

The Study of the Paternalistic Leadership Style: A Case Study of a Kindergarten Principal

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the leading behaviors of kindergarten principals from a local perspective by conducting a case study, so as to get a better understanding of the role played by the concepts and conduct of the leader during the process of improving education quality. The study was based on data collected between March 2004 and March 2005. Research methods included participant observation, formal and informal interviews. Besides, parent handbooks, teaching plan designs, and parent-teacher meeting communication documents have also been collected for documentation analysis. The results finds that the leadership concepts and behaviors of a kindergarten principal are present in four aspects, which are “Demonstration of austerity and authority”, “Showing Care and Kindness”, “Appreciation of professional ethics and moral” and “Emphasis on personal image”. The essence of the first three aspects corresponds to the elements in “Paternalistic Leadership”, which are indicated in studies on Chinese organizations done in recent years. As to the last aspect, it echoes the issue of “face-saving” emphasized by the Chinese people.

Key words: *paternalistic leadership, kindergarten principal's leadership, kindergarten*

Introduction

Leadership is a cultural phenomenon, which is inevitably connected with people's values and customs. Leadership differences are also related to the culture of a

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nation (Gerstner and O'Day, 1994; Hofstede, 1980). Taiwanese scholars Cheng (1995) and Hsu (1981) also pointed out that there is a great difference between the Eastern and Western cultures (in particular between the Chinese and American societies). If the research instruments and theories originated from the Western studies are applied in studying the leadership in the Chinese society without further consideration, some significant and unique phenomena peculiar to the Chinese society are very likely to be overlooked. This is because culture affects personal preferences of an individual leader and the interaction within schools and communities. In addition, cultural values vary from country to country and will determine some specific educational goals and objectives within school systems.

Kindergartens in Taiwan are mostly private-run. Kindergarten principals (or leaders) have to shoulder huge responsibilities for education and management. Principals, as leaders, are important in terms of the role they play. In the study conducted by Lin, Kao, and Wang (2002), it is found that principals play a very important role in planning further studies of fellow teachers. Principals have to consider both the individual needs of fellow teachers and the development direction of the school. They should offer encouragement and guidance to fellow teachers. Principals and fellow teachers should also work together to create the same vision of the school development and the specialties of school so everyone shares a common goal to work for. It requires long-term efforts to reach the consensus among fellow teachers to establish a vision for the organization. Therefore, it has been an important issue of study to examine how kindergarten principals should lead in order to improve the quality of education and organizational management (Getzels et al., 1968).

In view of this, this research originally aimed to study the leadership of kindergarten principal before observations of the concepts and behavior of principals were made in the organizational context. When the researcher started collecting preliminary data, however, it was found that the leadership behaviors and concepts of the principal leadership actually demonstrated many values shared by the Chinese people. Therefore, the present research eventually shifted the focus on and examined the leadership of kindergarten principal from the perspective of the Chinese society.

The research aimed to explore the leadership behaviors of kindergarten princi-

pals, and to examine the role played by the concepts and behaviors of the principal during the process of enhancing education quality. The research objectives were as follows:

- (1) To illustrate the interaction patterns and processes between the kindergarten principal and organization members in order to understand the leadership concepts and behaviors of the principal.
- (2) To analyze and interpret the role of the principal as a leader.

It was expected that this research can attract more attention to the leaders in kindergartens and will be beneficial to kindergarten principals in their efforts of enhancing education quality.

Literature Review

Leadership is an interpersonal process. Through their roles and behaviors, leaders influence the values of their subordinates and team spirits in the organizations. Team members are thus further inspired to contribute and work towards the common goal of the organization if inspired (Yulk, 1998). This study aimed to examine the leadership concepts and behavior of kindergarten principals. The researcher also attempted to study the nature of the leadership of kindergarten principals from the perspective of cultural values. This section will briefly review the local perspective on organizational leadership and the nature of leadership.

Research on Organizational Leadership and the Chinese Perspectives

Studies on leadership done in Taiwan mainly adopted the Western leadership theories. However, since 1980, many scholars started to notice that features of leadership are greatly affected by culture. While leadership may be a universal phenomenon, the features of leadership are embedded in culture. Differences between cultures lead to different features and effectiveness of leadership (Kang, 1997; Kang & Shiu, 2001; Cheng & Huang, 2000; Cheng & Farh, 2001; Chemers, 1993; Hofstede, 1980).

Kang (1997, 1998, 1999) asserts that the local research on leadership in Taiwan relied too much on Western theories and measurement scales without taking into

account the local perspective. He thus proposes examining leadership behaviors from three dimensions, “sympathy”, “reason”, and “law” derived from Confucianism, Taoism, and Legalism. He believes that these three dimensions should serve as the framework to analyze the Chinese leadership and further construct Chinese leadership theories. In other words, under the influences of traditional Chinese culture, leadership behaviors can be categorized into three types, including “to move by seeking for sympathy”, “to convince by giving reasons”, and “to stress both laws and techniques while highlighting power and interest”. A leader may lead as “a parent”, “a teacher”, and “a ruler”.

Further examination of the nature of the leadership behavior based on “sympathy”, “reason” and “law” (Kang, 1997; Shiu, 2000) shows that “leading as a parent” means a leader regards the organization as a big family. The leader highly regards the harmony within the big family by respecting and caring about the demand of the family members. The leader particularly listens to, understands, and accepts the feelings of the family members. The content of this leadership contains three dimensions, including “highly regard harmony”, “respect and care”, “forgive and sympathize”. In terms of “leading as a teacher”, the leader leads with his/her reputation and knowledge as well as his/her conduct and instructions. Such leadership shows three features, including “character model”, “intelligence inspiration”, “sharing and participation”. The features of “leading as a ruler” cover “laws”, “techniques”, and “power”, with particular focus on regulations, manipulation techniques and empowerment.

Apart from the research on “the Chinese leadership behavior” mentioned above, some local psychology research organizations in Taiwan also started to develop domestic research by taking into account the social, cultural, and historical attributes of the subject under issue. Endogenous indigenization is adopted to construct the Chinese organizational behavior knowledge, which is not dominated by the Western organizational behavior theories and corresponds to the local perspective (Cheng, 2003). Studies on leadership in the Chinese organizational behaviors focus on the two important leadership behaviors embedded in the Chinese family concepts—the paternalistic leadership and differential leadership. The Chinese cultural values, the parental authority and relationship differences, are embedded in these two leadership styles

(Cheng, 1991). From the perspective of cultural analysis, Cheng and Huang (2000) further indicates that the general rules for interpersonal relationships in the Chinese society are based on the cultural tradition of the family concept. There are two general rules for interpersonal relationships. The first rule is based on the paternalistic value, while the second one is based on the differential value. The paternalistic value is manifested in paternalistic leadership within organizations where subordinates respond to the behavior of the leader accordingly. On the other hand, differential value can also be applied in differential leaderships where the leader categorizes his/her subordinates and gives differential treatments. The subordinates then also interact with the leader based on the same principle.

Paternalistic Leadership

Paternalistic leadership is conducted based on favor bestowal, virtue establishment and authority formation. These three leadership behaviors are also known as benevolent leadership, moral leadership, and authoritarian leadership. Analyses from the cultural perspective show that benevolent, moral, and authoritative leaderships originated from reciprocity, virtues, and austerity and authority, which are the three major principles of the Confucianism and the concepts of the Legalism. These leadership styles demonstrate a style similar to patriarchy, which constructs a clear and powerful authority to take care of the subordinates and establish a role model (Farh & Cheng, 2000). Cheng, Chou, and Farh (2000) uses the paternalistic leadership theories as a foundation to further develop the measurement scale for examining paternalistic leadership. They also examine the scale with structural equation modeling and statistical analysis to prove that the factor structure is fairly stable and effective. When the scale is applied to examine the leadership in organizations and different units of the school, employees and teachers indeed feel the leadership behaviors of benevolent, moral, and authoritarian leaderships from their managers and principals. Benevolent leadership includes “individual care” and “consideration”. Moral leadership includes “integrity and responsibility”, “decency” and “unselfishness”. Authoritarian leadership covers “authoritarian ruling”, “authoritarian power”, “concealment”, and “preach”.

The above mentioned researches are all conducted based on the domestic perspective. These studies have developed stable leadership behavior measurement scale and preliminary results. However, how the Chinese leadership functions and how the measurement scale is to be applied in appropriate fields still require further examination. Kindergartens in Taiwan are a very special organization in that they are not included in the national education system. As a result, kindergartens in Taiwan are mostly private-run organizations and are faced with keen market competition. However, while a kindergarten is an institution that education takes place, the kindergarten principal has to take care of both organizational management and education quality. The researcher is interested in and would like to investigate how a kindergarten principal lead fellow teachers to facilitate the development and progress of the institute as well as the role played by leadership concepts of the principal.

Summary

This research originally aimed to study the relationship of kindergarten principals. When the researcher started to collect primary data through observation and interviews however, it was found that the leadership behaviors and concepts of the principal actually demonstrated many values shared in the Chinese society. As a result, this research eventually focused on the leadership of kindergarten principals from the perspective of the Chinese society.

Methods

This research adopted the qualitative research method of the naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The naturalistic inquiry emphasizes the on-site data collection which allows the researcher to fully illustrate and understand complex human experiences as well as the context where the experiences take place. Qualitative research focuses on process development so as to understand how events occur, how people interpret the events, and what the follow-ups are. It aims to provide a faithful and comprehensive description of the natural context of the phenomenon in the research. Furthermore, it is expected to reveal the significance of the experience or phe-

nomenon as well as to analyze individuals throughout the process in order to understand the complex experiences of human beings (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Participant

This research is a case study, and the participant is Principal Ji of Xiaoxiao Kindergarten, a private-run organization, which was granted the Award of Excellency by the Bureau of Education of Taipei county in 2003. Principal Ji has been the principal of Xiaoxiao Kindergarten since its establishment in 1985. The Kindergarten was established and funded by four founders and led by Principal Ji in terms of management. In 2001, Principal Ji acquired the Kindergarten which is now owned and run by her alone. There are two classes in Xiaoxiao Kindergarten with four teachers, one assistant teacher, and seventy children enrolled.

Before the establishment of Xiaoxiao Kindergarten, Principal Ji had been a teacher and director of a kindergarten affiliated to an elementary school in Taipei County. She has almost thirty years of preschool education as well as more than twenty years of management work. Principal Ji took courses in the night division of a childhood education department in a university from 1996 to 1999. Recently, she has also obtained a master degree in Education Administration.

Data Collection and Analysis

1. Data Collection

The researcher collected data in Xiaoxiao Kindergarten between March 2004 and March 2005. The data were collected through participant observations, interviews, formal and informal ones, and document analysis.

Participant observation was conducted with a hope to getting first-hand information. It was also hoped that the researcher could better understand and describe people involved, the events, the processes, and causes in the whole setting of observation. The research put focus on the interaction between the principal and kindergarten staff, through which the leadership and leadership behaviors of the principal would be better understood. Therefore, the researcher mainly observed the kindergarten administration meetings and teaching meetings. In addition, to further understand

the context in which the principal exerted her leadership, the researcher also observed the daily lives the principal on various dates. The parent-teacher meetings, parent involvement, and class demonstrations were also observed. Observations were conducted once or twice per week. There were fifty-four observations conducted in total.

The researcher also conducted interviews, two formal ones and twenty informal ones altogether. There were no structured questions for interviews. Instead, questions were accordingly developed from the answers of the principal in the interviews in order to further explore the thoughts of the principal.

The principal being the subject of the research, the researcher also interviewed the fellow teachers and observed the interaction between them so that a better understanding of how the fellow teachers think and feel about their interaction with the principal could be got. There were totally eight informal interviews conducted with the fellow teachers.

In terms of document analysis, the researcher collected the Kindergarten's appraisal briefing materials, parent handbooks, teaching plan designs, teacher's teaching journals, observation record of learning area, brochures of parents' visit to the Kindergarten, as well as the principal's notes. The research journals or memos of the researcher were also used as reference.

2. Data Analysis

Data analysis is called data coding in qualitative analysis. Data coding refers to the operational process of the disintegration, identification, symbolization, and proper re-integration of the data and documentation collected or transcribed (Hu, 1996). It uses "event" as the unit for analysis and conceptualizes the event. When the phenomenon is conceptualized, it has the potential to be developed as a theory and become a phenomenon that can be processed and analyzed again in the future.

The researcher started the analysis by reading and examining all the data collected carefully, and then categorized them into different groups, and labeled the groups under different labeling, which are "Demonstration of austerity and authority", "Showing care and kindness", "Appreciation of professional ethics and moral" and "emphasis on personal image". The four main labels respectively correspond to authoritative leadership, caring leadership, moral leadership, and image leadership,

which collectively formed the basis for discussing the leadership concepts and behaviors of the principal in this study. Besides, there are sub-labels in each main label to further classify the coded data. Further labeling is shown as Table 1.

Table 1. *Coding System of the Study*

Main labels	Sub-labels
Demonstration of austerity and authority	Direct guidance and instructions Austere blaming Demonstration of professional knowledge
Showing care and kindness	Care for staff's family and personal life Care for staff's future care plans
Appreciation of professional ethics and moral	Setting a role model for staff Sharing experiences of success
Emphasis on personal image	Maintenance of professional demeanor Showing smiles and self-confidence

Findings and Discussions

Data analyses of the present study have been focused on the interaction between

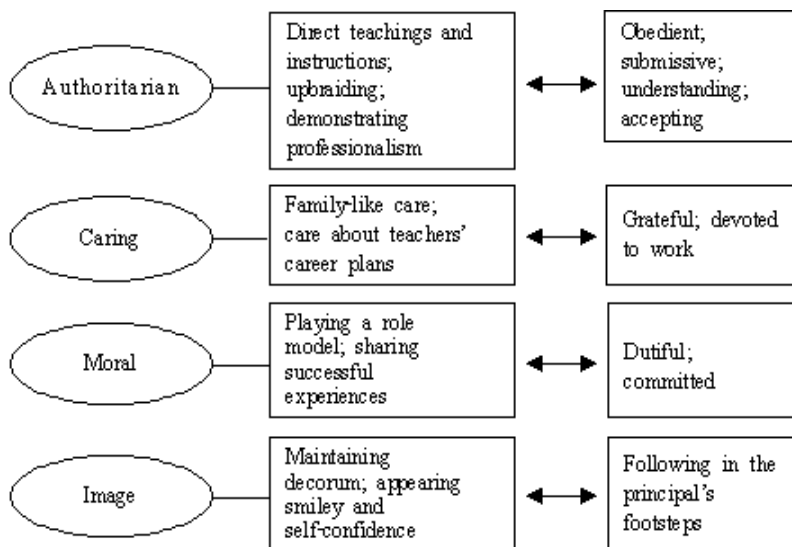


Figure 1. Leadership concepts and conduct of the subject of the study

the principal and the teachers in the kindergarten to gain a better understanding of the principal's leadership. The leadership of the principal can be portrayed on four facets: Authoritarian leadership, caring leadership, moral leadership, and image leadership (see Figure 1).

Demonstration of Austerity and Authority – Authoritarian Leadership

Authoritarian leadership of the principal was observed during the weekly teaching meetings on Thursdays. In general, the principal's speech took up two-thirds of the meeting time. Most teachers were busy taking notes. They seldom spoke or responded unless they were asked to by the principal.

During the meetings, the principal gave her instructions not only on the administrative procedures, but also on the classroom or learning activities, such as the graduation trip (Observation 2004/04/29 & Observation 2004/05/06), the teaching of phonetic symbols (Observation 2004/05/06), theme of the graduation ceremony (Observation 2004/06/24) and teachers' share of work on the graduation day (Observation 2004/07/15 & Document 2004/07/15), design of classroom activities (Observation 2004/03/29, Observation 2004/04/01, Observation 2004/04/30, Observation 2004/08/19, Observation 2004/08/28, Observation 2004/10/07, Observation 2004/10/14, Observation 2004/12/11 & Observation 2005/01/06), and nursing (Observation 2004/04/08, Observation 2004/04/15, Observation 2004/04/29, Observation 2004/07/01, Observation 2004/08/28, Observation 2004/09/02 & Observation 2005/01/13), etc.

For example, the principal decided on the destination of the graduation trip and visited it in advance. She also arranged a series of activities and suggested how the students should be taken care of. Even though she asked the teachers to propose ideas, they didn't contribute much to the design of activities. In the end, she told everyone in the meeting what she thought was the best for the graduation trip, and the teachers did not object (Observation 2004/04/29 & Observation 2004/05/06).

How did the teachers in the kindergarten react to the principal's authoritarian leadership then? It was found that the teachers accepted it quite well. Once a parent visited the kindergarten and mentioned that her kid went to an all-English kindergarten during the week and took Chinese lessons on the weekend. Ms. May secretly

called this ridiculous, and Ms. Jane said wryly, “we’ve been brainwashed by the principal!” (Observation 2004/10/14) The teachers appear submissive to the principal’s arrangements. This may have something to do with how long they have been on the job. Ms. Chun has worked with the kindergarten only for two years. The other three teachers have been in the kindergarten for at least eight years. They all know very well the principal’s personality and how she runs the kindergarten. In a conversation with Ms. May, she mentioned, “Actually the principal is very considerate of the old employees like us. She would not ask us to ride on the school bus to pick up students. Teachers in other kindergartens have to do this. She does not ask us to do things that may distract our attention from teaching. She treats teachers quite well. ...She could have arranged me in the after-school program to save the money for hiring a new teacher. Anyways, I’ve worked here for so many years. I don’t think I should make that many comments. It’s just the principal’s personality. It won’t change.” (Informal interview with teachers 2005/01/19) During the summer vacation, some teachers did not come to work. Ms. Chun said, “Shan and Jane have this week off. They have worked non-stop for three years. The kindergarten was short-handed a couple years ago. Teachers had to work at the daycare center in the summer. We didn’t have a summer break. It was business as usual. Jane and Shan were really tired. The principal thought that the kindergarten isn’t understaffed anymore so she allowed them to take some time off. I think I can have two days off too! The principal asked me whether or not I wanted to have some time off. I said, ‘Sure!’ I’m content that I can have two days off. Jane and Shan have worked with the principal for more than ten years. They’ve got only a week off. I think two days is enough for me.” (Informal interview with teachers 2004/07/22)

The teachers’ submissiveness reflected the principal’s authoritarian leadership. Most teachers were senior employees. So they understood her personality and working style very well. They were willing to cooperate and obey. They put up with her severe scolding and continued to do their best on the job. They made themselves feel better by assuming “this is what the principal is”. However, despite her austerity, the principal was also a caring person, which was felt by the teachers.

Showing Care and Kindness Caring Leadership

Being asked how she viewed her own role in the kindergarten, the principal said, “I suppose everyone would consider this kindergarten as a family. I am like a mom. I consider myself a mom, too. Even though I am not old enough to be the teachers’ mother, I do treat them as my family. For example, I’ll help them take care of their personal lives if they need me. Ms. May’s child had to undergo a facial surgery. I offered her a loan of some tens of thousands of dollars, but she tried to decline. I bought Ms. Shan’s child a present when she became an elementary school student. I look serious most of the time, but I consider the teachers my family” (Interview 2004/10/28). Through her remark, it is found that the principal expressed her gratitude towards the teachers by caring about their families (Interview 2004/07/13).

Besides, the principal cared a lot about the teachers’ career plan as well, especially the three teachers who have worked with her for at least eight years. She suggested to the three of them that after she retired, she would want them to take over the kindergarten. She proposed a very good deal. These teachers were very grateful to her for such an arrangement (Informal interview with teachers 2004/08/11). The principal considered the teachers to be very committed to their jobs and had won acknowledgement from the parents. The school’s reputation was built on the excellent teamwork, and she thought the teachers should run the kindergarten in her retirement. Therefore, she advised the teachers to advance their studies so that they will be better qualified for the position as a principal (Interview 2005/01/13). Ms. Jane said in a joking manner about the future takeover, “The atmosphere in the meeting will be changed” (Informal interview with teachers 2004/08/11). She seemed to imply that the principal appeared too serious. The principal’s proposal made the teachers more devoted to their work and even more submissive to her authoritative and demanding leadership.

Appreciation of Professional Ethics and Moral—Moral Leadership

The principal paid great attention to the teachers’ moral attitudes, especially their professional ethics and working habits. She thought teachers are supposed to be diligent, devoted, and dutiful. The principal attributed her own achievements to her diligence. She shared with parents in a PTA meeting her learning experiences,

through which she hoped to convey her messages that the key to success is good habits (Observation 2004/06/17).

The principal's devotion exerted an influence on the teachers. The teachers usually stayed late at the kindergarten to prepare for the next day's lessons or inform the parents of their children's learning progress. Their commitment was obvious. Ms. Shan said, "The principal works so hard at her age. As a young teacher myself, there is no excuse for me not to work hard" (Informal interview with teachers 2004/06/10). It can be seen that the principal was a role model for the teachers and inspired them to devote themselves to work.

Besides, the principal also mentioned that she hardly checked the teachers' attendance record. However, she once found a teacher got to school later than she did. So, she checked her attendance record and found that this particular teacher had not signed in to work for several days. She was angry at this since she believed honesty is the most important moral standard. So, she urged the teachers not to make the same mistake again, and stressed that if one cannot be punctual, she cannot be expected to work hard (Informal interview 2004/09/15). She stressed time and again in the meeting that teachers should be dutiful and work hard on their teaching plans and contact books with the parents, and that they shall not pay less attention to these even when she is busy. If they were to be found amiss, she would be very angry (Observation 2004/09/02).

Emphasis on Personal Image — Image Leadership

In the weekly meetings, the principal often reminded the teachers of projecting and maintaining a good image, especially during the enrollment period between June and July or when parents visit the kindergarten in September. The principal also mentioned that atmosphere in the kindergarten and the teachers' behaviors reflect the kindergarten's image. She considered that such image left the first impression on visitors. This might affect their perception of the kindergarten's professionalism. Therefore, the teachers were reminded to maintain a positive image not only to attract students but also to keep improving their working attitudes (Observation 2004/06/10 & Observation 2004/12/22).

In the letter to the teachers prior to the graduation ceremony, the principal mentioned, “When you are on the stage, it is time for you to present yourself. A mature individual maintains decorum and demonstrates his/her attributes as a leading role. His/her uniqueness is embodied in his/her performance on the stage. At the graduation ceremony, you may be as nervous and tired as I will be, but you still have to act elegantly and politely. Otherwise, your efforts might be discounted just because of a one-time dissatisfactory performance. After all, other people may not have witnessed your diligence in the past, but they will find it hard to forget about your inappropriate behavior at the ceremony. Therefore, please do what I do. When you feel nervous and tired, wear a smile, take it easy and act friendly. Your uneasiness and anxiety will be alleviated by doing so. Do your best on the stage and the audience will be touched. I hope we would appear elegant and professional” (Document 2004/07/15).

The principal considered the teachers’ image to be very important. This would help leave the good first impression on visiting parents and encourage them to send their children to this kindergarten (Informal interview 2004/09/15).

The principal also explained that she often put herself in the shoes of the parents. She believed that parents feel assured when they see a professional workforce. She thus urged the teachers to pay attention to their appearance and manners even though she believed that it is their knowledge and professionalism that count. However, the principal seemed to pay more attention to the teachers’ appearance and manners. Maybe this was because the principal was expecting good manners to be the best way to demonstrate professionalism.

The principal’s emphasis on image could be observed in the ways she deals with other people. She always wore a smile in the presence of visitors or parents. She dressed up for important occasions, such as PTA meetings, school day, etc. The teachers agreed to the principal’s requirements. Ms. Shan said, “The host is supposed to be well-prepared to welcome guests and should seem different from usual” (Informal interview with teachers 2004/09/30). This remark suggested the teachers’ approval of the principal’s policies.

In sum, the principal demonstrated authoritative, caring, moral and image leaderships in her interactions with teachers. What kind of leading role does the kinder-

garten principal play then? This will be further discussed in the next section.

The Leader in Paternalistic Leadership

This study found that the principal appeared authoritarian while interacting with the teachers in the kindergarten and they seemed obedient, accepting, and grateful. This conforms to Paternalistic Leadership proposed by the studies in recent years on the leadership within Chinese organizations (Cheng, 1991; Cheng 2000).

Paternalistic Leadership entails being giving, exemplary, and authoritarian. Namely, a leader leads by means of kindness, conduct, and authoritarianism. The principal in this study has embodied the definition of Paternalistic Leadership by her caring, moral, authoritarian and image leaderships (See Table 2).

Table 2. *Correspondence of the Principal's Leading Style to Paternalistic Leadership*

Paternalistic leadership		The leading style of principal Ji	
Authoritarianism	Authoritative, domineering, lecturing, austere, demanding	Authoritarian	Demanding, instructive, upbraiding, instilling professional doctrines
Kindness	Caring for individuals, tolerant, forgiving	Caring	Caring for the teachers' families and their career plans
Conduct	Selflessness, dutiful, righteous	Moral	Being a role model and sharing her own successful experiences
		Image	Maintaining decorum, wearing a smile and appearing confident

In addition, this study also found the principal paid a lot of attention to the teachers' images, which reflects another facet of her leadership. Such emphasis on image equates to "face-saving" for the Chinese people, and also reflects one Chinese cultural value.

As far as the principal is concerned, she assumed the role as a mother in the big family of the kindergarten, regarding the teachers as her daughters or family. Even though she maintained a no-nonsense façade, she treated the teachers dearly in private and cared about them and even their families. The so-called no-nonsense style is to hold the teachers accountable for their work. They are expected to "adhere to

disciplines” (Interview 2004/10/28). Such austerity is often shown in a paternalistic figure in the traditional Chinese family. As a leader in the kindergarten, the principal must act as demanding as a father in the family to maintain her authority. However, the kindergarten staff is composed mostly of females, and the principal in private cares for the teachers as a mother does for her daughters.

The teachers in the kindergarten obeyed the principal’s instructions, and felt grateful to her for the arrangement of their future careers. Her role as a parent in the big family determined the atmosphere in the kindergarten. The teachers’ attitudes and behaviors were influenced by variations in the principal’s mood. Confucius aptly described a situation like this, “to observe filial piety, one must be observant of the parents mood”. In fact, the teachers in the kindergarten played the role of observant and obedient children, expressing their opinions only when asked to.

Conclusions

This research found the features of the Paternalistic Leadership in the kindergarten through interaction between the research subject, Principal Ji, and the fellow teachers. The leadership concepts and behaviors of the principal can be portrayed in terms of four facets: authoritarian leadership, caring leadership, moral leadership, and image leadership. The natures of the first three types of leadership correspond to the elements of Paternalistic Leadership in the researches done in Chinese organizations. On the other hand, image leadership emphasizes “face-saving, which is particularly valued by the Chinese people. Accordingly, the researcher believes that the role of the principal in leading a kindergarten analogically resembles that of “the householder” in the Chinese culture.

This research found that the leadership concepts and behaviors of the research subject could be further interpreted and analyzed under the framework of cultural values. Future research may further investigate the advantages, disadvantages, and impacts of the Paternalistic Leadership. The scope of this research is limited to one kindergarten. More follow-up case studies are suggested to conduct to gather more information on the influence of culture on leadership. Moreover, future researchers

may adopt the analysis framework of the Western cultures, and similarities and differences between the Western leadership theories, such as transformational leadership, charisma leadership, and cultural leadership, and the Chinese Paternalistic Leadership may be examined for comparison.

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