RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Values and Actions: An Exploratory Study of School Principals in the Mainland of China

Abstract   This paper explores the relationship between leader values and actions in the Chinese context. The Chinese Value Instrument (CVI) and the Strategic Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) were used as the primary data collection tools. The CVI was used to measure the presence of ten values: (1) social harmony, (2) benevolence and honesty, (3) initiative and innovation (challenge and creativity), (4) achievement and power, (5) *zhongyong* (practicality and modesty), (6) stability, (7) familial loyalty, (8) happiness, (9) *renqing* (sympathy) and *guanxi* (personal relationships), and (10) freedom and equity. The findings indicate that achievement and initiative were at the low end of the value continuum. Familial loyalty, social harmony, and benevolence were at the high end of the value continuum. The SLQ measured the managing, transforming, bonding, bridging, and bartering actions leaders use to mobilize and gain support from followers. The findings indicate that the Chinese school principal management prototype is formed around transforming and bonding actions. This prototype changes depending on role assignment and school type. A connection between leader values and actions was established with regard to the values of achievement and power, benevolence and honesty, and stability.

Keywords   strategic leadership actions, value orientations, school principals

Introduction

The People's Republic of China has experienced considerable social, economic and technological changes since its founding in 1949. This has prompted different ways of looking at the world, and has brought about an approach to life that emphasizes the need to maximize one's own ability and gain material wealth (Chen & Farh, 2010; Hubacek & Sun, 2007). These new perspectives on life have threatened the relevancy of core Chinese philosophy and the values which have historically guided China's leaders (Faure, 2002; Yin, 2003).

The Educational Context

The educational sphere of Chinese life, like the economic and social context, is in flux. At the policy level, school enrollments have has dramatically risen since 1990. Other than sheer size, there are several significant features of the educational system in China which require multiple talents and skills from school principals. The responsibility for providing educational opportunities in China is layered, creating situational complexity for educational leaders. Basic education is primarily the responsibility of local government (towns and villages) for primary to junior secondary level, and of cities and provinces for senior secondary education. However, as reported by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2003a), the educational system is moving from a highly centralized system to a more widely distributed one. The trend is toward the localization of education management. China's "The National Guidelines for Medium- and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development (2010–2020)" specified that reform and innovation of the education system is one of five guiding policies for education in the ensuring ten year period (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2010). It indicates that local governments and schools will be encouraged to innovate and test new management methods, and expand the scope of school autonomy. Aims, policy, and curricula are primarily formed at both the national and local levels of government (Bush, Coleman, & Xiaohong, 1998; Bush & Qiang, 2002).

At the governmental level, financing provisions require that many schools have to secure their own financial resources to operate. This feature has led to the establishment of school-run enterprises to supplement limited governmental funding (Fouts & Chan, 1997). This means that school principals have to be entrepreneurial, creating or finding opportunities to gain resources for their school. Those principals' who are successful in capturing additional resources are able to reward superior performance among their staff and thus gain support for

their work.

At the school level, a dual system of authority and control exists, comprising of the local communist party secretary and the professional educators. These dual authorities normally come together through a school management committee in which the different entities assemble weekly to review performance. This feature requires that school principals regularly consult with local government and party officials as well as teachers, developing a close relationship between political and educational aspects of school management (Bush & Qiang, 2002; Lewin, Little, Xu, & Zheng, 1994; Tang & Wu, 2000). However, principals are still responsible for making sure that the specified educational objectives are reached no matter what level of authority is granted to the position.

Another significant structural feature of Chinese schools is the high class size, enabling a large amount of non-contact time to be available for school-based professional development. These teacher led *jiaoyanzu* (subject groups) focus on how to conduct a good lesson including reviewing research that supports pedagogy (Tsui & Wong, 2010). In addition to fostering collaborative work, individual teacher preparation and grading responsibilities can be completed during the school day. While this is thought to be an important contributor to high achievement, it also impacts on managerial action and necessitates a team approach to curricula and teaching; requiring principals to negotiate rather than dictate and implement rather than create policy. These unique features—financing levels, dual authority structures, teacher led jiaoyanzu—of the emerging educational context may require that school principals utilize a more expansive set of leadership strategies and tactics to adapt their schools and teachers to these new circumstances. Although it could be argued that these features limit the principal's ability to mold their school to their particular vision, they also put a premium on entrepreneurial and facilitative managerial skills. Faced with resource inequities, principals need to be highly skilled in curriculum and pedagogy, assessment, management and leadership.

Purpose of the Study

Leadership is value laden (Burns, 1978; Fairholm, 1998; Price, 2003; Li & Shi, 2005; Ling, Zhao, & Baron, 2007). This assumption is strong in the Chinese context. As recorded in the Confucian Analects, the traditional Chinese perspective on leadership is that values make the leader (Low, 2010). The assumption is also strong in western culture. As noted by Covey (1992), Fairholm (1998), and Leonard (1991), values are the anchors that leaders use to make difficult decisions and guide their actions. Likewise, these assumptions are

strong in several leadership theories: Greenleaf's (1970) servant leadership, House's (1976) charismatic leadership, Burn's (1978) transforming leadership, Covey's (1992) principle centered leadership, Heifetz's (1994) adaptive leadership, and Ciullia's (1998) ethical leadership.

Theoretically, the values action link was crystallized by Schwartz (1992) who defines values as, desirable states, objects, goals, or behaviors transcending specific situations which are applied as normative standards to judge and to choose among alternative modes of behavior (p. 4). Values in his way of thinking provide coherence and sense of purpose to actions. Yet, in empirical terms, the link between leadership values and actions has not yet been secured (Lord & Brown, 2001). In educational leadership circles in particular, values have either been regarded as a static component of leadership or have been neglected altogether (Zhang, 2010; Qiu, 2008).

The purpose of this study was to determine if, and if so, what types of values have influenced leadership actions by school principals. Five questions guided the study: (1) What are the most important values held by principals? (2) Are principals' value orientations moderated by their position, gender, academic degree or school type? (3) What is the level of the principals' use of strategic leadership actions? (4) Do contextual variables of position, age, gender, school type, modify their employment of strategic leadership actions? (5) Do principals' values influence their leadership actions?

The implications of this study for leadership and management are significant. First, this study sheds light on the influence tactics Chinese school principals use in their work. It also addresses the link between leadership values and actions by determining what values currently guide leadership action in a complex context which requires leaders to adapt and conform. Additionally, these findings allow us to discover if core Chinese philosophy and values are still relevant to the way leaders attempt to influence followers (Ralston, Egri, Stewart, Terpstra, & Yu, 1999; Redfern & Crawford, 2004). Finally, it provides new insights into what values guide school principals' actions as they pursue their role objectives.

Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study is composed of the following elements: leadership value orientation, leadership actions, and contextual factors. The study begins by identifying the values school principals hold. Then it detects the use of actions school principals employ in pursuing their role objectives. Finally, contextual variables are introduced to detect their influence on the

relationship previously established. This framework suggests that school principals' value orientations influence the way they act.

The Value Framework

Values are core beliefs held strongly by individuals (Low, 2010). In the management literature, values have been studied in various ways. One line of research investigates cultural values and attempts to extract values indigenous to a country (Hofstede, 1993, 2001). At the organization level, the Competing Values Framework (CVF), one of the most important organizational analysis models available (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1981), helps leaders identify the ability of the organization to support change and high performance. Both Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Quinn's competing values framework, are based on values but they have seldom been used to determine individual differences at the level of leadership practice in given contexts.

More germane to this study are Chinese traditions which emphasize benevolent and moral leadership. Tradition would demand that the leader serve the collective without seeking personal benefits; be the first to work, but the last for enjoyment and put the collective interests in front of personal interests (Li & Shi, 2005, pp. 805–806). This tradition of leadership was formed from beliefs of several Chinese thought leaders. For example, Sunzi's "The Art of Warfare" (trans. 1993), though written more than 2 500 years ago, identifies five traits that the leader should possess: wisdom, humanity, integrity, courage and discipline. De Bettignies and Tan (2007) suggest that all of these traits stem from a noble character.

Another strong philosophical force exerted on responsible leaders is the framework of principles espoused by the ancient Chinese scholar Confucius. At the center of his social philosophy is *renqing* (loving of others), putting the needs of others before one's own. He also emphasized self-restraint, restrained individualism, benevolence, putting the needs of others before his own, and *guanxi* (personal relations) as vital to getting things done, and respect for ones elders and ritual in a way that balances ones needs with those of family and society (Tu, 1991, May; Whitcomb, Erdener, & Li, 1998; Pye, 2000; Liu & Tang, 2003; Su, Sirgy, & Littlefield, 2003). Some view Confucian leadership concepts as impediments to change, and remark that Confucian thinking advocates hierarchical and vertical society, emphasizes learning over thinking, and limits innovation and creativity (De Bettignies & Tan, 2007; Vogel as 1991 cited in Hayhoe, 2004, p. 324). However, from the Confucian perspective, the leader attempts to practice virtue through self-cultivation and convince people by

principle or "virtuous rule" (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999, p. 195).

The third major influence on Chinese values stems from the role of Chinese political ideology in personal morality (Hui & Tan, 1999). Studies have been done on loyalty to the party when the party's view conflicts with personal views (Ling, 1989; Hui & Tan, 1999), and on leadership responsiveness to suggestions from workers (Littrell, 2002). Although participative leadership is generally thought of as a western influence, Fu and Tsui (2003) found that action oriented, principle abiding, collectivistic, corruption resistant, democratic, determined, devoted, and hardworking attributes are all consistent with communist ideology (pp. 425–426).

The pattern of the Chinese management prototype can be teased out of the writing of Sunzi, Confucius, Mao Zedong, and others such as Laozi (see Fu & Tsui, 2003; Tsui et al., 2004; Cheung & Chan, 2005; Javidan et al., 2006). The elements of the prototype are self-cultivation, influence over others, and adopting strategy and tactics of the organization through reflection, imitation, and experience. The lessons learned from these thought leaders yields the underlying principles of current Chinese management thought: respect for authority, benevolence, moral character, reciprocity, interpersonal harmony, familial loyalty, use of both brain and heart, keen judgment, circular and continuous time orientation, societal contribution, flexibility and balance.

Several Chinese researchers have interpreted traditional Chinese values in the modern context. For example, Li and Shi (2005) suggest that values of nation, enterprise workgroup and family dominance enable Chinese managers to serve the collective without seeking personal benefits. They also enable managers to work the fault line between central planning and decentralized highly autonomous work groups by "letting the bamboo bend with the wind" (pp. 805–806). Lin and Su (2005) emphasized that autonomy was becoming a characteristic of organization in the flux context, and that self-organization, self-reflection and self-regulation are fundamental to success. Lin (2005) hypothesized that top managers would construct a feedback system to maintain and inspire the collective self-efficacy of the organization members, if they were dominated by self-efficacy values. Fu, Tsui, Liu, and Li (2009) also explored the self-transcendence values and the self-enhancement values among Chinese CEOs. They identified the dominance of self-transcendence values of broad-mindedness, equality, forgiveness, helpfulness, honesty, loyalty, environmental protection, responsibly, self-discipline, social justice, world peace, and unity with nature, in the CEOs they studied (p. 232). Other scholars point to changes in the context that require managers and leaders to adapt and conform to the market on one hand and the government on the other. De Bettignies and Tan (2007) maintain that these contextual needs require additional value orientations such as rational thinking and instinct equally.

Several scales have been developed to measure individual values (Schwartz &

Bilsky, 1990; Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995; Yang & Cheng, 1987; Yu, Fu, Liu, & Qu, 2007). Schwartz (1992) for example identified ten common value dimensions: (1) achievement, (2) benevolence, (3) conformity, (4) hedonism, (5) power, (6) security, (7) self-direction, (8) stimulation, (9) tradition, and (10) universalism, with each distinct from one another, universal in nature and used across cultures (pp. 6–7). This ten value framework influenced the work of Yu et al. (2007) in creating the Chinese Values Inventory (CVI). The CVI was used in this study to detect specific Chinese values held by school principals. The value framework is shown in Table 1.

Table 1   Description of Value Orientations Found on the Chinese Value Inventory

Value	Description
Social harmony	World peace (no war and conflict), maintenance of ecological balance and environmental protection, national prosperity, social stability, social order
Benevolence and honesty	Integrity, kindness, responsibility, helpfulness, tolerance, filial relations, loyalty to the organization, self-restraint, justice, repaying an obligation, equality
Initiative and innovation	Challenge, adventure, curiosity, excitement, creativity, imagination
Achievement and power	Power, honor, social status, success, wealth, face, knowledgeable, putting influence
Zhongyong	Practicality, modesty, mental peace, thrift, optimism
Stability	Work and life stability, social security
Familial loyalty	Children, love, family health, family harmony
Happiness	Enjoyment of life, beauty, comfortable life and working environment, pleasure
Renqing and guanxi	Relations among organization members, social relations, favors, sincere friendship, politeness
Freedom and equity	Freedom of thought and action, independence, ambition, faith, perseverance

The Leadership Framework

New models of leadership have emerged to bridge the gap which is created when the context changes, and ambiguity and complexity proliferates. What is known is that such contexts reward leaders who are creative rather than compliant, practice from analytic and integrative mindsets, use a multi-dimensional set of leadership actions, make connections between their organizations and major environmental themes and between their minds and the spirit of followers

(Pisapia & Pang, 2009, September). Such environments require leaders to demonstrate agility of mind and action.

This study utilizes Pisapia's (2006; 2009) strategic leader framework as a guide. Pisapia's notion is that strategic leadership is not just the purview of top management. Leaders at every key intersection of an organization must be able to work in a strategic way. They must lead and manage simultaneously with a deep appreciation of stability. This expectation puts a premium on horizontal and collaborative actions. A central tenet of Pisapia's strategic leader theory is that leaders who are able to think and act with agility will be able to create more supportive organizational conditions and achieve more valuable organizational outcomes. His strategic leader's mantra is common ends and adaptable means. When ends are not externally established, strategic leaders need to establish them. When ends are known, they create the conditions that produce results by mobilizing people, establishing relationships, capturing resources, creating coherence and crafting a responsible adaptive learning culture. To accomplish these tasks in a multifaceted world Pisapia (2009) suggests that effective leaders use a multifaceted set of actions. He proposes five action sets leaders can use to create the conditions that produce results: the choice between political (bartering and bridging) and ethical (bonding) actions as well as the stabilizing actions of managing and the transforming actions that enable them to keep moving the organization forward. These actions described in Table 2, were used in this study to determine if leadership values influence their actions.

Table 2 Description of the Leadership Actions Found in the Strategic Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ)

Leadership action	Description
Managing	Managing actions are taken to maintain consistency in order that current organizational goals are accomplished efficiently and effectively.
Transforming	Transforming actions are taken to influence direction, actions, and opinions in order to change organizational conditions and culture so that learning and change occur as a normal routine of the organization.
Bonding	Bonding actions are taken to ensure that trust is an attribute of the system and not just something developed among individuals in order that followers' exhibit emotional commitment to the organization's aspirations and values.
Bridging	Bridging actions are taken to develop alliances with people of power and influence from outside and inside the organization in order to gain insights, support, and resources.
Bartering	Bartering actions are taken to give something in exchange in order to strengthen the effectiveness of relationships and alliance building efforts.

Contextual Factors

Many scholars believe that organizational environment is an important factor influencing leadership behavior (Hambrick & Mason, 1984; Pawar & Eastman, 1997; Cook, 2001; Osland, Kolb, & Rubin, 2001; Osborn, Hunt, & Jauch 2002; Shivers-Blackwell, 2004). Contextual factors can be divided into organizational variables and personal characteristics. It was expected that school principals' values and actions would be influenced by both organizational and personal characteristics.

The organizational environmental factors which are commonly used in educational research to explain school effects were also considered for this study. Organizational factors include: (1) school type (middle school, high school, and middle and high combined school), (2) school size (number of students), (3) number of classrooms, and (4) number of teachers. Only school type was used for analysis this time. Personal characteristics and traits of the leader may also affect their style of leadership and eventually their effectiveness. The study of leadership characteristics and traits has a long history. Trait studies have yielded significant correlations between individual leadership attributes and leadership effectiveness criteria (Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992). In this study four personal characteristics of leaders were chosen: (1) position (principal, vice-principal), (2) gender, (3) age, and (4) educational degree.

Methods

Research Design

This study used a quantitative non-experimental design. The criterion variable was the actions school principals took in leading and managing their schools. The predictor variables are values these principals hold. The study was designed to discover any possible interactions between the criterion and predictor variables which could be attributed to contextual factors. Specific hypotheses were not established since the study was considered to be exploratory due to sampling limitations.

Population and Sampling

The study was conducted on a convenience sample of 106 school principals from 27 provinces of Chinese mainland that attended staff training in Shanghai in the spring of 2010. The instructors distributed the questionnaires in the classes and told the participants that the investigation was academic purposes and had

nothing to do with individual evaluation. The participants answered individually and anonymously.

Demographically, the sample consisted of 73.6% principals, and 26.4% vice-principals. Male respondents (85.8%) outnumbered female respondents (14.2%). Most participants (72.6%) were in the age range of 40 to 49 years old and the proportion of principals to vice-principals' increased with age. Over thirty one percent (31.1%) led middle schools; approximately forty two percent (41.5%) high schools; and over twenty seven percent (27.4%) were from combined secondary schools. Almost all participants had received university education; approximately seventy eight percent (78.3%) had bachelor degrees, and nearly twenty percent (18.9%) had master's degrees.

Data Collection and Instruments

Two instruments were used to collect data for this study. The Chinese Value Instrument (CVI) was used to collect data relative to the value orientations of the school principals. The original value items were collected by open questionnaire, and sorted into general items by multiple individuals. The CVI contains 54 items and was psychometrically validated through principal component factor analysis (Yu et al., 2007). The participants were asked to rank by importance each value item from 1 (*reversed with my values*) to 7 (*extremely important*). The value orientation of 2 089 Chinese respondents were revealed in ten dimensions: (1) social harmony ($\alpha = .855$), (2) benevolence and honesty ($\alpha = .858$), (3) initiative and innovation ($\alpha = .801$), (4) achievement and power ($\alpha = .797$), (5) zhongyong ($\alpha = .787$), (6) stability ($\alpha = .685$), (7) familial loyalty ($\alpha = .675$), (8) happiness ($\alpha = .682$), (9) renqing and guanxi ($\alpha = .679$), (10) freedom and equity ($\alpha = .652$). Yu and his colleagues reported that differences in values between males and female were not significant. They concluded that the guiding values in China are familial loyalty, benevolence and honesty, freedom and equity.

The Strategic Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ), developed to test one component of Pisapia's theory of strategic leadership, was used to collect leader action data. It was psychometrically validated through principal component factor analysis (Reyes-Guerra, 2009; Pisapia, 2009). Forty items from the SLQv$_3$ were used to create SLQv$_4$ which was used to collect data on the five leadership actions: managing ($n = 6$ $\alpha = .673$), transforming ($n = 12$ $\alpha = .861$), bonding ($n = 10$ $\alpha = .738$), bridging ($n = 7$ $\alpha = .813$), and bartering ($n = 5$ $\alpha = .622$). The SLQ asks respondents how often they use these actions in performing their duties on a scale from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*). The higher the score, the more positive the prediction for effective functioning in meeting environmental demands and pressures. On the other hand, an inability to be an effective strategic leader is suggested by low scores. The interpretation of these dimensions of leadership

actions provides participants with a deeper understanding of their capacity to influence others.

While the SLQ has versions for self and others, the SLQv$_4$ used in this study was a self-report instrument.

The translation from English to Chinese was achieved in two steps. The SLQv$_4$ was first translated into Chinese and then retranslated into English by scholars with doctoral degrees in organizational psychology and then back-translated. The versions were compared; items and questions were found to be quite similar. Some items and terms were modified to improve the translation.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, multiple univariate analysis of variance, and regression were performed to evaluate the relationships among values, actions and contextual variables. All statistical tests were done using the Statistical Packages of Social Scientists (PASW) software version 17.0. An α level of 0.05 was set for all statistical tests. Eta^2 was employed to test for Effect Sizes (ES) for all appropriate analyses, with .01−.04 considered small, .05−.07 considered medium, and .08 or greater considered large effects (Cohen, 1969, p. 23; 1988).

Limitations of the Study

Results from this study are limited by the sample and operations. The sample size was relatively small when considering the number of school principals in China. While the sample was representative of principals from across China, one should still be cautious about over-generalizing the results. Second, the sample was purposeful, convenient, and not randomly selected. Third, the information was self-reported. Although some researchers such as Spector (1992), suggest that such data is not as limited as is commonly perceived, we attempted to overcome the effects of this limitation by cleansing the data before analysis by considering the omission rate of the omitted responses, and the inconsistency of responses on paired items, to increase the accuracy of the results. These limitations led us to classify our study as exploratory, meaning that the results may point in a certain direction but need to be substantiated with a larger sample from the population under study.

Results

School Principal Value Orientations

Research question 1 asked: What are the most important values held by

principals? The analysis proceeded by describing the importance the school principals placed on the value dimensions measured by the CVI. These results are displayed in rank order in Table 3, and then compared to the rank order achieved with the norming study of the CVI (Yu et al., 2007).

The data produced a clear ranking of important and less important value orientations. Principals reported that familial loyalty (M = 5.8093, SD= 1.01215), social harmony (M = 5.5547, SD = 1.16822), benevolence and honesty (M = 5.5225, SD = .92262), were the most important values. The second level of importance was composed of zhongyong (M = 5.2102, SD = 1.05767), stability (M = 5.1395, SD = 1.20225), freedom and equity (M = 5.0295, SD = 1.12305), and renqing and guanxi (M = 4.9082, SD = 1.07805). The lowest level of importance was assigned to happiness (M = 4.5559, SD = 1.16810), achievement and power (M = 4.0671, SD = 1.17116) and initiative and innovation (M = 3.6268, SD = 1.39989).

Table 3   The Value Orientations of School Principals

Value*	CVI**									
	Sample				Males			Females		
	N	Mean	SD	Rank	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Familial loyalty	97	5.8093	1.01215	1	83	5.8313	1.03455	14	5.6786	.89027
Social harmony	96	5.5547	1.16822	4	82	5.6494	1.15994	14	5.0000	1.09632
Benevolence and honesty	95	5.5225	.92262	2	81	5.5297	.97030	14	5.4805	.59925
Zhongyong	98	5.2102	1.05767	8	85	5.2141	1.09012	13	5.1846	.85034
Stability	98	5.1395	1.20225	7	84	5.1349	1.21252	13	5.1667	1.18213
Freedom and equity	95	5.0295	1.12305	3	82	4.5910	1.036	13	5.0615	1.17299
Renqing and guanxi	98	4.9082	1.07805	5	85	4.8988	1.10351	13	4.9692	.93040
Happiness	94	4.5559	1.16810	6	80	4.5375	1.20986	14	4.6607	.92303
Achievement and power	95	4.0671	1.17116	9	82	3.9817	1.16669	13	4.6058	1.09193
Initiative and innovation	97	3.6268	1.39989	10	83	3.5952	1.40833	14	3.8143	1.38445

Note: *Values displayed in rank order as judged by school principals;

**Rank of value on the CVI study as judged by a sample of 2 089 Chinese people.

In contrasting the rank order achieved in this study to the CVI results one can observe different orientations between the two sets of data. Familial loyalty is ranked number one on both administrations. Also the ranking for achievement and power, and initiative and innovation are similar. In lower ranking values, the

order is different. Principals in this sample appeared to place more importance on zhongyong and stability, and less importance on freedom and equity. Male-female data were not statistically analyzed but differences in the importance of freedom and equity and social harmony can be seen in Table 3.

Research question 2 asked: Are principal's values orientations moderated by their position, gender, academic degree held or school type? Gender, degree, and school type did not interact with other variables and did not singularly produce any effects. Therefore, these factors were not included in interaction analyses. Age was only significantly related to guanxi $F(1,96) = 5.240$, $p = .000$, ES = .208 and was not tested further.

Table 4 Means, Standard Deviations and *F-Tests* for Position (Principal, Vice-Principal)

	Principal			Vice-principal				
Value	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	Df	F	Eta^2
Familial loyalty	70	5.9607	1.05091	27	5.4167	.79360	1(95)	5.918*	.059
Social harmony	69	5.8043	1.09634	27	4.9167	1.12018	1(94)	12.569**	.118
Benevolence and honesty	68	5.6738	.96775	27	5.1414	.67341	1(93)	6.834**	.068
Zhongyong	72	5.3944	1.07256	26	4.7000	.83952	1(96)	8.906**	.085
Stability	71	5.3146	1.26351	27	4.6790	.88907	1(96)	5.733*	.056
Freedom and equity	69	5.1710	1.15365	26	4.6538	.95926	1(93)	4.138*	.043
Renqing and guanxi	72	5.0056	1.12936	26	4.6385	.88547	1(96)	2.243	
Happiness	67	4.6679	1.22736	27	4.2778	.97155	1(92)	2.174	
Achievement and power	69	4.1612	1.28769	26	3.8173	.74685	1(93)	1.640	
Initiative and innovation	70	3.6714	1.48228	27	3.5111	1.17713	1(95)	.254	

Note: * $p \leqslant .05$ for *F* ; ** $p \leqslant .01$.

As seen in Table 4, principal and vice-principal rankings of the importance of the values mirrored the general sample with one exception. Vice-principals rated benevolence $M = 5.1414$ as more important than social harmony $M = 4.9167$. A comparison of their mean scores, however, demonstrated significant differences held by principals and vice-principals as to the importance of the value being assessed. Moderate effects where produced by comparing principals and vice-principals for familial loyalty $F(1,95) = 5.918$, $p = .05$, ES = .059, stability $F(1,96) = 5.733$, $p = .05$, ES = .056, and freedom $F(1,95) = 4.138$, $p = .05$, ES = .043. Larger effects were presented for comparisons of principal and vice-principal ratings of the importance of social harmony $F(1,94) = 12.569$, $p = .01$, ES = .118), benevolence $F(1,93) = 6.834$, $p = .01$, ES = .068, and

zhongyong $F(1,96) = 8.906$, $p = .01$, ES = .085. No significant differences in the ratings for principals and vice-principals were found for guanxi, happiness, achievement and innovation.

The Use of Strategic Leadership Actions by School Principals

Research questions 3 and 4 concern the level of participants' use of strategic leadership actions, and the effect of position, age, gender, school size, school type, on these actions. These research questions were answered by first comparing the means for study participants on the four leadership actions. As seen in Table 5, bonding ($M = 5.8645$, $SD = .48650$) was used most often, and bartering ($M = 4.7892$, $SD = .82814$) least often in the general sample.

Table 5   Means and Standard Deviations for Sample, Position, Gender, and School Type

			Managing	Transforming	Bonding	Bridging	Bartering
Sample		*Mean*	5.253	5.567	5.865	5.157	4.790
		SD	.688	.671	.487	.7166	.828
		N	106	106	106	106	106
Principal		*Mean*	5.299	5.660	5.886	5.267	4.859
		SD	.727	.701	.518	.692	.851
		N	78	78	78	78	78
Vice-principal		*Mean*	5.126	5.307	5.805	4.848	4.600
		SD	.559	.507	.388	.706	.740
		N	28	28	28	28	28
Principal	Male	*Mean*	5.301	5.634	5.876	5.259	4.836
		SD	.72627	.692	.519	.700	.878
		N	72	72	72	72	72
Principal	Female	*Mean*	5.278	5.967	6.000	5.365	5.133
		SD	.807	.809	.535	.637	.350
		N	6	6	6	6	6
Vice-principal	Male	*Mean*	5.133	5.305	5.825	4.797	4.516
		SD	.5490	.406	.3597	.797	.694
		N	19	19	19	19	19
Vice-principal	Female	*Mean*	5.111	5.332	5.764	4.965	4.761
		SD	.612	.703	.463	.480	.849
		N	9	9	9	9	9
Principal	Combo	*Mean*	5.237	5.53	5.778	5.261	4.768
		SD	.614	.658	.580	.668	.839
		N	19	19	19	19	19

(*To be continued*)

			Managing	Transforming	Bonding	Bridging	Bartering
Principal	Middle	*Mean*	5.606	6.033	6.055	5.430	5.013
		SD	.566	.539	.435	.701	.822
		N	30	30	30	30	30
Principal	High	*Mean*	5.022	5.355	5.782	5.103	4.76
		SD	.834	.718	.525	.682	.893
		N	29	29	29	29	29
Vice-principal	Combo	*Mean*	5.050	5.240	5.867	4.543	4.280
		SD	.572	.268	.202	.620	.855
		N	10	10	10	10	10
Vice-principal	Middle	*Mean*	5.167	5.357	5.817	5.092	4.729
		SD	.547	.660	.481	.747	.631
		N	14	14	14	14	14
Vice-principal	High	*Mean*	5.175	5.297	5.611	4.756	4.913
		SD	.707	.428	.411	.558	.686
		N	4	4	4	4	4

Simple *T-tests* indicated that all comparisons at the sample level were statistically significant. The rank order of the use of leadership actions by principals is bonding, transforming, managing, bridging and then bartering. As seen in Table 5, this rank ordering stays consistent whether the subjects were principals or a vice-principals, male or female.

The preferred influence tactics of school principals in this study were bonding and transforming. However, principals used leadership actions differently from vice-principals. Principals used transforming ($M = 5.6593$, $SD = .70096$), bridging ($M = 5.2674$, $SD = .69178$), and bartering ($M = 4.8590$, $SD = .85104$) actions to a greater extent than vice-principals. The use of managing and bonding actions were used at a similar rate by principals and vice-principals.

Similarly, as seen in Table 5, male and female principals used leadership actions differently. Female principals used transforming ($M = 5.9667$, $SD = .80911$), bonding ($M = 6.0000$, $SD = .53518$), bridging ($M = 5.3651$, $SD = .63651$), and bartering ($M = 5.1333$, $SD = .35024$) more often than male principals. Male principals used managing actions ($M = 5.3005$, $SD = .72627$) more often than females. The comparison of female vice-principals to male vice-principals yielded similar results except that both used managing actions at the same rate, and females used bonding actions less than males.

Also noted from Table 5 is that principals of middle schools used managing ($M = 5.6056$, $SD = .56644$), transforming ($M = 6.0333$, $SD = .53905$) bonding ($M =

6.0551, SD=.43523), bridging (M = 5.4302, SD = .70058) and bartering (M = 5.0133, SD = .82200) significantly more frequently than principals at high schools and combined schools.

This initial inquiry indicated that principals' leadership actions were influenced by the position they held, their gender, and the type of school they managed. Confirmation of these results was sought by examining the moderation effects of position, gender, age, degree held, and school type with regard to predictions of principals' use of strategic leadership actions. The results of these univariate analyses are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6 Moderation Effects between Position (P), Gender (G), Age (A), Degree Held (D), and School Type (ST) in Regard to the Predication of Strategic Leadership Actions

Source	Criterion variable	Sum of squares	df	$Mean$'s square	F	p	Eta^2
P*G	Managing	.522	3	.174	.809	.490	.008
P*A	Managing	.558	2	.279	.585	.559	.012
P*D	Managing	.019	1	.019	.039	.844	.000
P*ST	Managing	5.824	5	1.165	2.652	.027*	.117
P*G*ST	Managing	1.601	4	.400	.859	.493	.042
P*G*D	Managing	2.983	7	.426	.914	.500	.075
P*G*D*ST	Managing	2.077	5	.415	.891	.491	.053
P*G	Transforming	1.186	3	.395	1.328	.265	.013
P*A	Transforming	.520	2	.260	.591	.556	.012
P*D	Transforming	.009	1	.009	.021	.884	.000
P*ST	Transforming	9.824	5	1.965	5.240	.000**	.208
P*G*ST	Transforming	7.726	11	.702	1.694	.094	.220
P*G*D	Transforming	5.291	10	.529	1.276	.262	.162
P*G*D*ST	Transforming	7.415	15	.494	1.192	.300	.213
P*G	Bonding	.542	5	.108	.504	.773	.008
P*A	Bonding	.052	2	.026	.107	.899	.002
P*D	Bonding	.004	1	.004	.016	.900	.000
P*ST	Bonding	1.402	4	.351	1.346	.262	.075
P*G*ST	Bonding	1.907	11	.173	.666	.765	.100
P*G*D	Bonding	2.967	10	.297	1.139	.347	.147
P*G*D*ST	Bonding	3.187	15	.212	.816	.657	.156
P*G	Bridging	2.828	1	2.828	5.814	.018*	.055
P*A	Bridging	1.368	2	.684	1.406	.250	.027
P*D	Bridging	5.297	5	1.059	2.119	.070	.098

(To be continued)

Source	Criterion variable	Sum of squares	df	Mean's square	F	p	Eta^2
P*ST	Bridging	7.000	5	1.400	2.984	.015*	.130
P*G*ST	Bridging	4.763	10	.476	.877	.558	.117
P*G*D	Bridging	2.665	10	.266	.491	.890	.069
P*G*D*ST	Bridging	3.735	11	.340	.626	.801	.094
P*G	Bartering	.633	4	.158	.737	.567	.010
P*A	Bartering	.158	2	.079	.115	.892	.002
P*D	Bartering	.007	1	.007	.009	.923	.000
P*ST	Bartering	4.248	5	.850	1.254	.290	.059
P*G*ST	Bartering	3.402	10	.340	.477	.899	.067
P*G*D	Bartering	6.094	10	.609	.855	.579	.115
P*G*D*ST	Bartering	8.974	11	.816	1.145	.342	.160

Note: * $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$.

In particular, position and school type moderate the use of managing $F(1,165) = 2.652$, $p = .027$, ES $= .117$; transforming $F(1,965) = 5.240$, $p = .000$, ES $= .208$; and bridging $F(1,400) = 2.984$, $p = .015$, ES $= .130$. Effect sizes were large. The only other moderating effects noted in Table 6 were position and gender regarding the use of bridging actions $F(2,828) = 5.814$, $p = .018$, ES $= .055$. The effect was moderate.

The Link between Values and Actions

Research question 5 asked: Do principals' values influence their use of leadership actions? Regression models were constructed and tested to determine the portion of the variance in the use of the leadership actions attributed to principal value orientations. Table 7 displays the four value orientations: benevolence and honesty, stability, achievement and power, initiative and innovation, that significantly predict leadership actions. Achievement and power appears as the most important predictor.

As seen in the Table 7, stability, and achievement and power, combined to predict 21.9% of managing behavior. Benevolence and honesty, and achievement and power predict 25.2% transforming behavior. Achievement and power explains 25.2% of bonding. Benevolence and honesty predict 11.5% of bridging. Achievement and power, and initiative and innovation combined predict bartering in 17.7% of the cases. The other six values (familial loyalty, social

harmony, zhongyong, freedom and equity, renqing and guanxi, and happiness) reflect general value orientations of individuals but do not have a significant effect on their leadership actions.

Table 7 Regression Models of Ten Value Orientations and Five Strategic Leadership Actions

Dependent variable	Predictors	R^2	AR^2	df1	df2	F	β	t
Managing	Constant							14.562***
Model		.486	.219	2	87	13.451***		
	Stability						.275	2.205*
Achievement and power							.258	2.065*
Transforming	Constant							10.338***
Model		.518	.252	2	87	15.961***		
Benevolence and honesty							.341	3.277**
Achievement and power							.262	2.519*
Bonding	Constant							33.766***
Model		.375	.131	1	88	14.437***		
Achievement and power							.375	3.800***
Bridging	Constant							8.788***
Model		.353	.115	1	88	12.544		
Benevolence and honesty							.353	3.542***
Bartering	Constant							13.634***
Model		.442	.177	2	87	10.574***		
Achievement and power							.51	4.583***
Initiative and innovation							−.294	−2.642**

Note: * $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$; *** $p<.001$.

Discussion

We extracted several major findings from the reported results. From the review of literature, we expected that Chinese school principals' value orientations would emphasize benevolence, flexibility, balance, self-restraint, less individualism and self-interest, and the use of guanxi to get things done. Our findings are consistent with the transmission of traditions and the role of values in schools. The expected value orientations were easily identifiable in the rank order of importance the school principals placed on the ten values. Clearly, achievement, and power and initiative, formed one end of the continuum while familial loyalty, social harmony, benevolence anchored the other end. Nevertheless, the relatively high ranking of freedom and equity, and lower

ranking of zhongyong and stability may reflect shifts in the traditional Chinese value orientation and for this reason, deserve attention in future research. In general, however, identifying this continuum supports the work of Ros, Schwartz and Surkiss (1999) and Fu et al. (2009) on the difference between self-enhancement, associated with values of achievement and power, and the self-transcendence values of universalism, benevolence, and concern for the welfare of others.

The observation of Bond and Hwang (1986) regarding *wulun* (fundamental relationships), i.e., hierarchy, and individual loyalty, as the prerequisites of social harmony can also be observed in the arrangement of values along the continuum. However, when comparing the principals' rank order to the rank order of the 2089 university students and employees reported by Yu et al. (2007), school principals ranked social harmony, stability, and zhongyong as more important, and freedom and equity as less important.

The value rankings were moderated by the responsibility of principals. If the value orientations are the result of cultural influences and traditions, we would have expected that the school principal ranking would to some degree mirror the school vice-principal rankings across school types: high, middle, and combined schools. Instead we found that the ranking was fairly consistent but the level of importance was not. This presents an interesting dilemma for future research on the contextual influence on values as opposed to the influence of values on context.

Overall, the school principal leader prototype centers on transforming ($M = 5.67$) and bonding ($M = 5.865$). The supportive actions are managing ($M = 5.253$) and bridging ($M = 5.157$). Bartering ($M = 4.790$) was the least often used type of action. The actions contained in Pisapia's (2009) bonding construct stem from ethical roots whereas the bartering actions stem from political and transactional roots. The dichotomy between bonding/transforming and bartering mirrors school principal research conducted in the West (Reyes-Guerra, 2009).

Our findings on bonding and transforming mirror results found in other studies using the SLQ (Yasin, 2006; Urdegar 2008; Reyes-Guerra, 2009; Uğurluoğlu, 2009). They also relate well to Bass's (1998), and Kouzes and Posner's (2003) contention that transformational charismatic influence tactics are universally endorsed and effective across cultures. They are less supportive of Bass's (1996) claim that transactional tactics are universal as seen in the results for bartering, bridging, and managing.

The male leadership prototype formed around managing, transforming and bonding. The female prototype demonstrates a wider command of leadership actions. Their pattern centers on transforming, bonding, and bridging. This finding that men and women perform their managerial roles differently supports

Eagly and Johnson's (1990) claim that "the strongest evidence we obtained for a sex difference in leadership style occurred in the tendency for women to adopt a more democratic or participative style and for men to adopt a more autocratic or directive style" (p. 247). Gabriel and Gardner (1999) suggest that this difference could be due to male identification with a larger group while females define themselves in interpersonal terms or specific relationships. However, Eagly and Johnson (1990) speculate that the attitudinal bias against female leaders "may be exacerbated by any tendency for women in these roles to take charge in an especially authoritative manner" (p. 248). Our results support a gender related not gender specific behavioral argument. For example, the females in our study were also more likely to use bartering than males. Furthermore, the influence of organizational role in this study was more robust than gender and seems to have had a strong influence on how men and women employed leadership actions. For example, our results indicate that gender comparisons at the level of middle school vice-principals are less pronounced. Female vice-principals used managing actions at the same rate as males and bonding actions less than males. This interpretation tends to support Eagly and Johnson's (1990) conclusion that "when social behavior is regulated by other, less diffuse social roles, as in organizational settings, behavior should primarily reflect the influence of these other roles and therefore lose much of its gender-stereotypic character" (p. 249). This research did not ask the "so what?" question so we have not been able to fully interpret these findings related to difference in leadership effectiveness. However, other studies indicate that male and female leaders do not differ in overall leadership effectiveness (Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995; Thompson, 2000).

The notion that leadership is contextually and culturally based (Ardichvili & Gasparishvili 2001; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2002; Elenkov & Manev, 2005; Belchtz & Leithwood, 2007; Pisapia, 2009) is also seen in our data. Principals' leadership actions were influenced by the position and type of school they were managing. Principals use the leadership actions differently from vice-principals, bridging, bartering, and transforming to a greater extent than vice-principals, but managing and bonding at the same rate. The use of leadership actions by principals and vice-principals indicate that different roles and contexts require different actions.

This conclusion can be clearly seen in the comparison of principal and vice-principal use of bridging. Principals, who have greater needs to establish both internal and external relationships, use bridging significantly more often than vice-principals. Although the level of use of bridging and managing are above the mean level for the SLQ scale, considering the focus on guanxi,

stability, benevolence, and social harmony values in the Chinese context we would have expected them to be used more often.

The effect of social context is also noted in the finding that middle school principals manage, transform, bond, bridge, and barter more than principals at high schools and combined schools. Transforming and bonding in middle schools were at a very high level. Perhaps these differences can be attributed to the purposes these schools serve. For example, high schools are directed by only one baton: university entrance examination; but middle schools are evaluated by more indexes and there are different ways to enter high school from middle school in different provinces. For example, in Shanghai, academic examination and high school enrollment is combined, and then moderated by school districts. The role of social context on leadership actions is one that needs further examination.

The relationship between values and actions can be seen in our data to an extent. Values are anchors used to make decisions and stay true to ourselves. Values have been described as implicit, espoused or enacted (Argyris & Schön, 1978). It is thought that the best ways to learn about one's values is to look at behavior to detect linkages. In this research we looked at values and leadership actions. Interpreting our results from this perspective we would say that traditional Chinese values are implicit and even espoused but not acted on in the way projected by the rank ordering of values by school principals. One observation is that the values that were identified as the most important by principals—familial loyalty and social harmony—do not seem to influence leadership actions. One might say they were good guides in theory but in practice, achievement and power, benevolence and honesty, and stability had more influence.

Value congruence occurs when behavior reflects implicit or espoused values. In our framework, the higher a value was ranked the more it should be reflected in actions. Consequently values like familial loyalty, benevolence and social harmony should connect to transforming, bonding and bridging actions. Of these traditional values only benevolence concepts like integrity, kindness, responsibility, tolerance, self-restraint and repaying an obligation were linked to leadership actions i.e. transforming and bridging.

Perhaps the most intriguing finding relates to the influence of achievement and power (honor, social status, success, wealth, face, knowledge) on managing, transforming, bonding, and bartering. This indicates that the more important achievement and power were to principals the more they used transforming, bonding, and bartering leadership actions. While we do not want to over generalize from our results, it seems safe to say that if transforming, bonding, and bartering leadership actions are valued in the prototype of a leader,

achievement and power orientation should receive more attention as elements of Chinese culture.

This study, though exploratory, lays a foundation to further cement the assumed link between leader values and leadership actions and the role of context in paving this link. Several practical issues need further research. It will take a much bigger sample in differing managerial contexts to strengthen the link. Furthermore, the link between guanxi and bridging and bartering did not appear in the data. This seems counter-intuitive considering the extent of writing painting guanxi as a main cultural feature in China. The finding on a negative relationship between innovation and bartering action was also confusing, taken at face value it means that the more we espouse challenge, excitement, curiosity and imagination the less we use bartering actions. We look forward to working to develop the link between values and actions further and investigating the many issues raised by this research.

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