



Original Article (Qualitative)

Designing a Smart Leadership Model for Education Managers

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Abstract

The aim of the present study is to design a smart leadership model for education managers. The research method is applicable according to its purpose, and its method is qualitative and of the type of content analysis. The statistical population includes 12 university professors and scientific research experts with a degree in public administration, as well as education managers and experts in Torbat Heydariyeh city, who were selected through purposive sampling dependent on the selection criteria, and the selection of samples continued until theoretical saturation was reached. The data collection tool is a semi-structured interview. The validity of the research data was examined and confirmed by returning to the participants and external auditors. The content analysis method and Atlas ti8 software were used to analyze the data. The results indicate that 4 organizing themes: pragmatic management, knowledge management, organizational management, and team management were identified and confirmed; and the results also showed that the elements of the smart leadership model for education managers are knowledge management, organizational management, team management, and pragmatic management.

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Extended abstract

Introduction

Today, the issue of leadership is one of the most important topics in the field of organizational behavior, which has been discussed and practiced in various ways for a long time. In the last fifty years, when systemic theories about organizations have been formed, the issue of organizational leadership has also been an important and noteworthy topic, and various discussions and numerous researches have been presented and conducted around it. One of the approaches recently attracted the attention of management experts is intelligent leadership (Haight et al, 2017). Intelligent leadership is an exchange of ideas between a leader and followers in a specific situation, who work effectively with each other to achieve a common vision (Majlesi et al, 2020). Today, future leaders consider it necessary to recognize a change pattern in order to open windows of success for themselves and seize it; and to achieve it, they need many competencies; Smart leadership as a process and competency leadership takes this into account (Marishane & Mampane, 2019). It should be noted that the goal of smart leadership is to create the necessary skills and enthusiasm to achieve organizational leadership knowledge and improve leadership intelligence within individuals. Double effectiveness, strategic and flexible thinking, operational focus, and balance are other knowledge achievements of this theory. In fact, leadership is a real phenomenon and plays a prominent role in the effectiveness of organizations (O'Brien, 2022).

Therefore, the present study, with the aim of designing and developing a model for smart leadership in education using the interpretive structural modeling technique, seeks to design and present a model for smart leadership in education, and answer the question: what the interpretive structural model of smart leadership in education looks like?

Theoretical Framework of Leadership

Leadership is a simple yet elegant concept, which is why there are numerous definitions. Many management experts have different views on what leadership entails, but in general, they agree that leadership involves the power to influence individuals or groups to achieve goals (Amzat et al, 2020).

Smart Leadership

Smart leadership is one of the approaches that management experts have recently paid attention to; therefore, according to leadership theories in new models, an attempt is made to look at the phenomenon of leadership from a creative and intelligent angle (Ali & Rashid, 2020). Smart leadership is an exchange of ideas between a leader and followers in a specific situation, who work effectively with each other to achieve a common vision (Majlesi & Khani, 2019).

Cheraghchi (2023) states in his research that the effectiveness of manager is determined by his management and leadership style. In his research, he examined pragmatic and transformational leadership styles and their types, and showed that a manager, based on his personality and the organization in which he works, can use a specific leadership style or a combination of styles to increase progress and growth. Familiarity with different leadership styles enables an individual to analyze different situations and choose the most appropriate style. He also states that all styles can be effective in specific situations.

Toosi et al, (2022) conducted a study aimed at providing a model for smart leadership in the central organization of Islamic Azad University. In this study, the data in the qualitative section, including three stages of data coding, were analyzed through a coding process and based on a systematic design of grounded theory. The results of the qualitative section indicated the identification of smart leadership components in 5 main components, 21



subcategories, and 98 sub-indices. In the quantitative phase of the research, managers specializing in macro-planning at the middle and senior levels of the Islamic Azad University were selected as the population. The number of staff managers of the central organization of the Islamic Azad University was 114, and the number of staff managers in the provinces was 40, which made a total of 154 people selected as the statistical population. Due to the limited statistical population, the statistical sample was considered equal to the number of 154 people. To collect data from the statistical sample, a researcher-made intelligent leadership questionnaire was used. In the quantitative part, confirmatory factor analysis was first used, and then the relationships between the main indicators were identified using the structural equation model; and after confirming the relationships between the variables, an appropriate model was presented. The findings of the quantitative part showed that the final model of intelligent leadership was confirmed with 5 components of rational leadership, emotional leadership, spiritual leadership, collective leadership, and political leadership.

Research Methodology

The research method is applicable according to its purpose, and its method is qualitative and of the type of content analysis. The statistical population consists of 12 university professors and scientific research experts with a degree in public administration, along with education managers and experts in Torbat Heydariyeh city, selected through purposive sampling dependent on the selection criteria; and the selection of samples continued until theoretical saturation. The data collection tool is a semi-structured interview. The validity of the research data was examined and confirmed through feedback to the participants and external auditors.

Research findings

For data analysis, the content analysis method and Atlas ti8 software were used. The results indicate that 4 organizing themes: pragmatic management, knowledge management, organizational management, and team management were identified and confirmed; and the results as well showed that the components of the intelligent leadership model of education managers are knowledge management, organizational management, team management, and pragmatic management.

Conclusion

The present study was conducted with the aim of designing an intelligent leadership model for education managers. The results of this study are in line with the research of Cheraghchi (2023), Mohtaram & Pakbaz (2023), Fazlail & Moazzami (2023), Toosi et al, (2022), Hejazi & Hossein zadeh (2020), Ali & Rashid (2020), Keikha et al, (2019), Lang (2019), Jalali et al, (2019), Oleksiyenko & Ruan (2018), Keikha (2017), Mohamadi & Farahbakhsh (2015), Rutkauskas & Stasytyte (2013), and Mattone (2013). Lang (2019) showed that given today's changing business environment, what context and platform should be the aim of organizational leaders. Based on published research on the context and platform, this article develops a model of contextual intelligence that can be applied to develop better methods for leadership training. The model encompasses four concerns: contextual sensitivity, situational awareness and judgment, situational adaptability, and response judgment. In the next step, the article focuses on the necessary complexity that leaders must achieve if such a model is to be operationalized. This required complexity includes four components: general cognitive complexity, social complexity, affective complexity, and self-complexity.

In line with the results obtained, the following suggestions are made:

Provide funding for the electronic resource allocation and deployment system.



Design a reward and incentive system that is appropriate for innovative and collaborative employee performance.

Reduce cumbersome rules and processes based on informal structures.

Consider joint goal setting through management by objectives techniques.

Provide special budget to implement an optimal management system for economic and human investments.