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Contents

An International Cross-Cultural Validation of the Ethical Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ)

Claire Lapointe, Lyse Langlois, Pierre Valois, Mualla Aksu, Khalid H. Arar, Christopher Bezzina, Olof Johansson, Katarina Norberg and Izhar Oplatka

Abstract: *By investigating the ethical perspectives of school principals in five different countries and verifying the cultural invariance of the Ethical Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ), this paper addresses the need to develop cross-cultural research instruments to better understand the work of school leaders in different contexts. In order to verify the invariance of the ELQ according to culture, school leaders from Canada (n=668), Israel (n=117), Malta (n=130), Sweden (n=260), and Turkey (n=460) completed the ELQ. A measurement invariance analysis was then conducted using the multiple indicators multiple causes (MIMIC) approach, followed by a verification of item translation and equivalence of meaning. Invariance analyses demonstrated some differences in factor loadings (i.e. the regression coefficients indicating the strength of the relation between the items and the constructs they are assumed to measure). Results showed that the ELQ was culturally invariant, and that only one item out of 23 needed to be modified.*

Key words: ethical leadership, cultures, questionnaire, invariance, ethic of care, ethic of critique, ethic of justice, ethical sensitivity

This article deals with significant ethical challenges school principals from around the world are facing today – challenges that are having a weighty impact on their work yet are often unacknowledged (Burford & Bezzina 2014; Cherkowski, Walker & Kutsyuruba 2015; Holte 2014). Principals who are aware of ethical issues and face ethical dilemmas – i.e. conflicts between personal, professional and organisational values that make decision-making problematic (Langlois 2004) – experience cognitive and emotional reactions which can lead to a sense of inadequacy if their ethical skills remain undeveloped, or to a sense of empowerment if they are developed (Langlois & Lapointe 2009, 2010).

By culturally validating a research instrument for the study of, and training in, ethical leadership, this paper directly addresses the fourth question of this special issue: how can we encourage the development of cross-cultural models, frameworks and analytical tools to understand the work of school leaders in different contexts? This paper also provides a reliable instrument for international comparative studies of principals' ethical leadership.

Problem Statement

In the international corporate world, ethics has become an inescapable issue following numerous scandals (for example, involving Arthur Andersen, Parmalat, Exxon and Bernie Madoff) and the subsequent collapse of major companies. Although educational organisations around the world have not been put in the spotlight to the same degree as large corporations, they are not above reproach. Sadly, misuse of financial resources, theft of equipment, falsification of student lists in order to increase funding, and favouritism are all too commonly observed in the field of education (Hallak & Poisson 2007; Pliksnys, Kopnicka, Hrynevych & Palicarsky 2009; Poisson 2014). Therefore, when investigating the work of school leaders that goes beyond their official role, one major element which comes to mind is the challenges they face with regard to ethical decision-making, and the need for effective training which would stimulate and consolidate their ethical competency (Cherkowski et al. 2015; Kristinsson 2014; Langlois & Lapointe 2014).

Numerous scholars agree there is a pressing need for educational leaders to acquire ethical decision-making skills (e.g. Aquino, McFerran & Laven 2011; Begley & Tuana 2007; Branson & Gross 2014; Cranston, Ehrich & Kimber 2014; Shapiro, Stefkovitch & Gutierrez 2014; Tuana 2014). In order to offer sound training programmes in ethics, it is essential to create instruments with which to evaluate if and how ethics skills grow from latency to full development (Brown, Trevino & Harrisson 2005; Karlshoven, Den Hartog & De Hoogh 2011; Langlois & Lapointe 2014). However, if instruments are to be used in countries or cultures other than those in which they were validated, their cultural invariance must be ascertained in order for the results they produce to be considered reliable, since values and norms are culturally informed and can vary significantly between societies. In the same manner, moral priorities can differ from one cultural context to another (Bass 1996; Truong & Hallinger 2015). Moreover, legal structures and administrative organisations vary between school systems, influencing the role and responsibilities attributed to principals (Hofstede 2001). In this paper, we briefly recall how the Ethical Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ) was developed and initially validated for the Canadian context in its French and English language versions, and with regard to gender (Langlois, Lapointe, Valois & de Leeuw 2014). We then explain the research methodology used in the present study to verify the invariance of the ELQ across cultures, and share the results. We conclude with a discussion on the need to further investigate the complex and globally diverse realities facing school principals who aspire to become ethical leaders.

Overview of Research on Ethical Leadership in Education

Research on the ethical dimension of leadership in education has seen a significant rise in the past 20 years, inspired in part by the work of Kohlberg (1981) on moral reasoning based on justice, and that of Gilligan (1982) and Noddings (1984) on the ethic of care. Hodgkinson (1978) suggested restoring a moral foundation to theories on educational leadership. Greenfield (1981) emphasised the need to study the ethical and moral aspects of educational leadership, while Farquard (1981) wrote about the almost total lack of moral dimension in educational leadership theory. Supported by Kuhn's (1962) insights, Farquard's conclusion led some scholars to question the dominance of the positivist paradigm in the study of leadership in education, while others started investigating the axiological and ethical dimensions of the practice of leadership. The work of Hodgkinson (1978), Griffiths (1979), Greenfield (1981) and Foster (1989) gave new impetus to research in educational administration by emphasising its moral dimensions.

Starratt's (1991) paper was the first to offer a cohesive and clear theoretical model of ethical leadership in educational administration. Thereafter, several scholars addressed the issue of ethical leadership in education (Aksu & Kasalak 2014; Arar 2015; Beck 1994; Begley & Johansson 2003; Bezzina 1999; Bezzina & Bufalino 2014; Crowson 1989; Duignan 2012; Langlois 2004; Marshall, Paterson, Rogers & Steele 1993; Maxcy 2002; Norberg 2009; Norberg & Johansson 2014; Oplatka & Arar 2016; Sergiovanni 1992; Shapiro & Stepkovich 2001; Starratt 2004; Starratt, Langlois & Duignan 2010). These studies provided a framework to identify the characteristics of an ethics-oriented practice of educational leadership, i.e. a way of leading where one's conduct – whether making a landmark decision, modelling a behaviour or interacting with people – is firmly rooted in an ethically-based, auto-regulated, professional judgement (Langlois 2010; Langlois & Lapointe 2010).

Development and Validation of the Ethical Leadership Questionnaire

Before presenting the research design used to ascertain the ELQ cultural invariance, we summarise the three research phases that, over a period of 20 years, led to its construction and to the psychometric validation of its three-factorial structure for the Canadian context, as well as with regard to gender. A more detailed description of these phases is provided in Langlois et al. (2014).

Phase 1

In the mid-1990s, Langlois (1997) decided to empirically verify Starratt's theoretical model in order to help educational leaders develop their ethical decision-making skills. Starratt's model is based on three interdependent dimensions of ethics: the ethic of care, which reflects a significant concern for others and their well-being as well as an ability to show empathy (Gilligan 1982; Noddings 1984; Tronto 2011); the ethic of justice, which helps to safeguard the common good and maintain normativity, neutrality and rationality (Kolhberg 1981; Sullivan 1985); and the ethic of critique, defined as a means to emancipate individuals and disclose inequities and undue privileges (Adorno 1978; Freire 1970). To this framework, Langlois added the construct of ethical sensitivity, defined as an awareness of ethically challenging situations and a capacity to discern the values at stake (Rest et al. 1986; Tuana 2007).

Between 1994 and 2000, over 200 qualitative interviews were conducted with Canadian school leaders (Langlois 1997, 2004, 2010). The data allowed Langlois to describe how these leaders resolved ethical dilemmas. Between 2000 and 2016, while developing the initial version of the ELQ, another 200 interviews were conducted in various organisational and professional settings in Canada and France, such as hospitals, police forces, engineering firms, international business corporations and public service organisations (Bégin & Langlois 2012; Langlois, Centeno & Filion 2012; Langlois & Lapointe 2007).

Phase 2

Langlois' initial 200 interviews allowed her to develop a typology of ethical dilemmas and decision-making rationales linked to each of the three ethical dimensions proposed by Starratt. Using this rich empirical dataset, Langlois created a first version of the ELQ, which measured five components of ethical leadership: (1) the ability to identify an ethical dilemma, (2) the ability to solve it, (3) the types of decisions made when facing an ethical dilemma, (4) the influence of organisational culture on the process, and (5) the pressures felt while resolving the ethical dilemma. For each component, response items were linked to one of the three ethical dimensions proposed by Starratt, as well

as to ethical sensitivity. This initial version of the ELQ was then used as an experimental pre- and post-test instrument during an action training study on ethical competency. It was found that the use of the ELQ greatly helped participants to understand the meaning of the three ethics – both conceptually and practically – and that it had an important triggering effect on their decision to take ownership of their professional development with regard to ethical leadership (Langlois & Lapointe 2010).

Phase 3

The third phase of the research programme involved the psychometric validation of the three-factorial structure of the ELQ (care, justice and critique), as well as the demonstration of its invariance with regard to gender. The latter is a prerequisite when carrying out comparative analyses between women and men as, in order to be able to reach a conclusion on real gender differences in leadership characteristics, gender invariance of the items needs to be first ascertained (Brown et al. 2005). As a very detailed description of this third phase is available in Langlois et al. (2014), only a brief summary of how it was achieved follows.

Data were collected from a sample of 668 Canadian educational leaders from Quebec and Ontario; 50.3 per cent of the participants were male and 49.7 per cent were female. This sample was divided into four random subgroups of 167 participants, one for each of the four steps of data analyses: use of item response theory (IRT) for item analysis; confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and ESEM analysis; invariance of the ELQ items across gender; and structural equation modelling. The results confirmed the validity of the ELQ in terms of measuring the presence of ethical leadership based on the ethics of justice, critique and care linked to ethical sensitivity, as well as its invariance with regard to gender. Finally, as there was a sufficient number of items to assure the content validity of each of the three ethical dimensions, items that had much higher loadings on a factor other than the one intended were removed, resulting in a 23-item version of the ELQ (Langlois et al. 2014).

Testing the Cultural Invariance of the ELQ

Testing the cultural invariance of the ELQ – a prerequisite in the use of such instruments in order to produce reliable results (Meredith 1993; Vandenberg & Lance 2000) – constituted the fourth and final phase of its validation.

Participants

An international team was brought together by means of an invitation through the TERA[1] website as well as through contacts made at international conferences. Scholars from four distinct cultures offered to collaborate in the study: Khalid Arar and Izhar Oplatka (Israel), Christopher Bezzina (Malta), Katarina Norberg and Olof Johannson (Sweden) and Mualla Aksu (Turkey). For participants from Sweden, Turkey and Israel, the ELQ needed to be translated from English into Swedish, Turkish and Hebrew, respectively. In each country, investigators collected data using paper and/or online versions of the questionnaire, and forwarded these data to the Canadian team for processing. Participation was as follows: Israel (n=117), Malta (n=130), Sweden (n=257), Turkey (n=460). The Canadian sample was made up of 637 participants. We wish to emphasise that, although sufficient for testing invariance across culture, the convenience samples used in this study are not representative of the entire target population of each country.

1 Towards Ethics, Responsibility, Authenticity (www.qle-elq.rlt.ulaval.ca/en/node/60).

Israeli Context

In 2016, Israel had a total population of around eight and a half million people, comprising 74.8 per cent Jews, 20.8 per cent Arabs and 4.4 per cent other (Central Bureau of Statistics 2016). As citizens of what is officially considered a Jewish state (Smooha 2002), the Arab population in Israel contends with a constant identity conflict, while the Jewish population includes many ethnic and religious subcultures. Though average income is significantly higher for Jewish than for Arab families, the gap between wealthy and poor Jews has gradually reached worrying proportions (Ben-David & Bleikh 2013).

Education in Israel is segregated, with separate school systems for religious and secular Jewish children, and separate state and religious schools for Arab children. Parents have the legal right to enroll their child in any of these systems. The first three systems share similar structures, reforms, matriculation exams, national core curricula, labour relations (tenured teachers) and student configuration (grades 1-6, 7-9, and 10-12), but differ from each other in terms of cultural and religious affiliations. The Jewish education system serves 74 per cent of all the student population, 45 per cent in the state secular system and 29 per cent in the religious system. The Arab educational system serves 26 per cent of the children in Israel (CBS 2013). Unequal resources allocated to Arab schools (Arlosoroff 2014) and undefined educational aims lead to lower achievement for Arab students in both national and international standard exams (Arar 2012). Several problems – such as scholastic disparities, low achievement, low teachers' salaries, major deficits in the fields of knowledge and inefficient utilisation of resources – have led to the introduction of two major reforms: New Horizons and Power to Change (Arar 2012; Gibton 2011). In addition, an Authority for Research and Assessment has been established as part of Israel's Ministry of Education, and several national and international examinations have been introduced into schools, including the National Mitzav exam for 4th and 8th grades and the PISA and Perl exams, which have ramped up the pressure on those working in the Israeli education system (Blas 2014). In 2007, the Israeli National Centre of School Leadership was founded, taking up the mission of improving the Israeli educational system through the reinvention of school principals as a leading professional community (Avney Rosha Institute 2009). At the end of 2011, Israel's total principal population numbered 3,186, 58 per cent of whom were female and 42 per cent of whom were male. (Blas, Gavooli, Hayman & Ofarim 2012).

Israeli Participants

Principals and vice-principals from the Arab education system enrolled in a Master's programme in educational administration were invited to fill out the ELQ. Of the 128 enrolled, 78 individuals participated in the study. Another 39 questionnaires were administered by a research assistant, for a total of 117 questionnaires.

Maltese Context

Located in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, the Maltese Archipelago covers an area of 316 square kilometres and has approximately 420,000 residents. It is a democratic republic, with a president as the constitutional head of state and a prime minister. Education in Malta is compulsory up to the age of 16 and is offered by three different providers: the state, the church and the private sector. Whilst the state sector still caters to the majority of students (60 per cent), the church sector is growing and will cater to over 40 per cent of students within a few years. The private and fee-paying sector caters to approximately 7 per cent of the student population. The state is responsible for promoting education and instruction, and for ensuring universal access to education for all Maltese citizens. The objectives of education in Malta include intellectual and moral development

and the preparation of every citizen to contribute productively to the national economy. Malta's educational system is structured in four stages: pre-primary (ages 3-5), primary (ages 5-11), secondary (ages 11-16) and higher (16+). Those wishing to pursue a position of headship in the Maltese school system are required to follow a two-year postgraduate diploma (or equivalent) at the University of Malta. All current heads are either in possession of this degree or hold a Master's degree in educational management and leadership.

In the Mediterranean and European contexts, migration raises many concerns of an ethical nature as school leaders need to learn how to understand students (and parents) that come from different cultural and religious backgrounds, a situation that is further complicated by language barriers (Eurydice 2009; Pace 2013). For the people of Malta, for example, the challenge of moving from an insular and Catholic reality to one which is more multicultural has to be handled with care (Bernardie-Tahir & Schmoll 2014; Cassar 2013). Recent studies (e.g. Cassar 2013; Pace 2013) have shown that migration raises 'normative and ethical considerations such as the issue of solidarity' (Pace 2013: 20), and have shone light on the 'impact that unregulated migration is having on the domestic politics of southern European countries as reflected in the increase in racism and xenophobia' (Pace 2013: 20). Furthermore, Bernardie-Tahir & Schmoll (2014) note that 'Malta reveals the complexity of migration issues and offers a remarkable "site of condensation" of the ambivalences of the Euro-Mediterranean region where one can observe new cartographies of power and resistance in the making' (p. 53).

Maltese Participants

After discussing matters with top officials and garnering their support, ethical clearance for the present study was sought. All school leaders currently in post within the three sectors were then invited to participate through information made available online. Respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and informed that their participation was voluntary. A total of 130 participants filled out the ELQ online.

Swedish Context

With 50 years of social democratic governments, Sweden is a welfare state with well-established social democratic values. With fewer than ten million inhabitants (14 per cent immigrants), Sweden has a history of open elections and debates which frame democracy and freedom of speech as fundamental societal values. Government services operate pre-school, schools, university and healthcare, subsidised through the tax system. The Swedish Parliament and the government set out the goals and guidelines for pre-school (optional educational and day-care services starting at the age of 1), pre-school class (optional kindergarten at ages 5-6), compulsory school (ages 7-16), leisure time centres and upper secondary school. Municipalities and independent schools are the principal organisers or school owners in the school system.

Over the last decades, neoliberal ideas have influenced Swedish society. Consequently, many independent schools have opened and most agree that they are a permanent fixture, despite claims that they profit from public taxes. The Swedish State School Inspection controls all schools and provides official reports on the schools' administration and their compliance with laws and regulations. The current curricula and the School Act (*Skollagen*) stipulate that schools must impart a world-view and shape pupils' fundamental values, including the inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between women and men, and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable. These values are meant to saturate all school activities and constitute a common frame of reference.

Principals and pre-school heads are appointed before they commence the National Principal Training Program, a Master's level in-service programme which runs for three years and has been mandatory since 2009 for all newly appointed principals. Training providers are payed by the state and school owners pay for the participation of their principals (20 per cent time-release from work). Two years after the end of the programme, the state offers all principals voluntary in-service training in leadership and quality work.

Swedish Participants

Ten groups from the three-year National Principal Training Program were selected to participate in the present study, which resulted in a total of 257 participants from various rural and urban regions of Sweden. There was an even distribution between groups in their first semester and those in their last semester.

Turkish Context

Although a modern republic that was founded in 1923, Turkey is still a developing country in which not all people embrace democratic values. With a population of 78 million citizens, a growth rate of 13.3 per thousand and the recent arrival of 2.7 million Syrian refugees, significant issues are negatively affecting national income and the quality of education. The Turkish educational system is a highly centralised one wherein the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) controls all aspects of the 12-year compulsory system (age 6-17), including all public and private primary and secondary schools. After the military coup in 1980, Turkish governments were influenced by neoliberal ideas, diminishing their financial support to public schools while encouraging the development of private schools. Although civic values are taught at all levels of schooling, religious values are promoted in the new curricula and regulations. At the high school level conservative parents often send their daughters to open high schools where attendance is not compulsory.

Currently, all candidates for educational administration positions, regardless of their educational degree or experience, are evaluated through a written and oral examination. After appointment, a free-of-charge, 90-hour compulsory initial training programme is conducted by local educational authorities in cooperation with universities. Principals and other educational administrators are also given in-service training when needed.

Turkish Participants

All educational administrators working in the province of Antalya were invited to fill out the ELQ voluntarily via a formal email message. Of the total 3,860 potential participants, 460 (12.5 per cent) completed the questionnaire.

Canadian Context

A federation of ten provinces and three territories, Canada has a population of over 35 million, 96 per cent of whom are descendants of immigrants who arrived either 400 years ago (French), 300 years ago (British) or more recently. Less than 4 per cent of Canadians are aboriginals (First Nation, Inuit and Metis people). Canada is a socially oriented country where individual and collective rights tend to be balanced. Although education is under provincial jurisdiction and each province and territory has its own ministry of education, school systems are quite similar, with a more distinct structure in the province of Quebec. Provincial governments operate kindergartens (ages 4-5), elementary and middle schools (grades 1-7 or 1-8), and high schools (grades 8-12 or 9-12). In Quebec, the structure is as follows: subsidised early childhood centres and day-cares (ages 1-5),

kindergarten (ages 4-5), elementary school (grades 1-6) and high school (grades 7-11). Compulsory schooling ends at grade 11, after which students attend CEGEP, which offers free pre-university and professional training programmes.

Elected school boards constitute an intermediate level of governance for resource allocation and educational service supervision and evaluation. As regulated by the Canadian constitution, all provinces financially support an English and a French language school system. Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia have private and public schools which are significantly subsidised, while Ontario has public non-denominational and public Catholic fully subsidised schools. In all provinces, principals complete a graduate programme in educational administration before being appointed, or do so as an in-service requirement.

Canada's school systems face three pressing issues: dramatically low graduation rates among its indigenous peoples, significantly lower success rates of French-language official minority students in national and international testing, and a general deterioration of the situation with regard to educational equity.

Canadian Participants

The Canadian sample for the present study is made up of 637 principals, schoolboard counsellors and college administrators from the provinces of Quebec and Ontario who participated over a period of three years. In both provinces, participants were free to complete the questionnaire in either French or English.

Measurement Invariance Analysis

When using an instrument such as the ELQ, an important prerequisite to enable unambiguous interpretation of latent mean differences according to culture is for the measurement of the latent constructs forming its underlying model to be invariant (equivalent) across cultural groups; in other words, it is important that the measured latent constructs are comparable across groups (Byrne 2013; Gardner & Qualter 2011; Morin, Marsh & Nagengast 2013; Vandenberg & Lance 2000). Therefore, we performed tests of measurement invariance to evaluate the extent to which measurement properties of the ELQ generalise across different cultural groups. Different approaches can be used to test measurement invariance: multiple group, longitudinal, and multiple indicators multiple causes (MIMIC). We used the MIMIC approach because it is the most suitable when research is based on modest sample sizes, as is the case in the current study (Morin et al. 2013). More specifically, the MIMIC model is much more parsimonious than the other approaches mentioned, and does not require the separate estimation of the model in each cultural group. In the present study, parameters in the MIMIC model were successively constrained to invariance across cultures or countries (Canada versus Turkey, Malta and Sweden, etc.) in a series of hierarchically related (nested) models to ensure that the measurement and meaning of the latent constructs remained the same for each group, an important prerequisite for group-based comparisons (for more details, see Morin et al. 2013).

The first model (M1: null model) predicts that culture (the predictor variable) will have no effect on the latent variables (ethic of care, ethic of justice and ethic of critique) and items intercepts; this means that the paths from the predictor to the latent factors and their indicators are constrained to zero. The second model (M2: saturated model) allows the paths between the predictor (culture or country) and the items (Q1-Q23) to be freely estimated, but the paths from the predictor to the

latent factors (ethic of care, ethic of justice and ethic of critique) are still constrained to zero. In the third model (M3: invariant intercept model), the paths from the predictor to the latent factors are freely estimated, but all the paths between the predictor and the indicators or items are constrained to zero.

The comparison of M1 with M2 and M3 tests whether there is any cultural effect on the responses to the ELQ items. If M1 fails to provide an acceptable fit to the data, this suggests that at least some effects of the predictor variable (cultural differences) on the ELQ factors should be expected. If M2 fits substantially better than M3, the implication is the presence of differential item functioning (DIF). To find which item has a problem of DIF, different hierarchical partially invariant models (Models 4, 5 and so on, depending on the circumstances) are performed in which the invariant constraint is relaxed for some item intercepts. For instance, in the case of M4, the path between the predictor and item X is freely estimated rather than constrained to zero. M5, with paths between the predictor and items X (item freely estimated in M4) and Y are freely estimated rather than constrained to zero, etc. With the software Mplus, the command 'modindices' is used in M3 to identify which path or paths between the predictor (culture) and the items have to be freely estimated (biggest modification indices). The different models were tested by structural equation modelling (SEM) using Mplus 7.0 (Muthén & Muthén 1998–2015). Given the known over-sensitivity of the chi-square to sample size, minor deviations from normality and minor model misspecifications, model fit is usually assessed with sample size-independent fit indices, which in this case were the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) and the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA). According to conventional rules of thumb (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2011), acceptable and excellent model fit is indicated by CFI and TLI values greater than .90 and .95, respectively, and by RMSEA values smaller than .08 and .06, respectively.

For the model comparisons:

> [t]here has been an increasing tendency to argue for evidence of invariance based on a more practical approach involving one, or a combination of two, alternative criteria: (a) the multi-group model exhibits an adequate fit to the data, and (b) the ΔCFI (or its robust counterpart) values are negligible. (Byrne 2012: 256)

According to Cheung & Rensvold (2002) and Chen (2007), the imposition of additional constraints is justifiable if it results in a ΔCFI of 0.01 or less and a ΔRMSEA of 0.015 or less between a more restricted model and the preceding one in the case of samples larger than 300.

Explaining Differing Items

The final methodological step in the present study consisted of explaining why certain items seem to be problematic (i.e. they have a different meaning in different countries or cultures). This was done in one stage for Malta, where the English ELQ version was used, and in two stages where it was translated (i.e. in Israel, Turkey and Sweden). For the countries where the ELQ was translated, we first verified whether the translation of the differing items was accurate by translating them back to English and comparing with the original version. We then wrote short descriptions of how people in Canada and in the participating countries understood the items which seemed problematic, and compared those descriptions in order to ascertain whether the items had the same meaning in each language.

Results

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the 1,632 ELQ participants included in this study, of which 545 were tested in English, 253 in French, 460 in Turkish, 260 in Swedish and 117 in Hebrew.

Table 1: Participants' characteristics

Country	Gender			No. years' experience in educational administration		
	M	F	Total	0-10	11-20	21+
Canada	336	332	668	532	105	31
Israel	70	47	117	31	38	48
Malta	59	71	130	76	43	11
Sweden	98	159	257	239	18	0
Turkey	396	64	460	244	125	69

The MIMIC approach indicated that a number of items scored differently for each participating country, ranging from three items for Israel to seven for Sweden (see Tables 3 to 6 for paired comparisons). Table 2 presents a summary of the ELQ items showing a different metric across countries or cultures.

Table 2: Summary of the ELQ items showing a different metric across countries or culture

Country	Items									
	3	5	6	8	9	11	13	14	15	16
Israel							x	x	x	
Malta	x		x	x	x	x				
Sweden			x	x	x		x	x	x	x
Turkey		x	x				x		x	

Verification of the Translation for Israel, Sweden, and Turkey

Israel and Turkey

As shown in Table 2, three items scored differently between Israel and Canada (13, 14, 15) and four items scored differently between Turkey and Canada (5, 6, 13, 15). When verifying the translation of these items from English into Hebrew or Turkish and then back to English, we found they had been translated correctly.

Sweden

Seven items scored differently between Sweden and Canada: 6, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, and 16. We found changes of meaning in translation only for item 6. In the English version, item 6 referred to *making people aware that some situations privilege certain groups*, whereas the Swedish version was more specific and referred to *making the staff aware that some children get more privileges than others*. The six other items had been translated accurately.

Table 3: ELQ comparison between Canada and Israel

Canada - Israel	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	ΔRMSEA	ΔCFI	ΔTLI
M1: MIMIC NULL effect model	811,615	210	0.095	0.826	0.771			
M2: MIMIC SATURATED model	445,251	187	0.066	0.925	0.89			
M3: MIMIC invariant intercept	578,133	207	0.075	0.892	0.857	0.009	0.033	0.033
M4: MIMIC Partially (DIF: Q15)	557,908	206	0.073	0.898	0.863	0.007	0.027	0.027
M5: MIMIC Partially (DIF: Q15, Q14)	532,462	205	0.071	0.905	0.872	0.005	0.02	0.018
M6: MIMIC Partially (DIF: Q15, Q14, Q13)	499,012	204	0.068	0.915	0.884	0.002	0.01	0.006

Table 4: ELQ comparison between Canada and Malta

Can - Malta	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	ΔRMSEA	ΔCFI	ΔTLI
M1: MIMIC NULL effect model	840,192	210	0.106	0.798	0.734			
M2: MIMIC SATURATED model	351,977	187	0.057	0.947	0.922			
M3: MIMIC invariant intercept	510,631	207	0.074	0.903	0.87	0.017	0.044	0.052
M4: MIMIC Partially (DIF: Q9)	465,771	206	0.068	0.917	0.888	0.011	0.03	0.034
M5: MIMIC Partially (DIF: Q9,Q3)	439,991	205	0.065	0.925	0.898	0.008	0.022	0.024
M6: MIMIC Partially (DIF: Q9,Q3,Q6)	417,710	204	0.062	0.931	0.907	0.005	0.016	0.015
M7: MIMIC Partially (DIF: Q9,Q3,Q6,Q11)	402,703	203	0.06	0.936	0.913	0.003	0.011	0.009
M8: MIMIC Partially (DIF: Q9,Q3,Q6,Q11, Q8)	388,857	202	0.059	0.94	0.918	0.002	0.007	0.004

Table 5: ELQ comparison between Canada and Turkey

Can - Turkey	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	ΔRMSEA	ΔCFI	ΔTLI
M1: MIMIC NULL effect model	1240,736	210	0.089	0.889	0.855			
M2: MIMIC SATURATED model	585,425	187	0.058	0.957	0.937			
M3: MIMIC invariant intercept	924,707	207	0.075	0.923	0.897	0.017	0.034	0.04
M4: MIMIC Partially (DIF= Q6)	814,640	206	0.069	0.935	0.913	0.011	0.022	0.024
M5: MIMIC Partially (DIF= Q6, Q5)	773,091	205	0.067	0.939	0.918	0.009	0.018	0.019
M6: MIMIC Partially (DIF= Q6, Q5, Q15)	730,806	204	0.064	0.943	0.924	0.006	0.014	0.013
M7: MIMIC Partially (DIF= Q6, Q5, Q15, Q13)	693,456	203	0.062	0.947	0.928	0.004	0.01	0.009

Table 6: ELQ comparison between Canada and Sweden

Can-Sweden	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	ΔRMSEA	ΔCFI	ΔTLI
M1: MIMIC NULL effect model	1091,613	210	0.1	0.793	0.728	-	-	-
M1: MIMIC SATURATED model	456,201	187	0.058	0.937	0.907			
M1: MIMIC invariant intercept	741,825	207	0.078	0.875	0.833	0.02	0.062	0.074
M1: MIMIC Partially (DIF: Q6)	718,239	206	0.077	0.88	0.839	0.019	0.057	0.068
M1: MIMIC Partially (DIF: Q6, Q14)	696,497	205	0.075	0.885	0.845	0.017	0.052	0.062
M1: MIMIC Partially (DIF: Q6, Q14, Q13)	622,568	204	0.07	0.902	0.867	0.012	0.035	0.04
M1: MIMIC Partially (DIF: Q6, Q14, Q13, Q15)	579,546	203	0.066	0.912	0.88	0.008	0.025	0.027
M1: MIMIC Partially (DIF: Q6, Q14, Q13, Q15, Q8)	551,844	202	0.064	0.918	0.888	0.006	0.019	0.019
M1: MIMIC Partially (DIF: Q6, Q14, Q13, Q15, Q8, Q16)	528,000	201	0.062	0.923	0.895	0.004	0.014	0.012
M1: MIMIC Partially (DIF: Q6, Q14, Q13, Q15, Q8, Q16, Q9)	508,848	200	0.06	0.928	0.9	0.002	0.009	0.007

Verification of Meaning for Remaining Items

As a final step, we needed to compare the meaning given to the ten items which, although used in the original English version or translated correctly, scored differently with MIMIC. Co-authors looked at the list of problematic items for their country and wrote a short definition of what each meant to school principals in their own context. Canadian authors did the same for the ten items in question. Definitions were then compiled as shown in Table 7.

When comparing the definitions, we found that the meaning given in each country to items 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, and 16 was similar, and that each of them referred to their intended ethical dimension. However, distinct meanings were found for item 14, *I conduct an investigation,* which was intended to refer to the way one would gather a series of facts before making a decision (ethic of justice). This item proved to be inconsistent in the way it was understood in Israel and Sweden, given the various ways the word *investigation* can be interpreted.

Table 7: Verification of item meaning

3	ELQ	I don't tolerate arrogance.
	C	*When I see individuals behaving like they know better than others, I make sure to intervene.*
	M	*I would engage through verbal communication with staff who may not express respect to others.*
5	ELQ	I try to preserve everyone's safety and well-being.
	C	*I try to keep a safe and secure working environment so that people feel well at work.*
	T*	*I make an effort to provide a safe environment and conditions for well-being for everyone.*
6	ELQ	I try to make people aware that some situations disproportionately privilege certain groups.
	C	*I find it important to make people aware of situations where individuals or groups of people have more advantages than others.*
	M	*I do my utmost to provide the support when and where needed, with the consent of the management and staff.*
	T*	*I know that there are privileged groups and I want other people to be aware of this situation.*
8	ELQ	I seek to protect each individual's dignity.
	C	*I try to do what is necessary to make sure that neither my behaviour nor that of other people diminishes the way they feel about who they are as a human being.*
	M	*I do my utmost to ensure that people are treated with respect both through my acts and words.*
	S*	*I find it important that no pupil, staff member or parent be harassed, insulted or exposed to something that makes them feel worthless.*
9	ELQ	I expect people to make mistakes (it's human nature)
	C	*It is normal for people to make mistakes, people are not infallible.*
	M	*It is normal to make mistakes, we are all learning.*
	S*	*It is no problem if people make mistakes, no one is perfect.*
11	ELQ	I am concerned when individuals or groups have advantages compared to others.
	C	*I feel bad when individuals or groups have privileges that others don't have.*
	M	*I want to make sure that there are no advantaged individuals/groups and do my utmost to help those in need.*

13	ELQ	I check my organisation's unwritten rules.
	C	*Before making a decision, I find out if there are any unofficial rules or principles I should take into account.*
	S*	*I investigate if there are any unwritten rules in the organisation.*
	T*	*I need to remember what is acceptable and what is not before making any decision.*
	I*	*I check the school's unwritten rules (including previous decisions and regulations).*
14	ELQ	I conduct an investigation.
	C	*I look for all the facts related to the situation.*
	S*	*I or someone else investigates the situation.*
	I*	*Before I decide I check the ethical implications of my decision.*
15	ELQ	I sanction mistakes in proportion to their seriousness.
	C	*I decide consequences based on the gravity of the action.*
	S*	*Small mistakes, mild sanctions; serious mistakes, harder sanctions.*
	T*	*I balance sanctions with the severity of mistakes.*
	I*	*I punish according to the severity and damage caused to other parties.*
16	ELQ	I speak out against injustices.
	C	*I publicly denounce unfair situations.*
	S*	*I explicitly express a clear standpoint against injustice.*

Note: ELQ refers to original item in English; C stands for Canadian definitions, S for Swedish, and so on. * indicates countries where the ELQ was translated from English to another language.

Discussion

Based on the results presented above, we decided that only one item of the ELQ needed to be modified following the intercultural validation procedure. Given the ambiguous signification of the word *investigation*, we modified item 14 from *I conduct an investigation* to *I conduct an inquiry into the situation*. Aside from this one instance, it is reasonable to assume that the remaining ELQ items have the same meaning in quite distinct cultures, and that any differences observed between countries will not be the result of a faulty instrument. A final 23-item version of the ELQ is therefore presented at the end of this paper (in the Appendix).

As for the challenging, albeit very stimulating, work required to verify the cultural invariance of the ELQ, the exercise resulted in a realisation by team members of just how rigorous one needs to be when translating a research instrument from one language into another, and from one culture to another. In order to avoid attributing to reality results affected by errors made in the translation process, it is essential to first apply a transcultural validation technique, such as the one developed by Vallerand (1989), wherein one verifies the accuracy of a translation by translating the content back into its original language. A second prerequisite is the verification of the transcultural validity of correctly translated items, as even when using an instrument in its original version, meaning attributed to items can differ significantly from one cultural context to another.

With regard to the limits of this study, we agree that in order to get a better grasp of the meaning of educational ethical leadership around the world, our findings need to be further analysed through discussions held with school leaders in the countries where our study has been conducted, and

elsewhere. Just as we did in Canada, this would allow for school leaders to openly debate issues of an ethical nature and to address the dilemmas they are facing, resulting in the identification of specific issues that are central to the ethics of care, critique and justice in different cultural contexts.

Perspective

Given the great challenges facing educational leaders today – such as maintaining equitable access to quality education for all in a time of financial crisis, learning to live together in an ever more diverse world, and appreciating the beauty of this diversity and its important contribution to humanity's ongoing progress towards peace and social wellbeing – we posit that the ethic of justice constitutes a promising starting point for principals who wish to bring about positive changes in their schools. Indeed, the ethic of justice provides principals with solid ground as it is based on adopted norms and regulations that must be applied to all. However, educational leaders must move beyond the mere application of rules and norms and apply the ethic of care, which offers an authentic framework for dialogue and human understanding. Finally, through the adoption of a perspective inspired by the ethic of critique, principals will be able to engage in transformative and emancipatory action within their schools and in wider society.

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Appendix

Ethical Leadership Questionnaire

DEFINITION: *An ethical dilemma is a situation that involves an apparent conflict between values in which to support one would result in transgressing another.*

Referring to the scale below, circle the number of your choice

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often	Always	N/A (not applicable)
1	2	3	4	5	6	X

When I reflect on the way I act at work, I can see that…

1. I establish trust in my relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
2. I try to ensure harmony in the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
3. I don't tolerate arrogance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
4. I follow procedures and rules.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
5. I try to preserve everyone's safety and well-being.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
6. I try to make people aware that certain situations disproportionately privilege some groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
7. I speak out against unfair practices.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
8. I seek to protect each individual's dignity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
9. I expect people to make mistakes (it is human nature).	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
10. I speak out against injustice.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
11. I am concerned when individuals or groups have advantages compared to others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X

When I have to resolve an ethical dilemma…

12. I check the legal and regulatory clauses that might apply.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
13. I check my organization's unwritten rules.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
14. I conduct an inquiry into the situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
15. I sanction mistakes in proportion to their seriousness.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
16. I try to oppose injustice.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
17. I take time to listen to the people involved in the situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
18. I seek to preserve bonds and harmony within the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
19. I avoid hurting people's feelings by maintaining their dignity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
20. I pay attention to individuals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
21. I promote dialogue about contentious issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X

My decision in the resolution of an ethical dilemma is based on…

22. the statutory and legal framework.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X
23. greater social justice.	1	2	3	4	5	6	X

Care = mean of items 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

Critique = mean of items 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 16, 23

Justice = mean of items 4, 12, 13, 14, 15, 22