

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIRECTORS POSITIVE LEADERSHIP AND TEACHERS WELL-BEING OF KINDERGARTENS IN TAIWAN

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated kindergarten teachers in Kaohsiung to examine the relationship between director's positive leadership and teacher's well-being. The purposes of this study were as below. First, to understand the current situation of the director's positive leadership and teacher's well-being in Kaohsiung kindergartens. Second, to discuss the differences of the two variables with various background variables. Finally, to discuss the correlations of the two variables in this study.

This study used a questionnaire survey. Research subjects include public and private kindergarten teachers in Kaohsiung in the 2017 School Year. Sixty-seven kindergartens attended and there were 473 valid questionnaires, with a 61% valid response rate. Based on the valid questionnaires, mean, standard deviation, t-test, one-way ANOVA and Pearson's product –moment correlation were used for data analyses.

Major conclusions of this study are summarized as below: 1. Kindergarten teachers perceived a high level of director's positive leadership and a moderate-high level of teacher's well-being; 2. Teachers who were 41 years old and more, masters, seniority above 5 years, administrators and teachers, in private kindergartens and metropolitan areas had a higher perceived level of director's positive leadership; 3. Teacher who were 31 years old and more, seniority above 10 years, administrators and teachers, in private kindergartens, had a higher perceived level of teacher's well-being; 4. Positive correlations existed between director's positive leadership and teacher's well-being.

Finally, according to the results, the study provided specific recommendations for educational authorities, kindergarten directors, and references for the future researches.

Keywords: Kindergarten, Positive Leadership, Well-being

INTRODUCTION

For preschool directors in the process of organizing preschool affairs, if they only focus on development and execution of plans and provide related resources and decision making, then they simply are playing the role of traditional leader. With the rapid change of society and following the trend of time, preschool directors particularly rely on communication and negotiation, which result in teachers' identification with preschools. Regarding the current obstacles of preschools, they properly apply an appropriate leadership strategy and solve problems encountered by their preschools, thus requiring leadership to respond to the ever-changing environment.

The researcher reviewed the National Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations in Taiwan with positive leadership as the key word, retrieving 99 papers. However, they mostly treated senior high school, vocational school, junior high school, and elementary school teachers and industrial people as subjects. Those that treated preschool teachers as subjects were rare. Thus, the researcher adopts preschool teachers as subjects and explores their current perception of preschool directors' positive leadership, which is the first motivation of this study.

Well-being is a goal pursued by everyone, every family, and every society. In recent years, well-being has become an important issue of concern by academia. From studies on positive leadership, general scholars' research on well-being mostly has focused on secondary and elementary schools and educators. However, studies on preschools are rare. Hence, the researcher treats preschool teachers as subjects and explores the current perception of their well-being, which is the second motivation of this study.

The researcher has been a private and non-profit preschool director and recognizes the significant association between preschool directors' positive leadership and teachers' well-being. Therefore, this empirical research explores the correlation between preschool directors' positive leadership and teachers' well-being, which is the third motivation of this study.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. Research Structure

Figure 1 presents the research structure.

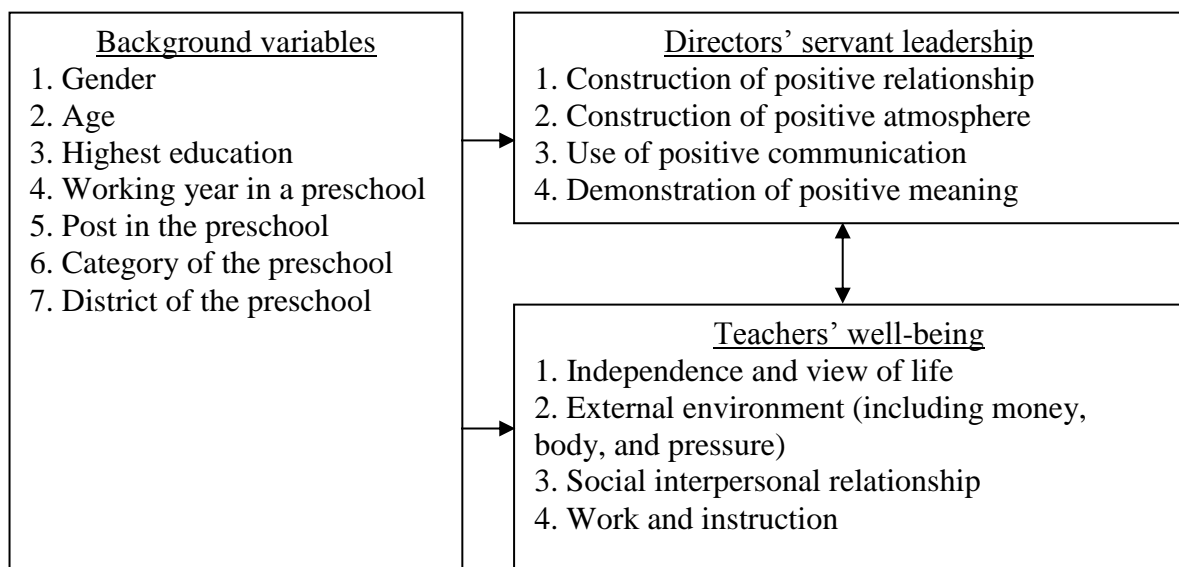


Figure 1. Research Structure

2. Research Subjects

The research subjects were preschool teachers in Kaohsiung City, Taiwan. By purposive sampling, this study extracted 770 preschool teachers in different districts. Formal questionnaires were distributed to 67 preschools on October 9, 2017. After retrieving the questionnaires, this study obtained 473 valid samples for a return rate of 61%.

3. Research Tools

The questionnaire of this study on directors' positive leadership is based on the questionnaire content designed by Ho (2014), including "construction of positive relationship", "construction of positive atmosphere", "use of positive communication", and "demonstration of positive meaning" and 19 items.

The questionnaire on teachers' well-being in this study is based on the questionnaire content designed by Wei (2011), including "independence and view of life", "external environment (including money, body and pressure)", "social interpersonal relationship", and "work and instruction" and 35 items.

4. Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis of this study includes Descriptive Statistics, *t*-test, one-way ANOVA, and Pearson's Product-moment Correlation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study utilizes action research to explore the proper courses to cultivate and enhance secondary school students' inter-disciplinary cultural creativity competence of problem-discovery, problem-solving, and DIY.

1. Analysis and Discussion of the Current Situation of Directors' Positive Leadership

Table 1 lists the current situation of directors' positive leadership.

Table 1. Current situation of directors' positive leadership (N=473)

Name of dimension	Number of items	Average mean	Standard deviation	F value	Post-hoc comparison
A. Construction of positive relationship	5	4.42	.60	22.52***	
B. Construction of positive atmosphere	4	4.33	.60		A>B
C. Use of positive communication	5	4.32	.54		A>C
D. Demonstration of positive meaning	5	4.44	.60		D>B
Overall dimension	19	4.38	.54		D>C

****P*<.001

According to Table 1, this study shows that the overall mean perception of preschool teachers in Kaohsiung City on directors' positive leadership is 4.38, which is high. The levels of perception on different dimensions of directors' positive leadership are the following: mean of "demonstration of positive meaning" is 4.44 (highest); mean of "construction of positive relationship" is 4.42; mean of "construction of positive atmosphere" is 4.33; and mean of "use of positive communication" is 4.32 (lowest). The difference among dimensions is significant ($F=22.52, p<.001$). According to the findings of this study, the score of "use of positive communication" is the lowest. This matches the study of Weng (2017) who showed "positive communication" as the lowest. The researcher argues that the reason could be that when directors communicate with teachers, their negative critiques are more than their positive supportive language and they do not properly offer positive feedback.

2. Analysis and Discussion of the Current Situation of Teachers' Well-being

Table 2 presents the current situation of teachers' well-being.

Table 2. Current situation of teachers' well-being (N=473)

Name of dimension	Number of items	Average mean	Standard deviation	F value	Post-hoc comparison
A. Independence and view of life	8	4.15	.53	21.19***	
B. External environment (including money, body and pressure)	9	3.66	.52		A>B A>C A>D
C. Social interpersonal relationship	9	4.05	.53		C>B D>B
D. Work and instruction	9	4.01	.52		
Overall dimension	35	3.97	.53		

*** $P<.001$

According to Table 2, this study shows that the overall mean perception of preschool teachers in Kaohsiung City on teachers' well-being is 3.97, which is at the medium to high level. The levels of perception on different dimensions of teachers' well-being are the following: mean of "independence and view of life" is 4.15 (highest); mean of "social interpersonal relationship" is 4.05; mean of "work and instruction" is 4.01; and mean of "external environment (including money, body, and pressure)" is 3.66 (lowest). The difference among different dimensions is significant ($F=21.19, p<.001$). According to these findings, the score of "independence and view of life" is the highest, which matches "living satisfaction" in Yang (2010). The researcher argues that preschool teachers approach children for the long term. In an atmosphere with children's innocence and vigorousness, teachers can maintain optimism, happiness, and ease, and feel positive about things around them.

3. Correlation Analysis and Discussion of Directors' Positive Leadership and Teachers' Well-being

Table 3 presents the correlation coefficients of preschool teachers on the dimensions of "directors' positive leadership" and "teachers' well-being".

Table 3. Product-moment correlation analysis of directors' positive leadership and teachers' well-being (N=473)

Teachers' well-being Directors', positive leadership	Independence and view of life	External environment (including money, body and pressure)	Social interpersonal relationship	Work and instruction	Overall dimension
	Construction of positive relationship	.63**	.42**	.38**	.58**
Construction of positive atmosphere	.58**	.42**	.35**	.52**	.55**
Use of positive communication	.59**	.42**	.35**	.52**	.55**
Demonstration of positive meaning	.65**	.40**	.35**	.58**	.58**
Overall dimension	.67**	.45**	.39**	.60**	.62**

** $p<.01$

According to Table 3, Kaohsiung City preschool teachers' perception of directors' overall positive leadership and teachers' overall well-being are significantly related ($r=.62, p<.01$). In other words, when directors' positive leadership is more significant, teachers' perceived well-being will be higher.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

1. Preschool teachers' perception of directors' positive leadership is high, their perception of "demonstration of positive meaning" is higher, and that of "use of positive communication" is lower.
2. Preschool teachers' perception of well-being is at a medium and high level, their perception of "independence and view of life" is the highest, and that of "external environment (including money, body, and pressure)" is the lowest.
3. When preschool teachers' perception of directors' positive leadership is higher, their perception of teachers' well-being will also be higher.

Suggestions

1. ***Professional growth activities of preschool directors should include the study of knowledge and competence of positive leadership, particularly the comprehension of "use of positive communication".***

According to the findings of this study, there is a positive correlation between preschool directors' positive leadership and teachers' well-being. Thus, it is suggested when holding professional growth activities for preschool directors that the educational authority should include a study of the knowledge and competence of positive leadership in order to enhance preschool directors' cognition and comprehension of positive leadership and to strengthen directors' executive competence of positive leadership, which can lead to a positive climate in preschools and reinforce preschool teachers' well-being.

2. ***The value of preschool teachers' mental and physical health helps to enhance teachers' well-being.***

According to this study's findings, for, preschool teachers' perception of teachers' well-being, "external environment (including money, body and pressure)" is the lowest. Hence, it is suggested that preschool directors should pay attention to preschool teachers' material and spiritual lives, including external environment factors such as physical health, sufficient sleep, release of stress, and sufficient financial capacity in order to upgrade preschool teachers' perception of their own well-being in service to the preschools.

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