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Leadership style, occupational perception and organizational citizenship behavior in the Arab education system in Israel

Arab
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Abstract

Purpose – The field of educational systems has witnessed an increase in studies of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) as it contributes to the effectiveness and success of schools and achieving their objectives and goals. The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationships between principals' leadership style, occupational perceptions and OCB.

Design/methodology/approach – The research hypothesis holds that the leadership style (transformational or transactional) have a direct and indirect effect on OCB (through occupation perception). These hypotheses have been tested on data collected from 620 Arab Israeli teachers.

Findings – The results reveal that: transformational and transactional leadership have no direct effect on OCB, an indirect effect of occupational perception on the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB, occupational perception did not mediate the effect between transactional leadership and OCB.

Originality/value – The results of the study contribute to the understanding of the way leadership style and OCB interact in schools, and the importance of teachers' occupational perception in explaining this relationship. Future research should further investigate the teachers' occupational perceptions and its effect on their performance as little research has been conducted to date.

Keywords Teachers, Transformational leadership, Arab, Organizational citizenship behaviour, Transactional leadership, Occupational perception

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The study of school effectiveness within educational research has witnessed an increase in studies of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) as it contributes to the effectiveness and success of schools and achieving their objectives and goals (Abu Nasra and Heilbrunn, 2016; Bogler and Somech, 2004). Organ defined OCB (Organ, 1988, p. 4) as "individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization." In the education context, Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2000) distinguished theoretically between three levels of OCB: the individual level (e.g. donating behaviors), the team level (e.g. sharing and cooperative behaviors) and the organizational level (e.g. volunteering for unpaid tasks).

Many studies on OCB have dealt with the question of which factors foster OCB. One finding of many of these studies is that leadership has a positive influence on OCB among workers (Abu Nasra and Heilbrunn, 2016; MacKenzie *et al.*, 2001; Nguni *et al.*, 2006). Leadership is the ability of a person or group to influence people, to lead them to a common goal and motivate them to perform tasks that are often beyond initial expectations and a high level of commitment, without using coercion (Fullan, 2005; Li *et al.*, 2016). The importance of leadership stems from its ability to promote the educational and pedagogical process (Fullan, 2005), increase school effectiveness (Li *et al.*, 2016), be a source of inspiration for the school staff, generate organizational propulsion to achieve educational goals, develop



staff communication, create a positive school climate and create organizational cohesion and stability (Fullan, 2005).

The researchers indicate that transformational leadership is one of the most prominent of contemporary approaches to leadership (Abu Nasra and Heilbrunn, 2016). There is unanimity among the researchers that transformational leadership has a positive effect on employee motivation and occupational perception leading to extra investment and effort required for the organization's development, efficiency and effectiveness (Bogler, 2001; Coyne *et al.*, 2013). Additionally, in contrast to transformational leadership, transactional leadership has less influence on the motivation and occupational perception of the employee (Bogler, 2001; Coyne *et al.*, 2013). Higher levels of positive occupational perception increase employees' motivation and organizational commitment; they even invest more effort in their occupation, which increases organizational effectiveness and realization of organizational goals.

A number of research studies have investigated the potential mediation between principals' leadership style, and OCB, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment (Nguni *et al.*, 2006), trust in the supervisor (Jung and Avolio, 2000) and procedural justice (Ngodo, 2008), and finds a positive influence between these variables. However, a crucial factor has not been incorporated into these investigations, namely, the perceptions of the teachers regarding their occupation. Teachers' occupational perceptions entail a number of aspects that relate to the concept of teaching as a profession: professional prestige, professional identification and status, sense of self-fulfillment, scope for self-expression and personal development, job autonomy and centrality of the vocation (Bogler, 2001). The present study aims to examine the effects of principals' leadership style (transformational leadership and transactional leadership) together with teachers' occupational perceptions on OCB. Exploring the link between leadership style, occupational perception and OCB has great importance due to their effect on educational and pedagogical process, school effectiveness, teacher's motivation, school climate, organizational commitment, organizational cohesion, stability and achieving the organizational goals (Bogler, 2001; Fullan, 2005; Li *et al.*, 2016; Optalka, 2007).

Most studies on transformational and transactional leadership have been confined to western societies rather than non-western societies (Bass, 1997; Nguni *et al.*, 2006). Regarding minority societies, these studies exemplify their limits and highlight the importance of examining organizational phenomena in different socio-cultural backgrounds, due to the influence of the cultural context on the organizational behavior of employees. It is therefore appropriate to confirm the effects of transformational and transactional leadership, in ethnic educational contexts and specifically in the Arab education system.

In the present study, the influence of transformational and transactional leadership on teachers' occupational perception and OCB in schools in the Arab education system in Israel is studied. The uniqueness of Arab society is its social, cultural and economic structure, and its influence on the organizational culture of Arab schools. Arab schools adopted the authoritarian and collectivist social structure of Arab society, which according to the studies undermined the motivation and performance of the teachers (Arar and Massry-Herzallah, 2016). The next section relates in detail to the uniqueness of the case of the Arab education system in Israel.

The context: the Arab education system in Israel

The Arab population in Israel is a national minority that constitutes about 20 percent of the population in Israel (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Arab society is mainly a traditional patriarchal, male dominated, collectivist and less egalitarian culture (Arar *et al.*, 2013). Arab citizens do not enjoy full equal civilian rights and face obstacles in attaining access to public resources, and their nation is still embroiled in conflict with Israel. Consequently, 49 percent of the Arab population lives below the poverty line (National Insurance Institute of Israel, 2016).

Politically, the Arab minority has not managed to turn their demographic proportion into political power; economically, they constitute 53 percent of the population below the poverty line, and the average living standard of the Arab population is 60 percent less than that of the Jewish population.

The achievements of the Arab educational system are very low compared to the Jewish education system in the national exams (e.g. GEMS, Matriculation and Psychometric) as well as international exams (e.g. TIMSS and PISA). These low educational performances are due to various reasons: first, the Arab education system suffers from discriminatory government policies that expressed in limited educational and budgetary resources compare to the Jewish education system (Arar and Abu-Asbe, 2013). The inequality is evident in the insufficiency of teachers per students, limited allocation of school hours and lack of development of informal and special education. Second, appointment policy of teaching and management staff is according to familial or political affiliation. In addition, the inadequate access of Arab academics to the Jewish labor market and the fairly limited employment opportunities in the local Arab market brought high percentage of academics reluctantly turn to teaching in the Arab education system. This phenomenon produces on the one hand high profile of teachers in Arab education, and on the other hand damage on the occupational perception and even alienation from the teaching profession (Arar and Abu-Asbe, 2013).

As noted, Arab society is mainly a traditional patriarchal, male dominated, collectivist and less egalitarian culture. This is a society that views a strict hierarchy and control as the “correct” form of social organization; and local micro-politics have a strong influence on school decision making (Arar *et al.*, 2013). The influence of strong “hamullas” (extended families) often dictates appointments to school staff, and may prevent teacher dismissal irrespective of professional considerations (Arar *et al.*, 2013). A patriarchal culture still predominates in most Arab communities, ensuring the superiority of men over women in both private and public spheres. Until recently there have been few women allowed to manage Arab schools, and this has led to the perseverance of a hierarchic, authoritarian, autocratic and non-participatory masculine style of management (Arar *et al.*, 2013).

Conceptual background and hypotheses

Organizational citizenship behavior

OCB typically reflects activities initiated by employees by personal choice, which are outside their job definition and do not necessarily incur direct rewards, but nevertheless contribute to the organization, its development (Organ, 1997), and organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000).

This definition of teachers’ OCB emphasizes three main features: first, the behavior must be voluntary, that is, neither role prescribed nor part of formal job duties. Second, the focus is on behaviors that do not simply happen in an organization but are directed toward or seen as benefiting the organization. Third, by this definition OCB is multidimensional by nature. Although most scholars agree on the multidimensionality of this construct, a review of the literature reveals a lack of consensus about its dimensionality (Abu Nasra and Heilbrunn, 2016; Somech and Drach-Zahavy, 2000; Organ, 1988, 1990). Podsakoff *et al.* (2000) have identified almost 30 potentially different forms of OCB. However, they have also asserted that the constructs greatly overlap, so that they might be captured in five common dimensions: altruism: behavior that aims to help complete an assignment or to solve a work-related problem, for instance helping an overloaded co-worker; conscientiousness: whereas altruism is aimed at individuals, conscientiousness is aimed at the organization, specifically devotion and loyalty to the organization; sportsmanship: also aimed at the organization and represents situations in which an employee accepts certain uncomfortable conditions without criticism or complaints; civic virtue: the employee’s concern for the organization and its effective functioning; and courtesy: behavior aimed at the individual,

which entails cooperation and consultation with co-workers regarding activities that affect the organization.

Within the educational context, OCB is defined as teachers taking on activities above and beyond their formal job obligations with the school, the teaching staff and the pupils, with an aim to promoting the organization and achieve its aims (Somech and Drach-Zahavy, 2000; Somech and Oplatka, 2014).

Transformational leadership, transactional leadership and OCB

Transformational and transactional leadership were suggested by various studies, which tried to explain the differences between revolutionary, rebels, reform and ordinary leaders (Bass and Avolio, 1990). In the organizational context, scholars distinguished between transformational and transactional leadership to explain the questions of how leaders influence the performance of their employees, how leaders motivate employees, and how leaders appeal to their followers' values and emotions (Burns, 1978).

Transactional leadership creates motivation among employees through the use of a rewards system (Bass, 1985). The transactional leader focuses on setting goals, clarifying the link between performance and rewards and providing feedback to keep the employee focused on completing tasks. Therefore, the employees' behavior and activities are adjusted to the expected rewards. Transactional leadership is driven by exchange without an attempt to achieve an organized goal or to produce an organizational outcome. This style of leadership may produce an efficient and productive workplace, but is limited compared to transformational leadership (Nguni *et al.*, 2006). In contrast to transactional leaders, transformational leaders motivate followers by communicating the need to prioritize and internalize the organizations' interests over their individual interests. Intrinsic motivation may lead to willingness by subordinates to contribute to the organizations' aims without expecting immediate personal and tangible rewards. Thereby, they are willing to do much more than could be expected from their formal organizational role description.

A fundamental proposition of transformational–transactional leadership is the augmentation hypothesis (Bass and Avolio, 1993), which stipulates that transformational leadership builds on transactional. Bass (1998) has, however, made clear that “transformational leadership does not substitute for transactional leadership” (p. 21). In their meta-analysis of transformational and transactional leadership, Judge and Piccolo (2004) investigated the augmentation hypothesis and assessed the unique value of each of the two constructs in predicting key outcomes such as performance, satisfaction and effectiveness. Their findings indicated that transformational leadership did explain variance beyond the effects of transactional leadership.

The somewhat differential processes underlying the two constructs have been indicated by other studies. For example, Atwater and Yammarino (1996) found transactional leaders to rely more on positional power to exercise influence, and transformational leaders to motivate followers mostly via referent and personal power. Lord *et al.* (1999) suggested that transactional leaders prime the individual level of followers' self-identity, whereas transformational leaders make the collective level of identity more salient. Transformational and transactional leadership have been positively related to many individual and organizational outcomes such as effectiveness (e.g. Lowe *et al.*, 1996), satisfaction, organizational commitment (Podsakoff *et al.*, 1996) and well-being (Arnold *et al.*, 2007; Martin and Epitropaki, 2001).

Transformational leadership has been defined by Bass (1999, p. 11) as “moving the follower beyond immediate self-interest through idealized influence (charisma), inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration.” Transformational leadership has received much attention in the literature dealing with leadership and it has been found to be positively related to OCB (Abu Nasra and Heilbrunn, 2016; Khasawneh *et al.*, 2012; Piccolo

and Colquitt, 2006; Wang *et al.*, 2011). Wang *et al.* (2005) maintain that a positive association between transformational leadership and OCB is expected and has been supported empirically (e.g. Podsakoff *et al.*, 1990). Also, more updated studies such as Podsakoff *et al.* (2000), Wang *et al.* (2011), Abu Nasra and Heilbrunn (2016) have provided empirical support for the positive relationship between transformational leadership and OCB. In addition, Nguni *et al.* (2006) found a direct effect between transformational leadership and the OCB of teachers. This positive effect is a result of teachers participating in decision making, and of empowerment increasing their self-efficacy and positively impacts their occupational perceptions and opportunities (Somech and Oplatka, 2014). Similarly, Khasawneh *et al.* (2012) have suggested an empirical support between transformational leadership and organizational commitment among vocational teachers in Jordan. Therefore, a first hypothesis can be suggested as:

H1. Transformational leadership has a direct, positive effect on OCB.

Transactional behavior is expressed in two dimensions: contingent rewards and management by exception. Contingent rewards link the goal to rewards, clarify expectations, provide necessary resources, set mutually agreed upon goals and provide various kinds of rewards for successful performance. Transactional leaders set specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely goals for their subordinates. The leader takes an active part in fulfilling the task, and supplies constructive feedback. Management by exception may be active or passive. Active management by exception leaders actively monitor the work of their subordinates, watch for deviations from rules and standards and take corrective action to prevent mistakes. Passive management by exception leaders intervene only when standards are not met or when the performance is not as per the expectations. They may even use punishment as a response to unacceptable performance. Subordinates are motivated primarily by fear of reprisals, are not supported or guided, and thus exhibit indifference and tend to focus on their own agenda, even if it is contrary to that of the organization or community. Transactional leadership has been found to be positively related to OCB (Piccolo and Colquitt, 2006), although, contrastingly, Shapira-Lishchinsky and Tsemach (2014) found a correlation between negative transactions and occupational perceptions which leads to withdrawal from citizenship behavior among teachers in Israel.

The goal of transactional leadership is not to build a long-term relationship, but to exchange immediate benefits (Whittington *et al.*, 2009). Subordinates realize that they must act according to a profit and loss system. A transactional leader will reward OCB (if the employees are so inclined) as long as it serves his/her worldview. Consequently, we hypothesized that:

H2. Transactional leadership has a direct, positive effect on OCB.

Occupational perception as a mediator between leadership style and OCB

Previous studies have discussed the possible relationships between different dimensions of leadership and absenteeism. For example, Mellor *et al.*'s (2009) study found a positive relationship between transformational leadership and positive occupational perception.

The perception of occupations plays a key role in many vocational behaviors and in theories of vocational development. Although different studies have explored the relationships between positive occupational perceptions and limited opportunities, which have forced workers to stay in their present occupation (Blau *et al.*, 2009; Coyne *et al.*, 2013), negative occupational perceptions and teacher's empowerment has been correlated with the tendency among teachers to withdraw from citizenship behaviors (Shapira-Lishchinsky and Tsemach, 2014). Furthermore, both teachers' level of education and work exhaustion are negatively related to their being forced to stay in their present positions and to their voluntary intention to withdraw from them. Affective occupational commitment was

positively related to those forced to stay in their occupations but negatively related to a voluntary withdrawal from them. Social desirability response bias had a consistently negative but minimal impact on these occupational perceptions (Blau *et al.*, 2009).

Among the crucial determiners of occupational perception and job satisfaction is leadership style (Coyne *et al.*, 2013). In her research examining the effect of principals' leadership style (transformational or transactional), principal's decision-making strategy, teacher's occupational perceptions and job satisfaction, Coyne found that transformational leadership style mediated between the attributes of teachers' job satisfaction and their feelings of positive job satisfaction. Principals' transformational leadership affected teachers' satisfaction both directly and indirectly through their occupational perceptions (Bogler, 2001).

Consequently, if major motives are satisfied in the context of work and career, then satisfaction with an occupation should be a function of the discrepancy between personal needs and the perceived potential of the occupation for satisfying needs, particularly among those for whom the occupation constitutes a major source of satisfaction (i.e. men rather than women), and in the instance of occupationally relevant needs, such as need achievement (Blau *et al.*, 2009). Interestingly, a higher level of occupation complexity has a positive effect on the importance of the role and finally on occupational perception (Ganzach and Pazy, 2001). In her study of novice teachers' choice of teaching as a profession and their future occupational perceptions in the Turkish education system, Orcu (2011) found that occupational perceptions are formed as a result of learning, experience and organizational factors, such as their principals' leadership style and the school culture.

The common conception in research is that OCB is perceived as being positive for schools (Oplatka, 2006), and teachers' negative occupational perceptions are negative (Vardi and Weitz, 2004). Previous empirical studies show strong negative relationships between OCB and counterproductive work behaviors (CWB) such as voluntary absence (e.g. Coyne *et al.*, 2013). Although most previous studies examined the constructs of OCB and CWB from separate perspectives, researchers are becoming more interested in the relationship between these two constructs (Spector and Fox, 2010). On the other hand, there is tremendous importance in teachers acting beyond the call of duty, because these behaviors promote school effectiveness (Somech and Oplatka, 2009). It seems that teachers, who have positive occupational perceptions, will perform higher levels of OCB. Therefore, we may assume that:

H3a. Occupational perception mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB.

H3b. Occupational perception mediates the relationship between transactional leadership and OCB.

Figure 1 describes the initial research model.

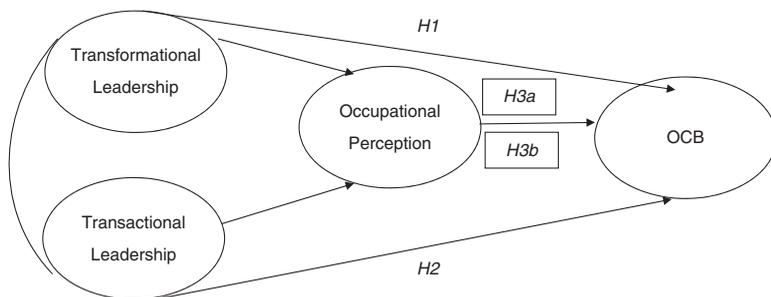


Figure 1.
Description of the
research model

Method

Participants

The study was carried out in public schools in the Arab education system in Israel. From a sample of 670 teachers who were selected from 67 schools located in five educational districts, 620 responded and returned usable questionnaires (92 percent return rate). The schools were randomly selected from a list of schools kept by each District Education Office. The sample of schools included elementary grades 1–6 (29 percent), middle grades 7–9 (31 percent) and high school grades 10–12 (40 percent). Ten teachers were randomly selected from the list of teachers kept by the school principal in each school. Care was taken to select urban (40 percent), suburban (25 percent) and rural (35 percent) schools from diverse demographic areas of the state. The average of school size was 625. In total, 90 schools were invited to participate, and 67 agreed, for a response rate of 74.4 percent.

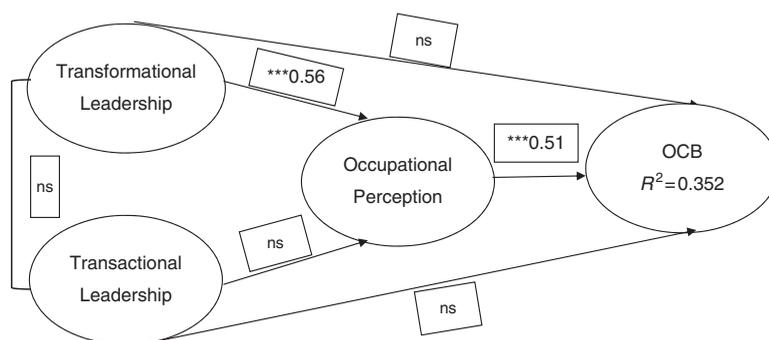
The response rate per school varied between 80 and 100 percent. Most of the respondents were women (65 percent). In total, 43 percent of the teachers in this study taught in high schools, 88 percent were married and 59 percent had a Bachelor's degree. The average teaching seniority was 14.48 years, compared to an average of 11.21 years in the school as a whole.

Variables and instruments

Participants completed an extended Arabic version of the teacher performance: OCB- 22 items (Somech and Drach-Zahavy, 2000) and in-role performance – 8 items (Williams and Anderson, 1991); leadership style (transformational leadership – 20 items, transactional leadership – 12 items) (Bass, 1985) and occupation perceptions (28 items) (Yaniv, 1982). Responses to the stress coping items are given on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great degree). Values of internal consistency (Cronbach's) coefficients for the research variables range from 0.75 to 0.95.

Data analysis

Path analysis was employed to test the research model in Figure 1. This method, which assumes linear and non-recursive relationships among interval variables, allows examination of the direct and indirect effects of the independent variables, principals' leadership style and teachers' occupation perceptions, on the dependent variable, OCB. This technique allows the researcher to estimate the direct and indirect effects of variables in systems of structural equation models. Figure 2 depicts the results of testing the model reported in Figure 1. The statistical program EQS 6.1 was employed to perform the data analyses with maximum likelihood as the method of estimation.



Notes: $n = 620$. *** $p < 0.001$

Figure 2.
Path analysis of the
relationships between
principals' leadership
style, teachers'
occupation perception
and OCB

Findings

Table I displays the means and standard deviations of the teachers' scores for all the research variables. The results show that the teachers thought quite positively about the extent to which they experienced transformational leadership, occupational perception, OCB and transactional leadership. The results also indicate that teachers experienced more transformational leadership ($M=3.92$), occupational perception ($M=3.50$) and OCB ($M=3.31$), than transactional leadership ($M=3.22$).

The Pearson correlation coefficients between each of the following: OCB, transformational leadership, transactional leadership and occupational perception are presented in the three right columns of Table II. All the correlations were found to be significant. As can be seen, these correlation coefficients range from 0.25 to 0.51. The OCB variable was positively correlated with all other research variables: transformational leadership ($r=0.40$; $P<0.001$), occupational perception ($r=0.51$; $P<0.001$) and transactional leadership ($r=0.25$; $P<0.001$). We also found a significant correlation between transformational leadership and occupational perception ($r=0.48$; $P<0.001$), and between transactional leadership and occupational perception ($r=0.26$; $P<0.001$). Note that the correlation coefficients between transactional leadership and OCB and occupational perception are lower than between transformational leadership and the other variables. These results indicate relatedness among the presumed effects of transformational leadership and transactional leadership on teachers' occupational perception and OCB.

In the next section, we present more detailed analyses of the effects of transformational and transactional leadership on occupational perception, and OCB, as we address our three research hypothesis.

Hypotheses testing

In order to examine the effect of transformational and transactional leadership on the outcome variables, we conducted path analyses to examine the effects of transformational and transactional leadership factors on teachers' occupational perception, OCB, successively (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 depicts the results of testing the model reported in Figure 1. The model shows a good fit with the data. The ratio between χ^2 and the number of degrees of freedom in the model is the first and basic test for evaluating the model's fit. If this ratio is 2.0 or less, the model is considered to be a good fit. The research model met this requirement ($\chi^2/df = 1.66$).

Table I.
Means (M) and standard deviation (SD) for research variables

Variables	M	SD
Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)	3.32	0.68
Transformational leadership	3.92	0.69
Transactional leadership	3.24	0.57
Occupational perception	3.52	0.61

Table II.
Correlation matrix (Pearson's) for research variables

Variables	1	2	3
1. Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)			
2. Transformational leadership	0.40***		
3. Transactional leadership	0.25***	0.39***	
4. Occupational perception	0.51***	0.48***	0.26***

Note: *** $p < 0.001$

The RMSR has to be less than 0.5. Also, GFI, AGFI, NFI, NNFI and CFI have to be closer to 1 for the model to fit. In the research model, RMSR's value was 0.01, indicating a very good fit. Also, the CFI was 0.98, the NNFI value was 0.98, and the GFI was 0.94, which are very close to 1, and support the fit of the model. In addition, the AGFI was 0.92. The RMSEA scale examines the fit of the null hypothesis in the alternative models. A value of less than 0.05 signifies a good fit. In the research model, the RMSEA scale had a value of 0.05.

Figure 2 presents standardized regression coefficients for all the paths hypothesized in the model. No statistically significant relationship was found between OCB and transformational leadership and transactional leadership ($p > 0.05$). These results contradict *H1* and *H2* claiming that transformational leadership and transactional leadership have a direct effect on OCB. *H3a* stating that occupation perception is a mediator of the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB was supported. We found a positive relationship between transformational leadership and occupation perception ($\beta = 0.56; P < 0.001$), and between occupation perception and OCB ($\beta = 0.51; P < 0.001$). In addition, the paths coefficients in the model indicate that no statistically significant relationship was found between transactional leadership and occupation perception ($p > 0.05$), but a positive relationship was found between occupation perception and OCB ($\beta = 0.51; P < 0.001$). These results contradict *H3a* claiming that occupation perception mediates the relationship between transactional leadership and OCB.

The model explained 35.2 percent of the variance in OCB. It reveals that the effect of transformational principals' leadership style on OCB is expressed only by indirect effect – through occupation perception.

In summary, the effects of transformational and transactional leadership on teachers' occupational perception and OCB show that principals' leadership styles have no direct effect on OCB. In regard to the mediation effect, the findings revealed that occupational perception mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB. Conversely, occupational perception in supervisors does not mediate the relationship between transactional leadership and OCB. These findings support only *H3a* (Tables III and IV).

Discussion

This paper has both theoretical and methodological contributions to the literature. This study is the first to investigate the mediating effect of teachers' occupational perceptions on the relationship between principals' leadership style (transformational and transactional leadership) and OCB. The findings suggest that principals' leadership styles have no direct effect on OCB. These results are inconsistent with numerous studies described in the literature, which pertain to the direct effect between OCB and

Effect	Significance
Transformational leadership→OCB	ns
Transactional leadership→OCB	ns
Transformational leadership→Occupational perception	0.56***
Transactional leadership→Occupational perception	ns
Occupational Perception→OCB	0.51***

Note: *** $p < 0.001$

Table III.
Summary of the
effects between
research variables

df	χ^2	χ^2/df	RMSEA	RMSR	GFI	AGFI	NFI	NNFI	CFI
63	104.75	1.66	0.05	0.01	0.944	0.920	0.962	0.981	0.984

Table IV.
Goodness-of-fit
indexes of the
research model

transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000; Wang *et al.*, 2011) and transactional leadership (Piccolo and Colquitt, 2006).

The lack of effect of leadership style on OCB can be explained by the changes in the management of educational systems and the relationship between the principal and teachers. Recently, there have been changes in the education system regarding the role of the teacher and the principal, and in the relationship between them under the procedural implementation of new accountability reforms that limit the principal's space of decision and action (Arar, 2017; Harris, 2012; Tian *et al.*, 2016). The transition from the old public administration to the new public administration (Olsen, 2004), and new education reforms, lead to an increase in teacher autonomy, and creates a clearer definition of the role of the teacher that reduces the involvement of the principal in the teacher's educational activity (Arar, 2017; Fullan, 2001; Gronn, 2003; Spillane and Seashore, 2002).

Similarly, the educational system in Israel in general and the Arab educational system in particular adopted various educational reforms, such as the "New Horizon," which provide the teacher with professional autonomy and independent management ability, on the assumption that this will improve the teacher's performance and contribute to the improvement of educational achievements and climate (Arar, 2017). These changes in the work structure of the school have affected the relationship between teacher and principal, and the ability of the principal to influence the teaching staff (Nguni *et al.*, 2006). Hence, the direct effect of the principal on teachers' performance is quite limited, whether his or her leadership style is transformational or transactional.

The decisive effect of professional autonomy on Arab teachers' performance also explains the research finding that occupational perception mediates the relationship only between the transformational leadership style and OCB, but not the transactional leadership style and OCB. This means that the way to influence the performance of Arab teachers is by internal factors, by their occupational perception and not by an external source of leadership style. Influencing the teachers' occupational perception requires the principal to raise the teacher's level of motivation, to grant him autonomy, empowerment, optimal relationships, open communication channels (Khasawneh *et al.*, 2012; Piccolo and Colquitt, 2006; Wang *et al.*, 2011).

The adoption of transformational leadership (employees taking part in organizational decision-making processes, keeping open channels of communication with employees, and so on) increases teachers' motivation level, providing them with a positive occupational perception by giving them a sense of autonomy at work, professional prestige and status, personal development, and self-esteem (Wahlstrom and Louis, 2008). This positive occupational perception fosters teachers' identification with the school and its goals, and improves their willingness to perform OCB (Somech and Oplatka, 2014). As for the transactional leadership style, unequal treatment between teachers encourages alienation and their sense of a lack of fairness and justice, which in turn damages their motivation and occupational perception, and leads to a negative attitude toward their teaching role, thus weakening what is a cornerstone of OCB. Previous studies of the Arab education system confirmed that transactions between principals and teachers depended mainly on familial affiliation rather than professional capabilities and professional commitment.

Theoretically, our results make an important contribution to the literature, in that they directly test a central tenet of transformational leadership theory – that transformational leaders inspire followers to see their jobs as important, significant, and rewarding (Bass, 1985). Furthermore, our results link teachers' occupational perception to the "performance beyond expectations" suggested by Bass (1985). Specifically, school principals who score high on transformational leadership appear to be more successful at stimulating teachers' enthusiasm about their occupation than school principals who score lower (Bogler and Somech, 2004; Wahlstrom and Louis, 2008), thus indirectly influencing teacher's tendencies to engage in OCB.

Past research suggests that perceptions of intrinsic occupational perception can be substitutes for leadership (Kerr and Jermier, 1978). Conversely, our results suggest that occupational perceptions may be, at least in part, the effects of transformational leadership, as suggested by Podsakoff and colleagues (1996). Given the finding of occupational perception as a mediator between transformational leadership and OCB, this has implications for the broader literature on teacher satisfaction, and, in extension, teacher retention. We not only want teachers to have a positive perception of their job, but also, we want them to give back to their organization. This emotional support or encouragement of teachers with transformational leadership is not found in narrowed definitions of instructional leadership, which may help to increase academic success, but may not motivate teachers. In addition, this study adds to the growing body of evidence that transformational leaders have indirect effects on employees' perceptions and attitudes, as well as on behaviors that have been linked to individual, group and organizational effectiveness (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000).

Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of studies conducted on the effect of leadership style were conducted in western countries, in western culture, but few studies were conducted in non-western cultures (Nguni *et al.*, 2006). The current study extends the body of academic knowledge by examining the effect of principals' leadership style on teachers' occupational perception and OCB in non-western societies and cultures by taking the Arab community in Israel as a case study. The Arab community in Israel is a national minority that is characterized by a traditional community and collectivist way of life (Abu Nasra and Heilbrunn, 2016; Arar *et al.*, 2013). The research findings confirm the claim of questioning the universality of the transformational and transactional leadership theory across different societies and cultures (Bass, 1985; Hofstede, 2001). Organizational phenomena are usually multicultural, namely they are not affected by the cultural context so they can be observed in a wide range of cultures in different societies.

Limitations

Some limitations should be mentioned: first, the OCB of followers was rated by teachers; it would have been better if the variable had also been measured by using principals' rating, so as to avoid same-source bias. Second, the research analysis ignored the socio-demographic elements, such as gender and school characteristics, that can affect research results. Hence, it is recommended that future research on this issue take into consideration the specific characteristics of both teachers and schools. Third, the research model focuses on two types of leadership (transformational and transactional leadership). Examination of additional leadership styles in relation to the study variables is recommended for future research, to deepen our understanding about the influence of leadership style on teacher occupational perception and OCB.

Conclusion and implications

Our findings showed that the level of OCB among teachers who perceive the principal leadership style as transformational is higher than that of transactional style. Additionally, the study calls our attention to the professional world of teachers- occupational perception. It suggests that, to increase teachers' OCB perform, we need to pay attention to factors related to all aspects teaching, especially those termed "professional," as they refer to the characteristics of teaching as a vocation. Teachers' perceptions of their occupation are highly significant in affecting their OCB. This implication should be acknowledged by decision makers at the top level, such as government officials, and – on the more local level – by supervisors and principals. The more teachers perceive their teaching job as a profession and central to their lives, the more they will be satisfied with it.

Moreover, to improve the general feeling of all teachers, school principals should be more aware of how strongly their role and behavior affect teachers' perceptions about their occupation – and their OCB. Through transformational leadership, principals can develop and foster positive feelings and attitudes of teachers regarding their vocation. Viewing teaching as an occupation that confers a sense of self-esteem and professional prestige will lead the teachers to consider it as central to their lives and will thus increase their OCB performance. Hence, training programs for principals could be developed, aiming at providing the principal with tools and strategies to assist in imbuing meaning to jobs that might otherwise appear to be less important or significant. Teachers' job satisfaction is essential for the nexus between teachers and students, for satisfied teachers will be more enthusiastic about investing time and energy in teaching their students.

Hence, this study may provide the first step in a line of research relating principals to teachers to students. This could be accomplished through the collection of data from the principals about their leadership styles, occupational perception and demographics and how these variables affect teachers' OCB performance.

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