Examining the Relations between Principals' Self-Image and Conflict Management Styles

Mohadese Montazeri[1], Zeinolabedin Montazeri[2], Fatemeh Montazeri[3]

[1]Instructor in Payam-e Noor University of North Khorasan and Esfaraein Branch, Islamic Azad University, Esfaraein, Iran; [2]Instructor in Payam-e Noor University of Norht Khorasan; [3]Instructor in Payam-e Noor University and the expert of monitoring and evaluation of Applied Science University of North Khorasan

Abstract

The present study aimed to identify the relation between school managers' self-image and their conflict management styles. The study was done among 40 managers of high schools in Esfaraien town, who were selected by the help of Bureau of Education of this town by census method. All managers had official notice of charge of management. The results indicated that there is no meaningful relation between self-image and conflict management styles, there is no meaningful relation between self-image and conflict management styles in relation to the gender, and finally in a strategic research the results showed that most of managers have used solution orientation as the management technique.

Keywords: Self-image, Conflict management styles, Management skills

Introduction

Large presence of organizations in different scenes of social life and management role in performance of organizations have developed so far as to consider management knowledge as one of the most important and complicated majors of humanities. Therefore, 20th century was called as management age and today world as the world of conscious mangers (Bazrgan, 1991). Besides common features with other organizations, bureau of Education has its own features. Therefore managing this department seeks special abilities and conditions. Development of any society depends primarily on the activity that takes place in schools, so the effect of school principals as the leader of education cannot be ignored (Mirkamali, 1995). This is important as far as one of the theorists claims that one way of determining the extent of successful realization of school goals is considering skills, competencies, and performance of principals of training units (Rabins, 1998). Accordingly, it is necessary to select competent, informed, and wise persons who have intuitional and potential capabilities; generally speaking, to be a specific character as they want to play the role of school manager. School managers are educational guides who lead an occupational family. Styles and methods of their managements have large effect on progress and job satisfaction of teachers as well as on their morale. If the principal's behavior is autocratic, incomprehensible, and far from the expectations, causes reluctance and demotivation among teachers. Principals should inform their teachers about their styles and their expectations even ask them that they are against or for and if they have some comments on school management. Teachers' comments and opinions not only improve the principal's management, but also are followed by feeling of participation in school affairs. This feeling makes teachers to accept methods and styles of the principal (Mirkamali, 1994).

The study was designed to investigate the relationship between self-image of principals and conflict management styles in high schools of Esfariean. Review of the related literature indicates that management can either create an atmosphere which is evocative, provides stimulus to changes, brings compatibility, and finally generates individual or organizational prosperity (Pardakhtci,1993), or create an atmosphere which prevents changing and compatibility. This will require a healthy and strong personality as if the principals be such a brave that accept their weak points as their strong ones. They need to be the owner of their personality, to try to strengthen their capabilities and to take steps toward a positive self-image in order to be an effective person. Rogers (1989) believes that if one makes progress in the

---

Corresponding author: Zeinolabedin Montazeri, Instructor in Payam-e Noor University of Norht Khorasan. E-mail: Zen_montazeri@yahoo.com

process of being good, they will get such a personality that tendency to construction, learning, and prosperity is the important part of his/her behavior (Rogers, 1990). Consequently, the base of action and behavior of man includes self-image and cognitive features that influence on a person's behavior.

Purpose and significance of the study

Regarding the time we live, the need for fundamental cognizance and essential skills to prevent tensions in human relations is felt more than ever (Rogers, 1990). By this token, the aim of the present study is firstly to define "self-image" term and the related theories, secondly to identify conflict and to explain conflict management styles in order to create a safe and healthy environment for school staff. Thus the main goal is to identify the relation between self-image of school managers and their conflict styles in high schools.

The conceptual framework of the research

An in-depth analysis of conflict styles has been conducted by Kenneth Thomas in 1976. To adapt management network to conflict conditions, he raised two aspects of self-regarding and others-regarding. After expressing various parts of the network, Thomas identified five basic styles. He has presented five major strategies for conflict management.

1- Competition: a tendency to meet the interests regardless of whether it leads to the conflict of another person.

2- Collaboration: a position in which both sides are steadfast in obtaining the interests while they are willing to have cooperation with each other as consider the other side's interests.

3- Avoidance: in this situation, one intends to withdraw from or avoid conflict.

4- Compromise: one intends to give points to the opposite side because they are high in rank.

5- Reconciliation: a situation in which parties agree to withdraw from some of their stance, and exchange some of their points.

In their field research, Putnam and Wilson have represented these five styles within three strategies of conflict.

1- Avoidance Strategy: it includes avoidance styles and adaptation or compromising.

2- Solution Orientation Strategy: is based on cooperation and compromising.

3- Control Strategy: this strategy is the same as competitive Strategy.

Research questions

According to the above, research questions are as follow:

1- How is management styles distribution of high schools managers of Esfaraien?

2- How is the distribution frequency of self-image educational managers of high schools of Esfaraien?

3- Is there any relation between managers' self-image and styles of conflict management?

4- Does gender of managers affect the relation between self-image and conflict management styles?

Methodology

In regard to the topic of the research, the relation between school managers' self-image and conflict management styles, the research is descriptive and correlational. Descriptive research includes methods that their goal is to describe under review conditions or phenomena. On other words, a researcher attempts to report everything without interference or deriving subjective inference (Naderi, 1991). Conducting a descriptive research is only for better understanding of existing conditions or to help decision-making process, while in analytical research there is a hypothesis through which an inference is achieved and the result can be generalized to the society. Finally, correlational research is a research in which the relation between different variables are determined and discovered by using correlation coefficient.

Participants

Statistical population of the study involves all principals of high schools of Esfaraein town who received officially notice of charge of management in 2007-2008. To do so, a list of all school managers who had official notification was prepared through census method by the help of Bureau of Education of this town.

Table1. Frequency Distribution of Statistical Population Gender and Degree

Degree	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor	Male	10	37
	Female	17	63
	Total	27	100
Master	Male	8	5/61
	Female	5	5/38
	Total	13	100

Results

Results of data analysis using descriptive and inferential data presented in the current chapter.

Describing the data

Frequency distribution of conflict management styles are presented in table 1.

As table 1 indicates, frequency use of conflict management styles among 40 school managers respectively include solution orientation; 26 persons (72.5%), avoidance; 6 persons (15%), control; 5 persons (12.5%). Therefore, as table 2 shows most of the managers employ solution orientation strategy as their management method.

Table 3 presents frequency distribution of conflict management styles according to gender and academic degree

As table 3 shows, among various methods and styles of conflict management (avoidance, solution orientation, and control), solution orientation is more practical method of management among male and female managers.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for conflict management styles

Conflict management styles	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative frequency%
Avoidance	6	0.15	0.15
Solution orientation	26	72.5	87.5
control	5	12.5	0.100
Total	40	100	

Table 3. The frequency distribution of conflict management styles according to gender and academic degree

Gender	Degree	Conflict styles	Frequency	%	Cumulative frequency %
Male	Bachelor	Avoidance	3	30.0	30.0
		Solution orientation	7	70.0	100
		control	0	0.0	0.0
		Total	10	100	
	Master	Avoidance	1	12	12.5
		Solution orientation	6	75.0	87.5
		control	1	12.0	100
		Total	8	100	
Female	Bachelor	Avoidance	1	5.9	5.9
		Solution orientation	12	70.6	76.5
		control	4	23.5	100
		Total	17	100	
	Master	Avoidance	1	20.0	20.0
		Solution orientation	4	80.0	100
		control	0	0.0	0.0
		Total	5	100	

Table 4. The Frequency Distribution of Self-image of Principals

Self-image	Frequency	%	Cumulative frequency %
Normal	16	40	40
Weak	24	60	100
Total	40	100	

Based on table 4, among 40 managers under investigation, 16 managers (40%) have normal self-image and 24 of them (60%) carry weak self-image. Therefore most of them have weak self-image.

As table 5 shows weak and normal self-image of male managers who have bachelor degree were respectively 20% and 80%, and male managers' self-image with master degree were half and half in

normal and weak. Whereas female managers' self-image with bachelor degree was 41/2% for weak and 58/8% for normal, those who had master degree were about 60% for weak and 40% for normal.

Table 5. The Frequency Distribution Principals' Self-image Based on Gender and Academic Degree

Gender	Degree	Self-image	Frequency	%	Cumulative frequency %
Male	Bachelor	Weak	2	20	20
		Normal	8	80	100
		Total	10	100	
	Master	Weak	4	50	50
		Normal	4	50	100
		Total	8	100	
Female	Bachelor	Weak	7	2/41	2/41
		Normal	10	8/58	100
		Total	17	100	
	Master	Weak	3	60	60
		Normal	2	40	100
		Total	5	100	

Data analysis

In order to examine the hypotheses, the study applied consistent test of Chi square (x^2). The obtained results with related hypotheses are as follow.

Research hypothesis testing

H1. There is a meaningful relation between self-image of school managers and their styles of conflict management.

The results of applying of consistent test of Chi square (x^2) for the test of hypothesis 1 has shown in table 6.

Given that the observed Chi square ($X^2 = 4.746$, df=2) is smaller than two other items of the table at the level of 95% confidence ($x^2=5.99$, df=2), there does not exist enough evidence of relation between conflict management styles and self-image.

Table 6. The Results of Using Consistent Test of Chi Square (X^2) For Examining the Relation Between Management Styles and Self-image of Managers

χ^2	df	Sig.
6 4.74	2	0.93

To examine second and the third hypotheses, the study used consistency testing of Chi square. The outcomes and the related hypotheses were presented in table 3.

Table 7. The results of using consistency testing of chi-square to examine the relation between management styles and self-image of managers based on gender

Hypothesis	χ^2	Df	Sig.
there is no meaningful relation between self-image and conflict management styles of male managers	2.16	2	34/0
there is no meaningful relation between self-image and conflict management styles of female managers	3.09	2	21/0

Based on table 7, there is no meaningful relation between self-image and conflict management styles of managers in the way gender affects relations. That is to say, whereas the amount of observed Chi square for male managers are ($x^2=0.34$, df=2) and for female managers are (x2=0.21, df=2) it is smaller

than critical Chi-square of table at the confidence level of 95% (d.f=25.99*2). So there is no sufficient evidence to prove the existence of relation between managers' self-image and their conflict management methods with respect to gender.

Discussion

Today, having an effective and efficient learning environment as well as fully growth and flourishing the talents of students need beneficial collaboration, useful activities, and also appropriate human interaction. To make such an environment, it is necessary to consider one of the important and effective factors, i.e. relation. "Self" has a special importance in communications. Self-awareness and having a considerable acquaintance with our own abilities is the first step in forming and shaping our communication. Meanwhile self-image is a prelude to have an effective communication with others. Each manager in his/her organization has to control numerous conflicts. Many times managers themselves are exposed to the conflict. In any situation a manager is, has to understand conflict. With the help of self-image it is possible to make clear the relation between others; in this case conflicts are replaced with constructive criticism that can solve the existing problems in organization and be used for organizational goals. Otherwise, conflicts would disrupt and damage organizational activities and the goals that are the intrinsic feature of organizations would not be realized. Self-image training not only helps people to boost their understanding and to take care of themselves, but also helps them to achieve the essential ability of understanding individual differences. Some people constantly encounter persons with various styles, different values, and distinctive viewpoints. Influential forces at work are increasing. Self-image is a valuable technique that helps people to strengthen their mind and its transmission encounter with large variety of work and education environment.

The present study was conducted to reveal the relation between managers' self-awareness and conflict management strategies in high school of Esfaraen. The findings showed that the majority of the managers use solution orientation strategy as the management method (table 1-4). The obtained results share the same outcomes reported by other researchers (Izadi, 1993; Haghighi, 2002; Izadi Yazdan Abadi, 2000; Batler, 1994; Velkoma & Bergman, 1989; Davz & Holend, 1989; Blake & Moton, 1985; and Ernest, 1993). One of the factors that managers choose solution orientation technique among other management methods is that those who are interested in this type of

technique care about either their needs or others' requirements and do not seek a transient solution; rather they take into account the relation of the two sides, self-confidence, and finally the conflict issue itself.

As tables 3, 4 indicate, there is no significant relationship between self-image of managers and their method in managing conflicts at the level of 95 percent of confidence. The outcomes of the examined hypothesis do not agree with some of the current theories. For example, Bamp and his colleagues (1989) claim that positive evaluation of self has a mutual correlation with happiness and one's useful performance. Bruk (1981), March (1984), Cekalvic (1983), and Hansford (1982) found a relation between self-image and self-esteem. Ragers (1982) believes that those who know themselves, are truly themselves; they do not hide themselves behind masks, do not pretend what they are not, such people tends toward construction, creating, learning, and flourishing. Branden (1993) also asserts that persons who are familiar with themselves are in a position that put themselves in charge of their actions and behaviors and they are free to announce their thoughts, ideas, and feelings.

Persons who have knowledge about themselves in Mazlo's view (as cited in Saatchi, 1997) are those who knows what they are and to where they are going. They are eager to flourish their talents and realize their abilities and potential genius; to do this they apply the maximum of their capabilities. They are patient and brave; accept the weak points of their behavior, the limit of their abilities and powers without worry; think about their weak points less (except to amend it as much as possible), they're not fighting, and finally try to keep the deficiencies separate at all cost. Fredric Perlz (cited in Saatchi, 1999) claims that self-knowing people do not shirk their responsibilities and are aware of themselves and the world around.

It should be noted that the results of the study are consistent with results reported by other researchers (Williams, 1996; susan nikoo, 1996; Haghighi, F, 2002; molavi,H, 2001), however they are inconsistent with the studies listed (Shahni Yeylagh & Shekarkan, 1995; Salimi & Tirgar, 1999; Rezaie, 1997; Taraghi Jah, 1996; Esmaili Farsani, 1995, Vaider and Hotfield, 1996; and Karman,1984).

Further, as table 3 implies there is no significant relation between self-image of managers and their styles for conflict management (male and female) when the confidence of coefficient is 95%. The findings are different from the proposed hypothesis. That is, people who have higher education, have higher self-image. In Super's view, through changing in environmental fac-

tors and providing educational-training programs it is possible to desirably make a change in self-image; as such people are able to realize themselves, to discover abilities and this is usually done when they continue their education and attend universities. Hence they can realize themselves better, and to achieve the desired social behavior. The result of the study also indicates that men and women in conflict resolution skills are almost equal. Meanwhile, the study is in consistent with the researches of (Taraghikhah, 1996; Lutatz, 1989; and Blake & Moton, 1985). Take a look at theories of Izadi Yazdan Abadi in 1993, Kvzan in 2000, and Ernest in 1993 it is clear that use of conflict management methods depends on conflict situations; i.e., in different situations people should exercise various strategies and due to the conditions apply a specific method. Consequently, the outcome of the research refutes previous studies. Jazayeri, Mohmmadzade, and Mehrozhanare are theorists who believe that use of conflict management styles are situation-dependent. They claim each type of strategy is suitable for a specific situation. From their viewpoint, the strategy of solution orientation is applied when the average of balance, cooperation, and insisting degrees are medium or higher, or if there is a logical approach to the existing issue. Time controlling method is proposed when the degree of balance and cooperation are low while the extent of resistance is high. These are conditions which have more dominancy on educational environment than conditions of other methods. B because in educational surroundings logic plays the main role and people continually seek to integrate various notions in order to reach a desired conclusion (to reach a consensus). However, in certain situations and in respect to different positions other styles can be used in an educational environment.

Recommendations of the study

1- Conflict solutions skills enhance managers' self-confidence and improve their relations with their staff. If managers use conflict management methods, it causes that conflicts would have an appropriate structure, therefore creativity and effectiveness would rise.

2- Offering training courses for managers and teaching essential skills as they intends to use conflict management methods, this helps an increase in the productivity power and organizational efficiency.

3- Using other management theories in line with evaluating management methods and styles of managers and for further review in various aspects

4- Doing more studies in order to determine the role of some of other factors such as local culture,

organizational culture, behavioral and physical features and etc. in determining the management method and conflict management strategies.

References

Abbas Bazargan, M. (1991). *The principles of fundamental concepts of management.* Tehran, Sorush publication.

Alvani, M. (1996). *Managers' self-image.* Nei publication. (3rd ed.).

Berko,R. & Andr, V.& Darlin,R. (20001). *Management of relations: individual or popular.* Translated by M, Arabi & D, Izadi. Cultural Research publication. (2nd ed.).

Bahari,S. (1983). *Anthropology (self-image).* Bayan publication. (2nd ed.).

Brouwer, PJ.(1964). *The power to see ourselves.* Harvard Business Review.

Coleman & Fults (n.d). *Special class placement, level of intelligence and the self − concept, Remedial and special education.*

Delavar, A. (2001). *Theoretical and empirical sources of research in the humanities and social sciences.* Roshd publication. (1st ed.).

Friedman , P. (1984). *Identifying the leadership Gifted: self-performance of teacher orientation, Roper review.*

Ghorbani, M. (2000). *Conflict Management and effectiveness in organizations.* Tus research publication.

Harasi, P. & Blanchard, K. (1998). *Management of organizational behavior.* Translated by A. Alaghemand. Amirkabir publication. (4th ed.).

Hui, V. & Miskel, C. (1992). Educational management. Translated by M, Abbaszade. Anzali Publication.

Izadi Yazdan Abadi, A. (2000). *Conflict management.* Publication institute of Imam Hussein. (1st ed.).

Mark, H. (1985). Educational management and organizational behaviuor. Translated by A. Naeli. Shahid Chamran University Publication. (1st ed.).

Mirkamali, A. (1992). Psychology for managers, systematic approach to human behavior. Management In Education Quarterly, Number 1, Fourth Year.

Milz, K. (1998). *Relations of organization.* Translated by Ghobadi. Publication of Management Organization.

Mirkamali, A. (1994). Management in Education Quarterly, Third year, Number 10.

Mosley, D. & Paulh, P. & Leonc, M. (1996). *Management leadership in Action*. Harper Collins college publishers.

Naderi, E. & Seyf Naraghi, M. (1991). *Research styles and how to evaluate it in humanities*. Badr publication.

Namara Cater, M. (1999). *Basics of conflict Management Na*. Retrieved from Http: // www Management. Help. Org / abowt NmI.htm.

Pardahktchi,M. (1993). Management in Education. Management Quarterly, Second Year, Number 2.

Pervin, O. (2001). Personality (theory and research). Translated by M, Javadi & P, Kadivar. Aiineh publication. (1st ed.).

Rabinz, S. (1998). *Organizational behavior of concepts, theories, applications*. Translated by A, Parsiyan., Arabi,M.

Rezaiyan,A. (1993). *Management of organization behavior (concepts, theories, and applications)*. Scientific republication of Azad University, first edition.

Rogers, K. (1990). *A prelude to be human*. Translated by GH,Ghazi. Center of Islamic University Press, first edition.

Rokeach , M . (1973). *Thenature of human values*. New York.

Saatchi, M. (1999). Practical psychology for managers. Editing Institute Publication, fifth edition.

Sayles , L. (1964) . *Managerial behavior*. New York. MCGraw − Hill.

Shamloo, S. (1995). Philosophy and theories in psychology of personality. Roshd publication. (5th ed.).

Williams, P. & *et al.* (1987). *The creativity and self-concept relationship*.