

The Antecedents of Primary School Principals' Management and Leadership Behaviors

Haim H. Gaziel

*Professor, School of Education, Bar Ilan University, Ramat-Gan 52900, Israel
Email: haim.gaziel@gmail.com*

Yael Cohen-Azaria

Yael Cohen-Azaria, Lecturer, Bar Ilan University, Ramat-Gan 52900, Israel

Amalia A. Ifanti

*Professor, Department of Educational Sciences and Early Childhood Education, University of Patras,
Rion-Patras 26504, Greece*

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Abstract: *This study explores the relationship between management and leadership behaviors of primary school principals from the perspective of personal and contextual variables. Although the school effectiveness literature has put much attention to school principals' behavior outcomes, however, a few studies have investigated the background of principals' behaviors. The sample of this study was consisted of 140 primary school principals, who were chosen randomly from three of the six educational districts in Israel. For the purposes of this piece of work two anonymous Likert-type questionnaires were used: the Instructional Leadership Inventory and the School Administrator Assessment Survey. Data analysis revealed that school principals' management behaviors were mostly influenced by contextual factors whereas their leadership behaviors were mainly affected by personal factors. It was also found that the principals' demographic variables had different effects upon their management and leadership behaviors. Besides it was indicated that staff and community characteristics affect both school principals' management and leadership behaviors.*

Key words: *Primary school, principals, behaviors, management, leadership*

1. Introduction

In the last decades researchers seem to pay special attention to the question about what managers can do to improve their organizations (Chapman, Mahlick & Smulder 1997; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hopkins, Ainscow & West, 1993). At schools this question has got the form of a quest for an effective school, which has also been associated with the efforts for the upgrading of students' achievements (Knoepel & Rinehart, 2008; Lezotte, 2005).

These studies have generated lists of effective administrative behaviors and activities, which can consistently be found in the effective schools (Day, Harris & Hatfield, 2001; Gaziel, 1995, 2007; Leitner, 1994). However, despite the work done on the effects of leadership and management activities, our knowledge about the antecedents of such behaviors still appears to be limited. Why do some principals act in one way and others differently?

There are a few studies related to the above question (Goldring, Huff, May & Canburn, 2006; Martinko & Gardner, 1990). In particular, Martinko & Gardner (1990) carried out a qualitative research study in an attempt to interview a few principals in depth looking for their goals and motivations in leadership.

In our study we attempted to explore the principals' antecedents from the perspective of their management and leadership behaviors. More specifically, we tried to investigate the extent to which personal and contextual factors were related to the principals' activities in different school settings.