Chapter 60
Emotional Intelligence and Political Skill Really Matter in Educational Leadership

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the authors investigate the social skills that school principals ought to exhibit in order to be more effective in the complex environment that characterizes modern schools. Thus, the main aim of this chapter is to provide an in-depth exploration of those social skills that are needed in order for school principals to become more flexible to external and internal requirements and to balance the need for change with stability. Therefore, an attempt is made to investigate the linkages between school leadership, emotional intelligence, political skill, and teachers' job satisfaction, as well as to examine the correlation of emotional and political skills of principals with the job satisfaction of their teachers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today's schools operate in competitive and complex environments that require educational leaders to possess social effectiveness skills in order to energize their schools towards the achievement of their core purpose. Within this context it is necessary to investigate the social competences of school principals that will equip them to effectively cope with multiple and complex changes. According to Pashiardis (2009), "Leaders need to be cognizant of the power of how one publicly presents oneself but at the same time realize the dangers involved for their public image" (p. 1).This is necessary in order to be more socially adept and competent when exercising their duties as school leaders. After all it is the principal who binds together the various threads of "values, leadership, vision and culture" (Campbell-Evans, 1993:110).

Based on this assumption, Taliadorou and Pashiardis (2014) investigated whether emotional intelligence and political capacity of school principals influence the way they exercise leadership and in

which ways they influence their teachers' job satisfaction. It should be noted from the outset that in the context of this study, leadership behaviors of the principal are perceived, through the adoption of leadership styles. We will base our suggestions on the research results of Taliadorou and Pashiardis (2014), which support the need for an expansion of the theories about what constitutes effective leadership. Specifically, the above researchers developed a dynamic model in an effort to couple and co-examine these areas (Figure 1), after a thorough literature review. Thus, the theoretical model guiding this piece of research combines the main research variables that (supposedly) affect the exercise of educational leadership and are analyzed below. In order to find out whether any relations exist between the variables examined, the results are presented in section two of this chapter.

Figure 1. Research theoretical model (Taliadorou & Pashiardis, 2014)
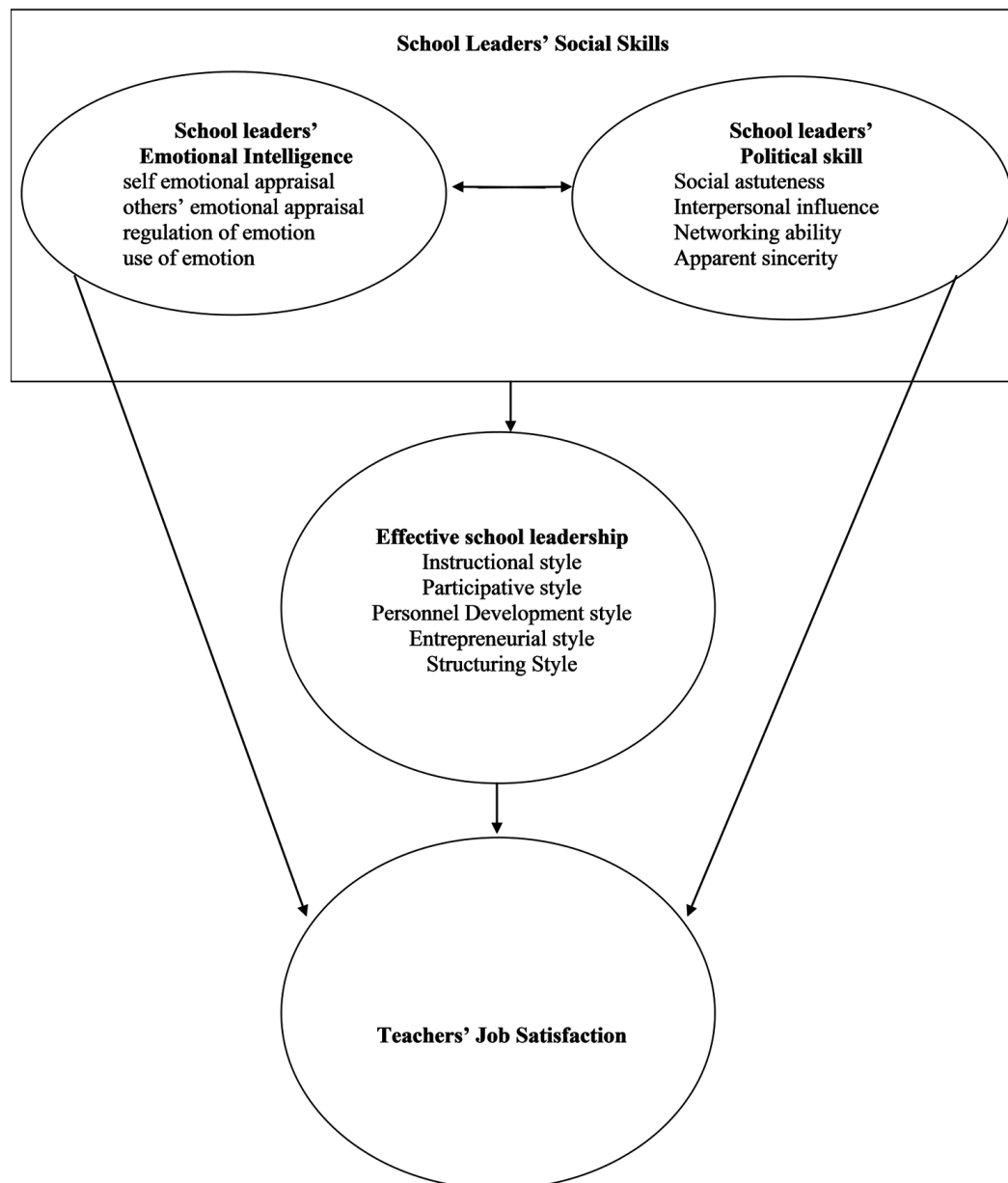
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