



Instructional Leadership in Today's China

Xiaojun LI & Jiafang LU

Research has been affirming a significantly positive role of instructional leadership in assuring student academic outcomes. Greater accountability for school success and emphasis of student academic achievement has made the concept especially appealing to researchers and school practitioners in Chinese societies. Nonetheless, our review of the Western and Chinese literature on leading change in schools suggested that there could be both similarities as well as potential differences in the activities entailed in promoting instruction at schools in Hong Kong and Mainland China.

58 School leaders from Hong Kong and Shanghai were approached separately in class setting. They were provided with the definition of instructional leadership developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) and were asked to draw on his or her work experiences to list 10 to 20 specific examples of principal leadership behaviors or activities. These activities were further coded using NVivo and categorized into dimension groups.

Similarities and differences were found at both the dimension and specific activity level. External communication and connection emerged as a new dimension from participants' report, under which specific principal leadership activities include frequent school visits, and seeking external resources. Several new principal leadership activities also emerged to the original dimensions. These include keeping positive and harmonious relationship with staffs, leading and supervising teachers' research group, inviting external experts, parent involvement, and maintaining a safe and orderly campus. Differences between Shanghai and Hong Kong principal leadership activities were also found and discussed.

Key words: instructional leadership; China; validity

