

Leading for Well-Being in Complex Educational Contexts: The Role of School Leadership in Transforming Policies

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Abstract

In response to Lebanon's ongoing crises and the urgent need to support school communities, this study examines the transformative role of school leadership in embedding well-being and socialemotional learning into school policy and practice. Within a complex educational context, school leaders redefined priorities to meet evolving community needs, guided by principles of transformational leadership. This process emphasized participatory decision-making, teacher engagement, peer support, and a shared culture that placed well-being and success at the core of the school's vision and mission. The transformation involved a comprehensive review of policies, revision of the vision and mission, curriculum updates, and the integration of tools to assess the impact of well-being on school improvement and learning quality. Using an applied research approach that combined qualitative and quantitative methods, data was collected through document analysis, observations, and interviews across selected schools in Lebanon. Preliminary findings show that aligning school policy with a culture of well-being increased teacher creativity, improved student outcomes, and fostered greater ownership of curriculum development. A strong link emerged between emotional and cognitive development, influenced by leadership-driven initiatives. Staff were supported through structured guidance, mindfulness workshops, peer exchange, international exposure, and pedagogical innovation. This paper contributes to ongoing discourse on the role of leadership in education systems navigating crisis and instability. It offers practical insights and a framework for school leaders to drive sustainable educational transformation by placing well-being at the center of school culture and strategy.

Keywords: curriculum development; educational crises; participatory decision making; transformational leadership; social-emotional learning