

# Identifying Factors Influencing School Leadership Practices: Case Study of Latvia

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# SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

key role in making schools more effective  
(Scheerens and Bosker, 1997; Teddlie and  
Reynolds, 2000; Townsend, 2007)

second only to teachers as the most  
influential school-level factor in student  
achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004; Louis,  
Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010)

# SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

unique position to bring multiple in-school factors together  
(Wallace Foundation, 2013)

impact on all students in a school;  
the overall impact of increasing principal quality exceeds the benefit from a comparable increase in the quality of a single teacher (Branch et al., 2013)

# CURRENT CONTEXT



- Nation-wide general education reform with a focus on competency-based approach to learning and development of 21st century skills;
- School principals as «change leaders» (Fullan 2015); have a key role to play in reform implementation and change management.

# AIM

To identify factors influencing school leadership practices,

with a specific focus on school leadership in Latvia and their perceptions of factors influencing their practice:

**what are the factors they are referring to and highlighting, what are the main factors that are characteristic to Latvian context?**

# METHODOLOGY

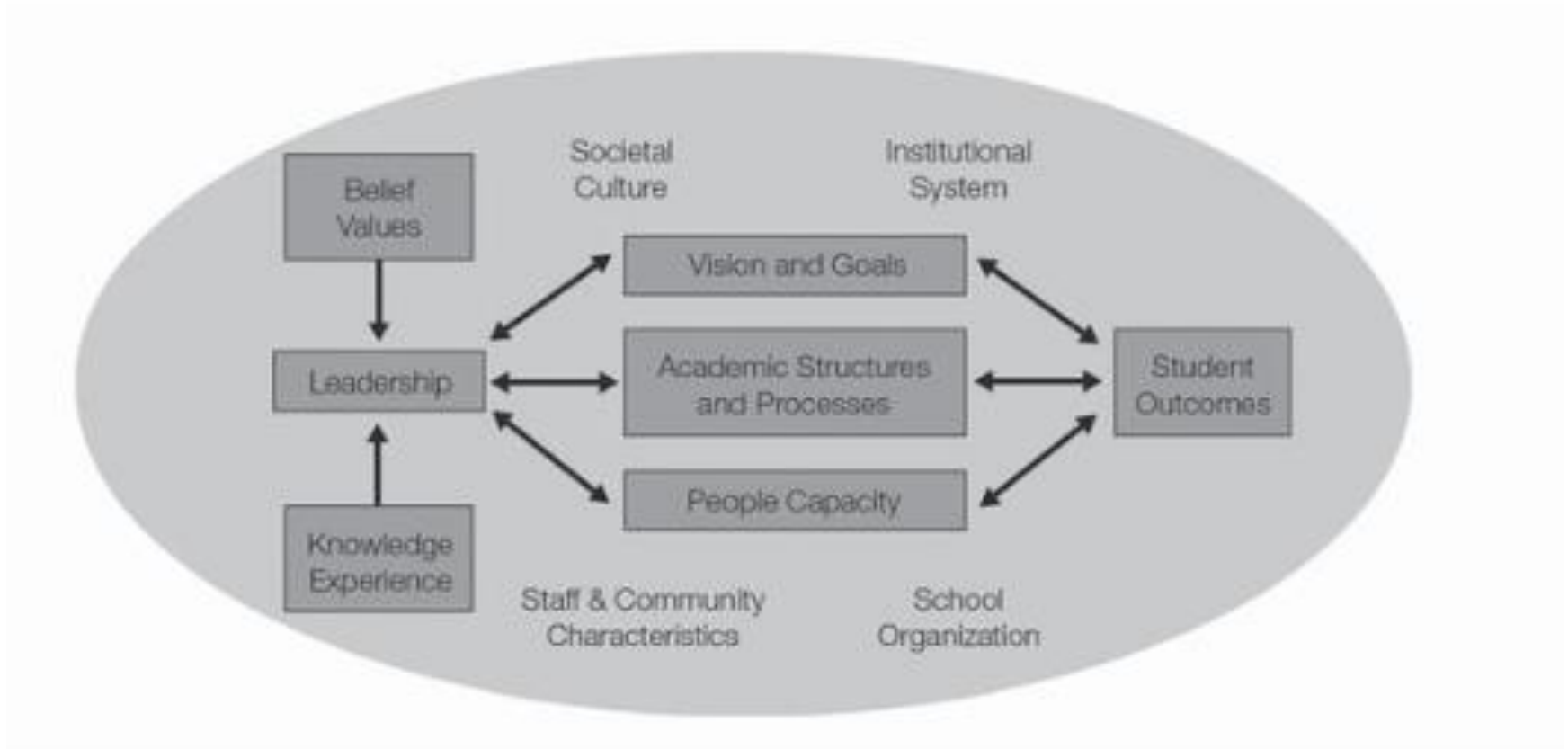
## LITERATURE ANALYSIS

- Hallinger (2011), Hitt & Tucker (2016), Pollock, Wang & Hauseman (2017), Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins (2008) etc.,
- Australian Model of Successful Principal Leadership, Gurr, Drysdale & Mulford (2006) etc.

## ANALYSIS OF LATVIAN CONTEXT

- Interviews: 21 interviews with school heads and their deputies, various types of schools,
- Expert focus group: 12 experts involved both in research and professional development for teachers and school leadership.

# Hallinger, 2011



Model of principals' impact.

# GENERAL OVERVIEW

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## 1. Personality related or individual level factors:

- school leadership's previous **experience and knowledge**,
- **values and beliefs** on their role; leadership specifics; school, teachers and students; what's important,
- **skills** that are important for school leadership.

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## 2. External or contextual level factors:

- **various contextual factors** that have an influence on school leadership at institutional level, community level, in society in general.



# RESULTS I

- **Previous work experience:**
  - from teachers to school leaders;
  - identity transformation, i.e. «becoming a principal» (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003),
  - significant differences in responsibilities, aims, networks, approaches etc.,
  - highly important to develop skills related to management and leadership, human resource management, strategic planning, communication.

# OECD TALIS 2018

**36%** of school leaders have completed a programme or course **in school administration or training for principals** (OECD average 54%), **45%** have completed **an instructional leadership** training programme or course (OECD average 54%), before taking up their position as principal.

# RESULTS II

- **Beliefs and mental models:**
  - beliefs and mental models related to change, their own role, students and their potential, problem solving strategies etc.,
  - shape practices,
  - importance of how they see their role,
  - importance of belief «every student can succeed» (Taylor in Leithwood, Begley, Bradley Cousins, 1990).

# RESULTS III

- **Social skills:**
  - ability to develop and maintain respectful and effective relationships with parents, teachers and decision makers,
  - «us» vs «us and them» in school leaders relationship with teachers,
  - understanding and skills regarding work with parents – building support systems for students together vs «they are bombarding us».

# RESULTS IV

- **Relationship with key external partners:**
  - municipality and state institutions responsible for education,
  - administrative and controlling functions vs strategic and supporting functions,
  - mostly managerial leadership (operating through hierarchy, managing clearly targeted change), in comparison to instructional leadership (learning-centered leadership) and transformational leadership (shared vision, school-wide objectives, schools initiating change), Hallinger (1992), Bush, Glover, 2014.

# RESULTS V

- **Other factors:**
  - Available resources, in particular - financial resources and time,
  - Education policy changes and initiatives.

# CONCLUSIONS

- In Latvia, such factors as school leaders' previous work experience, beliefs and mental models, social skills and relationship with and impact of the external parties have an influence on their practices.
- Contribution to a large-scale study conducted by the authors and aiming to build a multi-factor model influencing student achievement.

**Thank you!**

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