

THE INFLUENCE OF THE PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP STYLE ON THE TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY AND EXTENT OF BURNOUT IN AN ARAB SCHOOLS IN ISRAEL

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ABSTRACT:The research aimed to investigate whether there was a correlation between the school principal's leadership style and the teachers' sense of self-efficacy for management and the teachers' level of burnout in Arab schools in Israel. The research question was: to what extent does the principal's leadership style influence the teachers' sense of self-efficacy for management and level of burnout? Quantitative data-collection was performed with validated questionnaires from relevant scientific literature. Findings indicate a negative correlation between four styles of leadership and burnout, but two styles: structural-procedural and human resources moderated the level of teachers' burnout and increased teachers' sense of self-efficacy; also when teachers' level of self-efficacy to manage was stronger, burnout decreased. Insights are provided concerning the influence of principals' leadership style on teachers' burnout and sense of self-efficacy with recommendations for teacher-training.

KEYWORDS:self-efficacy, leadership style, burnout, Israeli Arabic schools

1. INTRODUCTION

The school is an interactive workplace in which different factors act to produce teacher burnout including the principal's leadership style. Many studies have investigated this phenomenon [1],[2], [3] and [4] but little research attention has been turned to the influence of the principal's leadership style in the Arab education system in Israel on teachers' regressive behavior. The present study aimed to investigate the correlation between the principal's leadership style in an Arab school and the teachers' self-efficacy for management and extent of burnout.

Characterization of the influence of the principal's leadership style according to the leadership model developed by Bolman and Deal [5] can assist education leaders to identify means to moderate teachers' regressive behavior and burnout and thus improve teachers' functioning in school.

A serious issue encountered in many world education systems is a high rate of teacher dropout during their initial years of teaching. In Israel, a report by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics [6] indicated that from 1993-2002, 26% of novice teachers in Jewish elementary schooling dropped out after their first year at work. Approximately 38% of novice teachers left after three years work and approximately 45% left after five years work. In high schools the situation was even more severe so that teacher dropout at the end of the first year reached 40-50% and 55% after five years. A similar trend was recorded in Australia where the dropout among novice teachers reached approximately 30% [7].

In recent years the mental grind and pressure on teachers have become matters of increasing public and professional interest and teaching has become a very challenging profession [8], [9]. Moreover, culture has been found to be an encompassing factor that influences the level of teachers' stress and burnout [10] and a correlation was found between burnout and quality of life [11]. In Norway, organizational and personal variables were found to influence teacher burnout, for example, a sense of self-efficacy influenced the level of teacher burnout [12]. It was also found that when the teacher's sense of self-efficacy increases then there is a decrease or moderation of the burnout level [13]. Betoret [14] investigated the correlation between burnout and a sense of self-efficacy and different stress factors for junior high school teachers in Spain. He found that when the teacher's sense of self-efficacy increases and his power resources are higher than the teacher senses less burnout. Another study on teacher burnout in Greece was reported by Papastyilanou, Kaila & Polychronopoulos [15].

According to Kinman, Wray and Strange [16] teacher burnout is expressed in reactions of anger, anxiety, unease, depression, fatigue, boredom, cynicism, a sense of guilt, psychiatric

reactions and in extreme cases also nervous breakdown. On the professional level there may be a significant and evident decrease in performance and teaching, lack of continued attendance due to illness, strictness towards students, low expectations regarding students' efforts, mental and physical fatigue and a low level of commitment to teaching work and the students' needs.

Researchers define self-efficacy as people's belief concerning their ability to supervise and manage events that influence their environment and lives so that they can satisfy their needs and their ability to enlist the motivation, cognitive resources and actions (skills) necessary to succeed in tasks that they choose. Self-efficacy can be developed through success in task performance, observation of behavioural models, verbal persuasion and a positive level of psychological and physiological arousal. These processes contribute significantly to human motivation to attain achievements [17]. Professional self-efficacy is defined as a professional person's belief in his capability to control events that influence his professional life [18] in relation to the individual's specific occupation [19].

Evidence from research indicates that there is a correlation between school leadership and teachers' professional self-efficacy. For example, the studies of Leithwood and Mascall [20] found that leadership style influenced the teaching framework and teachers' self-efficacy expressed in the teachers' motivation. Oplatka [21] saw the principal's leadership style as an important factor for teacher performances so that a beneficial setting and reciprocal principal-teacher relations produce better performances. Teachers who have a high sense of self-efficacy tend to be more satisfied and motivated to contribute to the organization than teachers who have a low sense of self-efficacy [22].

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research goal

The research aimed to investigate possible correlations between the principal's leadership style and teachers' sense of self-efficacy and level of burnout.

2.2 Research questions

From all the above-said, it appears that the correlation between regressive behavior including burnout and a sense of self-efficacy and professional self-efficacy has an influence on the quality of teachers' functioning in the school organization. This functioning is shaped against the background of the organizational culture led by the school principal. On this assumption, the researcher formulated the research question as follows: To what extent does the school principal's leadership style influence the teachers' sense of self-efficacy to manage and their sense of burnout?

2.3 Research hypotheses

Five hypotheses were derived from the principle that the principal's leadership style influences the teachers' self-efficacy and level of burnout. Additionally, there is a correlation between the teacher's self-efficacy for management and the teacher's level of burnout.

Thus Hypothesis 1 was: A positive correlation will be found between the principal's use of a human resources leadership approach or the structural-procedural leadership style and the teachers' sense of self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 2: A negative correlation will be found between the principal's use of a political leadership style or a symbolic leadership style and the teachers' sense of self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 3: A negative correlation will be found between the principal's the principal's use of a human resources leadership approach or the structural-procedural leadership style and the teachers' level of burnout.

Hypothesis 4: A positive correlation will be found between the principal's use of a political or symbolic leadership style and the teachers' level of burnout.

Hypothesis 5: A negative correlation will be found between the teachers' sense of self-efficacy for management and their level of burnout.

2.1 Research method

Research tools: To gather data to respond to the research question, a closed-end quantitative questionnaire was employed, including a questionnaire to examine the level of teachers' burnout composed of 14 items and with a reliability value of $\alpha=0.90$ [23]. Internal reliability of the entire questionnaire was measured at $\alpha=0.908$. It also included a questionnaire examining principal's leadership style composed of 32 items, according to four leadership styles: structural-procedural, human resources, political and symbolic [24].

The teachers were asked to grade the principal's behaviour on a five point Likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. Internal reliability of the questionnaire was very high: for structural-procedural items ($\alpha=0.949$), human resources ($\alpha=0.947$), political ($\alpha=0.904$) and symbolic ($\alpha=0.953$). A final questionnaire examined self-efficacy for management. This was developed by Arar (2015) and included 12 items. The teachers were asked to grade their responses on a five point Likert scale where 1= completely disagree and 5= completely agree. The internal consistency of this questionnaire stood at 0.858.

Research population: 740 Arab teachers participated in the research, with a response rate of 87%; 740 out of 850 teachers in the selected schools consented to participate in the research. The choice of the sample authentically represented the distribution of the Arab population in Israel: 50% from the Northern region (370 teachers), 35% from the central region (259 teachers) and 15% from the Southern region (111 teachers) [25]. To choose the sample, each region was divided into large towns (more than 15,000 inhabitants) and villages (less than 15,000 inhabitants). Eight localities were chosen from the Northern region (4 large towns and 4 villages; four localities from the central region (2 large towns and 2 villages) and two localities from the Southern region (1 town and 1 village). Three schools were chosen from each town and village, including senior high, junior high and elementary schools. Approximately two thirds of the teachers were women (68%) and 68% had a Bachelor's degree. The average age of the teachers was 38.85 years, while their average years of teaching experience were 14.53 years.

3. MAIN FINDINGS

The teachers reported that the principals demonstrated a high level of structural-procedural leadership ($M=3.90$), a slightly lower level of human resources leadership ($M=3.78$), less political leadership ($M=3.72$), while symbolic leadership received a mean grade of 3.85. Moreover the teachers reported a high level of self-realization ($M=3.67$) yet a medium level of burnout ($M=2.48$).

Table 1 provides the matrix of correlations between the variables: leadership style (structural procedural, human resources, symbolic and political), background variables (gender, age, education and years of teaching experience), self-realization and burnout. The data in the table indicate that the range of values of the correlations runs from a zero correlation to a strong value (0.00-0.95). A negative correlation is evident between burnout and all types of leadership style: structural-procedural ($r=-0.65$; $p<0.001$), human resources ($r=-0.67$; $p<0.001$), symbolic ($r=-0.35$; $p<0.001$), and political ($r=-0.42$; $p<0.001$).

The data in Table 2 indicate that there was a positive correlation between self-realization and all types of leadership style: structural-procedural ($r=0.57$; $p<0.001$), human resources ($r=0.65$; $p<0.001$), symbolic ($r=0.34$; $p<0.001$), political ($r=0.37$; $p<0.001$). A negative correlation was found between self-realization and burnout.

Table 1. Matrix of Pearson's correlations for the research variables

	Burnout	Structural-procedural	Human resources	Political	Symbolic	Self-realization
Structural-procedural	-0.65***					

Human resources	-0.67***	0.93***				
Political	-0.42***	0.91***	0.91***			
Symbolic	-0.35***	0.94***	0.93***	0.92***		
Self-realization	-0.54***	0.57***	0.65***	0.34***	0.37***	

*p<0.5, ** p<0.1, ***p<0.01

In order to investigate the correlation between the four leadership styles on the one hand and the extent of influence of the mediating factor (self-realization) on the other hand, analysis was conducted through regressive linear equations in three stages: (1) regression of the mediating variable on the independent variable (2) regression of the dependent variable on the independent variable and (3) regression of the dependent variable on the independent variable and the mediating variable [26].

Table 2 displays the results for performance of regression of self-realization on the five leadership styles. The order of entry of the independent variables was performed in two stages, where at each additional stage another group was added to the equation. At the first stage the background variables group was entered: gender, age, years of teaching experience and education. At the second stage the leadership styles variables group was entered: structural-procedural, human resources, symbolic, and political.

Table 2. Multiple regression for analysis of the influence of background variables and leadership styles on self-realization

Variable	Step 1	Step 2
Gender (0=female)	0.00	0.03
Age	-0.70	-0.06
Years of teaching experience	0.19**	0.16*
Education (0=Bachelor's degree)	0.14***	0.15***
Structural-procedural		1.05***
Human resources		0.95***
Political		-0.09
Symbolic		0.08
R ²	0.043	0.199

*p<0.5; ***p=0.01

As can be seen from the data in Table 4, analysis of the findings at the first stage of regression equation on self-realization indicated the existence of a positive correlation between self-realization and years of teaching experience ($\beta = 0.09$; $p < 0.05$) and education ($\beta = 0.09$; $p < 0.05$). It was found that older teachers and those who had a Master's degree had a higher sense of self-realization than younger teachers who only had a Bachelor's degree. No correlation was found between self-realization and the other background variables. Following the entry of the leadership style variables it was possible to discern a slight weakening of the correlation between self-realization and years of experience and education. With regard to the correlation between the leadership style variables and self-realization, it was found that there was a positive correlation between self-realization and the structural-procedural style ($\beta = 1.05$; $p < 0.001$) and between self-realization and the human resources style ($\beta = 0.95$; $p < 0.001$). Teachers who perceived the leadership of the principal as more structural-procedural or human resources styles, had a higher sense of self-realization. While the level of explained difference after the first stage amounted to 4.3%, it was found that the second stage

contributed an additional 15.6% to the explained difference of the regression model. This contribution points to a significant predictive ability of the structural-procedural leadership style and the human resources approach for self-realization.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Hypothesis 3 was that a correlation would be found between the principal's leadership style and the teachers' level of burnout. The hypothesis was confirmed with regard to the structural managerial style. A correlation was found between this style and general burnout, such that when the principal was seen by the teachers to have a structural management style, then they felt less burnout. Burnout stems primarily from stress. The structural leadership style reduces stress since everything is clear and predefined. Thus some of the factors for stress are avoided such as vagueness of the role and lack of sufficient guidance by the management [27]. This finding is in line with the bureaucratic organizational dimension categorized by Malach Pines [28], who argued that effective functioning of an organization and the mechanisms supporting work allow the employee to achieve his goals and prevent mental and physical fatigue. Oplatka [29] also noted the importance of these factors.

The hypothesis was also confirmed with regard to influence of the human resources management style for the level of burnout, so that when the principal was perceived as using this leadership approach, the teachers had a lower level of burnout, they were less fatigued and had less sense of a lack of self-realization. This style emphasizes relationships and emotions and stresses the importance of employees, through guidance of the employee, his participation, team work and interpersonal relations. Lack of these components is known to be a factor for burnout. Cherniss [30] noted the lack of support as one of the factors for burnout, while Evans [31] spoke about teachers' participation in decision-making as a moderator for burnout, and in fact many researchers have noted that the human resources approach provides a response to these factors.

An additional reason for the fact that the human resources approach moderates the sense of burnout, is that burnout is caused when the teacher feels that the means that he invests are not productive and that his actions are ineffective. This style of management stresses the individual's needs, modifies the organization to the employees and stresses their significance. When the principal supports the teacher, strengthening him, improving his motivation and emphasizing good interpersonal relations, the sense that self-realization is lacking is reduced.

With regard to the symbolic leadership style, it was found that Hypothesis 4 was confirmed for the influence of a principal's use of symbolic leadership style on burnout. When the principal was perceived as using the symbolic style, the teachers suffered less burnout and were less fatigued. This is because the symbolic leader introduces a sense of enthusiasm and commitment for the employees. He provides them with inspiration and a vision. Symbolic leadership shapes an educational learning vision, and is advantageous due to the cooperation created between the principal and the school staff and the community for the sake of the school staff's realization [32].

The hypothesis was also confirmed for the political leadership style influence on burnout. This means that when the principal was perceived to use a political style, the teachers were less fatigued. Fatigue is caused among other things by onerous demands of the role and stress [33] (Friedman & Lotan, (1993). A principal that uses a political style is an environmental leader, he directs his actions more towards the outside and deals less with the daily activities of the school. According to Addi-Raccach [34], the principal invests in relations with external entities in order to increase the effectiveness of his management of the school and to establish the school's status and prestige [35].

Hypothesis 5 concerning the correlation between self-efficacy and burnout was confirmed. This means that when the teacher's level of self-efficacy to manage is higher, then the level of burnout is reduced.

A positive correlation was also found between the human resources management style and also the structural-procedural style and the teacher's self-efficacy for management.

Practical recommendations: the research findings indicate the contribution of the leadership style to the teachers' level of burnout and sense of self-efficacy in school. Thus, if there is a desire to reduce teachers' level of burnout, and to increase their level of self-efficacy, a school principal's leadership style can definitely help to attain these goals.

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