Journal of International Education and Leadership
http://www.jielusa.org/

Volume 5 Issue 1 Spring 2015
ISSN: 2161-7252

Improving Education in Confucian Countries through Analysis of Organizational Challenges, Leadership, and Responsibilities

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While common philosophical foundations influence instruction and leadership in East Asian nations, variable historical factors also significantly impact education within these countries. The current study was designed to holistically examine educational systems in different Confucian contexts, so that contemporary issues and necessary reforms may be identified. Aspects of leadership, organizational responsibilities, and educational challenges were analyzed using the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). Results suggest that new types of leadership are needed to empower administrators and teachers in East Asian countries. Such reforms cannot become successful, however, unless innovative techniques are developed which adapt Western theories to the highly defined status hierarchies of Confucian societies.

Keywords: Confucian, leadership, Asia, organizational responsibilities, educational challenges

Results of the most recent Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) revealed that Asian nations such as China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan and South Korea outperformed nearly every other country in all three skill areas tested: math, literacy, and science (OECD, 2014). The impressive results have compelled some Western nations to consider emulating Asian educational systems, which heavily emphasize the transmission of knowledge and extensive utilization of high-stakes standardized testing (Hogan, 2014).

Though Western nations may emulate the educational systems of their Asian counterparts, an all-pervasive cultural norm, emphasizing academic achievement and dedication to success on standardized testing, ultimately fuels performance in Eastern countries (Hogan, 2014; Wang & Lin, 2005). The value placed on standardized examinations in Asian nations has compelled students in these countries to forgo taking "unnecessary" subjects such as art or music, which do not appear on the college entrance exam (Walter, 2014). It has further compelled students to exclusively study concepts covered on the test, and nothing else (Bernstein, 2013; Walter, 2014). Describing this issue in China, Bernstein (2013) wrote,

> In comparison, the Gaokao [college entrance exam] preparation cycle is a super-marathon, a year-long review session in which books pile high on the student's desk at school and desk at home. The following four years of a student's life rides on a single, far-away exam slated usually for the month of June, and every moment is spent studying until then (para. 11).

As this passage reveals, the college entrance exam is a ubiquitous aspect of student life in Chinese high schools. Similarly, Confucian schools in Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, and South Korea reveal a singular dedication to this type of high-stakes assessment (Bernstein, 2013; Hogan, 2014; Wang & Lin, 2005).

While a commitment to basic core subjects has led to a great deal of achievement, the accomplishment has come at a price. Sole emphasis on standardized tests has led to excessive memorization of facts and procedures, which, in turn, has prevented the cultivation of valuable critical thinking and social skills. Other competencies which cannot be developed through memorization, such as foreign language ability, are difficult for East Asian learners to master (Wu, Wu, & Le, 2014). Confucian

nations, recognizing the limitations of unilateral emphasis on achievement tests, have attempted to integrate more qualitative educational experiences within the core curriculum (Hogan, 2014). In Singapore, for example, during the 2004-5 school year, a new pedagogical framework called "Teach Less, Learn More" was adopted to eliminate perceived shortcomings in critical thinking and social skills (Hogan, 2014). Despite lofty ambitions after implementation in 2006, results continue to be lackluster. While student participation and teacher professionalism have improved, children continue to receive intense pressure to memorize facts and achieve on high stakes tests (NIE, 2012). Despite a sincere effort to reform, a clear overemphasis of high-stakes testing predominates, relegating social and experiential learning to an inferior position.

In essence, failures to implement reforms complementing core subject areas are a reflection of the cultural and educational values that preclude their implementation. To truly understand causes for both instructional success and failure in East Asian nations, the operation of their educational systems must be comprehensively studied, along with cultural and historical factors influencing their manifestation. With a holistic perspective obtained from such examination, education may be significantly enhanced.

Literature Review

To understand how academic achievement in East Asian countries may be facilitated and improved upon, it is essential that cultural and educational characteristics of these nations be further examined. Countries such as China, South Korea, Japan, and Singapore all share common cultural characteristics rooted in Confucianism, which stress harmony and compel members of a community to conform to group norms. As pointed out by Shin and Koh (2005), Confucianism is an all-pervasive aspect of society which permeates communal, political, familial, and school relationships. Within the school system, strict hierarchical connections clearly delineate roles of both superiors and subordinates. Students are expected to receive knowledge from their teachers, who serve as a content experts. Teachers, in turn, are compelled to obey the orders of their superior, the principal. The Confucian philosophical perspective explains an overwhelming preference for high-stakes testing of basic skills, such as math, literacy, and science. Such tests are congruent with Confucian ideals, since they require direct transmission of knowledge and passive memorization for achievement.

Although Confucian educational traditions are congruent with Western philosophies of pedagogy, which emphasize the transmission of knowledge through direct guidance, they do not match andragogical theories which rely on diverse opinions and self-direction. Confucianism further limits the effectiveness of Western educational strategies that require sociolinguistic interaction or task-based instruction, since these methods require students to change their role into active, self-directed learners. Research has recognized these educational issues, citing that Eastern cultural traditions hinder the application of reforms from Western contexts (Burnaby & Sun, 1989). Not only do Eastern cultural traditions limit the application of instructional improvements, they restrict the degree to which Western styles of leadership may applied. According to the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness research program (GLOBE), a comprehensive study of 62 different countries (House, Javidan, Hanges, Dorfman, 2002; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorman, & Gupta, 2004; House, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla, Dorfman, Javidan, Dickson, & Gupta, 1999), nations from the Confucian tradition exhibit clear characteristics of institutional and group collectivism (Northouse, 2013). It is this emphasis on adherence to group norms which hampers efforts to diversify leadership for subordinates. Furthermore, the cultural tradition may limit the degree to which subordinates are willing or able to operate in a self-directed manner.

Despite clear similarities among Confucian countries (e.g., group collectivism and high-stakes testing), there are also clear cultural differences that influence education. Korean and Japanese learners, for example, differ according to attention to detail and aspects of patriotism. Japanese learners often exhibit a high preference

for detail (e.g., using correct English when speaking) and have little emotional attachment to collective aspects of their national history, while Korean learners often emphasize general meaning over accuracy (e.g., the message that is spoken) and have a strong sense of nationalism (Aubrey, 2009).

In addition to cultural differences, historical issues have influenced the manifestation of education in East Asian countries. In China, for example, a highly centralized system of education was decentralized to provincial and county levels after privatization of the economy in the 1970s (Ngok, 2007). As in China, Korean education has moved from a highly centralized to a provincially diversified system. In 1991, the National Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development delegated major budget and administrative issues to local educational authorities (Shin & Koh, 2005). Unlike Chinese and Korean school systems, Singapore continues to have a highly centralized educational system which is uniform across grade levels and subjects (Hogan, 2014). Japanese education is neither centralized nor decentralized, choosing to delegate authority to both national and regional government agencies. The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) sets national standards for curriculum, administrator pay scales, and supervisory organizations, while regional agencies make recommendations for teacher appointment, management of in-service training, and oversight of daily school activities (CIEB, 2014).

Despite a common cultural foundation influencing instruction and leadership in East Asian nations, variable historical factors also have a significant impact on education within these countries. Consequently, it is essential that both cultural and historical factors be considered when considering issues and designing reforms. The purpose of this paper is to holistically examine education and leadership in different Confucian contexts, so that more effective plans for educational improvement may be devised.

Research Questions

Though Confucian countries have common cultural traditions, they also have significant historical differences that influence education. To truly understand how instruction and leadership may be improved within these countries, it is important to holistically understand how cultural, historical, and organizational factors influence the education process. The following questions have been posed:

1. What organizational leadership styles predominate in Confucian schools? How do cultural, historical, or economic factors explain both similarities and differences in their leadership styles? How do these styles differ from those found in Western contexts?
2. What organizational responsibilities predominate in Confucian schools? How do cultural, historical, or economic factors explain both similarities and differences in their organizational responsibilities? How do organizational responsibilities in Confucian schools differ from those in a Western Context?
3. What challenges to learning remain in Confucian contexts? How can leadership and organizational systems be enhanced to handle these issues?

Method

Data obtained from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) was utilized to examine of all three research questions. While PISA covers 65 countries and economies, only Confucian nations (Hong Kong - China, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore) and one Western nation (the United States) were selected for comparison (OECD, 2014). To address the research questions posed, survey questions from three educational categories (leadership, responsibilities, and learner hindrances) were selected for analysis.

For question one, the largest frequency values of a leadership activity, which could range from once a year to more than once a week, were tallied to identify inclinations for a particular leadership style. The results were then summarized within a table. For question two, responsibilities of teachers, principals, and educational organizations were analyzed from

the selected countries. Responsibilities which revealed a larger number of positive over negative responses were recorded for each job role (e.g., principal, teachers, regional authority, etc.). Information was then compiled into a table which summarized the major responsibilities of teachers, principals, and larger educational organizations within each country. For question three, the number of complaints for each type of learner hindrance were recorded by country. The numbers of complaints were then ranked from smallest to largest, to identify which countries had the most significant issues with particular learner hindrances.

Results

Educational Leadership

In contrast to their Western counterparts, educational leaders in Confucian countries reported communicating infrequently with subordinates. All of the Asian countries reported less frequent meetings with administrators for goal-setting, problem-solving, professional development, and assessment (Table 1). The lack of frequent communication may be a reflection of strict hierarchical relationships between superiors and subordinates in Confucian countries, which enforce compliance and discourage disruption. Leaders may delegate authority to subordinates and either implicitly or explicitly compel them to solve problems independently.

While all Confucian countries had lower communication values than the United States, the intensity of these values differed among the Asian nations. Reflection of curricular goals, for example, was less frequent within South Korea; Korean leaders tended to neglect consideration of curricular strengths and weaknesses, along with the congruence of curricular designs to school goals (once or twice a year). Japanese administrators tended to neglect consideration of academic goals and performance results (once or twice a year). Furthermore, they did not frequently use teacher development or educational research to satisfy school goals (once or twice a year). Schools in China, Hong Kong, and Singapore, revealed slightly more frequent communication of goals, discussion of performance, and promotion of training. Leaders and staff tended to cooperatively perform these tasks 3 to 12 times a year.

Table 1

Largest Frequencies of Leadership Activities

Leadership	1-2 Times During the Year	3-4 Times During the Year	Once a Month	Once a Week	More Than Once a Week
I work to enhance the school's reputation in the community		Hong Kong, China, Japan, Korea, and Singapore			United States
I ensure that teachers work according to the school's educational goals.	Japan	Korea and Singapore	Hong Kong and China		United States
I promote teaching practices based on recent educational research	Hong Kong, China, and Japan	Korea and Singapore			United States
I praise teachers whose students are actively participating in learning	Japan	Korea	Hong Kong, China, and Singapore		United States
I engage teachers to build a school culture of continuous improvement		Hong Kong, China, and Japan	Korea and Singapore		United States
I draw teachers' attention to the importance of pupils' development of critical and social capacities		Hong Kong, China, Japan, and Korea	Singapore		United States
When a teacher brings up a classroom problem, we solve the problem together		Hong Kong, China, and Japan	Korea and Singapore		United States
When a teacher has problems in his/her classroom, I take the initiative to discuss matters		Hong Kong, China, and Japan	Korea and Singapore		United States
I pay attention to disruptive behavior in the classrooms			Hong Kong, China, and Japan	Korea	Singapore and the United States
I make sure the professional development activities of teachers are in accordance with teaching goals of the school.	Japan	Hong Kong, China, Korea, and Singapore	United States		
I refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers	Korea	Hong Kong, China, Japan, and Singapore	United States		
I discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses	Korea	Hong Kong, China, and Japan	United States		
I ask teachers to participate in reviewing management practices	Korea and Singapore	Hong Kong and China	Japan and United States		
I discuss the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings	Japan	Hong Kong and China	Korea, Singapore, and the United States		
I use student performance results to develop the school's educational goals.	Japan	Hong Kong, China, Korea, Singapore, and United States			
I lead or attend in-service activities concerned with instruction		Hong Kong, China, Japan, Korea, and Singapore	United States		

Volume 5 Issue 1 Spring 2015
ISSN: 2161-7252

Communication with subordinates concerning all aspects of organizational leadership, such as goals, problem-solving, and training, was most frequent in the United States. These results suggest that principals and other educational leaders within US schools have a great deal of meaningful interaction with teachers, meeting more than once a week to solve problems (e.g., classroom or behavioral issues), promote training (e.g., professional development and inservice activities), or promulgate information (e.g., student performance results and academic goals)(See Table 1). Within Western contexts, it is clear that social interaction is a vital component of a school's operation. This is further supported by the frequent emphasis on critical and social capacities of students (More than once a week).

In addition to more frequent interaction between superiors and subordinates, education in a Western context appears to support frequent cooperation in problem-solving. Results indicate that principals in US schools take the initiative to cooperatively solve teacher issues more than once a week. Increased interaction and problem-solving in the United States may reflect the utilization of a situational leadership approach, whereby direct guidance or support is provided based upon characteristics of the subordinate (Johnson & Blanchard, 1982). This leadership style appears to represent a form of emergent leadership. Confucian schools, in contrast, appear to utilize positional power, which is reinforced through cultural beliefs, to delegate authority to subordinates of various different ability levels.

Roles and Responsibilities

Patterns in the delegation of authority reveal a number of organizational differences between Confucian nations. The degree to which authority was localized, for example, differed significantly. Overall, China revealed the largest localization of authority. Teachers tended to have considerably more responsibilities than other nations. They had some degree of control over hiring teachers, textbook selection, course content, and assessment. The larger responsibilities of Chinese teachers may explain the higher frequency values for leader-staff communication concerning school goals, performance, and assessment. Like teachers, principals in Chinese schools had a large amount of responsibility, controlling aspects of disciplinary policies, hiring of teachers, and assessment (Table 2). While principals in both China and the United States both had similar responsibilities, Chinese teachers appeared to have more responsibilities than their American counterparts.

Principals in Japan revealed the greatest degree of authority (Table 2). Results indicated that they control student development from start to finish, which includes disciplinary policy, textbook selection, course content, and assessment. Very little authority appears to be devolved to Japanese teachers, which may explain their reported lack of communication with leaders concerning goals, performance, and assessment. Japanese principals may provide more direct guidance concerning how instruction is to be conducted and assessed.

Table 2

Roles and Responsibilities of Individuals in Educational Organizations

Hong Kong - China	Japan	South Korea	Singapore	United States
Principals and teachers are responsible for disciplinary policies, hiring teachers, and assessment. Teachers responsible for assessment, hiring teachers, textbook selection and course content. National education authority is responsible for salary increases.	Principals are responsible for disciplinary policies, textbook selection, course content, and assessment. Regional or local authority is responsible for hiring teachers and salary increases.	Principals are responsible for disciplinary policies and assessment. Teachers responsible for textbook selection and course content. National education authority is responsible for salary increases.	Principals are responsible for disciplinary policies and assessment. Teachers responsible for textbook selection and course content. School governing board are responsible for disciplinary policies. National education authority is responsible for hiring teachers and salary increases.	Principals are responsible for disciplinary policies, hiring teachers, and assessment. Teachers responsible for textbook selection and course content. School governing board are responsible for disciplinary policies. Regional or local authority is responsible for salary increases, textbook selection, assessment, and course content.

While Hong Kong, China, South Korea, and Singapore all showed national influences on teacher salary, analysis of other responsibilities revealed a high degree of decentralization to regional authorities or schools. Although the United States regional authority was reported to control several aspects of instruction and curricular design, local authorities in Asian nations (Japan) controlled only human resource issues. According to data obtained from PISA (OECD, 2014), schools have the greatest amount of authority to control aspects of instruction, curricular design, and assessment. Only Singapore and the United States appear to heavily utilize local school boards to handle disciplinary action.

Learner Hindrances

Analysis of learning hindrances revealed several different educational challenges for Confucian nations. Diverse and heterogeneous student populations were one major issue within countries such as Singapore and Japan, which had 43 and 136 complaints respectively (Table 3). Growing diversity of the learner population, and an apparent contradiction with beliefs promoting group collectivism and joint action, may explain these grievances. Another learner issue was student disruption in South Korea. Table 3 reveals that student disrespect, disruption, and bullying were all most prevalent in South Korea, having 60, 51, and 31 reported issues respectively. These behavioral concerns may reflect a ban on corporal punishment, enacted in 2010, which has created a disciplinary power vacuum (Higginbotham, 2013). Without traditional means of discipline, teachers may be ill-equipped to handle disruptions. More in-service training for teachers, along with innovative policies for discipline, might be needed to deal with such issues.

In contrast to South Korea, which reported major issues related to the student population, Japan reported serious issues with teacher behavior. *Staff resistance to change* and *teachers too strict* were major issues, yielding 60 and 36 complaints respectively. The behavioral problems of teachers in Japan may be a reaction to an inequitable power relationship with the principal. As previously described, Japanese principals hold sizable influence over instruction, curriculum, design, and assessment. Since cultural traditions dictate that subordinates follow orders, teachers may experience dissatisfaction and frustration. More self-directed learning and goal setting, in accordance with teachers' levels of maturity, may help increase teacher satisfaction. While a necessary reform, empowerment is also problematic, since Confucian relationships compel absolute obedience to authority.

Table 3
Perceived Learner Hindrances

Learning Hindrance	**Lowest Number of Issues Reported**				**Highest Number of Issues Reported**
Students Lacking Respect	Singapore (16)	Hong Kong – China (22)	United States (24)	Japan (37)	South Korea (60)
Students Disruption	Japan (10)	Hong Kong – China (20)	Singapore (21)	United States (23)	South Korea (51)
Students Being Bullied	Singapore (7)	Japan (8)	Hong Kong – China (9)	United States (20)	South Korea (31)
Students Not Encouraged	Singapore (16)	United States (20)	South Korea (29)	Hong Kong – China (54)	Japan (55)
Poor Student Teacher Relations	Hong Kong – China (7)	United States (10)	Singapore (11)		Korea (19) Japan (19)
Heterogeneous Classes	United States (53)	Singapore (75)	South Korea (90)	Hong Kong – China (120)	Japan (136)
Diverse Ethnic Backgrounds	South Korea (3)	Hong Kong – China (8) Japan (8)		United States (36)	Singapore (43)
Teachers' Low Expectations	Singapore (19)	United States (26)	South Korea (36)	Japan (41)	Hong Kong – China (45)
Students' Needs Not Met	Singapore (35)	South Korea (36)	United States (38)	Japan (50)	Hong Kong – China (66)
Teacher Absenteeism	South Korea (1)	Singapore (7)	Japan (6)	United States (12)	Hong Kong – China(18)
Staff Resisting Change	South Korea (20)	Singapore (21)	Hong Kong – China(29)	United States (46)	Japan (60)
Teachers Too Strict	United States (9) Hong Kong – China (9)	Singapore (10)		South Korea (22)	Japan (36)

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A final issue is related to Chinese teacher competence. Several complaints arose concerning *Teachers' Low Expectations* (45), *Not Meeting Students' Needs* (66), and *Teacher Absenteeism* (18). As with other complaints about teachers, these issues may reflect the overutilization of positional power relationships, which do not cultivate self-direction in subordinates with higher levels of development, nor do they provide direct guidance to employees at lower levels of progress. These issues may also be the result of unrealistic goals for students or environmental conditions that limit pedagogical influence (e.g., large class sizes).

Discussion

Results of the current study reveal that leadership in a Western context such as the United States requires a great deal more interaction between staff and administrators. Cultivation of group relationships for goal setting, curricular design, in-service training, and assessment appears to reflect an adaptation of situational leadership, which provides support based upon an employee's developmental level. Within Confucian contexts, interaction is much less frequent, suggesting that positional power, reinforced by Confucian hierarchical relationships, is used to assign tasks to subordinates. Principals of East Asian countries may delegate tasks and responsibilities in a more autocratic fashion, and teachers may simply obey orders in accordance with their role as a subordinate. While this type of leadership is ideal for the transmission of knowledge relevant for high-stakes testing, it can be maladaptive for the development of critical thinking and social competencies needed by both students and teachers.

While increased interaction, critical thinking, and communication within schools is indeed necessary, past attempts to address these needs (e.g., Teach Less, Learn More) have yielded lackluster results. Such reforms have failed because the designs are based largely upon Western philosophical traditions, which are not easily adapted to strict hierarchical social systems of East Asian nations. To promote sociocultural competence and critical thinking skills, innovative training strategies must be utilized that complement the rigid Confucian social structure. Because Eastern status hierarchies consist largely of unilateral power relationships, change must occur at the top and proceed downward. This means that principals and other leaders must first receive training before a change may be successful. They must be trained to deal with the individuality and creativity required for empowerment and group problem-solving. They must also be trained to eliminate the status quo, prevalent in societies with narrowly specified teacher roles. Following training of administrators and principals, head-teachers and senior teachers must be trained, followed by other teachers who are low on the status hierarchy. Status should never be disregarded (e.g., giving training to new employees first) during the training process, since it may cause resentment and ultimately hamper efforts for reform.

In addition to the flow of training from top to bottom, the method of delivery must be congruent with strict Confucian relationships. Since self-direction among subordinates is often discouraged, both superiors and employees may be reluctant to accept devolution of authority. These limitations require utilization of more direct (e.g., pedagogical) guidance when initially implementing situational leadership strategies. To begin the process of training, a lecture outlining targeted leadership skills and behaviors should be presented to principals. Goals and behaviors associated with the following points may be proposed to facilitate leadership training:

1. Ways to communicate school vision and educational goals to teachers
2. Praising teachers for good performance
3. How to handle teachers who have students with behavioral problems
4. How to empower teachers to solve problems on their own or with you
5. How to deal with curricular weaknesses together
6. How to deal with assessment
7. Ways to integrate teachers into the decision-making process

Following a clear explanation of necessary leadership goals and behavioral skills, some case

studies can be provided for analysis. Administrators may be asked, for example, how they might deal with teachers when issues such as those featured in Table 4 emerge.

Table 4

Sample Case Studies for Leadership Training

	Case Studies
New, Inexperienced Teacher	A female teacher, aged 21, is having problems with a student who keeps interrupting in class. The teacher just started a few months ago and still does not feel confident in her work. What would you say to her? Would you initiate a discussion about the issue? How often should you meet the teacher to monitor her development? Would this teacher benefit more from self-directed or pedagogical training? Why or why not?
Senior Teacher	A highly experienced female teacher, aged 40 (the same age as you), is having problems with a student who keeps disrupting the class. How would you initiate a discussion about the issue? How can you empower her to solve the problem on her own, or with peers? Would you deal with this issue differently if the teacher were less experienced? Aged 21? Male?
Teacher Who Is Older Than Principal	One of your teachers, who is about 10 years older than you, has had problems designing language arts curricula for learners of diverse backgrounds. Learners come from several different countries, which include the United States, Russia, and Saudi Arabia and have various levels of language proficiency. The teacher, however, continues to use the same curriculum they have always used, and refuses to change. What techniques could you utilize to change this teacher's behavior? Would some self-directed teacher training initiate change without forcing this teacher to lose face among peers? What disciplinary measures may be effective in this circumstance?
Staff Members of Diverse Backgrounds	Staff members at your school vary considerably in age (ranges from 20 to 60 years old). About 30% of the staff are male. The government has enacted a new policy to reform the social studies curriculum, integrating more concepts about diverse cultures from around the world. Past curricula have primarily emphasized the history and society of your own country. How could you communicate the school's new policy to staff members? Could some staff members require more than a group meeting to grasp the objectives? What kind of training is required? How should this training be diversified according to teachers of different ages, ethnic backgrounds, and genders? How can some teachers be praised without having other teachers lose face? How can teachers with problems be helped or disciplined without losing face? How can formative and summative assessment be utilized to accurately evaluate performance and cultivate self-direction in all staff members?

Case studies in Table 4 go beyond archetypal models of training from the West, because they analyze leadership and behavioral issues in accordance with status differences (e.g., age, experience, gender, etc.). Such analysis helps the East Asian administrator consider how he or she may differentiate leadership based upon teacher disparities, and how he or she might cultivate self-direction in more experienced employees. In addition to these case studies, administrators and teachers may also benefit from discussing scenarios concerning issues in each individual country (e.g., heightened student disciplinary issues or staff resistance to change).

Like case studies, role plays may be an effective means to promote social and behavioral change in Confucian contexts. Drama has already been used in countries like the

United States and Canada to promote ethical decision-making among school leaders (Cranston & Kusanovich, 2014). Because the dramatic approach to training allows both superiors and subordinates to transcend rigid hierarchical roles, it represents an ideal means to explore school objectives and reforms in a Confucian context.

Following the use of case studies and role plays, leadership and behavioral changes may be facilitated using highly scaffolded training for subordinates. Since members of a Confucian hierarchy are often uncomfortable acting independently, a slow progression of training which moves from direct guidance to delegation should be utilized. It is important to note that this training will not succeed unless staff members can overcome status differences that preclude effective interaction. To eliminate barriers to communication caused by hierarchical disparities, various social and task-based activities must be developed for use with heterogeneous groups. In essence, strategic use of group members will help teachers develop the social competencies and critical thinking skills necessary to improve education in a Confucian context.

While leaders in East Asian contexts may provide diversified leadership to staff members, it requires a great deal of social and behavioral training. Detailed instruction must be provided at every step of the leadership process to promote communication and clearly outline boundaries of devolution. As in other EFL contexts, a failure to clearly instruct subordinates about their new responsibilities can thwart attempts to empower teachers (Fertig, 2012). Thus, it is essential that clear, systematic training be utilized to increase employee autonomy, work performance, and job satisfaction (Algarni & Male, 2014).

Conclusion

Analysis of leadership in East Asian countries reveals a clear need for social skills training and increased empowerment of subordinates to solve educational problems. Such reform, however, is a significant challenge, due to the highly rigid status hierarchies present in Confucian nations. To implement change within Eastern countries, Western philosophies cannot simply be applied "as is." They must be reformed and made congruent with Asian status hierarchies.

Before educational leadership policies are changed in East Asian societies, several key points must be considered. First, training must move in a top-down fashion, from administrator to teacher. Social capacities and devolution of authority will not occur unless they are sanctioned by a superior. Next, social and behavioral training must move from more explicit (lecture of desired reforms) to more implicit (case studies and role play) techniques. Using case studies and role plays represent a means for teachers or administrators to transcend their routine roles, so that they may clearly view the school's overall mission and need for reform. Finally, plans that promote social interaction must move from highly structured interaction between more homogeneous groups (age, gender, and experience) to more self-directed and heterogeneous groups. Training in this way utilizes Confucian cultural traditions to promote learning, socialization, and change.

Author Bio

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