Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and moral reasoning

Izhak Berkovich

Department of Education and Psychology, The Open University of Israel, Ra`anana, Israel

and

Ori Eyal

School of Education, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel

Abstract

Despite the centrality of research concerning both ethics and leadership styles in education administration, our knowledge of the relations between them is limited. The present study closes this gap by investigating the relations of transformational and transactional leadership with multiple ethical paradigms that have been suggested as relevant to solving moral dilemmas in education. Participants self-reported on their leadership behaviors, and the Ethical Perspectives Instrument (EPI) was administered to assess their moral reasoning. Transformational leadership predicted resorting to the ethics of critique and profession, whereas transactional leadership predicted use of the ethics of utilitarianism. The study's findings are discussed.

1. Introduction

The present work integrates two important research domains in the field of education administration. The first is leadership styles theory, which coined the terms "transformational leadership" and "transactional leadership" (Bass, 1985); the second is ethical and moral leadership (Hodgkinson, 1991). Leadership styles theory, particularly that of transformational leadership, is among the leading theories in education leadership today (Berkovich, 2018; Bush, 2014). The importance of leadership styles in educational organizations has been demonstrated by the body of work of Leithwood and Janzi, in the 1990s (e.g., Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999), as a result of which the theory gained a prominent place and exercised broad influence in the field of education (Berkovich, 2016; Hallinger, 2003). Transformational leadership is "a style of leadership that transforms followers to rise above their self-interest by altering their morale, ideals, interests, and values, motivating them to perform better than initially expected" (Pieterse, Van Knippenberg, Schippers, & Stam, 2010, p. 610). It includes four behavioral dimensions: (a) serving as a role model (i.e., idealized influence), (b) expressing an energizing vision (i.e., inspirational motivation), (c) encouraging questioning of the status quo (i.e., intellectual stimulation), and (d) providing support for individual needs (i.e., individualized consideration) (Bass & Riggio, 2006). By contrast, transactional leadership is "an exchange relationship in which the leader makes clear what is expected of followers" (Pieterse et al., 2010, p. 610). It includes two behavioral dimensions: (a) setting goals and granting rewards (i.e., contingent reward) and (b) continually monitoring performance and taking immediate action in case of deviations (i.e., active management by exception) (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Research on moral leadership has also laid its foundations in educational leadership in 1990s. The works of Starratt (1991, 1994) and Sergiovanni (1992) were among the first to present elaborated theories of ethical leadership in school management. These studies conceptualized ethical leadership not as a stable style of behavior but as moral intentions and specific actions (Arar, Haj, Abramovitz, & Oplatka, 2016). Building on these works, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) proposed a multiple ethical paradigm framework that outlines the ethics of justice, critique, care, and profession as central considerations school leaders should take into account when resolving ethical dilemmas. This approach, which is among the leading ethical frameworks in education administration (Eyal, Schwartz & Berkovich, 2011), focuses largely on developing participants' moral maturation, i.e., their sense of moral identity, and their ability to view complexity and reflect on their cognitions (Hannah, Avolio, & May, 2011). One of the direct indicators of people's moral maturation is their use of moral reasoning. Moral reasoning is "one's conceptual and analytical ability to frame socio-moral problems using one's standards and values in order to judge the proper course of action" (Sivanathan & Fekken, 2002, p. 199). Moral reasoning is often used interchangeably with the concept of ethical judgment because both describe "the determination of an action as being ethical or not ethical" (Wagner & Sanders, 2001, p. 164).

Despite the relevance and importance of these two research domains to the field of education administration, they remained largely separated. In general management studies, however, a few works have made the connection between the two domains and demonstrated how such fusion produces novel insights on both leadership styles and moral reasoning (e.g., Simola, Barling, & Turner, 2010; Turner, Barling, Epitropaki, Butcher, & Milner, 2002). These works focused on samples from

the business world, and used a limited number of ethical perspectives that are not suited for educational organizations. The present study contributes to the education administration literature by investigating how transformational and transactional leadership styles are related to different types of educational leaders' moral reasoning. Thus, in our view, both transformational and transactional leadership styles are ethical, but in different ways. To this end, we review the literature on leadership and ethics and on the links between leadership styles and moral reasoning, and postulate certain relations between transformational and transactional leadership, and leaders' moral reasoning. Next, we test these hypotheses by administration of a scenario-based decision-making tool (Ethical Perspectives Instrument; Eyal et al., 2011) and self-reports on leadership styles, using data derived from a sample of 248 educational leaders. Last, we discuss the findings and their implications.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Leadership and ethics

The ethical aspect of leadership is commonly viewed as linked with "whether what is being done (the end) and the means employed to do it are morally legitimate" (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999, p. 185). In the field of management studies, Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005) defined ethical leadership as the "demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (p. 120). Educational management scholars consider ethics and morals as a fundamental part of the essence of being an educational leader (Sergiovanni, 1992). For example, addressing moral educational leadership, Begley (2010) warned that "[w]hen educational administrators carry out

their roles without explicit reference to educational purposes, they run the risk of directing their energy to inappropriate or wasteful tasks, and become more vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation by individuals, organizations and special interest groups bent on pursuing their self-interests" (p. 32). Thus, ethics in educational leadership is commonly viewed as directly linked with educational purposes and with the basic role definition of what it means to be an educational leader.

Philosophers have long addressed the relations between leadership and ethics (e.g., Lao-tzu, Confucius, Buddha, Plato, and Aristotle, see discussion in Ciulla, 2004), but only in the last two decades have behavioral science scholars begun to turn their attention to the topic (Brown et al., 2005). As a result, little empirical research in organizational behavior has been carried out to date on this topic (Simola et al., 2010). Two research streams have emerged in the body of work of organizational behavior that address leadership and ethics: (a) the general ethical leadership research stream, in which scholars attempt to describe the nature, predictors, and outcomes of ethical leadership (e.g., Treviño & Brown, 2014); and (b) the moral reasoning research stream, in which scholars seek to identify the problem-solving logic of leaders (e.g., Simola et al., 2010; Turner et al., 2002). The two research domains have also surfaced in recent years in the behavioral science research of educational leadership (e.g., Arar et al., 2016; Eyal et al., 2011; Langlois, Lapointe, Valois, & de Leeuw, 2014).

The present work is part of the moral reasoning research stream. Previous works in education have attempted to pin down the ethical perspectives dominating educational leaders' judgment (Arar et al., 2016; Eyal et al., 2011), but education research did not try to uncover how the transformational and transactional leadership styles are associated with moral reasoning. The majority of previous research in management studies explored the associations of transformational and transactional

leadership styles with the Kohlbergian ethics of justice, which places the greatest

value on commitment to basic human rights (e.g., Sivanathan & Fekken, 2002; Turner

et al., 2002), and with the ethics of care (e.g., Simola et al., 2010; Simola, Barling, &

Turner, 2012). This consideration of a limited number of ethical perspectives does not

take into account the full range of perspectives that have been claimed to be relevant

to educational leadership research (Eyal et al., 2011; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016).

The rationale used in this study suggests that leadership practices predict

ethical judgments. This theoretical argument is based on claims in the literature that

stable leadership behaviors are related to situational responsiveness, such as ethical

decision making. For example, Treviño (1986) suggested that ethical decision making

is a product of the individual's more stable elements (e.g., one's leadership style) and

of contextual elements (e.g., the features of the decision situation at hand). We

propose that stable leadership practices affect situation-contingent ethical decision,

and form a pattern of moral reasoning across situations.

2.2 Educational leaders and ethical perspectives

One of the most influential ethical models in the field of educational leadership is the

multiple ethical paradigm framework, which is based on Starratt's earlier works

(1991, 1994). This framework proposes a model incorporating the ethics of justice,

critique, care, and profession (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). According to it, when

school leaders explore a given ethical dilemma using several ethical perspectives, the

best solution is reached. Eyal et al. (2011) expanded the multiple ethical paradigms,

with supplementary ethical perspectives discussed in the education leadership

literature (ethics of community, see Furman (2004) and ethics of utilitarianism, see

Denig and Quinn (2001)), extending the multiple ethical paradigms to six

perspectives. The researchers also refined the boundaries between the six ethical perspectives, to maintain their empirical distinctiveness. The six ethical perspectives that have been suggested to be relevant to school management (see elaborated descriptions in Eyal et al., 2011) are:

- Ethics of critique: emphasizes supporting oppressed groups and undermining power structures as an ethical compass.

- Ethics of care: emphasizes relational fidelity, trust, and empowerment as an ethical compass.

- Ethics of profession: emphasizes professional knowledge and experience as an ethical compass.

- Ethics of fairness: emphasizes just procedural treatment as an ethical compass.

- Ethics of utilitarianism: focuses on capitalizing benefits for most people involved as an ethical compass.

- Ethics of community: emphasizes local community values and interests as an ethical compass.

Moral leadership wishes to act in accordance with social ideals (social reform, care, and professional standards) or in accordance with pragmatic principles (procedural fairness, utility, and community). Within the scope of exploring leaders' moral reasoning, the literature suggests that leaders with different leadership styles differ in their ethical problem-solving processes and preferences (Tatum, Eberlin, Kottraba, & Bradberry, 2003; Simola et al., 2010).

2.3 Background on leadership style theory in education

Leadership style theory originated in James Burns's (1978) work on political leaders. The theory was expanded by Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio (1988) to business leaders. Soon thereafter, in the 1990s, the theory was adapted to the field of educational administration by Kenneth Leithwood and colleagues (e.g., Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995). Transformational school leadership style was particularly popular, as it was considered to be ideal leadership and relevant to the schooling challenges of the 21st century (Hallinger, 2003). Despite early scholarly interest in the connections between transformational school leadership and values (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1991), reviews suggest that the vast majority of research on transformational school leadership focused mostly on school outcomes, school conditions, teachers' internal states and behaviors, and student achievement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Leithwood, Tomlinson, & Genge, 1996; Leithwood & Sun, 2012), and less so on leaders' internal states. For example, a review of 22 studies from the US and China on transformational school leadership, among them on the topic of leaders' internal states, identified only two dealing with leaders' values (Sun, Chen, & Zhang, 2017). Nevertheless, some theoretical claims and empirical evidence in general management and educational administration make the connection between leadership styles and leaders' ethics.

2.4 Theory and evidence of the relationship between transformational leadership and moral reasoning

The leadership literature has identified transformational leadership as a moral leadership. Scholars suggests that transformational leadership is related to using deontological ethics, driven by sense of duty or obligation (Aronson, 2001; Bass &

Steidlmeier, 1999; Kanungo, 2001). Works in the general management field have discussed the ethical aspects linked with transformational leadership specifically in relation to leader-follower interactions. For example, Kanungo and Mendonca (1996) have argued that transformational leaders are committed to altruistic values and the empowerment of others. Groves and LaRocca (2011) have argued that transformational leaders acknowledge followers' intrinsic worth and refuse to view them as a means to organizational ends.

Research has also examined the relationship between transformational leadership style and moral reasoning. Transformational leaders have been found to use comprehensive decision making that considers multiple inputs and possible operational paths (Tatum et al., 2003). Transformational leadership has also been suggested to use universal principles to guide its decision making, which coincides with idealist commitment to basic human rights (Kohlberg's post-conventional level of moral reasoning) (Groves & LaRocca, 2011). Transformational leadership has been linked to a sense of social responsibility. Kanungo (2001) described this type of responsibility as "an internalized belief of a moral obligation to help others without any consideration of an expected personal benefit" (p. 262). Furthermore, it has been suggested that transformational leadership is associated with end values such as liberty, justice, and equality (Ciulla, 1995). Finally, transformational leadership styles were found to be positively related to leaders' perception by followers as ethical (Brown et al., 2005). It is reasonable to argue, therefore, that transformational leadership is related to adopting universal considerations in solving ethical dilemmas, even at a personal cost. This description echoes qualitative reports about idealistic school leaders who are committed to resolve moral dilemmas by counting on their own "gut instinct" and "being true to themselves," even if it means that they must

"bite the bullet" and face the unpleasant personal outcomes of their decisions (Frick, 2009).

Successful school leadership, which often coincides with a transformational leadership style, is said to be "harnessed to an ethic of care, a set of values about social justice and the equitable education of all students" (Leithwood, 2005). Similarly, a quantitative study by Eyal et al. (2011) identified three ethical perspectives commonly used in settling schooling dilemmas by educational leaders: critique, care, and professionalism. The authors called this combination "*ethical activism,*" as it emphasizes professional standards that support the needs of individual students, and a critical approach toward educational policies. We argue that transformational school leaders tend to use "ethical activism" (i.e. critique, care, and professionalism) in settling ethical dilemmas. This argument has some support in the management and educational literatures.

First, several theoretical and empirical works support the idea that transformational school leaders tend to use the ethics of critique. For example, the idealized influence dimension of transformational leadership has been associated with the idea of a "universal brotherhood" (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999, p. 187), which transcends and disregards the "we-they" distinction (Simola et al., 2010). Furthermore, Turner, Barling, Epitropaki, Butcher, and Milner (2002) found that managers who exhibited more transformational leadership behaviors scored higher on Kohlbergian moral reasoning, i.e., were at the post-conventional stage, which values the most basic human rights of life, liberty, and justice.[1] In the education administration field, Leithwood and Steinbach (1995) found support for the

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[1] Daniel's (2005) US study that explored the connection between Kohlbergian moral reasoning and transformational leadership among 103 educational administrators found such links to be non-significant. This finding warrants caution, however, because the study included a mixed sample combining different roles (superintendents, deputy superintendents, and principals).

hypothesis that transformational school leaders hold four types of values: basic human values, moral values, professional values, and social values. These values are manifest in principles such as respect for others, valuing equity, sense of responsibility to act and generate change, and willingness to promote the participation of all stakeholders. Other researchers have also suggested a connection between transformational leadership and social critique. For example, Bottery (1992) contended that school leaders must be, among others, empowering but also liberating in their behaviors. Hallinger (2003) suggested that transformational educational leaders should think about the duties and scope of their leadership in an innovative manner, and often pay attention to the external environment of schooling. Santamaría and Jean-Marie's (2014) phenomenological qualitative study of US educational leaders from underserved backgrounds indicated a fusion of transformational leadership and critical approach. This fusion has been referred to as "transformative leadership" (Shields, 2010). Similarly, Gerstl-Pepin and Aiken (2010) argued that successful school leaders are critical and committed to the social transformation of the school.

Second, the literature also supports the idea that transformational school leaders are inclined to use the ethics of care that promotes welfare and prevents suffering. The self-concept of transformational leaders contains moral aspects that are grounded in a conceptualization of individuals as connected with others (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). This rationale forms the foundation of the associations of each of the transformational leadership dimensions with the ethics of care. For example, idealized influence has been linked with the sense of interconnection, inspirational motivation with shared goal attainment, intellectual stimulation with the non-zero sum problem-solving tactics for the benefit of all, and individualized consideration with responsiveness to the unique needs of each follower (Simola et al., 2012). These

theoretical claims have received empirical support in Simola, Barling, and Turner's works. The researchers found that transformational leadership ranking of leaders was positively and significantly related to leaders' use of ethics of care (Simola et al., 2010). In a follow-up study, the researchers found that public sector managers who displayed the highest transformational leadership ranking also had the highest type of developmental mode of care reasoning, i.e., focus on both self and others (Simola et al., 2012). In education administration, transformational school leaders have been associated with promoting care among staff and caring for the wellbeing of the staff (Geijsel, Sleegers, & van den Berg, 1999). Capper (1993) suggested that educational administrators should be concerned with minimizing suffering, and Marshall (1992), who explored "atypical" school leaders, reported that many of them indeed use care as their ethical guidance.

Third, scholarly works support the idea that transformational school leaders are inclined to use the ethic of profession to guide their efforts. Transformational leaders have been found to produce high cognitive trust (Zhu, Newman, Miao, & Hooke, 2013), which is significantly based on their professional proficiency. Greenfield's (1991) case study on an elementary school principal in an urban setting found that the principal applied professional logic and style to promote the school and the children's best interests. It has been suggested that using professional judgment that is deeply based on knowledge and expertise was connected with evidence-based education and improved educational outcomes (Davies, 1999), which are often been associated with transformational school leaders (Leithwood et al., 1999).

Hypothesis 1: Transformational leadership predicts the use of ethical activism (critique, care, and professionalism) as moral reasoning

2.5 Theory and evidence of transactional leadership and moral reasoning

Few leadership scholars questioned the moral base of transactional leadership, but many have identified it as a moral leadership that has different values from those of transformational leadership. It has been suggested that transactional leadership is associated with values such as duty, fairness, honesty and promise-keeping (Ciulla, 1995). Within the framework of leader-follower interactions, transactional leadership style is said to involve exchanges, making it consistent with utilitarian ethics that motivate decision making for maximizing the benefit for all concerned (Aronson, 2001). Expanding this rationale, Kanungo (2001) argued that "a transactional leader behaves in a moral way (i.e., seeking consent to means to achieve individual ends rather than seeking consensus on a single collective purpose) when he/she brings greatest satisfaction to the greatest number of people" (p. 260).

Transactional leaders are also said to value obedience and adopt an avoidance approach, which corresponds to Kohlberg's pre-conventional moral reasoning (that is, driven by self-interest) or conventional moral reasoning (which relies greatly on laws and rule-following), with emphasis on procedural fairness (Groves & LaRocca, 2011). Transactional leaders have also been described as prone to use rather limited decision making with respect to the number of the information sources and alternative actions they consider (Tatum et al., 2003). According to Tatum and associates, transactional leaders value structural features when making moral decisions.

The knowledge about the connection between transactional leadership style and various types of moral reasoning is limited, but some mixed empirical evidence exists. Prior works have found that managers' transactional leadership was not linked with their Kohlbergian levels of moral reasoning (Turner et al., 2002), their use of the

ethics of care (Simola et al., 2010), or their developmental mode of care reasoning (Simola et al., 2012). By contrast, according to Trevino et al. (2003), transactional style that manifests in standard setting and monitoring of performance has been found to be associated with certain ethical leaders. Transactional leadership ranking has been found to be positively related also to leaders' teleological ethical values, such as utilitarianism (Groves & LaRocca, 2011).

There are indirect references to this connection in the literature discussing moral leadership and successful leadership in schools. Several education administration scholars emphasized the commitment to "*ethical conformism"* of successful school leaders who value utility, procedural justice, and community. For example, referring to school leaders as moral actors, Schrag (1979) argued that they must base their decisions on universal principles that avoid situational and personal variability (paralleling the ethics of justice), and stressed that school leaders' decisions must be for the welfare and interests of all people affected by them (paralleling the ethics of utilitarianism). Similarly, Hodgkinson (1991) suggested that ethical school administration is grounded in pragmatism or utilitarianism. Discussing social justice leadership in traditional societies, Oplatka and Arar (2016) contended that loyalty to the group (paralleling the ethics of community) is regarded as morally favorable, and people tend to sacrifice personal interests for the sake of the collective.

Hypothesis 2: Transactional leadership dimensions predict the use of ethical conformism (fairness, utilitarianism, community) as moral reasoning.

3. Method

3.1 Context of research

State education in Israel was created as a centralized system, with a tight hold on the fiscal, administrative, organizational, pedagogical, and structural features of public schooling (Addi-Raccah, 2015). Since the 1990s, however, public education has changed with the introduction of market and privatization policies promoting autonomous schools, parental choice, self-based management, and national standardized testing (Addi-Raccah, 2015; Berkovich, 2014). It has been suggested that these policy changes encourage Israeli principals to adopt transformational leadership behaviors (Goldring, 1992) and grant them greater decision-making autonomy (Nir, 2002). Autonomous decision making involves ethical judgment because it makes it necessary to choose between values.

3.2 Participants and procedure

We used convenience sampling because there is no repository that lists all education administration students in master's degree programs, and because convenience sampling results in a shorter and more affordable data collection process (Dörnyei, 2007). We included several academic institutions to minimize possible biases related to this sampling method, such as representativeness and outliers (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The sample originated from four institutions, one university and three colleges located in two metropolitan areas in the center of the country. The survey was administered in three waves during 2014-2016. The sample included 248 participants enrolled in education administration master's degree programs in Israel. Graduate programs in educational administration in Israel serve mostly aspiring principals who are acting school leaders. Thus, out of 248 participants, 75% reported

holding middle management roles (e.g., vice-principals, department heads, subject

matter heads, etc.).

Participants were in midlife (M age=43.26 years, *SD* = 8.72), and 77% were

female. Eighty-two percent of participants reported being experienced teachers in

mid-career (*M* teaching=12.96 years, *SD* = 7.90); 46% worked in primary schools,

and the remaining 56% in secondary schools. Thirty-three percent reported having

participated in the past in some sort of ethical training. The Israeli National Institute

for Testing and Evaluation (RAMA, 2016) performed a random national survey of

384 new principals at the outset of their career and found that they are in midlife stage

(with an average age of 45 years), and are in general educated (83% hold an MA

degree), female (70%), and experienced (with an average of 17.4 teaching years prior

to appointment as principals). This profile is similar to the one we identified in our

convenience sample of aspiring principals, therefore it suggests that our study sample

is not biased.

The authors administered the questionnaires to students in pen-and-paper

format, at the end of a lesson (approved and coordinated with program

administrators). Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed that they

could withdraw at any time (response rate was 78%). Informed consent was obtained

in writing. Participants were asked to self-rank their transformational and

transactional leadership behaviors and solve 30 ethical dilemmas related to education

administration.

3.3 Instrument

Transformational and transactional leadership. Transformational and transactional

leadership actions and behaviors were evaluated separately using participants' self-

reports on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

We used six subscales of the MLQ. Individualized consideration (i.e., supporting

subordinates' needs and development), intellectual stimulation (i.e., encouraging

subordinates to adopt new mental perspectives), inspirational motivation (i.e.,

articulating a compelling vision), and idealized influence behavior (i.e., acting as a

role model) pertaining to transformational leadership were each measured using four

items. Contingent reward (i.e., providing rewards for effort and good performance)

and management-by-exception (active) (i.e., setting guidelines and expectations and

intervening when these are not met), representing transactional leadership, were each

measured using four items. Following recommendations in the literature (see

Berkovich, 2016), three MLQ sub-dimensions (idealized influence (attributed),

management by exception (passive), and laissez-faire) were omitted. Idealized

influence (attributed) has been criticized for capturing the effect of leadership and not

behaviors (Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003), whereas laissez-faire leadership and

management by exception (passive) has been criticized for representing poor passive

leadership (Kelloway, Sivanathan, Francis, & Barling 2005); therefore, we did not use

these three sub-dimensions. Participants rated themselves on a 5-point scale ranging

from 1 (not at all) to 5 (frequently, if not always) on leadership dimensions. The

results of the confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) conducted using the AMOS

software demonstrated a good fit[2] of the data to the four-dimension model of

transformational leadership (χ^2 (98) = 185.75, χ^2/df= 1.895, comparative fit index

(CFI) = .91, root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .06) and to the

two-dimension model of transactional leadership (χ^2 (19) = 33.56, χ^2/df= 1.767, CFI =

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[2] According to the literature, χ^2/df < 2, CFI > 0.9 and RMSEA < .08 indicate good fit (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

.93, RMSEA = .05). The original questionnaire was reported to be valid and reliable

(Bass & Avolio, 1994). In the present study, internal consistency reliability for

transformational leadership was .85 and .64 for transactional leadership. These values

resemble closely the reliabilities reported in the recent literature (Ayman, Korabik, &

Morris, 2009; Zhu, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2009).

Moral reasoning. We used the Ethical Perspectives Instrument (EPI) to measure

participants' ethical judgment (Eyal et al., 2011). The EPI contains 30 ethical

dilemmas describing situations and events that are relevant to the work of school

leaders. The dilemmas portray interactions of school leaders with students, teachers,

parents, communities, and the system, and capture the moral tension between two

paths of action. The paths of action are based on the extended multiple ethical

paradigm approach, based on seminal works by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016), and

Starratt (1991, 1994), which suggests six considerations often used in educational

leaders' ethical judgments: fairness, utilitarianism, care, critique, profession, and

community. The EPI requires that participants choose their preferred path of action

out of two alternatives, reflecting two different ethical considerations (see example in

Figure 1; full EPI form and SPSS syntaxes are available at www.izhakber.com/EPI),

so that each choice is binary (selecting either path A or path B). Instrument reliability

and validity have been previously reported in the literature. The EPI has demonstrated

reliability over time, with test-retest of participants' choices at T1 and T2 significantly

stable (test-retest was explored using a series of χ^2 independence tests:

$4.29<\chi^2(1)<24.62$; $.001<p<.05$; see Eyal et al., 2011). The ethical judgments that

participants made were used to calculate an ethical perspective preference index for

each ethic, representing the percentages of choices made for each ethic above all other

possible ethics across the 30 dilemmas.

Figure 1. Sample scenario from the Ethical Perspective Instrument (Eyal et al., 2011).

4. Findings

4.1 Descriptive analysis

We began by conducting a descriptive analysis of means, standard deviations, and

range (Table 1), and calculated bivariate correlations of the study variables (Table 2).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of all variables (N=248)

		Minimum	Maximum	*M*	*SD*
TF:	Idealized influence	2.00	5.00	4.269	.515
TF:	Inspirational motivation	2.25	5.00	4.261	.529
TF:	Intellectual stimulation	2.75	5.00	4.074	.495

TF:	Individual consideration	2.67	5.00	4.310	.504
TA:	Contingent reward	2.67	5.00	4.049	.539
TA:	Management-by-exception (active)	1.00	4.75	2.766	.710
Ethics of fairness		11.11	100.00	47.670	17.928
Ethics of utilitarianism		.00	90.00	45.040	16.445
Ethics of care		.00	100.00	52.643	18.943
Ethics of critique		22.22	100.00	63.754	17.374
Ethics of profession		12.50	87.50	49.697	15.045
Ethics of community		11.11	100.00	41.084	18.494

Note. TF = Transformational leadership; TA = Transactional leadership.

The descriptive statistics revealed that among the four transformational leadership dimensions, the two prevailing dimensions that participants used to describe their own style were individual consideration (M=4.310) and idealized influence (M=4.269). The table also shows that contingent reward was the highest transactional dimension participants reported (M=4.097). The overall mean of transformational leadership in the present study was 4.22 (SD=0.51), and the overall mean of transactional leadership was 3.40 (SD=0.62). Similar means and SDs of leadership styles were reported in numerous Israeli studies on leadership styles using the MLQ (e.g., Eyal & Kark, 2004; Kurland, Peretz, & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2011; Nasra & Heilbrunn, 2016). When exploring the ethical considerations used by participants to resolve the dilemmas, we also noted that the most dominant ethic was critique (M=63.754), by far above all other ethics, followed by the ethic of care (M=52.643) and by professionalism (M=49.697).

4.2 Bivariate correlational analysis

Table 2 displays the inter-correlations between the study variables. As seen, two of the transformational leadership dimensions were linked with ethical perspectives: idealized influence was positively and significantly associated with the ethic of profession (r=.160, p<.05), and individualized consideration was significantly associated with the ethics of critique (r=.149, p<.05). This grants preliminary support to Hypothesis 1. Furthermore, two transactional leadership dimensions were associated with ethical considerations: contingent reward was positively and significantly associated with the ethics of utilitarianism (r=.152, p<.05), and management-by-exception (active) was positively and significantly associated with the ethics of utilitarianism (r=.181, p<.01). This grants preliminary support to Hypothesis 2. Although not hypothesized, one significantly negative correlation was found between management-by-exception (active) and the ethics of critique (r=-.136, p<.05). Therefore, in the regression analyses we focused strictly on the four ethical consideration that were found to correlate significantly. As none of the control variables produced significant correlations with the six ethical considerations (average r = .005, average SD = .003), they were omitted from the following analysis.

Table 2. Pearson correlations of all variables (N=248)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Idealized influence	1															
2. Inspirational motivation	.619**	1														
3. Intellectual stimulation	.425**	.514**	1													
4. Individual consideration	.564**	.499**	.513**	1												
5. Contingent reward	.354**	.448**	.337**	.330**	1											
6. Management-by-exception (active)	.034	.065	.067	.008	.222**	1										
7. Ethics of fairness	-.064	.040	.026	-.002	.055	.018	1									
8. Ethics of utilitarianism	-.063	-.017	-.035	-.097	.152*	.181**	-.170**	1								
9. Ethics of care	.043	.005	.084	.054	-.120	-.011	-.395**	-.325**	1							
10. Ethics of critique	.050	.012	.039	.149*	-.059	-.136*	-.109	-.266**	.006	1						
11. Ethics of profession	.160*	.046	.008	.085	.022	-.075	-.269**	-.125*	-.118	-.098	1					
12. Ethics of community	-.087	-.094	-.105	-.149*	-.058	-.018	-.094	-.138*	-.225**	-.480**	-.133*	1				

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
13. Gender (1=male; 2=female)	.090	.063	.112	.134*	.118	-.064	-.083	-.029	.117	.114	.011	-.112	1			
14. Teaching seniority (years)	.102	.204**	.174**	.132*	.139*	.004	.068	.006	-.026	-.036	.045	-.059	-.042	1		
15. School level (1=primary 2= secondary)	-.090	-.100	-.167*	-.167*	-.143*	.049	-.012	.033	-.082	-.085	.091	.058	-.246**	.093	1	
16. Previous participation in ethics course (1=no; 2=yes)	-.151*	-.053	-.063	-.058	.006	.017	-.064	.000	-.005	-.028	.053	.051	.110	.019	.080	1

Note. *p < .05. **p < .01.

4.3 Regression analyses

To test Hypothesis 1 about transformational leadership predicting ethical considerations related to ethical activism, we preformed two regression analyses. The first regression analysis summarized in Table 3a, predicted the participants' use of the ethics of critique. The results indicate that individual consideration had a significant positive effect on the ethics of critique (β=.193, p<.05). Together, the predictors explained approximately 5% of the variance in the participants' use of the ethics of critique when solving school-related moral dilemmas.

The second regression analysis, summarized in Table 3b, predicted the participants' use of the ethic of profession. The results indicate that idealized influence had a significant positive effect on the ethic of profession (β=.172, p<.05). Although the overall regression model was marginally significant, it explained 3% of the variance in the participants' use of the ethic of profession when solving school-related moral dilemmas. Overall, the results of the regression support our first hypothesis that transformational leadership predicts ethical considerations related to ethical activism, specifically to the ethics of critique and profession.

To test Hypothesis 2 about transactional leadership predicting ethical considerations related to ethical conformism, we preformed two regression analyses. The first analysis, summarized in Table 3c, predicted the participants' use of the ethics of utilitarianism. The results indicate that contingent reward and management-by-exception (active) both had a significant positive effect on the ethics of utilitarianism (β=.183, p<.01; β=.143, p<.05, respectively). Together, the predictors explained approximately 7% of the variance in participants' use of the ethics of utilitarianism when solving school-related moral dilemmas.

The second regression analysis, summarized in Table 3d, predicted the participants' use of the ethics of community. The overall regression model was non-significant. Taken together, the results of the regression support our second hypothesis that transactional leadership dimensions predict ethical considerations related to ethical conformism, specifically to the ethics of utilitarianism.

Table 3. Results of the regression analyses

Model	(a) Ethics of critique			(b) Ethics of profession			(c) Ethics of utilitarianism			(d) Ethics of community		
	Beta	t	Sig.	Beta	t	Sig.	Beta	t	Sig.	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)		4.938	.000		3.473	.001		3.561	.000		5.238	.000
Idealized influence	-.023	-.301	.763	.172	2.196	.029	-.064	-.834	.405	-.002	-.020	.984
Individual consideration	.193	2.502	.013	-.004	-.058	.954	-.123	-1.609	.109	-.146	-1.874	.062
Contingent reward	-.089	-1.271	.205	-.020	-.286	.775	.183	2.657	.008	-.006	-.087	.931
Management-by-exception (active)	-.117	-1.814	.071	-.077	-1.181	.239	.143	2.250	.025	-.015	-.236	.813
Model statistics	$R^2 = .049$ $F(4,243) = 3.109$*			$R^2 = .032$ $F(4,243) = 2.031$†			$R^2 = .070$ $F(4,243) = 4.550$**			$R^2 = .023$ $F(4,243) = 1.404$		

Note. †$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

5. Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to explore the association of transformational and transactional leadership styles with various ethical perspectives: the ethics of critique, care, profession, fairness, utilitarianism, and community. We hypothesized that transformational leaders significantly use ethical activism (i.e., critique, care, and profession), whereas transactional leaders significantly use ethical conformism (i.e., fairness, utilitarianism, and community) in their moral judgments. In general, the regression analyses supported the two hypotheses: transformational leadership predicted the use of the ethics of critique and profession, and transactional leadership predicted the use of the ethic of utilitarianism. This work serves as an important addition to the educational leadership literature because it integrates two central theoretical domains in the field, the leadership styles and ethical leadership research, thereby promoting the relevance of external, imported organizational theory to the field of education (Berkovich, 2016).

      The study contributes to the understanding of leadership styles in several ways. First, the study makes a significant contribution to the moral reasoning research stream that seeks to identify the problem-solving logic of leaders (the small body of work focusing on leadership styles (e.g., Simola et al., 2010; Turner et al., 2002) is limited and addresses only a few ethical perspectives). The study extends the theoretical foundations for linking leadership styles to multiple ethical perspectives. This contribution is particularly important in the domain of education administration. In schools, ethics form a fundamental part of being an educational leader, and leadership is directly linked to educational purposes (Begley, 2010; Sergiovanni, 1992). Thus, multiple ethical considerations are inherent in all decisions faced by educational leaders (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). Note, however, that the study

found that the relationship between leadership styles and ethical dimensions was weak. Nevertheless, these results are consistent with previous empirical research (e.g., Simola et al. (2010) and Turner et al. (2002), who reported correlations ranging in size from .01 to .26). The small effect size and proportions of variance demonstrated in previous studies (Simola et al., 2010), as well as in our study, may result from adopting a rigorous data collection design that reduced common method variance. Our study used the methodological separation of measurement of the predictor and criterion variables, as recommended by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003) (leadership styles were assessed with a questionnaire using Likert scale scoring, and moral reasoning was assessed using scenarios and a dichotomous scale). Therefore, these findings are more robust because distortions resulting from mono-method bias are minimized (Simola et al., 2010, p. 185).

Second, the study focused on exploring dimensions of leadership styles, revealing that relationships between transformational leadership and moral reasoning are more complex than previously thought. We found that individual consideration leadership which includes attending to individual needs, is related to using the ethics of critique, which struggles against oppressive social structures. This dimension of individual consideration was found to be linked to the greater underlying component of the empowering feature of transformational leadership (Özaralli, 2003). This finding provides additional support to the concept of "transformative leadership," which was suggested in the educational administration literature to describe the type of school leaders who integrate transformational leadership with a critical approach (Santamaría & Jean-Marie, 2014; Shields, 2010). Our findings also suggest that transformational educational leaders not only value social aspects (Tatum et al., 2003) but are committed to social transformation.

We also found that idealized influence leadership, which includes serving as a role model, is related to using the ethics of profession that considers knowledge and expertise to be ideal guides. This is consistent with Greenfield's (1991) case study findings on moral leadership that emphasized the use of professional logic by school leaders to promote children's wellbeing and performance. The present work offers a new moral reasoning explanation concerning the relation between transformational leadership and instructional focus. Some scholars have suggested that instructional focus is one other dimension of transformational behaviors (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005); the present work is more aligned with a description of instructional professionalism as a logic used by transformational leaders. One unexpected finding concerning transformational leadership is its lack of association with the ethics of care, despite existing evidence of it in business research, mainly in the context of manager-employee relations (Simola et al., 2010). The study at hand's findings can be viewed as a result of separating personal care from social critique, which at times are discussed as closely conjoined in the educational literature, particularly in disadvantaged school environments (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002). Another explanation is that care considerations are diminished because transformational leaders are inclined to stress critique and professionalism to frame their ethical decisions. Under both ethical considerations, students are viewed as passive objects that require generalized action, rather than individuals whose *ad hoc* needs must be attended to. Future exploration of the connection between transformational school leadership and the ethics of care is therefore advised in educational settings that emphasize the importance of the group over the individual, perhaps because of efficiency considerations. Note, however, that the findings may be at least partly related to the local Israeli culture and system, which, because of the relative youth of

the institutions, are more open to negotiative discourse (Dery, 2002), fostering a

culture of debate and critique, and the challenging of institutional mores and praxis.

Furthermore, in the last decade, Israeli principals and teachers have been at the center

of several professionalization reforms (e.g., Berkovich, 2014; CHE, 2016), which may

also have affected the local actors' inclination toward the ethics of professionalism.

Third, the exploration of multiple ethics helped clarify the transactional

leaders' use of certain ethics in moral judgments, especially the use of utility in moral

reasoning. Previous works have argued that transactional leaders use utilitarian moral

reasoning (Aronson, 2001; Groves & LaRocca, 2011), but this was not shown in the

context of resolving dilemmas. The present findings confirm that transactional

leadership is indeed associated with utilitarianism as moral reasoning. We were able

to provide direct evidence about the relations between transactional leadership and

utilitarian moral reasoning. The present findings differ from earlier claims concerning

the possible links between transactional leadership, procedural justice, and rule-

following, but confirm prior results on these leaders adopting utility as a value

(Groves & LaRocca, 2011). In this sense, the findings suggest that even transactional

educational leaders prefer their personal judgment over formal codes, despite possible

personal consequences (Frick, 2009). The present work provides support for the moral

view of transactional school leaders committed to ethical conformism through a

pragmatic utilitarian approach that considers the welfare and interests of all

individuals affected by their decisions (Hodgkinson, 1991; Schrag, 1979). An

interpretative study conducted in Hong Kong suggests that principals holding a

utilitarian pragmatic approach tend to view individuals as resources that need to be

utilized (Ng & Yuen, 2015). It is reasonable to contend that for educational leaders

serving an oppressed and discriminated social group, utilitarianism can be a path to

promote collective change and mobility, and that therefore it operates *de facto* as a type of mobilizing ethics.

5.1 Practical implications

The findings of the present study have several practical implications. First, they suggest that educational leaders' leadership styles are related to their tendency toward particular forms of moral reasoning. The study may be used in leadership preparation programs, especially if such programs adopt the developmental outlook on both leadership (Drago-Severson, 2009) and moral reasoning (Turner et al., 2002). The findings can provide relevant theoretical content to leadership preparation programs, to expand prospective principals' understanding of their role as leaders and as ethical actors. Such understanding is essential for shaping future principals' professional identities. Drago-Severson (2012) suggested that peer group reflection can promote school leaders' growth, learning, and renewal. Incorporation of peer reflection into programs can assist school leaders to better understand and even change their leadership style and ethical reasoning. In addition, meeting acting principals and listening to them articulate their leadership style and reflect on their ethical decision-making processes can be highly effective in promoting prospective principals' leadership and ethical abilities.

Second, the findings may be relevant to central offices, which play a key role in shaping the external demands and pressures that influence principals' leadership and decision making. For example, an accountability-oriented policy environment is likely to cultivate higher level of transactional behaviors and use of utilitarian ethics. Central offices are therefore advised to promote policies that allow school principals

to exercise their own judgment, which is probably more flexible and better suited to the local challenges of their school and community. The findings may also be used to promote communication between policymakers and school principals concerning the ethical commitments of both groups. Moreover, the findings can be used to inform stakeholders involved in hiring school leaders, on how to predict the ethical judgment the school leaders will use in solving managerial dilemmas based on the candidates' past behavioral style. The candidates' insights on moral reasoning are particularly important in light of current school reforms that promote decentralization and autonomy for educational leaders (Berkovich, 2014).

Despite the contributions of the study to both theory and practice, it is important to note that in the design of the EPI we aspired to achieve construct distinctiveness, therefore we intentionally avoided mixing various types of ethics together. For example, a utilitarian decision approach of a school leader could also express and promote care for others. Hence, as in any case of operationalization, our work is also based on *a priori* assumptions regarding the boundaries of the variables used (Lyon, Lumpkin, & Dess, 2000), which influenced the measurement. Although *a priori* assumptions can be found in all operationalizations, we advocate awareness of this issue. Another limitation that should be noted is the low internal reliability of the transactional leadership scale (i.e., .64) which is lower than the conventional threshold (i.e., .70). Therefore, some caution is warranted in interpreting the results associated with this scale. This level, however, is commonly considered to be acceptable for this scale, as prior reports indicated that the internal reliability of the scale ranges from .64 to .68 (see Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse, & Sassenberg, 2011; Nir & Hameiri, 2014).

In sum, just as transformational and transactional leaders are considered mirror images in their behavioral styles, the ethical perspectives that they adopt, activism and

conformism, are opposites. Together, the two ethical patterns represent ethical

leadership, which assumes responsibility and expresses its personal moral

commitment in dialogue with structural and systemic constraints.

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