

The Relationship Between the Leadership Styles of School Principals and the School Culture Types in High Schools from Haifa District

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Abstract

The article discusses the relationship between school leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) on the four types on organizational culture based on the Quinn Cameron model (Clan, Adhocracy, Market and Hierarchy) in high schools with a high rate of academic achievement of their students. The mix of leadership styles used by school principals and the organizational culture profile of the schools are closely related leading to the conclusion that there is a synergy between them which is explaining the high rate of academic success. The researchers used a mixed research method, qualitative based on interviews with various important school stakeholders and a questionnaire based survey of 162 teachers from 8 high schools from the Haifa district, in Israel. Conclusions and several recommendations were made.

Keywords: leadership, leadership styles, principals, school culture

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1. Introduction

Many management methods and instruments were adopted by countries around the world to manage their educational organizations at every level in order to improve the process of learning by their students, to improve the functioning of each school, the school leadership and their teaching practices, and achieve better academic performance.

Do teachers consider their managers to be transformational or transactional leaders or laissez-faire leaders? Will creating a school culture that supports teacher motivation and job satisfaction increase school performance? The education system in the Haifa District, as in the whole world, is fast and constantly changing, and these changes include new management methods and instruments, new leadership styles, new curriculum development, new learning strategies, and changes in the roles of

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students and teachers. In this context, educational leadership is more than effective in getting teachers to do things (Adizes, 2012).

Leadership is defined as the process of social influence in which subordinates undertake are participating voluntary and work with the leader to reach organization's goals. Also, (Yukl, 2010) and (Sušanj and Jakopec, 2012) argued that leadership is an interactional process between leaders and followers in which a leader attempts to influence followers in order to achieve a common goal.

The top manager of the school is the school principal. Its main responsibility is to lead the school in effective ways that satisfy and motivate everyone involved in the school activities including the teachers and to achieve the planned academic goals, while using the allocated resources using the planned school budget. An effective school manager is a leader who understands the complexities of the rapidly changing environment and who can influence their teachers and other relevant stakeholders in a creative manner to achieve higher work performance.

Organizational culture (school culture) was considered as "glue" that embraces the school together (Sürücü and Yeşilada, 2017). On the other hand, (Armstrong, 2006) suggests that organizational culture (school culture) consists of "valuable and rare values, standards, beliefs, attitudes, and expectations that are imitable to achieve a competitive advantage".

The study aims to identify the main leadership styles used by the school principals and whether the leadership of principals has an impact on the school culture in Arab high schools in the Haifa district.

2. Literature review

In each entity there are strengths to be improved, and weaknesses to be solved. Leadership is needed as an essential element in the internal environment for the development of loyalty and making the personnel feel of their respective stability. Several studies addressed that a successful school is that which exists based on a perfect fit between school culture, its personnel and a common leadership style in use by the school's principal and other people with management position in the school.

Thus, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of harmonization and consistency between the school culture and the leadership style of its principal. This is strongly need because inconsistency leads to a school's failure in practicing its policies. Consequently, the need to scrutinize the prevailing school culture emerged, to understand its determinants and to try to amend or even replace the prevailing values in a manner which helps them continue to adapt and change the leadership style of school principals.

The school, like other organizations, operates within a reality that dictates conditions of intensified competition, alongside increasing demands on the environment - students, parents, the Ministry of Education, and others. This wide public of stakeholders does not always accept the professional authority of schools, principals and educators yet challenges them. The prevailing expectations of school

principals and educators are to demonstrate leadership, to present a vision that outlines an improved future picture of the educational agenda, and to define practical processes through which the vision can be implemented and realized in practice. These challenges require both school principals and educators to have leadership qualities that are not necessarily born with them, but it is important to raise awareness of them and nurture them within the school. There is an agreement in the literature with the perception and findings that two main variables influence the quality of students' learning in the school: the quality of the curriculum and teaching, and the quality of the pedagogical leadership of the school (Leo, 2015).

"Leadership is a process of influence that leads to achieving the desired goals. Successful leaders develop a vision for their school based on personal and professional values. They formulate a vision at every opportunity and influence their staff and other stakeholders to adopt the vision they have formulated. Towards achieving the shared vision" (Bush & Glover, p. 8, 2003).

Leadership is a "social process in which one or several members of a group or organization influence the interpretation of external and internal events, the choice of desired goals or outputs, the organization of the work activities, the abilities and the degree of motivation of the individual, the power relations and the common orientations of the group" (Hoy & Miskel, 2005).

There are two main characteristics of leadership: (1) a sense of purpose and security that are transferred to subordinates/followers. (2) The followers are directed and stimulated to work towards the goal and the tasks.

Most of the definitions of "leadership" tend to view leadership as a process of influence directed at the individual or group, and the leader is perceived as bridging between the desires and capabilities of the organization and the organization's goals and demands. In many definitions, it is assumed that leadership refers to social influence processes in which one individual deliberately influences others in order to construct activities and relationships in a group or organization (Yukl, 2002).

In today's postmodernist age, educating youth for life presents a complex challenge to the education system. Because of the process of "information explosion" that characterizes this period, the importance of mastery of knowledge becomes less important, if only because of its changing nature and dimensions, while the importance of developing and promoting thinking and the use of learning skills increases in order to enable a person to function in a rapidly changing world. As a result, the environment in which teachers work and the demands placed on them by the socio-economic environment becomes more and more complex (Oplatka, 2015).

Oplatka (2015) argues that an effective school manager will be the one who will come to his students with a message, give meaning beyond immediate learning, make his students believe in their abilities and develop inner motivation and commitment to the goals of his students.

According to Popper (2012), the transactional style educator finds it difficult to leave the center of the action and therefore encourages dependency of his/ her students, out of fear of losing the student or his/ her influence on the student.

Transformational and transactional leadership consists of seven dimensions. Bass & Avolio (1997) developed a research tool called the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire that encompasses all of those seven dimensions and is used to measure the components of transformational leadership styles, leadership and non-interference (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009).

A leader is advised as shown in many studies to use the three types of managements styles as different occasions require different style. For encouraging employees to work independently and be creative, the transformational, and the laissez-faire styles are the most helpful to use. While it is more effective when a leader wants to create new practices and needs to implement them within a specified period of time to use the transactional style.

Organizational (group) culture “is a pattern of basic assumptions, invented, discovered or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that have worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore is to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein, 2001).

Other definitions emphasize the dimension of learning, and further detail the components of culture, as can be seen from the following sample of definitions developed both in general management and in the educational management field.

Organizational culture is the spirit and faith that characterizes the organization, which are expressed, for example, in the norms and values that define the way people should act toward each other, the nature of the labor relations that need to develop, and the attitudes toward change.

In conclusion, the culture of an organization is reflected in what is valued, by the dominant leadership styles, in the company specific language and symbols, in the organizational procedures and routines, and in its own definitions of success.

The Quinn Competing Values model distinguishes four organizational culture types, situated in four quadrants created by the intersection of two axis: the first axis is between flexibility and control; the second axis is between internal (inward) focus and external (outward) focus. (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983)

In the Competing Values Framework, organizations with an internal focus which adopt central authority over organizational processes, have a strong respect for the formal hierarchy and are adhering to rules are having an organizational culture named “hierarchy”. Second, organizations with an internal focus and an emphasis on flexibility, encouraging broad participation by employees, emphasizing teamwork, collaboration and empowerment of employees, and making human resource development a priority have an organizational culture named “clan” culture (Shafei et al., 2011). The culture of the clan (cooperative) is characteristic of organizations that focus on maintaining internal stability and flexibility and concern for people on the one hand, and sensitivity to customers on the other. Thirdly, organizations with an external focus, also with focus on flexibility, demonstrated creativity and innovation, aiming on improving and expanding resources have an organizational culture named “adhocracy”. This type of culture emphasizes fast,

dynamic and entrepreneurial action, encouraging their employees to innovate and assume risks.

Finally, organizations with an external focus and focusing on stability and control, are driven by market-related results and by the action to compete and win over their market competitors. The “market” culture (competitive) is characteristic of organizations that focus on external positioning with the need for stability and control. These organizations are results-oriented, and the main focus is on accomplishing the task. The people who work in these organizations are producers and competitive and are held together by their need to win.

These four types of organizational cultures have been suggested as archetypes. The organizations need to reflect all the four cultures to several extents. According to the authors, there is always a prevailing culture (manifested in the perspectives of workers at all levels of the organization), but no single organizational culture is better. All four types of culture can work in a particular organization with relative constancy over time (Cameron & Quinn, 1983).

3. The research methodology

This research used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigate the main leadership styles, whether the principals' leadership has an effect on the school culture in Arab high schools in the Haifa district, and how the leadership styles influence the motivation and job satisfaction of teachers.

The study adopted the exploratory research approach to explore the impact of the three school leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire leadership style) on the school culture in the Arab high schools in Haifa district.

The main and subsidiary questions for this research arise from gaps existing in the literature concerning the relationships between school culture and school leadership styles, importance in Arab high schools in Haifa district. This leads us to the following main research question:

What is the influence of school leadership styles on the school culture in the Arab high schools in Haifa district?

The study set out research goals and questions as follows: a) To identify the main school leadership types in the Arab high schools from the Haifa educational district; b). What types of culture are dominant in the Arab high schools in Haifa District education? c): To identify the influence of the leadership styles of the school principal on the school culture in the Arab high schools in Haifa District; d) What is the influence of the leadership styles of school principal on the school culture in the Arab high schools in Haifa District?2- What is the influence the transformational leadership style of school principals on the schools culture in Arab school with a high rate and low rate?4. What is the influence the transactional leadership style of school principals on the schools culture in Arab school with a high rate and low rate?6- What is the influence the laissez-faire leadership style of school principals on the schools culture in Arab school with a high rate and low rate? Related to the above research questions the researcher formulated 24 research hypothesis.

Several interviews were conducted with participants from 8 high schools in Haifa district. A considerable amount of attention was paid to the development of the interviews. The interviews were designed to obtain information on leadership style used in school. The interviews were conducted with 8 presidents of parents' board, 7 school inspectors, and 8 school principals of the Arab high schools in Haifa district. The survey sample included 81 teachers from schools with high rate and 81 teachers from schools with low rate.

Two different questionnaires were built and distributed to collect the primary data from school principals, and, from teachers of the Arab high schools in Haifa district. Both questionnaires include a demographic data set of questions. The questionnaire for school principals is made of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ6x) scale for leadership styles is going to be used in the researcher, as well as Quinn Model for the organizational culture. The questionnaire for teachers is made of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ6x) scale for leadership styles is going to be used in the researcher, as well as Quinn Model for the organizational culture.

4. Results and discussion

The teachers' results indicate that school principals from the high rated Arab high schools are using a mix of leadership styles in their daily activities, with the most used style being the transformational style (mean score =3,64), above average, with quite an homogenous distribution of answers. The transactional leadership style is also used quite intensively (mean score = 3,53) while the laissez-faire style is the less utilized leadership style (mean score= 1,99), the two being also very homogenous distributes among responding teachers.

The teachers' results indicate that school principals from the low rated Arab high schools are using a mix of leadership styles in their daily activities, with the most used style being the laissez-faire leadership style (mean score =3,41), above average, with quite an homogenous distribution of answers (standard deviation = 0,44). This score indicates that school principals from low rated high school from Haifa district are sometimes using this leadership style, which is also considered to be not an effective leadership style. In the opinion of the researcher this explains the low rating of their schools. The score indicates that the transactional leadership style is practiced once in a while to sometimes by school principals in below average rate in Arab high school from the Haifa district (mean score = 2,50), further explaining their schools' low rate. The transformational leadership style is the least utilized leadership style (mean score= 2,13), indicating that it is very rarely used, once in a while, by the school principals in low rate schools. Also, the results for these two effective leadership styles are very homogenous distributed among responding teachers, confirming that the scores are very sound.

The researcher underlines the fact that this mix of leadership styles is ineffective and is influencing the organizational cultures of the low rated schools and also is impacting negatively the teachers motivation and their job satisfaction,

leading to low level of students achievement and explaining the low rate of their schools.

The results of the hypotheses relating to the influence of leadership styles of school principals on the school culture are presented in Table 1, below.

Table 1. Correlations between the leadership style and type of school culture in low rate and high rate high schools in Haifa district

Leadership style	Type of high school	Clan culture	Market culture	Hierarchy culture	Adhocracy culture
Transformational Leadership	Low rate	0.176	-0.104	0.024	-0.070
	High rate	0.050	0.042	0.062	-0.282
Transactional Leadership	Low rate	-0.165	-0.054	- 0.140	-0.057
	High rate	-0.013	0.204	0.332	-0.019
Laissez-faire Leadership	Low rate	0.089	0.123	-0.116	-0.209
	High rate	0.004	0.028	-0.113	-0.045

The researcher explored the relationships between leadership styles and school culture. The results showed that there is a good and strong relationship between transformational leadership and the school culture. These results support the results of former research conducted previously.

It is validated that transformational leadership would be more open to the reforms directed at the sustainability of the institutional structure of the educational institutions. Transactional leadership seems to have a positive relationship between with the motivation of teachers but less than the transformational leadership style for meeting the current expectancy of being open to reforms and innovations, the motivation of the employees with punishment and reward, and promoting team spirit by school principals.

In this research, the relationship between leadership styles and school culture was also examined based on school inspectors' opinions, school principals' and presidents of parents' board' opinions expressed during interviews. The principal actors of the student's achievements studies and the mission of creating a strong school culture to increase the effectiveness of educational institutions are the school principals and the teachers. In this context, it would be beneficial to provide a sustainable structure to educational institutions, to develop transformational leadership behaviors of school administrators, and to organize training and development programs for a strong school culture.

Leadership characteristics of the principal and teachers affect school culture (Thaher et al., 2022a). The results of this study show significance of transactional and transformational, and laissez-faire leadership, with school culture. Higher levels

of both transactional and transformational leadership were associated with higher levels of school culture.

It was found that principal leadership had significant effects on school goals, school culture, policies and organization. In this study, the use of transactional leadership resulted in a positive school culture as rated by teachers.

As Atasoy (2020) pointed out, one reason to the transformational leadership style predicting school culture more strongly than the transactional leadership style is that this might be due to the transformative leaders providing psychological and structural empowerment that revitalize the motivation, enhances the enthusiasm, and invigorate the organizational commitment of the followers. For maintaining an organization, transactional leadership and transformational are central and important to use. A principal's leadership style enhances, encourages, and nurtures a positive school culture. Transactional leadership is characterized by flexibility and discretion and occurs when leaders intervene to make some correction and generally involves corrective criticism.

The high rated school have a strong culture profile according to their school principals' opinion dominated by the clan type of culture, and market culture, and less intensive the hierarchy culture and adhocracy culture. This means that if you want your school to be highly rated the school principal should begin the process of changing the culture of the school. This is a complex process and usually takes 2-5 years of sustained efforts and always needs the intervention of an external consultant and a strong motivation of the school principal and of several teachers to do it and be successful in the endeavour. There are also several others factors internal and external which can facilitate or prevent it from happening.

The low rated schools have a weak culture profile dominated by the clan culture, by the hierarchy type of culture and by the market type of culture, while the adhocracy culture is much less important. This cultural profile is characteristic to traditional culture of the Arab community and to the traditional way of administrating public schools, and it is still in used in the educational sector in Arab countries.

The major gaps between the two groups of schools according to their rating are the following. The first, the greatest gap (0,45) is about the adhocracy type of culture, in favour of the high performing schools. This means that the higher the score for the adhocracy type, the higher the rating of the school is. The second gap (+0,41) is about the market type of culture, also in favor of the high performing schools. This means that the higher is the score for the market type of the school culture, the higher the rating of the school is. The third important gap, (-0,42) is about the hierarchy type of culture, this time the gap is negative for the high performing schools. This means that the lower the score is for hierarchy type of culture, the higher the rate of the school is.

5. Recommendations

The first recommendations is to support school principals of low rated schools to plan for the change of their school culture from the current mix of culture towards the cultural profile of the school which exists currently in high rate Arab

high schools. This requires the support of specialists consultants in organizational culture development and change management, and additional financial resources and support of the school principal and the important stakeholders such as the school inspector, the parents council, the teachers and even the students. Previous experiences indicate that this process is a difficult one, taking about two years of intense and dedicated effort from all the involved parties. However, organized and implemented in a professional manner, it could be successful and would lead finally to highly improved teaching processes in the school, to an increase of teachers motivation and job satisfaction and to higher students' academic results.

Second recommendation is to involve all stakeholders of the school (school principal, teachers, administrative staff, parents, actors from the school environment such as school inspectors, local authorities, religious leaders) in the development and construction of a school culture supporting the academic achievement of students. Third, school inspectors should hold workshops and educational days for principals and teachers in both schools with high rate and schools with low rate, as this helps in providing school principals with tools that help them to achieve better results with students and with the school team.

Another recommendation is to promote schools with school principals using an effective mix of leadership styles and roles at the local and at the district level, as this play a major role in encouraging other school principals to do the same. The fifth recommendation is to encourage the participation of teachers from schools in the Haifa district in the "Guests and Hosts" program, which is held every year by the Israeli Ministry of Education. Related to the previous recommendation is to ensure the possibility of hosting secondary schools in the Jewish community, too.

6. Conclusion

The article focuses on the importance of having a right mix of leadership style of the school principal harmonized with the school culture, in the case of Arab high schools from the Haifa district. It described such a mix in the case of high academic achievement rate schools and low rate schools, formulating several recommendations to improve the academic results of their students.

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