

The Strategy of Strategic Leadership Development of Kindergarten Administrators in Shijiazhuang City, Hebei Province, P.R. China

Guo Guangwei, Pimon Wisedsang*, Pradit Silabut**, Pongsak Tongpanchang**

Doctor of Education in Educational Administration Sisaket Rajabhat University

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were: 1) to study the factors that affected the strategic leadership development of kindergarten administrators in Shijiazhuang city, Hebei province, P.R. China, 2) to construct the strategies of the strategic leadership development of kindergarten administrators in Shijiazhuang city, and 3) to evaluate the strategies of the strategic leadership development of kindergarten administrators in Shijiazhuang city.

The sample in this study was comprised of 205 teachers and 27 administrators from nine kindergartens at Shijiazhuang city, derived through Krejcie and Morgan Table. The instruments of this research included questionnaire, focus group meeting and connoisseur evaluation Seminar conducted with quantitative methods. The statistics which employed to analyze the data were mean, standard deviation, percentages, and also employed regression to analyze the data.

The results of the study were summarized as follows:

1. The factors that affect strategic leadership development included: 1) Capacity for Change of administrator, 2) Communication skills of administrator, 3) Learning ability of administrator, 4) Managerial ability of administrator, 5) Decision-making ability of administrator.
2. The strategies of the strategic leadership development of kindergarten administrators in Shijiazhuang city were included education administrative department level, kindergarten level, and social level.
3. The results of the strategies evaluation showed that the suitability, feasibility, utility and congruency were all at high level.

Keywords: Strategy, Factors, Strategic leadership development, Kindergarten administrator, Shijiazhuang city in Hebei Province of China

Introduction

With the economic globalization and the rapid development of science and technology, the world today keeps changing. International trade and globalization have accelerated the process of interdependence for most countries in the world, strategic leadership in different national contexts becomes a relevant and critical issue. Being one of the most important features of the current education, social change has become a tremendous driving force to the educational reform. Additionally, education has increasingly significantly played its roles in enhancing the sustainability of social and economic development, resulting in the establishments of multi-levels of education settings ranging from kindergarten to higher education in which quality, in the meantime, is absolutely indispensable.

*Advisor

**Co-advisor

The study of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in China has been closely watched by China's political and economic reforms and progress. At present, the Chinese government has shown strong interest in early childhood education. In 2001, it implemented the policy in the form of “Kindergarten Education Guidance (Trial Version)” and implemented the National Education Reform and Long-Term Planning Development Plan in 2010 (2010–2020). Since 1990, China’s kindergarten education has undergone tremendous changes. In recent years, China has introduced various Western courses and teaching models, such as the Montessori Education Program, Reggio Emilia, Development Applicable Practices (DAP) and project methods.

The purpose of investigating competitive leadership is because we believe that many kindergarten school leaders have not invested heavily in strategic efforts. As Price Water House Coopers LLP (PWC)'s independent research on UK school leadership, many principals recognize that they are working hard to create enough time to effectively address some of the strategic issues they need to address. Driven by a large number of business delivery issues that school leaders must address now. The data suggests that some school leaders are more satisfied with strategic roles than for strategic roles.

We believe that this silence on strategic leadership is due to the temporary nature of the insecurities of some kindergarten school leaders who have no confidence in strategic issues. Then, we set out to study what can make kindergarten school leaders confident to take on strategic priorities. We will explore what is effective and successful strategic leadership and how to develop strategic leadership in kindergarten schools. Finally, we will develop a strategic leadership development strategy for kindergarten administrators in Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province, China.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this research were: 1) to study the factors that affected the strategic leadership development of kindergarten administrators in Shijiazhuang city, Hebei province, P.R. China, 2) to construct the strategies of the strategic leadership development of kindergarten administrators in Shijiazhuang city, Hebei province, P.R. China, and 3) to evaluate the strategies of the strategic leadership development of kindergarten administrators in Shijiazhuang city, Hebei province, P.R. China.

Scope of the Study

1. Research Population and Samples

The population in this study is 27 kindergarten administrators, 406 teachers and staff from 9 kindergartens in Shijiazhuang city, Hebei province, P.R. China at the academic year of 2018–2019.

The sample for the study consisted of 27 kindergarten administrators, 205 teachers and staff. The sample was derived by Krejcie and Morgan table, stratified random sampling, and simple random sampling was used for drawing the sample.

2. Value of the Research

To enhance kindergarten administrator's strategic leadership is an inevitable requirement for deepening education reform, an objective need of kindergarten development, and a realistic demand for promoting kindergarten administrator's strategic leadership and planning ability.

3. Research Area

The study focused on the strategic leadership development of kindergarten administrators from all the kindergartens in Shijiazhuang city, Hebei province, P.R. China.

Research Methodology

The methodologies of this research included documentary study and depth-interview. The instrument of this study was questionnaire, conducted with quantitative methods. The statistics used to analyze the data included mean, standard deviation, percentages and regression.

Research Results

Based on the documentary study, depth-interview and questionnaire analysis, it revealed as follows:

Table 1.1 The Relationship Analysis between Independent variable and Dependent variable

Independent variable	Dependent variable
The factors that affected strategic leadership	Strategic leadership of Administrators
	β
Factor 1 : Learning ability of administrator	0.145 *
Factor 2 : Capacity for Change of administrator	0.320 **
Factor 3 : Managerial ability of administrator	0.179 **
Factor 4 : Communication skills of administrator	0.173 **
Factor 5 : Innovation ability of administrator	0.054
Factor 6 : Strategic ability of administrator	0.023
Factor 7 : Decision-making ability of administrator	0.129 *
R	0.750
R ²	0.563

** p<.01; * p<.05

There were only 5 variables statistical significantly affected on the strategic leadership of administrators as following:

If the standardized score of Capacity for Change of administrators increased 1, the strategic leadership of administrators would increase 0.320 score; If the standardized score of Communication skills of administrator increased 1, the strategic leadership of administrators would increase 0.173 score; If the standardized score of Learning ability of administrators increased 1, the strategic leadership of administrators would increase 0.145 score; If the standardized score of Managerial ability of administrator increased 1, the strategic leadership of administrators would increase 0.179 score; If the standardized score of Decision-making ability of administrator increased 1, the strategic leadership of administrators would increase 0.32 score.

These five variables could explain 56.3% of the variance of the strategic leadership of administrators.

From the **Table 1.1** above we could derive the regression equation as:

Strategic leadership = $0.320 * \text{Factor 2} + 0.173 * \text{Factor 4} + 0.145 * \text{Factor 1} + 0.179 * \text{Factor 3} + 0.129 * \text{Factor 7}$

1. The factors affect strategic leadership development included 1) Capacity for Change of administrators, 2) Communication skills of administrators, 3) Learning ability of administrators, 4) Managerial ability of administrators, and 5) Decision-making ability of administrators.

2. The strategy of the strategic leadership development of kindergarten administrators in Shijiazhuang city, Hebei province, P.R.China were as following:

2.1 Vision:

We will comprehensively improve the level of strategic leadership of the kindergarten administrators, build a team of high-quality kindergarten administrators, further promote the reform and development of preschool education and achieve further popularization, fairness and high quality development of kindergartens.

2.2 Mission:

2.2.1 Build the strategic awareness of administrators

2.2.2 Improve the capacity for change of administrators

2.2.3 Develop communication skills of administrators

2.2.4 Improve learning ability of administrators

2.2.5 Cultivate managerial ability of administrators

2.2.6 Improve decision-making and action ability of administrators

2.2.7 Determine the core competitiveness of kindergarten development

2.2.8 Create strategic leadership of administrators with shared values

2.3 Goals:

2.3.1 Focus on overall and long-term development and build the strategic awareness of administrators

2.3.2 In response to social changes and rapid development, improve the capacity for Change of administrator

2.3.3 Enhance managerial communication skills, improve the surrounding communication environment, and conduct effective communication and cooperation.

2.3.4 Adapt to the rapid development of society and improve the learning ability of administrator

2.3.5 Integrate effective resources and cultivate managerial ability of administrator

2.3.6 Improve decision-making and action ability of administrator and guide the correct development of kindergartens in the future

2.3.7 Focus on the development of kindergarten characteristics and core competitiveness

2.3.8 Create strategic leadership of administrators with shared values and cultivate campus culture with core values

2.4 Strategies:

Firstly, on education administrative department level, the strategies were as follows: 1) Providing policy to guide the reformation and strategic development of kindergartens. 2) Reducing administrative intervention and let the kindergartens make their own choices and decisions. 3) Conducting diversified training programs to enhance the management ability of administrators. 4) Organizing

more exchanges inside and between kindergartens to achieve mutual learning. 5) Formulating a scientific evaluation and promotion system to enhance the development momentum of the directors. 6) Providing financial support and necessary resources.

Secondly, on kindergarten level, the strategies were as follows: 1) Planing the future development direction to respond to social changes and innovations. 2) Creating a culture of educating people and determine core values and core competitiveness. 3) Leading and promote the reform of childcare education. 4) Building a learning kindergarten and strengthen the training of teachers' professional ability to promote the growth of the director and teachers' abilities. 5) Optimizing internal management and strengthen campus culture construction. 6) Adapting the external environment and strengthen external exchanges and cooperation. 7) Raising salaries and welfare.

Finally, on social level, the strategies were as follows: 1) Strengthening social supervision to ensure the quality of kindergartens. 2) Formulating a third-party assessment system to achieve a scientific assessment of the management of directors. 3) Enhancing attention to early childhood education and improve the social status of preschool education. 4) Changing the limited understanding of kindergarten care. 5) Encouraging social institutions to participate in kindergarten construction. 6) Optimizing the security and environment of running kindergartens.

3. The results of evaluation of the strategy showed that the suitability, feasibility, utility and congruency were all at high level.

Discussions

This research is based on the documentary study, questionnaire and interview. It aims to study the strategic leadership and the factors that affect strategic leadership of kindergarten administrators in Shijiazhuang city, Hebei province, P.R.China, and then try to find the main factors.

Through the documentary study, we found out seven components of strategic leadership:

1) Determine the strategic direction, 2) Explore and maintain the core competitiveness, 3) Maintain effective organizational culture, 4) Emphasis on ethical practice, 5) Balanced organizational structure, 6) Applying strategies into practice, and 7) Evaluate and develop strategy. It is interesting to point out that these findings are similar to the research of Michael A. Hitt, R. Duane Ireland and Robert E. Hoskisson (2013).

And meanwhile, the research of Robert J House and Ram N Aditya (1997) also have the similar opinions. They believed that the major parts of strategic leadership are: make strategic decisions, choose main administrators, configure core resources, make both strategies and goals, specify the directions of organization development, make plan and arrangement for the structure of the organization, work with major stakeholders and keep communication with them.

Also, Naowabutr (2014) stated strategic leadership includes the following parts: vision and strategic setting, ability to apply strategies into practice, capacity to create and develop work in a more effective way, be concentrated in work, and the ability to evaluate and propose a strategy.

Likewise, researchers Carr, Corkwell, & Johnson (2009) found out that strategic leadership also needs understanding and value of making decisions, with support provided to teachers or faculty. Meanwhile, Yawirach (2013) considered that good leaders need non-stop improvement in many different ways, such as attending meetings or seminars to keep themselves up to date. It also includes

personality, attitudes, emotion and social skills with the goal of attaining modern expertise and leadership commensurate with current changes.

Relatively, Pimpisa Chatchawaphun (2016) hold the ideas regarding strategic leadership of school administrators that it is a key tool for managing schools. Administrators with strategic leadership are those who can apply principles, knowledge and characteristics with skills required for self-development to work and support colleagues. And they also can work by creating good organizational culture, future planning, broad vision, and being able to perform tasks in order to meet schools' and society's expectations.

Besides the strategic leadership components, experts and scholars have similar views, and there are many similar expressions in the factors of strategic leadership. So we will have a discussion about the factors that influence strategic leadership. Besides China's relevant studies, western scholars have also systematically analyzed and studied the factors that affect strategic leadership. For instance Boal, K.B. and Hooijberg, R (2001) believed that the main factors affecting managerial strategic leadership include managerial adaptability, management wisdom and absorptive capacity.

Paul J.H. Schoemaker, Steve Krupp, and Samantha Howland (2013) considered that factors that affect managerial strategic leadership include administrator's anticipate ability, challenge ability, interpret ability, decide ability, align ability and learn ability.

According to the five main factors through data analysis which affecting strategic leadership and the opinions and suggestions of experts, the researcher constructed the strategy of the strategic leadership development of kindergarten administrators in Shijiazhuang city, Hebei province, P.R.China. Firstly, on education administrative department level, the corresponding strategies were 1) Provide policy guidance the reformation and strategic development of kindergartens. 2) Reduce administrative intervention and let the kindergartens make their own choices and decisions. 3) Conduct diversified training programs to enhance the management ability of administrators. 4) Organize more exchanges inside and between kindergartens to achieve mutual learning. 5) Formulate a scientific evaluation and promotion system to enhance the development momentum of the directors. 6) Provide financial support and necessary resources. Secondly, on kindergarten level, the corresponding strategies were 1) Plan the future development direction to respond to social changes and innovations. 2) Create a culture of educating people and determine core values and core competitiveness. 3) Lead and promote the reform of childcare education. 4) Build a learning kindergarten and strengthen the training of teachers' professional ability to promote the growth of the director and teachers' abilities. 5) Optimize internal management and strengthen campus culture construction. 6) Adapt to the external environment and strengthen external exchanges and cooperation. 7) Raise salaries and welfare. Finally, on social level, the corresponding strategies were: 1) Strengthen social supervision to ensure the quality of kindergartens. 2) Formulate a third-party assessment system to achieve a scientific assessment of the management of directors. 3) Enhance attention to early childhood education and improve the social status of preschool education. 4) Change the limited understanding of kindergarten care. 5) Encourage social institutions to participate in kindergarten construction. 6) Optimize the security and environment of running kindergartens.

Above all, this section discussed the components of strategic leadership and the factors that affect strategic leadership. Although the opinions of different scholars are not completely consistent

with each other, their views are very similar and have many cross-cutting characteristics, which can fully reflect the main factors affecting strategic leadership.

REFERENCES

- A. Hitt, R. D. Ireland and R. E. Hoskisson, (2001). **Strategic Management: Competitiveness and Globalization**. 5th Edition, International Thomson Publishing, Cincinnati.
- Boal K B, Hooijberg R. (2000). **Strategic leadership research: Moving on**. The Leadership Quarterly, 2000,11(4):515–549.
- Burns, J. (1978). **Leadership**. (New York: Harper & Row).
- Carr, V., Johnson, L. J., & Corkwell, C, (2009). **Principle-Centered Leadership in Early Childhood Education**. Dimensions of Early Childhood, 37(3), 27.
- Cheng, Y.C. (2000). **Strategic Leadership for Educational Transformation in the New Millennium**. Chulalongkorn Educational Review 6(2): 15–32.
- Davies, B. (2008). **Leading the Strategically Focused School**. Keynote paper to the ANTSEL Online Conference, 18–24 August. Video stream and paper available at www.cybertext.net.au/antssel_2008/tuesday.html (accessed 11 January 2010).
- Davies, B. (2008). **Leading the Strategically Focused School**. Keynote paper to the ANTSEL Online Conference, 18–24 August. Video stream and paper available at www.cybertext.net.au/antssel_2008/tuesday.html (accessed 11 January 2010).
- Marturano, A. & Gosling, J. (2007). **Leadership the Key Concepts**. (London: Routledge).
- Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2016). <http://www.moe.gov.cn>
- Naowabutr, P. (2014). **Strategy Management for Educational Development**. Coursebook. Sukhothaithamirat University.
- Paul J.H. Schoemaker, Steve Krupp, and Samantha Howland, (2013). **Strategic Leadership: The Essential Skills**. January–February 2013, Harvard Business Review.
- Pellegrini, E.K., & Scandura, T.A. (2008). **Paternalistic Leadership: A Review and Agenda for Future Research**. Journal of Management. 34(3): 566–593.
- Pellegrini, E.K., & Scandura, T.A. (2008). **Paternalistic Leadership: A Review and Agenda for Future Research**. Journal of Management. 34(3): 566–593.
- Pimpisa Chatchawaphun, (2016). **Development of Program to Enhance Strategic Leadership of Secondary School Administrators**. International Education Studies; Vol. 9, No. 10; 2016.
- Postiglione (Ed.) **China's national minority education: Culture, schooling, and development**. (pp. 3–20). New York: Falmer Press.
- Robert J House and Ram N Aditya, (1997). **The social scientific study of leadership**. Journal of management 3, 409–473.
- Robinson, V. (2007). **How School Leaders Make a Difference to their Students**. Keynote address to International Confederation of Principals: a paper presented to the 2007 International Confederation of Principals, Auckland, 2 April 2007.
- Rowe, W. G. (2001). **Creating Wealth in Organizations: The Role of Strategic Leadership**. The Academy of Management Executive, 81–94.
- Yawirach, N, (2013). **Strategic Leadership**. Bangkok: Central Express.