Typology of "Tough Love" Leadership in Urban Schools Facing Challenging Circumstances

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Abstract
The myth of "tough love" leadership emerges in cultural narratives as a superior approach to improving students' educational opportunities in urban schools facing challenging circumstances. This model, however, has not been conceptualized, and consequently, empirical research about it is lacking. We formulated a typology of tough love leadership as a mix of four behaviors that combine "tough" and "loving" approaches, with a focus on crisis management and a positive school vision. The study used the tough love leadership conceptualization to explore different mixes of tough love leadership, manifesting in four urban schools facing challenging circumstances. The study's implications are discussed.

Keywords: care, challenging circumstances, consideration, leadership, structure, tough love, zero tolerance

1. Introduction

> *There will be no free rides, no excuses. You already have two strikes against you: your name and your complexion... Math is the great equalizer... When you go for a job, the person giving you that job will not want to hear your problems; ergo, neither do I.*
>
> Jaime Escalante, to his students, in the movie *Stand and Deliver* (1988)

Hollywood filmmakers love returning to the story of a "heroic" educator in a troubled urban school. The films traditionally display a teacher-hero (e.g., *Blackboard Jungle, Dangerous Minds, To Sir, with Love, Stand and Deliver*) or a principal-hero (e.g., *Lean On Me, The Principal*) coping with low-achieving students with low socio-economic background and successfully transforming their lives. Often, the behaviors of on-screen heroic educators include "tough love" (Bulman, 2002). According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, tough love is "love or affectionate concern expressed in a stern or unsentimental manner (as through discipline) especially to promote responsible behavior." Undoubtedly, the movie industry regularly shapes on-film reality to maximize dramatic effects. The question remains, however, whether there is a kernel of truth at the heart of this description.

To begin answering this question, we must first look at the origin and uses of the term. The phrase *tough love* is said to have been coined by Milliken and Meredith, in their eponymous book, published in 1968. The book describes urban outreach attempts to improve the lives of youths in Manhattan *ghettoes* (urban areas populated by minority groups that face social, economic, and legal pressures). Since then, the

concept has become popular not only in movies, but also in therapy (e.g., Chang & Wang, 2009), social work (e.g., Jordan, 2000) and education (e.g., Hess, 2006). Nevertheless, the phenomenon has not been conceptualized and explored.

The present paper aims to shed light on the poorly understood concept of tough love leadership in urban schools facing challenging socio-economic settings. First, the problem is stated and central research questions are presented. Second, the paper elaborates on the literature dealing with educational leadership in challenging circumstances. Third, based on the literature, the paper conceptualizes "loving" and "tough" leadership. Fourth, the paper presents a typology of tough love leadership by combining different levels of loving and tough leadership. Fifth, the paper reports the results of an empirical study of principals' and teachers' narratives from four schools facing challenging circumstances. Lastly, the theoretical idea of tough love leadership is discussed in view of the empirical results.

2. Problem Statement and Central Research Questions

Milner and Lomotey (2014) argued that research knowledge concerning urban education is frequently sporadic, disconnected, and lacks coherent assessments of antecedents and outcomes. These shortcomings are often viewed as reflecting the broader challenge of a theoretical gap in urban education research, as few studies adopt a theoretical basis or build a theory (Milner & Lomotey, 2014). The present study hopes to address some of these challenges by contributing to the discourse on leadership in urban education research, specifically to the conversation on successful leadership.

Lomotey and Lowery (2014) reviewed studies that focused on successful black principals in urban areas and found two behaviors that aimed at directly

promoting students' learning and development: nurturing and commitment to students' academic performance. The researchers also described different committed behaviors to promote students' performance; on one hand, principals encouraged a culture of inclusion (e.g., Henderson, 2008), on the other, they used autocratic and directive behaviors (e.g., Miller, 2011). Therefore, both "loving" (e.g., nurturing, inclusive, etc.) and "tough" (e.g., autocratic, directive, etc.) behaviors appear to be central to successful urban education leadership. In the present article we wish to highlight the concept of "tough love."

In urban education research, knowledge about tough love in schools seems to be contradictory. On one hand, a case study by Beachum, Dentith, McCray, and Boyle (2008) about a Midwestern urban middle school noted that "[t]he principal is clearly dedicated to the students and seems to utilize a stern tough-love style. She is structured and maintains order. She also has a military background" (p. 198). On the other hand, we find a contrasting conceptualization in another work, in which "tough love" is used to describe a highly supportive and intimate approach among black teachers: "We could work close to kids—there was just camaraderie you know – and if I wanted to talk to you and tell you something . . . [I could] because being Black myself I could come up and sit with you and tell you: 'the only thing that is going to prepare you is an education, so get your act together now'" (Kelly, 2010, p. 156). Lastly, in Brown's (2004) study on culturally responsive teaching, one participant described tough love as combining support and structure: "tough love—I use it with students and teachers. I tell students, 'I'm here to help you. I'm not going to let you slide! You're not going to get away with acting the wrong way or not doing the work.' We use very structured routines here. Students know what to expect down to every

little detail." (p. 279). Reading these contrasting outlooks on tough love leaves readers with the sense that despite its importance, tough love is poorly understood.

The present study is organized around the following central research questions: What behaviors characterize tough love leadership in urban schools facing challenging socio-economic settings? What profile of tough love leadership behaviors emerge in successful urban schools operating in challenging contexts?

3. Literature Review

3.1 Leadership in Challenging Circumstances

There is a keen interest of the scholarly community in understanding the dynamics of successful schools that face challenging socio-cultural circumstances (Harris, 2002; Harris & Chapman, 2002). Schools in challenging circumstances, often share several challenging features such as (Ainscow, Muijs, & West, 2006; Hargreaves & Harris, 2015; Harris & Chapman, 2002; Reynolds, Hopkins, Potter, & Chapman, 2001): (a) students from families coping with poverty or unemployment; (b) a student population dominated by a non-hegemonic ethnicity or having a multiethnic composition; (c) high ratio of students who have not mastered the teaching language; (d) parents who do not sufficiently support the students' learning; and (e) challenging socio-spatial location (e.g., urban, inner-city, rural, etc.). Success under these circumstances is usually framed as having been achieved "against the odds." It is not surprising, therefore, that leadership in schools facing challenging circumstances became the subject of research.

Drawing on popular conceptualizations of leadership styles in the educational leadership literature, Chapman and Harris (2004) argued that leaders in schools with challenging conditions need to display both transformational and transactional

behaviors. Effective leaders in schools facing challenging circumstances need to have a multi-dimensional behavioral range because of the complexity involved in promoting a positive academic climate in such schools (Chapman & Harris, 2004). Frequently, schools in challenging environments cope with the outcomes of oppressive social structures and public policies that make students' learning, school support of learning, and home support of learning difficult (Chapman & Harris, 2004; Harris et al., 2006; Quartz & TEP Research Group, 2003; Reynolds, Clarke, & Harris, 2004).

The empirical exploration of successful principals' behaviors operating in challenging circumstances has led to identifying two sets of behaviors: a set of "soft" leadership behaviors, which include emotional sensitivity, empowerment, and trust; and a set of "hard" leadership behaviors, which include setting high expectations and monitoring (Harris & Chapman, 2004). "Soft" leadership behaviors are based on a socio-affective dynamic and rely on interpersonal strategies such as persuasion, appreciation, encouragement, support, and collaboration, which motivate individuals to pursue the desired goals (Holt & Marques, 2012; Rao, 2013; Stoker, 2006). By contrast, "hard" leadership behaviors are based on a command-and-control model, and rely on providing instrumental structure and systems that drive or guide individuals to achieve the desired objectives (Rushmer, Kelly, Lough, Wilkinson, & Davies, 2004). These notions are somewhat parallel to the classic differentiation between relationship-oriented and task-oriented leadership (see Yukl, 1999), but the classic differentiation stresses aims, whereas ours stresses mechanisms.

The literature also suggests that successful teachers operating in challenging circumstances adopt both soft and hard behaviors: on one hand, they emphasize student-teacher relationships, and on the other they maintain task-oriented,

authoritative teaching in classrooms (Edmonds, 1979; Shann, 1998). The combination of soft and hard behaviors seems integral to successful leadership in schools facing challenging circumstances. We argue that leaders in schools with challenging conditions face a dilemma between crisis management and vision. Leaders in challenging schools continually manage "tensions and problems directly related to the particular circumstances and context of the school" (Harris, 2002; pp. 23-24). Successful leaders alternate between coping with incidents (or crises) and attempting to promote and institutionalize their vision of a positive academic climate.

Below we conceptualize tough love leadership as combining soft and hard behaviors. The interest in leadership behavior in schools with challenging conditions is motivated by findings showing that the personal attributes of leaders in these contexts do not allow to discriminate between highly effective and less effective leaders (Sachs, 2004). We believe that tough love leadership may be seen as the educators' reaction to low expectations and to racial, ethnic, and poverty biases prevalent in challenging circumstances (Wilson, 2015). We begin by discussing soft behaviors (i.e., loving leadership), and hard behaviors (i.e., tough leadership), which can be both oriented toward crisis management and the fulfillment of the leader's vision. Next, we suggest a typology that integrates the two to outline different types of tough love leadership.

3.2 Loving Leadership

Our review of the literature suggests two key concepts that can be interpreted as manifestations of loving leadership in education. The first is "consideration leadership," which is defined as "the degree to which a leader shows concern and respect for followers, looks out for their welfare, and expresses

appreciation and support" (Judge, Woolf, Hurst, & Livingston, 2008, p. 347). This concept, which was identified in 1945 by the Ohio State leadership studies program (Schriesheim & Kerr, 1974), dominated leadership research until 1980s, when it was integrated in transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Judge, Piccolo, and Ilies (2004) broke down consideration behaviors further, and noted that their theoretical and operational components included a relational orientation, trusting and treating members as equal, concern for the welfare of members, and being approachable and accessible. This manifestation of loving leadership has a universalistic focus.

The second concept that may be interpreted as a manifestation of loving leadership is "caring leadership." The concept of care has been widely discussed in educational philosophy. Noddings (2005) suggested that caring was a "way of being in [human] relation, not a set of specific behaviors" (p. 17). Noddings (2001) considered care as an ethical commitment to sustain a relationship, most critical in difficult situations. According to Noddings, caring in education is situational and not universalistic. Following Noddings, researchers have suggested that caring characteristics may be seen more broadly as combining care and education ("educare"). This view reflects caring not merely in its narrow meaning but as part of the culture and the conduct of the workplace (Fielding & Moss, 2011; Warin, 2014; Wrigley, Thomson, & Lingard, 2012). Few theoretical and empirical works have focused on caring as a form of educational leadership (van der Vyver, van der Westhuizen, & Meyer, 2014). Recently, Louis, Murphy, and Smylie (2016) conceptualized caring leadership in educational administration as integrating interest in members and knowledge about them, motivational displacement (i.e., putting the needs of other ahead of one's own), mutuality, authenticity, and situationality (as

opposed to being rule-bound or driven). Thus, the recent conceptualization of caring leadership by Louis and colleagues appears to agree with Noddings's key elements of relational ethics that this manifestation of loving leadership has to do with a situational focus.

3.3 Tough Leadership

Two constructs appear from the literature to be fundamental when considering tough leadership. The first is the concept of "initiating structure leadership," which is the degree to which the leader provides psychological structure for subordinates by doing such things as assigning particular tasks, specifying procedures to be followed, clarifying his expectations of subordinates, and scheduling and work to be done" (House, 1971, p. 321). This is a task-oriented leadership style that focuses on laying down goals and procedures, communicating expectations that rules must be followed, and monitoring progress toward objectives (Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies, 2004). In a sense, it is somewhat similar to the notion of direction-setting school leadership, which emphasizes the framing of school goals and conveys them to teachers and students (Sun & Leithwood, 2015).

The second concept that can be interpreted as a manifestation of tough leadership is "zero-tolerance leadership." The term "zero tolerance" refers to an administrative policy that imposes harsh disciplinary measures on all offenses, primarily those related to violence, regardless of the severity of the offence, the situation, or the identity of the perpetrator (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). The purpose of zero-tolerance behaviors is to remove "dangerous" students immediately and to send a clear warning signal to other students (Gregory & Cornell, 2009). The logic behind this leadership style is that tolerating negative phenomena rewards and reinforces

them (Cleary, Hunt, Walter, & Robertson, 2009). Zero-tolerance leadership has similarities with highly authoritarian and controlling parenting (Gregory & Cornell, 2009). For example, research about the fathers of high-achieving sons from minority groups identified a highly directive and restrictive parenting style that includes clear rules and discipline, with the message "my way or the highway" often proving effective (Greif, Hrabowski, & Maton, 1998). According to the researchers, this controlling style was associated with the fathers' views on promoting children's learning.

3.4 Conceptualizing Tough Love Leadership

We formulated a 2×2 framework to describe all possible variations of tough love leadership adopted by principals and teachers in schools in challenging circumstances: leadership behaviors (tough vs. loving) × temporal goal (crisis management-oriented vs. vision-oriented). The two types of leadership behaviors are tough and loving. Our logic in constructing this dimension is based on canonical Ohio State University leadership studies from the 1950s, particularly, Halpin and Winer's (1957) factorial research. The researchers who explored the structure of leadership behaviors found two factors characterizing leadership behaviors (one structuring and the other supportive) that were independent of each other. We also introduced a temporal goal dimension, crisis management-oriented vs. vision-oriented, which cuts across both types of leadership behaviors. Some scholars regard incidents as isolated events that can be addressed individually, whereas others adopt a holistic approach that emphasizes systemic improvement through measures taken by leaders, the team, and all stakeholders (Cornell & Sheras, 1998).

The typology outlined above is based on several assumptions: (a) certain school leadership behaviors are inherently "hard" and others inherently "soft" (b) hard and soft school leadership behaviors are independent of each other; (c) hard and soft behaviors are not competing styles but complementary ones; (d) in both hard and soft behaviors, there is a trade-off between long-term focus on positive climate and a short-term focus on crisis management around individual incidents; and (e) leadership in urban schools operating in challenging environments can be characterized by hard and soft behaviors and by their temporal orientation.

As shown in Figure 1, it is possible to distinguish between crisis management-oriented loving leadership and vision-oriented loving leadership, the former manifesting in caring behaviors and the latter in consideration behaviors. Similarly, crisis management-oriented tough leadership and vision-oriented tough leadership are different, the former manifested in zero-tolerance behaviors and the latter in initiating structure behaviors.

	Loving leadership	**Tough leadership**
Vision-oriented	Consideration behaviors	Initiating structure behaviors
Crisis management-oriented	Caring behaviors	Zero tolerance behaviors

Figure 1. Typology of tough love leadership by function

We suggest further that in schools with challenging circumstances, effective leadership involves both hard and soft behaviors, and it is associated with generally

favorable outcomes. For example, an effective leader (principal or teacher) in a challenging school, who displays tough love leadership, may adopt loving consideration behaviors, but when violent incidents occur, may resort to tough zero-tolerance behaviors. In the field of education, Irvine and Fraser (1998) used the term "warm demanders" to describe successful teachers working with minorities, because they adopt authoritative teaching, at the same time managing to create personal relationships with students. Naturally, tough love leaders must know how to choose between the two components and balance them, for what they consider to be the good of the students.

4. Method

In-depth qualitative case studies are ideal for generating or testing explanatory theories about a phenomenon (Eisenhardt, 1989). Following the case study tradition, we used multiple data sources to achieve rich descriptive data about the cases (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2013). Data collection included narrative interviews and on-site observations in schools. Schools were purposefully selected, based on their suitability for generating insights about tough love leadership in schools facing challenging circumstances (Coyne, 1997). The interview and observation data were complemented by effectiveness data (climate and pedagogy) obtained from a Ministry of Education survey.

4.1 Sample

This multi-case study included four urban Israeli state schools (three primary schools and one high school) facing challenging circumstances. As a selection strategy, the researchers used their prior knowledge of schools and their leadership, gained in past

research projects. The schools were selected based on two main criteria: peripheral geographic location and low socioeconomic status. In Israel, periphery is defined as remote geographical areas and distinct geo-social areas with low economic, political, social, and cultural capitals, compared with the central areas. Being located in the periphery also affects access to public resources, the quality of public services, and students' educational opportunities (Haisraeli, 2008). Schools A, B, and C are located in the northern or southern periphery of Israel. School D is located at the periphery of a metropolis. The socioeconomic status of the schools was determined based on their ranking in the database of the Ministry of Education. The combination of the two dimensions yields schools located in the periphery and ranking low on the socioeconomic scale. These schools face challenging circumstances. At each school separately, we looked for the combination of the hard and soft behaviors to classify each using the 2×2 theoretical typology presented above.

4.2 Data Collection

We sought narratives that represent a diversity of experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2016) and capture the spirit of the schools. To gain a broader understanding of the leaders' work and leadership experiences, we interviewed both principals and teachers. We conducted in-depth interviews with four principals and eight teachers in middle-management positions (e.g., teachers who are part of the leading team of the schools and hold positions as vice principals and coordinators) (Harris, 2005). The sample of leaders (principals and teachers) comprised 10 women and 2 men, working in the Jewish secular state-school sector, aged between 37 and 64, with seniority ranging from 10 to 35 years.

Narrative inquiry is a way of organizing human experience, considering that humans lead storied lives, individually and socially (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Based on the phenomenological tradition, we focused on personal narratives "as windows into the lived experience of the narrators" (Bernard, Wutich, & Ryan, 2016, p. 286). Two main open-coded questions guided the interviews: (a) How can you describe the work at your school? and (b) What are the behaviors or the strategies you need to apply in your school? All the interviews were recorded and transcribed. As part of each data collection wave, researchers also preformed on-site observations in the schools. The observations were conducted during lessons, in the hallways and in the courtyard, during recesses, to understand the atmosphere in the school without interrupting the schedule. Observations were summarized in notes. The qualitative data were complemented by effectiveness data derived from a survey of the Ministry of Education concerning the over- and under-performance of schools on a range of climate and pedagogical aspects, as perceived by students (e.g., positive relations, care, violence, high expectations, feedback, etc.), compared to equivalent schools with similar socioeconomic status (SES).

4.3 Data Analysis

We analyzed the qualitative data using the directed content analysis approach, in which insights of preliminary theory serve as codes that guide the analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The framework in Figure 1 served as the primary coding guide. Our analysis was performed in two stages. In the first stage, we focused on constructing detailed images of the principals' and teachers' leadership behaviors in school, and analyzing each individual story. In the second stage, we integrated the stories at school level, using the supportive data from on-site observations, aiming to generate a

portrait of each school. We then expanded the qualitative thematic narrative by incorporating the effectiveness data from the annual survey of the Ministry of Education.

4.4 Ethics

Two main issues were carefully addressed to protect the interviewees: consent and confidentiality (Gibton, 2016). Participants agreed to take part in the study of their own free will. When the interview was scheduled and before it started, we made it clear to the participants that they were free to choose not to answer any questions, partially or completely, during the interview. Moreover, we deleted identifying details from the final paper, to protect not only the interviewees but their schools and environments as well.

5. Findings

Below we present the findings for the four schools we examined. For each school we present findings connected to two central aspects: leadership patterns, as reflected in the narrative analysis we performed for the principal and two staff members, and school effectiveness, as reflected in the performance of the school relative to equivalent schools with similar SES composition. When analyzing leadership patterns, we examined expressions of tough love leadership behaviors, as well as orientation toward long-term vision and short-term crisis management. We examined the leadership patterns based on the formal leadership style presented by the principals and by the informal style presented by teachers. We also examined school effectiveness based on parameters of school climate in the students' perceptions (according to the national survey).

5.1 The case of School A: "Work with the children"

The first case is that of School A, a medium size, primary state school, located in the southern periphery. The school belongs the secular stream, and serves 300 students from an urban background, many of them from single-parent families. Many of the students' parents are immigrants. In this school, we identified a formal policy, whereby the principal combines loving and tough leadership behaviors with emphasis on the long term. This pattern included consideration behaviors as well as initial structure behaviors (see Figure 2).
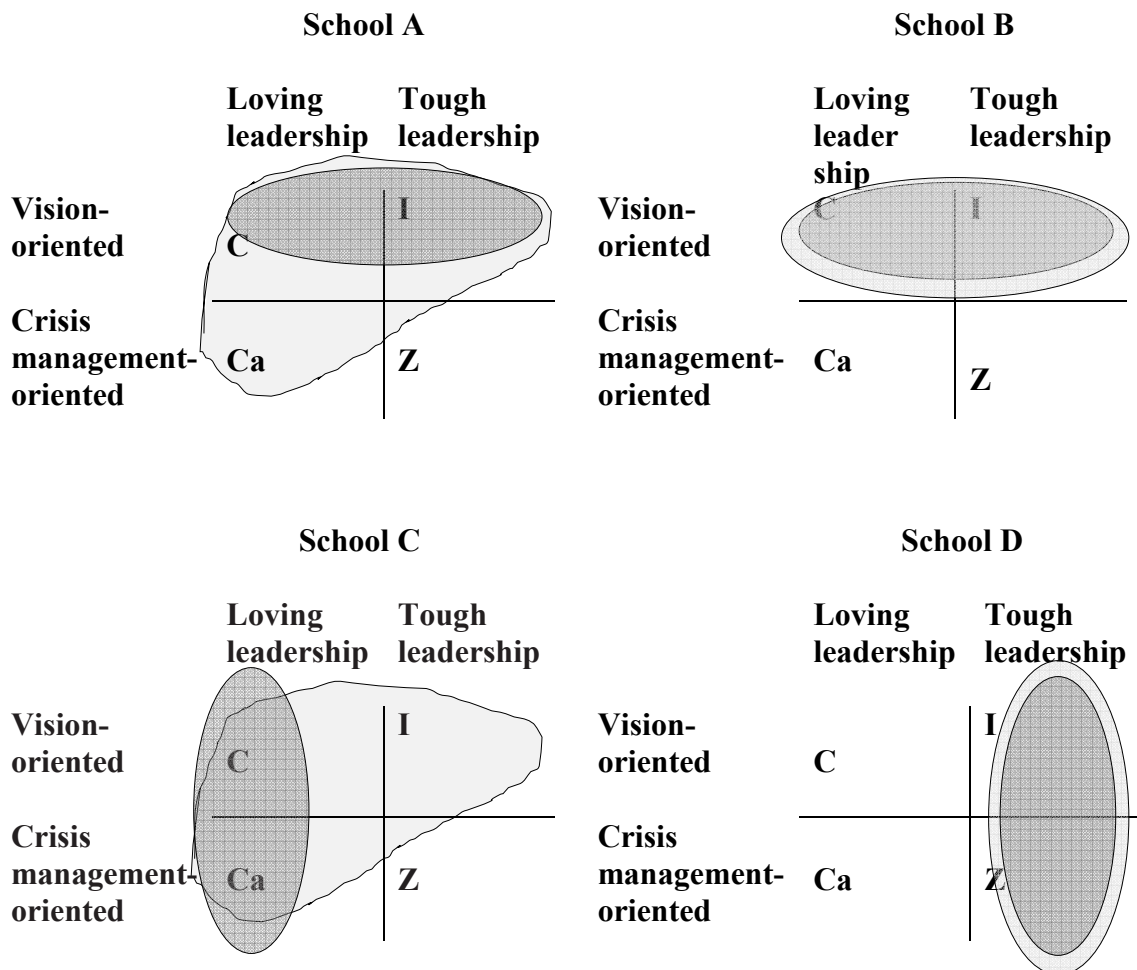

Figure 2. Patterns of tough love leadership, as they emerged in the schools. C=Consideration behaviors; I=Initiating structure behaviors; Ca=Caring behaviors; Z=Zero-tolerance behaviors; Dark grey represents formal school style (i.e., principal), and light gray represents informal school style (i.e., teachers).

The dual pattern of behaviors is manifest when coping with various discipline problems in school, for example, in the way in which the school handles the problem of late arrivals. The following quotation reveals the principal's decision to initiate disciplinary measures in school, but also to contain the students:

> We had to deal with many late arrivals. This year I told the entire staff: "let's organize a campaign to handle matters so they won't come late to school. We won't allow the children to enter the school…" We decided to work with the children, not with the mothers. Individual talks, a personalized plan for each child to see how they can get to school on time, and here we saw the first signs of success. (Principal)

The focus was on drafting a long-term plan for the children, making sure not to derail it by short-term measures. The school leadership model, as presented by the principal, is also present in the teachers' accounts, which emphasize long-term considerations allied with structuring behaviors:

> Work procedures are totally clear. The clearer and more defined they are to everyone, the greater the contribution, I think, to setting distinct boundaries for the staff. They offer a sense of security, definitely attentiveness, definitely empathy, as well as coping tools, professional work tools. And of course, the whole topic of encouraging and publicizing successes, either in the framework of the staff or outside, causes much more pleasure than frustration, I think. (Teacher 2)

Another teacher also cited consideration behaviors, commenting on a different aspect of school activity, aimed at promoting student engagement in all school activities, despite non-school setbacks:

When there's a school ceremony, I'm always prepared, and bring T-shirts
from home. We don't say, "you can't attend the ceremony because your
mother didn't wash your shirt." (Teacher 1)

At the same time, some tension arose between the principal and the teaching
staff. The teachers pressured the principal to apply a more stringent orientation of
crisis management, emphasizing zero tolerance:

They (the teachers) want me to be more severe, use more punishments and
suspensions. And I say okay, we'll suspend the child and then he goes back
home, what have we gained by this? (Principal)

In a different excerpt, we found an informal pattern in this school that differs
from the formal pattern displayed by the principal because it also includes care
behaviors. One teacher stressed a caring behavior in the following excerpt about her
reaction to a work crisis:

A boy photographed me on his iPhone without my knowledge… He
photographed me, distorted the picture, and put it on Facebook. And even
though I was angry with him, I didn't file a complaint with the police, because
I didn't want to destroy his future. And I didn't share this with too many
people. Although in my position (as vice principal) I encourage teachers not to
remain silent, to complain, I myself chose to say nothing. (Teacher 1)

This model attests to a balance between love and toughness, a long-term
orientation, and complementary informal caring behaviours. Despite the tension
between the principal and staff over the preference of the latter to apply tough, short-
term crisis management, the principal's formal leadership seems to be accepted by the
teachers, and the school is conducted in accordance with it. The effectiveness of this

pattern is evident when we examine the students' perceptions of school climate and of the pedagogical atmosphere. Table 1 shows that the school over-performs in four areas with respect to its reference group.

Table 1
School Effectiveness as Manifested in Climate and Pedagogical Aspects

	General feeling among students	*Caring rapport between teachers and students*	*Teachers' fairness and respect toward students*	*Positive relationships between students and their peers*	*School efforts to encourage the sense of protection*	*Involvement in violent incidents*	*Proper behavior of students in class*	*High expectations of students and teachers and faith in the students' abilities*	*Acceptance of teacher evaluation and feedback*	*Strict checking of homework by teachers*
School A	11	-2	11	-4	15	-1	10	4	-4	3
School B	4	-3	5	2	-5	-1	6	4	2	--
School C	4	-2	6	-3	5	-5	8	0	1	--
School D	0	4	0	-11	7	0	-11	2	5	1

Note. Original scores represent the percentage of students in agreement with statements in the annual national survey. The scores presented here are the difference between the school and the average score of equivalent schools with similar SES composition (the reference group was defined by the National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation). Dark grey represents over-performance (school exceeds the average by 5%) between the school and the average of the equivalent schools with similar SES composition; light grey represents under-performance (school falls below the average by 5%) between the school and the average of the equivalent schools with similar SES composition.

5.1 The case of School B: "We don't accept it here and we work a lot on self-image"

School B is a large secondary school owned and operated by an NGO. It is situated in a small city in the northern periphery. The school is part of the secular stream. It has a student population of 1100. The formal pattern of the principal and of the teaching staff is similar to that of school A, and it reflects a combination of tough and loving leadership behaviors, with a long-term orientation and a positive vision (Figure 2).

On one hand, the school insists on clarifying expectations, maintaining standards, and handling issues correctly; on the other hand, there is strong emphasis on relating equitably to everyone and on teachers understanding the children's socioeconomic background. For example, there was a strong concern for students after school hours:

> It's not Tel-Aviv [large metropolitan city in the center of the country], there's no cinema in town, hardly any discotheques or clubs. On special occasions you can have a good time here too. Yes, we organize parties on Hanukkah, and activities and parties so the children will have somewhere to go. It's not really our job, and not our work hours either. (Principal)

The teachers also concur that the desire for developing the students has led to an integrated behavioral pattern:

> Saying "I can't do it" — we don't accept that here. There are clear expectations, and demands… Our kids go to pre-army interviews, they come from peripheral regions of the country, and right away their image is affected… But they feel inferior because they're from an outlying region. We work a lot on self-image. (Teacher 1)

Another teacher further illustrated this pattern when addressing disciplinary aspects:

All students must come to school in uniform. We enforce this regulation, and the parents are obligated to help us… On the other hand, a student who's late to class must come the next day at 07:30. And if there are students who I know have to help their parents in the morning, take a brother to kindergarten because the parents have left for work already, or help their father with the insulin shots, I don't give that sort of punishment and must be creative in the matter. Every punishment is weighed to take into account the children's needs and their family situation. (Teacher 2)

The teachers focus on specific tasks and objectives, like taking responsibility or handling expectations and demands. But they also express the desire to help the students develop higher self-value and overcome their disadvantaged setting. This attitude is reflected in the long-term consideration that broadcasts concern and respect for students. We identified a full correlation between the formal and informal pattern that emerged from the participants' accounts.

In sum, there seems to be a good fit in this school model between the behavior patterns of the principal and of the teachers, reflected in a combination of toughness and love, and in an emphasis on the long term. The school does not adopt a remedial approach, which is characterized by care in the short term. The effectiveness of this policy can be found in the students' perception of school climate and pedagogical atmosphere. On comparison with its reference group, the school over-performs in two parameters and under-preforms in one (Table 1).

5.3 The case of School C: "It's vital that the girls be happy"

School C is a large primary state school (470 students) for girls only, located in a small city in the northern periphery. It belongs to the ultra-Orthodox religious stream, and serves not only students from the city but also from villages in its geographic proximity. The formal model of school C emphasizes aspects of love both in its vision-orientation (i.e., consideration) and crisis management (i.e., care) (Figure 2).

The principal's leadership pattern stresses offering love and affection during short-term crisis management, toward both teachers and students. This is combined with attempts to consistently show concern and respect, at the same time providing ongoing support, based on a long-term vision. According to the principal, this is how the combination works:

> When there's a problem with a girl, we invite her parents and work seriously together with them. It's also an opportunity for me to work with the girl, although in fact I simultaneously project messages to the teacher who takes it on herself to be with her, shapes her behavior and gives her more attention and love. We work along two parallel tracks. This is a girl who recently joined us from another school, whose parents recently divorced. We try to understand the girl, to feel and love her. Later we will design a good path for her, together with the homeroom teacher and the school counselor. (Principal)

At the same time, teachers noted that the formal emphasis on loving behaviors in the short and long term comes at the expense of tough behaviors needed in the long term:

> In general, the teachers know that the disciplinary aspect is lacking, it's not strong enough in the principal, it's not a critical issue for her. It's as if it's

important for her that there's discipline, but it's also vital to her for the girls to be happy. (Teacher 1).

I personally tend to be a highly organized, methodical person. I need that order, and when it doesn't exist, I find it confusing. The management style here at school is due to our really exceptional principal and her desire to create more experiences of joy in the present. But sometimes it clashes strongly with me, and I end up frustrated (Teacher 2).

It is not surprising that the formal pattern prevalent in the school has been complemented by an informal one, which emerged among the teachers, as manifest in the following excerpt:

I have good relations, I always turn up, always smile, even if, for example, there are problems with children; then I really make a great attempt to solve it in extremely pleasant ways… At the same time, I don't back down on my demands about what has to be done (Teacher 2) .

The outcomes of the pattern followed by School C are reflected in the students' perceptions of school climate and pedagogical atmosphere (Table 1). School C over-preforms with respect to its reference group. The outcome is similar to that of School A, which also covered the same three types of love and tough behaviors in formal and informal models.

5.4 The case of School D: "There are laws and regulations, and you're faced with a dilemma"

School D is a medium size primary state school (299 students) located in a large metropolitan city in the center of Israel. The school belongs to the secular stream, and

serves inner-city students from disadvantaged families, living at the periphery of the metropolis. Unlike the three previous schools, School D follows a formal model that underscores tough leadership both with respect to the long-term vision and to short-term crisis management (Figure 2).

It appears that there was a clear fit between the principal's attitude and that of the teachers concerning the suitably of the tough leadership model. An example of the school's zero-tolerance policy can be seen in the following excerpt:

> Here at school, we work according to the Safety Rule, which we drafted ten years ago already. Four years later, we drew up the Ways of Pleasantness Rule, which is a model for appropriate verbal behavior. Then, two years ago, we launched the Golden Way program. All these rules have to do with protecting the children, and also received a national award from the Minister of Education. I maintain that they also protect the teachers. Why? Because they totally bring the teacher to a very well-defined position vis-à-vis the children. If there is some sort of problem or violence between the children, there are rules and regulations, you are very organized, and you're not facing a dilemma. (Principal)

The principal's words reveal her emphasis on a proactive process that lucidly sets out expectations and objectives about solving problems of violence and quarrels between children. The process stresses short-term solutions, with zero tolerance, a structured conduct for complying with the process, and clear objectives deriving from it.

We found that teachers in School D embrace the principal's formal model. For example, one teacher described how tough leadership behaviors and structuring guide her work, also with the parents of an undisciplined child:

> Parents start to cry. It cannot happen to my son, you misread him, he doesn't have problems, you need to contain him. I listen and I say, let's check. How do you manage at home in the morning? What's happening? Then you can see. The child has problems with boundaries. (Teacher 1)

In the account of a different teacher, we identified a similar emphasis on tough leadership behaviors of structuring when discussing disciplinary issues with the parents:

> I have a good relationship with parents, I always come smiling… but I don't back down on the demands and on what needs to be done.

There seems to be a fit between the principal's formal leadership model and the informal one presented and implemented by the teachers. The effectiveness of this tough leadership model, which does not stress characteristics of loving behaviors, is expressed in the imbalance in the students' perceptions of school climate and pedagogical atmosphere (Table 1). We found that the school over-preforms its respective reference group in only two parameters, and under-preforms in two others.

6. Discussion

The present study focuses on the conceptualization and exploration of tough love leadership in urban schools and the assessment of its outcomes. Although the concept of tough love leadership in education has been around for over 50 years and has become part of popular culture, education administration research has not defined or

explored it. This preliminary study sought to establish the theoretical ground for defining the concept as a multi-dimensional work model, and to demonstrate its explanatory value.

The research offers several key insights into the phenomenon of tough love leadership. First, it demonstrates that tough love leadership is a multi-dimensional concept that combines both soft and hard leadership behaviors. Some scholars found that in their interactions with students, urban educators are confronted with a choice based on "contrasting assumptions and practices about empowerment and control" (Reitzug & Patterson, 1998, p. 150), but our study suggests the opposite: successful coping with the complexity of urban education demands not an either-or but an inclusive mode of operation. Our results are consistent with recent multidimensional conceptualizations of leadership, which argue that educational leaders use different behaviors simultaneously to address the complex tasks at hand (Urick & Bowers, 2014). Thus, our study offers a more refined understanding of successful leadership than do earlier discussions in urban education research. Adopting the typology and findings of the current study leads to the conclusion that "ideal" management of staff in urban settings often incorporates both hard and soft leadership behaviors, some of which can be regarded as long-term-oriented (e.g., Alder, 2002). Some of the works that addressed care or nurturing of principals and teachers in urban education discussed different profiles of hard and soft leadership behaviors, with various temporal orientations, within the tough love typology we suggested. The same picture of a compound construct that encompasses a diverse set of basic behaviors emerges also from works on commitment to students' achievements by successful urban principals (e.g., Lomotey & Lowery, 2014). Therefore, past insights must be reinterpreted in light of current findings.

Second, the present research demonstrates that some forms of tough love leadership at the organizational level are more effective than others, being associated with higher performance in certain desired outcomes, such as students' perceptions of school climate and pedagogical atmosphere. In particular, we found that the three-component form of tough love leadership in schools A and C (Figure 2), incorporating both tough leadership and loving leadership (in other words, embracing positive, long-term-oriented vision and engaging caring behaviors in crisis management) showed more favorable climate outcomes than their respective reference groups. When considering a school with the two-component form of tough love leadership (school B), we noted the importance of the two long-term leadership behaviors in challenging circumstances. The results are consistent with Ohio State University leadership follow-up works, which indicated that leaders who were high on both consideration and initiation of structure behaviors were regarded as most effective and contributed most to their followers' morale and productivity (Fleishman, & Harris, 1962; Oaklander & Fleishman, 1964). One explanation of the over-performance of urban schools due to long-term leadership behaviors is related to expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964). Based on expectancy theory, it is possible to suggest that tough love leadership, which is long-term vision-oriented, unlike crisis management-oriented behaviors, provides students not only with strong expectancy and instrumental components, but also with a strong valence component. Thus, tough love leadership, which is vision-oriented, is likely to generate a reciprocal motivation cycle.

Third, the present research demonstrates the importance of promoting a positive vision over crisis management in successful urban education leadership. These results are consistent with several earlier works in urban education research. For example, Cucchiara, Rooney, and Robertson-Kraft's (2015) study on the

turnaround of low-performing urban schools found that organizational stability, clearly defined norms, and shared expectations, together with a supportive culture developed by administrators, greatly promoted school improvement. Thus, initiating structure and consideration behaviors emerged as relevant in the turnaround of low-performing urban schools. In a complementary way, the study indicated that crisis management, specifically zero tolerance, is less suited to lead urban schools successfully. The under-representation of zero tolerance behaviors in our findings may suggests that pervious literature addressing the problems associated with these behaviors is correct. "My way or the highway" policies in schools are said to create either/or dichotomized relationships that place students and teachers into a mandatory dynamic of inclusion or exclusion (Freedman & Easley, 2004). McCarthy and Benally (2003) suggested that zero-tolerance classroom management puts minority children who struggle with school norms at risk, making it more difficult for them to succeed. The present study promotes a positive vision over crisis management (the priority of being a "firelighter" over being a "firefighter," in the words of Barber and Warn (2005)).

Fourth, the present research shows that an interplay exists between principals' and teachers' behaviors that shapes the tough love leadership model at the organizational level. We noted that in some cases, principals' and teachers' behaviors were tightly coordinated, whereas in other cases the coordination was loose. Analysis shows that at the organizational level, tough love leadership represents a unique form of distributed leadership (Gronn, 2002). When principals and teachers are tightly coordinated, we view it as a form of "coordinated distribution," where individuals work in sequence to complete a given leadership task (Spillane, 2006). When principals and teachers are loosely coordinated, we view it as a form of "collective

distribution," where individuals work separately but interdependently to complete a given leadership task (Spillane, 2006). The former is likely to embody a highly planned alignment, in which responsibilities are deliberately distributed, whereas the latter embodies a spontaneous, unplanned alignment (Leithwood et al., 2006). As described in the findings, such spontaneous, unplanned pattern often results in internal tension between the principal and the staff over the suitable school policy, but it is the most effective as far the outcomes are concerned. Spontaneous, unplanned alignment and disagreements within schools seem to be part of effective tough love leadership. It is therefore advisable to develop norms and procedures that help resolve constructively conflicts in schools (Uline, Tschannen-Moran, & Perez, 2003) and to work on increasing shared expectations between principals and teachers (Price, 2012).

The present study has several limitations. First, as the concept of tough love leadership touches upon distributed leadership, the current framework does not take into account power relations that might influence it (Bolden, 2011). Additional research is needed on the effect of power relations between principal and teachers concerning the pattern of tough love leadership at the organizational level. Second, there is a need for research on the emergence and development of tough love leadership among new principals, and the outcomes of such leadership. Earlier findings indicate that highly considerate leaders can increase the level of structure without adverse consequences, but different effects have been found for less considerate leaders (Fleishman & Harris, 1962). Therefore, the extent of flexibility in the dimensions defining tough love leadership should be further investigated. Third, the data on effectiveness focused strictly on students' perceptions of school climate and pedagogical atmosphere. Future works are advised to explore the effects of tough love leadership in schools with challenging circumstances in relation to other

effectiveness indices, such as promoting students achievement, developing a learning community, and involving parents (Muijs, Harris, Chapman, Stoll, & Russ, 2004; Reynolds et al., 2014). Fourth, we did not address cultural aspects and social affiliations. Prior urban education research suggests that students from different cultures may elicit different priorities from educators (Garza, 2009), and that same leadership behaviors may have different meanings or manifestations, depending on the educators' race and gender (Lomotey & Lowery, 2014). Thus, additional research is needed on these issues.

The present work sought to conceptualize tough love leadership in challenging urban schools and reify the heroic image of principals and teachers embracing it. Note, however, that this is only one, bottom-up path that educators may follow in coping with complex sociopolitical settings. It does not replace the responsibility of the state and of policymakers to provide educators with proper teacher training, smaller class sizes, technological tools, and additional financial resources. This view is echoed in Crow and Scribner's (2014) claim that successful urban school leaders need to master not only the "theocratic" aspects of leadership, but must also have moral and political identity, which is needed for working with the community and the system effectively. Tough love leadership may produce positive outcomes, and it is augmented when leaders also promote the broader social and policy changes needed to ensure that disadvantaged students, often from oppressed and marginalized groups, succeed academically and develop in a manner that opens better life opportunities before them.

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