

The Impact of Effective Leadership on Work Engagement in Teachers : Role of Leadership

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ABSTRACT

The school principal serves as a vital link between the school administration and the instructors. For teachers to achieve a high level of performance, the school principal must provide the necessary assistance and oversight. As a result, the purpose of this study was to examine the influence of school principals' leadership behaviour on teacher job engagement as well as to assess variances in teacher views depending on individual characteristics. The study also looked into how teachers' gender and the style of school management interact with principle behaviour to influence how they rate school principal leadership. Teachers' impressions of their principals' leadership behaviour were assessed using the Leadership Behaviour Description Questionnaire (LBDQ), and teachers' work engagement was assessed using the Utrecht Work Engagement Tool, using a sample of 516 teachers from various secondary schools in Bangalore. Data research revealed that school administrators' leadership behaviour is a strong predictor of teachers' job engagement. The study also discovered substantial interaction effects between teachers' gender and kind of management, as well as their impact on the evaluation of administrators' leadership behaviour.

Keywords– Bangalore, leadership behaviour, school principals, secondary schools, work engagement.

INTRODUCTION

In the past, schools were static in their administration with traditional administrative structures and focused prominently on maintaining a steady routine. In contrast, the present educational system puts forth diverse challenges owing to globalization of education, increasing demands and high competition in the educational sector, pressurizing the schools to reorganize their internal processes to warrant exceptional academic performance from the school members. For successful reorganization of school administrative structures, leadership behaviour of the school principals plays a significant role as they act as important links

between the school management and the teachers. As stated by Nye [1], since 'leadership is in the eye of the beholder', the present study assessed the leadership behaviour of principals as perceived by the teachers working in the secondary schools of Bangalore and identified the underpinning factors of leadership which are essential for improving work-related attitudes in the institution. Work engagement, a construct believed to be the central index for assessing the work life of professionals [2] was employed in the study to assess the effort invested by school teachers towards their jobs. Studying leadership behaviour as a contributing factor of work engagement will also assist the institutions in overcoming difficulties associated with retaining as well as attracting fresh talent to the teaching profession [3].

1.1. Leadership Behaviour of Principals

The growing body of literature on leadership reveals several kinds of leadership behaviours such as transactional, inspirational, transformational, etc. [4]. Leadership attributes such as moral values, interpersonal skills, etc. have long been emphasized by researchers as the important determinants of teacher outcomes such as their efficiency, satisfaction, commitment, etc. [5]. Until the middle of the twentieth century, researchers accorded much importance to the study of the individual personality traits of leaders, an approach that was later proved by Stogdill [6] to be inadequate in explaining the eminence of leadership and its outcomes. The researcher opined that in order to explain the emergence of leadership, situational aspects should also be considered along with the personality traits of a leader [7].

Consideration refers to the relational aspects of leadership such as comradeship, mutual trust between the leaders and the subordinates, etc. Consideration encompasses the following aspects: leader's concern for subordinates, nature of the bonds formed with them, ability to recognize their opinions and the tendency to confer with them while making decisions, attention and compassion to the interests of subordinates and honesty in the communications with subordinates. Researchers have identified consideration to be a significant dimension in case of individual and group outcomes such as motivation at work, satisfaction, etc. [9], [26], [27], [28]. Initiating structure refers to the extent of focus on tasks and management of resources to achieve goals as a team. Initiating structure dimension of leadership includes the following aspects of leadership: capacity to strategize, organize, resolve complexity, offer guidance, assign roles, disapprove of unsatisfactory performance and motivate the subordinates to work efficiently [9], [26], [27], [28].

1.2. Research gap

A thorough review of the literature on the subject revealed that researchers have abundantly studied the relationship between principal leadership skills and teacher efficiency [29], teacher effectiveness [30], [31], teacher performance [32], [33], organizational commitment [34], [35], job satisfaction [36], [37], [38], [39] and motivation [40]. Further, studies on work engagement of teachers were found to be mostly with regard to the different leadership styles of principals such as charismatic leadership [41], authentic leadership [42] and transformational leadership [43], whereas, studies related to leadership behaviour aspects such as consideration and initiating structure with work engagement of teachers were found to be insufficient in the Indian context. Further, even though ample studies have been

conducted in assessing the gender based differences in principal behaviour [44], [45], most studies have overlooked the fact that subjective assessment of the efficiency of school principals depends not only on gender of the leader, but also on gender of the follower, i.e., the teacher. In this context, the present study investigated the benefits of leadership behaviour of the school principals in enhancing the work engagement of teachers through the leadership aspects, consideration and initiating structure.

1.3. Research Objectives and hypotheses

The present study was conducted with the following objectives: To ascertain the differences in the perceptions of secondary school teachers with respect to their work engagement and the leadership behaviour of their school principals based on individual characteristics; to investigate the impact of the principals' leadership behaviour on work engagement of teachers; to identify the factors affecting the relationship between the leadership behaviour of principal and work engagement of teachers.

II.METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study sample

The study followed a descriptive and quantitative research approach in order to assess the relationship between leadership behaviour and work engagement. Non-probability convenience sampling method was employed for the selection of respondents and a survey was conducted using questionnaires as the research instruments. A total number of 516 teachers working in different Government, aided, unaided secondary schools of Bangalore were treated as the final sample for the study.

2.2 Research tools

The perspective of the school principals regarding the needs of the teachers and their competencies in achieving the shared goal of the management was measured by the researcher with the help of the Leadership Behaviour Description Questionnaire (L.B.D.Q) devised by the Ohio State University [27], [47], [48], [49]. The L.B.D.Q scale consists of 48 items, categorized into two aspects of leadership, namely, 'Initiating structure' (20 items) and 'Consideration' (28 items). The questions were scored with the help of a descending five point Likert scale: 1-Always, 2-Often, 3-Occasionally, 4-Seldom, 5-Never to evaluate the frequency of leadership traits exhibited by the leader.

Work engagement was measured using the Utrecht work engagement scale [51], which consists of 17 items, categorized into three dimensions, namely, vigour (6 items), dedication (5 items) and absorption (6 items). Responses were scored on a scale of 1 to 6: 1-A few times a year or less, 2-Once a month or less, 3-Sometimes, 4-Once a week, 5-Very often, 6-Always.

III.RESULTS

3.1 Demographic profile of the sample

The survey participants were mostly young and middle-aged adults, between the age groups of 31 and 50 years (68%). Most of them were qualified with Post Graduate degrees (57.4%) and possessed a work experience of 10 to 20 years (42%) in the educational sector. During the survey, equal distribution of the respondents on the basis of gender (50%) and

type of management(33%) was ensured by the researcher in order to avoid response bias in the study.

Table 1:Demographic characteristics of the respondents

| Factor | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Age group (years) | | |
| 21 to 30 | 86 | 16.67 |
| 31 to 40 | 170 | 32.95 |
| 41 to 50 | 180 | 34.88 |
| >51 | 80 | 15.5 |
| Gender | | |
| Female | 258 | 50.00 |
| Male | 258 | 50.00 |
| Educational qualification | | |
| PG | 296 | 57.40 |
| UG | 220 | 42.60 |
| Work experience (years) | | |
| < 5 | 75 | 14.50 |
| < 10 | 120 | 23.30 |
| < 20 | 216 | 41.90 |
| >20 | 105 | 20.30 |
| Type of management | | |
| Aided | 172 | 33.30 |
| Unaided | 172 | 33.30 |
| Govt. | 172 | 33.30 |

3.2Leadership behaviour of principals

Table 2 reveals that the perceptions of respondents regarding the leadership behaviour of school principals scored $M=3.42$ with respect to consideration. Interpreting the result based on the L.D.B.Q scale, it is inferred that the school principals exhibited traits such as compassion, companionship and trust for their subordinates less frequently with the response ranging from 'occasionally' to 'seldom'. It is evident that the principals scored approximately the same mean value (Mean=3.40) in the case of initiating structure, thereby indicating that their ability to manage tasks and resources for achievement of common goals was also limited.

Table 2: Leadership behaviour of principals

| Leadership behaviour | Mean | S.D. |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Consideration | 3.42 | 0.50 |
| Initiating Structure | 3.40 | 0.59 |
| Leadership Behaviour | 3.41 | 0.45 |

3.3 Work engagement of the teachers

Table 3 reveals that vigour, dedication and absorption dimensions of work engagement scored mean values ranging from 4.6 to 5.2, which as per the Utrecht scale indicates frequent manifestation of work engagement among the respondents. Of the three dimensions, dedication scored the highest (Mean=5.22), demonstrating enhanced pride, enthusiasm and inspiration experienced by the respondents towards their jobs. The high mean scores of absorption (Mean=4.9) and vigour (Mean=4.6) also suggest that the respondents were often occupied during their work and experienced a good level of energy while carrying out their responsibilities.

Table 3: Work engagement of teachers

| Work engagement | Mean | S.D. |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Vigour | 4.68 | 0.90 |
| Dedication | 5.22 | 0.86 |
| Absorption | 4.90 | 0.89 |
| Work engagement | 4.93 | 0.76 |

3.4 Differences in the perceptions of leadership behaviour of principals and work engagement of teachers

H₁: Significant differences exist in the teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership behaviour and their work engagement based on their gender and type of management

To test H₁, the respondents were given a Mann-whitney U test to see if there were any variations in their opinions of principle leadership behaviour in terms of deliberation and starting structure. Table 4 shows that female instructors thought their school leaders were more compassionate (Mean=3.47) than male teachers did (Mean=3.38, p0.05). In the starting structure dimension of leadership behaviour, female teachers (Mean=3.45) likewise had high ratings as compared to male respondents (Mean=3.34, p0.05). When variations in attitudes between respondents from various types of management were examined, it was discovered that unassisted institutions (Mean=3.43) produced leaders who were more considerate than aided (Mean=3.48) and government schools (Mean=3.37). The initiating structure, on the other hand, did not show similar disparities based on management style, implying that principals in all of the schools encouraged their subordinates to attain personal and organisational objectives (p>0.05).

Table 4: Perceptions of principal leadership behaviour based on gender and management

| Leadership behaviour | Factors | | Mean | S.D. | Mann-Whitney U | P |
|----------------------|------------|---------|------|------|----------------|-------|
| Consideration | Gender | Female | 3.47 | 0.51 | 29026.00 | 0.012 |
| | | Male | 3.38 | 0.50 | | |
| | Management | Aided | 3.48 | 0.49 | 12.179 | 0.002 |
| | | Govt. | 3.37 | 0.44 | | |
| | | Unaided | 3.43 | 0.57 | | |
| Initiating structure | Gender | Female | 3.45 | 0.57 | 29568.50 | 0.028 |
| | | Male | 3.34 | 0.61 | | |
| | Management | Aided | 3.48 | 0.62 | 1.371 | 0.504 |
| | | Govt. | 3.30 | 0.56 | | |
| | | Unaided | 3.40 | 0.59 | | |
| Leadership behaviour | Gender | Female | 3.46 | 0.47 | 28763.50 | 0.008 |
| | | Male | 3.36 | 0.50 | | |
| | Management | Aided | 3.48 | 0.50 | 6.154 | 0.046 |
| | | Govt. | 3.33 | 0.45 | | |
| | | Unaided | 3.42 | 0.51 | | |

Table 5 shows that, unlike leadership behaviour, teachers' perceptions of the dimensions of work engagement, namely, vigour, dedication, and absorption, did not differ significantly between male and female teachers, as well as between teachers from different types of management ($p > 0.05$), i.e., teachers' perceived energy toward their responsibilities, the extent of inspiration, and interest presented by their jobs remained the same among teachers in spite of the fact that they were from different types of management. As a consequence, H1 is partially accepted based on the data reported in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 5: Perceptions of work engagement based on gender and management

| Work engagement | Factors | | Mean | S.D. | Mann-Whitney U | P |
|-----------------|------------|---------|------|------|----------------|-------|
| Vigour | Gender | Female | 4.71 | 0.8 | 8.71 | 0.92 |
| | | Male | 4.65 | 0.99 | | |
| | Management | Aided | 4.91 | 0.78 | 1.310 | 0.519 |
| | | Govt. | 4.53 | 0.88 | | |
| | | Unaided | 4.59 | 0.98 | | |
| Dedication | Gender | Female | 5.32 | 0.75 | 700.0 | 0.09 |
| | | Male | 5.13 | 0.95 | | |

| Work engagement | Factors | | Mean | S.D. | Mann-Whitney U | P |
|-----------------|------------|---------|------|------|----------------|-------|
| | Management | Aided | 5.29 | 0.82 | 1.834 | 0.400 |
| | | Govt. | 5.12 | 0.88 | | |
| | | Unaided | 5.26 | 0.88 | | |
| Absorption | Gender | Female | 4.95 | 0.83 | 848.0 | 0.76 |
| | | Male | 4.84 | 0.93 | | |
| | Management | Aided | 5.09 | 0.80 | 4.132 | 0.127 |
| | | Govt. | 4.76 | 0.86 | | |
| | | Unaided | 4.84 | 0.96 | | |
| Work engagement | Gender | Female | 4.99 | 0.65 | 848.0 | 0.76 |
| | | Male | 4.87 | 0.84 | | |
| | Management | Aided | 5.09 | 0.70 | 2.752 | .253 |
| | | Govt. | 4.80 | 0.74 | | |
| | | Unaided | 4.90 | 0.80 | | |

3.5 Main and interaction effects

H₂: The interaction effects of type of management and teachers' gender have a significant effect on their perceptions of principal leadership behaviour and work engagement

A two-way ANOVA test conducted to analyse the main and interaction effects of the type of management and teachers' gender on their work engagement (Table 6) revealed significant main effects of the type of school management ($F=6.13$, $p=0.00$). However, the main effects of gender ($F=2.45$) as well as the interaction effects of gender and type of management ($F=1.18$) on work engagement were found to be statistically insignificant ($p>0.05$).

Table 6: Work engagement of respondents based on management type and gender

| Type of management | Gender | Mean | SD |
|--------------------|--------|------|------|
| Aided | Female | 5.09 | 0.63 |
| | Male | 5.08 | 0.67 |
| Govt. | Female | 4.83 | 0.66 |
| | Male | 4.77 | 0.64 |
| Unaided | Female | 5.00 | 0.63 |
| | Male | 4.75 | 0.64 |

Table 7: Effects of management type and gender on work engagement

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--|-------------------------|-------|-------------|-----------|------|
| Corrected Model | 10.184a | 5.00 | 2.04 | 3.42 | 0.01 |
| Intercept | 12,494.42 | 1.00 | 12,494.42 | 20,956.30 | 0.00 |
| Type of management | 7.31 | 2.00 | 3.66 | 6.13 | 0.00 |
| Gender | 1.46 | 1.00 | 1.46 | 2.45 | 0.12 |
| Type of management * Gender | 1.41 | 2.00 | 0.71 | 1.18 | 0.31 |
| Error | 304.07 | 510.0 | 0.60 | | |
| Total | 12,808.67 | 516.0 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 314.25 | 515.0 | | | |
| R Squared = .032 (Adjusted R Squared = .023) | | | | | |

*P<.05

The main effect of gender on leadership behaviour was significant, whereas the interaction effects of type of management and gender were not significant, according to the results of the two-way ANOVA test. The substantial main effect suggests that male and female instructors have different opinions of leadership behaviour ($F=6.47$, $p0.05$). As a result, H2 is partially accepted based on the facts reported in Tables 7 and 9.

Table 8: Effects of management type and gender on perceptions of leadership

| Type of Management | Gender | Mean | SD |
|--------------------|--------|------|------|
| Aided | Female | 3.43 | 0.47 |
| | Male | 3.32 | 0.47 |
| Govt. | Female | 3.49 | 0.40 |
| | Male | 3.34 | 0.46 |
| Unaided | Female | 3.45 | 0.44 |
| | Male | 3.41 | 0.44 |

Table 9: Effects of management type and gender on perceptions of leadership

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----|-------------|-----------|------|
| Corrected Model | 1.887 | 5 | .377 | 1.888 | .095 |
| Intercept | 5961.418 | 1 | 5961.418 | 29829.662 | .000 |
| Type of management | .246 | 2 | .123 | .616 | .540 |
| Gender | 1.294 | 1 | 1.294 | 6.477 | .011 |
| Type of management * Gender | .251 | 2 | .125 | .627 | .534 |
| Error | 101.923 | 51 | .200 | | |
| Total | 6108.436 | 51 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 103.809 | 51 | | | |

R Squared = .018 (Adjusted R Squared = .009)

*P<.05

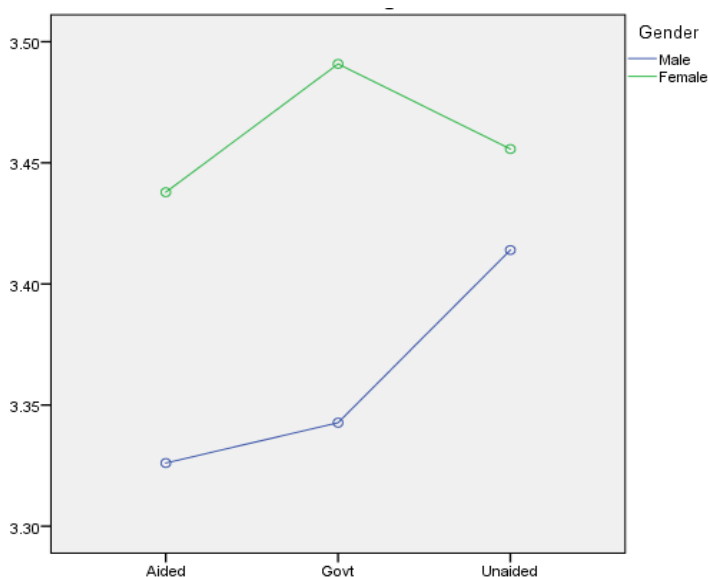


Figure 2: Effects of management type and gender on perceptions of leadership

3.6 Leadership behaviour of principals and work engagement

H₃: There is a significant relationship between leadership behaviour of principals and work engagement of teachers

Leadership behaviour of the principals as a determinant of work engagement of the teachers was investigated with the help of linear regression analysis (Table 10 and 11). Relationship between the variables was found to be statistically significant ($p=0.00$), with principals' leadership behaviour accounting for 4.1% of the total variation in work engagement of teachers ($R^2=0.045$, $F(2,513)=11.982$). The Pearson's correlation value between the variables was found to be $R=0.211$, indicating a weak, yet significant relationship between them. From Table 11, it is noteworthy that while consideration aspect of leadership acted as a significant predictor of work engagement ($B=0.310$, $p=0.00$), initiating structure abilities of principals failed to significantly affect their subordinates' work engagement ($B=0.035$, $p>0.05$). Therefore, H_3 is accepted.

Table 10: Model summary of impact of principal leadership behaviour on work engagement

| R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | |
|------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------|-----|-----|---------------|
| | | | | R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change |
| .211 | .045 | .041 | .76021 | .045 | 11.982 | 2 | 513 | .000 |

Table 11: Impact of principal leadership behaviour on work engagement

| Factors | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | 3.761 | .261 | | 14.416 | .000 |
| Consideration | .310 | .070 | .201 | 4.402 | .000 |
| Initiating structure | .035 | .059 | .027 | .582 | .561 |

V.CONCLUSION

Based on the outcomes of this study, it can be concluded that school administrators' leadership qualities have a key influence in assuring better levels of job engagement among teachers. According to the findings, attentive behaviour on the part of school principals will considerably boost instructors' commitment to their institutions, helping pupils and resulting in the institution's overall success. The current study, on the other hand, was confined to Bangalore secondary school teachers. The study depended on the teachers' assessments of their principals because criteria like principal consideration could not be examined directly by the researcher. In the future, the study should be reproduced in various cities and countries to gain a better understanding of the function of school principals' leadership behaviour in enhancing teachers' job engagement.

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