



Exploration of Educational Leadership Components for Social Justice: A Phenomenological Study

Elham Kaviani*¹

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Abstract

Despite the attention of many policymakers to the social justice issue, a question can be raised what is the relationship between educational leaders and their social responsibility in the social justice context? Therefore, the current research encompasses the participants' lived experiences of the main essences of educational leadership for social justice to put it in a meaningful context. In the present research with a qualitative approach and a descriptive phenomenology strategy, the potential participants were school principals and experts involved in the education sector of Kermanshah. Among these people, 16 samples were selected by the purposive method and invited to participate in the research. Data were collected using a semi-structured protocol focused on two main and general questions: What have you experienced about leadership for social justice? What situations have affected your experiences of leadership for social justice? The text of interviews was analyzed using the thematic network drawing method (Attride-Stirling, 2001), including three stages of basic, organizing, and inclusive themes. It finally led to a textual and structural description of the experiences and provided an understanding of the participants' common experiences. MAXqda software was used to increase reliability and data management. The results indicated that educational leadership components for the social justice of school principals included six main essences, namely leadership knowledge, professional competence, moral adequacy, cultural capacities, coping strategies, and leadership style. Paying attention to each of these components can effectively promote social justice at schools.

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1. Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Sciences, Kermanshah Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah, Iran.

*Corresponding Author: Email: eli.kaveani@gmail.com

Introduction

Deeply structured inequalities in society provide more choices for some people than others. According to educational experts' views, families alone cannot be responsible for the compensation of inequalities in life opportunities. The social justice issue requires thinking beyond the home and classroom levels. These kinds of inequalities are real for children and predominant before children start school. However, social justice realization requires something more than education. Educational leaders should understand that education is only part of the equation to promote justice as equality. The social justice issue is a broader goal of equitable education and leadership for educational leaders. Understanding this goal requires familiarity with the concept of justice and taking clear actions. Although this process implementation may be difficult, it directs educational leaders to a general path. This issue stems from political decisions that lead to justice in practice. Nowadays, educational leaders should work with a firmer impetus toward a better future for all children (English et al., 2013, translated by Shirbaghi and Fatehi, 2000). Therefore, one of the areas that needs justice is the educational system (karimi and Kermaj).

Socioeconomic developments in the world have significantly changed the lifestyle and social structure. Freedom and human rights are some of the prominent concepts in this era, and inequalities and interpersonal factors have diversified the origin of inequality (Akhtari and Zolfaghari, 2017). However, social effort is of paramount importance to implement and provide social justice and manage institutions to achieve the goal of social justice (Turhan, 2010). The need to provide social justice in the education system is not a new issue. Schools are educational institutions where students grow academically,

socially, culturally, and psychologically; they play a role in social life because people are the input and output of these institutions. It is necessary to consider the quality of social relations within the school to improve a healthy educational process. The leadership behaviors of school principals, directly and indirectly, influence teachers and students, respectively, resulting in the formation of social relations (Akman, 2020).

Some researchers acknowledge that nowadays school leadership has proceeded toward a moral mission related to democracy and justice for all beyond productivity and efficiency, and social justice is one of these approaches. Educational leadership is combined with social justice principles to identify concerns and solutions to facilitate equitable education. Social justice leadership (SJL) seeks to establish justice in school contexts, student experiences, and learning opportunities rather than equality (Conrad et al., 2019).

The promotion of social justice issues in schools is of particular importance because social, political, and economic conditions are often reflected in schools (Zembylas, 2010). Therefore, school leaders play a central role in promoting social justice issues. School leaders are expected to propose and examine various solutions to reduce social injustices (Dantley & Tillman, 2006).

Because social justice has many definitions, SJL has been described by several definitions (Bogotch, 2002; Theoharis, 2007). As stated by Furman and Shields (2005), SJL is an effort to eliminate the educational and economic inequalities faced by students by offering a democratic school life. In schools, SJL is a type of leadership that supports marginalized groups in terms of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, etc., and this understanding is at the center of

school leadership activities (Theoharis, 2007). In another definition, SJL is defined as a leadership approach that focuses on improving the achievement of deprived students, such as minorities and women (Marshall and Oliva, 2006). This type of leadership is primarily an intra-school activity that typically focuses on the academic and economic welfare of students from marginalized groups (Berkovich, 2014).

A social justice leader should be someone who discovers and provides solutions to issues that create and reproduce social inequalities (Dantley and Tillman, 2010). However, this type of leadership encompasses a wide range of programs. Accordingly, it is important not only in terms of supporting deprived students but also in supporting the rights that should be granted to all school members. Therefore, social justice in education means providing opportunities for all students to live happily despite their differences and diversity (Koçak, 2021). To achieve this goal, leaders must be ready to identify unfair practices, examine school and community expectations, policies, and practices, and utilize democratic processes to change the status quo in schools (Wasunga, 2009).

McKenzie et al. (2008) believe that all SJL definitions emphasize the two characteristics of focusing on equality and activism. SJL activism targets unfair educational practices and policies and promotes inclusion and equity for all students (Zembylas, 2010). Marshall and Oliva (2006) have stated that the ability of SJL to rectify educational injustices is hidden in its power to mobilize people in support of goals, thereby consolidating the social capital and political power needed to make a change. People who adopt proactive behaviors are very important because they express goals and mobilize and coordinate various participants. Allen et al. (2017) introduce the key

characteristics of such leaders to be public interest priority over personal interest, the value of diversity, readiness to develop a safe, supportive, and sustainable learning environment, beliefs that every student is learning, and participation in the development of diverse sociocultural capital.

The disproportion in educational opportunities and results among different groups of students is suggestive of an unfair educational system (Apple, 2010). In response to this worrying situation, scientists and researchers paid more attention to the causes of social justice problems, SJL and its development, and social justice efforts and their outcomes. Despite this increased attention, our understanding of SJL remains negligible, and the nature of the concept is still ambiguous (Furman, 2012).

In a national study of 279 educational leadership programs, Lyman and Villani (2002) found that only 20% emphasized social justice. They reported that their results might have been different if more than one aspect of social justice (e.g., poverty) had been included in their survey. Therefore, all educational systems that adopt the principle of "education is necessary for society" should be sensitive to social justice issues in schools as this principle provides schools with a multidimensional character. The provision of education to people from different socioeconomic and sociocultural backgrounds under one roof is very beneficial for socialization. However, it can be the starting point of huge problems unless it ensures social justice. Social injustices in present-day schools can result in economic imbalances in the future. School principals play a significant role in social justice provision at schools. Therefore, studies on the leadership role of school principals are required to ensure social justice (Turhan, 2010).

Given the importance of the subject, studies on educational leadership for social justice have been conducted at schools. Investigations that are somehow related to the present research are reviewed in the following.

Eslami Harandi et al. (2017) designed and validated an educational justice model for formal and public education systems. They identified three groups of overarching themes under the headings of fair distribution of resources, fair use of resources, and meritocracy, all of which were confirmed with high factor loadings.

Akhtari and Zolfaghari (2016) present evidence that Rawlsian and Islamic discourses are more important in social justice. The association of Islamic social justice discourse with Rawlsian justice discourse is due to some similarities between these two discourses; though, they have contradictions in the fundamentals and content of social justice categories. Experts believe that there is a need for a model tailored to the culture and social background of the society to establish social justice and reach a comprehensive theory. Koçak (2021) examined the relationship between SJL, a sense of belonging to the school, and students' resilience. They found a complete mediating role for the sense of belonging. Moreover, SJL increased students' resilience by increasing their sense of belonging to the school. A study on SJL showed that managers were generally unaware of SJL orientation, but for example, they understood the value of fairness and equality (Conrad et al., 2019). The findings suggest the need for putting social justice on the agenda of school improvement.

To investigate social justice in school leaders, Zhang et al. (2018) reported a statistically significant relationship between socially just school leadership and community context. This research supports current qualitative studies to

demonstrate that effective SJL cannot be separated from the political, economic, and cultural context of society. In an investigation on SJL, Torrance, and Ford (2017) presented a framework for tracking three macro, medium, and micro levels for educational decision-making. Furman (2012) proposed a conceptual framework for SJL and explored the implications of this framework for leadership preparation programs. The SJL conceptual framework was designed based on a literature review and organized around three main concepts. First, leadership is conceptualized as an action for social justice, consisting of both action and reaction. Second, SJL has different individual, interpersonal, collective, systemic, and ecological dimensions, which are used as an arena for this action. Third, each dimension in the framework requires the development of capacities for action and reaction on the leader's behalf. It also argues that leadership preparation programs mainly aim to develop these capacities in eager leaders at schools. The research results indicate that SJL and most preparation programs properly address some SJL capacities (e.g., critical knowledge of social justice issues), but others are poor or not good whatsoever (i.e., the actual skills required for leadership functioning). The practical framework presented in this article provides a more detailed and comprehensive analysis of the capacities needed by contemporary school leaders, who work for social justice, thus facilitating the design and provision of preparation programs.

In an investigation on educational leaders of social justice and resistance: towards a theory of SJL, Theoharis (2007) presented a framework to identify the capacities needed by contemporary school leaders working for social justice, as well as the procedure of its preparation programs. This framework is organized around three main concepts. First, leadership for social justice as a

practice. Second, leadership for social justice includes different dimensions being considered an arena for this practice. Third, each dimension in the specific framework requires the development of capacities on the leader's behalf, which aims to prepare leadership and develop these capacities in aspiring school leaders. The results indicated that SJL and most preparation programs would properly express some SJL capacities, such as critical knowledge of social justice issues, but others, such as the actual skills required for leadership practice, were weak or insignificant.

Justice realization is included in the slogans and political-social goals governing human societies. The Ministry of Education has struggled in an educational system establishment based on social justice all these years. Education can create justice in society by upbringing justice-oriented students, and this is achieved, directly and indirectly, only through educational leaders at schools. Nonetheless, this issue is still neglected at schools and in the educational system. Furthermore, studies conducted in this field have mostly focused on a micro perspective on processes and results. No research has so far investigated educational leadership components of educational justice in the education system presenting a relevant model. This research gap has caused educational beneficiaries to be uninformed of SJL indicators related to them. Therefore, studies are necessary to identify the components of educational leadership for social justice and develop a scientific model to establish social justice in education in Iran. Thus, this research aims to investigate and identify SJL components at schools, seeking to improve social justice at the micro level at schools and to pave the ground for social, economic, educational, and cultural justice in society at the macro level. The main research questions are:

1) What have school principals experienced in leadership for social justice?

2) What do school principals' experiences of leadership for social justice mean for them?

Methodology

Approach and strategy: The current research uses the thematic analysis method, which is a technique for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns in qualitative data. This method is a process for analyzing textual data and transforms scattered and diverse data into rich and detailed data (Brown and Clark, 2006).

Survey field and sampling: This research was conducted qualitatively on school principals and experts in the field of educational management in Iran. Samples were collected among key informants purposively and theoretically. In this method, the sample size is determined during the work, and sampling continues until data reach theoretical saturation. This means that data collection continues until new data are a repetition of previous data, and no new concept is obtained that requires new coding or the expansion of existing codes and classes. In this research, the participants of the qualitative part consisted of 16 experts in the field of educational management.

Data collection tools: Data were collected through in-depth and semi-structured interviews with experts. The research questions were sent to the interviewees one week before the start of the interviews for their full preparation on the day of the interviews. To this aim, questions were used based on the Attride-Stirling approach, which is a conventional coding method in thematic analysis.

Implementation and analysis methods: The duration of the interviews varied from 60 to 90 min. The interviews were audio-recorded and thematically analyzed immediately after the end of each session. The Attride-Stirling (2001) theme network method was chosen among the several

methods for theme analysis. The mentioned analysis includes three analysis levels for basic, organizing, and inclusive themes, which are implemented in three stages and six steps. First, the phrases with prominent features and important topics related to the research topic were highlighted as primary codes by careful text scrutiny and then analyzed using MAXqda 2020 software.

In the three-stage thematic analysis, the data were reviewed and monitored continuously. Data centered on a concept were collected in the first stage. In the second stage, the concepts with a

common meaning were organized in the form of categories that are at a more abstract level than the concepts. In the last stage, categories with a common meaning and content were assigned to special classes. The data were analyzed using Maxqda20 software for qualitative studies. The reliability of the interview with an intra-subject agreement between coders was examined in association with a co-author (a coder or evaluator). Then, some interviews were selected and re-coded randomly by the researcher together with the co-author.

Table 1. The results of reliability calculations between two coders in the analyzed interviews

Row	Number of interviews	Total number of codes	Number of agreements	Number of disagreements	Reliability between two coders
1	4	29	12	4	82.75
2	9	15	8	2	84.21
3	11	14	6	3	85.71
Total		58	26	9	83.87

Table 1 shows a reliability rate of 83.87% between the two coders for the interviews examined in this research. A reliability rate of > 60% confirms the reliability of coding.

The content validity was evaluated numerically using the Lawshe content validity coefficient. Then, the content validity ratio (CVR) was calculated by the following formula:

$$CVR = \frac{n_E - N/2}{N/2}$$

This research used the opinions of 16 specialists and experts. Their content validity was confirmed since a CVR of > 0.49 was calculated for all questions.

Results

In this research, the participants (n = 16) were experienced school principals and knowledgeable authorities in the field of educational management and leadership. Some non-confidential demographic characteristics of the participants are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of participants in the research interview

Row	Gender	Education	Major	Interview time (min)	Management experience	Type of interview	Interview sessions
1	Male	Ph.D.	Educational management (EM)	83	8	Face-to-face (FTF)	2
2	Male	MS	EM	67	9	FTF	3
3	Male	Ph.D.	EM	69	12	FTF	2
4	Female	MS	EM	79	7	FTF	2
5	Male	BS	EM	73	13	FTF	2
6	Female	Ph.D.	EM	69	11	FTF	2
7	Male	Ph.D.	EM	80	10	FTF	2
8	Male	MS	EM	92	9	FTF	2
9	Male	Ph.D.	EM	76	8	FTF	2
10	Male	Ph.D.	EM	72	6	FTF	3
11	Male	MS	EM	78	7	FTF	2
12	Female	MS	EM	76	11	FTF	2
13	Male	Ph.D.	EM	71	9	FTF	2
14	Male	Ph.D.	EM	69	10	FTF	2
15	Female	MS	EM	67	8	FTF	2
16	Male	MS	EM	68	7	FTF	2

There were four female participants. Doctorate, master, and bachelor's degrees were recorded in eight, seven, and one of the subjects (Table 2). All face-to-face interviews were conducted at participants' workplaces. All subjects were graduates in the educational management field of study, with at least 7 years of school management experience.

A) Analysis of basic themes: This includes the key points of the text, which should be read thoroughly to identify and select the smallest

experience as a basic theme. In the stage of basic theme analysis, 100 primary concepts were extracted by paragraph-based coding. In the first stage, it was tried to extract the key points emphasized by the interviewees. A closer scrutiny of the identified codes revealed that many codes were expressed with different terms and interpretations, but they contained the same meaning in explaining the questioned and interviewed issues. Therefore, 72 basic themes were finally extracted by consolidating and integrating these codes.

Table 3. The theme analysis procedure: raw data conversion into basic themes

Basic themes	The texts of interviewees' opinions
1) Non-discrimination toward the school community members 2) Establishment of balance and equilibrium 3) Institutionalization of justice 4) Principal's role model and pacemaker 5) Compliance with the governing protocols and laws 6) Paying attention to the socioeconomic context of the environment 7) Respecting the beneficiaries' rights 8) Sharing facilities for everyone 9) Modifying inefficient practices and policies	1. This means that educational leaders should not discriminate against colleagues, students, and their parents in their actions and behaviors, should establish balance and equality in the school environment, and put justice as the focus of their work because justice orientation can effectively strengthen people's culture and socialization according to the laws and orders of society. The fair behavior of educational leaders will institutionalize justice in their work environment, and everyone will somehow imitate this behavior. 2. A person who wants to be the guardian of justice in any place must, first of all, be a just individual and social pattern, otherwise, subordinates will certainly not follow someone who supports injustice, inequality, and discrimination. To institutionalize social justice, it is necessary to: a) observe high-level documents and laws governing the country according to the cultural, economic, political, and social contexts of its environment; b) respect the rights of all stakeholders according to Sharia and existing regulations; d) trying to use all human and financial resources as well as welfare and recreational facilities equally for all people in their educational environment. Correcting wrong or ineffective procedures, policies, and structures can be effective and useful in educational justice establishment.

B) Organizing theme analysis: This includes the themes resulting from the combination and summarization of basic themes. Basic codes should be reviewed and similar concepts should be placed next to each other. A suitable name should be chosen for each category of the code according to the researcher's ability in recognition and mastery. At this stage, major categories were categorized based on dimensions and listed in a sequence logically and analytically. The concepts

obtained in the first stage (basic themes) were coded into 18 more abstract concepts.

C) Overarching theme analysis: It includes large themes governing the text as a whole. Overarching theme coding helps to organize data analytically and logically and allows for analyzing organizing themes and extracting overarching themes. After organizing theme analysis, 18 identification categories were classified into six categories under overarching themes. The results of the analyses are shown in Table (2).

Table 4. The analysis method and conversion of basic themes into organizing and overarching themes

Overarching	Organizing	Basic themes
1. Self-awareness	Leadership Awareness	Inner awareness to manage one's strengths and strive to be effective
		Awareness of one's influence on others
		Feedback from others to improve relationships
		Attention and respect for others' opinions
	Social	Commitment to addressing injustice issues and contributing to positive social change at schools
		Helping to establish and maintain healthy relationships and social interactions at schools
		Understanding and empathizing with other people of different genders, races, religions, ages, cultures, classes, and financial conditions
		Identifying inequalities in school policies, procedures, and practices
	Situational awareness	Paving the ground for open discourse, experience, and innovation
		Converting the educational organization into a learning organization
		Flexibility (meaning that a leader's behavior is adapted to the needs of the current situation)
		External awareness, listening, observing, and considering the situation dynamics
2. Professional competence	Inclusive social identity	Adopting an identity that complies with social justice values
		Developing an entrepreneurial social identity
		Paying attention to an active and alive social identity for group members
		Identifying and understanding one's socio-political identities according to critical reflection
	Social justice competencies	Active self-reflection on injustice, power, and privileges
		Creating learning environments to reinforce the fair participation of all groups
		Creating social justice entrepreneurs (offering innovation and ideation in social justice)
		The feasibility of everyone's participation, especially people with social disadvantage, and improvement of school conditions
	Social relationships	Ability to consider the feelings, thoughts, and values of others
		Ability to build positive relationships with others
		Turning into effective role models and the representative of school members
		Using constructive and respectful words and actions
3. Moral competence	Moral discourse	Knowingness of moral issues and the application of moral beliefs in daily behavior

		Ethical communication with the cultivation of truth and justice
		Responsibility, personal honesty, and respect for self and others
		Constructive feedback (non-threateningly and supportively)
	Moral justice	Continuous discourse and facilitating and accepting opposing opinions
		Dealing properly with students' moral challenges in the current situation
		Using a legal lens in dealing with school issues
		Creating an ethical atmosphere for all members of the school
	Moral care	Fair behavior with people
		Caring for others or being responsible for the moral issues of students and teachers
		Codification of professional ethical codes ("moralization" of ethical codes)
		Identifying and demonstrating safe and unsafe behaviors
	4. Cultural capacities	Safe learning culture
A culture where social-emotional learning can grow		
Making a safe and healthy place for children to learn and grow		
Promoting cooperation between schools and parents and encouraging the educational culture development in families		
Supportive culture		Supporting social values (justice, cooperation, social etiquette, honesty, and keeping promises)
		Supporting professional values (growth and development, responsibility, uniform practice, and commitment)
		Supporting individual values (grooming, virtue and chastity, patience, health and well-being, and moderation)
		Creating school environments to support minority and marginalized groups
Justice-promoting culture		A culture based on cooperation and encouraging teamwork
		Providing discourse conditions for others to unveil injustices
		Promoting equity and social justice programs for the school and removing barriers to student achievement
		Using democratic processes to change the existing situation in schools
5. Coping strategies	Restorative justice methods	Holding some peace circles such as circle bells
		Conflict resolution training courses for students and teachers
		Creating justice bells at schools
		Setting up counselor clinics and psychosocial emergency committees
	Positive behavioral interventions and supports	Creating a strategic team to support the positive behaviors of teachers and students
		Teaching living skills in a supportive educational environment
Continuous management of the consequences of violating		

		behavioral expectations
		Defining behavioral expectations that are valuable to the school community
	Critical awareness	The recognition ability of inequality and injustice
		Creating a space for discussion and reflection to create a sense of efficiency
		Development of critical awareness, critical thinking, and critical literacy
6. Leadership style	Socially responsible leadership	Ability to process critical thinking skills
		Legal and ethical standards of behavior and commitments
		Accountability, empowerment, and development of people
		Following the laws, protecting the organization's resources and assets, and law enforcement
	Fair social leadership	Obligation to common effort-compliance to take responsibility
		Equitable distribution of resources in a psychophysically safe environment
		Adherence to principles and concurrently flexibility
		Identifying, challenging, and counteracting discrimination and prejudice
	Social care leadership	Recognizing the details of injustice and inequality
		Creating caring relationship networks inside and outside schools
		Developing the capacity to care for others
		Development of social relations of students with adults and peers at schools
		Creating satisfactory organizational conditions for care

Discussion and conclusion

This section describes the obtained overarching themes and explains the creation and development of leadership for social justice. An evolutionary discussion explains the creation and development of a social phenomenon, followed by interpreting participants' viewpoints on leadership for social justice.

In this research, educational leadership components for social justice in school principals were analyzed due to the importance of social justice establishment at schools, especially for marginalized and female students. Our results indicate that educational leadership components for the social justice of school principals include leadership awareness, professional competence,

moral adequacy, cultural capacities, coping strategies, and leadership style, each of which is discussed in detail below.

Answer to the first question: What have school principals experienced in leadership for social justice?

Leadership knowledge is a component of educational leadership for the social justice of school principals. School administrators must first initially need self-awareness to be aware of the pros and cons of social justice establishment, reduce their weaknesses and use their strengths to serve effectively in this field. A weakness-prone manager cannot be expected to be successful in social justice establishment at the school. School principals should also pay attention to and respect the opinions of others to receive feedback from

others to improve relationships. Without the ability to establish a relationship with target groups, school principals are not able to feel inequalities, try to reduce these inequalities, and establish social justice at the school. Regarding the self-awareness issue, school principals should be informed of their influence on others. In addition to self-awareness, school principals should also be informed of social justice. It should be borne in mind that the justice concept differs from equality, and the concept of justice is also related to the capacities of the target groups of justice; hence, each of the concepts should be treated according to their capacities. For example, a school principal cannot encourage strong and weak students to the same extent, and the encouragement extent depends on students' talent and effort. To establish social justice, school principals need to address issues of injustice, help positive social changes at

schools, help establish and maintain healthy relationships and social interactions at schools, understand and empathize people with of different genders, races, religions, ages, cultures, classes, and financial conditions, and identify inequalities in school policies, procedures, and practices. Ultimately, situational awareness should also be considered the other side of the leadership awareness triangle. The opportunity should be prepared to establish social justice at schools by being flexible and paving the ground for free dialogue, experience, and innovation, turning the educational organization into a learning organization, external awareness, listening, observing, and considering the dynamics of the situation, and the principal should be adapted to this condition. This is in agreement with the findings of Koçak (2021) and Conrad et al. (2019).

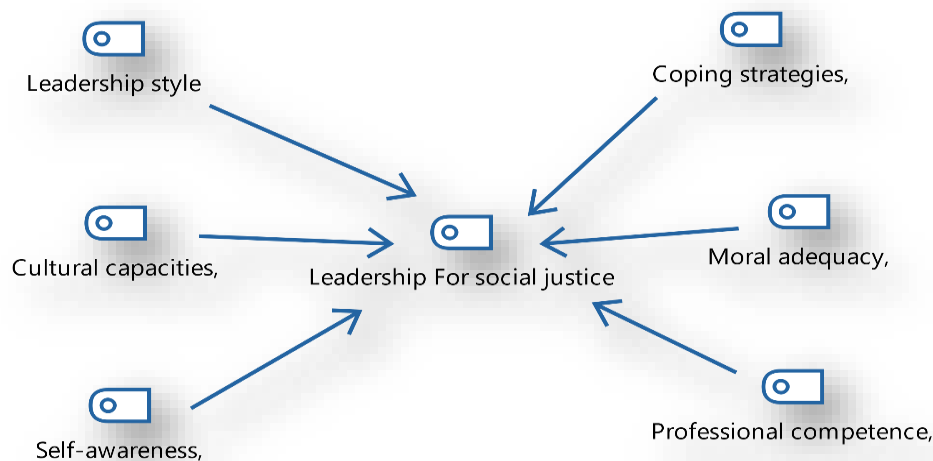


Figure 1. Overarching themes extracted from the texts of interviews with participants

Professional competencies are another component of educational leadership for the social justice of school principals. To promote social justice at schools, school principals need a series of professional competence, which is considered one of the four components of ranking school

teachers and principals, indicating the importance of this component. One of these professional competencies is to have an inclusive social identity, meaning that a principal should be committed to social justice values and keep this identity alive in colleagues (school teachers and

staff). The absence of such an identity in a principal causes failure in social justice establishment at the school. Creating the social identity of entrepreneurship and identifying and understanding their socio-political identities according to critical reflection are the other issues that should be considered concerning comprehensive social identity. This is in line with the findings of Zhang et al. (2018).

School principals should also be equipped with a series of professional competencies, including active self-reflection in the fields of injustice, power, and privileges, creating learning environments to reinforce fair participation of all groups, innovation, and ideation in social justice, the participation of all individuals, especially people with social disadvantage, and improving school conditions. However, a major competency is related to social communication because people's opinions, feelings, and thoughts cannot be understood without positive communication with others. Through social relation establishment, school principals turn into effective and representative role models for school members and can properly achieve this role using constructive and respectful words and actions.

Moral adequacy is another component of educational leadership for the social justice of school principals. The two justice and morality concepts are strongly interrelated and are among the categories always being thought of by humans and are the cornerstone of universe creation. The combination of these two concepts at schools has developed a new concept known as moral justice, which includes dealing appropriately with students' moral challenges, using the law in handling school issues, creating a moral atmosphere for all school members, and behaving everyone fairly. School principals should be sensitive to moral issues and apply moral beliefs

in their daily behavior in moral discourse to promote social justice at schools by matching their words and actions so that students can feel this issue. Furman (2012) also emphasized the importance of practice in social justice. Accountability, personal honesty, respect for oneself and others, giving feedback non-threateningly and supportively, continuous discourse, facilitating and accepting opposing opinions, identifying safe and unsafe behaviors, and developing professional ethical codes can influence the quality of moral justice.

Cultural capacities are the other components of educational leadership for social justice, which are summarized in three support, justice, and safe learning cultures. Similar to our findings, Zhang et al. (2018) presented evidence of a statistically significant relationship between socially just school leadership and the community context. This means that effective social justice leadership cannot be separated from the political, economic, and cultural contexts of society. A supportive culture with support for social, professional, and individual values is one of these capacities that can play a role in social justice establishment. As such, all students are regarded at the same level at the school, and social justice is observed for minority and marginalized groups. In the justice-promoting culture, it is also tried to implement social justice for a school, remove the barriers to students' progress, and change the existing school situation using democratic processes. A justice-promoting culture is also based on the principle of teamwork implementation, and this culture creates a discourse to unveil injustices. A safe learning culture is a culture in which social-emotional learning can grow, a safe and healthy place is created for children to learn and grow, standards and values are determined, and cooperation between the school and parents is promoted by

encouraging the educational culture development in the family. Altogether, these three cultures as cultural capacities should be paid attention to by school principals to establish social justice.

Answer to the second question: What do school principals' experiences of leadership for social justice mean for them?

Based on the present results, two components of educational leadership for the social justice of school principals depend on principals' decisions based on conditions. Accordingly, Furman (2012) states that individual, interpersonal, collective, systemic, and ecological dimensions require the development of capacities (for action and reaction) on the leader's behalf. One of these components is managers' strategies, which fall into three categories. Conrad et al. (2019) state that SJL roles are perceived as multidimensional, difficult, and strategy-requiring roles. First of all, restorative justice methods can be used to improve the level of social justice at schools by holding some peace circles, such as circle bells, conflict resolution training courses for students and teachers, creating justice bells at schools, and setting up counselor clinics and psychosocial emergency committees. Social justice can also be achieved at schools using a critical strategy including the recognition ability of inequality and injustice, a space provision for discussion and reflection to make a sense of efficiency, developing critical awareness, critical thinking, and critical literacy, and the ability to process critical thinking skills.

In this context, Koçak (2021) believes that school leaders should also involve students in their decision-making processes and familiarize them with critical awareness to be able to criticize and challenge discriminatory and oppressive practices. Ultimately, social justice may be promoted at schools using positive behavioral support and

interventions, including a strategic team to support positive behaviors of teachers and students, teaching life skills in a supportive educational environment, continuous management of the consequences of violating behavioral expectations, and defining behavioral expectations that are valuable for the school community.

School principals should also use socially responsible, socially fair, and social care leadership styles to establish social justice at schools. In socially responsible leadership, school principals behave responsibly to establish social justice at schools by following legal and ethical standards of behavior, obligations, accountability, empowerment and prosperity of individuals, observing the laws, protecting the organization's resources and assets, enforcing the law, and committing common efforts-compliance to take responsibility in their duties. In socially fair leadership, principals should consider fair behavior with students, distribute fairly the available resources, and try to deal with any type of injustice by identifying and recognizing injustices to establish social justice at schools.

In an investigation on educational justice for formal and public education systems, Eslami Harandi et al. (2017) identified two categories of overarching themes, namely fair distribution of resources and fair use of resources, accentuating the importance of the fair distribution of resources at schools. Social care leadership also concentrates on the weak and marginalized groups and provides them with satisfactory organizational conditions for care by creating caring relationship networks for such students inside and outside schools and developing social relationships of students with adults and peers at schools.

Educational leadership for social justice focuses on marginalized groups in terms of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender, and

in other words, improving the level of educational progress of disadvantaged students, including minorities and female students. Therefore, the findings of this research can generally be a guideline for school principals to promote social justice in their schools. Some of these components (leadership awareness, professional competence, and moral adequacy) emphasize principals' characteristics and abilities. As such, principals can improve these characteristics and abilities in an innate and acquired manner to be able to proceed toward social justice improvement. Several of these components also emphasize environmental conditions (cultural capacities) as the presence of justice-promoting cultures supporting social justice helps to establish social justice at schools. Finally, there are also components (coping strategies and leadership style) that depend on the need for correct decision-making by school principals to adopt appropriate coping strategies and leadership styles to protect marginalized groups in terms of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender to provide them with social justice. Using the current findings, a social justice leader should prevent the creation and reproduction of social inequalities and examine the appropriate solutions to reduce inequalities to witness an educational system establishment based on social justice.

However, it should not be overlooked that educational leadership for social justice should concentrate on all students, with more focus on marginalized students because justice (not equality) requires paying more attention to these students due to certain barriers in the family and community. For example, some students may enjoy private tutors and boosting classes outside the school. Therefore, boosting classes for marginalized students can be planned inside the school by social justice establishment in the

school education system. Social justice in Islamic discourse (Akhtari and Zolfaghari, 2016) and social justice in Iranian schools should be given more importance by considering the Iranian-Islamic culture of Iran.

The present study suffers from limitations that should be paid attention to in the application of the results and future studies. A limitation is related to the research implementation procedure. Some of the managers refused for recording their voices in the interview session. Due to cultural issues, female managers did not allow the recording of the interview session; hence, some details of the interview text could not be recorded quickly. Some managers' unfamiliarity with the specialized concepts of justice, fairness, and equality was another limitation, and sometimes the interviewees needed explanations at the beginning of the i

Ethical considerations

During the implementation of this research and the preparation of the article, all national laws and principles of professional ethics related to the subject of research, including the rights of statistical community, organizations and institutions, as well as authors and writers have been observed. Adherence to the principles of research ethics in the present study was observed and consent forms were consciously completed by all statistical community.

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Conflict of interest

According to the authors of the present article, there was no conflict of interest.

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Appendix 1: The protocol of interviews with school principals

1. Based on your experiences, what is educational leadership for social justice and what is its aim at schools?
2. How can striving educational leaders for social justice recognize student success at schools?
3. What strategies can educational leaders use to provide services to students for social justice in educational environments?
4. In your opinion, what positive managerial capabilities and characteristics lead to social justice implementation at schools?
5. What do your experiences in educational leadership for social justice at schools mean to you now?

Author 1 Name: Elham Kaviani
Email: eli.kaveani@gmail.com

Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Sciences, Kermanshah Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah, Iran.

