

EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' TRANSFORMATIONAL AND TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLES AND TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine the relationships between school principals' transformational and transactional leadership styles and teachers' organizational commitment. A total of 237 primary school teachers employed in Ankara participated in the study. The "Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire" developed by Bass and Avolio (1995) and "Organizational Commitment Questionnaire" developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) were used to gather data. Results indicated that school principals were more likely to perform transformational leadership style than transactional leadership styles. Teachers' commitment scores were the highest in continuance commitment. There were significant relationships between transformational and transactional leadership styles of principals and organizational commitment of teachers. Results also showed that motivation by inspiration and individualized consideration predicted affective commitment significantly. While contingent reward dimension of leadership styles was the only significant predictor of teacher continuance commitment, management by exceptions (passive) and laissez-faire significantly predicted normative commitment.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, organizational commitment, teacher, school principal

Introduction

The problems which people face in organizational environment might reduce the effectiveness and performance. One of these problems is stress in organizations (Norfolk, 1989). It is pointed out that stress stemming from job might cause some problems (Baltaş & Baltaş, 2000). The studies on organizational environment indicate that the reason for employees' job stress comes from the behaviors of organizational administrators (O'Driscoll & Beehr, 1994) and that administrators' behaviors are related to various variables (Cemaloğlu, 2007). In the studies which were carried out in educational organizations, significant relations were found between school principals' leadership behaviors and teachers' motivation level and morale (Kabadayı, 1982), motivation (Webb, 2007), job satisfaction (Bogler, 2001) and mobbing (Cemaloğlu, 2007).

One of the reasons that reduces organizational effectiveness and productivity is the low level of organizational commitment. Studies demonstrated that in the case of low level of organizational commitment, organizational trust decreases (Yılmaz, 2008). School principals' leadership behaviors are accepted to be one of the reasons for the problems that occur in the school and these problems prevent school from reaching its objectives (O'Driscoll & Beehr, 1994). Moreover, the relationships between leadership behaviors and organizational commitment are frequently studied and discussed in the study. Some researches indicate that there is a significant relationship between organizational commitment and leadership (Yavuz, 2008). Concordantly, it is assumed that examining the relationship between school principals' leadership styles and the level of teachers' organizational commitment is important for explaining the important problems at schools and finding solutions for them.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is defined as finding the current energy in followers by creating an active interaction environment in the organization and mobilizing this energy in the direction of organizational objectives. Primary objective of transformational leaders is to increase the perception of success in the organization and to motivate the organization's members (Bass, 2000). Transformational leaders motivate the followers to realize organizational objectives by gaining their confidence. Transformational leaders make the employees be disposed to deal with problems and difficulties they encounter and they provide autonomy for them to increase their performance and efficacy (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003). Currie and Lockett (2007) state about the transformational leadership as a leadership style for meeting the needs of followers and a leadership that is sensitive to differences. Transformational leadership is analyzed in four different dimensions; namely, idealized influence (behavior or attributed), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). *Idealized influence* means leader's determining institutions' vision and mission by incorporating the followers to the process (Karip, 1998). *Inspirational motivation* is creation of team spirit by the leader to reach organizational objectives and to increase the performance (Hall, Johnson, Wysocki, & Kepner, 2002). *Intellectual stimulation* is leader's supporting the followers for being creative and innovative (Bass, 2000). *Individualized consideration* is related to creation of a suitable and supportive environment in which individual differences and needs are considered (Bass, 1989), and the thoughts of the followers are valued (Tourish & Pinnington, 2002).

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is related to motivating the employees and making them do the works with the help of external motivators such as organizational rewards (Bass, 2000). As Tengilimoğlu (2005) emphasizes that transactional leader generally works with a focus on continuing the works of the past and

transferring them to future. Nguni, Slegers, and Denessen (2006) suggest that transactional leaders are not interested in people's personal development. They prefer a policy which is about preserving the current situation. Transactional leadership has four dimensions: Conditional reward, management by exceptions (active), management by exceptions (passive) and laissez-faire (Bass, 2000; Karip, 1998). *Contingent reward* means a process of mutual transaction in which leader is trying to motivate the followers by rewards and promises (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). *Management by exceptions (active)* is about leader's observing employees' performance and correcting their mistakes (Bass, 1985). *Management by exceptions (passive)* means leader's not intervening the organizational problems until they acquire a stricter situation and not acting before any kind of mistakes occurs (Karip, 1998). *Laissez-faire* is a leadership style in which the leader never intervenes the administrative processes and gives limitless freedom to the followers (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Karip, 1998).

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is a concept related to a lot of variables which affect the organizational behavior (Dee, Henkin, & Singleton, 2006). Organizational commitment is defined as a process in which employees internalize the values of the organization, keep on staying at the organization to get the results of their investments on the organization and they think that staying at the organization is a moral and ethical responsibility (Allen & Meyer, 1990). According to Park and Rainey (2007) organizational commitment means the bond between organization and the employee. Bogler and Somech (2004) note that the employees engaged in the organization want to have active roles in the organization. They want to have an impact on the programs, procedures or strategies of the organization. Organizational commitment has been examined in three dimensions: *Affective commitment* means employees' being identified with the organization they work for. *Continuance commitment* is related to employee's staying in the organization considering the price he/she will have to pay if he/she leaves the organization. *Normative commitment* is associated with the obligation that employees feel about staying in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Method

Participants

A total of 237 randomly selected teachers employed in 18 primary schools in Ankara participated in this correlational study. 139 (59%) of the participants are female, 98 (41%) of them are male. 80 (34%) of them are of the ages between 21 and 30, 113 (48%) of them are of the ages between 31-40, and 44 (18%) of them are of the ages 41 or above. Besides this, 35 (15%) of the teachers who participated in the research are science and mathematics teachers, 50 (21%) of them are social sciences teachers, 13 of them (5%) are fine arts teachers, 35 (15%) of them are preschool teachers, and 104 (44%) of them are classroom teachers.

Instruments

Multi Factor Leadership Questionnaire-Evaluation Form (5x short). This form was developed by Bass and Avolio (1995) and translated into Turkish by Cemaloğlu (2007) to examine school principals' leadership styles. There are 20 items related to transformational leadership, idealized influence (behavior) (4 items), idealized influence (attributed) (4 items), motivation by inspiration (4 items), intellectual stimulation (4 items), individualized consideration (4 items). There are 16 items in transactional leadership, conditional reward (4 items), management by exceptions (active) (4 items), management by exceptions (passive) (4 items) and Laissez-faire (4 items). Likert scale of 5 items was used in the evaluation of the items. In the reliability study which was carried out by Cemaloğlu, Cronbach's Alpha consistency coefficient was found to be .95. In this study, reliability coefficient for transformational leadership is .89, while it is .60 for transactional leadership.

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire. To measure the level of organizational commitment Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) which was developed by Meyer and Allen (1990) was used in this study. This questionnaire includes three subscales: Affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Although the questionnaire has gone through reliability and validity tests many times the reliability and validity of the questionnaire were tested again in this research. As a result of the analysis three factors were found in organizational commitment questionnaire. Total variance explained by three factors is approximately 57%. The first factor constitutes 29.385%, second factor constitutes 19.052%, third factor constitutes 8.450% of the total variance. Total item correlation is between .41 and .86. Total reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was found as .74. Internal consistency coefficients of continuance, affective, and normative commitments were .88, .72, and .63, respectively.

Data Analysis

Data was collected through survey method. Data was recorded on SPSS 15 program. Descriptive statistics methods were used for evaluating teachers' leadership styles. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to find out the relationships among variables for all the teachers who participated in the study. Standard multiple regression analysis was used to predict the dependent variables (components of teacher organizational commitment) by the independent variables (dimensions of school principals leadership styles).

Results

First of all, teachers' perceptions about school principals' leadership styles and teachers' organizational commitment were analyzed and then the relationships between leadership styles and teachers' organizational commitment levels were analyzed.

Table 1 Teachers' Perceptions about School Principals' Leadership Styles and Their Organizational Commitment Levels (n = 237)

Variables	\bar{X}	S
<i>Leadership Styles</i>		
Idealized Influence (Behavior) (IIB)	2.96	1.00
Idealized Influence (Attributed) (IIA)	2.51	.81
Motivation by Inspiration (MI)	2.81	.72
Intellectual Stimulation (IS)	2.53	.76
Individualized Consideration (IC)	2.50	.76
Conditional Reward (CR)	2.74	.72
Management by Exceptions (Active) (MEA)	2.24	.70
Management by Exceptions (Passive) (MEP)	1.61	.80
Laissez-Faire (LF)	1.40	.91
<i>Organizational Commitment</i>		
Affective Commitment (AC)	2.77	.86
Continuance Commitment (CC)	3.72	.85
Normative Commitment (NC)	3.32	.90

As can be seen from Table 1, school principals mostly use the idealized influence (behavior) (\bar{X} = 2.96). Generally, it is seen that school principals prefer transformational leadership style to transactional leadership style. In other words, principals are trying to motivate teachers by persuasion and they prefer being active by effecting the employees. When the standard deviation values are analyzed, it is clear that the most heterogenic distribution is in idealized influence dimension (behavior) (S = 1.00), and the most homogenous distribution is in management by exceptions (active) dimension (S = .70). When teachers' organizational commitment levels are analyzed, affective commitment is the commitment dimension that has the least value (\bar{X} = 2.77) and continuance commitment is the commitment dimension which has the most value (\bar{X} = 3.72). In other words, teachers base their commitment for the organization they work on the economic interest mostly. On the other hand, the low level of affective commitment of teachers might mean that teachers cannot be identified with the school and they cannot devote themselves to their schools

properly. Also, standard deviation values for commitment subscales seem to be similar; affective commitment (S = .86), continuance commitment (S = .85) and normative commitment (S = .90)

Table 2 The Relationship between School Principals' Leadership Styles and Organizational Commitment Levels

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. IIB	-	.53**	.58**	.53**	.53**	.57**	.30**	-.25**	-.31**	-.10	.40**	.07
2. IIA		-	.72**	.78**	.78**	.77**	.33**	-.23**	-.42**	-.21**	.52**	.23**
3. MI			-	.75**	.65**	.66**	.33**	-.23**	-.43**	-.28**	.44**	.12
4. IS				-	.76**	.76**	.34**	-.24**	-.47**	-.24**	.53**	.23**
5. IC					-	.72**	.40**	-.29**	-.41**	-.11	.50**	.27**
6. CR						-	.40**	-.27**	-.49**	-.25**	.58**	.19**
7. MEA							-	.09	-.05	-.04	.24**	.19**
8. MEP								-	.64**	.14*	-.26**	-.10
9. LF									-	.24**	-.35**	-.03
10. AC										-	-.23**	.27**
11. CC											-	.32**
12. NC												-

** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

As can be seen from Table 2, affective commitment was negatively correlated with idealized influence (attributed) ($r = -.21, p < .01$), motivation by inspiration ($r = -.28, p < .01$), intellectual stimulation ($r = -.24, p < .01$), conditional reward ($r = -.25, p < .01$), however, it was positively and significantly associated with management by exceptions (passive) ($r = .14, p < .05$) and laissez-faire ($r = .24, p < .01$). Teachers' continuance commitment was positively and significantly related to idealized influence (behavior) ($r = .40, p < .01$), idealized influence (attributed) ($r = .52, p < .01$), motivation by inspiration ($r = .44, p < .01$), intellectual stimulation ($r = .53, p < .01$), individualized consideration ($r = .50, p < .01$), contingent reward ($r = .58, p < .01$), management by exceptions (active) ($r = .24, p < .01$), however, it was negatively and significantly related to management by exceptions (passive) ($r = -.26, p < .01$) and laissez-faire ($r = -.35, p < .01$). Normative commitment dimension was positively and significantly correlated with idealized influence (attributed) ($r = .23, p < .01$), intellectual stimulation ($r = .23, p < .01$), individualized consideration ($r = .27, p < .01$), contingent reward ($r = .19, p < .01$), and management by exceptions (active) ($r = .19, p < .01$).

Table 3 Results of Regression Analyses for the Components of Teacher Commitment

Variables	Affective ^a			Continuance ^b			Normative ^c		
	β	t	p	β	t	p	β	t	p
(Constant)		9.82	.00		7.13	.00		6.94	.00
IIB	.11	1.38	.17	.06	.86	.39	-.12	-1.50	.14
IIA	-.05	-.38	.71	.09	.87	.39	.18	.96	.34
MI	-.26	-2.55	.01	-.03	-.38	.70	-.15	-1.48	.14
IS	-.08	-.63	.53	.13	1.27	.20	.18	1.48	.14
IC	.21	2.50	.01	.05	.51	.61	.18	1.64	.10
CR	.11	-1.67	.09	.33	3.34	.00	.01	.05	.96
MEA	.02	.31	.76	.02	.27	.79	.12	1.71	.09
MEP	.04	.46	.65	-.09	-1.32	.19	-.18	-2.18	.03
LF	.11	1.20	.23	-.01	-.10	.92	.20	2.21	.03

^a $R = .37, R^2 = .14; F = 4.02, p < .05.$

^b $R = .61, R^2 = .37; F = 14.78, p < .05.$

^c $R = .36, R^2 = .13; F = 3.71, p < .05.$

Table 3 shows the results of standard multiple regressions for variables predicting the affective, continuance, and normative components of teacher organizational commitment. A multiple R of .37 explained 14% of the variance in affective commitment scores. Inspirational motivation ($\beta = -.26, p < .05$) and individualized consideration ($\beta = .21, p < .05$) predicted affective commitment significantly. However, idealized influence (behavior) ($\beta = .11, p > .05$), idealized influence (attributed) ($\beta = -.05, p > .05$), intellectual stimulation ($\beta = -.08, p > .05$), contingent reward ($\beta = .11, p > .05$), management by exceptions (active) ($\beta = .02, p > .05$), management by exceptions (passive) ($\beta = .04, p > .05$) and laissez-faire ($\beta = .11, p > .05$) were not significant in predicting affective commitment. For continuance commitment, 37% of the variance was explained by the dimensions of leadership styles. Only the contingent reward dimension of leadership styles was the significant predictor of teacher continuance commitment ($\beta = .33, p < .05$) while the other eight leadership styles' dimensions were statistically insignificant. For the normative commitment factor, regression analysis produced a multiple R of .36, which explained 13 % of the variance. Management by exceptions (passive) ($\beta = -.18, p < .05$) and laissez-faire ($\beta = .20, p < .05$) significantly predicted teacher normative commitment. Idealized influence (behavior), idealized influence (attributed), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, contingent reward and management by exceptions (active) were not significant predictors of the normative commitment.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, teachers' perceptions about their own organizational commitment levels and about school principals' leadership styles are analyzed. In addition, relationships between school principals' transformational and transactional leadership styles and teachers' organizational commitment levels became the subject of the research. This study using leadership styles as the predictors of organizational commitment has supported the argument that school principals' leadership styles is a meaningful construct for understanding and explaining teacher organizational commitment in Turkish primary schools. It was put forward that school principals prefer transformational leadership style to transactional leadership style and that teachers' continuance commitment levels are higher than affective and normative commitment. This may suggest that teachers give more importance to economic earnings than personal satisfaction. In other aspect, a quite number of studies reveal the fact that teaching is a very stressful and tiring job (Austin, Shah, & Muncer, 2005; Capel, 1991; Dick & Wagner, 2001; Tsiakkiros & Pashiardis, 2006) and also teachers are easily criticized by the community (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991). This may result in low affective and normative commitment for teachers.

In this study, significant relationships between school principals' leadership styles and teachers' organizational commitment levels were found. School principals' showing the behaviors of idealized influence (behavior), idealized influence (attributed), motivation by inspiration, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, conditional reward and management by exceptions (active) are negatively related to teachers' affective commitment. In contrast, teachers' affective commitment is positively correlated with principals' using management by exceptions (passive) and laissez-faire leadership styles. Management by exceptions (passive) and laissez-faire are such kind of leadership styles in which principals do not intervene with the job teachers are doing and give them a limitless freedom in the organization. This may mean that teachers' affective commitment may be related more to the feeling of freedom and autonomy. In other words, teachers affectively committed to their schools possibly do not need motivation or direction of the leader. This finding is consistent with the expression of Tarter, Hoy, and Kottkamp (1990) that school principal is the leading factor to teacher commitment. In contrast to the findings about affective commitment, teachers' continuance and normative commitment are negatively related to management by exceptions (passive) and laissez-faire leadership styles. It may be referred from this finding that active, motivating, intellectual, and mutual behaviors of school principals are important in teachers' continuance and normative commitment. Tsui and Cheng (1999) state that principals' being supportive and open to teachers are important for teachers' commitment to their schools. This is clearly consistent with the findings of the study. Furthermore, Allen and Mayer (1990) assert that continuance and normative commitment stem from an obligation for staying in the organization. This obligation may come

from economic or social causes. Considering this, the fact that continuance and normative commitment are negatively associated with management by exceptions (passive) and laissez-faire is understandable.

Result also mirrored that different leadership styles were significantly related to different components of teacher commitment. Inspirational motivation and individualized consideration were predicting affective commitment. The fact that teachers' affective commitment was predicted by inspirational motivation and individualized consideration might mean that teachers want their principals to be interested in their individual beliefs, norms, and needs. Affective commitment may be linked to the feeling of closeness to school members and giving others' well-being (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Therefore, principals who motivate teachers and pay attention to their voices may help teachers experience deeper affective contact with school. This finding is in line with the ideas of Tarter *et al.* (1990) that school principal is likely to create climate of commitment. Contingent reward was predicting continuance commitment and management by exceptions (passive), and laissez-faire were predicting normative commitment. The fact that contingent reward predicted continuance commitment is understandable in that teachers may work more efficiently if their efforts are appreciated by school principals. In other aspect, school principals probably use rewards to make school's educational setting more effectively.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between school principals' transformational and transactional leadership styles and organizational commitment of teachers. Only the perceptions of teachers on their commitment and schools' leadership styles were examined. Therefore, future studies may have a tendency to examine the commitment of principals to the school. Other research methods such as interview or document analysis are possible to be used to gather data. Further research also can be done to determine the factors that affect teachers' or principals' commitment. Principals' role for developing commitment of school members and creating a more healthy school setting might be analyzed.

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