

The Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Organizational Learning among High School Principals in Isfahan

Ziba Ghorbanian,

Department of Educational Sciences - Khorasgan (Isfahan) Branch-Islamic Azad University –Isfahan- Iran

Email:zghorbani905@gmail.com

Gholamhossein Mo'meni,

Electric Power Company, Isfahan, Iran

Email:ghm639@gmail.com

Zohreh Ghorbanian

Education Organization, Isfahan, Iran

Email:zghorbani1209@gmail.com

ABSTRACT— This study was conducted aiming at the relation between transformational leadership and organizational learning among school principals in Isfahan in the academic year 2012-2013 using correlational descriptive method. From the total number of 185 high school principals in Isfahan, 125 principals were randomly chosen using the sampling formula of Kukaran (1994). The instrument of the study included the standard questionnaire of transformational leadership by Bass (1992) with 25 items and an organizational learning questionnaire by Gomez et al. (2005) with 14 items which was edited based on 5 degree Likert scale. Facial validity of the questionnaires was developed by the supervisor and consultant supervisor and a number of education experts. The reliability of the questionnaires was determined 0.84 for transformational leadership and 0.77 for organizational learning by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. In order to analyze the findings of descriptive statistics such as mean, percentage, and standard deviation, frequency, inferential statistics, and correlation coefficients, manifold stepwise regression analysis of variance was used. The results of the analysis showed that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership along with its dimensions and organizational learning ($r=0.066$, $p<0.01$). From among the dimensions of transformational leadership, inspirational motivation had the capability of predicting organizational learning.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, Organizational learning, Principals, Education

Introduction

Due to the importance of leadership in organizations, management scholars and researchers try to explore and mention the characteristics of successful leaders. Following these efforts, new visions of leadership came to being among which the latest transformative leadership can be named. Transformational leadership is a kind of leadership in which there is the most self-awareness of group and individual interests among the members of the organization. And this type of leadership helps the members of the organization in achieving their goals (Bass & Avolio) [1]. With more information and better acceptance of the goals of the organization and creating a common view, transformational leadership transforms the process of training and group organizing. This kind of leadership enables the leaders to convince the members to clearly learn and motivate and be the driving force of themselves, and to provide what is needed and to overcome internal and external doubts [2]. Transformational leadership has an interactive view. These kinds of leaders pay great deal of attention to effective creation of communication and shared values, as well as creating a suitable environment for the innovative teams and group gatherings for learning and creating a mutual trust between the members and the leaders of the organization and causing a favorable attitude of being active and risk taker [3]. The expression of the characteristics of the theory of transformational leadership is clearly evident in the four dimensions of this leadership style. In a way that in the dimension of idealized attributes, the leaders consider putting the needs of others before their own needs, refraining from using the power for personal purposes, describing high moral standards, emphasizing trust, offering authentic moral values, paying attention to the moral consequences of decisions and offering prospects (Griffin) [4]. The dimension of inspirational motivation is associated to abilities and features such as picturing the future horizon, challenging the followers by setting high standards, creating passion, using symbols and presenting ideas and mobilizing minds and feelings among the followers. The dimension of individualized consideration happens when the leader has a developmental attitude towards his colleagues and considers each one of them as an independent being and observes their individual needs [5]. The dimension of intellectual stimulation includes actions which help increasing and developing skills among followers to think about old problems in new ways. In fact, the leaders by applying this dimension of their leadership try to increase the ability of the followers in conceptualizing, comprehension, presentation and production of new and improved solutions [1]. The leaders of transformational leadership are the leaders who are deeply respected and trusted. They consider the

members' cooperation and partnership. They delegate responsibility to the followers and use intellectual stimulation to challenge the followers' minds, imaginations and creativity and to understand their values and beliefs [6]. In terms of organization and management, organizational learning is known as a vital tool in promoting creativity, knowledge sharing and improving the performance [7]. With due attention to the role of learning in behavior change, Rodriguez, et al. (2003) consider organizational learning as a union process for supporting the change in organizational behavior [8]. Organizational learning is a kind of ability in sustaining the organization or developing organizational activities through the experience [9]. Gomez et al. [2] have also defined organizational learning as learning or creating knowledge, knowledge transfer and integration of knowledge. Accordingly, these three organizational processes have been considered as the ability of an organization for knowledge processing. In other words, organizational learning has been defined as the ability to create, acquire, transfer and integrate knowledge and to modify the behavior of the organization for reflecting the new situation with the view of improving the performance of the organization [10]. Organizational learning is a tool for changing organizations aiming at improving the situation of the organization and creating competitive advantage for the organization and helps the organization to accommodate itself to the existing changes. In organizational learning, it is tried to systematically increase the knowledge that is created by the members and this knowledge creates the new abilities and knowledge. Individual learning occurs through experience, interview, studying, and expanding the effective mental patterns. But organizational learning occurs when the group learns cooperation and group working and it leads to improvement in group performance and the ability to understand and to execute the effective matters [11]. Organizational learning is one of the numerous ways to benefit from creativity and innovation. Nowadays, learning is the vital road to understanding and adaptation of the rapidly growing change [12]. Therefore, organizations and especially schools which are considered as the main creators of knowledge and information and the axis of development in the society are not immune to modern changes. So, through permanent learning they should prepare members for a confrontation with changing conditions, and to enable members to adapt themselves to new conditions they should institutionalize learning within the organization and in other words become a learning organization. Learning organizations are capable and bold organizations that their foundation is on learning and they consider learning as the best way of performance improvement in the long run. In other words, learning organizations using the virtues, arts, values and abilities of their employees and based on the lessons learned through experience, continuously change and enhance their performance. The main slogan of these organizations is to improve performance. Therefore, in this turbulent environment, education must also be prepared to enter into such an environment and by training human resources promote the schools to learning dynamic organizations with creativity along with transformational leadership in order to improve the organization performance. Thus, according to the mentioned needs, in the present study the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational learning has been discussed. About the connection of two variables, namely leadership styles and organizational learning, several studies have been done, including the following research:

- Research conducted by Enayati [13] entitled 'the relationship between transformational leadership, organizational learning and culture and organizational performance' showed that organizational culture, organizational learning and transformational leadership has a significant positive relationship with organizational performance.
- Javadi [14] in his research entitled 'the relationship between the individual skills, organizational learning, innovation and organizational performance in small and medium industries' showed that individual skills have a significant positive relationship with organizational performance, organizational innovation and learning.
- The research done by Khakzad Bafrouee [15] entitled 'the influence of transformational leadership on organizational learning and knowledge management of the employees of phone company in Kerman province' showed that the inspirational dimension of transformational leadership had not any effect on knowledge management of the organization but the other dimensions of transformational leadership had a positive effect on knowledge management and organizational learning.
- Research conducted by Mirkamaly [16] entitled 'the study of the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational learning (study case: SAIPA Company)' showed that there is a significant positive relationship between the components of transformational leadership and organizational learning. Finally, idealized attributes as one of the aspects of transformational leadership is the most important predictor of organizational learning.
- Tang (2010) [17] in his research entitled 'the relationship between organizational learning and organizational performance' showed that there is a significant positive relationship between organizational learning strategies and organizational performance.
- Garcia et al. [9] in a study entitled 'investigating the effect of transformational leadership on organizational performance through innovation and organizational learning' demonstrated the positive impact of transformational leadership on organizational performance and showed that there is a positive relationship between organizational learning and innovation; organizational innovation has a positive impact on organizational performance as well.

One of the important institutions in today world is educational institutions. The dominant viewpoint in this system is a systematic point of view. That means in this system, resources enter the system and after processes they exit. What happens in this direction to achieve the best output is the education process. During processing, the role of teacher and principal in equipping the members with the new knowledge is very important [18]. These members can help organizational efficiency and effectiveness if they are equipped with the modern knowledge. Applying new styles of leadership for impacting organizational learning and efficiency is one of the important issues that require special attention. According to what was said, this article tries to investigate the relationship between the dimensions of transformational leadership and organizational learning in education.

Research Objectives

General goals

Determining the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational learning among the high schools principals in Isfahan (academic year 2012-2013)

Partial goals

- Determining the relationship between transformational leadership and its dimensions, including the utopian influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual encouragement and individual consideration with organizational learning
- Determining the capability of predictability of organizational learning through transformational leadership dimensions
- Determining the difference between the views of the respondents in the transformational leadership with regard to demographic factors (gender, education degree, age, work experience, district)
- Determining the difference between the views of the respondents in the organizational learning with respect to demographic factors (gender, education degree, age, work experience, district)

Methodology, population, samples, sampling method and research instrument

Considering the purpose, this study is practical and its method is correlational descriptive. The research population consists of Isfahan high schools principals who have been working in the 2012-2013 academic year. Sampling method of the present study is categorical random sampling proportionate to size. This sampling method is used when the population is heterogeneous. In such cases the population is divided into homogeneous categories and then random sampling is done. In this study, according to the number of principals 3 teachers completed the questionnaire related to their principal. A total number of 125 questionnaires were distributed and 5 of them were found useless and consequently 120 questionnaires were analyzed. In surveys, the most common means of collecting information is the questionnaire. Therefore, for data collection in this study two questionnaires namely Bass transformational leadership questionnaire and Gomez et al. organizational learning questionnaire were used as they are explained in the following.

Transformational Leadership Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study is a questionnaire which has been presented by Bass (1992). The questionnaire contains 25 questions that analyze transformational leadership in four dimensions: inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealized attributes, and individualized considerations. Subjects can choose the scores of 1 to 5 based on the Likert-type rating scale and type of question. Table 1 shows the distribution of questions of transformational leadership based on the components of transformational leadership.

Table 1. Distribution of questions of transformational leadership based on the components of transformational leadership

Row	Dimension	Question number
1	inspirational motivation	20-21-23
2	intellectual stimulation	1-5-7-8-15-24-25
3	individualized considerations	3-4-11-13-16
4	idealized attributes	2-6-9-10-12-14-17-18-19-22

Table 2. Likert scale for transformational leadership

Option	Very Little	Little	So-So	Much	Very Much
score	1	2	3	4	5

Organizational Learning Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study is the standard Gomez Organizational Learning questionnaire (2005) consists of 14 questions. Subjects can choose the scores of 1 to 5 based on the Likert-type rating scale and type of question.

Table 3. Likert scale organizational learning

Option	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
score	1	2	3	4	5

Since organizational learning and transformational leadership questionnaires are standard, it is not necessary to check the validity of them. In the present study to determine the reliability of the questionnaires Cronbach's alpha coefficient has been used that is one of the methods of internal consistency. The coefficient for transformational leadership questionnaire was calculated (0.84) and for organizational learning questionnaire it was (0.77). In this study, the Pearson correlation coefficient, stepwise regression and ANOVA were used to analyze the data.

Findings

First question: Is there any relationship between transformational leadership and its dimensions including idealized attributes, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and organizational learning?

Table 4. The correlation coefficient between transformational leadership and its dimensions and organizational learning

Criterion Variable	Organizational learning		
	Statistical Index		
Predictor Variable	Square Root Of Correlation Coefficient	Correlation Coefficient	Significant Level
Transformational Leadership	0.669**	0.448	0.001
Idealized Attributes	0.538**	0.289	0.001
Inspirational Motivation	0.679**	0.461	0.001
Intellectual Stimulation	0.666**	0.444	0.001
Individualized Consideration	0.660**	0.436	0.001

p<0.01

Results from Table 4 show that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and its dimensions, including idealized attributes, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and organizational learning (r =0.669). Based on the coefficient of determination (r²) 44.8 percent of the variance was common in transformational leadership and its dimensions, including idealized attributes, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and organizational learning. So the first question that is if there is any relationship between transformational leadership and its dimensions, including idealized attributes, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and organizational learning is confirmed.

Second question: Which aspect of transformational leadership is capable of predicting organizational learning?

Table 5. Table of multiple correlation coefficient transformational leadership and organizational learning

Statistical Indicator	Predictor Variable	Multiple Correlation Coefficient	Square Root of Multiple Correlation Coefficient	Adjusted Square Root of Multiple Correlation Coefficient	Coefficient F	Significant Level	
Criterion Variable							
Organizational Learning	First Step	Inspirational Motivation	0.697	0.485	0.480	91.501	0.001

P<0.01

As the results of Table 5 show, inspirational motivation is the best predictor of organizational learning among the variables in the regression study. Based on stepwise regression analysis, the relationship between variables inspirational motivation and organizational learning has been significant. Accordingly, in the first step, inspirational motivation coefficient explains 48.5 percent of the variance in organizational learning. The observed F at the level of p <0.01 was significant so the regression can be generalized to the population.

Table 6. Beta coefficient table in anticipation of organizational learning through transformational leadership dimensions

Statistical Indicator	Predictor Variable	Non Standard Beta Coefficient	Beta Standard Error		Standard Beta Coefficient	Coefficient T	Significant Level
Organizational Learning	First Step	Inspirational Motivation	2.455	0.257	0.697	9.566	0.001

p<0.01

The results in Table 6 indicate that beta coefficient increases 0.697 units in organizational learning per each unit of increase in inspirational motivation. Predictive equation of the second question of the study is presentable as the following:

$$\text{Organizational learning} = \text{constant coefficient (23.703)} + \text{inspirational motivation (2.455)}$$

Table 7. Variables out of the regression equation for predicting the organizational learning through transformational leadership dimensions

First Step	SCALE	BETA	T Amount	Significant Level
		idealized attributes	0.103	1.333
	intellectual stimulation	0.295	1.578	0.118
	individualized consideration	295	1.925	0.057

p<0.05

As it can be seen from Table 7, the relationship between idealized attributes, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and organizational learning is not significant.

Third question: Is there a significant difference in the views of the respondents in the transformational leadership with regard to demographic factors (gender, education degree, age, work experience, district)?

Table 8. Multivariate analysis of variance between the scores of the respondents in the transformational leadership with respect to demographic variables (gender, age, education degree, work experience, district)

Source	Sum of Square Roots	Degree of Freedom	Average of Square Roots	F	Significant Level
Gender	228.451	1	228.451	1.977	0.164
Education Degree	265.578	1	265.578	2.298	0.134
Age	648.101	2	324.050	2.804	0.067
Work Experience	308.154	2	154.077	1.333	0.270
District	21.665	2	10.832	0.094	0.911

The results in Table 8 show that there is not a significant difference in transformational leadership in terms of gender, age, education degree, work experience, and district.

The fourth question: Is there a significant difference in the views of the respondents in the organizational learning with respect to demographic factors?

Table 9. Multivariate analysis of variance between respondents scores in organizational learning with respect to demographic variables (gender, age, education degree, work experience, district)

Source	Sum of Square Roots	Degree of Freedom	Average of Square Roots	F	Significant Level
Gender	10.225	1	10.225	0.351	0.555
Education Degree	76.393	1	76.393	2.625	0.109
Age	83.083	2	41.542	1.428	0.246
Work Experience	128.809	2	64.404	2.213	0.116
District	44.517	2	22.258	0.765	0.469

The results in Table 9 show that there is not a significant difference in the views of the respondents in organizational learning with respect to gender, age, education degree, work experience, and district.

Discussion and Conclusion

First question: Is there any relationship between transformational leadership and its dimensions including idealized attributes, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and organizational learning? Results of Table 4 show that there is a significant relationship ($r=0.669$) between transformational leadership and its dimensions including idealized attributes, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and organizational learning. Based on the coefficient of determination (r^2), 44.8 percent of the variance is common in transformational leadership and its dimensions including idealized attributes, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and organizational learning. The results of this part of the research is in accordance with the results of the research of Garcia et al. (2011), Khakzar (2011), Enayati (2009) that there is a positive and significant relationship between transformational leadership and organizational learning. For clarifying these results it can be stated that the transformational leadership theory is an excellent theory for developing an organization. It helps creating a learning organization with internal motivation. Leaders in transformational leadership see leadership from a modern point of view and they are unanimous in applying the capabilities of their followers. The emergence of the theory of transformational leadership is a new version of leaders' prominent characteristics such as intelligence, charisma, inspiration capability, better relation with superiors, referral power, intellectual stimulation, considering individual differences, and creating substantial changes. These leaders' goal is to expand trust and relation which can improve the transformation process through mental stimulation and transformational leadership. Learning needs changing, and changing needs transformational leadership. In intellectual stimulation aspect, transformational leaders act as a catalyst to ease organizational learning and to promote mental models and to encourage organizational learning through intellectual stimulation. Therefore, the relationship between the aspect of intellectual stimulation in transformational leadership and organizational learning can be explained. In individualized consideration aspect, leaders are their followers' stimulants and they send away from the staff whatever causes doubt and hesitation when encountering internal and external problems. In individualized consideration aspect, leaders provide a suitable environment for innovation in groups and cause a favorable attitude towards change and thereby cause a suitable vision for learning. In the inspirational motivation aspect, leaders in transformational leadership create a common vision through creating greater awareness and acceptance of the purpose and mission of the organization and they change education process and teamwork construction. When the process of organizational learning increases, mutual trust among the members of the organization is created. In transformational leadership, leaders in the aspect of inspirational stimulation encourage trust and open relationship. They promote the culture of communication and cooperation among the members of the group and in this manner they help a lot in acquiring, distributing and commenting the knowledge. In the aspect of idealized attributes, leaders of transformational leadership indirectly help organizational learning through their impact on the relationships

between leaders and followers; in a way that followers after accepting and trusting their leaders react more rapidly and would show more flexibility towards organizational changes. Also, leaders of transformational leadership facilitate the members' cognitive and behavioral changes which occur through learning. The employees by accepting their leaders as their model role would think critically about their own experience and actions and consequently develop common goals and would participate in decision makings. This process also causes knowledge connection among the members. Successful and influential managers create a learning organization, improve cooperation and finally cause the promotion of professional assemblies in the organization.

Second question: Which aspect of transformational leadership is capable of predicting organizational learning?

As the results of Table 5 show, from among the studied variables in the regression, the best predictor of organizational learning in the first place is inspirational motivation. Based on stepwise regression analysis, there is a significant relationship between inspirational motivation variable and organizational learning. Accordingly, in the first step, inspirational motivation coefficient explains 48.5 percent of the variance in organizational learning. The observed F at the level of $p < 0.01$ is significant so the regression can be generalized to the population. The results in Table 6 indicate that beta coefficient increases organizational learning 0.697 units per each unit increase in inspirational motivation. As it can be seen from Table 7, the relationship between idealized attributes, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and organizational learning is not significant.

Third question: Is there a significant difference in the views of the respondents in the transformational leadership with regard to demographic factors (gender, education degree, age, work experience, district)?

The results in Table 8 show that there is not a significant difference in transformational leadership in terms of gender, age, education degree, work experience, and district. In other words, respondents' views about transformational leadership with regard to gender, age, education degree, work experience, and district have been the same.

The fourth question: Is there a significant difference in the views of the respondents in the organizational learning with respect to demographic factors (gender, education degree, age, years of experience, district)?

The results in Table 9 show that there is not a significant difference in organizational learning in terms of gender, age, education degree, work experience, and district. In other words, the respondents' views on organizational learning with respect to gender, age, education degree, work experience, and district are the same.

References

- 1- Bass, B.M., Avolio, B.J. (2005). MLQ multifactor leadership questionnaire technical report. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- 2- Senge, P. (1990). The fifth discipline: The art and practice of learning organization. New York.
- 3- Parizim, B. Z., Kaliki, M., and Sobhan Elahi, M. (2011). The role of revolutionized management on the organizations. 4th ed. Tehran: Khorshid
- 4- Griffin, R. W., woodman, R. W., sawyer, J. E. (2003). Toward a theory of Organizational Creativity. Journal of the Academy of Management.
- 5- Afje, A. (2005). Philosophical introduction and organizational-behavioristic theories. Tehran: Samt Publication.
- 6- Mogli, A. (2002). Organizational and learning management. Journal of Management roles.
- 7- Yousefi, F. (2008). Measuring the organizational learning in different branches of the supportive organization of producers and consumers. Master's thesis, high Institute of management research and planning in public management field.
- 8- Rodriguez, S., Perez, J., and Delval, M. (2003). An empirical study about the effect of cultural problematic on organizational learning in alliances. Journal of The Learning Organization, 17:70-93.
- 9- García, M., Lloréns, M., and Verdú, J. (2011). Antecedents and consequences of organizational innovation and organizational learning in entrepreneurship. Industrial Management & Data Systems. 106:21-42.
- 10- Gomez, P., Lorente, J., and Cabrera, R. (2005). Organizational learning capability, A proposal of measurement. Journal of Business Research, 58: 715-725.
- 11- Bennet, A. and Bennet, D. (2008). The partnership between organizational learning based on knowledge management. Journal of Green, 12:90-111.
- 12- Marcuart, M. (2008). Creating learning organization. (M. Zali, Trans.). Tehran: Tehran University.
- 13- Enayati, M. (2009). The relationship between revolutionary management, culture, and organizational learning, together with organizational operation. MA thesis. Tehran: Tehran University.
- 14- Javadi, M. (2009). The relationship between individual skills, organizational learning, innovation and organizational operation in the small and average industries. Master's thesis, Tarbiyat Modarres University.
- 15- Khakzadbafrouyee, N. (2011). On the effect of revolutionary management on organizational learning and the knowledge management of the staff of the telecommunication company in Kerman. Master's thesis, Yazd University.
- 16- Mirkamali, B. (2011). On the analysis of the relationship between revolutionary management and organizational learning: A case study on Saipa Company. Master's thesis, Allameh Tabatabayee University.
- 17- Taung, M. (2010). Relationship between organizational learning and organizational performance. Journal of Bb Management, 12: 87-110.
- 18- Morales, L. Daniela, B. Jourjia, T. Lankom, P. (2008). The relationship between leadership and organizational performance. Journal of Governi University of Oxford, 76: 740-890.