One the Relationship between Teachers' Sense of Responsibility and Transformational Leadership Style

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Abstract

This study sought to explore the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' transformational leadership style and sense of responsibility. To do so, 183 Iranian EFL teachers took part in this study. The data were collected through Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio, Bass & Jung, 1995) and Teachers' Responsibility Scale (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2013). To analyse the data, spearman correlation and linear regression were run. The results revealed that Iranian EFL teachers' transformational leadership style was significantly correlated with their sense of responsibility. Moreover, it was found that transformational leadership style was a positive predictor of teachers' sense of responsibility. It was concluded that higher transformational leadership styles contributes to higher sense of responsibility, which in turn affects students' learning and help them achieve their educational purposes. The finding of this study is particularly significant for educational practitioners and teachers, as it will help teachers focus on these two individual characteristics in order to augment both teaching and learning quality.

Keywords: Sense of responsibility; Transformational leadership; Individual characteristic; EFL teacher;

1. Introduction

Teachers' sense of responsibility is considered as one of the most influential factor in both teaching and learning processes (Broadfoot, Osborn, Gilly, & Paillet, 1988; Dahlgren, & Hammar Chiriac, 2009; Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004; Guskey, 1981; Lauermann, & Karabenick, 2011, 2013; Schalock, 1998). Sense of responsibility is described as "a sense of internal obligation and commitment to produce or prevent designated outcomes or that these
outcomes should have been produced or prevented” (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2011). It is asserted that teachers’ responsibility likely touches their instructional practices, mental well-being, and eventually their students’ learning and performance (Lauermann, 2013). Moreover, Responsible teachers focus on their students' motivation, academic success, the interaction with their students (Lauermann, & Karabenick, 2013).

One factor which is posited to influence teachers' sense of responsibility is transformational leadership style in that transformational leadership focuses on the leader/follower relationship with a sense of “responsibility for” the improvement of followers (Shibru, & Darshan, 2011). Some educational researchers acknowledged that transformational leadership contributes to effective teaching, student educational achievements and attaining desired objectives in the classrooms in that this single concept focus on students' needs, motivation and behavior (Bowman, 2004; Can, 2009; Bolkan & Goodboy, 2009; Koh, 2008; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Stein, 2010; Treslan, 2006). Moreover, the nature of these two concepts is inclusively focused on students' needs and behavior; hence, theoretically, it seems that these two issues interact with each other closely. Additionally, both transformational leadership style and sense of responsibility have been separately studied regarding to different educational issues such as academic success or failure (Koh, 2008; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Weiner, 1995), student goal commitment, achievement motivation and learning (Bierhoff et al., 2005; Bolkan & Goodboy, 2009; Can, 2009; Lee & Smith, 1996, 1997; Diamond, Randolph & Spillane, 2004), and student achievement (Lee & Loeb, 2000; Rose & Medway, 1981). Although these two concepts have been investigated separately in relation to different issues, however, the probable relationship between teachers' sense of responsibility and transformational leadership, to the best knowledge of the authors, has not been studied. Therefore, the dearth of such investigation echoes a clear requirement to undertake an empirical research in this realm.

2. Literature Review

Responsibility is referred to teachers' insights towards their responsibilities and the situations under which they incline to admit personal responsibility for the likely outcomes (Lauermann, & Karabenick, 2013). Lauermann and Karabenick's (2013) developed a more comprehensive, conceptualized and operationalized teachers' sense of responsibility scale. They contended that responsibility contains four facets namely (1) student motivation, (2) student achievement, (3) relationships with students, and (4) teaching. As it is clearly obvious, in this perspective students' and their needs are the center of attention. In one study, Lauermann (2013) conducted a study to investigate teachers' prospective about responsibility. They acknowledged that although responsibility has significant motivational consequences in terms of effort investment, perseverance, and commitment to students, it contains some personal costs for teachers such as hard work, dearth of sleep, and less family time. Furthermore, Lee and Smith (1996) move toward collective teacher responsibility as a component of teachers’ efficacy in their teaching rehearsals, internal locus of control, commitment to all students’ learning, and personal responsibility for students’ learning outcomes. Likewise, Lee and Loeb (2000) found that teachers' collective responsibility was positively linked to their student achievement. Although teachers’ responsibility has been studied in relation to aforementioned issues in educational context, however, it has not been touched on with some teachers' individual characteristics such as transformational leadership.

Literature bounds with studies done regarding the relationship between teachers' transformational leadership and other individual characteristics (Burkett, 2011; Khany & Ghoreishi, 2013; Koh, 2008; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Stein, 2010; Treslan, 2006). Transformational leadership includes four facets, namely, idealized influence behavior, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Khany and Ghoreishi (2013) explored the relationship between teachers' efficacy of classroom management, reflective thinking and transformational leadership style. The results found that there is significant relationship between teachers' transformational leadership style with efficacy of classroom management and reflective thinking. In line with other researchers, Bolkan and Goodboy (2009) conducted a study and found that there is a positive association between teachers' transformational leadership skills and their students’ academic achievement. Furthermore, Pounder (2006) stated that there was a positive relationship between teachers’ transformational leadership, classroom instruction and students’ empowerment. It was concluded that transformative leaders empower their students to learn effectively and attain their academic goals by inspirational motivation, appropriate classroom instructions and individual consideration.

Reviewing all the above mentioned literature revealed that although teachers' sense of responsibility and transformational leadership style have been studied separately in relation to different issues in educational context,
however, their probable interaction has not been touched on. Moreover, it is required that researchers methodologically approach this issue as well. To fill the existing gap, the researchers addressed the following questions:

1) Is there any statistically significant relationship between teachers' sense of responsibility and transformational leadership style?

2) Does teachers' transformational leadership style account for significant variance in their sense of responsibility?

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants
183 teachers participated from several high schools of Babolsar and Ghaemshahr cities in Mazandaran province. Of them, 58.3% were males and 41.6% were females. All the participants were invited directly by researchers and ensured that the responses would be confidential.

3.2. Instrument
Two self-report scales were administered to collect the data.

3.2.1. Teachers' Responsibility Scale
Teachers' Responsibility Scale designed by Lauermann and Karabenick (2013) was applied in this study. It includes four dimensions, namely responsibility for student motivation, student achievement, relationships with students, and teaching. This measure is assessed along with a 5-point Likert scale with anchors from 0 (not at all responsible) to 5 (completely responsible). Its reliability was 0.77.

3.2.2. Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form developed by Avolio, Bass and Jung (1995) was used in this study. This questionnaire designed to measure Transformational, transactional, and laissez-fair leadership styles, but in present study only those items that were related to Transformational leadership style were used. Five dimensions conceptualize transformational leadership: idealized influence behavior, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. It includes 21 Items, which were answered using a 5-point Likert-type scale. The reliability of the questionnaire was .89.

3.3. Procedure and Data analysis
This study was conducted in July 2013. The scales were administered to teachers in different high schools. To answer the addressed research questions in the study, different analytical methods were computed. After the data were put into the SPSS software, first, Spearman correlation was computed to determine the relationship between teachers' sense of responsibility and transformational leadership style. Then, linear regression analysis was applied to see whether or not teachers' transformational leadership style accounts for their sense of responsibility. In the following section, the findings are discussed at length.

4. Results
To respond the first questions posed in the study, spearman bivariate correlation was run to investigate the relationship between teachers' responsibility and transformational leadership as well as the associations between their sub-scales. As it is indicated in Table 1, there is a significant correlation between teachers' responsibility and transformational leadership ($r = .601$).
Table 1. Spearman bivariate correlation between teachers’ sense of responsibility and transformational leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers' Scales</th>
<th>TR</th>
<th>SM</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>RS</th>
<th>TL</th>
<th>IIB</th>
<th>IM</th>
<th>IS</th>
<th>NC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers' Sense of Responsibility</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Student motivation</td>
<td>.578**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Student achievement</td>
<td>.543*</td>
<td>.334**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Relationships with students</td>
<td>.611**</td>
<td>.442**</td>
<td>.417**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teaching</td>
<td>.486**</td>
<td>.398**</td>
<td>.198**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership</td>
<td>.601**</td>
<td>.371*</td>
<td>.472**</td>
<td>.398**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Idealized Influence Behaviour</td>
<td>.421**</td>
<td>.298**</td>
<td>.389**</td>
<td>.227*</td>
<td>.437**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Inspirational Motivation</td>
<td>.341*</td>
<td>.499**</td>
<td>.568*</td>
<td>.419**</td>
<td>.656**</td>
<td>.339**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>.234**</td>
<td>.236**</td>
<td>.441**</td>
<td>.389*</td>
<td>.349**</td>
<td>.198*</td>
<td>.510**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Individual Consideration</td>
<td>.456**</td>
<td>.329**</td>
<td>.343*</td>
<td>.223**</td>
<td>.596**</td>
<td>.250**</td>
<td>.460**</td>
<td>.494*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

TR= Teachers’ Responsibility; SM= Student motivation; SA= Student achievement; RS= Relationships with students; TL= Transformational Leadership; IIB= Idealized Influence Behavior; IM= Inspirational Motivation; IS= Intellectual Stimulation; NC= Individual Consideration

It is surprising to mention that all sub-scales of main variables are significantly correlated with each other. Additionally, all connections are positive as well.

To predict the effect of teachers' transformational leadership on their sense of responsibility, linear regressions were applied. As it is illustrated in Table 2, transformational leadership significantly accounts for variation on sense of responsibility.

Table 2. Linear regression analysis for predicting teachers' sense of responsibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers' Sense of Responsibility</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.516</td>
<td>1.791</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational leadership</td>
<td>0.647</td>
<td>3.715</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig= 0.000</td>
<td>F= 16.808</td>
<td>R²= 0.121</td>
<td>R= 0.834</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is obviously presented in above table, transformational leadership contributes to moderate variation in teachers' sense of responsibility (B= .647, Sig=. 000). Additionally, transformational leadership is a positive predictor of responsibility.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The primary objective of the study was to provide empirical evidence and well-documented information on the relationship between teachers' sense of responsibility and transformational leadership. This study extended prior research by being the first to demonstrate a link between these two variables simultaneously. The finding revealed that there is positive and significant link between the two concepts. Taking the facets of these two scales into account, it seems logical that sense of responsibility and transformational leadership are moderately associated with each other since the nature of these two variables is focused on students' requirement, motivation, and stimulation as well as on teaching so they share the same goals which would be facilitating teaching and learning processes.

Regarding the second question, it was found that transformational leadership is a moderate predictor of sense of responsibility implying that by increasing the level of transformational leadership style, the level of responsibility would be enhanced. Accordingly, once teachers' both professional and personal responsibility augmented, they try
to improve their teaching techniques and strategies, help to particular students who needs specific attention in academic environment and seek to stimulate students more in order to develops students' autonomus.

Such conclusions, no doubt, provide some implications for educational practitioners and teachers. As transformational leadership was significantly associated to sense of responsibility, educational practitioners are posited to study the leadership ability of teachers before they enter into academic career. Additionally, it is recommended that practitioners provide opportunities for teachers outside the classrooms to cultivate their skills through peer discussion and holding special classes to train them. It helps teachers to become better classroom leaders and contributes to academic success. It is through this knowledge that practitioners can better assign students to teachers in an attempt to avoid personality conflicts that hinder the students' ability to learn. Moreover, teachers should focus more on the influence of transformational leadership style on responsibility and attempt to augment this skill in that by increasing this characteristic, their sense of responsibility will improve which in turn influence students' learning and academic achievement.

Concerning the limitation of the study, as the current study conducted only in one province, similar research can be carried out in more cities and provinces in order to make an overt generalization. Moreover, such study can be reduplicate to explore the relationship between teachers' responsibility with other individual characteristics such as personality trait, emotional intelligence and/or with students' responsibility.

Reference


Burkett, M. C. (2011). Relationships among teachers' personality, leadership style, and efficacy of classroom management. A dissertation submitted to the graduate school of the University of Southern Mississippi in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy, USA.


