Abstract

This paper examines the possible relationship between teachers’ Transformational leadership style, their personality factors, experience, education level, and efficacy of their classroom management. Three questionnaires were administered to 153 English teachers, the results of which indicated a positive relationship between Transformational leadership style, personality factors, and efficacy of the classroom management. Small, but significant, relationships were also found between efficacy of class management and Extraversion, Openness, and Neuroticism personality factors. Further data analysis also revealed significant relationship between teachers’ education level and classroom management efficacy. Findings, thus, support the need to provide classroom teachers with leadership training in addition to their professional knowledge.

1. Introduction

Teachers' ability to organize classrooms and manage the students’ behavior is highly important in achieving positive educational outcomes. Accordingly, discipline and classroom management are serious concerns for teachers, administrators, and the general public (Braden & Smith, 2006; Oliver & Reschly, 2007; Burkett, 2011). In the mean time, Braden and Smith (2006) note that disruptive behavior has become normal in today’s classrooms. Without appropriate classroom management techniques, such behavior by a minority group of students may negatively affect other students and lead other students to join in, and causes the students to question and mock the ability of the teacher (Braden & Smith, 2006; Burkett, 2011).

In addition to classroom management, teachers must possess some leadership ability in order to know how to motivate their students. In other words, leadership style is another characteristic which may influence a teacher’s efficacy of classroom management. In this relation, Can (2009) states that teachers need to have a vision, be adaptable, take risks, and be honest. He further notes that teachers, as leaders, are able to affect their students’ performances, goal attainment, and behaviors. One of the reasons it is thought that schools have not obtained their educational goals is lack of appropriate leadership style and that teachers never even consider themselves as leaders (Bowman, 2004; Stein, 2010). Koh (2008) described classroom leadership in terms of the actions teachers must take in order to help students attain their learning goals. Among various leadership styles, Transformational leadership is
thought to empower others to become leaders. It consists of four dimensions: influence or charisma, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, and inspirational motivation (Thomas, 2007). Moreover, it appeals to the values, morals, and ethics of both the leaders and followers in order to create a shared vision and motivate followers to perform at their best (Antonakis, Avolio & Sivasubramaniam, 2003; Sutherland, 2010). According to Etheridge (2010) differences in personality among teachers can affect teacher’s communication with students, teachers’ abilities to consider students’ needs and handle differences in thoughts about discipline and classroom management.

Although most of the teachers do not have training or education for management of the classroom; Fidler (1997) recognized that based on his/her personality, each teacher has a dominant leadership style. That is, they are forced to rely on their personal characteristics to make decision about controlling the classroom and how to handle unruly and disruptive students. Accordingly, the present study is an attempt to examine the extent of employment of Transformational leadership style proposed by Bolkan and Goodboy (2009) and its relationship with other teacher characteristics.

2. Statement of the problem

According to Mayer and Patriarca (2007) there is a complicated relation between academic achievement and behavioral problems in the classroom. Sometimes teachers are unable to control students’ disruptive behavior and consequently, students do not reach their academic goals. Some of these problems can be related to teachers' lack of appropriate leadership style. Thus, it is thought that teachers must precisely recognize the needs and ability levels of their students in the classroom, and adjust their leadership style in order to best teach these students so that they learn and improve (Thomas, 2007). While several studies have focused on the importance of efficacy of classroom management (e.g. Oliver & Reschly, 2007), there is few, if any, study investigating the influence of various factors like personality, leadership style, experience, and level of education on efficacy of classroom management. Accordingly, the present study intended to examine the relationship between teachers’ Transformational leadership style, personality, experience, educational level and the efficacy of classroom management. It also intended to check for the possible influence of these variables on classroom management. Briefly speaking, the study is intended to seek answers for the following research questions.

1. Is there any relationship between teachers’ personality factors, Transformational leadership style, experience, educational level and efficacy of their classroom management?
2. To what extent do teachers’ Transformational leadership style, personality, experience and educational level significantly influence their efficacy of classroom management?

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study included 153 English teachers at different institutes in Kermanshah, West of Iran. As a convenience sampling, they volunteered to return the completed questionnaires. The participants’ age ranged from 21 to 45. Both male (41.2%) and female (58.8%) teachers with bachelor, master, or PhD degrees participated in the study.

3.2. Instruments

Three questionnaires were adopted as instruments for collecting data. The first instrument of the study was Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). According to Burkett (2011), the TSES aims at testing teacher’s efficacy of the classroom management, efficacy of instructional strategy, and efficacy of students’ engagement. This questionnaire consists of 24 items which follow nine-point likert scale. The descriptors were 1= nothing, 3= very little, 5= some influence, 7= quite a bit, 9= a great. Other values like 2, 4, 6
and 8 allow respondents to choose between these descriptors. The established reliability of this instrument ranges from .92 to .95 for the overall instrument (Burkett, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

The second instrument of the current research was Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form (MLQ-5X) developed by Avolio, Bass and Jung (1995). It aimed to measure Transformational, transactional and laissez-fair leadership behaviour, but in this study only the items related to Transformational leadership were administered. This instrument consisted of 45 items that were used by 5 points likert scale with the following description (0= not at all, 1= once in a while, 2= sometimes, 3= fairly often, and 4= frequently). The reported reliability for the MLQ-5X ranges from .74 to .94 (Sutherland, 2010; Burkett, 2011). Other researchers like Antonakis et al., (2003) also maintained that MLQ-5X is a valid test and has high construct validity.

The third questionnaire, The Big Five Inventory (BFI), designed in 1991 by John, Donahue and Kentle was adopted to measure each of the personality traits related to the Five Factor Model (Benet-Martinez and John, 1998). The BFI includes 43 questions with a 5 point likert scale to allow respondent the opportunity to evaluate themselves on a set of descriptive items. These personality tests consist of five types of personality as: extraversion (E), Openness (O), neuroticism (N), agreeableness (A), and conscientiousness (C). The BFI scales include disagree strongly, disagree a little, neither agree nor disagree, agree a little, and agree strongly options. Respondents answered 43 questions to specify how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statements that began with the subject “I”. It is worth mentioning that to care for learners understandings of the instruments, their Persian translation were administered.

3.3. Procedure

All procedures and steps of spreading and gathering questionnaires were conducted by the researchers. As mentioned earlier, there were three questionnaires for each teacher; BFI, MLQ, and TSES. After selecting institutes, questionnaires were given to each individual teacher. The institutes were selected according to their vicinity and acquaintance. Teachers’ demographic issues of age, gender, years of experience, and level of education were also addressed. The questionnaires were distributed in April 2012 and it took three weeks to collect all of the forms. The teachers complete the questionnaires and returned them the next session. Afterwards, data from all returned forms were entered into and analyzed using SPSS statistical software.

4. Results

Table 1 presents teachers' demographic data.

| Gender       | F  | Percent |
|--------------|----|---------|
| Male         | 63 | 41.6    |
| Female       | 90 | 58.4    |
| Age          |    |         |
| 20 – less than 25 | 40 | 26.3    |
| 25 – less than 30 | 65 | 42.5 |
| 30 – less than 35 | 19 | 12.4    |
| 35 – less than 40 | 13 | 8.5     |
| 40 – less than 45 | 11 | 7.2     |
| ≥ 45         | 5  | 3.5     |
| Education Level |    |         |
| Bachelor     | 116 | 75.8    |
| Master       | 34  | 22.2    |
| PhD          | 3   | 2.0     |

The correlations computed between Transformational leadership style and teachers’ personality factors are presented in Table 2.
Table 2. Correlation between Transformational leadership style and BFI personality factors

| Extraversion | Agreeableness | Conscientiousness | Neuroticism | Openness |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------|----------|
| Sig.         | .372         | .284              | .544        | .000     |
| N            | 153          | 153               | 153         | 153      |

Table 3. Correlations between BFI personality factors and efficacy of classroom management

| variable                  | Classroom Management | Instructional strategy | Students engagement |
|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| BFI Extraversion          | -.200*               | -.150                  | -.197*              |
| BFI Agreeableness         | .000                 | .009                   | -.081               |
| BFI Conscientiousness     | -.129                | -.098                  | -.172*              |
| BFI Neuroticism           | .121                 | .093                   | .089                |
| BFI Openness              | .086                 | .185*                  | .097                |
| P<.05                     | Sig = .014           | .318*                  | .274               |

The numerical information in Table 4 illustrates the qualitative relationship between Transformational leadership and efficacy of the classroom management:

| MLQ Transformational     | Classroom Management | Instructional strategy | Students engagement |
|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
|                          | .258*                | .318*                  | .299*               |
| P<.05                    | Sig = .001           | .000                   | .000               |

Since the current study was to determine if teachers' Transformational leadership style, personality, experience and educational level significantly influenced their efficacy of classroom management, Multiple regression tests were run, the results of which are presented in the table below.

Table 5. Multiple Regression Results

| Model                     | b        | SE b     | B        | sig     |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant                  | 6.552    | 1.318    | .000     |         |
| BFI Extraversion          | -.592    | .275     | -.187    | .033    |
| BFI Agreeableness         | .069     | .274     | .022     | .801    |
| BFI Conscientiousness     | -.268    | .247     | -.098    | .279    |
| BFI Neuroticism           | .158     | .232     | .058     | .497    |
| BFI Openness              | .188     | .323     | .050     | .571    |
| MLQ Transformational      | .475     | .015     | .235     | .003    |
| Experience                | .045     | .181     | .012     | .875    |
| Education Level           | .028     | .197     | .215     | .017    |
| F=3.88                    | Sig = .000 |         | .017     |         |
| R = .422                  | Sig = .000 |         | .017     |         |

5. Discussion

In this study the relationships between personality, leadership styles, education level, experience, and efficacy of classroom management were examined. As shown in Table 1, female teachers made up 58.8% of the population, and male teachers made 41.2%. Seventy-five percent of the respondents had Bachelor, twenty-two percent Masters...
and a small number of teachers (2%) PhD degrees. The mean for teaching experience was approximately 6.56 years with a range from 1 to 29 years.

As presented in Table 2, a significant relationship between Transformational leadership and the personality factors of Agreeableness, Neuroticism, and Openness was observed. Perhaps because Transformational teachers provide the opportunity for their students to become problem solvers and allow them to find new ways to think about issues, communicate high expectation, and also model expected behavior through their achievements and character (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Results of the study showed a weak but significant relationship between efficacy of classroom management and the personality factor of Extraversion, in negative direction. Thus, it can be proposed that teachers who are more social and outgoing may allow their students not to necessarily follow certain rules and strategies that are presented in the classroom. Therefore, teachers may control students' behavior in the classroom and efficacy of their classroom management is reduced. Furthermore, Table 3 indicates a direct significant association between instructional strategy and Openness factor, while efficacy of students' engagement negatively correlates with Extraversion and Conscientiousness. Moreover, data provided in Table 4 made it clear that Transformational leadership is positively associated with students' engagement, efficacy of the classroom management, and instructional strategy.

Besides, the results of the multiple regressions computed suggest that Transformational leadership style, Extraversion and educational level were found to influence TSES, but no significant impact was reported for teachers' experience. Though all independent variables were not significant, among these variables Transformational leadership appeared to have the highest impact on TSES at B=.235. The educational level (B=.215) had the second highest impact and the personality factor of Extraversion had the largest negative impact on TSES at B= -.187.

6. Conclusion

The obtained findings revealed that Transformational leadership style is significantly associated with personality factors, educational level and TSES while no significant association was reported between teachers' experience and efficacy of their classroom management. Such conclusion provides several implications for the results. Since Transformational leadership was significantly related to TSES, educational administrators are recommended to examine the leadership ability of teachers before they start their career. Furthermore, administrators should provide opportunities for teachers to develop their skills outside the classrooms and institutes. It helps teachers to become better classroom and school leaders. Concerning the importance of the personality in fulfilling the job, teachers and administrators need to be aware of the influence of personality traits on controlling students' behavior in the classroom. In addition, understanding how teachers approach classroom management is another factor which demands attention. It is through this knowledge that, to avoid personality conflicts which hinder the students' ability to learn, administrators can better assign students to appropriate teachers.

To care for the limitations of the study, similar research can be conducted in public schools. Also, researchers should replicate this study to link the teachers' efficacy of classroom management to their students' academic performance. With the link between students' behavior and academic performance not being completely clear, it may be beneficial to determine if teachers who are more efficacious for classroom management are also able to produce better academic results in their students. It may also be beneficial to determine whether these characteristics lead to academic success in students. Moreover, future researchers should replicate this study to include all types of leadership styles. Since in this study significant relationship was found between Transformational leadership style and TSES, additional studies can be conducted to determine if other leadership styles can lead to more effective outcome.
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