

Relationship of Managers' Leadership Styles (Transactional and Transformational Leaderships) and Workplace (Relational and Cognitive) Conflict

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ABSTRACT

The study aims at investigating the relationship between managers' leadership styles (transactional and transformational ones) and workplace conflicts in Construction Jihad Organization of Nahavand. This correlation survey is an applied descriptive type. Statistical population is the total of 360 workers of Construction Jihad Organization in Nahavand. To calculate the sample volume of desired population, we can determine that based on Talkman or Morgan table for the total population of 360 people, a sample of 186 workers is required to achieve logical analytical results. Questionnaires consisting of 41 questions which have been utilized in the article "the impacts of leadership on conflicts" written by Oliver Doucet in 2009 were suggested by scholars and professors to be administrated in the research. Then, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.94 has been estimated for 30 participants indicating high levels of questionnaire reliability. In the paper, Cronbach's Alpha and multivariate regression tests have been utilized to clarify the changes of a dependent variable (criterion) through analyzing several independent variables (predictor) and determine their predictive roles in predicting the criterion variable applied in this study. The results indicate that among the dimensions of transactional and transformational leadership styles, however, contingent rewards, management by passive exception, management by active exception and motivation have the highest effects on clarifying and predicting the changes of cognitive and relational conflicts.

KEYWORDS: leadership style, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, cognitive conflict, relational conflict.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, lots of studies have focused on the effects of transactional and transformational leadership styles on a wide range of such variables as workers' Job satisfaction, attempts, commitment, tend to leave and performance. Although many scholars have regarded conflict management as one of the most important and fundamental leadership roles, the relationships of leadership styles and conflict are likely to be ignored (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 125). Recent developments of leadership theories have been moved from Charismatic leadership ones in which a leader is supposed to be a unique individual upon whom followers depend towards Neo-charismatic theories which intend to develop the followers' abilities. Accordingly, one of newest personal approaches has been created to study the leadership based on Bass leadership model (1985) and implemented by Bass and Avolio (1995). Transactional leadership is defined as a combination of transactions and bargains between leaders and followers while transformational one is a leadership beyond motivating workers to achieve optimal performance. In fact, it leads to the followers' maturity, intellectual stimulation and inspiration to enhance their personal interests instead of high collective goals (Kark, 2009, p. 160).

Sometimes, the leaders are forced to interfere in the subordinates' conflicts. Therefore, the leader is in charge of attending the conflicts on-time and resolving the disputes among workers through judging and interceding. If leaders interfere with the organizational conflicts directly, conflict management strategies involving (avoidance, accommodating, competing and cooperating) will have impacts on controlling the conflicts. Management should provide the opportunities to judge various ideas and viewpoints and evaluate themselves through stimulating the conflict (i.e. creative and constructive uses of conflict). Conflict management is a process of identifying the appropriate roles of conflict among groups and applying the techniques effectively to resolve or stimulate it for the sake of organizational efficacy (Fakhimi, 2004, p. 307).

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

MirSepasi (2005) has specified the leadership as ability or science to penetrate into the individuals in a manner that he/she willingly tries to achieve the pre-determined goals (MirSepasi, 2005, p. 31). Alvani defines the

leadership as a process by which the organization management tries to facilitate the tasks through creating the motivation and effective connections and encourage the workers to do the affairs willingly to achieve the organizational goals (Alvani, 1994, p. 110). According to Burns theory, Bass presented a new theory on transformational leadership style. In 1985, he stated that leaders are able to perform both of transactional and transformational leadership styles. In fact, Burns considers these two concepts as non-exclusive ones but Bass knows them as complementary concepts. Hatter and Bass (1988) have argued that transformational leadership affects the organizational mission and followers by emphasizing the redoubled efforts and creating a symbolic mind. However, transactional leaders take measures with regard to the structures and considerations through motivating the followers' expectations related to pre-determined purposes (Hatter & Bass, 1988, p697).

Transformational leaders change the society by their speech and behavior and influence their followers greatly. This kind of leadership will be realized if leaders enhance the followers' job interests, make them aware of goals and missions and encourage them to think beyond personal benefits. This leadership style is to be realized on the basis of idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and individual consideration (Mogheli, 2003, p. 79).

Idealized influence: It refers to the followers' pride, splendor, respect and loyalty to the leader who transfer the idealized feeling. Idealized influence causes that leaders are behaved as examples of behavioral roles and patterns for the followers (Mogheli, 2003, p. 79).

Intellectual stimulation: It indicates that the followers are encouraged by leader in order to re-think and discover new solutions to solve the organizational problems by the help of followers. Actually, a leader's behaviors challenge the followers to retry for doing the tasks and rethink on the things he/she is able to perform (Podsakoff, 1990, p. 116).

Inspirational motivation: It states that followers' stimulation and motivation enhancement are done by resorting subordinates' feelings. It emphasizes the emotions and inner motivations of individual not daily exchanges of leader and follower (Mogheli, 2003, p. 79).

Individual consideration: It considers the personal differences of followers, their communications and motivating them to learn new experiences through the assignment of responsibilities (Podsakoff, 1990, p. 116).

According to Burns (1978), transactional leadership is on the basis of two-way exchange between leader and followers so that personal demands are provided. In other words, he believes that in this doctrine, everything is observed from the perspective of the degree to which people derive benefits and the relationship of leader and followers is on the transaction basis of giving this for receiving that. Actually, transactional leadership follows the exchange of economy, costs and benefits to meet common material and physical needs of workers and in return, expects subordinates to provide a collection of services on which they have reached an agreement (Bass, 1985, p. 14). In 1985, Bass has argued reward and punishment as two basic dimensions of transactional leadership. He believes that first element is the contingent reward comprising rewards for performance compensation and second one is management by exception involving collective measures of leader in response to unacceptable deviation in subordinates' performance (Moghely, 2002, p. 79).

Contingent reward: refers to the rewards which are paid with regard to an agreement between leader and followers based on performance standards (ibid, p80).

Management by exception: shows the leader reaction to encounter mistakes and deviations and involves the practices to correct the deviations from standards. This management has two types including active and passive.

Management by active exception: indicates the active management which leadership utilizes to control mistakes and law violations and then, perform corrective practices.

Management by passive exception: presents the passive management which leader applies when standards are not satisfied or some problems are made in the workplace (Northouse, 2001, p. 141). In other words, they passively wait for followers to make mistakes and after that, remind them negative feedback or rebuke them before doing corrective measures (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999, p. 184).

Conflict: refers to conflicts of organizational behaviors between individuals or organization unit due to various goals and interest conflict. It is regarded as a process in which first person's intentional efforts for frustrating second one's practices lead to second one's incapability and desperation through creating barriers to achieve the desired goals or increasing personal benefits (Robbins, 1989, p368).Waltz has defined it as a process in which one side (an individual or group) finds that his/her interests are encountered the other side's disagreement or negative reaction (Waltz, 1985, p. 517).

Cognitive conflict: is combined of work-related conflicts, interest incompatibility or job-related views on how to do activities. Consequently, this conflict dimension includes conflicts of work perspectives and worker differences about what should be performed (Doucet et al., 2009, p. 342).

Relational conflict: refers to those arguments which cause emotional incompatibilities, intervention and obstructionism behaviors in the workplace. Incompatibilities of workers and their fault finding are, therefore, placed in this dimension. Afterwards, conflict is resulted from individual difficulties stimulating strong feelings such as

anger, lack of trust, hatred, fear and disgust. This conflict category undermines the individuals' energy and prevents them regarding important work priorities (Doucet et al., 2009, p. 342).

MosayebMoradi (2009) studied the relationships of transactional, transformational and non-noticeable leadership styles, managers' organizational commitment and work ethics in High schools of Isfahan and concluded that there is a significant relationship between transformational style and managers' commitment. A meaningful relationship is found between transactional leadership, managers' commitment and their work ethics but no significant relationship exists between non-noticeable leadership style, managers' job commitment and work ethics. Also, among above-mentioned leadership styles, the best predictive variable is the transformational one.

Through studying the relationships of transactional and transformational leadership styles and organizational equity and presenting a model for Physical Education Organization of Tehran, Mohammad Reza Moradi (2007) has reported that transactional and transformational leadership styles have a significant relationship with organizational equity. Consequently, transformational leadership style has the strongest predictor with organizational equity.

Amin Torabi (2007) studied the relationships of leadership style and conflict management in the hospitals under the authority of Medical Science University in Lorestan province and stated that in the studied population, leadership style has a meaningful relationship with the individuals' mean work records. There is no relationship between conflict management, age and sex. No significant relationships are observed between leadership styles and conflict management strategies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is an applied descriptive research with regard to purpose and method. To analyze the data, Pearson correlation coefficient has been applied. Since current situations of such variables as transactional and transformational leadership styles and workers' conflicts are measured, their relationships are to be considered. Studied population is totally 360 workers of Construction Jihad Organization in Nahavand. According to Tuckman or Morgan table, 186 individuals were selected out of 360 workers to present the desired sample volume and logical analytical results. Questionnaire administered in the research consists of 41 questions which have been utilized by Doucet (2009) in the article "effects of leadership on conflicts".

Scholars and professors have suggested us to apply the mentioned questionnaire after being translated. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of whole questions was calculated as 0.94 for 30 participants indicating high reliability of questionnaire. In the paper, inferential and descriptive statistics were used for doing analysis. Descriptive one includes mean, standard deviation, frequency table and related graphs. Inferential one involves validity tests' Cronbach's Alpha and Pearson correlation coefficients and multivariate regression test to clarify the changes of a dependent variable (criterion) through analyzing several independent variables (predictor) and determine their predictive roles in predicting the criterion variable applied in this study.

DATA ANALYSIS

Regression analysis of leadership styles and cognitive conflict

There are 4 hypotheses in this research that are examined with each other using t-test, alpha coefficient and correlation coefficient. Hypotheses related to the relationships of variables have been examined two by two. To analyze the simultaneous effects of independent variables (predictor) and clarify the changes of criterion variable (cognitive conflict) using independent ones (leadership styles), regression analysis has been utilized in a stepwise manner and the results are presented.

Table1: Multivariate correlation coefficient, coefficient of determination and significance level

Regression model	Multivariate correlation coefficient/R	Coefficient of determination/R ²	Statistic of F	Significance level/sig
1	0.414	0.171	037.841	P<0.001**
2	0.492	0.242	29.069	P<0.001**
3	0.514	0.265	21.709	P<0.001**
4	0.533	0.284	23.933	P<0.001**

According to above table, the highest significance level of variables (predictor) has been considered. Models of contingent rewards (1), contingent rewards and management by passive exception (2), contingent rewards and management by active exception (3) and finally, management by passive exception, management by active

exception and inspirational motivation (4) have been analyzed. As a result, considered variables have given 17, 24, 26 and 28% of criterion variable's changes (cognitive conflict), respectively.

Table2: Standardized and non-standardized regression coefficients and significance test

Regression models	Non-standardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient		Statistic of t	Significance level
	Standard deviation	B	Beta			
1	Constant value	0.177	4.913	-	27.823	P<0.001**
	contingent rewards	0.051	-0.315	-0.414	-6.152	P<0.001**
2	Constant value	0.291	3.935	-	13.503	P<0.001**
	contingent rewards	0.051	-0.258	-0.339	-5.059	P<0.001**
	management by passive exception	0.071	0.294	0.276	4.122	P<0.001**
3	Constant value	0.454	3.108	-	6.838	P<0.001**
	contingent rewards	0.050	-0.262	-0.344	-5.186	P<0.001**
	management by passive exception	0.071	0.300	0.282	4.251	P<0.001**
	management by active exception	0.103	0.242	0.150	2.354	P=0.020*
4	Constant value	0.454	3.264	-	7.193	P<0.001**
	management by passive exception	0.069	0.295	0.277	4.249	P<0.001**
	management by active exception	0.103	0.333	0.207	3.229	P=0.001**
	inspirational motivation	0.067	-0.380	-0.378	-5.704	P<0.001**

*significance at 0.05 level

** significance at 0.01 level

Based on standardized regression coefficients, models of contingent rewards (1), contingent rewards and management by passive exception (2), contingent rewards and management by active exception (3) and finally, management by passive exception, management by active exception and inspirational motivation have the highest impacts on clarifying and predicting the changes of cognitive conflict. In general, it can be concluded that contingent rewards, inspirational motivation, management by passive exception and management by active exception are of the highest impact, respectively.

Regression analysis of leadership styles and relational conflict

Table3: Multivariate correlation coefficient, coefficient of determination and significance level

Regression models	Multivariate correlation coefficient/R	Coefficient of determination/R ²	Statistic of F	Significance level/sig
1	0.492	0.242	58.473	P<0.001**
2	0.570	0.325	43.896	P<0.001**
3	0.596	0.356	33.281	P<0.001**
4	0.612	0.375	26.988	P<0.001**

According to above table, the highest significance level of variables (predictor) has been considered. Models of contingent rewards (1), contingent rewards and management by passive exception (2), contingent rewards and management by active exception (3) and finally, management by passive exception, management by active exception and inspirational motivation (4) have been analyzed. As a result, considered variables have given 24, 32, 35 and 37% of criterion variable's changes (cognitive conflict), respectively.

Table4: Standardized and non-standardized regression coefficients and significance test

Regression models		Non-standardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	Statistic of t	Significance level
		Standard deviation	B	Beta		
1	Constant value	0.192	4.561	-	23.813	P<0.001**
	contingent rewards	0.056	-0.425	-0.492	-7.647	P<0.001**
2	Constant value	0.312	3.358	-	10.768	P<0.001**
	contingent rewards	0.055	-0.355	-0.411	-6.497	P<0.001**
	management by passive exception	0.076	0.362	0.300	4.739	P<0.001**
3	Constant value	0.483	2.273	-	4.710	P<0.001**
	contingent rewards	0.054	-0.360	-0.416	-6.709	P<0.001**
	management by passive exception	0.075	0.369	0.306	4.932	P<0.001**
	management by active exception	0.109	0.317	0.174	2.908	P=0.004**
4	Constant value	0.485	2.484	-	5.123	P<0.001**
	contingent rewards	0.091	-0.185	-0.214	-2.032	P=0.004*
	management by passive exception	0.074	0.357	0.296	4.814	P<0.001**
	management by active exception	0.112	0.387	0.212	3.466	P=0.001**
	inspirational motivation	0.122	-0.288	-0.252	-2.363	P=0.019*

*significance at 0.05 level

** significance at 0.01 level

According to table 4 (final table regarding the main hypothesis of the research) and also based on standardized regression coefficients, models of contingent rewards (1), contingent rewards and management by passive exception (2), contingent rewards and management by active exception (3) and finally, management by passive exception, management by active exception and inspirational motivation have the highest impacts on clarifying and predicting the changes of relational conflict. In general, it can be concluded that management by passive exception, inspirational motivation, contingent rewards and management by active exception have the highest effects, respectively.

CONCLUSION

To predict the changes of cognitive conflict, regression analysis results are as follows:

According to table1, the fourth model, the final one indicates that the 28% changes of cognitive conflict can be clarified by three variables of management by passive exception, management by active exception and inspirational motivation. Totally, we can conclude that contingent rewards, inspirational motivation, management by passive exception and management by active exception are of the highest impact to clarify and predict the changes of cognitive conflict, respectively.

To predict the changes of relational conflict, regression analysis results are as follows:

According to table3 and 4, the fourth model shows that the 37% changes of relational conflict are likely to be clarified by four variables of contingent rewards, managements by passive exception and active exception and inspirational motivation. Consequently, we can conclude that management by passive exception, inspirational motivation, contingent rewards and management by active exception have the highest effects to clarify and predict the changes of relational conflict, respectively.

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