A Study on the Relationships among School Goal Structures, Science Teacher Self-Efficacy and Job Satisfaction

Achievement goal theory is one of the most prominent motivational frameworks in educational contexts (Ames, 1992). According to achievement goal theory, achievement goals are the reasons or purposes that students possess for approaching, engaging, selecting and persisting in achievement situations (Ames, 1992; Elliot, 1999; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Early research on achievement motivation distinguished two types of goals namely, mastery goals and performance goals (Ames, 1992), while more recent research has suggested four achievement goals: mastery approach and avoidance goals and performance approach and avoidance goals (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Mastery approach goals emphasize learning, and deep understanding, while mastery avoidance goals focus on avoiding misunderstanding and avoiding not learning. Performance approach goals emphasize showing abilities to others and getting the highest grade, whereas performance avoidance goals focus on avoiding looking stupid and getting the worst grades (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002).

Goal theory is not only related to students but also it involves classroom and school goal structures (Ames, 1992). A mastery goal structure is described as an educational context where learning and understanding is important, effort and improvement are appreciated and valued (Wolters, 2004). A performance goal structure is an educational environment which emphasizes students achievement is more important than effort and doing better than others and displaying it is more appreciated than learning the material deeply (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2013). Similar to students, the teachers are also
exposed to the goal structures at the educational institutions and they receive messages about the values and policies prevalent at schools (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011a).

Previous research on goal structure mostly focused on the relationships between classroom goal structures and students affective, cognitive and behavioral responses (e.g., Wolters, 2004). Compared to studies which are related to student and classroom goals, studies concerning the influence of school goal structures on the perceptions of teachers are rare (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). However, there are studies indicating the relationships between crucial teacher variables such as self-efficacy (e.g., Devos, Dupries & Paquay 2012), job satisfaction and work engagement (Skaalvik & Skaalvik 2011).

An important construct in teacher motivation, self-efficacy is defined as beliefs teachers have about their skills to affect student learning (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca & Malone, 2006). Teachers holding high levels of self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to apply innovative teaching acts in the classroom, to use classroom management strategies effectively and utilize appropriate teaching methods which foster students' autonomy (Cousins & Walker, 1995), to undertake responsibility of students with special learning needs (Allinder, 1994), and to keep students concentrated on task than teachers holding relatively low levels of teaching self-efficacy beliefs (Podell & Soodak, 1993). Devos, Dupries and Paquay (2012) found that school goal structure predicted beginning teachers’ self-efficacy and feelings of depression.

A different but a work context related construct, job satisfaction is characterized as a positive or negative sense of fulfillment about one’s work (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, and Steca (2003) stated that job satisfaction a “decisive element” that is influential on teachers’ attitudes and performance on teaching and found self-efficacy as prominent predictor to teachers’ job satisfaction. A study by Skaalvik & Skaalvik (2011) revealed that while mastery goal structure was positively correlated with job satisfaction, performance goal structure was negatively correlated.

In light of the abovementioned literature, this study aims to explore the relationships among science teachers’ perceptions of school goal structures (mastery and performance), science teacher self-efficacy and science teachers’ job satisfaction. Accordingly, following research question was generated:

What are the relationships among science teachers’ perceptions of school goal structures (mastery and performance), self-efficacy and job satisfaction?

Method

This study is a correlational research in nature. Approximately 130 middle school science teachers will constitute the participants of the study. To investigate the abovementioned research question, three measures will be used. The first one is Perceptions of School Goal Structures of Patterns of Adaptive Learning (PALS). PALS was developed by Midgley, Maehr, Hruda, Anderman, Anderman, Freeman and Urdan (2000). The scale consists of 13 items in two dimensions namely, school mastery goal structure and school performance goal structure. The second measure is the teacher self-efficacy scale. It was developed by Tschanne-Moran and Hoy (2001). It consists of 24 items. The third measure is job satisfaction scale. It consists of 4 items and developed by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007). All of the scales will be administered to the sample at the same time and one point in time (cross-sectional). A path analysis model will be produced and the gathered data will be analyzed by using LISREL 8.80 statistical program.

Expected Outcomes

It is expected that school mastery goal structure will be positively related to teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Schools adopting performance goals may emphasize besting others, displaying performance and achievement at all costs instead of learning and improvement. Therefore, teachers of performance oriented schools may be low in their teaching self-efficacy and satisfaction from teaching profession. The results of the study may be useful in understanding the influence of school culture on teachers’ behaviors and how it shapes their self-efficacy and their satisfaction from their occupation. Moreover results of this study may have implications for school administrators and educational policy makers. Additionally, this study may lead the way for future researchers who are interested in the influence that school culture exerts on science teachers.

References


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