledge, ideas, and structures, receiving feedback, and reflecting on teamwork, analyzing and learning from mistakes, and how to avoid them in the future (Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2017). Therefore, leadership behavior is considered as a necessary facilitator for creating conducive conditions for participation in team learning behaviors, such as creating a safe environment, and is considered a significant and fundamental enabler (Koeslag-Kreunen et al., 2018a). Leaders can indirectly facilitate workplace learning at these levels through their leadership behaviors (Wallo et al., 2022). However, team members do not automatically engage in team learning behaviors; as this can lead to problems. For example, differences in levels can result in non-constructive dominance by members with more authority, and members may experience excessive cognitive load when faced with unstructured tasks. Therefore, it is argued that participation in team learning behavior should be encouraged through leadership behavior (Van der Haar et al, 2017); as leadership behavior involves formulating a clear set of expectations for achieving organizational-individual goals through influencing and accompanying others, utilizing organizational resources, and facilitating individual and collective activities, in a structured guidance (Zhang et al, 2022). Or it is defined as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree on what needs to be done and how to do it, and facilitating individual and collective efforts to achieve common goals" (Yukl, 2010: 8).

School organizations, like other organizations, consist of various issues and goals, so they have the ability to adopt a team-oriented approach to the school workforce, mainly teachers, and explore team-related issues in schools with an emphasis on teachers in the form of work teams and school managers as team leaders for research. Various research has been conducted in diverse organizations, including the school organization, on how leadership behavior can support team learning behavior, for example. Hariharan & Anand(2023); Lundqvist et al(2023); Shoukat et al(2023); Abdolmalek & Ghanbari (2022); Koeslag-Kreunen et al(2020,2018a,2018b); Ghanbari et al (2017); Chatalalsingh & Reeves(2014); Imants et al(2013) & Nouwen et al (2012).

In analyzing the duties of teachers, it can be said that school teachers have two types of adaptive and developmental duties, which team learning facilitates these duties implicitly and explicitly. Therefore, team learning of teachers is influenced by the leadership behaviors of school administrators, in a way that the leadership behaviors of school administrators can be an effective factor in team learning of teachers and facilitate it. Therefore, by correctly recognizing leadership behaviors and employing them by school administrators, we can go beyond adaptive duties in teachers, especially innovative duties, in the context of team learning. As can be seen, studies and theories only indicate the relationship between leadership behavior and team learning, and it cannot be accurately said which type of leadership behavior has a greater impact on team learning. Therefore, in order to clarify this research gap, the researchers of this study considered the faculty of primary schools as a team and examined the effects of various leadership behaviors of school administrators on team learning of school teachers in order to clarify the exact role and effects of various leadership behaviors of school administrators on team learning of teachers. The information obtained from this research can assist school administrators in selecting and employing effective and useful leadership behavior in order to create, strengthen, and develop team learning of

teachers. Therefore, our question is whether the various leadership behaviors of primary school administrators have a significant effect on the team learning of their teachers, and which type of leadership behavior has the greatest impact on the team learning of teachers? Therefore, the main question of this research is whether the dual task-focused and individual-focused leadership behaviors of school administrators have a significant impact on the team learning of teachers.

Theoretical framework:

Team learning behaviors are crucial, especially for team performance and effectiveness; therefore, it is essential for teams to strengthen team learning behaviors (Gerbeth et al, 2022). Team learning behaviors are defined as team activities in which team members engage to perform tasks effectively; therefore, teams that share and exchange knowledge among their members, create shared understanding and new knowledge, engage in constructive blending and discussion of opinions, and reflect on their teamwork are recognized as exhibiting team learning behaviors (Widmann & Mulder, 2020). To understand when leadership is effective in teams, research typically observes leadership from a behavioral perspective (Koeslag-Kreunen et al, 2018a). Burke et al (2006) distinguished two main behavioral styles: individual-oriented and task-oriented team leadership behaviors. Clearly, these behaviors can stem from vertical and shared team leadership resources.

Individual-oriented leadership behaviors :are behaviors that encourage communication, support self-governance, and motivate team members to move beyond their individual interests. Attention, empowerment, and transformational leadership have been recognized as specific accepted leadership behaviors with a focus on the individual (Burke et al, 2006). Since attention refers to creating a positive space for cooperation and open communication and emphasizing relationships and team members' well-being, it is supportive of team learning behavior (Carmeli, Tishler & Edmondson, 2012). Empowerment leadership means actively developing self-governance skills in team members (Burke et al, 2006). Transformational leadership attempts to assist team members in surpassing their individual interests and taking action towards problem-solving by creating challenges and fostering creativity (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Overall, it is argued that individual-focused leadership behaviors strengthen team learning behaviors through encouraging communication, supporting self-governance, and going beyond individual interests.-

Task-oriented leadership behaviors: These behaviors emphasize the task of team members by providing information on tasks, task structure, and monitoring team performance, and include 1) boundary-spanning, 2) structural facilitation, and 3) transactional leadership (Burke et al, 2006). Boundary-spanning involves examining the environment for new information, networking, and negotiating for team resources (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). Additionally, Burke et al. (2006) argue that boundary-spanning activities guide teams towards task accomplishment based on available material resources and organizational strategies. Structural facilitation refers to defining team tasks, work methods, goals, and outcomes (Dong et al, 2017). Finally, Ashauer & Macan (2013) suggested that task-oriented leadership with a focus on team tasks and performance can encourage members to demonstrate their competence for the task, thus encouraging them to participate in team learning behaviors.

Methodology:

The research population consisted of all primary school teachers of Qorve city, numbering 548 people, and a sample size of 225 people was selected from this population by simple random sampling based on Morgan's table. The research method was correlative and through structural equation modeling. To collect data, Strang.'s leadership behavior questionnaire (2005) and Bresó et al.'s team learning questionnaire (2008) were used. To determine the



reliability and validity of the tool, Cronbach's alpha and confirmatory factor analysis techniques were used; the results indicated the desired reliability and validity of the tool. To analyze the data, structural equation modeling was used by Lisrel 10.20 software.

Discussion and Results:

According to the results of structural equation modeling analysis, task-oriented leadership behavior of school managers has a significant, positive direct effect (0.27) on teacher team learning ($p=0.05$) with a t-value of 4.98. Similarly, individual-oriented leadership behavior of school managers has a significant, positive direct effect (0.50) on teacher team learning ($p=0.05$) with a t-value of 9.34. Dual leadership behaviors of school managers can explain 38% of the variance in teacher team learning, which is significant with a t-value of 8.41, indicating the significant variance explained in teacher team learning by dual leadership behaviors of school managers. The fit indices of the model are as follows: the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom (1.47), RMSEA (0.045), CFI (0.97), GFI (0.95), and AGFI (0.93). Based on the fit indices in the path analysis model, it can be concluded that the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom indicates a good fit between the conceptual model and the empirical model. The value of RMSEA is within an acceptable range. The values of CFI, GFI, and AGFI also indicate a good fit for the structural model. Therefore, it can be said that the structural model of the study has a good and acceptable fit.

Conclusion:

In explaining the results of the research, it can be said that Hoch (2014) argued that the distribution of leader behaviors among team members can help resolve their non-constructive conflicts and support members in providing unique information. Therefore, individual-centered leadership with encouragement, modeling, empowerment, and power control in teams that have adaptive and developmental tasks enhances learning. Bucic et al (2010) showed that for performing adaptive tasks, transformational leadership behaviors encourage participation and urge team members to maintain their boundaries. As a result, teams are able to collectively create new ideas. Additionally, Nouwen et al (2012) highlighted that integrating considerations and strengthening leadership behaviors enhances team learning for performing adaptive tasks, as these leaders maintain close social relationships, respect, trust, and group cohesion. They encourage speaking up through modeling and requesting feedback, and demonstrate how to provide feedback. Their actions encourage self-leadership and leadership skills.

However, task-centered leadership has limitations for learning in teams with adaptive tasks. Bucic et al (2010) showed that for teams with adaptive tasks, transactional leadership supports team learning behaviors as it provides structures and processes and subsequently reinforces structured routines. Nevertheless, McKeown (2012) and Nouwen et al (2012) discovered that in teams with adaptive tasks, team leaders can excessively control work processes, which hinders team learning. Moreover, they demonstrated that if team leaders do not involve team members in decision-making or share goals and actions with the team, team confidence (in each other and in the leader) decreases and team learning motivation decreases. Therefore, it can be said that individual-centered leadership behavior is essential for supporting team learning, and our findings contribute to understanding the timing and application of this behavior. Leadership behaviors strengthen team learning through individual and task-centered behaviors displayed by a unified leader and team members, including leadership behaviors such as building trust and relationships, empowering and challenging team members, and structuring tasks and goals.