Reviewed by Lena Batt
University of Wisconsin - Madison
United States

In their edited volume *Successful School Leadership: International Perspectives,* Petros Pashiardis and Olof Johansson write, "School leadership has been identified as being second only to classroom teaching in its potential to influence student learning" (p. 42). Research shows that school leadership has an impact on student success (Coelli & Green, 2012; Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016), but what characterizes a successful leader? This answer often varies, depending on who is asked and what the expectations are for that leader. This collection of chapters provides international perspectives on successful and effective school leadership while recognizing that there is no singular "homogenized" definition for either concept. Contributors from across the globe discuss how certain regions define successful and effective school leaders, prepare educators to become administrators, and practice successful school leadership. This work aims to address the research gap in knowing the
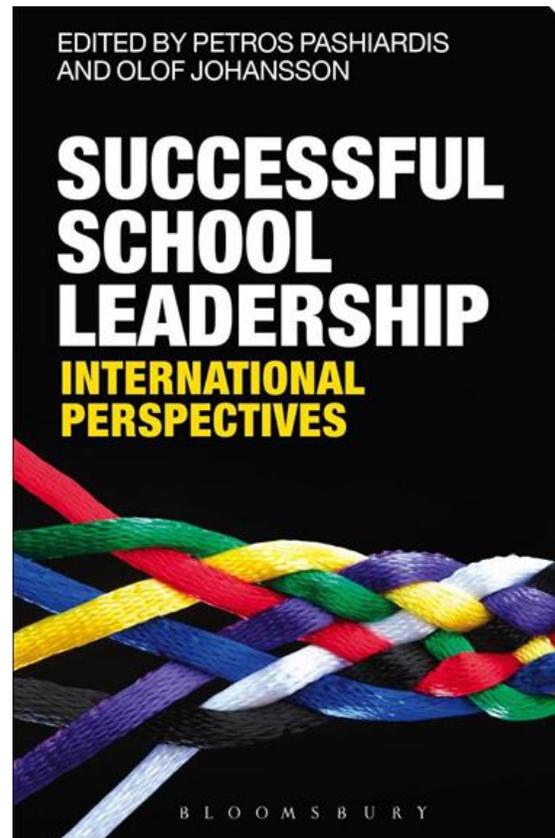
varying needs of educational administrators in diverse contexts and creating preparation programs to meet those needs.

The book begins with the basic question: what makes a successful and effective leader and why do principals matter? Editors Pashiardis and Johansson note that successful and effective are defined in different ways. They provide working definitions of each: *successful leadership* is being able to help all students achieve, regardless of background or school readiness, and *effective leadership* is a principal's ability to meet school targets. One contributor, Disraeli Hutton, highlights the relationship between successful and effective leadership: "Successful leadership is about implementing the basic structure and systems, which provide the platform on which effective leadership performance is achieved" (p. 168). In other words, a principal's effectiveness relies on the foundation established by a successful leader, such as defining a vision of academic achievement for all students and building capacity in school staff. Each of the contributors' unique definition of these two terms demonstrates how different cultures expect varying skills, characteristics, and outcomes from successful and effective leaders.

The role of the school leader is now changing, in part due to the importance that policy makers and researchers have placed on principals. According to the editors, "[V]arious stakeholders have increased their expectations from school leaders demanding for instance, higher academic results and performance standards. However, despite the changing roles and higher expectations of school leaders, it seems that most receive little formal or structured preparation for the job" (p. 1).

This change in expectations has been echoed in other US-based education research, which shows the principal's role becoming more managerial with increased autonomy and accountability (Henig & Rich, 2004).

The book is organized in two parts: the first focuses on the development of successful and effective leadership and the second explores the practice of successful and effective school leadership. Each part highlights these themes in Africa, South Asia, Australia and the Pacific, North America, the Caribbean, and Europe with South America also featured in the first part of the book. In each chapter, the contributor presents either a review of current research or their own original work from a particular region, which provides limited voices and examples. Readers will recognize that expectations placed on school leaders may vary dramatically in other areas of the same region.

These editorial selections underscore how context matters, not only between the regions, but within them as well. The two chapters on the African region, both of which ultimately focus on South Africa while referencing information from other countries, highlight the importance of the Ubuntu philosophy in leadership. Author Jan Heystek explains that Ubuntu "holds that the group is more important than the individual – a communal societal approach, with a strong emphasis on the humanity of people and interaction. This seems to link to shared leadership or participative leadership" (p. 17). The influence of this philosophy is evident in the findings of a qualitative study by Raj Mestry in South Africa that asks school leaders what skills and traits contributed to their success. Three primary findings of this study suggest that leaders (1) set the direction for the

school, (2) develop the people in the school, and (3) develop the organization. Distributive leadership and an awareness that leadership occurs within the organization and wider society draw on the idea of Ubuntu.

Several other authors address the changing role of the principal into a site-based manager with greater autonomy in other regions. In Candido Alberto Gomes, Alexandre Ventura, and Magali de Fatima Evangelista Machado's chapter on South America, the authors discuss the historical and economic circumstances that lead to the decentralization of school governance, funding diversification, and external evaluation and explain how these policies make the role of the principal more autonomous but also beholden to greater accountability measures and democratic governance. This situation results in clashes between community expectations of a more democratic leader and a principal's desire to maintain a bureaucratic role. Furthermore, leadership preparation programs have not adjusted for the principal's new role, which has left many school leaders without the necessary skills to meet the new expectations.

Like the chapter on South America, Disraeli Hutton focuses on the impact of levels of school governance in the Caribbean. He argues that centralized school systems in many of the region's countries have prevented principals from being able to meet students' needs. He highlights Jamaica as the exception, because it built a system that fosters successful and effective leaders by granting them more legal authority to make decisions previously performed by the central ministry. According to Hutton, "[H]igh performing principals are emerging from the traditional management role and responsibilities, partly because they have to be more inclusive in order to bring all

constituents on board" (p. 173). This system has resulted in greater student outcomes in Jamaica, in contrast to countries such as Trinidad and Tobago and Antigua, which continue to see poor student performance and where the bureaucratic systems from colonial times still thrive.

Other authors discuss the importance of autonomy in being a successful leader. Stephen Jacobson highlights a study in America that found that school leaders are most successful when they have a mix of autonomy and the right supports. Success includes the development of distributive leadership and the ability to build relationships, especially within the school. Though "the quality of its teacher workforce remains a school's strongest determinant of student motivation and achievement, it is the ability of principals to motivate and enhance the quality of their teachers' work setting that has the second greatest impact on student performance" (p. 158). Similarly, the importance of building capacity, creating a positive climate, and communicating a shared vision are found in studies in Australia and New Zealand. Studies from both of these regions as well as those highlighted in the European chapters were part of a larger study called the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP), which is indicated as a good resource for more information about international perspectives on successful school leadership for readers who want to further explore this topic.

Some overall international trends in defining successful and effective leadership emerge in the editors' conclusion. While reiterating the importance of context, they identify four commonalities across all regions. First, successful school leaders are aware of

their schools' internal and external contexts and they know how to adapt to meet their students' needs. Second, principals must be effective instructional or pedagogical leaders. The editors' note, "This leadership style improves the quality of teaching and enhances the school climate, which should be conducive to teaching and learning, and instruction becomes the leader's priority and a measure of success and effectiveness" (p. 206). Third, principals need to practice distributed leadership by building collaborative structures both inside and outside of their schools. Finally, school leaders must be value-driven and trust-driven. They need to be able to translate these values into a shared vision, which is then communicated broadly.

While the contributors provide diverse perspectives on the subject, it privileges countries where more research on school leadership is conducted. Hong Kong is the source of 50% of publications from East Asia and 25% of studies in Asia overall. Furthermore, a large amount of academic literature in Chinese is inaccessible beyond China and to the global academic community. These limitations are also noted in chapters on African regions, highlighting missing voices and perspectives of countries and cultures not represented and what new dynamic they might have brought to the conversation about successful and effective leadership. While this book was not intended to be an encyclopedia, these limitations underscore the need for more research in areas where there has historically been a lack of focus.

The questions posed by this work prompt important discussions for school leaders, policy makers, and especially for educators of future principals. How are success and effectiveness defined and measured within local contexts? Will these measures of success incentivize how a school leader acts, and if so, how will this affect students' experiences and outcomes? The book also encourages a review of school leadership education programs, as contributors provide numerous examples of how principals are not prepared to successfully lead schools given policy changes, new managerial expectations, or changing student populations. Once successful and effective are defined, preparation programs for school leaders must be developed or revised to align with these definitions.

References

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About the Reviewer

Lena Batt is a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is a former teacher and principal. Her research interests include school leadership, school finance, teacher sorting, and their impact on inequities in American schools.

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