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ABSTRACT
              One definition of an educational leader is a
professional and pragmatic person capable of setting a direction and
goals for his or her school. Another definition of the educational
leader is a social and moral agent. This second definition supports
the idea that schools should be communities with shared moral and
social values and highlights the importance of the principal in
setting these guidelines. In furthering internal change in schools,
principals also oversee the school bureaucracy and structure and
encourage those leading to change. The traditional ways of acquiring
leadership skills may be insufficient for all leadership tasks. This
study examines the attitudes of educational leaders toward their
changing role using the Israeli educational system as a model.
Educational leaders who graduated from the educational administration
program at Tel Aviv University were issued a questionnaire. The
respondents viewed professional knowledge and skills as more valuable
in developing leadership than the moral-social aspects of their role.
A significant correlation was also found between the scale of
professional orientation and social-moral leadership orientations.
Respondents with a higher academic degree who prefer administration
to teaching have a more positive orientation toward professional
knowledge and skills than do other respondents. (Contains 13
references.) (JPT)

# EDUCATIONAL LEADERS: PROFESSIONALS OR MORAL-SOCIAL AGENTS

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A preliminary version

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# EDUCATIONAL LEADERS: PROFESSIONALS OR MORAL-SOCIAL AGENTS

## A. The Complex Roles of Educational Leaders

Two contrasting images of leadership have been set forth for effective schools (Greenfield, 1987). One dominant view draws a portrait of the effective leader as a professional, pragmatic person with the necessary "intellectual abilities to ascertain appropriate goals for the school, to review possible alternatives, to weight consequences, and to select appropriate solutions" (Burlingame, 1987, p. 4). In Israel, as well as in the US, leaders are being trained by an ongoing process of raising the academic level of educational leaders in what has been termed the "era of Professionalization" (Murphy, 1992).

More recently, effective leaders are being portrayed as social and moral agents (Murphy, 1992). Leaders should develop schools into "living places that fit children" (p. 130), schools that are central in developing the social needs facing children in the turbulent, troubled world of today. This image of leadership suggests that leaders and their schools should be guided by a set of moral values and beliefs (Spaedy, 1990). "With values guiding decision making at the school site, we should expect increased equity, empowerment, and professional development of teachers" (Marshall, 1992, p. 382).

The notion that schools should be vibrant communities with shared values and ideologies also highlights the importance of the principal's role as a value-oriented leader (Sergiovanni, 1992; Driscoll, 1992). In such schools, principals are often charged with creating a collective culture, with widespread consensus among parents, teachers, and students. In such schools, values, ideology, and belief systems are integral parts of daily routines. Rebore (1982) suggests, for example, that the most important selection criterion for elementary school personnel is the educational philosophy of the applicant. Namely: are the educational ideas and values of the applicant compatible with the district's policies and curriculum? The educational philosophy itself is as important as all other criteria, like academic preparation, past teaching experience or personal characteristics and behaviors, put together.

The contrasting images of professional school principalship and social-moral leadership are associated with contrasting approaches to the goals of education, and subsequently, to school organization and their ties with their constituencies.

Studies of dynamic schools indicate two main directions of school change; one is internally and the other is externally directed. The internal direction of change is towards innovations and improvements of the school setting as a closed organization. In some schools that specialize in internal innovations, several changes are frequently evident at the same time. They are usually introduced by the principals who view the school as a well coordinated organization with strong ties among all its units. They facilitate the participations of the professional community in making decision, mobilizing resources, measuring accountability, and recruiting and retaining teachers and students (Goldring & Rallis, 1993).

As a facilitator of internal change, the school principal is placed at the head of a semi-professional bureaucracy. He/she is supposed to exercise several traditional bureaucratic mechanisms, like the employment of strict hierarchical referral and supervision procedures, frequent use of rules and procedures, management by detailed plans and schedules, the establishment of information systems, etc., in order to enhance instructional and organizational effectiveness, effective manipulation of the bureaucratic mechanisms of the school organization and organizational innovations and their institutionalization by manipulating available resources or options. They empower those teachers and staff members who are in charge of the change program, and collaborate with the school administration (Chen & Goldring, 1992).

Another direction of change is the spanning and crossing of the boundaries that separate the school from the communities they serve. Schools are internally changed in order to alter their external boundaries and to enhance their interactions with their constituencies. There is a constant effort by the principal and the leadership of dynamic schools to include parents and this depends, to a great extent, on the academic training and professional experience of the school principal. For example, four scheduling and planning mechanisms are in the hands of the school principal: 1) daily, weekly and annual scheduling, 2) allocation of students to classrooms, 3) budgeting, and 4) structuring the school curriculum. All these mechanisms

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influence significantly, the teachers' work habits, attitudes and morale, as well as students' learning and behavior (Firestone & Wilson, 1986).

Effective application of these mechanisms require proper understanding of psychological, sociological, economic, administrative and legal consideration, which are usually acquired at the university.

The professional aspects of the bureaucratic component of the principal's role led to the convention that school administration is an application of the social sciences, and that it should be granted professional legitimacy through academic training, a university degree and an alliance with the scholars and practitioners of organizational behavior (Cooper & Boyd, 1981).

Academic legitimacy and practice rely on credits, classroom learning, mastery of current program content and compliance with the academic traditions. However, mastery of the academic part the of the principal's role seems to be a necessary, but insufficient requirement for effective school leadership. Different kinds of leadership is needed both within the schools sites' community and outside of the school walls, of the community at large.

Some important tasks of the school principals require much more than applications of theoretical concepts to the realities of the daily life in school They require influential leadership and proficiency in interpersonal relationships. Principals have to transform their authority into a friendly persuasion in order to work directly on the consciousness of the teachers, the staff and the students. They have to convince them to adapt their attitudes and behaviors to the school culture and to be part of the school community. It is the mission of the principal to encourage teachers to be committed to their tasks. "Commitment refers to the individual's willingness to devote energy and loyalty to the organization and the attachment of that person to the organization" (Firestone & Wilson, 1986, p. 280). Furthermore, the principal has to convince his constituency and the parents of the students that some definitions, approaches and techniques of teaching are more appropriate and some accomplishments are more relevant than others. The moral and social leadership of the school site's principal is transformed into a much more complex role, with the spanning of the school boundaries into the wider community. The need for principals of dynamic schools to focus on external relationship and to be productively engaged in managing the environment is critical. They have

to cooperation with parents and community leaders, to define new programs of study for the school and to convince the community to support and finance them. They have to "take control of their environment through organizational redesign inside the school and strategic maneuvering of the environment" (Goldring & Rallis, 1993, p. 77).

As flag-bearers, principals have to act not only as professional experts, but also as political leaders who are able to convince and mobilize their constituencies to accept their educational point of view, and to be committed to their educational policy and practice.

### Conflicting Perspectives of Principalship in Israel

It would appear that many school leaders are well aware of the conflicting demands of the principal's role in dynamic schools. Principals know that they are expected to be social agents, moral educators, and professional leaders (Murphy, 1992). In the changing context of restructuring, "school leaders will have to adjust their own definition of what it means to be a school leader" (Hallinger, 1990, p. 76).

The purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes of educational leaders themselves to the evolving nature of their role. It explores the views of educational administrators on the importance of professional skills and knowledge compared to social, moral, and ideological values as the basis for effective leadership. Specifically, two research questions are addressed: 1) What is the relative importance that educational leaders place on the professional and social-moral aspects of leadership? and, 2) What aspects of the leaders' role may impact their views of the importance of the two orientations of leadership?

The context for this study is the educational system in Israel which is undergoing a rapid process of decentralization in an effort to transform schools to be more response to their local communities. Schools are increasingly more autonomous, and more directed towards academic achievements and occupational mobility, but are still considered part of the social-moral agenda of several religious and political segments of society.

The Israeli educational system is officially divided into five separate organizational systems according to their value orientation (Chen, 1993). First of all there is clear distinction between Hebrew education (about 80% of the student body) and Arabic education. The

linguistic difference is just an indication of far-reaching differences in nationality, religion, SES, place of residence and many others among the two antagonist sectors of the population groups. The Hebrew (Jewish) educational system is further divided into an orthodox sector (about 9% of Hebrew education), the national religious sector (about 22%), and state education (69%), which is further divided into Kibbutz education (ideological cooperative settlements) and urban education. Each educational sector aims at providing its graduates with general education and occupational opportunities on the one hand, and promotes loyalty and identification with its sector on the other.

Each educational sector employs a distinctive body of supervisors, administrators, teachers and staff, separately education and trained according to a particular curriculum, which fits the sector's point of view. In practice, all seminars and teachers' colleges are affiliated to one of the political/ideological sectors of society. For many years, the loyalty of school principals to their sector served as the main criterion for their selection and appointment. Only in 1983, the Ministry of Education issued a regulation that only holders of a university degree or diploma in educational administration are entitled to be appointed as school principals. In recent years there has been increased emphasis on the professional development of school leaders; principals are expected to master a body of knowledge and skills through academic training programs to become professional leaders and managers.

The directors of change in patterns of recruiting school principals in Israel appears to be very different from those in the USA. While Israel experiences a change from perceiving the principal as a moral-social leader into a professional expert, the USA educational system moves in the opposite director.

As professional qualification and a university degree are new requirements which have only recently been imposed on a strictly divided school system, it is rather difficult to predict the attitudes of leaders or principals towards their job and how they conceptualize it. It is interesting and useful to clarify the orientations of school principals towards the two conflicting demands of their job and their correlations with other aspects of their role, like education and training, the standard of the school in which they work (from elementary to post-secondary),

what parts of the position are devoted to teaching and to administration, and how much do they prefer administration to teaching.

## Research Procedures

A survey questionnaire was administered to 182 educational leaders who graduated from diploma or degree programs in educational administration at Tel Aviv University. The questionnaire was mailed to the respondents and a 48% response rate was achieved. The questionnaire measured three sets of variables: The first set of questions asked the respondents about their professional training and credentials, the second set asked about their present working conditions, and the third set asked question about their orientations toward effective leadership. Two scales were constructed based on factor analysis. The professional orientation scale ($\alpha = .65$) indicates the extent to which principals view professionalism as important for effective leadership. Items for example are, "How much teaching experience contributes to effective school leadership?" or "How much is academic training helpful for effective school principalship?" or "Is an academic degree an essential requirement for effective leadership?"

The reliability of the social-moral orientation scale is moderate ($\alpha = .62$). It measures the ideological aspects of leadership. Items for example are "A sense of commitment for the solution of social problems is important for school principals", or "Involvement in local politics contributes to effective school leadership".

A third scale measured the respondents' preferences of administration over teachers ($\alpha = .60$). Items for example are: "I prefer administration over teaching" (1 fully disagree, to 7 fully agree), or "when did you consider to work in school administration for the first time?" (from "before I started to teach" to "after the first years of teaching?"

## Findings

Table 1 reports the means and standard deviations of the five independent and two dependent variables of the study, and their inter-correlations.

The findings of Table 1 indicate that the respondents view professional knowledge and skills as having more value in developing effective leadership than the moral-social aspects of their role. The mean of the firs scale is 5.69 (SD = .98) in a scale of 7 compared to the mean of 3.77 (SD = 1.12) of the second scale. The findings also indicate that the scale of professional orientation correlates with the independent variables better than the scale of social and moral orientations. Surprising, a moderate, but significant correlation (r = .28; p < .05) is indicated between the two dependent variables, the scale of professional orientations and the scale of social-moral leadership orientations.

The results of the two regression analyses show that the five independent variables hardly explain the variances of the two dependent variables. The $R^2$ value of the social-moral orientation scale is too low to be statistically significant and the $R^2$ value of the professional orientation scale is low, but significant. The 5 independent variables explain 5.23% of its variance.

Respondents with a higher academic degree (and longer professional training) who prefer administration to teaching have a more positive orientations toward professional knowledge and skills than other respondents.

The findings also indicate that respondents with an administrative position, with a greater share of administrative duties out of their total work time, are more reluctant to complement the social and moral aspects of their role, compared with the rest of the respondents.

Discussion: Professional Leadership in Religious Ideologically Oriented School System

The Israeli society is characterized by ideological, political and religious conflicts among various segments of the population. The divisions among the 5 sectors are so distinctive that each sector maintains a separate school system. Each sectorial school system is

expected, inter alia, to inculcate in its students, the belief system and a long-lasting affiliation with its respective ideological/religious sector. School principals are selected, trained and appointed to carry out this mission. As such, they are expected to be social-moral leaders and to appreciate the charismatic aspects of the school principal role.

The data show that school principals who have been educated at a research university, earned a graduate degree in educational administration and workers in the state public education do not consider the social-moral leadership aspect of their roles as very important. They evaluate professional skills and knowledge as much more important to their effectiveness as school leaders than charismatic, social-moral leadership. In addition, leaders who have more credentials in educational administration, aspirations to stay in an administrative career, and higher positions in the hierarchy indicate that professionalism is most important for effective leadership, while respondents with very few years of experience or lower positions (i.e., vice-principals) view social and moral values as more important for effective leadership.

The results imply tensions in defining the roles of educational leaders in Israel as the system moves towards decentralization with an emphasis on school-site autonomy. As professional attitudes are strengthened through credentialing, educational leaders are placing less emphasis on their roles as national social/moral agents, which may be in conflict with the larger needs of society.

As more and more demands are being placed on school leaders, it is crucial to examine the extent to which they can reconceptualize their roles to implement needed changes. Of special interest is the significant correlation between positive attitudes towards both professional and social/moral orientations as factors of effective leadership.

It seems that although principals of parochial/ideological schools know that they have to serve as charismatic leaders of their constituencies, they also know that their success as school principals is determined by the proper use of professional skills and knowledge.

Principals with a strong professional orientation know that inculcation of accepted political and ideological values among their students is an essential part of their task as educators. They realize that in order to accomplish this task they have to be proficient, social-moral experts as well.

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Table 1: The Research Variables: Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations (N = 182)

| | Means SD | Correlations | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 1. Academic Professional Training (1-none; 4-M.A.) | 2.69 (.92) | - | | | | | |
| 2. School Level 1 - first to fifth grade to 5 - twelfth grade + | 3.11 (.92) | .09 | | | | | |
| 3. Administrative Position (0-no; 1-yes) | .86 (.34) | .09 | -.05 | | | | |
| 4. Proportion of administrative jobtime (1-10%; 7-90%+) | 4.05 (2.05) | .23* | .05 | .48* | | | |
| 5. Preference of Administration over teaching (1-not at all; 6-very much) | 4.9% (1.75) | .09 | -.03 | .10 | .13* | | |
| 6. Social-Moral Scale (1-does not agree; 7-strongly agree) | 3.77 (1.12) | .08 | -.00 | -.18* | -.14* | .08 | |
| 7. Professional Orientation (1-does not agree; 7-strongly agree) | 5.69 (.98) | .24* | -.23* | -.06 | .13* | .13* | .23* |

* $p < .05$

Table 2:   Multiple Regression Analysis of Training, Gradel Level, Administration
Position, Proportion of Jobtime and Preference of Administration over Teaching by
Social-Moral Orientation and Professional Orientation

|  |  | Social-Moral Orientation | Professional Orientation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Academic and Administrative Training | b | .11 | .23* |
| | ß | .14 | .25* |
| | S.E.b | .092 | .076 |
| 2. School level of Students | b | .00 | -.20* |
| | ß | .00 | -.21* |
| | S.E.b | .090 | .075 |
| 3. Administrative Position | b | -.15* | .05 |
| | ß | -.51* | -.15 |
| | S.E.b | .273 | .227 |
| 4. Proportion of Administrative Jobtime | b | -.16* | -.11 |
| | ß | -.50* | -.06 |
| | S.E.b | .273 | .039 |
| 5. Preference of Administration over Teaching | b | .09 | .12* |
| | ß | .24 | .16* |
| | S.E.b | .111 | .093 |
| | Constant | 3.32 | 5.23 |
| | S.E. | .568 | .683 |
| | $R^2$ | .06 | .13* |

*   $p < .05$