




Research Paper

Identification and Validation of Antecedents, Consequences and Barriers of Visionary Educational Leadership in Elementary Schools

Zahra Hemmatyar*¹, Bijan Abdollahi², Abdolrahim Navehebrahim³, Hassan
Reza Zeinabadi²

1. Corresponding Author: Ph.D. in Educational Management, Department of educational Management, Faculty of Management, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran 
2. Associate Professor, Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Management, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran
3. Professor, Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Management, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran

Received: 2020-07-20

Accepted: 2021-10-03

Abstract

Aim: This study aimed to identify antecedents of, consequences of and the most important barriers to visionary educational leadership in elementary schools with mixed approach. Qualitative data were analyzed using coding method and quantitative data were analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis. Based on the results, the following antecedents were identified: decentralization, selection on merit, social culture building, human resource empowerment, knowledge of religious values, and foundations of education. Furthermore, consequences included guiding learning environment, organizational satisfaction, pure life, and operationalizing document of the fundamental transformation. As for barriers, centralized system, high volume of instructions and circulars, and unpreparedness of the infrastructure to implement long-term plans in schools earned the highest rankings, respectively.

Keywords: Educational leadership, visionary, visionary educational leadership

Introduction

This article identifies the antecedents and consequences of visionary educational leadership in Mashhad-Iran elementary schools. The characteristics of this leadership style include designing and explaining the correct and attractive vision, creating a communication network among members and empowering them. The leader's vision influences the performance of the team. This vision provides a common thinking framework at school such that all members perceive the same picture of what the school intends to achieve in the future.

The lack of a visionary leadership creates challenges such as threatening the education system with future events, lack of transparency in goals and ideals, the frequency of cross-cutting decisions, and the lack of forward-looking decisions (Sadeghzadeh, et al., 2008). Studies show that school principals in Iran spend most of their time on less important and marginal matters such as logistics and administrative affairs, and spend less time on long-term and futuristic planning. In fact, the programs presented by school principals are usually stereotypical work reports, which do not have the necessary creativity to improve the quality of school education. (Banar, et al., 1394). Therefore, considering the challenges caused by the lack of a visionary leadership, serious steps should be taken to facilitate the implementation of a visionary leadership at schools. Hence, the researcher examined antecedents of, consequences of, and barriers to visionary educational leadership in elementary schools. Visionary leadership as a new leadership style was first operationalized by Sashkin (1988); generalized by Nanos (1992) and developed by Bennis (1994). Several studies have been conducted on the antecedents and consequences of visionary leadership such as *The Impact of Visionary Leadership on Teachers' Professional Performance and Public Education Policies* (Pribudhiana, et al., 2020); *The effect of Visionary Leadership Style on Teachers' Motivation* (Albir Nurut, 2017); *The Impact of Visionary Leadership on the Process of Change in Schools* (Waris Tasrim, 2015); *The Relationship between Visionary Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness* (Taylor, 2014); *The effect of Leadership on Job Satisfaction* (Baltaci, et al., 2012); *The Impact of Visionary Leadership on Followers' Performance* (Yilmaz, et al., 2010; Dalgin, et al., 2010); *The Effect of Empowerment and Development of Followers' Performance on the Implementation of Visionary Leadership* (Kantabutra et al., 2006); *The Effect of Leaders' Emotional Communication on the Implementation of Visionary Leadership* (Kevin, 2006). The researcher's review of literature indicated no studies were conducted on the antecedents of, consequences of and barriers to visionary educational leadership in Iran.

Methodology

This study answered the following questions:

- 1- What are the antecedents of visionary educational leadership in elementary schools of Mashhad?
- 2- What are the consequences of visionary educational leadership in elementary schools of Mashhad?
- 3- What are the most important barriers to visionary educational leadership in elementary schools of Mashhad?

The statistical population of the qualitative phase was academic experts and prominent school principals in Mashhad. In the qualitative phase, 23 individuals were selected by purposive sampling method. The statistical population of the quantitative phase was elementary school principals of Mashhad (n=720), of whom 251 individuals were selected stratified random sampling based on the Cochran sampling formula. Data collection tool was semi-structured interviews in the qualitative phase and a researcher-made questionnaire in quantitative phase. The face and content validities of the questionnaire were confirmed using the CVR coefficient. Inter-rater agreement and member check were used to confirm its reliability. Content and construct validities were used to validate the instrument in the quantitative phase. The final questionnaire used had a convergent validity >0.5 and a composite reliability > 0.7. Qualitative data obtained from the interviews were analyzed by open, axial and selective coding. Quantitative data were analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis.

Results

In response to the first question of the research, 22 indicators were extracted, which were summarized in 5 dimensions of decentralization, selection on merit, social culture building, human resource empowerment and knowledge of religious values, and the foundations of education.

Table 1. Antecedents of educational leadership

Open codes	Axial codes	Selected codes	Structure
Decentralization and delegation to regions. Paying attention to ethnic and racial differences in the school planning process and compiling textbook content.	Localization	Decentralization	
School administrators have ample opportunity to design and	Trust and delegation		

implement action plans tailored to the needs of their field of work		
Delegation of authority from educational departments to schools.		
Hiring managers with a long-term view.		
Elimination of politicization in the selection of individuals in education.	Job security	
Simultaneous attention to professional and experimental approach in selecting managers.		Selection on merit
Have a degree related to management to get a managerial job.		
Financial support and investment for the quantitative and qualitative development of education and the implementation of school plans and programs.	Financial support	
Existence of counseling and specialized teams at schools.		
Engaging school principals in drawing the vision of education.	Specialized support	
All levels of the hierarchy of the Ministry of Education should have vision.		Social culture building
Community institutions accompanying with schools and inter- and intra-organizational interactions.		
Using the capacity of parents in practical actions and educational projects.	Community involvement with the school	
The community should be demanding about the actions and performance of schools.		
Principals and teachers have taken practical courses in implementing programs.		
Designing the mission and vision of the school with the participation of school members.	Human resource empowerment	
Familiarization of school members with the great vision of education	Understanding the	Knowledge of religious values

Antecedents of visionary educational leadership

and the National Fundamental Reform Document.	foundations of education	and the foundations of education.
Compliance of school programs with the National Fundamental Reform Document 1404 and Supreme Leader's instructions.		
Principal's clear and explicit values towards the higher school vision.	Knowledge of religious values and principles	
Principal's materialistic orientation.		
Coordinating the educational leader's vision with the values, ideals and goals of the community.		

In response to the second question of research, 21 indicators were extracted and summarized in four dimensions as guiding learning environment, organizational satisfaction and belonging, pure life and operationalizing document of the fundamental transformation.

Table 2. consequences of visionary educational leadership

Open codes	Axial codes	Selected codes	Structure
The school becomes a center of education and perfection	School excellence	Guiding learning environment	Antecedents of visionary educational leadership
Increasing the organizational insight of schools towards future educational needs			
The movement of the school on the path to the realization of ideals	Improving the quality of the educational environment	Organizational satisfaction and belonging (teachers, students, and parents)	
Improving the knowledge and skills of school members			
Initiative in teaching and improving the quality of school processes	Feeling valued by teachers	Organizational satisfaction and belonging (teachers, students, and parents)	
Increasing teachers' sense of job security and satisfaction.			
Motivating school members for new experiences and reducing resistance to change	Organizational affiliation	Organizational satisfaction and belonging (teachers, students, and parents)	
Feeling of belonging and attachment of people (teachers, students) to school			
Commitment of all school members to the goals of the school and the vision of the leader			

Accountability and organizational coherence of members		
Increasing the abilities of parents in accompanying the school	Positive reflection of school performance	
Accompanying and consent of parents		
Discovering, nurturing, flourishing and developing talents and abilities in students	Raising a generation with future life skills	
Developing students' insights and awareness of the living environment		
Empowering students to build a quality life in the future		Pure life
School is the center of planning for the eternity of human beings	Raising a generation committed to religious, moral and human values	
Attention to simultaneous growth of refinement and education		
Training top students for Islamic Revolution and familiar with the Iranian-Islamic lifestyle		
Development of national and educational values and practical skills		
Transformation in all aspects of education	Operationalizing document of the fundamental transformation	
Education based on the components of the Fundamental Transformation Document		

In response to the third research question, the Friedman's test was used to identify and rank the most important barriers to visionary educational leadership... Comparison of the average rankings obtained from the quantitative phase of the research showed that the highest mean score pertained to the centralized system (14.33), followed by high volume of instructions and circulars (13.05), and then unpreparedness of the education infrastructure to implement long-term plans and goals (12.23).

Discussion and conclusion

The results of the present research showed that Iranian schools need a transformation and a forward-looking view of education processes. This transformation is possible by visionary educational leaders. According to the results of this study, the implementation of visionary leadership in Iranian

schools requires decentralization and delegation of authority to schools. Competency-based selection and professional development are also other requirements. Awareness of the community and its accompanying with school programs, as well as financial and professional support were other antecedents. The implementation of visionary leadership in Iranian schools will have positive consequences as those obtained in this study: guiding learning environment, organizational satisfaction and belonging, pure life, and operationalizing document of the fundamental transformation. Also, 19 main barriers were identified, the most important of which were the centralized system, the high volume of circulars and the unpreparedness of the education infrastructure to implement long-term plans and programs, respectively.

The limitations of this study were identification of visionary educational managers to participate in this study, and different interpretations of the subject due to its novelty.

It is suggested that educational administrators be selected from those with a deep and purposeful vision in school management. Also, appropriate infrastructure, in addition to financial and professional support for schools, should be provided in the community. The achievements of the effective implementation of this type of leadership in the studied schools, as well as the relevant actions and experiences should be shared with all schools in the form of panels, articles, publications and books.

Reference

- Albir Nurut, M. T. (2016). *The Effect of Principals' Visionary Leadership Style and Teachers' Work Motivation on the Accounting Teachers' Readiness in Facing Curriculum Changes with the Organizational Culture as Moderating Variable*, State University, Yogyakarta.
- Baltacı, F., Kara, E., Tascan, E. and Avsallı, H. (2012). *The Effect of leadership on Job Satisfaction. (Visionary Leadership, Transformational leadership, Transactional leadership)*. Akdeniz University, Antalya, Turkey.
- Bannar, N. A. and Mohammadi, A. A. (2016). *Operational method of the document of fundamental transformation of education at the micro level (school). Strategic planning approach*, Tehran, Monadiye Tarbiat Cultural Institute, (Text in Persian).
- Bennis, W. G. (1994). *On Becoming a Leader*. New York, Addison-Westly Publishing.
- Dalgın, T. and Topaloğlu, C. (2010). "The Relationship Between Leadership Behaviors and Job Satisfaction: An Application in Five Star Hotel Enterprises Operating in Marmaris", 11th National Tourism Congress Proceedings, Çolakoğlu.

- Kantabutra, S. and Avery, G. (2006). Follower Effect in the Visionary Leadership Process. *Journal of Business & Economics Research*, 4(5): 55-66.
- Kevin, S. G. (2006). Leader Emotional Expressivity, Visioning Leadership & Organizational Change, *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 27(7): 566-583.
- Nanuse, B. (1992). *Creating Compelling Sense of Direction for Your Organization*, New York, John Wiley & Sons inc.
- Pribudhiana, p., Bin Donb, Y. and bin Yusof, M. R. (2020). The Influence of Visionary Leadership towards The Teaching Profession in Indonesia, *Argentine Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 29(4): 496-505.
- Sadeghzadeh, A. and Ahmadifar, M. (2009). Pathology of the educational management system of the country and its impact on the current situation of the educational system, *Cultural Engineering Monthly*, 2(15): 6-12 (Text in Persian).
- Sashkin, M. (1988). The visionary Principal School Leadership for the Next Century. Office of Educational Research and Important United State Department of Education, *Journal of Education and Urban Society*, 20(3):239-249.
- Taylor, C. M., Cornelius, C. J. and Colvin, K. (2014). Visionary leadership and its relationship to organizational effectiveness. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 35(6): 566-583.
- Waris Tasrim, I. (2015). Visionary Leadership in the Process of Change in Effective Schools: A Multicase Study in Three Primary Schools, *International Journal of Science and Research*, 6(8): 128-136.
- Yılmaz, H. and Karahan, A. (2010). Examining the Relationships Between Leadership Behavior, Organizational Creativity and Employee Performance: A Research in Uşak, *Journal of Management and Economics*, 17 (2): 145-15



This article is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons AttributionNoncommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

[/https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0)