Shaping children’s values: The role of schools and their leaders

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(WITH YAIR BERSON)

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In the organizational context, leaders may have a particularly strong influence on their followers.

Organizations are reflections of their leaders (Hambrick & Mason, 1984; Schein, 1992)

Leaders’ characteristics influence follower reactions through what leaders choose to emphasize (e.g., Miller et al., 1982, 1988; Berson, Oreg & Dvir, 2008).
Leader characteristics and follower outcomes

- Ample evidence for relationship between leaders’ personality and organizational and employee outcomes, such as organizational performance and employee well-being (e.g., Miller et al., 1982, 1988; Judge et al., 2002).

- Some evidence for the impact of leader values (e.g., Berson, Oreg, & Dvir, 2008; Oreg & Berson, 2011).
Outcomes of CEO values

(Berson, Oreg, & Dvir, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 2008)
Schwartz’s theory of values

OPENNESS TO CHANGE: Independent thought and action; readiness for new experiences

SELF-ENHANCEMENT: pursuit of self-interests

SELF-TRANSCENDENCE: Concern for the welfare and interests of others

CONSERVATION: Stability, resistance to change and self-restriction.
Considering a broader and more far-reaching outcome

- Effects beyond employee and performance outcomes - Organizations and their leaders should be concerned (practically and morally) with a much broader net of stakeholders (e.g., Freeman, 1999).
School outcomes

- The most prevalent outcome considered is student achievement.

- Central to the school’s mission is educating for values (Dewey, 1909)

“To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society” (Theodore Roosevelt)

“בחברה הישראלית החינוך לערכים נחשב לאחת ממטרות־העל של מערכות החינוך המאוחרות. עניין 2 בהкос החינוך הממלכתי, מערכתי החינוך מאז הקמתה. סעיף 2 בהקוס החינוך הממלכתי, תש"ג-1953 מציין את מטרות החינוך הממלכתי, וביןיהן שמור מקום משמעוני לחינוך לערכים..." (מתוך אתר "ויזמה")
Value development

- Predominantly based on social learning and socialization within a culture (e.g., Rohan & Zanna, 1996).

- Findings linking parents’ values to their children’s values (e.g., Knafo & Schwartz, 2009; Knafo & Spinath, 2011)

- Very little research on other environmental influences on children’s values (e.g., Knafo, Daniel & Khoury-Kassabri, 2008; Hofmann-Towfigh, 2007). None that consider change in children’s values.
Research model

1. CEO Values → Organizational Culture → Organizational Outcomes
2. Principals values → Organizational climate → Children’s values
School climate and children's values

- School climate as a socialization agent (e.g., Cemalcilar, 2010).

- Climate as “...the shared perceptions of and the meaning attached to the policies, practices, and procedures employees experience and the behaviors they observe getting rewarded and that are supported and expected” (Schneider et al., 2013).

- Given that values develop on the basis of social learning and socialization, school climate may be a vehicle through which school leadership impacts children.
Research model

Principals values → Organizational climate → Children’s values
Research model
Method

- Three-wave longitudinal study
- 252 public elementary and middle schools
  - 128 Primary-Secular (ממלכתי)
  - 42 Primary-Religious (مم"ד)
  - 42 Secondary (חט"ב)
  - 40 Primary-Arab (ערבי)
Participants & procedure

- **Year 1**
  - Values data from 252 principals
  - Values data from 49,415 children

- **Year 2** – Climate data from 3,658 teachers
  (Mean of ~16 per school)

- **Year 3**
  - Values data from 33,426 children
    (26,422 of these also provided Year 1 data)
  - Teachers’ (N=1,007) reports of 6,363 children’s behaviors
Measures – Principals’ Values

- Principals’ values were assessed with a 34-item version of the PVQ5X (Schwartz et al., 2012)

  - "It is very important to him/her to have his/her own opinions."
    (فتحתות לטיניים)
  - "It is very important to him/her to protect his/her personal rights."
    (שמור)
  - "It is very important to him/her to help close to him/her."
    (ה愉לות מעל לעצמי)
  - "He/She wants people to know his/her achievements and evaluate them."
    (האדון עצמית)
  - "He/She is a real, dedicated, humble, and upright person."
    (האדרת עצמית)
Measures – School Climate

- **School Climate (3 items)**
  - "At my school, we encourage us to develop our ideas."

- **Supportive Climate (3 items)**
  - "At my school, there is a supportive atmosphere."

- **Performative Climate (3 items)**
  - "At my school, we emphasize achievement."

- **Stable Climate (3 items)**
  - "At our school, we attach importance to order and organization."
Measures – Children’s Values

- Children’s values
  - Grades 3 and up - 20-item version of the PVQ5X (Schwartz et al., 2012)
  - Grades 1-2 –The (20-item) Picture-Based Value Survey for Children (PBVS-C, Doring et al., 2010)
Analyses

- Aggregation indexes supported the appropriateness of aggregating school climate ratings.

- Multilevel structural equation modeling, using Mplus

- Change in children’s values is assessed by predicting children’s Time 2 values while controlling for their Time 1 values.
Model results (standardized estimates). Analyses were conducted while controlling for schoolchildren’s Time 1 values, grade and sex, school size (number of teachers), and principals’ tenure.

Values in bold and darker model paths are statistically significant:  * < .05;  ** < .01.
Results – Self-transcendence Values

Model results (standardized estimates). Analyses were conducted while controlling for schoolchildren’s Time 1 values, grade and sex, school size (number of teachers), and principals’ tenure.

Values in **bold** and darker model paths are statistically significant: * < .05; ** < .01.
Results – Openness Values

Model results (standardized estimates). Analyses were conducted while controlling for schoolchildren’s Time 1 values, grade and sex, school size (number of teachers), and principals’ tenure.

Values in **bold** and darker model paths are statistically significant: * < .05; ** < .01.
Model results (standardized estimates). Analyses were conducted while controlling for schoolchildren’s Time 1 values, grade and sex, school size (number of teachers), and principals’ tenure.

Values in **bold** and darker model paths are statistically significant: * < .05; ** < .01.
Findings

Principal Conservation

Stability Climate

Children's Conservation

Disciplined behavior

Principal Self-transcendence

Support Climate

Children's Self-transcendence

Supportive behavior

Principal Openness to change

Innovation Climate

Children's Openness to change

Learning-oriented behavior

Principal Self-enhancement

Achievement Climate

Children's Self-enhancement

Achievement-oriented behavior
Discussion

- School principals and the school climate have a role in shaping children’s values.
- Room for further consideration of the process through which principals influence children’s values, beyond climate (e.g., formal practices).
- Other school factors that influence children’s values (e.g., peers, Benish-Weisman, Oreg, & Berson, under review).
תודה רבה

שאלות/הערות/תובנות?