

I Have a Dream: School Principals as Entrepreneurs

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Abstract

Most policymakers and academics agree that entrepreneurship is indispensable to society's development and well-being. Fostering entrepreneurship has become a matter of highest priority in public policy worldwide. Given the growing pressures of decentralization and competitiveness that schools have faced over the last 20 years, the role of school principals as entrepreneurs is receiving growing interest in academic and practical contexts. Our study examines school principals from the perspective of their schools' entrepreneurship. Accordingly, we seek to reveal the meaning of entrepreneurship in school settings and to examine the conditions that are related with school principals' entrepreneurial activities. This study examines 10 school principals of different educational streams in Israel, who have been identified as entrepreneurs by their peers and supervision authorities. We characterize these agents of change as institutional entrepreneurs and present their motives and resources that facilitate their entrepreneurship in school settings. We include several novel parameters that may be applied to characterize school entrepreneurship, with an emphasis on institutional lens. This study contributes to the broader educational literature that addresses school principals' roles within a decentralized system demanding high accountability.

Keywords

entrepreneurship, management, schools, school headteachers

Introduction

In many countries (for example, the UK, the USA and Israel), schools are exposed to increasing pressures to perform well along with demands to adhere to governmental standards and policies. At the same time, because of decentralization processes, schools are being allowed more power and autonomy. These two prominent trends expose school leaders to contradictory forces that affect their actions and practices. On the one hand, principals face being accountable for school outcomes in line with prescribed regulations and standards; on the other hand, following

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decentralization, school principals have the opportunity to extend their spheres of autonomy. Schools are thus influenced both by top-down accountability demands and by the autonomous action of principals from the bottom-up. To some extent, school principals enjoy discretion over their actions, as long as they advance and improve student achievement. These trends enable school principals to take advantage of the opportunities within their school environments to mobilize resources, promote new initiatives and lead change in their schools and communities. Within this context, principals can be regarded as entrepreneurs who not only comply with institutional pressures (improving academic achievement) and regulations (demands for accountability), but also take a proactive role to advance initiatives and changes that reflect their own interests and respond to the needs of their particular school. To date, research regarding entrepreneurship among school principals has been limited, although in practice school principals operate in a field that requires multiple initiatives. This study seeks a comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurship among school principals by examining school principals that have been recognized as entrepreneurial. We examine the components of school principal entrepreneurship and further define the entrepreneurship phenomenon in the school setting.

School Leadership Under Decentralization

The institutional perspective typically conceives of schools as being heavily influenced by strong institutional pressures (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Meyer, Scott and Deal, 1992; Scott, 1995) and compelled to conform to practices and norms imposed by the formal central authorities (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Ogawa et al., 2003; Scott, 1995). However, decentralization that shifted the level of the decision-making authority initially from the central government to local educational authorities (LEAs) and then to individual schools has significantly changed schools' institutional environment. Under decentralization policies, schools are expected to take more power and autonomy (Nir, 2009), afford more diversity in school governance (Gibton, 2011; Goldring and Schuermann, 2009) and increase their dependence on their local environment (Addi-Raccah, 2006). Nowadays, school principals are exposed to contradictory pressures that affect their actions and practices, thereby holding an even more pivotal role than they had in the past. Goldring and Schuermann (2009) summarize the multiple tasks that contemporary school principals must undertake: responding to accountability demands by increasing their visibility and responsibility; focusing on instructional improvement to advance pupil achievement; planning, allocating resources and making decisions based on data and research; functioning within a market-oriented and competitive environment; and finally, integrating and engaging the school within its external environment. School principals must now act within more complex networks of groups, agencies and individuals than they did prior to decentralizing educational reforms (Cheng, 2002). They engage in boundary-spanning tasks and are pressed to seek new partnerships with various agencies and stakeholders in the wider community (for example, LEAs, parents or business community) (Bradshaw, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2006, 2008). Principals have opportunities to influence policy, resource allocation and mobilization (Addi-Raccah and Gavish, 2010; McLaughlin and Brown, 2000; Whitaker, 2003) and to address community-wide problems that are central to schools (Goldring and Schuermann, 2009). Furthermore, principals have opportunities to implement innovation, critical thinking, adaptability and creativity (all important skills at the present), while at the same time ensuring they meet central governmental regulations for accountability and standardization of outcomes (Inbar, 2009; Schoen and Fusarelli, 2008). To respond to these challenges, principals must take risks both within and beyond their schools (Crow et al., 2002; Foskett, 2003). They

must act as 'resource investigators' whose activities foster new initiatives and find new support and the funding required for school development and improvement (Earley and Weindling, 2004; Ogawa et al., 1999), while establishing commercial and entrepreneurial connections with diverse external agencies (Addi-Raccah, 2006). Indeed, school leaders often transcend their traditional roles to incorporate innovative activities that mediate and alter educational policy and establish new arrangements (Blackmore and Sachs, 2007; Bottery, 2007; Day and Leithwood, 2007). Educational decentralization and diversification challenge institutional assumptions of school stability, compliance and isomorphism, and introduce space for school leaders' agency and entrepreneurship. The expectations of and opportunities available to principals are becoming similar to those of managers in the corporate sector (Veenker et al., 2008).

Within this context, school principals can be regarded as *institutional entrepreneurs* required not only to comply with institutional demands (for example, improving academic achievement) and regulations (for example, demands for accountability), but also to take a proactive role in advancing initiatives and changes that reflect their own interests and respond to the needs of their school. Eisenstadt (1980), who coined the term 'institutional entrepreneur', referred to individuals who adopted leadership roles in institution building. Institutional entrepreneurs are actors who have interest in particularly new institutional arrangements or in transforming existing ones. They are agents who mobilize resources to alter or create institutional structures (Pacheco et al., 2010). They are able to shape and change institutions in an environment of stasis and compliance (Battilana et al., 2009). This impact occurs through an ongoing process in which the actor is in a social position to respond to opportunities and incentives in order to lead change and to instil new norms, values or institutional structures in innovative ways that challenge existing arrangements or standardized practices (Colomy 1998; Veciana and Urbano, 2008). The innovation of institutional entrepreneurs centres on project implementation and the ability solve problems within the existing legitimized social context (Colomy, 1998: 271). The change does not have to be a new venture or large in scope, but it is associated with shifting the institutional order and norms.

Entrepreneurship in Education Systems

Entrepreneurship is considered to be a driving force of change and innovation, introducing opportunities to achieve efficient and effective performance in both public and private sectors. Since the early 1980s, scholars of different perspectives and disciplines have addressed entrepreneurship (Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986; Baumol, 1990; Boyett, 1996; Covin and Slevin, 1988; Gartner, 1985; Kirzner, 1973; Low and MacMillan, 1988; Lumpkin and Dess, 1996; North, 1990; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000a). The phenomenon of entrepreneurship is intertwined with a multifaceted set of overlapping constructs, such as management of change, innovation, and ecological and environmental turbulence (Cornelius et al., 2006; Low, 2001; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Despite the continuous debate over the definition and core concept of entrepreneurship (Fernald et al., 2005), researchers concur that entrepreneurs are risk-takers, high achievers and are creative in their approaches to producing unique goods and services (Fernald et al., 2005). Entrepreneurship can be regarded as one feature of extraordinary leaders whose innovations or solutions to pressing problems bring benefits (for example, in economic terms) (Sheingate, 2003).

Traditionally, entrepreneurship was associated with the private sector and for-profit business organizations, with entrepreneurial innovations considered to be those directed toward the marketplace. Therefore, the phenomenon initially received marginal attention in public educational settings (Borasi and Finnigan, 2010). Furthermore, schools are frequently considered to be resistant to

educational change; expressed in their reliance on institutional regulations and norms, which leave little room for entrepreneurship (Levin, 2006). Since education is generally a non-profit field, education researchers have applied different approaches to entrepreneurship than those working in for-profit settings (Borasi and Finnigan, 2010; Hentschke, 2010; Ruvio et al., 2010). Indeed, school entrepreneurship falls under the term 'corporate (organizational) entrepreneurship': an organization's tendency to initiate and implement both incremental and radical innovations in its internal and external environments (Eyal, 2007). Miller (1983) argues that corporate entrepreneurship is a multidimensional phenomenon that includes a tendency towards innovation, proactivity and risk-taking in the development of products and technology (see also Covin and Slevin, 1986; Eyal and Kark, 2004; Slevin and Covin, 1990).

Corporate entrepreneurship has been labelled 'intrapreneurship' (Antoncic and Hisrich, 2001), and typically has been investigated through the lens of big business in a fluctuating, competitive environment. In the school setting, in contrast, leadership innovation takes on an aspect of social entrepreneurship that encompasses innovative activities with a social objective in both for-profit and non-profit organizations (Austin et al., 2006). In this regard, Selman (2002) proposes that innovation is intentional action to bring something new that can be sustained and which has some value or utility. It is about making new tools, products or processes, and bringing something 'new', which allows people to accomplish something they were not able to accomplish previously. Innovation carries expectation for change and improvement.

In education, innovations can be related to school practices, standards and policies (Pacheco et al., 2010) in various areas such as *pedagogy*, that is, curricular content and instructional strategies with immediate impact at the classroom level (see, for example, an initiative for technological solutions in Israel (<http://www.timetoknow.com/>)); *organization*, that is, practices and structural designs that do not directly affect classroom techniques or content (Lubienski, 2003); and *social concerns*, which involve creating arrangements to solve social problems by pursuing opportunities to catalyse social change and/or address social needs in innovative ways and combinations of resources (Mair and Marti, 2006).

While school entrepreneurship can fall under several definitions and frameworks, to date few attempts have been made to understand and conceptualize entrepreneurship in education. Even fewer empirical studies have focused on entrepreneurship within schools (Eyal, 2007; Eyal and Inbar, 2003), among students (Bergman et al., 2011; Heilbrunn, 2010), or among school principals and other leaders (Borasi and Finnigan, 2010b; Xaba and Malindi, 2010). However, an operative and measurable concept of school principals as entrepreneurs within the school context has not yet been defined. Empirical studies of this matter are scarce (Eyal, 2007; Eyal and Inbar, 2003; Eyal and Kark, 2004), and concentrate on teachers' reports of school principals' entrepreneurship, rather than documenting the school principals' own perspectives.

The present study fills this gap. We examined 10 school principals that were identified as entrepreneurs in order to reveal the parallels and differences between their motivations and behaviour and those of business entrepreneurs (as presented in the literature). Moreover, we aimed to provide an understanding that builds on the quantitative studies of school entrepreneurship (Eyal, 2007; Eyal and Inbar, 2003) by identifying previously unexamined dimensions and characteristics of school principal entrepreneurship.

To provide a case study we focused our research on the Israeli school system. Traditionally, the Israeli education system has been centrally oriented, with the Ministry of Education making most decisions regarding educational policy and resource distribution. In the past two decades, however, decentralization processes have been taking place, with authority delegated to LEAs and the

schools themselves. As in other systems (similar to the UK) that underwent decentralization, the leadership of Israeli schools face the internal conflict described above regarding engagement in entrepreneurial action to better fit the schools' target population, on one hand, and the pressure to comply with governmental standards and procedures on the other. Further, while comparatively small, the Israeli system includes highly diverse school settings in terms of socio-economic status, achievement and governmental funding and LEA involvement; thus, within the present scope of this study we could easily access a wide range of schools and school principals.

Methodology

We employed qualitative strategies to collect and analyse various sources of empirical data. As a preliminary inquiry preceding the study, we composed a list of 10 school principals identified by media sources, other principals and/or multiple relevant stakeholders within their respective school communities as being commonly perceived as entrepreneurial. At this point it should be mentioned that as the Israeli educational system is small in its size, comparatively high familiarity exists between school principals, LEA personnel, school supervisors, superintendents and other stakeholders. Thus, identifying school principals that are acknowledged as entrepreneurs was feasible.

We conducted in-depth interviews with the 10 principals to expose their personal perspectives (Erickson, 1986). The interviews were conducted in person through a purposeful conversation following Paton (2001), the interview content and evolution were not defined a priori. Hence, some differences in the stream of conversation existed among the interviews. The broad focus questions were open-ended, with prompts used to expand discussion and to further elicit interviewees' views and opinions (Creswell and Miller, 2000). Categories were developed to explore key issues in depth as they emerged in the interview context. The interviews covered the respondents' subjective motives and realities, as well as their views on engagement in entrepreneurial activities. These interviews, generally conducted in the school principals' offices, lasted between 90 and 120 minutes. They were recorded and transcribed verbatim, following which they were coded and thematically analysed. All records were analysed independently and jointly by all three authors.

Selection Procedure

First, we used multiple evidence sources to identify school principals who were perceived as entrepreneurs by their peers and school supervisors. As a preliminary stage, we conducted purposive talks with former school principals, superintendents and teachers, in which they were asked to name school principals that they perceived to be entrepreneurial. We surveyed local and national press to gather materials on the particular school principal and schools and also searched schools' websites in conducting a preliminary design of potential interviewees' profiles.

After selecting the school principals, we contacted additional stakeholders in each school – including teachers, parents and supervisors – to make sure that our initial perception of the school principal as an entrepreneur is one that is commonly held and widely accepted. Only those school principals that were confirmed to be broadly perceived as entrepreneurs were approached and interviewed. All the participants in the study were principals in schools that had improved their academic achievement during the period 2008 to 2012. In these schools principals introduced innovations that vary in their scope and areas. Some of the innovations were focused on school social aspects and were targeted to improve school culture and climate, for instance, offering a special programme based on meditation and yoga activities in order to decrease violence and

controlling emotions); programmes to strengthen the sense of belonging, identity, commitment and citizenship values; to enhance democratic values and the coexistence of Jews and Arabs; or developing an special art programme in school responding to particular students' ability and preferences. Other projects related to the school organization and focused on school–community relations. For example, a school opened a public library within its building, developing a project based on local–global and multidisciplinary perspectives in which students learned about various communities in Israel and worldwide. The third type of innovation was related to school pedagogic issues and were aimed to increase achievement and change the organization of learning activities by affording open spaces to enhance social interactions, learning cooperation and multi-age group activities or a school adopted and developed personal tutoring based on holistic and comprehensive views. These innovations were reported to be exemplary, with other school principals showing interest in them and even adopting them in their schools. To fund these projects the school principals mainly relied on resources from external agencies (for example, collaboration with universities, NGOs and LEAs) rather than the Ministry of Education.

All of these school principals agreed to participate in the study. All three authors, who are well acquainted with the Israeli system, were involved in data collection and data analysis to minimize the risk of individual interpretations and biases.

Data Analysis

Interview data analysis followed the four stages suggested by Marshall and Rossman, namely (1995), 'organizing the data', 'generating categories, themes, and patterns', 'testing any emergent hypotheses' and 'searching for alternative explanations'. This analysis searched for recurrent experiences, feelings and attitudes, so as to codify, reduce and connect different categories into central themes. The coding was guided by the principles of comparative analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1998), including the comparison of any coded element in terms of emergent categories and sub-categories leading to the identification of prominent patterns. When analysing the interviews, we looked specifically for convergence across participants' reports (Creswell and Miller, 2000a). The major themes were then assembled into the categories presented in the results section.

Findings and Discussion

Ten principals identified as entrepreneurs were interviewed. These principals manage schools located throughout Israel, ranging from elementary to secondary schools and from Palestinian-Arab to Jewish schools, and representing the full socio-economic spectrum. Interviewees differed in professional experience and in personal characteristics, but all were identified as leaders who introduced substantial change into their schools. In this section, we present the main findings from in-depth interviews with these principals, highlight the common features and characterize the notion of entrepreneurship in school settings.

Entrepreneurship Fitting School Values

Borasi and Finnagan (2010: 15) claimed that 'the most clear-cutting theme across our six educational entrepreneurs is that all of them were driven by a particular vision or philosophy that was not only critical to their entrepreneurial initiatives but really shaped everything that they did and their "way of being"'. The entrepreneurial actions of school leaders are motivated by their values, as a

form of social entrepreneurship that goes beyond the incentive of financial profit. We were intrigued by this finding of Borasi and Finnagan in attempting to understand the logic that motivates school principals to pursue certain initiatives but not others. Hence, we asked our interviewees how they select initiatives to engage in and why some of those become embedded into their schools' culture and life while others vanish.

School principal A explained:

The school, usually defined as a stagnant governmental institution, is actually packed with initiatives. Parents, students, teachers, the LEA. All of them can be potentially incorporated into the school entrepreneurship, and once we decide to pursue something, it usually changes the school. We keep doing [the selected entrepreneurial venture] year after year. Sometimes we change and further develop things. But the decision to pursue it is mine. I feel it – whether it fits our values or not and we go forward with things that feel right.

When asked about how she succeeded in bringing a school serving an unprivileged population to lead the national table-tennis league, school principal B said the following: 'Actually, I live out my dream. I envision things that we can implement here ... without fears ... This is how we can succeed; we can change school practises forever.'

All of the school principals interviewed relied on their vision and values and decided upon implementation and institutionalization of entrepreneurial activities. School principal A, when asked to describe initiatives that have not been continued from year to year, claimed that:

some initiatives were terminated, because I saw that they do not correspond well enough with the school's values. It is definitely not about lack of resources or necessary effort – we continue with much more complicated projects. But once we determine that this is not our vision, the project will evaporate.

School principal C said, 'we feel that this is our home, with our values and the system working well because all of us are trying to make things better. Teachers propose things that are based on a joint vision ... on our vision.' When asked how she determines which venture to pursue and to institutionalize and what kinds of initiatives are being abandoned, the same principal responded: 'The initiatives are not being abandoned! Regarding every initiative, I inquire with my staff whether it fits the schools' values. Only if it does, it be incorporated here and change the school.' School principal F claimed that 'initiatives get institutionalized here because I never embark upon a new adventure without truly believing in it'.

Leithwood et al. (2008) addressed the role of school leadership in promoting beliefs, motivations and values of the principal to the teachers (and other school stakeholders). They note that school principals who choose to promote certain initiatives and to institutionalize them into their schools' practises used the criteria of compatibility to schools' values as the most powerful apparatus to ensure institutionalization. Belief in a certain idea must not be unique to the educational entrepreneur personally, but rather the venture must be deemed relevant to the basic values of the school itself.

From the comments of our interviewees above, we can gather that one of the major characteristics of school entrepreneurship is the institutionalization and sustainability of the entrepreneurial initiatives. In other words, we found that school principals tailor their decision regarding which of their 'dreams' to act upon based, to a large extent, on their assessment of the likelihood of initiatives to truly change their schools' practises not only immediately but also in the long-run, thereby ensuring institutionalization of their envisioned changes.

In addition the published model of school entrepreneurship (Eyal and Inbar, 2003), which addresses proactivity (that is, an active search for new opportunities) and innovation (a capability to implement newly designed services and/or products), we revealed the importance of an additional feature of successful entrepreneurship – the institutionalization of the initiatives and their ability to significantly impact the schools which chosen according to schools' vision. School leaders were found to implement new ideas by introducing them into routine school practises.

Team-players

Entrepreneurs are people who work alone to promote change and innovation. In organizations, settings and structures can be changed to enable individual entrepreneurship, through a process Pinchot (1985) coined 'intrapreneurship'. Schools are different from corporations in this sense. One of the major themes that our interviews uncovered in school principals' entrepreneurship activities is that in contrast to the business entrepreneurship model, school entrepreneurship is more of a joint team effort than an individual venture.

For example, school principal C stated: 'All my teachers know that we are together in this. If one of them has a dream, it is also my dream and we will work hard to accomplish it. Entrepreneurship is about working together.' Principal E described the same process of joint team-work in implementing visions for the school: 'Together with a school team, we think about the new venture and develop an implementation plan ... I can't work alone ... This is all about the team.'

Principal D, who directs a democratic school with quite a different structure and function than traditional schools, specifically mentioned the team as an implementation agent as well: 'We have a high degree of autonomy from the government, but all decisions at [my school] are made together with all school stakeholders. We together decide whether to implement and later to institutionalize any proposed initiative.' Interestingly, only school principal D addressed the pupils as part of the school's leadership and entrepreneurial base:

[The pupils] decided that they want peers from special education at the school, and few years later we opened here a special class for autistic children with special needs. It become the school's tradition and was initiated by the students, although the supervision was against us from the start.

No Resource Constraint Obstacles

Most organizational entrepreneurship takes place in an environment of severe resource constraint (Baker and Nelson, 2005). One of the most prominent components of entrepreneurship is the innovative ability to manage and promote activities within a context of limited resources (Eyal and Inbar, 2003; Jarillo, 1989; Schumpeter, 1934). Baker and Nelson (2005) studied entrepreneurial firms working under resource constrains. In their words, entrepreneurs were able to 'use things that for others are useless to create valuable resources'. They found managers to be entrepreneurial when they succeeded in 'bricolage', meaning they refuse to succumb to circumstantial limitations and were able to create something from nothing.

Social entrepreneurs look for innovative ways to assure that their ventures creating social value will have access to resources, even when such resources are seemingly impossible to attain. Hence, social entrepreneurs are more likely to take risks to promote their vision, in an attempt to maximize social value (Dees, 1998).

Indeed, school principal J said:

I don't have financial constraints. It is my hobby to raise money for the school. Even if I don't have enough, I start the project and try to get more. I write letters to foundation, the municipality, everybody. This is super important, but the money never stops me.

School principal E, from the Palestinian-Arab educational sector, responded to inquiry about the resources needed to fulfil his vision:

There is no problem with resources. If I need money, we go from door to door to raise money. All school staff is engaged. For example, for construction projects, if we just get the materials, the school teachers will work here in construction and in everything else needed.

School principal G confirmed the same approach:

There is no such thing as resource constraints. Of course, you could always use more money. But we can teach and be entrepreneurial. The kids here need our empathy – this is for free ... if a teacher approaches me to tell me about her dream, I am not going to tell her, 'we don't have resources.' If the dream is worth fighting for, we will do it.

School principal F considered fundraising ability to be a precondition for success in his job: 'I know how to raise money and to get resources for our new ventures ... [Money] cannot be the constraint ... otherwise you are not good principal.'

Educational entrepreneurship inherently suffers from lack of adequate resources to pursue its mission (Austin et al., 2006). Thus, entrepreneurs who seek to attract resources for the school must engage not only for-profit entrepreneurship, but also a robust network of contacts that will provide them with access to funding, management and staff, and other resources. To attract these resources, social entrepreneurs, like their commercial counterparts, must have a strong reputation that engenders trust and a willingness to invest in the social enterprise and its mission. Thus, school principals act according to their vision as was presented above, but they apply teamwork in the process, as a means to gain the necessary scarce resources. Their ability to succeed is thus highly dependent on their belief in their venture and their ability to motivate others to believe in it.

Risk-taking

Risk-taking denotes the willingness to make large and bold resource commitments or to venture into unknown spheres, both of which pertain to a reasonable chance of costly failures (Miller and Friesen, 1984). Researchers have claimed that entrepreneurs take calculated rather than high risks (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996). Eyal and Inbar (2003) and Eyal (2007) propose that managerial entrepreneurship in schools should be described and measured according to various entrepreneurial profiles, representing different combinations of the two main dimensions of corporate entrepreneurship – proactiveness and organizational innovativeness – without referring to the principal's risk-taking profile.

We propose considering risk-taking in school entrepreneurship from the perspective of social entrepreneurship, where risk is taken in order to expand organizational capacity with limited resources. The entrepreneur thus focuses on building a rich network of contacts and resources, developing the skills to manage the various relationships in this network effectively, and seeking out creative arrangements. As was confirmed by the principals' views portrayed above, risk-taking is a component of actions guided by strong vision and cultivated by a dedicated team. Hence, the

entrepreneurial principal can take risk but modify the danger they present through the backing of a strong vision and dedicated co-workers (Eyal, 2007). As school principal F stated:

I am not afraid to take risk . . . On the contrary – I remain in this role in order to make a difference. I choose to be here in a school that has nearly been shut down since only here you can change. In other places, pupils get private teachers that their parents pay for and succeed, here – you must take risks . . . the risk is also to take the people with you.

School principal G works in a school of high socio-economic status at the country's centre. She is a veteran principal, highly regarded in her community, who played an active role in establishing the school in the neighbourhood 12 years ago. She was asked about the difficulties in her decisions to pursue a new initiative:

You take risks in being innovative. The community wants things to be implemented in the traditional way. Parents here have a lot of influence. You need to pursue your goals together with them . . . to explain . . . I assessed the risks involved in everything that I did.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship in the school setting is under discussion in many countries. While the few prior studies examine entrepreneurship in schools in term of pro-activeness and innovation, the present study revealed the motivations and capacitating factors for engaging in entrepreneurship ventures in schools. Four related component were revealed.

First, principals' entrepreneurship was found to be driven by particular values and visions that are important to them, which are then adopted by the school staff. Entrepreneurial school principals seek opportunities that will enable them to realize their 'dreams' and vision. Second, principals as entrepreneurs never work alone. They engage the school staff and win over their support for the suggested venture. Hence, their ability to execute their vision and introduce innovations depends on creating commitment of the school staff to their vision. Third, entrepreneurial principals are not hindered by funding constraints in implementing visions they have dedicated themselves to. They do not hesitate to begin a new project, even when funding for it has not been secured. They appear confident in their ability to fundraise as needed. As such, they appear ready to take risks, which forms the fourth component of entrepreneurialism among school principals.

Notably, the school principals interviewed did not mention any constrains from the formal educational authorities. It sees that despite the trend of growing accountability, school principals maintain adequate autonomy that enables them to lead changes as per their vision and consequently maintain diversity and specialization. The interviews also revealed that the innovations being introduced in schools were being successfully institutionalized within the organization. They become part of the school routine and in some cases were adopted by other schools as well. We can thus posit that the four components of school principals' entrepreneurship identified in this study may introduce institutional changes that turn principals' initiatives into the 'norm' within their respective institutions.

Thus, entrepreneurship in the school setting seems to fit the concept of institutional entrepreneurship. Eisenstadt (1980), who coined the term 'institutional entrepreneur', referred to individuals who adopted leadership roles in institution-building. DiMaggio (1988) argued that these individuals may use their resources in order to realize interests that they value highly. Institutional

entrepreneurs are actors who have an interest in instigating new institutional arrangements or in substantially transforming existing ones. They are agents who mobilize resources to alter or create institutional structures (Pacheco et al., 2010). They are able to shape and change institutions despite pressures towards stasis and compliance (Battilana et al., 2009) that characterize centralized educational systems. Entrepreneurial school principals thus engage in an ongoing process of responding to opportunities to lead change and to instil new norms or institutional structures in innovative ways that challenge existing arrangements or standardized practises (Colomy, 1998; Veciana and Urbano, 2008). They engage in these processes within their existing institutional context, while gaining social legitimization and support (Colomy, 1998).

Institutional theory suggests that institutional arrangements play a key role in shaping organizational behaviour (Rowan and Miskel, 1999). According to this theory, a public organization like a school has to adopt institutional practises and ideology that will increase community support and enhance its prospects of survival, sometimes at the cost of undermining its own technical mandate and ability to accomplish the goals it set for itself in the first place (Meyer and Rowan, 1992). Thus, innovative and entrepreneurial leadership might contradict organizational pressures and lead principals to take risk in engaging in new ventures that may impose negative consequences on the themselves and the institution (Tubin, 2009).

In short, compared to corporate entrepreneurs who implement market-driven innovations without necessarily changing the existing norms and institutional order, institutional entrepreneurship is associated with shifting the institutional order and norms. In our study, school principals introduced innovation in their organizational and pedagogic environments. These changes were different in their scope but appear, as reported by the school principals, to be significant in their impact at school, leading to profound and lasting changes. Thus, school principals that have been identified as entrepreneurial by other stakeholders are actually hold specific type of entrepreneurship which characteristics were revealed in this study.

Hence, we found that institutional entrepreneurship is not about an extremely proactive change, but rather involves profound change of the organizational settings and norms. For example, school principal G explained: 'I hate projects. Projects are when you have a start date and an end date and no real influence. For me, a success is when the initiative becomes a "built in" thing in the school.' School principal A summarized the matter as follows: 'true success is when the project becomes an integral part of the school. Everybody knows that this is our thing, our DNA'.

The present study showed that school principals may have spheres of influence that are designed according to their own vision and interest. School principals may initiate and lead meaningful changes as institutional entrepreneurs. Yet, the conditions that afford them to act entrepreneurially, as well as the impact of their entrepreneurial acts on various pedagogical and organizational issues must still be studied.

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