

The Effect of Teachers' Personal Values on the Perceptions of the Effective Principal and Student in School

Authors : Alexander Zibenberg, Rima'a Da'As

Abstract : According to the author's knowledge, individuals are naturally inclined to classify people as leaders and followers. Individuals utilize cognitive structures or prototypes specifying the traits and abilities that characterize the effective leader (implicit leadership theories) and effective follower in an organization (implicit followership theories). Thus, the present study offers insights into understanding how teachers' personal values (self-enhancement and self-transcendence) explain the preference for styles of effective leader (i.e., principal) and assumptions about the traits and behaviors that characterize effective followers (i.e., student). Beyond the direct effect on perceptions of effective types of leader and follower, the present study argues that values may also interact with organizational and personal contexts in influencing perceptions. Thus authors suggest that teachers' managerial position may moderate the relationships between personal values and perception of the effective leader and follower. Specifically, two key questions are addressed in the present research: (1) Is there a relationship between personal values and perceptions of the effective leader and effective follower? and (2) Are these relationships stable or could they change across different contexts? Two hundred fifty-five Israeli teachers participated in this study, completing questionnaires – about the effective student and effective principal. Results of structural equations modeling (SEM) with maximum likelihood estimation showed: first: the model fit the data well. Second: researchers found a positive relationship between self-enhancement and anti-prototype of the effective principal and anti-prototype of the effective student. The relationship between self-transcendence value and both perceptions were found significant as well. Self-transcendence positively related to the way the teacher perceives the prototype of the effective principal and effective student. Besides, authors found that teachers' managerial position moderates these relationships. The article contributes to the literature both on perceptions and on personal values. Although several earlier studies explored issues of implicit leadership theories and implicit followership theories, personality characteristics (values) have garnered less attention in this matter. This study shows that personal values which are deeply rooted, abstract motivations that guide justify or explain attitudes, norms, opinions and actions explain differences in perception of the effective leader and follower. The results advance the theoretical understanding of the relationship between personal values and individuals' perceptions in organizations. An additional contribution of this study is the application of the teacher's managerial position to explain a potential boundary condition of the translation of personal values into outcomes. The findings suggest that through the management process in the organization, teachers acquire knowledge and skills which augment their ability (beyond their personal values) to predict perceptions of ideal types of principal and student. The study elucidates the unique role of personal values in understanding an organizational thinking in organization. It seems that personal values might explain the differences in individual preferences of the organizational paradigm (mechanistic vs organic).

Keywords : implicit leadership theories, implicit followership theories, organizational paradigms, personal values

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