

ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPALS' DEGREE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE AND THE ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN TEHRAN CITY

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study has been to study the relationship between principals' degree of transformational leadership style and the organizational climate in elementary schools in Tehran city. The research methodology has been applied and descriptive-correlational in terms of purpose and data collection respectively. In this study, the statistical population included 15535 teachers of state-run girls' and boys' elementary day schools, out of which a sample size of 384 teachers was selected based on Morgan's table through two-stage cluster sampling. In order to collect data, Bass' (1985) transformational leadership style standard questionnaire and Sussman and Deep's (1989) organizational climate standard questionnaire were used. In order to measure the reliability of the questionnaires, Cronbach's alpha was adopted, according to which the reliability of leadership style questionnaire was 0.84 and the reliability of organizational climate was 0.82. Besides, in order to measure the validity, content-related validity was adopted; for this purpose, the questionnaires were approved of by the related experts. The analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires was carried out through SPSS software in two descriptive (mean, frequency distribution, percentage frequency, diagram, measures of central tendency and index of dispersion) and inferential (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Spearman correlation test, Mann-Whitney U test) sections. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between principals' intellectual stimulation and the components of organizational climate (goal, role, reward, method, and communication); there is a significant relationship between idealized influence and the components of organizational climate; there is a significant relationship between principals' individualized consideration and the components of organizational climate; there is a significant relationship between inspirational motivation and the components of organizational climate. Finally, other results of the study indicated that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership style and the gender; i.e. there is a significant difference between the participants' ranking in terms of gender for the variables of intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and inspirational motivation, in such way that in all three cases, the calculated ranking for women was higher than the calculated ranking for men.

KEYWORDS: communication, idealized influence, individualized consideration, organizational climate, transformational leadership style,

INTRODUCTION

Today, the art and science of management are considered to be among the most delicate, most difficult and most rewarding affairs of the human being and it is one of the important indicators of contemporary civilization and is among the effective factors in social, cultural and economic growth and development of today societies. In the present century, the importance and the effectiveness of the human knowledge is so much that some of the experts call the 21st century as the management era and the today world as the world of the informed managers, and consider the management science as one of the most important and most complicated fields of human sciences. It is because the image of the administrative, industrial, commercial and educational organizations can be transformed, and the most benefit can be gained from the natural resources, capital, technology and human resources with the help of competent managers who are aware of the principles, theories and management styles as well as equipped with human, perceptive and technical skills and it is possible to establish order and harmony in different organizations through planning and organizing and pave the way for the achievement of the objectives of different organs. This goal is attainable given the dominant internal climate of the organization (Emarati, 2003).

Organizational climate is a broad term which is referred to as the teachers' perception of the public workplace in the school and is affected by the formal and informal organization, individuals' personality and organizational leadership (Emarati, 2003).

Besides, a brief definition of the components of organizational climate is as follows: *Goal* refers to the desirable concepts and ends which the organization's members try to attain by performing activities related to tasks (Behrangi, 2001); *role* refers to the behavior expected from an individual occupying a position; *reward* refers to the payments such as salary, bonus, promotion which are carried out based on employees' performance criteria (Feyzi, 2006); *method* refers to appreciating the importance of goals and performance criteria, emphasizing appropriate fulfilment of the tasks, challenges in attaining individual and collective goals (French, 1986); *communication* refers to two-way exchange of information with others and understanding a common concept of it (Abbaspour, 2008); *open climate* refers to climate in which the behavior of the principal and board of education is collaborative, respectful, intimate, supportive and with high morale; *close climate* refers to the climate in which behavior of the principals is unsupportive, flexible, and preventive, and there is a board of education who are indifferent, and not committed to the work and the behavior of the principal and the teachers has the minimum purity (Hoy & Miskel, translated by Abbaszadeh, 2003).

The organizations are faced with different kinds of change than ever in the recent decades and they are obliged to formulate and adopt strategies which ensure logical response to the needs and changing environmental and temporal conditions as well as modern needs of the organizational employees in order to adapt to and deal with changes because under such circumstances, the main factor for determining the organization's values is the factor of "acceptance of change which ensures the survival of the organization (Loub, 2004). Educational organizations are faced with highest difficulty in this encounter based on the social nature of their work as well as their formal functions. The pressure of the changes on the education department, given the limitation of its financial and funding resources, has increasingly caused its managers to realize the fact that sporadic efforts are not sufficient for the complicated problems of the organization and traditional does not survive in the third millennium. Today, a broader and more comprehensive planning is required and it is needed to adopt coordinated measures for establishing the organizational climate, workplace, methods of doing work, and information systems, which are compatible with the future predictable requirements. Besides, the organization needs managers who consider the organization and management as a single system in addition to having a contingent approach to the environmental variables and examine the employees' behavior with this approach and select their leadership style based on the reality and nature of the work, tasks and characteristics of the employees. Adopting transformational leadership style is a new measure adopted to respond to this need (Stone, 2004).

Transformational leadership is the change due to the insight based on some beliefs and values which encourage the organization's members to take measures and assume new organizational roles (Khodayari, 2006). In fact, transformational leadership is conscious spiritual and ethical process which establishes equality models and authority models among the leaders and their followers in order to attain a collective goal or real change. The following section introduces dimensions of transformational leadership.

The components of transformational leadership include the following. *Inspirational motivation*: transformational leadership shares the image it has in mind of the future and which is inspirational and attractive to the followers; *intellectual stimulation*: it refers to the extent to which the leader challenges different issues, takes risks and receives followers' ideas; *individualized observation*: it is the degree of psychological awareness the transformational leaders should have regarding the impact of group issues on its members; *Idealized influence*: it is the admirable extent of the leader's behavior and leads to the recognition and unity of the followers with the leader (Oshagbemi, 2004). The goal of transformational leadership is beyond the satisfaction of immediate needs. Transformational leadership makes use of its optimism and intellectual attraction as well as many personal abilities in order to promote others' ideals and lead the individuals and the organization to a higher level of performance (Skakon et al., 2010).

Some of the studies conducted outside and inside Iran on the transformational leadership and organizational climate are presented in the following section. Lim & Eo (2014) found out that school organizational climate reflecting higher levels of reflective dialogues was associated with both higher levels of collective teacher efficacy and lower levels of teachers' burnout. In contrast, school organizational climate reflecting higher levels of organizational politics was associated with lower levels of collective teacher efficacy, and did not have a direct effect on teachers' burnout. The relationship between school organizational climate and teachers' burnout was mediated by collective teacher efficacy. Bal Taştana and Güçel (2014) found that both dimensions of organizational climate (structural support and

organizational recognition) significantly and positively related to entrepreneurial behaviors. Bottiani et al. (2014), in a study titled “Promoting an Equitable and Supportive School Climate in High Schools: The Role of School Organizational Health and Staff Burnout”, found that a number of school organizational health indicators were more strongly associated with positive perceptions of school climate among White students than Black students.

Permarupan et al. (2013) presented a conceptual model of organizational climate and employee's work passion and organizational commitment is presented. Cristina-Corina (2013) found that teachers have different perceptions on organizational climate depending on their length of service and attitude towards change. Teachers with high conservatism have appreciated more negative the organizational climate than teachers with low conservatism. Jafari et al. (2012) found that there is a significant relationship between organizational learning and self-efficacy. On the other hand, there is no relationship between organizational climate and self-efficacy. Epitropaki et al. (2005) found that transactional leadership has a stronger positive effect on organizational objectives. Bohmer, Robert and Royen (2004) concluded that leaders whose group of counterpart leaders exhibit more transformational leadership behavior, tend more to exhibit creative behaviors (Nourae, 2006). Aghamohammadi (2008) concluded that there is a significant relationship between leadership style and organizational climate in schools in Divandareh town. Sabeti (2007) concluded that there is a direct relationship between schools' organizational climate and teachers' morale.

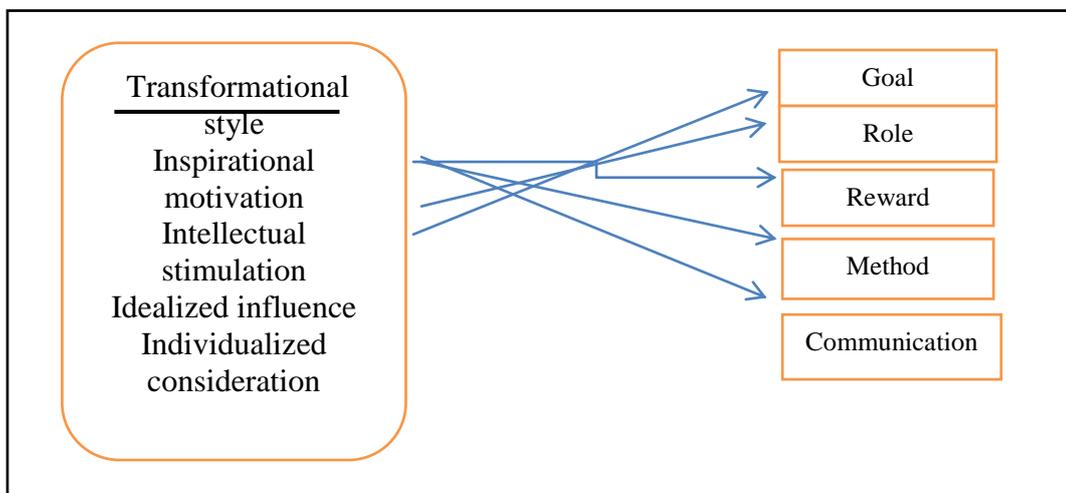
According to the studies presented above, it can be said that the education department as the source of changes and progress, requires efficient and effective management more than other organs and organizations. The necessity of paying attention to schools' management because of their position and organizational status, is more effective than the behaviors of other individuals in the establishment of a desirable environment in the school. From among the academic managements, management in the elementary period is important because this period is fundamental and deals with human factors easily affected (students) as the future assets (Zamani, 2004). It is also can be said that teachers are the greatest and most important assets of the organization and paying attention to their behavior directly affects the growth of the students (Tousi, 2001). This study can help to reform the classroom culture and efficacy in school by determining the relationship between two variables of organizational climate and transformational leadership style.

If we consider the organizational climate to be the result of leadership style, and be aware of the impact of organizational climate on employees' morale, then studying and examining the organizational climate will provide a sound understanding of the interaction between employees and managers. By establishing an appropriate organizational climate, the manager will be aware of the employees' perception and will gain a better understanding of their morale, and can adopt the right leadership style based on that understanding (Gakia, 2008). Finally, it can be said that this study can assist in reforming the behavioral pattern of the managers. Therefore, if there is going to be a change in education, the starting point should be the educational management of the elementary period because of its special importance. Consequently, the researcher intends to find out whether there is a relationship between principals' degree of transformational leadership style and organizational climate in elementary schools in Tehran.

Based on the above question and previous studies, the following research hypotheses are formulated:

1. There is a significant relationship between principals' degree of transformational leadership style and the dominant organizational climate in elementary schools in Tehran.
2. There is a significant relationship between principal's intellectual stimulation and components of organizational climate (goal, role, reward, method and communication).
3. There is a significant relationship between principal's idealized influence and components of organizational climate (goal, role, reward, method and communication).
4. There is a significant relationship between principal's individualized consideration and components of organizational climate (goal, role, reward, method and communication).
5. There is a significant relationship between principal's inspirational motivation and components of organizational climate (goal, role, reward, method and communication).

Finally, the theoretical framework of the study is presented in figure 1:



MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research methodology has been applied and descriptive-correlational in terms of purpose and data collection respectively. In this study, the statistical population included 15535 teachers of state-run girls’ and boys’ elementary day schools, out of which a sample size of 384 teachers was selected based on Morgan’s table through two-stage cluster sampling. In order to collect data, Bass’ (1985) transformational leadership style standard questionnaire and Sussman and Deep’s (1989) organizational climate standard questionnaire were used; and their indexes is presented in table 1. Besides, in order to measure the reliability of the questionnaires, Cronbach’s alpha was adopted. The value of alpha obtained from the constructs of the study presented in table 1 indicates that the reliability of the research instrument is acceptable. The questionnaires were in 5-point Likert scale. Finally, the questionnaires were distributed among the teachers and they were analyzed after being gathered through descriptive (mean, frequency distribution, diagram, percentage distribution, measures of central tendency and index of dispersion) and inferential (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Spearman correlation test, Mann–Whitney U test) statistics.

Table 1. Results related Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for different sections of the questionnaire

questions	Cronbach’s alpha coefficient	Dimensions	Questionnaire sections
1 to 5	0.78	Intellectual stimulation	Transformational leadership style
6-10	0.85	Idealized influence	
11-15	0.87	Individualized consideration	
16-20	0.93	Inspirational motivation	
21-24	0.73	Goal	Organizational climate
25-28	0.77	Role	
29-32	0.84	Reward	
33-36	0.88	Method	
37-40	0.90	Communication	
1-20	0.84	Total coefficient of the transformational leadership questionnaire	
21-40	0.82	Total coefficient for the organizational leadership questionnaire	

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First of all, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was adopted to examine the normality of the distribution of data, the results of which are presented in table 2.

Table 2. Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the variables

communication	Method	Reward	Role	Goal	Inspirational motivation	Individualized consideration	Idealized influence	Intellectual stimulation		
377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	377	Number	
4.36	4.155	3.09	4.43	4.293	4.551	4.454	4.43005389	4.57	Mean	Normal indexes
0.555	0.716	1.00	0.673	0.4999	0.4900	0.669	0.162	0.418	Standard deviation	Most Extreme Differences
0.160	0.131	0.083	0.238	0.127	0.192	0.215	0.145	0.186	Equal	
0.126	0.120	0.083	0.200	0.098	0.180	0.207	-0.162	0.154	Positive	
-0.160	0.131	0.061	0.238	0.127	-0.192	-0.215	3.14	-0.186	Negative	
3.09	2.53	1.61	4.62	2.47	3.73	4.16		3.61	K-S	Z
0.000	0.000	0.000	0.011	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	

The data presented in the above table show that for all the variables, the obtained result is smaller than 2.5 in the first section and in the second section, the obtained Z, except for one case (reward), is larger than +1096. Given the result of K-S test (table 2), the distribution has not been normal, so nonparametric tests were used for its analysis.

Hypotheses Testing

In order to examine the relationship between the components of transformational leadership style and the components of organizational climate, Spearman correlation test was adopted; and the results are presented in table 3.

Table 3. The results of significance test between components of transformational leadership style and components of organizational climate

Communication	Method	Reward	Role	Goal	Indexes	Components	
0.408	0.354	0.275	0.305	0.371	Spearman correlation	Intellectual stimulation	Spearman correlation
0.418	0.310	0.282	0.233	0.295	Spearman correlation	Idealized influence	
0.553	0.447	0.350	0.352	0.367	Spearman correlation	Individualized consideration	
0.493	0.368	0.214	0.462	0.258	Spearman correlation	Inspirational motivation	
0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	Significance level for two-tailed tests		
377	377	377	377	377	Number		

The results show that there is significant correlation between each one of the components of transformational leadership style (intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation) and the variables of organizational climate (goal, role, reward, method and communication). Therefore, t is

concluded that any increase or decrease in each one of the variables of transformational leadership style will result in increase or decrease of the score related to each one of the variables of organizational climate. The respondents of the participants to each one of the variables of transformational leadership style are different in terms of gender. For this purpose, the rankings related to the scores of two groups of men and women for different variables of transformational leadership are presented in table 4.

Table 4. Rankings related to the scores of two groups of men and women for different variables of transformational leadership

Total ranking	Mean ranking	Number	Gender	
65004.00	192.89	337	Women	Stimulation
6249.00	156.23	40	Men	
		377	Total	
63897.00	189.61	337	Women	Idealized
7356.00	183.90	40	Women	
		377	Total	
66712.00	197.96	337	Women	Individualized
4541.00	113.53	40	Women	
		377	Total	
65849.50	195.40	337	Women	Motivation
5403.50	135.09	40	Women	
		377	Total	

Besides, statistics related to the Mann–Whitney U test for the difference between rankings of the independent groups of men and women.

Table 5. Statistics related to Mann–Whitney U test for the difference between rankings of two independent groups (men and women).

Motivation	Individualized	Idealized	Stimulation	Statistics
4583.5	3721	6536	5429	Mann–Whitney U
5403.5	4541	7356	6249	Wilcoxon
-3.398	-4.747	-0.317	-2.053	Z
0.001	0.000	0.751	0.040	Significance level for two-tailed tests

In case of comparing the rankings of two independent groups of men and women for the idealized influence, it was concluded that there is no significance difference between the rankings of the participants in terms of gender; however, in case of the variables of intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and inspirational motivation, this difference is significant. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the ranking of the participants in terms of gender for the variables of intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and inspirational motivation; in such a way that in all three cases, the calculated ranking was larger for women than men.

CONCLUSION

Without doubt, educational managers spend most of their time for direct and face to face contact with employees, students and parents. If the educational manager intends to be successful in this communications, he/she needs to be aware of his/her organizational climate, because in the process of school operation, the human being plays a major role. The educational manager or the school principal is responsible to establish a climate of friendship and collaboration among teachers. The strongest human motivation is to have a friend and colleague (Bahri, 1999; Eghbali, 1996). On the other hand, school principals can affect the teaching activities trend and consequently, the improvement of teachers' performance quality. Thus adopting appropriate leadership styles provides the condition for optimal education, because the principal's appropriate leadership style is facilitating in school and motivates the teachers and directly and indirectly affects the organizational climate (Golshani, 2001). Therefore, given the importance of this subject, this study examined the relationship between principals' degree of transformational leadership style and schools' organizational climate in elementary schools in Tehran; in the following paragraphs, discussions and conclusion are presented based on the existing hypotheses.

The first hypothesis of the study indicated that there is a significant relationship between principal's intellectual stimulation and the components of organizational climate (goal, role, reward, method and communication). In explanation of this hypothesis, it can be said that risk-taking managers, are able to involve their employees in solving organizational problems and to challenge them, motivate them, and to propose new solutions; this ability of the manager positively affects the employees' perception of the organization. Therefore, members of this organization are familiar with their roles and the organization's objectives; they have a high morale and there is an intimate and close relationship between them. Rowold & Henitz (2007) stated that the leaders cause the exhibition of concrete and actual behavior in the employees by establishing the criteria of mental and abstract perception, and the outcome of these behaviors is beneficial to the organization and the manager; besides, Rejas et al. (2006) studied the impact of variables of transformational leadership style on the performance of small companies and concluded that organizations' performance is moderately related to employees' intellectual stimulation in that organization; on the other hand, the findings of the study conducted by Khodadad (2006, cited in Shoghi & Shoghi, 2013) indicated no significant relationship between organization's outcomes and the component of intellectual stimulation of transformational leadership style in faculties in Tehran. Javdani (2006) evaluated the low share of the principal's intellectual stimulations in the degree of teachers' organizational commitment, which affects the internal quality of the school, with respect to other components of transformational leadership style. The reason for the similarity between these results and the findings of the present study is probably because of the leaders' attention to facilitation of learning process; and in Senge's viewpoint, those principals who believe that human attributes and human learning capacity are their greatest asset, and recognize this potential ability in people, invest system affairs in that. On the other hand, in Karimian's (2006) viewpoint, the reason for the difference between the research results depends on the position and situation of one organization in adopting leadership styles.

The second hypothesis of the study indicated that there is a significant relationship between idealized influence and components of organizational climate (goal, role, reward, method and communication). In explanation of this hypothesis, it can be said that those managers who are self-confident and powerful, are able to evoke strong feelings in their employees and are aware of how to forge employees' identity, and are also aware of the ethical consequences of their decisions; these managers establish a climate filled with a sense of respect, admiration and loyalty in the organization in order to foster a sense of intrinsic rewards and job satisfaction in the employees, so that they make attempt to attain organization's goals with higher morale. Bommer & Rubin (2004) concluded in their study titled "Leadership Style and Organization's Social Climate" that those leaders whose followers have higher idealized influence, are more willing to exhibit ideal influence; and this results are similar to the present study findings. Berson & Avoilio (2004), in confirmation of this results, reported that those managers who define desirable behaviors in such a way that the individuals accept him/her, can foster a good morale for new guidance and new behaviors in the organization, and the target audience are more familiar with the organization's goals as well as the methods to achieve them than other organizations, and their organization has a more efficient climate. Beside, this finding is consistent with the findings of Nourshahi (2006) who studied the cognitive and leadership style among the university and higher education institutes' presidents by determining the dimensions of transformational leadership as well as the findings of Moghli (2003) who studied the current situation of leadership in successful administrative (nonOeducational)

organizations in Iran. Based on their studies, idealized influence is accepted as one of the dimensions of transformational leadership and most principals and leaders have gained a high score for ideal influence on the employees. The reason for similarity of this study with the obtained results from other studies may be because of the humanistic and ethics-based behaviors of this component.

The third hypothesis indicated that there is a significant relationship between principal's individualized consideration and the variables of organizational climate (goal, role, reward method and communication). In explanation of this hypothesis, it can be said that those principals who pay attention to their teachers and are aware of their personal morale, personal needs and the impact of problems on the employees can establish an open organizational climate in which the mission of the organization is clear to the employees and they are aware of their roles and tasks in the organization, and rewards are fair and based on the working quality and collaboration and intimacy among the organization members. The study conducted by Bommer (2004) indicated that those leaders whose employees have higher considerate behavior are more willing to exhibit creative behaviors (Shoghi & Shoghi, 2013). This study result is indirectly related to the study conducted by Zarandi (2008) who studied transformational and transactional leadership styles among the Sports Bureau officials in Gilan province. He stated that individualized consideration in transformational leadership style has a great impact on the human resources management because of paying attention to morale and intrinsic incentives of the individuals as well as attention to their beliefs and values.

The fourth hypothesis of the study indicated that there is significant relationship between inspirational motivation and the components of organizational climate (goal, role, reward method and communication). In explanation of this hypothesis, it can be said that the principal who is able to challenge the employees and influence their intrinsic incentive, and outline the organization's future mental image for the employees, establish an open organizational climate and achieve the organization's goals and create an intimate and close relationship among the colleagues, and will have an efficient organization. Goleman (2004) believed that those leaders, who boost employees' commitment to work and the organization by involving the followers in outlining the future outlook, foster a sense of motivation in people. Besides, Burns (1987, cited in Shoghi & Shoghi, 2013) indicated that transformational leaders have insight and stimulate other to do extraordinary tasks; and only the transformational leaders are able to outline the necessary paths for the new organizations because they are the source of change, are aware of the dominant changes in the organization and can handle the wave of changes; these factors can be the reason for the similarity between the conducted studies and the finding of this study. On the other hand, Ghadrhan (2006) believed that successful leaders are those who establish a framework of agreement among the leaders and the followers, and specify the roles, tasks and organization's goals based on that and boost the performance of the organization by using the mentioned exchanges. This finding is inconsistent with the results obtained in the present study. The reason for this inconsistency can be because of the difference in population under study and/or the research instruments adopted in this study.

Other research results indicated that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership style and gender, and the principals of girls' school mostly adopt this style; and from among the components of female principals' transformational leadership, dimensions of individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation gained higher scores than the component of idealized influence. Tucker et al. (2006) indicated that referees who were perceived as having apologized for mistakes made were considered to be transformational leaders and apology was also related to gender as well. Women tend to apologize more than men for their mistakes and in contrary to this, men would avoid apologizing.

Poursoltani (2008) concluded that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership style and gender and women adopt this style more than men. Besides, Javdani (2006) found that there is a difference between men's and women's being transformational, in such a way that female managers exhibit more transformational behavior. Finally, the findings of the present study are consistent with these research results.

Following suggestions are proposed based on the findings of the study:

- 1) Given the confirmation of all the research hypotheses, it is suggested that principals spend more time to communicate with the colleagues in order to have an open climate filled with intimacy and respect.
- 2) It is suggested that principals participate more in pedagogical sessions for consultation and guidance.

- 3) It is suggested that principals make use of the polling results in teacher meetings and use creative suggestions of the colleagues for resolving school problems.
- 4) Since the relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational climate has not been studied enough, it is suggested to replicate the study in other organizations and administrations in order to reach a final result.
- 5) Because the numbers of male principals are limited in elementary schools and for more uniformity among the gender of teachers and the principal, it is suggested to replicate the study in junior high school and high school levels in order to determine the relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational climate.

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