How does psychological safety affect employee turnover?

Selva Staub, Serdar Yener

The issue of employee turnover in a school setting can signal the difference between a stable and effective environment and an unstable, unhealthy learning environment. The challenge of turnover may prove particularly vexing in private schools as it results in costly efforts to replace qualified teachers, in addition to the potentially negative impression it creates among tuition-paying clientele. Educational leaders have attempted to mitigate turnover rates and improve morale by attempting the implementation of a Distributed Leadership framework in their administration of the school. However, this may not always prove successful. The research carried out in this study indicates that an additional layer of complexity should be taken into consideration when analyzing the school's organizational culture, that is Psychological Safety. It has been identified as taking on the role of a mediator between Distributed Leadership and Turnover Intention.

The primary aim of this study was to analyze and explain the mediation effect of psychological safety on the relationship between distributed leadership and turnover intention within seven private secondary schools in Turkey. The data were collected via survey; respondents consisted of 326 principals, vice-principals, and teachers.

Participants in this session will examine the combined effects of Distributed Leadership and Psychological Safety relevant to employee turnover in an educational environment. Outcomes of this session include understanding of mechanisms to assess the perceived level of Psychological Safety, as well as tools to address sentiments of insufficient Psychological Safety among staff.