

Authentic leadership as a mediator between professional identity, ethical climate, citizenship behavior and political behavior

Authentic leadership as a mediator

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore the mediating effect authentic leadership (AL) has on professional identity (PI), ethical climate (EC) and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) and political behavior (PB) among elementary school principals in Israel.

Design/methodology/approach – Four hundred and ten elementary principals from various Israeli districts participated in the study. The research is based on principals' self-report questionnaires. The analysis focused on SEM using AMOS software.

Findings – Results indicated that AL fully mediates the relationships between PI and OCB and PB while partially mediates the relationships between EC and OCB and PB.

Research limitations/implications – This study could contribute to the design of an integrative model not previously researched, while exploring relationships between behaviors perceived as mutually opposite. This study suggested that to increase OCB and decrease PB, authentic leadership among elementary school principals should be enhanced by educational leaders.

Originality/value – The new model is likely to help school principals to deal with political behaviors while fostering citizenship behaviors during their work. Educational leaders may design professional training for principals in order to encourage the development of the positive aspects of OCB and PB.

Keywords Authentic leadership, Ethical climate, Organizational citizenship behavior, Political behavior, Professional identity, School principals

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

While most previous studies in educational management focused on teachers' perceptions of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) *or* their perceptions regarding political behaviors (PB) (e.g., DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Somech and Drach-Zahavy, 2000; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2018), in this study, we referred to these factors, *in the same research*, from school principals' perspectives, since they deal with these factors together, including positive and negative aspects of the factors involved. Thus, the purpose of this research was to study an integrative model among school principals, which includes the mediating role that authentic leadership (AL) has on perceptions of professional identity (PI), ethical climate (EC), and simultaneous opposite behaviors, such as OCB and PB.

The central question this study explored is to what extent is the integrative model that includes personal perceptions of professional identity, organizational perception of ethical climate, and attitudes of the authentic leadership, likely to relate to OCB and PB among elementary school principals.

The challenges with which principals cope in their work raise doubts concerning the professional choice they made. In light of this, the present research is essential for understanding OCB and PB, behaviors that may assist in handling these professional challenges. Therefore, our study adopted Ajzen's (2012) sequence theory that argues that psychological mechanisms, including an individual's perceptions and attitudes, relate to



behaviors. This theory argues that there is a strong relationship between perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. We considered this theory specifically in the context of the educational system. Based on this theory, the study describes the relationships between the independent variables (PI, EC) and the mediator variable (AL), the relationship between the mediator variable and the dependent variables (OCB and PB), and finally, the mediating effect between the independent and the dependent variables.

The independent variables

Professional identity. The concept of “identity” represents a process in which the individual combines his/her role and social experience into a self-image (Beijaard *et al.*, 2013). Researchers have characterized the concept, “professional identity,” as to how educational workers define their professional identity as influencing their sense of self-efficacy concerning their judgment and professional decisions (Akerson *et al.*, 2014). Fisherman and Weiss (2011) characterize professional identity as a sense of security that the school principal demonstrates in her/his choice of profession, the feeling that he/she is capable of being a good principal and how he/she perceives her/himself as an emissary of society, of a particular ideal. It is further characterized as the individual’s perception of the reputation of education and teaching, how society perceives the role of being a school principal and its appreciation of this role. In this study, we considered the school environment, such as the EC level, as the setting of principals’ professional identity.

Ethical climate. An ethical climate reflects the organization’s norms, its customary procedures and its applications. All are based on the basic premise of the organization’s workers, their shared perception, their shared values concerning what is permissible and what is forbidden, and how to deal with specific topics, from a moral standpoint (Shin, 2012). The Shapira-Lishchinsky (2010) presented two dimensions of ethical climate in schools. The first one is a climate of concern and caring, which represents an ethical environment expressed in the honest aspiration of the principals to care for the welfare of others. The second dimension is a formal climate of rules, laws, and codes. This is based on the school’s policy and includes professional codes for employees coping with ethical dilemmas.

According to Kuenzi *et al.* (2019), there is a positive relationship between ethical climate and trust (one aspect of authentic leadership), and a negative relationship between trust and PB, such as manipulations. Greenbaum (2010) found that there is a positive relationship between the perception of the school’s ethical climate that is characterized by friendly relations toward the teachers and concern for them and OCB. In this study, we investigated the relationship between principals’ professional identity (considering the setting of ethical school climate) and their authentic leadership.

The mediator: authentic leadership in education

Authentic leadership (AL) refers to people’s ability to influence others and to motivate them to undertake a mission in a trusted manner, by using a minimum of coercive means (Avolio and Walumbwa, 2014). AL defines the relationship between the leaders and the followers via the construction of bi-directional communication. Alongside this, a balance is maintained between the natural stressors that characterize the role of leadership, by highlighting the power of the stressors, while, simultaneously, exposing the human weaknesses of the leaders (Brown and Trevino, 2006). AL encourages ethical behavior and the provision of legitimacy for expressing opinions (Gardner *et al.*, 2011).

Gardner *et al.* (2011) proposed a model that characterizes AL including the following dimensions: (a) *Self-awareness* – how the leader examines her/himself in comparison to his/her and others’ strong and weak points. (b) *Balanced processing* – this relates to leaders who are willing to accept opposing proposals to their stances, through an examination of the field and an objective analysis, before they make their decision. (c) *Relational transparency* –

behaving authentically, openly, and truly, to create trust by expressing thoughts and feelings in an open, honest and real manner. (d) *Internalized moral perspective* – the ability of the leader to learn from their mutual relations with the environment, to direct behavior, according to the goals that they have set for themselves, and not as a result of environmental pressures.

The relationship between the independent variables and the mediator

The relationship between professional identity and authentic leadership. A principals' professional identity is impacted by the definition of the role. The greater the knowledge and experience the principal has concerning the role, the greater the grounding of his/her professional identity. This makes it possible for principals to make decisions in ways that reflect their authentic leadership by cooperating with the educational staff they lead. Here they express the beliefs and principles that were taken into consideration, as opposed to external pressures or personal interests. Authentic educational leaders develop and nurture ties and relationships with their people by empowering their educational staff. This requires openness, cooperation and the extension of legitimacy to express different opinions (Avolio and Walumbwa, 2014). As a result, the hypothesis is that:

- H1. There will be a positive relationship between the perception of professional identity and authentic leadership among school principals.

The relationship between ethical climate and authentic leadership. A climate of concern and caring promotes the development of authentic leadership, which is characterized by a combination of synergism of self-awareness and sensitivity to the teachers' needs and the influence of the teachers' positive perception of the organization. Studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between EC and employee obligation to the organization (Banks *et al.*, 2016). One of the characteristic traits of an authentic leader is a sense of obligation to the workers by understanding their needs. Therefore, the hypothesis is that an EC will relate to the authentic leadership of school principals.

- H2. There will be a positive relationship between the perception of an ethical climate and the authentic leadership of principals.

The dependent variables

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). OCB was defined as organizational behavior that expresses the contribution of the employee to the organization, beyond the formal level of commitment. That is, it is not identified by the formal system of rewards. Furthermore, in general, the organization needs such behavior to function efficiently (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2018). OCB has been researched in different organizations, in general, and in schools, in specific. Concerning teachers, it was found that OCB contributes to the school's efficiency and influences students' achievements and the school's image (DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2000) presented three main dimensions of OCB in schools: OCB toward pupils (for example, help in coping with personal problems outside of school and attempts to solve them); OCB toward the school as an organization (for example, assimilating new teaching methods); OCB toward the school's staff (for example, fulfilling a volunteer role in the school's organizational system).

While OCB is considered a positive and desirable factor in all organizations, different studies (Bolino *et al.*, 2013) presented the negative side of such behavior. The argument is that such behavior is not derived from free choice, but rather from manifest or latent constraints and from the fear that if the person does not act according to expectations, her/his superiors will jeopardize the employee's promotion or harm her/his working conditions.

Political behavior (PB). PB expresses the human need for control, to accumulate power, and to fulfill personal and organizational needs alongside others and, at times, at the expense of others (Vigoda-Gadot and Drory, 2016). This study focused on the specific aspect of PB, also termed “micropolitics,” as expressed in the PB of school administrators. Kapoutsis and Thanos (2016) note that PB facilitates the administrative role. Tactics of political influence make it possible for the organization to be effective, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, for the individual to realize his/her aspirations.

Vigoda-Gadot (1997) presented the most accepted and common tactics of influence adopted by administrators, which perceived negative. For example, these include, flattery, which is the attempt to placate others and to satisfy their desires so that they will feel important and desired, or being manipulative to control people without their knowledge, through control of information or resources.

Although most of the literature in this area tend to relate to PB as a morally negative phenomenon, and as a phenomenon that harms the efficient functioning of the organization, other studies (e.g., Vigoda-Gadot and Drory, 2016) found that PB sometimes has positive aspects that contribute to the realization of organizational objectives or the realization of the members’ interests.

The relationship between organizational citizenship behaviors and political behavior

OCB and PB are directive acts that attempt to influence the functioning of the school principal and the school. The phenomena are located on the same continuum. On one pole is OCB, which is an approach that most perceive as represents the positive side of personal and organizational behavior in school (DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran, 2014). On the opposite pole, PB is located, perceived mostly as negative, an illegitimate behavior. Nevertheless, they are viewed as necessary for achieving school goals.

Spector and Fox’s (2010) study showed that the more that an employee engages in OCB, the higher the chance that the employee will feel a stronger sense of belonging to the organization. Moreover, the study was undertaken by Perrewé *et al.* (2012) demonstrated that an organization, which often, and inefficiently, engages in PB, has a bad influence on its workers, and its employees will have a hard time contributing to such an organization. Additionally, Ilies *et al.* (2006) found that there are situations in which there will be two opposite behaviors, which exist and are related simultaneously. As a result, the hypothesis will be that among school principals:

- H3. There will be a negative relationship between organizational citizenship behaviors and PB.

The relationship between the mediator and the dependent variables

The relationship between authentic leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors. Authentic leaders may serve as a factor that contributes to the OCB of all employees in an organization, including the principals. The authentic leadership of principals leads to good performances, beyond their formal role (Avolio and Walumbwa, 2014). Therefore, the hypothesis is that:

- H4. There will be a positive relationship between school principals’ authentic leadership and their OCB.

The relationship between authentic leadership and political behavior. Authentic leaders, whose authentic leadership is not crystallized, will have trouble achieving their organizational goals (Houghton *et al.*, 2013). Such a situation may increase the negative aspects of the PB of the school principals, so that he/she can influence organizational processes. Nejad *et al.* (2011)

aver that the less independence a leader has in the performance of her/his job, the more a leader will engage in PB, to reach the goals. Brown and Trevino (2006) concluded that inappropriate behavior in organizations is related to the lack of authentic leadership and unethical and immoral behavior. As a result, the hypothesis is that:

- H5. There will be a negative relationship between the perception of authentic leadership and PB among school principals.

The mediating effect between the independent and dependent variables

Authentic leadership as a mediator between professional identity, ethical climate and organizational citizenship behaviors, and political behavior. Based on Ajzen's (2012) theory, according to which, perceptions, which reflect beliefs, direct school principals' attitudes and behaviors, we assume that principals' professional identity and ethical climate will relate positively to authentic leadership, which can relate positively to OCB and negatively to PB. As a result, the hypothesis is that among principals:

- H6. Authentic leadership will mediate the relationship between professional identity and ethical climate and OCB and PB.

Figure 1 illustrates the mediating of authentic leadership between professional identity, ethical climate, and OCB and PB. This study model illustrates those principals' perceptions of the professional identity and ethical climate of their schools will relate positively to authentic leadership, which will relate positively to OCB and negatively to PB.

Method

Sampling and data collection

We implemented this study according to the following stages. We first received permission to undertake the research from the Office of the Head Scientist of the Ministry of Education. We then informed the district heads of this approval and received their permission to request email addresses for the school principals from the elementary school principals' supervisors. We randomly chose every third principal from the lists that we received from the supervisors. We asked the principals if they would be willing to participate, via the secure email program of all the principals in Israel. The questionnaires were sent as Google Docs to the principals, and they responded without disclosing their names or their email addresses. Out of the 603 questionnaires sent to the elementary school principals, 410 questionnaires were returned (a 68% response rate).

On the first page of the email, the principals received explanations of the study's goals and its importance, and were promised confidentiality concerning the results of the study according to the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (2002). Fifty-six percent of the participants were women; the mean age of the principals was 48.5 years; 4.4%

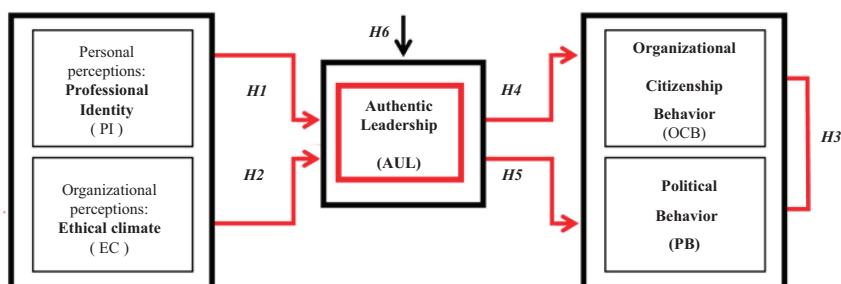


Figure 1.
Summary of the
theoretical research
hypotheses

had a B.Ed.; 82% had an MA and the rest had a Ph.D. The mean number of years of education of the principals was 18.7 years with the mean seniority in the educational system being 24 years, and the mean seniority in the principal role of an elementary school was 9.9 years.

Variables and measures

Professional identity. Presenting perceptions of security that the school principal demonstrates in her/his choice of the profession, including a feeling of capable of being a good principal. We based this measure on Fisherman and Weiss' (2011) questionnaire that has 27 items. An example of an item is: "I am happy with my choice to become a principal." The reliability of this scale was $\alpha = 0.89$.

Ethical climate. Reflecting shared values concerning what is permissible and what is forbidden, and how to deal with specific topics, from a moral standpoint (Shin, 2012). We based this measure on Victor and Cullen's (1988) questionnaire. The questionnaire has 27 items, i.e. "In this workplace, they care about the employees' welfare." The measure's reliability was $\alpha = 0.87$.

Authentic leadership. Presenting ethical behavior and the provision of legitimacy for expressing opinions (Gardner *et al.*, 2011). We based this measure on Avolio *et al.*'s (2007) measure. It has 16 items, such as: "I tell the employees the truth." The measure's reliability was $\alpha = 0.91$.

Organizational citizenship behavior. Expressing the school principal's contribution to the school, beyond the formal commitment (DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran, 2014). We based this measure on Somech and Drach-Zahavy's (2000) questionnaire, which has 23 items, i.e. "When a colleague is late, I try to help out." The measure's reliability was $\alpha = 0.90$.

Political behavior. Expressing the human need to accumulate power and fulfill personal and organizational needs (Vigoda-Gadot and Drory, 2016). We based this measure on Vigoda-Gadot's (1997) questionnaire; it had 14 items, i.e. "I use personal connections to influence my employees." The measure's reliability was $\alpha = 0.87$.

All of the questionnaires used Likert scales and ranged from 1 (definitely do not agree) to 5 (definitely agree).

Data analysis

AMOS 18 was used for path analysis, by employing SEM (Structural Equation Modeling), for the presentation of the graph models of relationships (correlations and regressions) between the observed and latent variables (Byrne, 2013).

Results

Table 1 describes the Pearson correlations, and the means and standard deviations of the study's variables. We found significant positive relationships between all study variables, except for the relationship between PB and professional identity, ethical climate, and OCB.

Due to the large sample ($N = 410$), it was unexpected that the Chi-square test would be insignificant. Therefore, we are mainly basing the relevance of the model on correlations: RMSEA <0.80, GFI, IFI, TLI, CFI >0.90 (Byrne, 2013). The fit indices were satisfactory (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 shows that there is no direct relationship between professional identity and OCB and PB. Therefore, authentic leadership serves as a full mediator between professional identity and these two variables. In contrast, there is both a direct effect and an indirect effect between the ethical climate and OCB and PB. As a result, authentic leadership serves as a

partial mediator between the independent variable, ethical climate, and the other two dependent variables.

According to H1, there would be a positive relationship between professional identity and authentic leadership among school principals. Figure 2 shows that such a relationship was found ($\beta = 0.26, p < 0.001$). Therefore, H1 was confirmed. According to H2, there would be a positive relationship between ethical climate and authentic leadership. Figure 2 shows that such a relationship was found ($\beta = 0.33, p < 0.001$). Table 1 and Figure 2 shows that in contrast to H3, which stated that there would be a negative relationship between OCB and PB, no relationship was found between these variables. Therefore, H3 was not confirmed. According to H4, there would be a positive relationship between authentic leadership and OCB. Figure 2 shows that there is a positive relationship ($\beta = 0.34, p < 0.001$). Therefore, H4 was confirmed. According to H5, there would be a negative relationship between authentic leadership and PB. Figure 2 shows that there was such a relationship ($\beta = -0.29, p < 0.001$). Therefore, H5 was confirmed.

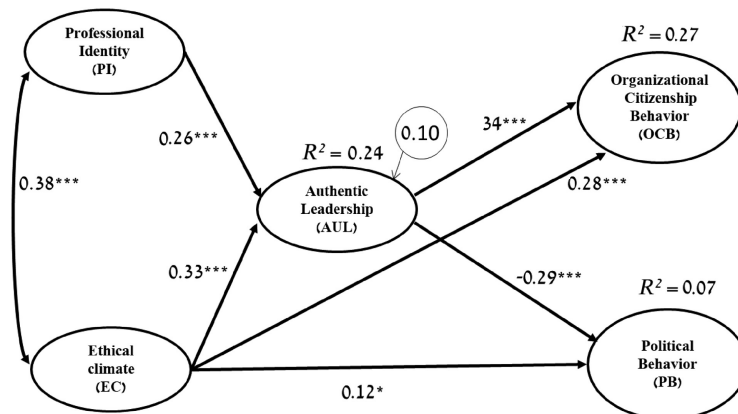
The mediating effect of authentic leadership on the independent and dependent variables

H6 averred that authentic leadership would mediate the relationship between professional identity and ethical climate, on the one hand, and between OCB and PB, on the other. The

	Professional identity	Ethical climate	Authentic leadership	Organizational citizenship behavior	Political behavior
Professional identity	4.3 (0.35)				
Ethical climate	0.038***	3.8 (0.42)			
Authentic leadership	0.38***	0.43***	4.4 (0.36)		
Organizational citizenship behavior	0.28***	0.43***	0.46***	4.1 (0.49)	
Political behavior	-0.15	0	-0.24***	0.03	2.4 (0.59)

Note(s): In the slant, average. The number in brackets SD; $p < 0.001$ ***

Table 1.
Pearson correlations,
means and standard
deviations of the
study's variables



$\chi^2(2) = 6.00, p = 0.05, GFI = 0.994, IFI = 0.989, TLI = 0.941,$
CFI = 0.988, RMSEA = 0.070

Note(s): $p < 0.05^*, p < 0.001^{***}$

Figure 2.
The study model
results

absence of a direct relationship between professional identity and OCB and PB testifies that the relationship between professional identity and the dependent variable is fully mediated by authentic leadership. In contrast, the direct relationship between ethical climate and OCB ($\beta = 0.28, p < 0.001$) and PB ($\beta = 0.12, p < 0.05$), in addition to the relationship that occurs via authentic leadership, demonstrates that this relationship between ethical climate and the dependent variables is partially mediated by authentic leadership.

Table 1 shows the direct, indirect, and overall effects between the independent and dependent variables. Moreover, it presents the significant results of the Sobel test (1982) for mediation. This test showed that the mediating effect was significant at the $p < 0.001$ level Table 2.

Discussion

The main goal of this research was to explore the mediating effect of authentic leadership by examining a multi-dimensional model, which includes opposing behaviors that exist simultaneously: OCB alongside PB in educational leadership. The study found that principals' perceptions concerning AL explained OCB, on the one hand, and PB, on the other. On this basis, the integrative model was constructed.

The relationship between professional identity and authentic leadership

We found that PI is positively related to AL. We can explain this relationship by the fact that PI relates to the success of the principal and the school's welfare under his/her supervision. The greater the school principal's PI, the more the school will function according to the principles of authentic leadership. Our results are supported by Beijaard *et al.* (2013), who assumed that if a leader policy is derived from professional identity, the policy will match the principles of authentic leadership.

The relationship between ethical climate and authentic leadership

We found a positive relationship between ethical climate and authentic leadership. School principals work according to an ethical basis at their schools. They work in a positive EC with a sense of trust among their staff in their schools. This finding matches the results of Avolio and Walumbwa's (2014) study that found that the more developed the EC in the organization, the more the leaders acted authentically.

The relationships between authentic leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors and political behavior

Based on Ajzen's theory (2012), we found that AL is related to OCB. Furthermore, the results showed a relationship between AL and PB (see Figure 2). Therefore, the organizational behavior of school principals is a synthesis of OCB and PB.

The relationship between authentic leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors

This research showed a positive relationship between AL and OCB. This finding confirmed the hypothesis that AL is related to the principal's desire to reward the school and to undertake jobs outside of the specific role. The positive relationships between AL and OCB can be explained by the different results found by Vigoda (2007). He asserted that, over the years, workers who engaged in activities for the organization that were neither part of their job nor connected to official rewards were a positive and desirable factor in all organizations. However, his studies showed that this phenomenon also has a negative aspect: it turns out that employees undertake activities that are not part of their job.

The independent variable	Mediator	The dependent variable	Between independent and the a, mediator	Between the mediator and the, dependent b	Direct c', effect	Indirect c', effect	Total effect	The type of mediation	Sobel test
Professional identity	Authentic leadership	Organizational citizenship behavior	0.26***	0.34***	0	0.09***	0.09***	Abundant	Z = 6.03; p < 0.001
Ethical climate	Authentic leadership	Organizational citizenship behavior	0.33***	0.34***	0.28***	0.11***	0.39***	Partial	Z = 5.74; p < 0.001
Ethical climate	Authentic leadership	Political behavior	0.33***	-0.29***	0.12*	-0.10***	0.03	Partial	Z = 4.77; p < 0.001
Note(s): p < 0.001***									

Authentic leadership as a mediator

Table 2.
The mediating effect of authentic leadership

Therefore, at times, employees feel that they have been coerced to do so. The argument is that such behavior is not derived from free will, but rather manifest or latent constraints. Hence, it is assumed that, at times, the source of OCB comes from directives from authorities in the educational system.

The relationship between authentic leadership and political behavior

The negative relationship that was found between AL and PB emphasizes the special role of principals as educational leaders who may express positive norms of behavior as a part of the role requirements. The negative relationships between AL and PB can be explained by [Nejad et al.'s \(2011\)](#) study. The researchers found that the authenticity of the leader becomes clear through her/his activities in the organization, which is characterized by avoidance of manipulations and of cunning. The authentic leader is perceived as a person who does not harm her/his subordinates and does not relate to them as pawns for achieving her/his goals.

The mediating effect of authentic leadership on professional identity and ethical climate and organizational citizenship behaviors and political behavior

The structural model in this study shows that authentic leadership fully mediates the relationship between professional identity and OCB and PB. Moreover, authentic leadership partially mediates the relationship between ethical climate and OCB and PB.

We found in our study that PI is expressed in its positive relationship with AL. The greater the sense of professional identity, the more relationships with authentic leadership are positive. In this context, AL is positively related to OCB and negatively related to PB. The present study supports the findings of other researchers, such as [Gardner et al. \(2011\)](#), who asserted that PI helps leaders identify their authentic leadership.

Furthermore, we found that the EC is positively related to authentic leadership, which is negatively related to PB. The positive relationships that we found in this study support other studies (e.g., [Avolio and Walumbwa, 2014](#)), which have raised the assertion that an EC in the school makes possible the development of AL, which decreases the use of perceived inappropriate behaviors such as PB. In addition, there was also a weak relationship between EC and PB. In other words, the greater the perception of an ethical climate, the higher the expression of the PB of the school principals. We can explain this relationship, by the fact, that even in cases of EC in the school, when the goals of the educational system are challenging for the principal to fulfill, it can be seen that the attainment of the organization's goals is tied to the tactics of political influence used by the school principal.

Results in this study point to the fact that AL links between two opposite behaviors: OCB, which is considered positive, and PB, which is considered inappropriate. Undertaking both behaviors, simultaneously, could derive from the complexity of the principal's role. The principal must fulfill different social and administrative roles that, at times, contradict one another. As a result, at times, it appears that the school principal works in contradictory ways ([Price, 2012](#)).

The study's integrative model

The study presented several paths that connect personal perceptions and organizational perceptions to the attitudes of the authentic leaders and their behaviors. The study presents that authentic leadership mediates the relationship between professional identity and ethical climate, and leads, at the same time, to OCB, which is perceived as positive behavior, and to PB, which is perceived as illegitimate and inappropriate behavior. Furthermore, the findings support the professional literature concerning the special role of school principals, which is diverse.

Conclusions and implications

This study was based on [Ajzen's \(2012\)](#) sequence theory. This theory raised a new integrative model, which presents authentic leadership as mediating the relationships between personal and organizational perceptions (professional identity and ethical climate), which are related to behaviors (OCB and PB). The present study found that the perceptions of principals toward professional identity, ethical climate, and authentic leadership related to OCB as well as PB. Authentic leadership is an instrument that balances the use of contradictory behaviors. On the one hand, it increases OCB; on the other, it decreases the need for employing tactics that have a negative impact, in the context of PB, among principals.

The integrative model makes it possible to gain a broad view of the network of relationships between the different study variables. This new model is likely to help policy designers identify PB and deal with it while fostering positive behaviors during the professional training of principals. Besides, the study made it possible for educational policy designers to learn how authentic leadership can help explain behaviors that appear to contradict one another.

The research results lead to several conclusions. This research found, via the discussions with principals, that in contrast to the usual positive perception of OCB, it also has a negative aspect, that can harm the organization. Nevertheless, PB, which usually is perceived as negative, has positive sides, since it can help the principal improve the ability of the organization to achieve its goals. Another conclusion derived from the findings is that OCB and PB are not only positive or negative, but rather are the outcomes of a specific organizational reality, which, at times, is an integral part of organizational culture.

Therefore, educational policy designers should be encouraged to understand the contradictory behaviors of organizational leaders. Such an understanding could elicit the negative aspect of OCB among principals. In addition, it is recommended that educational policymakers understand the use of tactics with a political influence among school principals, which do not necessarily present inappropriate activities in the organization.

Limitation and future research

This study is derived from the fact that most of the variables are rooted in the principals. This could have led to self-bias on the part of the principals, who may have attempted to give socially desirable responses. The integrative model, which was developed and examined in this study, can serve future research that will explore the topic of authentic leadership and OCB and PB. Additional studies on this topic are necessary for gaining a deeper understanding of the complex role experiences of school principals and understanding of the positive and negative aspects of OCB and PB.

In continuation of [Ajzen's \(2012\)](#) sequence theory, this study focused on the relationships between perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Future studies may consider the opposite direction of whether school principals' behaviors predict their attitudes and perceptions. More specifically, we agree that in theory, the direction is assumed. However, due to the design of the present study, the data cannot provide direct evidence of causal links between the proposed variables. Accordingly, we have adopted the approach of other studies (e.g., [Benoliel et al., 2019](#); [Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013](#)), in which hypotheses and argumentation are expressed in terms of relationships.

In any case, this study has broadened [Ajzen's \(2012\)](#) sequence theory. Therefore, it is worth undertaking additional studies that can increase our knowledge concerning the validity of this theory on additional populations in the educational system.

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