

Effects of Transformational Leadership on Burnout of College Teachers: The mediating role of Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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Abstract. The main objective of this study was to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' burnout and the role of organizational citizenship behavior(OCB). A total of 509 participants were surveyed from universities in East China through the online questionnaire. The multiple regression analysis was used to examine the possible relationships, and it was found that transformational leadership factors of idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation were significantly negative related to teachers' burnout, and were significantly positive related to organizational citizenship behavior. It was also confirmed the mediating effect of organizational citizenship behavior between transformational leadership and employee burnout with the analysis of the four-step mediator variable test method.

Keywords: Transformational leadership; Burnout; OCB; College teachers.

1. Introduction

Employee burnout was firstly put forward by psychiatrist Freudenbergcr, which was used to describe the negative emotional and cognitive responses of nurses to long-term emotional and interpersonal pressure. To date, the burnout has been depicted a crisis between an employee and their job and not necessarily as a crisis in interpersonal relationships at work[1]. Schaufeli, et al [2] proposed that burnout is characterized by a combination of exhaustion and cynicism, reduced professional efficacy.

A Eurofound study[3] showed that over half (51%) of all full-time employees surveyed in the United Kingdom had experienced anxiety or burnout in their current job. Employee burnout not only affects the physical and mental health and interpersonal relationships of individuals, but also causes individuals to have a negative attitude towards work and reduce work performance, affects the relationship between individuals and friends, family members, and will have a negative impact on themselves, others, organizations, especially society. It is generally believed that the influencing factors of burnout can be attributed to personal factors, situational factors and organizational factors.

1.1 Employee Engagement and Employee Burnout

The organization efficiency is mostly governed by employee work performance. Employee engagement is firstly proposed by Kahn [4], which define that the members of an organization are full engaged in their organizational roles, physically completing their work and express themselves in physically, cognitively and emotionally. Employee engagement is also further defined by Schaufeli, et al [2] as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Employees who engage have a sense of vigor and effective connection with their work activities and they believe themselves to deal completely with the demands of their job. However, employee burnout is mostly described as the opposite ends of work engagement. Employee burnout is considering as an erosion of engagement with the job. Compared with those of low engagement rate, Gallup researchers found that companies with high employee engagement had 13% higher employee retention, 5% higher production efficiency, 52% higher customer satisfaction

and 44% higher profit margin [5]. It is reported that the Australian civil engineers were strongly tended to quit their jobs because of burnout of the emotional exhaustion and cynicism dimension [6].

1.2 Transformational Leadership

Excellent leadership can develop the harmony workplace and encourage the employee to keep the good mood, which can decrease the anxious degree of employee. According to Kohan et al. [7], transformational leadership theory is one of the well-known theoretical frameworks on leadership. Transformational leadership has become one of the most popular styles to make leadership more effective [8]. Transformational leadership requires leaders to be able to consider the followers as “whole” people rather than just focusing on followers to implement certain government employees [9]. Transformational leadership is also important role in promising engagement of employees [10] and inspiring their behavior to reach the bigger goals.

Employee burnout was affected by leadership style and action. The role of management and leadership is one of the determining factor for burnout[3]. Smulders et al[11] reported that the risk of burnout is 2.3 times higher because of lack of support from management. A strong negative correlation between work-related social support and burnout was found. The research [12] on nurses found that there was a strong negative correlation between job burnout and the caring dimension of leadership style. At the same time, Eastburg et al [13] also found in the nurse that there is a strong negative correlation between work-related social support and burnout and nurses whose supervisors received positive-feedback training showed significant reductions in emotional exhaustion, compared to those whose supervisors did not receive this training. Shanafelt et al [14]reported that supervisor scores in each of the leadership dimensions and composite leadership score strongly correlated with the burnout and satisfaction scores of individual physicians and each 1-point increase in composite leadership score was associated with a 3.3% decrease in the likelihood of burnout. Kanste[15] also reported that idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and contingent reward were negatively with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization.

1.3 Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) refers that individual spontaneous behaviors of employees that do not appear in employee job descriptions of organization are generally beneficial to the operational effectiveness of the organization. OCB includes many behaviors, such as helping others, volunteering to take on additional tasks, and obeying workplace rules and procedures [16]. These behaviors are a prosocial behavior, that is, positive, constructive and meaningful social behavior to provide help [15]. OCB can not only promote work coordination among organizational members and strengthen teamwork spirit, but also make the more effective application of organizational resources. Organ et al. believe that organizational citizenship behavior is to increase trust and cohesion within the organization.

The employee who have the high levels of OCB can result in more identification and attachment with the organization and strongly identify their well-being with those of colleagues and/or employers [17]. At the same time, the important force of cohesion and a positive working atmosphere can improve employee performance.

1.4 College Teachers' Burnout Syndrome

College teachers have the following main characteristics: (1) They are more likely to experience happiness and passion from their work, and are willing to devote their time and energy to additional work. (2) The work content is diverse, and their achievements are difficult to evaluate. Intellectuals who have the higher educational level have a stronger desire to realize their own values and go all out. There is well-known that profession with strong social interactions is propensity to leading to the burnout syndrome, especially among teachers whose job is regarded as one of the most

stressful[1, 18]. Employee in educational sector are at risk for occupational burnout because teaching is a stressful profession with large demand and relatively low pay[19]. Teachers increasing sustain the high levels of occupational stress, negative emotions, anxiety, and burnout[20, 21]. A Eruofound study reported that 15% of educational professional suffered a moderate risk of burnout in Portugal[3]. Catherine King et al. [22]reported that 45% of school counsellors in Australia had experienced burnout in their study. The burnout of teacher can negatively affect effective teaching, their interaction with their students, and their motivation for the job[23, 24].

The investigation of burnout has become important because of the prevalence of burnout in education sector. The present study sought to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and the burnout of college teachers. In additional, the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB is also investigated. The hypotheses were as follows:

H1: Transformational leadership has a negative effect of teachers' burnout.

H1a: Transformational leadership's core transformational leadership behavior has a negative effect on teachers' burnout.

H1b: Transformational leadership's performance expectations has a negative effect on teachers' burnout.

H1c: Transformational leadership's individualized consideration has a negative effect on teachers' burnout.

H1d: Transformational leadership's intellectual stimulation has a negative effect on teachers' burnout.

H2: Transformational leadership has a significant positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior.

H3: Organizational citizenship behavior has a significant effect on teachers' burnout.

H4: Organizational citizenship behavior mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' burnout.

2. Methods

2.1 Participants and procedure

An online survey questionnaire was applied to collect data according to study design. The participants were selected from the higher education institutions in Shandong province, P. R. China. Table 1 presents the characteristics of respondents in detail. From this table, it can be seen that the respondents of employees are dominated by women, i.e. 260 people (51.1%) and the remaining 249 people (48.9%) are men.

There are only 27 the respondents of employee who gain the degree of college diploma and below. The respondents who have the master degree is dominated, which is 216 people(42.4%). The respondents of employee from the private college and the public college are 176 and 333, respectively. Related to the period of teaching experience, the period of employment is dominated by the period of employment 6-10 years and 11-20 years, which reaches above 70 percent. The period of employment above 20 years of 7.3 percent.

Table 1. Demographic Information of Respondents(n=509)

Characteristics	Categories	Variance
Gender	Male	249 (48.9%)
	Female	260 (51.1%)
Age	30 and Under	92(18.1%)
	31-40	166(32.6%)
	41-50	143(28.1%)
	Above 50	108(21.2%)
Education	College Diploma and Below	27(5.3%)
	Bachelor Degree	103(20.2%)
	Master Degree	216(42.4%)
	PhD	163(32%)
College Type	Private	176 (34.6%)
	Public	333 (65.4%)
Teaching Experience	5 Years and Below	92(18.1%)
	6-10 Years	200 (39.3%)
	11-20 Years	180 (35.4%)
	Above 20 Years	37 (7.3%)

2.2 Measures

Burnout. The burnout of teacher was evaluated with the Maslach Burnout Inventory(MBI), which include three different versions: the MBI Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS), the MBI-Educators Survey (MBI-ES) and the MBI-General Survey (MBI-GS)[25]. The MBI-ES was specially developed for to evaluate teacher's burnout and adapted by WU Xin-chun for Chinese[26], thus chosen for this study. The MBI-ES is made up of 22-item survey to measure three dimensions of burnout, including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The scale has 22 items with answer choices on a 7-point Likert-type scale (from 1=Never to 7=Always/Every day). The MBI-ES has demonstrated adequate reliability and validity of the three factor structure in different cultural background[25, 27-29].

Transformational leadership. The shortened version of the Podsakoff et al. [30] scale was applied to measure transformational leadership and the responses were obtained on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Never" to "Always". The measure scale consists of 14 items, including three items for the performance expectations, four items for individualized consideration, four items for intellectual stimulation and three items for core transformational leadership behaviors. We employ this scale because it can be used in the different cultural background and capture the multiple facets of transformational leadership[31, 32]. The scale was also utilized in the measure of transformational leadership in school[33].

Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB). We used a 24-item of and the 5-point Likert-type of OCB scale to evaluate teachers' organizational citizenship behaviors, which was developed by Podsakoff et al[34]. The OCB scale include the five dimensions, altruism, conscientiousness, civic virtue, courtesy and sportsmanship. Respondents were asked to choose the degree, which ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The studies using the scale have shown that the measure were well reliable as well as stable in the different culture background[32, 34]. The OCB Scale was translated from English into Chinese. The OCB scale in Chinese was then field tested with 20 teachers to verify comprehension and content validity of the items.

2.3 Data Analysis

The statistical analysis was performed with IBM SPSS 25.0. The average internal consistency reliability coefficients of burnout, transformational leadership and OCB questionnaire were 0.97, 0.93 and 0.96, respectively, which indicates an acceptable reliability index for the measure. Descriptive and inferential statistics such as standard deviations and correlations, ANOVA, and multiple regression were used for determining and explaining relationships between the variables and proving the hypotheses.

3. Results

Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations and correlations of the variables. The value of transformational leadership is the average of core transformational leadership behavior, performance expectations, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation. Table 3 is given the test results of mediating effects of organizational citizenship behavior with the four-step mediator variable test method.

3.1 Relationship among Teachers' Burnout, Transformational Leadership and OBC

Regarding H1, the Table 2 shows the result for the relationship between teachers' burnout and transformational leadership ($r=-0.88$, $p<0.01$), and core transformational leadership behavior ($r=-0.83$, $p<0.01$), and performance expectations ($r=-0.74$, $p<0.01$), and Individualized Consideration ($r=-0.82$, $p<0.01$), and Intellectual Stimulation ($r=-0.79$, $p<0.01$). The results indicate the the negative relationship between teachers' burnout and transformational leadership.

Regarding H3, it can seen in Table 2 the result for the relationship between teachers' burnout and OBC ($r=-0.88$, $p<0.01$), which means the negative relationship between teachers' burnout and OBC.

3.2 Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Considering H2, it can be found the result for the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior ($r=0.93$, $p<0.01$). There has the positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior.

3.3 Role of OBC between Teachers' Burnout and Transformational Leadership

Regarding H4, the relationships among transformational leadership, OBC and teachers' burnout were analyzed in Table 3.

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Gender	1.51	0.50	1											
2. Age	2.52	1.02	-0.04	1										
3. Education	3.01	0.86	-0.07	-0.18**	1									
4. CT	1.65	0.48	0.05	-0.1*	0.28**	1								
5. TE	2.32	0.85	-0.06	0.67**	-0.26**	0.01	1							
6. TFL	2.84	0.63	0.07	0.04	0.02	-0.07	0.01	1						
7. CTLB	2.9	0.75	0.08	0.02	0.02	-0.11*	-0.04	0.9**	1					
8. PE	3	0.6	0.06	0.01	0.04	-0.09	0.01	0.87**	0.72**	1				
9. IC	2.95	0.75	0.04	0.06	0.02	-0.08	0.01	0.94**	0.8**	0.8**	1			
10. IS	2.56	0.68	0.08	0.05	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.91**	0.75**	0.72**	0.9**	1		
11. TB	3.78	0.85	-0.08	-0.01	-0.07	0.04	0.03	-0.88**	-0.83**	-0.74**	-0.82**	-0.79**	1	

12.OCB	3.02	0.59	0.08	0.01	0.03	-0.08	0.01	0.93**	0.85**	0.78**	0.85**	0.86**	-0.88**	1
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Table 2. Means, standard deviations and correlations

Note: CT=College Type, TE=Teaching Experience, TFL=Transformational Leadership, CTLB-core transformational leadership behavior, PE-performance expectations, IC= Individualized Consideration, IS= Intellectual Stimulation, TB= Teachers' Burnout, OCB=Organizational Citizenship Behavior, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Table 3. Test results of mediating effects of organizational citizenship behavior

Variables	OCB		TB		
	Model1	Model2	Model3	Model4	Model5
Gender	0.11	0.03	-0.16	-0.04	-0.02
Age	-0.01	-0.04*	-0.03	0.01	-0.01
Education	0.05	0.02	-0.09	-0.04	-0.03
CT	-0.13	-0.04	0.12	-0.002	-0.03
TE	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.007	0.03
TFL		0.85**		-1.17**	-0.61**
OCB					-0.65**
R ²	0.02	0.86	0.018	0.774	0.803
ΔR^2	0.02	0.84	0.010	0.756	0.028
F	1.995	513.38	1.825	286.6	290.8
ΔF	1.995	3010.6	1.825	1680.2	72.2

Note: CT=College Type, TE=Teaching Experience, TFL=Transformational Leadership, TB= Teachers' Burnout, OCB=Organizational Citizenship Behavior, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

As can be seen in Table 3, it can be found the result of the relationships between transformational leadership and OCB ($\beta=0.85$, $p<0.01$, $\Delta R^2=0.84$) in Model 2. It is also seen in Model 4 and Model5 the significant relationships between transformational leadership and teachers' burnout ($\beta=-1.17$, $p<0.01$, $\Delta R^2=0.756$), transformational leadership, OCB and teachers' burnout ($\beta=-0.61$, $\beta=-0.65$, $p<0.01$, $\Delta R^2=0.028$).

4. Discussion

This study examined how teachers' burnout is related to transformational leadership and OCB and how the role of OCB play between teachers' burnout and transformational leadership. All the hypotheses proposed in our study were confirmed.

Firstly, the significant negative effect of transformational leadership on teachers' burnout was found. The core transformational leadership behavior, performance expectations, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation have a negative impact on teachers' burnout. These results confirm that transformational leadership and its dimensions have a negative relations with employee burnout, which is in line with the finding of Parveen and Adeinat[35] and Zopiatis and Constanti[36].

The second hypotheses is proved by the positive impact of transformational leadership on organizational citizenship behavior. Kohan et al [7] reported that transformational leadership has a positive and significant relation with organizational climate, which is indicated that transformational leadership is beneficial to organizational citizenship behavior. Li reported that transformational leadership positively affected organizational citizenship behavior[37].

The third hypotheses established that the negative relationship between OCB and teachers' burnout was found. OCB is beneficial to create a harmony workplace environment, which can decrease the inter-group conflict. Sulaiman et al[38] also reported OCB can reduce the value of housemen's burnout in public hospital.

The fourth hypotheses of this study is also confirmed. In order to test the mediating effect, this study takes the four-step mediator variable test method proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) to

examine whether organizational citizenship behavior has intermediary effect between transformational leadership and employee burnout. The results shows that transformational leadership has a significant positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior. After controlling the influence of other variables, Model 4 shows that transformational leadership has a significantly negative correlation with employee burnout. In addition, we further investigated the relationship between transformational leadership, organizational citizenship and employee burnout, and the results of model 5 showed organizational citizenship behavior and transformational leadership has a significantly negative correlation with employee burnout, which support that organizational citizenship behavior had a partially mediating effect between transformational leadership and employee burnout.

5. Conclusion

Our findings provides evidence on the relationship between teachers' burnout and transformation leadership, the mediating effect of OCB between burnout and transformation leadership. The results suggest that the defference of management style and OCB have related to teachers' burnout. The effective management and harmony workplace environment, such as respect for teachers' personal feelings, stimulating teachers to rethink the way they do things, trying to avoid creating problems for coworkers, will alleviate or prevent employee burnout in higher education institue. Appropriate management strategies can support and strengthen teachers' ability to prepare for a changing and stressful work environment and make it a sustainable environment and improve teachers' teaching quality.

There are several limitations to consider in this study. Firstly, the data used for this study only came from online self-report measures. Therefore, we could not govern the effect of bias that may have magnified the observed relationships between the variables. Secondly, it is conceivable that the variables assessed in this study were affected by cultural factors.

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