Leadership Practices and Teacher Job Performance: Inputs for Positive Workplace Behaviors

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Abstract

The study of leadership in educational institutions is one of the most often researched educational management topics. For any institution to succeed, it needs to have strong leadership.The studies mentioned indicate that employees play a critical role in ensuring the quality of service. When they are clarified about their work requirements and expectations, they are abler to perform better. Although leaders are responsible for the proper task and job allocation, different leadership practices affect how performance is being allocated. Leaders are claimed to have a positive impact on the organization's efficiency by influencing the employees. Specifically, leaders significantly influence their members within the organization.

Keywords

Leadership practices; Teacher job performance; Positive workplace behaviors.

1. Introduction

Education in Mainland China was mainly regarded as a political and ideological device without its mission and any autonomy prior to the political and economic reform period, which started in 1978 under the leadership of Premier Deng Xiaoping. However, these days, the principle of transitional leadership is attractive to Chinese scholars and leaders alike because of the unstable nature of the education system. To respond to the external environment and the pressing need for skills and the ability to cope with change, educational leaders must learn to solidify values, delegate responsibility, and build teams.

In their report, China Daily News (September, 2017) mentioned that the construction of qualified personnel is one of the fundamental problems in the survival and development of private colleges and universities. The performance and quality of the academic staff largely determine the quality of private colleges and universities. The higher education ministry in China has raised concern with the issue of academician performance due to some complaints lodged to the ministry by the parents and the students.

As noted by Güleryüz et al. (2018), job satisfaction is found to be a mediator between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment. Job satisfaction of teachers can also be seen from the side of human relationships. Namely, the supervision has done by the principal, as well as a good colleague relationship. Supervision or guidance of the principal is the ability of leaders to provide technical assistance and behavior support to subordinates, in this case, to the teacher. Furthermore, job satisfaction is also related to school culture, which is the values adopted by the citizens of the school. Thus, it is essential to know what variables affect teachers' job satisfaction at the Hunan University of Humanities Science and Technology (HUHST) in Hunan Province, China. Furthermore, it is necessary to manage these variables in such a way as to obtain maximum results for school management, empower leadership practices, and infuse

positive work behaviors in the workplace. Analysis of the variables that affect teachers' job satisfaction is one means to help schools improve teacher productivity.

Chinese universities and other educational institutions believe that upskilling their workforce is key to its continued economic growth. Programs and studies that promote the improvement of the quality of teachers spearhead innovative teaching models and promote overseas cooperation are some of the essential goals in higher education institutions. The researcher takes the problem from the macro-level perspective or the general perception the world has about China's leadership practices into the micro-level perspective by taking a sample population from the researcher's university.

The study hopes to provide empirical outcomes gained from the results of this study which can be valuable for the content and practices of school administrators, educators, human resource managers, and other school leaders towards the greater understanding and appreciation of leadership practices and appreciation of teacher's job satisfaction and other areas addressing the needs of the educators for the improvement of positive workplace behaviors.

2. The Design of Research

The research design that is utilized in this study is the convergent parallel design mixed method. This design combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches as it involves collecting quantitative and qualitative data, and analysis of the data integrates both forms of data.

The purpose is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem by converging or merging quantitative and qualitative evidence. In this design, the researcher typically collects both forms of data at the same time, utilizes the methods equally, keeps the data analysis independent, mixes the results during the overall interpretation, and tries to look for convergence, divergence, contradictions, or relationships of two sources of data (Creswell, J.W., & Creswell, J.D. (2018). Furthermore, this design entails that the researcher concurrently conducts the quantitative and qualitative elements in the same phase of the research process, weighs the methods equally, analyzes the two components independently, and interprets the results together. With the purpose of corroboration and validation, the researcher aims to obtain a complete understanding from two databases, such as the academic administrators' leadership practices and the university teachers' job satisfaction, by directly comparing the quantitative statistical results and qualitative findings.

The study aims at investigating the correlates of differences in the teacher respondents' assessment of the leadership practices of their academic administrators when their profile was taken as a test factor. Moreover, it explores the actual observations of the teachers on their school leaders' exercises of leadership practices and the commonly encountered challenges of the school leaders in the exercise of their leadership practices.

In this undertaking, a thorough analysis of the correlations will enable the researcher to converge and corroborate results from the given variables to form a valid synthesis of participants' responses towards providing a positive work behavior as the offshoot of the study. Given the nature of the current research work, it is believed that this research design is a fitly framed and highly useful method that can serve as the cornerstone of the study.

The study was conducted in Hunan University of Humanities, Science and Technology (HUHST), Hunan Province, China. The university is located in Loudi, a central city in Hunan Province, China. Hunan University of Humanities, Science and Technology is a provincial comprehensive public general undergraduate university approved by the Ministry of Education.

3. Summary of Findings

The research design that was utilized in this study was the convergent parallel design mixed method. This design combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches as it involved collecting quantitative and qualitative data, and analysis of the data integrated both forms of data.

The study aimed to investigate the correlates of differences in the teacher respondents' assessment of the leadership practices of their academic administrators when their profile was taken as a test factor. Moreover, it explored the actual observations of the teachers on their school leaders' leadership practices and the commonly encountered challenges of the school leaders in the exercise of their leadership practices.

3.1. Socio-demographic Profile

The following data presented in the socio-demographic profile of the respondents which constituted the first part of the questionnaire.

The majority of teacher respondents at Hunan University of Humanities, Science, and Technology are female and between the ages of 31 and 35, belonging to Generation Y, Z, or millennials. They value workplaces that are friendly, fun, efficient, fast-paced, flexible, informal, and have access to leadership and information. Most respondents are single and hold master's degrees. These findings suggest that the faculty members at the university are more likely to have a positive work environment, be productive, and committed. Graduate students may benefit from teachers who have also taken graduate courses.

3.2. Assessment of Leadership Practices

In terms of Assessment of Leadership Practices in Model the Way. The findings suggest that the academic administrators can be successful leaders since they show they work ethically and professionally. This is a good indication that they serve as role models for all faculty members because recent studies suggest that most teachers look up their academic heads as role models in terms of personality and social competencies.

In terms of Assessment of Leadership Practices in Terms of Inspire a Shared Vision, this means that they can inspire others to attain outcomes in an extraordinary way and in the process, develop their own leadership capacity.

In terms of Assessment of Leadership Practices in Terms of Challenge the Process, the findings suggest that the academic leaders have a high propensity to take or accept risks and be able to positively impact others' performance. Those kind of leaders are innovative and proactive.

In terms of Assessment of Leadership Practices in Terms of Enable Others to Act, the results suggest that they can foster collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships and can inspire everyone to be involved and to aim for higher job performance at all times.

In terms of Assessment of Leadership Practices in Terms of Encourage the Heart, the results suggest that they can encourage the heart of the people in order to go on and continue working hard. Those people can feel the genuine acts of caring of the leaders and can uplift their spirits; hence, appreciation and recognition of people's output even in the simplest form is necessary.

3.3. Significant Difference in Teacher-Respondents' Assessment of the Leadership Practices of their Academic Administrators

The overall assessment of academic administrators' leadership practices by teachers did not differ significantly by sex, with both male and female respondents rating their administrators equally. However, there were significant differences in the overall assessment of leadership practices by age, with teachers aged 41-50 rating their administrators lower than those aged 51 and above and 31-35. Marital status also showed significant differences in overall

assessment, with married teachers rating their administrators lower than divorced teachers. There were no significant differences in assessment based on highest educational attainment.

3.4. Academic Administrator-Respondents' Assessment of the Teachers' Job Performance

For academic administrator-Respondents' assessment of the teachers' job performance in terms of teacher planning, the highest mean score in Teacher Planning (TP) was for TP3 (The use of my teaching media is well planned), with a mean of 3.5053 and a verbal interpretation of "Always/Very High Level". This finding is consistent with Clark's study, which found that teachers plan in order to meet immediate personal needs such as reducing uncertainty and anxiety, organizing instructional materials, and organizing students to get activities started and aid memory.

For academic administrator-respondents' assessment of the teachers' Job performance in terms of classroom organization, the Classroom Organization (CO) variable showed that CO4 (I use teaching time effectively) had the highest mean score of 3.4632, with a verbal interpretation of "Always/Very High Level". This finding suggests that teachers prioritize on-time completion of tasks and course completion by planning activities with specific time ranges, including the preparation of teaching materials and documents.

For academic administrator-respondents' assessment of the teachers' job performance in terms of classroom atmosphere discipline, the Classroom Atmosphere Discipline (CAD) variable had the highest mean score of 3.4105, with a verbal interpretation of "Always/Very High Level". This finding suggests that the teacher-student relationships and classroom management are clearly separated, and the schools have a disciplined classroom environment.

For academic administrator-respondents' assessment of the teachers' job performance in terms of teacher leadership, the Teacher Leadership (TL) variable had the highest mean score of 3.4211, with a verbal interpretation of "Always/Very High Level". This finding suggests that teachers have a strong influence on their students' performance at school and are effective in teaching specific lessons.

3.5. Significant Difference in the Academic Administrators' Assessment of the Teacher-Respondents' Job Performance

The academic administrators' assessment of teachers' job performance was not significantly different by gender, age, marital status, or highest educational attainment. This suggests that administrators assess teachers' job performance consistently and without bias, regardless of these factors. These findings highlight the importance of unbiased judgment in the assessment of administrators and the consistency of the institution's performance standards for teachers.

3.6. Significant Relationship between Leadership Practices and Teachers' Job Performance

The teachers' assessment showed a significant positive correlation between academic administrators' leadership practices and teachers' job performance, with a high correlation coefficient of $r = .790$ and $p < .001$. The higher the leadership practices, the better the teachers' job performance. The academic administrators' assessment also showed a significant positive correlation between leadership practices and teachers' job performance, with moderate to high correlation coefficients ranging from $r = .565$ to $r = .824$ for all sub-variables. These findings suggest that leadership practices are strongly associated with teacher job performance and highlight the importance of effective leadership in promoting a positive work environment for teachers.

3.7. Observations that Teacher-Respondents Identified from the Leadership Practices of their Leaders

Among the responses, the primary themes that emerged were "Initiating Internal and External Training", "Promotion of Professional Growth", and "Incentives". The respondents highly regarded the training programs implemented in their schools, emphasizing the importance of improving the performance of individuals and groups through training. The promotion of professional growth was also highlighted, with academic administrators being responsible for monitoring the growth of their teachers, potentially contributing to the high number of teacher-respondents with graduate degrees. Finally, the use of incentives was noted as a key factor in influencing staff to have better job performance, indicating the efforts of academic administrators in promoting a positive work environment for their teachers.

The primary themes that emerged among the responses were "Trust," "Involvement of All Staff in Planning," and "Establishment of Assessment Plan for Teachers". Trust was highlighted as the most critical factor in promoting positive workplace behavior, with academic administrators allowing employees to manage themselves as long as they follow directives. The involvement of all staff in planning was also noted, indicating that programs are more likely to be successful when all staff members participate in the planning process. The establishment of an assessment plan for teachers was also highlighted, indicating that a standard assessment tool is used to measure performance and that all staff members perform their duties accordingly. These findings suggest that trust, involvement, and assessment are crucial elements in promoting a positive work environment and effective leadership practices.

The primary themes that emerged from the responses were "Handling Administrative Affairs in a Fair, Just, and Open Manner" and "Equal Distribution of Tasks". Respondents emphasized the importance of treating all staff members equally and handling administrative affairs in a fair and open manner. This suggests that their academic administrators prioritize transparency and fairness in their leadership practices. The equal distribution of tasks was also highlighted, indicating that all staff members are given equal opportunities and responsibilities. These findings suggest that fairness, transparency, and equal treatment are essential elements in promoting positive workplace behavior and effective leadership practices.

The primary theme that emerged among the responses was "Supporting the Professional Development of Teachers," and all other descriptions revolve around this theme. The academic administrators in their respective schools are supporting the professional development of teachers through various means such as seminars, training programs, and workshops. This is a good indication that there is a good leadership in their schools since they are investing in the growth of their employees, which would ultimately benefit the students.

3.8. Challenges Encountered by the Academic Administrators in their Leadership Practices

The findings indicate that professional development of teachers and academic quality of the school are the primary themes that emerged from the responses. Academic leaders have excellent leadership skills and their schools have an atmosphere of trust. Respondents generally have satisfactory relationships with students, teachers, administrative staff, parents, and community members at school. However, insufficient funding is one of the major problems encountered by school principals, and they take initiatives to maintain their relationship with other agencies to receive more funding and donations. Branding is also a significant concern, and improving the school's external influence, including branding, is needed.

4. Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The University is dominated by nurturing and sympathetic female teachers with master's degrees, who are mainly from the 31-35 age group and single. The teachers' high level of productivity and commitment should be maintained and nurtured until they get married. The teachers' high level of educational attainment, particularly with a master's degree, can positively impact students' productivity and knowledge retention.

The academic administrators were found to possess good leadership qualities that positively impact the teachers' job performance, foster collaboration, and encourage higher productivity. The teachers' assessment of the academic administrators' leadership practices is significantly high, indicating the effectiveness of good leadership practices in achieving organizational goals.

The teachers, regardless of gender, have similar assessments of the leadership practices of their academic administrators. However, there are significant differences in the assessment based on age, except for inspiring a shared vision. This indicates that teachers of different age groups have different assessments.

The teachers' age and experience may have contributed to the significant differences found in the parameters of leadership practices or its sub-variables, particularly in Model Way, Challenge Process, Enable Others Act, and Encourage Heart. The boldness of teachers aged 41-50 years old in expressing their true assessment of their administrators may have played a role in this finding.

The study found that teachers engage in planning and organizing activities to reduce uncertainty and anxiety, as well as to aid memory and ensure completion of tasks and courses on time. Classroom management is separated from teacher-student relationships, and there is a disciplined atmosphere in their respective schools. Teachers' performance is improved when their students perform better, making it easier to teach specific lessons. Appropriate assessment is used to classify and grade students, provide feedback, and structure teaching.

Academic administrators assess teachers' job performance consistently, regardless of gender, age, marital status, or educational attainment. Teachers are known for their consistent high performance standards and are assessed using appropriate assessments, which helps structure their teaching and provide feedback. Classroom management and teacher-student relationships are clearly separated, and teachers are expected to plan and organize their teaching to reduce uncertainty and anxiety.

There was a high positive correlation found between academic administrators' leadership practices and teachers' job performance. As the leadership practices of academic administrators improve, there is a corresponding improvement in teachers' job performance.

Their schools implement training programs that teachers highly regard. Academic administrators monitor their professional growth. It may be for this reason that the majority of teacher-respondents hold graduate degrees. Due to established incentive mechanisms, academic administrators are exerting much effort to influence their staff to develop professionally to improve job performance. Everyone, teaching and non-teaching are treated equally.

The atmosphere of trust in the schools and the excellent leadership skills of the academic administrators indicate a harmonious and effective working relationship between teachers and administrators, which ultimately benefits the students.

Academic administrators have good relationships with various stakeholders and exhibit effective leadership qualities, such as modeling the way and inspiring a shared vision.

Academic administrators generally have very good relationships with students, teachers, administrative staff, parents, and community members. As previously found, academic managers model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart.

The primary issues faced by school principals are lack of funds and branding. School principals can resolve the lack of funds by improving their relationships with public and private agencies to receive more funding and donations. School branding must begin within to control how the community perceives their teaching.

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