AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONALITY ASPECTS AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AMONG THE SCHOOL MANAGERS OF THE EDUCATIONAL REGIONS 1 AND 2 IN URMIA

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Abstract

This study was conducted in order to investigate the relationship between personality aspects and transformational leadership among the school managers of the educational regions 1 and 2 in Urumia. In order to measure personality and transformational leadership, NEO-PIR and MLQ-5X questionnaires were used respectively. The results indicated that Extraversion and Openness to Experience have a positive and significant relationship with transformational leadership, but the other aspects didn't have a significant relationship with this variable. Moreover, Openness to Experience predicted about 15 percent of the transformational leadership's variance.

Key Words: Personality, personality aspects, transformational leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Educational system represents the foundation of all the activities and substantial issues of a society and guarantees its survival and development. Consequently management and leadership of the educationalsystem as a motivating, controlling and coordinating factor is of particular importance. Turbulent conditions of the organizations and the existence of a high level of uncertainty, has lead to severe disorders in the organizations, and it has endangered planning for the organizations' development, as well as threatening their survival. In such a situation, the leaders are supposed be able to act effectively in complicated and risky conditions and strengthen in themselves and their subordinates the capability to react appropriately when facing probable challenges and opportunities. Many theorists believe that transformational leadership is the most appropriate style of leadership in such environments. Transformational leadership is a conscious, moral and spiritual process that provides patterns of equal power relationships between leaders and subordinates, in order to fulfill a collective purpose or make a genuine reform in the organizations or social systems by a reliable participatory plan (magliocca&Christakis, 2001). By being responsible, using their imagination and realizing their ideas, transformative leaders motivate the sense of commitment, voluntary participation and remarkable efforts in their subordinates. By doing this, they develop learning organizations that are able to recognize situational needs and provide themselves with the necessary tools to be adapted to these needs. Consequently, such leaders can build the basis for organizational creativity and effective harmony towards fulfilling the purposes (Bass, 1985). Transformative leaders provoke thinking in their followers, strengthening in them the creativity and problem solving potentials and producing a high level of confidence, commitment and appreciation in the subordinates (Balthazard et al 2008). Such leaders design missions and aims to enforce the personal and social identities of their subordinates (Bass et al 2003). The results of the conducted research

projects indicate the importance of this sort of leadership in organizations. Such studies have confirmed the positive effects of transformational leadership on organizations and their members. More specifically, many studies have proven its effects on organizational efficiency and competence, and the subordinates' commitment, satisfaction and integration, as well as their remarkable endeavor towards the organizational purposes (Avolio 1999). Besides, Leithwood(1992; as cited in Kinekid 2007) maintains that transformational leadership leads to stunning positive results; moreover, there is an evident relationship between transformational leadership and the teachers' collaboration. As a result, transformational leadership turns the attentions of the stakeholdersto improvement of the efforts. By reviewing the conducted studies, Lubis, Duris and Jentzi (2005, as cited in Hevimiskel, 2008) present four results about the effects of transformational leadership;

1. the effects of transformational leadership on organizational effectiveness are significant and extensive.
2. the effects of transformational leadership on the independent index of organizational effectiveness is positive and significant.
3. the effects of transformational leadership on the independent evaluation of the students' files is promising.
4. the effects of transformational leadership on the students' participation and collaboration is relatively positive.

The conducted research on transformational leadership has revealed five aspects of this concept. These aspects include Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Idealized influence is divided into two parts; idealized influence Attribute and idealized influence Behavior. Idealized influence Attribute or charisma refers to the fact that the followers perceive their leaders as charismatic, reliable and powerful individuals who are focused on high-level and moral principles.Idealized influence Behavior includes the activities of the charismatic leader, that are focused on values and beliefs and the way the concept of commitment is perceived (Antonakis, Avlio and sivasubramniam, 2003). As for inspirational motivation, the leaders behave in a way that motivates the people around them by providing challenges and special issues. They enhance the individuals' collective and personal spirit. They enforce the sense of optimism and enthusiasm in their subordinates and stimulate them about appealing opportunities in future (Bass et al, 2003). The intellectual stimulation aspect refers to stimulation of the followers by the leader in order to discover new solutions and rethink about solving organizational problems (Tunkenejad, 2007). The leaders who make use of this aspect don't tell the individuals what to do, but they rely on the trained working forces and improving their mental abilities (Alive and Bass, 2002). And individualized considerations is paying attention to the individual differences between the followers, communicating with all of them, and motivating them by giving responsibilities to learn and gain experience (Tunkenejad, 2007).

Personality is defined as an organized system that consists of relatively permanent characteristics and differentiates the individuals from each other (Scholts, 2005). Paying attention to personality and leadership and the relationship between personality aspects and transformational leadership has started from decades ago (de hoogh, den hartog&koopman, 2005) and has received a new wave of attention from 90s (hayutala, 2005). Conway (2000) believes that measuring the personality of leaders is an important element in recognizing successful leaders. Similarly, Ross and Offerman (1997) declare that certain personality traits are related to transformational leadership. Recent studies also show that personality traits can predict the leaders' success and certain aspects of personality are related to transformational leadership (Kavnoy, 2000). The personality aspects and models that have received the highest level of attention by the researchers are the ones integrated in Mccary and Kasta's five factor model (Judge et al, 2002). According to this model, personality consists of five factors, namely extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience. Extraversion reflects the preferences and attitudes in social settings. Agreeableness refers to the inclination to interact with others. Conscientiousness shows how organized and perseverant the individuals are in following their purposes. Neuroticism is the inclination to experience negative feelings and thoughts. And finally, openness to experience reflects the amount of tolerance in facing cultural beliefs and interests.

Studies have shown that transformative leaders are more extrovert, embrace new experiences, enjoy a high level of agreeableness and adaptability, and receive a low Neuroticism and a high conscientiousness grade

(bono & judge, 2004). The results of some other studies have cast doubt on these findings (Shao and Weber, 2004). Roush and Atwater (1992) have found out that understanding interests has an insignificant relationship with transformational leadership. Later on, investigations of edvater and yamarinoconfirmed these findings (hayootala, 2006). Judge et al (2002) also reviewed the conducted studies to conclude that the relationships between Neuroticism, Extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness are significant in 90% of the relations. Generally, the five factor model of personality has a 0/48 multiple correlation with leadership. Nevertheless, the results of conducted studies on this subject seem to be paradoxical, and many experts have argued that the research projects related to characteristic viewpoints as predictors of the style of leadership are insufficient (Lim &Ployhart, 2004). Bass (1998 and 1999) and Haws and Hall (1992) have also requested more studies on the relationship between personality and transformational leadership (Hayutala, 2006).

According to what was said, certain characteristics are required for transformational leadership. But the conducted studies have figured out different characteristics for transformative leaders, and the results of these research projects are limited and unclear (Ferry, 2007). Moreover, considering the fact that the educational system of our country is facing various problems and issues regarding its stagnancy and inflexibility, research projects seem to be necessary to clarifythe vague points about this style of leadership and prepare the conditions for its utilization. Besides, applying this style of leadership requires certain qualities and capabilities that the educational managers need to know and improve in order to be prepared to use it. So, the purposes of this study are;

1. to investigate the relationship between personality aspects (Extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience) on the one hand, and transformational leadership and its aspects (Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) on the other.
2. to determine the role of the five aspects of personality in predicting transformational leadership among school managers of the educational regions 1 and 2 in Urumia.

METHOD

The current study is a descriptive-correlational research. The statistical population of this research consists of 75 school managers of the educational regions 1 and 2 in Urumia. Regarding the fact that the population was limited and in order to enhance the reliability of the research in sampling, the census method was used and 56 managers were studied.

Data collecting tools

To measure transformational leadership, the fifth revision of Multi-leader Questionnaire (MLQ) (Bass and Avolio, 2004) was used. This questionnaire has 36 units, of which 20 units measure the elements related to transformational leadership. The Alpha coefficient of this questionnaire in the current research was 0/93, that indicates its high level of reliability.

To measure the personality aspects of the school managers, NEO-PI-R (Kasta and mccary, 1999) was used. This questionnaire consists of 60 parts, with each part including 12 units. The reliability of each element in this study was 0/79 for Extraversion, 0/72 for agreeableness, 0/74 for conscientiousness, 0/71 for Neuroticism, and 0/75 for openness to experience.

The method of data analysis

For data analysis, Pearson correlation coefficient was used. To determine the role of personality aspects in predicting transformational leadership, stepwise correlation was used.

RESULTS

In order to look at the relationship between personality aspects on the one hand, and transformational leadership and its aspects of the other, correlation matrix has been presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Correlation matrix of the variables

Aspects	Neuroticism	Extraversion	Openness to experience	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Idealized Influence behavior	Idealized Influence Attributed	Inspirational motivation	Intellectual stimulation	Individualizedconsiderations	Transformational leadership
Neuroticism	1										
Extraversion	** 0.35	1									
Openness to experience	** -0.27	** 0.41	1								
Agreeableness	** -0.38	** 0.35	** 0.31	1							
Conscientiousness	** - 0.41	** 0.35	0.26	** 0.54	1						
Idealized influence behavior	0.08	** 0.43	** 0.44	0.11	0.21	1					
Ideal viewopint	0.17	0.01	0.09	-0.05	0.03	** 0.46	1				
Inspirational motivation	0.13	0.20	0.23	-0.09	0.11	** 0.76	** 0.47	1			
Intellectual stimulation	0.02	* 0.31	* 0.30	-0.07	0.06	** 0.70	** 0.57	** 0.79	1		
Individualized considerations	0.02	* 0.25	* 0.26	0.06	0.16	** 0.71	** 0.55	** 0.68	** 0.84	1	
Transformational leadership	0.07	** 0. 37	** 0.38	0.15	0.25	** 0.84	** 0.72	** 0.77	** 0.80	** 0.78	1

According to Table 1 the correlation between openness to experience (0/38) and extraversion (0/37) on the one hand and transformational leadership on the other, is positive and significant in 0/0 1 level of significance. Correlation of the other aspects with this variable is not significant. Moreover, the correlation of these two personality aspects with individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation is positive and significant in 0/05 level of significance. The relationship between the two aspects of openness to experience (0/44) and extraversion (0/43) on the one hand and Idealized influence Behavior is positive and significant in 0/01 level of significance. It must be mentioned that none of the five aspects of personality has a significant correlation with idealized influence Attribute and inspirational motivation aspects.

In order to determine the role of each personality aspect in predicting transformational leadership, stepwise regression was used. In this equation the openness to experience variable was able to maintain its significance, and the other aspects got out of the equation. These results have been shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The results of multivariate regression analysis for personality aspects and transformational leadership

Statistical index of the variable	RS	F	Regression	Standard error of estimate
		P		
Openness to experience	0.15	9.23 0.004	Beta = 0.38 T: 3.04 P: 0.004	9.72

According to the results of regression analysis, openness to experience, as a predictive variable, predicts 15% of transformational leadership's variance. Moreover, the amount of F in the equation refers to significance of the correlation between criterion variable and predictive variable.

Model	Beta	T	Significance level	Partial Correlation
Neuroticism	0.19	1.44	0.15	0.19
Extraversion	0.25	1.86	0.07	0.25
Agreeableness	0.04	0.30	0.77	0.04
Conscientiousness	0.16	1.26	0.21	0.17

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between five personality aspects and transformational leadership. The results showed that openness to experience and extraversion have a positive and significant relationship with transformational leadership. Besides, the relationship between these two aspects on the one hand, and individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation and idealized influence Behavior on the other hand, is also significant. The results of regression analysis indicated that the variable of openness to experience is able to predict transformational leadership, and interprets about 15% of its variance. Transformational leadership is defined as a kind of leadership in which the leaders enjoy a sort of divine endowment, provide spiritual motivations for their followers, guide them by finding a way to their hearts and try to establish a relationship between individual and collective interests. As a result, a higher level of extraversion seems to be specifically necessary to conduct such kind of leadership.

In using their ideal charisma, the leaders need certain capabilities to communicate with others and win their confidence. This way the leaders would be able to gain their subordinates' appreciation, respect, and trust, and the subordinates would feel easy with their leaders and accept the values and viewpoints created by them. As for inspirational motivation, criteria like enhancing the individuals' motivation, paying attention to their feelings, enforcing their optimism and enthusiasm and making them involved in organizational life, creating collective commitment, developing powerful identities and inspiring the people to grasp their missions are considered, and these criteria are related to the features correlated with extraversion. The relationship between intellectual stimulation and extraversion can be justified by the fact that prompting the followers to discover new solutions and rethink about the issues as well as challenging their thoughts, ideas and senses of creativity, requires the leaders to establish clear, sympathetic, and honest communications with their followers. The same is true about individualized considerations. Paying attention to individual differences, trying to broaden the individuals' potentials by creating new opportunities to learn, and using mutual relationships with all the individuals, are among the behaviors that are necessary for successful individualized consideration, and all these behaviors are related to extraversion elements. Studies conducted by Mo'meni et al (2007), Zarandi (2007), Judge and Bono (2000), Johnson et al (2004), Lim and Ployhart (2004), Doher (2006), Veyfald (2008), and Saror (2008) are in accordance with this study to confirm the relationship between extraversion and transformational leadership.

Significance of the relationship between openness to experience and transformational leadership indicates that such leaders try to make a change in cultural values and strengthen the sense of creativity. They are inclined to introduce a new horizon towards growth and development to their organization by creating new ideas and perspectives. Such leaders also challenge the individuals to perform inventive and exceptional deeds. They enjoy a broad viewpoint and consider the organizational issues in a multidimensional manner and in relation with the evolutions in their environment. To do this, such leaders need to be open-minded, wise and courageous to devise and trace inventive methods. The behaviors related to openness to experience in transformative leaders can include insightfulness and creation of values in the idealized influence Attribute aspect, flexibility and making changes with regards to the idealized influence Behavior aspect, emphasizing inner motivations and feelings and encouraging the followers to accept responsibilities with regards to the inspirational motivation aspect, and paying attention to the individuals' personal feelings and needs, and

creating and making use of new learning opportunities with regards to individualized consideration aspect. The current study's findings about the relationship between openness to experience and transformational leadership are in accordance with the research projects conducted by Mo'meni et al (2007) and Zarandi (2007) in Iran, and Jaj et al (2002), Jaj and Bono (2000), Htlnd and Sandal (2003) , di Hogg et al (2005), Dvhr (2006) he Fald (2008) and Chen and Chen (2008) in other countries.

Another finding in this study was the 15% prediction of transformational leadership's variance by openness to experience, which is in accordance with the studies conducted by Mo'meni et al (2007), Zarandi (2007), Judge and Bono (2000), Lee (2007) and Saror (2008). However, this finding was not in accordance with the findings of Judge and Bono (2004), Doher (2006), and Chen and Chen (2008).

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Regarding the fact that this research used a descriptive correlational method, and since in such research methods various variables may affect the results, and on the other hand one cannot deduce a causal relationship on their basis, the findings of this study should be interpreted cautiously. Moreover, because of the population's diversity and the limited number of subjects, and since not all the individuals in the population were included in the survey, one should be careful in interpreting and generalizing the findings.

According to the study's findings, it can be suggested that the leaders make use of training sessions or self-study to enhance characteristics like openness to experience, so that the possibility of transformative behaviors is strengthened. Besides, because of the correlation between personality aspects, and their internal relations with the style of leadership, procedures like recruitment, employment, development and training of organizational leaders and codification of educational plans can be devised with emphasis on these features.

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