

PLANNING EDUCATIONAL POLICY: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL PRINCIPAL TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

Nations throughout the world continue to examine how to improve their system of education in terms of improving student achievement, so that each student has the opportunity to be a productive and successful member of the global society. For this to occur, each school must be successful in the development of high quality teaching and learning. School leadership is a critical component, since the principal has tremendous influence in transforming the culture by influencing, inspiring, challenging, and motivating teachers to continuously grow and improve. The goal of this study was to examine the teacher perceptions of the transformational leadership skills of school principals, according to the teachers' school level and setting, in both Israel and the United States. The study includes 615 Israeli teachers and 514 American teachers (n= 1,129). Results indicate that Israel teachers perceive transformational leadership of their principals significantly higher than teachers in the United States, particularly with the relationship between the level of the school and the transformational abilities of the principal. The findings may be explained by different culture perceptions of power distance, individualism, and masculinity. The results may help to plan policy in support of transformational leadership in terms comparative studies need to take into consideration the differences in culture as well as current policy regarding the degree of standardized testing, and its impact on how a principal leads the school.

INTRODUCTION

Planning is unavoidable process for linking organizational goals and outcomes with organizational means. Classical management theory construes planning as an executive function, reserved primarily for those upper-level managers with the most complete view of the organization as a whole. In school districts, planning has typically been viewed as a function of the up-level of educational administration (Howley et al., 2007).

Leadership continues to be a focus of researchers and policy-makers in the quest to understand how schools throughout the world can become more effective and successful in terms of the quality of both teaching and student learning (Hallinger, 2001; Marzano, et al, 2005;). This focus is the result of the dramatic increase in reform movements within the educational systems found in nations around the world (Bell, Bolam, & Cubillo, 2003; Muijs, 2007). Subsequently, a convergence of scholarship and interest has developed that seeks to transform structures, roles, and the core of effective school leadership, including but not limited to preparation for aspiring school leaders as well as continuous professional development and learning for current school leaders (Johnson, Moller, Jacobson & Wong, 2008; Whitaker, 2002; Zagorsek, Jaklic & Stough, 2004;).

Planning in the educational environment is often thought of in terms of strategic planning, school improvement planning, planning for teacher professional development, curriculum planning, and related practices. In terms of planning for the support for aspiring and

current school leaders is, more times than no, viewed as a secondary not primary focus for policy-makers (Grogan & Andrews, 2002; Su, Gamage, & Mininberg, 2003). This has occurred, despite the strong suggestion that school leaders, second only to teachers, have a significant impact on improving student achievement (Marzano, et al, 2005). While teachers may impact individual and small groups of students (including class of students), the overall success of all students in a school can be the result of the leadership provided by the school principal. Effective principals focus their leadership and managerial efforts to support both teacher effectiveness in terms of curriculum, instruction and assessment, which in turn, supports improvement in student achievement.

From a global perspective, early efforts in determining the relationship between effective school leadership and overall school improvement were originally found in North America, particularly the United States and Canada. But, over the past several decades, the interest in effective school leadership has emerged in Europe, Asia, and parts of the Middle East (Walker & Ko, 2011, Whitaker, 2002.). It was during the last decade of the twentieth century that a new interest developed around the world in comparative educational practice and results including the concept of effective school leadership practice.

The internationalization of educational policies and practices has developed as nations have begun to observe common challenges within their educational systems. Scholars and policymakers focusing on school leadership from around the world have fostered international learning networks. An example of such a collaboration is The International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP), which has focused its research and support of leadership practices and models in eight nations: Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, England, Norway, United States, and Sweden (Johnson, Moller, Jacobson & Wong, 2008).

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) recognized not only the relationship of high quality education to a nation's economic growth and development, but the critical nature school leadership plays (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008). In addition, there have been numerous initiatives to develop comparative and global studies in school leadership, including comparative models of leadership based upon cross-cultural inquiry (Dimmock & Walker, 2000).

For several decades, the role of the school principal has been examined and documented by scholars and policymakers throughout the world. Once considered the prime role to be the manager of the school, the concept of the school principal has evolved into that of the instructional leader who is collaborative and transformational (Blasé & Blasé, 2000). Yet, as more research is completed in this area, there appears to be a tendency to look *the* model of how a successful principal leads. From this, the contention is that, whatever is found, can be "plugged into" any school in any area.

As much as it is known that successful principals can be found in all countries, until recently, relatively little investigation has occurred as to how such success is determined, how these principals become successful, and how such success is sustained over time, particular where cultures and political as well as economic systems are different as well. In order to examine this more deeply, researchers need to look more outward and less inward, moving beyond geographical and intellectual borders to seek answers to these issues, in a more global manner than previously studied.

The purpose of this study is to examine the similarities and differences between school principals in Israel and the United States, based upon their teachers' perceptions in terms of

principal's ability to be transformational in their leadership. Based upon the findings, recommendations will be provided in terms of policy and professional for both current and aspiring school leaders, not only in Israel and the United States.

In addition, this study will provide a cross-cultural perspective of school leadership that will (1) deepen the understanding of American and Israeli school leadership; (2) provide a comparative context of practices of school leadership in Israel and the United States; (3) provide evidence from the data collected that can serve as a reference for future policy development for current and aspiring school leaders in Israel and the United States; (4) continue the global dialogue on the critical nature of school leadership in the 21st century.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Leadership

Transformational leadership is concerned with influencing followers in terms of their motives, needs and wants, behaviors and long-term goals. Conceptually developed by Burns (1978), transformational leadership is the opposite of transactional leadership. In transformational leadership, the leader engages with followers, creating a relationship that involves morality, motivation, individualization, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and intrinsic motivation. This is in sharp contrast to transactional leadership, which emphasizes exchanges between leader and follower, often in terms of rewards and sanctions, benefits, power and extrinsic motivational tools.

Among those who continued the work with transformational leadership included Bennis and Nanus (1985), who posited that transformational leaders had attributes focusing on have a clear vision of the future state of the organization, they were social architects in which shared values, norms and meanings were developed through thoughtful and purposeful conversations and reflection. Transformational leaders, according to Bennis and Nanus, also emphasize, model and create trust between leaders and followers, allowing for everyone within the organization to communicate and collaborate with integrity and a strong sense of self.

Kouzes and Posner (2012) developed a transformational leadership model, based upon their research that includes thousands of managers and followers from around the world. Subsequently, their model has been used extensively in leadership within government, the private sector and education as well. This model consists of five leadership practices (or behaviors) that empower leaders to accomplish remarkable outcomes that may not have been able to accomplish otherwise. Based upon the relationship that the leader develops with followers, these five practices provide a means to transform both individuals as well as groups within an organization.

- *Model the Way*-effective leaders are clear about their own personal values and beliefs, and consistently act on such by following through on promises and commitments as well. In addition, they encourage followers to do the same, and additionally, help to create an organization that has shared values, beliefs, and actions.
- *Inspire a Shared Vision*-exemplary leaders help others to see what individuals and groups can become, at a place that they have never experienced before. Such a vision is not only what the leader believes, but what the collective aspirations of everyone include.
- *Challenge the Process*-effective leaders encourage themselves and followers to innovate, improve, try new ideas and improve in an environment that allows individuals to take risks, reflect, share, and continue. Trying new things becomes the norm within the organization, not the exception.
- *Enable Others to Act*-working with followers is a critical component of this model, including building trust, treating others with dignity, respect, and with love. In addition, the leader

allows others to make choices and decisions, supports such actions, and is constantly looking for ways to support and provide appropriate resources that will help followers to be successful, both individually and collectively.

- *Encourage the Heart*-within organizations, people want to be supported and recognized for their efforts. The effective leader provides this in a manner that is consistent with the values, beliefs, mission and vision of the organization, through rituals, ceremonies and celebrations.

To measure these practices and behaviors, Kouzes and Posner (2001) created the *Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)*, which is both a self-assessment as well as observational assessment (followers) of exemplary leadership. The instrument contains 30 items, with each of the five practices having six statements for the rater (s) to assess, according to a Likert scale. The instrument has been used extensively in leadership development and preparation, including school leadership.

Cross-Cultural Leadership

For more than half a century, a proliferation of globalization has occurred throughout the world in which nations of the world have become more involved and to a certain degree, dependent upon the trading of social, economic, political, technical and scholarly ideas. Globalization is the result of rapid changes that occur concurrently throughout the world. Each of these areas interact with one another, causing a stream of ideas, knowledge and ideas to pass through national boundaries around the world (Stiglitz, 2002; Friedman, 2005).

While some may perceive the concept of globalization from a purely economic perspective, education around the world has been influenced as well. For scholars, practitioners and policymakers, education has always been a critical component of a nation's economic and social well-being. And, over the past several decades, there has been a significant increase in reforming education to meet the demands of the 21st century and beyond, as governments are faced with many issues in response to higher expectations in education, particularly in terms of improving achievement for all students. Thus, in an attempt to meet such demands, many nations of the world have been and continue to develop collaborative efforts and networks to share best practices and innovations in education, as well as to work together to help solve common educational problems. Dimmock and Walker (2000) and House and Javidan (2004) suggest that there exists an urgent need to learn about leadership, including school leadership, from across nations and cultures.

In terms of culture, Dimmock and Walker (2000) define culture in terms of the enduring set of beliefs, values, actions, norms and structures that separates one group of people from another. Hofstede argues that culture is “the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others” (p. 22). In addition, Hofstede (2014) proposes that there are six dimensions by which cultures can be compared:

- *Power Distance*-the degree within a culture that inequalities exists among the people.
- *Individualism*-the degree of interdependence that members of the culture experience.
- *Masculinity*-the degree by which a culture is influence by traditional “masculine” traits of being competitive, achievement-oriented, success, and hierarchical relationships based on gender roles.
- *Uncertainty Avoidance*-the degree by which members of a culture attempt to understand and influence the future or just let it unfold naturally.
- *Long-Term Orientation*-the degree to which members of a culture attempt to retain an association with their history in terms of dealing with current challenges.

- *Indulgence*-the degree to which people within a culture try to control their desires, needs and wants, based upon the way in which such members are reared and educated.
- According to Hofstede, individual country scores can be correlated and positioned relative to other countries. The data suggests there are significant differences between the cultures of Israel and the United States, particularly in the dimensions of *Power Distance*, *Individualism* and *Uncertainty Avoidance*. Of note,
- In terms of *Power Distance*, people in Israel tend to feel that there is less inequality in terms of government, power and access to such by the people than in the United States, although the United States has a relatively low rating of 40.
- In Israel, the sense of *Individualism* is rather moderate and much lower than that of the United States, which has a very high rating. This suggests that in Israel, there appears to be a stronger sense of commitment to a “we” consciousness and belonging to a greater good, than in the United States.
- For the domain of *Uncertainty Avoidance*, people in Israel are much more likely to perceive that they suffer from higher stress, anxiety and a continuous threat on their way of life, while people in the United States are less likely to be more tolerant for life’s ambiguities and stresses.

Such studies suggest that leadership practice can not only be influenced by culture, but demonstrate that “the cultural element is not only necessary but essential in the study of leadership” (Cheng, 1995, p. 99). Within the specific domain of culture and leadership, House, & Javidan (2004) provide substantial research in this area, which are referred to as the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) research project (2004).

Culture has a direct impact on how leaders lead and influence followers. This is true not only in the halls of government, but in all organizations-including schools-within a culture. Differences in beliefs, values, norms, and power have a significant impact on the leader-follower relationship. Yet, at the same time as globalization continues to occur, there is much interest in identifying leadership constructs that are considered good across cultures-perhaps a universal concept of what leadership, particularly in schools, means and how it can be better understood, practices and measured.

CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study compares the leadership behaviors of principals in Israel and the United States, and the following provides a contextual framework and comparison of the two nations, in general terms of each nation’s educational system, and more specifically, school leadership. The context in which this study occurs is framed within the educational systems of Israel and the United States. Although having vastly different histories, these two nations have many similarities today, including social, economic, leadership and the expressed desire to have a high quality and free public education for all. In this study we decided to conduct a cross-cultural comparison by investigating transformational leadership in order to expose to global trends regarding the impact of educational planning factors such as school level and school setting.

Education and School Leadership in Israel.

The Israeli educational system is very centralized and is controlled by the Ministry of Education (Tubin, 2011). The Israeli educational system reflects the divisions of its different populations, including ethnically heterogeneous immigrants, and is divided into the Hebrew (nonreligious public schools, religious public schools and ultra-orthodox independent schools) and Arab school systems (public schools and private parochial Christian schools). After six years in

elementary school, most Israeli students enter junior high school (grades 7–9), followed by high school (grades 10–12). Students finishing junior high school can choose between the academic track, which prepares them for academic studies, and the vocational track, which usually caters to scholastically weaker students who have not done well in junior high school. Both tracks prepare students for the matriculation examinations required for higher education; however, acceptance rates to higher education are much higher for students in the academic track (Ayalon & Shavit, 2004).

Israeli education is severely underfunded. Israeli expenditure for education per student, as measured by the purchasing power parity, is low compared to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) mean, resulting in classes that are larger and teachers that are paid less than in the OECD average (OECD, 2015). The latter factors may explain why Israeli school principals often complain that it is difficult for them to maintain an effective and orderly learning environment. In most Israeli schools, classes are typically very large and noisy, and the disciplinary sanctions that teachers can legally employ are limited (Almog, 2004).

From 1948, with the establishment of the State of Israel, the role of the Israeli principal has remained basically the same, and is composed of teaching hours with the addition of management hours (Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, 2015). The role definition is unclear, and is charged with responsibility without adequate authority. The principal population comprises 57% women,

Fifty percent are over the age of fifty, and 90% hold at least one academic degree (Worgen, 2006), with about 7.5% annual turnover. Since 2007 a radical change has occurred, with the establishment of a national center for principal training and professional development, which took upon itself the mission of improving the Israeli educational system through the activation of school principals as a leading professional community (Avney Rosh), and students' standardized testing (RAMA). Israeli Ministry of education require principals to have a Master's degree (in any research field) and specialized training in school leadership (for one year). A teacher who wants to become a principal must have a valid teaching certificate, and minimum of five years teaching.

Education and School Leadership in the United States.

The educational system within the United States, until the last half-century, had been within the domain of state and local governments with little, if any support from the federal government. It was not until the 1960s, with the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1965) and subsequent other civil rights legislation, that the federal government became more involved. Over the next four decades, calls for more accountability, better teaching, and improved student achievement led to much debate and research into how best to improve the schools in America. In 2003, Congress passed the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*, which resulted in dramatic and unprecedented federal involvement in education, and included higher levels of accountability, increased standardized testing, school choice as well as sweeping reforms aimed at improving teaching, professional development, and school leadership (Ravitch, 2011). *Race to the Top* (2009) supplemented NCLB and, most recently, *Every Student Succeeds Act* (2015) supplanted NCLB.

In terms of school leadership, each of the fifty states has their own educational system, which is controlled by the state educational agency, and overseen at the local level by a board of education. While the state is responsible for curriculum, assessment, and funding, it is also in charge of certification of teachers and administrators, including school principals. Most frequently, states require principals to have a Master's degree and specialized training in school leadership. Generally speaking, an educator who wants to become a principal must have a valid teaching certificate, a minimum number of years in teaching, a Master's degree in education,

successful completion of a school leadership program at the university level, and an administrative certificate issued by the state. Certification among states is not automatically reciprocal.

Teacher Perceptions

Perceptions are the way people organize and interpret their sensory input, or what they see and hear, and call it reality. Perceptions give meaning to a person's environment and make sense of the world, and are important because people's behaviors are based on their perception of what reality is (Williams, 2000). Based on Azen (2012), teachers' perceptions lead to their behaviors such as organizational citizenship behavior and organizational misbehavior. Researchers have suggested that teacher perceptions of the school leader can be a critical factor in the success of a school, including the principal's ability to lead (Williams, 2000). Through their daily interactions with teachers, the school leader reinforces the desired values, norms, behaviors, and expectations, and teachers can develop their own personal reality of how effective the principal is (Keiser & Shen, 2000).

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a comparative perspective regarding educational policy and planning. Therefore, comparing between the United States and Israel regarding factors such as school level, location and that educational policy and planning is a critical component of planning and managing changes and training school principals and teachers. The researchers focus on school level based on previous studies indicating that teachers' perceptions may be affected by their school level and location (Litchka, 2015). Thus following analyses describing the relationships between these important factors (school level, location) and transformational leadership, which may affect the educational planning and policy.

Data Collection

First, the researchers examined the questionnaires, how the questionnaires may be similar in each country, including translation issues. School roles in Israel can be different than in the US. For example, 'educator' in Israel is a teacher that, in addition to teaching the class, has the role to mediate between teachers, parents, and students, and is also responsible to the overall class instruction, discipline problems, and the content of the subject.

In addition, the researchers examined how to translate the leadership questionnaires into Hebrew, by sending the questionnaire to 25 Israeli teachers. Each teacher translated the questionnaire to Hebrew, and the Israeli researcher met these teachers, and based on these translations, decided upon the final wording of the questionnaire. Then, for each country, the questionnaire was uploaded in the relevant language.

After getting the confirmation of the ethics committees (Institutional Review Board) from the respective universities, the questionnaires were sent via email to schools and districts through Israel and within the state of Maryland (US), which were similar in size and population.

Participant Demographics

A total of 1,129 teachers from both Israel and the United States (Maryland) participated in the survey, 568 from the United States and 541 from Israel. The percentage of teachers participating from both countries was relatively similar in terms of gender, both being representative of the teacher gender demographics found in each country (Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, 2015; NCES, 2012) with more than three-fourths of the teachers from both countries reporting themselves as female.

As shown in Table 1, more than seventy percent of the teachers from Israel reported that they taught in urban settings, while less than twenty-five percent of teachers from the United States reported teaching in an urban setting. Almost two-thirds of American teachers reported

their school location as being suburban, as opposed to almost twenty-percent of Israeli teachers indicated a suburban location.

Table 1
School Location of Participating Teachers

	Israel	United States
Urban	436 (71.4%)	122 (22.6%)
Suburban	120 (19.7%)	357 (66.1%)
Rural	55 (9.0%)	62 (11.5%)
Total	611(100.0%)	541 (100.0%)

Teachers in the study were asked to report the grade level in which they current teach. The choice was Elementary, Middle, and High School. As shown in Table 2, almost two-thirds of Israeli teachers reported that they were elementary teachers, as opposed to teachers in the United States, which were relatively equal in their reporting of the level at which they teach. The data collected from the United States is not reflective of the overall proportions of teachers at each level (NCES, 2014).

Table 2
School Level for Participating Teachers

	Israel	United States
Elementary	388 (65.2%)	205 (36.1%)
Middle	126 (21.2%)	192 (33.8%)
High School	81 (13.6%)	171(30.1%)
Total	595 (100.0%)	568 (100.0%)

Data Presentation

From the survey instrument, mean scores were tabulated to determine the extent to which teachers in both countries felt their principals displayed transformational leadership abilities, compiling an overall mean for all thirty items. As shown in Table 3, Israeli teachers rated their principals higher than teachers in the United States. In comparing transformational leadership between U.S. and Israel, the researchers found that Israeli teachers' perceptions were significantly higher than American teachers their schools' principals ($t=12.24, p=.001$).

Table 3
Transformational Leadership Perceptions by All Participating Teachers-Mean (SD)

	Israel (n=611)	United States (n=541)
All Teachers	4.17 (.67)	3.54 (.95)

As shown in Table 4, teachers in Israel showed higher perceptions of their principal's leadership in comparison to teachers in the United States. However, these differences were not found to be statistically significant between the different locations in both Israel and the United States as it relates to teacher perceptions of transformational leadership.

Table 4

Transformational Leadership Perceptions by Participating Teachers According to School Location- Mean (SD)

	Israel	United States
Urban	4.16 (.68) n=436 (71.4%)	3.61 (.76) n=122 (22.6%)
Suburban	4.14 (.67) n=120 (19.7%)	3.58 (.84) n=357 (66.1%)
Rural	4.30 (.39) n=55 (9.0%)	3.61 (.93) n=62 (11.5%)
All Teachers	4.17 (0.67) n=611 (100.0%)	3.54 (.95) n=541 (100.0%)

As shown in Table 5, significant differences were found between the different school levels in both Israel and the United States as it relates to teacher perceptions of transformational leadership, according to the level of the school in which the teacher worked. These differences were found to be statistically significant ($t=14.31, p=.01$).

Table 5

Transformational Leadership Perceptions by Participating Teachers According to School Level- Mean (SD)

	Israel	United States
Elementary	4.25 (.63) n=388 (65.2%)	3.57 (.86) n=205 (36.1%)
Middle	4.07 (.65) n=126 (21.2%)	3.73 (.87) n=192 (33.8%)
High School	3.92 (.80) n=81(13.6%)	3.54 (.83) n=171 (30.1%)
All Teachers	4.17 (.67) n=595 (100.0%)	3.54 (.95) n=568 (100.0%)

Based upon a Two-Way ANOVA, the researchers examined the effect of school level (elementary, secondary/middle, high school) and location (urban, suburban, and rural) on the teachers' perceptions of their principal's transformational leadership abilities, and whether there existed significant difference between the two countries. As shown in Table 6, the interactions, based upon school level and country, were found to be statistically significant, at each school level.

Table 6

The Effect of School Level and Country by Teacher Perception of Principal's Transformational Leadership.

	F	df	p^*
School Level	4.48	2	.012
Country	87.23	1	.001
Interaction	5.65	2	.004

*significant at $<.05$

DISCUSSION

The data suggested, that overall, the principals of schools in Israel were perceived to be more transformational by teachers than the principals in the United States, particularly in terms of school location (urban, suburban, and rural) and school levels (elementary, middle, high school). Such results are similar to two previous studies conducted in Turkey (Babaoglan & Litchka, 2010) and Poland (Litchka, 2015) by one of the authors. Specifically, in the former study, teachers from Turkey perceived the leadership abilities of their principals at a higher in three of the five behaviors found in the instrument (*Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision and Enable Others to Act*, with significant differences were found in in the domain of *Model the Way*). In the former study, similar results were found, as teachers once again rated their principals significantly higher in each of the five domains.

With three studies completed, the question that needs to be addressed from the perspective of planners, policy-makers and practitioners, is why teachers in the United States consistently perceive the leadership abilities of their principals at significantly lower levels than Turkey, Poland and the United States.

Concerns about increased accountability as a result of federal and state mandates have placed leaders in American schools in a precarious situation as they not only must carry out such mandates and ensure all students succeed, but bear the brunt of the blame if students are not successful. Across America, this generation of school principals may leave their training and understanding of transformational leaders aside in order to be the manager of testing. One could surmise that teachers see this type of structured leadership (and structured teaching) from a negative perspective.

In 2012, the job satisfaction of principals in the United States dropped nine percentage points in four years and it is at its lowest point since 2001. In the same period, teacher satisfaction had dropped 23 percentage points, including a five-point decrease in 2012. This is the lowest level it has been in 25 years. Furthermore, principals and teachers who self-reported low job satisfaction report much higher levels of stress and less likely to be working in schools where professional development for both teachers and principals are less likely to occur.

Principals and teachers with low job satisfaction report higher levels of stress than do other educators and are more likely to work in high-needs schools. Less satisfied principals are more likely to find it challenging to maintain an academically rigorous environment and an adequate supply of effective teachers in their schools, while less satisfied teachers are more likely to be working in schools where budgets and time for professional development and collaboration have decreased in the last 12 months. The subjective and often inflexible demands of the accountability system in the United States has caused a generation of school leaders to become embittered, uncomfortable and unable to lead in a manner that is more transformational and less transactional.

Moreover, the findings that found Israel teachers perceiving their principals' transformational leadership significantly higher than American teachers based upon the different cultures between the two countries. In general, transformational leadership is defined as a relationship between leader and follower in which the leader intellectually stimulates subordinates and pays special attention to each follower's individual needs. According to the Hofstede Center (2014), Israel is very in *Power Distance* (10 points), compared to the United States (40 points).

Considering school context, Israeli schools have a more informal climate, with more direct and collaborative communication between the principal and teachers. In addition, Israel is also low in *Individualism* (54 points) in comparison with the United States (91 points). From the

perspective of Israel, principals and teachers are more likely to be more caring and have unquestioned loyalty to others, based upon the collectivist societal foundation and emphasis on extended families found in Israel.

In terms of *Masculinity* a culture is influence by traditional “masculine” traits), the United States was higher (62 points) than Israel (47), which may be a reason for the more competitive nature of school principals in the United States, due to increased accountability, leading to more transactional leadership and less transformational leadership, as perceived by their teachers.

The findings also indicate that as the school level increase (elementary to middle/secondary to high school), teachers’ perceptions of the transformational leadership of their principals decreases in both Israel and the United States. Thus, it may be that because schools generally become larger as they move from one level to another, there may exist more layers of administration between the principal and the teachers.

CONCLUSIONS

This study of the differences across two countries hints at how teachers in Israel and the United States perceive the extent in which their principals provide transformational leadership in their schools.

The school leadership behaviors of these principals are likely to vary across cultures. To understand these differences, we must go beyond the results of the questionnaires and look at the experiences of both the teachers and why they perceive their principal in the way they do, as well as the principals’ own perceptions. What values do they express and what type of school leadership practices succeed in each context? How do school principals within each culture understand leadership? How do teachers within each culture understand leadership? Future research should look at the stories of both the teachers and their principals in order to more deeply understand school leadership within this context.

We argue that educational leadership as a field of study and research as failed to keep pace with the current internationalizing and globalization of policy and practice. While nations that have common borders (i.e., Canada and the United States) might be more inclined to share planning and professional development for school leadership, it is less likely that this occurs when nations are separated by geographic barriers and significant cultural differences. We contend that a focus on culture as an analytical concept promises robust comparisons of school leadership across different – geo-cultural areas. Such cross-cultural comparisons can embrace a wider than narrower perspective, incorporating school leadership, teaching and learning in a more holistic manner.

Even with knowledge and experience, as well as an awareness of one’s own and other’s needs within the school context, it is still possible to have a relatively parochial perspective for teachers and principals to look primarily through the lens of one’s own county and its culture. It is easy to forget that there are huge populations of children and young people being educated throughout the world in continents and countries which have very different culture and traditions of school leadership (Hofstede Center , 2014).

Nevertheless, there are a number of features of successful school principals’ leadership behaviors which may, with justification, be said to cross most borders. While policy, staffing and student composition contexts affect the work of all school principals, it seems that those who achieve and sustain success actively and lead in ways which enable all staff in their schools to

raise rather than dampen their aspirations of themselves and for whom those they lead. They ensure that students leave their schools with a broader rather than narrower understanding of themselves and the world within their country and beyond. This can also be said of the way in which the principal leads their teachers, in terms of modeling appropriate values, inspiring a shared vision for teachers, challenging the status quo, enabling teachers to act and grow, and recognizing teacher accomplishments. In short, what being a successful principal really means is to have a passion for teaching and learning-for both teachers and students-which is articulated and communicated through structures, school culture, relationships, and norms. The transformational principal, particularly with teachers, will continuously inspire and influence teachers, both on an individual as well as collective based, in a manner that stimulates intellectual and professional growth.

This study indicates potential benefits for participants in international professional dialogue, regardless of cultural differences. Policy-makers, scholars and school district leaders must include this as an integral part of planning for the professional development of both current and aspiring leaders, including but not limited to how school principals may come to (re)consider how they learn and lead.

There are three implications of the study for planning for leadership development. First, school leaders should engage in ongoing professional networks that extend beyond their own culture so they can understand themselves in relation to the larger world. Second, in planning for such leadership development, it is critical to have both the principals *and* the teachers as part of this conversation, for as has been mentioned, principals and teachers may have different perceptions of the leadership skills of said principal. Finally, in terms of cross-cultural professional development-particularly in North America-the question of “What can we teach them?” be replaced by “What can we learn from them?”

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