

Predicting the Effectiveness of School Principals Based on Fiedler's Leadership Model

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to predict the effectiveness of Zahedan elementary school principals based on the triple factors of position in the Fiedler leadership model. The presented study was a descriptive correlational study in which 356 elementary school teachers were studied with stratified randomized sampling through two questionnaires including determining the leadership situation and the effectiveness of school administrators. The correlation coefficient and simultaneous multiple regression were used for data analysis with the help of SPSS software. Based on results, there was a positive and significant relationship between the three factors of leadership position (authority, leader-member relationship, duty structure). The results of multiple regression analysis also showed that the three situational factors can predict the effectiveness of school principals. Therefore, it can be concluded that school administrators should benefit from good authority, have good interactions with teachers and emphasize the structure of tasks to increase their effectiveness.

Keywords: *effectiveness, Fiedler's leadership model, school principals*

Introduction

Various definitions have been presented of effectiveness. For example, organizational effectiveness, from the viewpoint of Daft, is referred to as the extent to which the organization approaches its goals or, as stated by Robbins, organizational effectiveness is a situation in which the organization uses resources to a limited extent and can achieve goals according to the determined criteria (Hasani and Samari, 2010). Therefore, organizational effectiveness is the extent to which organizational goals are realized. It has also been mentioned in another definition that the organization's effectiveness is the extent to which it realizes its long-term and short-term goals, identifies its effective strategic factors and meets the needs (Bakhtiari et al., 2013). Thus, it can be accepted that effectiveness is the criterion of achieving the goals of the organization.

Educational organizations attempt to achieve the goals of their organizations and this effort provides a framework for studying and evaluating the effectiveness of the school (Zaki, 2010). Due to the sensitivity and importance of the quality of education as well as its effect on the future of their children, students' parents are strongly inclined to send their children to schools where they have good and effective performance according to their research, (Hasani & Samari, 2010).

The success of schools depends on the realization of educational goals and achieving these goals depends on effective management and leadership (Ranjbar et al., 2014). School principals have the greatest impact on school goals, especially students. To do this, they do a variety of activities. They provide a capable, efficient and deserving force. They also supply resources which are necessary to build and address them. Moreover, they coordinate, direct and control the school and do any other things they recognize as the necessary activities to achieve educational goals. Hence, the future of schools and their improvement depend on their effective management (Bakhtiari et al., 2013).

The effectiveness of educational managers is of particular importance and it seems that effective learning, which is the main focus of all activities in school, is largely owed to the school and the effective principal. It can be said that successful management requires efficiency and effectiveness (Alagheband, 2011). Without leadership efforts, a manager cannot achieve the fundamental mission of securing the success of school students. In a school where there is ineffective leadership and management, the training task is not well done while in a school where there is effective leadership and management, not only are the teachers able to do their job, but also the employees and students are well-motivated and individuals know their goals (Abdollahi and Heidarifar, 2014).

One of the factors influencing the effectiveness of managers is their leadership style. But research shows that there is no definite leadership style that would ensure effectiveness in all situations. As indicated in the study of Hina et al. (2014), there is a positive, strong and meaningful correlation between the communication competences of supervisors, task-oriented leadership as well as relationship-oriented styles and staff performance. Taberero & Arana (2009) claim that task-oriented leadership style has a greater and positive impact on group effectiveness while the relationship-oriented leadership style causes greater coherence among the members of the group. According to Muchiri et al. (2011), effective leadership emphasizes justice, equality, honesty, employee development, fostering workplace coordination and trust. Luthans & Peterson (2002) state that employees' participation and managers' effectiveness affect each other.

One of the prevailing styles of leadership is Fiedler's contingency model. This model is one of the positional theories of leadership in which constructive leaders have no specific attributes and specifications but specific conditions and interactions between the leader's personality and the conditions of the group cause leaders to become effective. According to Fiedler, three factors, i.e. leader-member relations, the structure of duty and the power of authority in the leader, determine the situational desirability. Leader-member relationships refer to the degree of mutual trust, respect and confidence between the leader and their subordinates while the structure of duty is related to the degree of clarity and stability of the job. Furthermore, the power of authority is associated with the internal and external power of the position that the leader has achieved and can apply. According to Fiedler's theory, an effective leader will have good relationships with their employees, will express the structure of duty clearly and they also have good authority (Sharif et al., 2006).

Based on the research in management science, human resources are the main resources of each organization and the success of organizations is linked to the effective use of human resources and from the findings it follows that the success and effectiveness of the organization depends, to a large extent, on the desirable use of potential forces, especially human resources. The realization of this goal is subject to the appropriate leadership style. The effectiveness of leadership in organizations depends on the styles that leaders use. Fiedler's contingency theory is one of the most prestigious theories of contemporary leadership which is designed to provide a conceptual framework for determining the effective factors in leadership effectiveness. Based on this model, effective group performance depends on the leader's position power, leader-member relations, and task structure. According

to Fiedler, the effectiveness of the outcome of the implementation of leadership attitudes and the constraints and conditions of leadership. Considering the importance of management and leadership in the education sector, and since the assumptions of Fiedler's contingency theory have been studied and emphasized in military and administrative-business areas, and according to the importance of educational leadership and to clarify the importance of leadership style in the effectiveness of school principals, this research aimed to test the relationship between the Fiedler leadership style and the effectiveness of school principals. Therefore, the main objective of this study was to predict the effectiveness of primary school principals in Zahedan based on the positional factors of leadership in Fiedler's theory, i.e., the leader-member relations, the structure of duty and power of authority by referring to the materials mentioned.

Research Method

The presented study is a descriptive correlation. Based on the Cochran sampling formula, 356 teachers of Zahedan city were selected by stratified random sampling. Two questionnaires were used to collect data:

A) The Determination of Leadership position Questionnaire by Sharif et al. (2006): The questionnaire examines the role of the leadership of school principals and it is in the form of 3 components and 46 items: Executive power (16 items), Functional structure of manager (15 items) and manager interactions with employees (15 items).

(B) The questionnaire on the effectiveness of school administrators by Alagheband (1992): The questionnaire is presented in the form of 6 components (teacher leadership, relationships with students, relationships with parents, proper treatment of teachers, assessment methods, school administration) and 30 items (each component with 5 items) which assesses the effectiveness of school administrators.

The Questionnaire was set based on a five-point Likert scale (the method of grading was determined from 1 = too low up to 5 = very high). To determine its reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used, in which the Cronbach alpha value for the leadership determination questionnaire was 0.89 and it was 0.87 for the questionnaire of managers' effectiveness. For data analysis, inferential statistics of the Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple simultaneous regressions were implemented using SPSS software.

Results

To examine the relationship between the situational leadership style (and its triple factors) and management effectiveness, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used at the first stage (Table 1).

Table 1. Pearson correlation coefficients of situational leadership style and management effectiveness

Variable	Leadership of teachers	Interactions with students	Interactions with parents	Worthy treatment	Staff assessment	School Administration	Management Effectiveness
Power of Authority	0.726	0.685	0.712	0.704	0.752	0.761	0.805
Interactions	0.659	0.661	0.65	0.708	0.706	0.69	0.755
Structuring	0.693	0.634	0.607	0.632	0.697	0.69	0.733
Leadership style	0.759	0.722	0.717	0.744	0.786	0.781	0.836

* All coefficients at the level of 0.001 are significant.

The findings presented in Table 1 indicate that all the correlation coefficients between the management effectiveness and the situational leadership style as well as its triple factors (and its dimensions) are positive and significant ($p < 0.01$). At the second stage, after discovering a positive and meaningful relationship between the situational leadership style and management effectiveness, multiple regressions were used simultaneously to estimate the relationship (Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of simultaneous multiple regressions

	Standard coefficients			Non-Standard coefficients		T	Sig
	Beta	Std. Error	B				
Power of authority	0.482	0.146	1.44	9.87	0.000		
Interactions	0.33	0.134	1.004	1.48	0.000		
Structuring	0.109	0.131	0.282	2.16	0.031		
Sig=0.000 f= 297.785 R2= 0.717 R= 0.847							

Based on the findings presented in Table 2, the value of the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.847 and the coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.717, i.e., 71.7% of the variations in the criterion variable (management effectiveness) can be explained based on the predicting variables and the rest belongs to other variables, not included in this study. Moreover, with respect to the significance of the β coefficients, the zero assumption that “beta coefficients are zero” is rejected with the confidence of 99%. Among the three factors of organizational health, authority with the value of β (0.482), interactions with β (0.33) and task structure with β value (0.109) have the greatest impact on management effectiveness.

Discussion and conclusion

The findings of this study show that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between the effectiveness of primary school administrators and three situational factors, i.e., the power of the principal, interactions of the manager with subordinates and constructing a task. Also, the results of multiple regressions indicate that all the three factors including authority of the manager, administrators’ interactions with subordinates and task structure can predict the effectiveness of school administrators. The findings of Sharif et al (2006) also showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the three factors of position in Fiedler’s leadership style and effectiveness. Leadership style affects the efficiency and effectiveness of employees and ultimately the organization directly and indirectly as a facilitating and provocative factor (Chukwuneye, 2004).

Leaders who communicate with their staff, pay attention to their individual differences, help employees implement their potential talents and enhance the sense of responsibility for their duties in the organization, not only strengthen independence and work challenges and accelerate inspirational motivation in the organization by promoting thinking in the work processes but also take steps in order to strengthen the organizational culture and finally cause organizational effectiveness in their respective organizations (Nazari et al., 2012).

According to the findings of this study and in order to enhance the effectiveness of the school, it is suggested that:

School principals should try to benefit from the legal support of higher authorities of the education organization and use their legal influence and support in the interest of school teachers (agent of authority), increase the teachers’ commitment to the goals and values of the school and the education organization (agent of interacting with subordinates) by showing emotions, friendly, supportive, open

and collaborative behavior along with respect, mutual trust and finally they should clearly specify goals, tasks and expectations of the organization, maintain accurate performance standards and avoid non-structural work (structuring agent).

One of the most important limitations of this study is the statistical population, which was limited to the principal and teachers of the elementary school in Zahedan. Therefore, the results should not be generalized to other managers or staff.

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