

**An affective paradigm for educational leadership theory and  
practice:  
Connecting affect, actions, power and influence**

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# **An affective paradigm for educational leadership theory and practice: Connecting affect, actions, power and influence**

## **Abstract**

Affects – feelings moods and emotions - have significant implications for leadership practice in educational institutions. However, research into role of affects in educational leadership has only relatively recently caught the attention of researchers. Consequently, affects do not have the central place they merit in educational leadership theory and practice. Hence the rationale for this article. In the article, we analyse the nature of affects and distinguish between the different kinds, particularly between feelings/moods and emotions; explain the ontological and epistemological challenges of researching feelings; and consider in some depth the complex nature of emotions. Through those analyses, we connect affect, actions, power and influence in leadership interactions in educational institutions thereby establishing a central role for affects, especially feelings, in educational leadership theory and practice. The role of feelings in initiating educational leadership actions calls for an affective paradigm for analysing and theorising educational leadership practice, in which educational leadership practice is understood and interpreted from an affective standpoint. In the article, we establish an affective paradigm for educational leadership theory and practice and illustrate different interpretation perspectives that fall within the paradigm.

(183 words)

## **Key words**

Affect; Feelings; Moods; Emotions; Leadership; Power: Affective Paradigm

## **Introduction**

In the last 20 years, various authors have drawn attention to the affective aspects of educational institutions, teaching and educational leadership, see for example, Hargreaves (1998a; 1998b), James (1999; 2010), James et al. (2006), Dunning, James and Jones, (2005), Beatty (2000), Zembylas (2005), Crawford (2007, 2009), Oplatka (2011, 2017), Samier and Schmidt (2009), and Berkovich and Eyal (2015). This body of work is substantial, but even so, the various forms of affect - feelings, moods and emotions - have yet to be accorded the significance they warrant in understandings of educational leadership, the process of influencing others in educational institutions (Cuban 1988; Bush, 2008; Connolly James and Fertig, 2017). Without that recognition, understandings of leadership theory and practice will only ever be partial and will be limited in nature and scope. Hence our intentions in this article: to connect affects, actions, power and influence, thereby establishing the central place of affects in educational leadership theory and practice; and to develop an affective paradigm for educational leadership theory and practice. To achieve those intentions, we have analysed relevant sources and synthesised substantive concepts to develop a theoretical framework and a coherent argument. We have also drawn upon our experience as teachers/leaders in diverse educational settings.

Our argument is as follows. Three forms of affect can be identified – feelings, moods and emotions. Feelings and moods are internal states, whereas emotions are complex physiological, psychological and social responses to events. Knowing and communicating

about feelings and moods is highly problematic. Nonetheless, feelings and moods are central in initiating and motivating social actions, which take place during the emotion process. In those actions, power is experienced, which influences others. As the practice of educational leadership is an influencing act, affect, actions, power and influence are connected and the central role of feelings in motivating educational leadership practices is established. That argument calls for an affective paradigm for educational leadership theory and practice in which educational leadership practice is understood and interpreted from an affective standpoint. Such interpretation can give in-depth insights into leadership practice and a fuller understanding of the rationales for leadership actions.

We start the article by exploring the nature of affects, distinguishing between the different forms, and reflecting on the problematics of researching feelings. In the section that follows, we consider the nature of emotions, and analyse the role of feelings in initiating social actions. We go on to establish an affective paradigm for analysing, understanding and theorising educational leadership practice. We then illustrate different interpretation perspectives that fall within the paradigm. In the last main section, we recap on the analyses and we finish with some concluding comments.

## **The nature of affects**

There is a long-standing view that mental processes are of three kinds: affection, cognition and volition (Hilgard, 1980), which are sometimes referred to as the 'trium of consciousness' (Tallon, 1997) or the 'trilogy of the mind' (Hilgard, 1980). Affection relates to the experience of feelings while cognition is concerned with thinking processes. Both are means of knowledge acquisition in the broadest sense. Volition relates to the mental processes that initiate action. It underpins purposive motivated acts and is considered to be of foundational significance in understanding human mental processes and behaviour (Hershberger, 1988). Theoreticians have concentrated on cognition during the last century, and only relatively recently has their attention begun to focus on the role of affection and volition in understanding human behaviour.

Although the processes of affection, cognition and volition can be distinguished analytically as different phenomena (Le Doux, 1986; Elliott and Dolan, 1998), in everyday experience the interplay between them is substantial. Establishing a role for affect in volition has been a long-standing line of enquiry (see for example, Murray, 1938), and continues to be developed in theories such as action readiness (Frijda, et al., 2009; 2010; Frijda et al., 2014). Frank (1993) argues that feelings are much more significant as rationales for actions than cognitions, a line of reasoning we develop here. We take the view, following Frijda et al. (2014), that 'cognitive knowing' does not of itself initiate willed behaviour/actions. The motivation to act is produced by the feelings we have about what we know cognitively; we are moved to act. For example, a teacher in a school receiving a message from the headteacher saying she wants to see him as soon as possible knows that he should do what the headteacher has requested. However, it is what he feels about the message that motivates him to go and see the headteacher, and to do so as a matter of urgency.

## ***The different forms of affect***

There are three types of affect: feelings, moods and emotions (Forgas, 2000). Various writers interested in the role of affect in the study of organisations generally, such as Fineman (1999; 2003) and James and Crawford (2015) and educational organisations specifically, such as James (2010) and Dale and James (2015) take the view that feelings and moods are what we experience as affective states, whilst emotions are affective states that are shown. This broad view is supported by a substantive body of

psychological theory, see for example, Sander and Scherer (2009). However, the terms 'emotion' and 'feelings' are often used interchangeably and synonymously in the literature, see for example Hochschild (1983), Oatley and Jenkins (1996), Goleman (1995), Zembylas (2005) and Niedenthal, Krauth-Gruber and Ric (2006), which we consider causes confusion and hinders analysis. This dividing line between feelings/moods and emotions shapes our analyses in the following sections.

## ***Feelings and moods***

The terms 'feelings' and 'moods' describe subjective impressions or sensations. Feelings and moods can be broadly distinguished on the basis that feelings are relatively intense, temporary, and typically have an identifiable rationale and a definable content, whereas moods are relatively low in intensity, persistent, and those experiencing them may find them difficult to explain and define (Dale and James 2015; James and Crawford, 2015). So, for example, a headteacher in England on receiving an unexpectedly good report following an inspection by Ofsted (Ofsted 2018) is left feeling very happy, despite generally being in a bit of a low mood, which has dogged him for a few weeks now and for reasons he can't really identify.

The subjective nature of feelings raises substantive ontological issues for those seeking to research them. Feelings do not exist as objects in individuals' external world. So, for example, the feelings a school principal experiences do not exist in her/his external world. They therefore differ ontologically from other objects in her/his experience, such as the teachers in the school, her/his office, or the school improvement plan. The ontological nature of feelings raises significant epistemological issues. The feelings generated by the experience of an event or an object of some kind may vary over time. Thus, they may be persistent or transient, may change as time passes, or may be delayed. The feelings experienced as a consequence of an event of some kind can often be complex and contradictory. For example, a school deputy headteacher/principal may experience a wide range of different, strong and opposing feelings during a difficult conversation with a disgruntled colleague.

In addition to the difficulties of knowing and measuring feelings, communicating knowledge about them is also difficult for various personal, interpersonal and cultural reasons. Individuals' feelings may be unacceptable to them, perhaps because they are associated with other feelings such as shame, embarrassment or guilt. Revealing such feelings to others may therefore be difficult and even impossible. Feelings may be so unacceptable to others in nature or degree that an individual may be unwilling to disclose them. People may experience feelings but lack the vocabulary and/or the means of expression to describe them (Sturdy, 2003). Feelings may also be repressed so there is no conscious experience of them to describe to others (James 2010). The feelings being experienced may be unusual and may therefore be difficult to communicate accurately. The act of articulating feelings may alleviate the experience of them, perhaps in a therapeutic or cathartic sense. Describing them to another may dissipate the affective experience (James 2010). Individuals may split their difficult feelings from the more acceptable ones and project them onto other individuals/groups/objects (Likierman, 2001). The unacceptable feelings may then no longer be experienced (James, 2010). This splitting and projection is a familiar practice in many organisations (Halton, 1994) including educational organisations (Dunning, James and Jones, 2005; James 2010) where it can be the starting point for scapegoating. People in work organisations may seek to remove any affective content from their work (Fineman 1993) a process that may serve various purposes but principally to defend against the experience of negative feelings. Sometimes feelings are expressed through metaphors (Broussine and Vince, 1995) which then require further interpretation. Those researching others' feelings can create perhaps

unconsciously an 'emotional zone', a space that has particular rules that shape the display of feelings (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993) by their respondents. Finally, being able to describe one's feelings fully and authentically requires self-awareness, a capability which only comes with later stages of adult ego development (James, James and Potter 2016; Carr, Gilbride and James, 2017). Despite these ontological challenges and consequent epistemological issues, as we explore later, feelings are real in that they have effects and causal properties.

## ***The nature of emotions***

The nature of emotions has been the subject of debate of a range of kinds and in various fields for centuries. In psychology and in other disciplines, the growth in interest in the last 30 years or so has been substantial and, perhaps as a consequence, understandings of the nature of emotions have become more diverse and complex.

The debate about the nature of emotions appears to have begun with a confusion (Scherer, 2009). In the 1870s, Charles Darwin in drawing attention to the significance of emotions and their expression (Darwin, 1872), clearly equated feelings and emotions. William James in his early writings on the subject, appeared to take a similar view (James, 1884) although his later writings (James, 1894) he adopted a more sophisticated stance (Southworth, 2014). Nonetheless, Scherer (2009) argues that since James's early writings, theorists, especially constructivist emotion theorists (see below) have "*tended to define the subjective component (of the emotion process) as emotion*" (p. 148). James's conflation of emotions and feelings in this way created a confusion (Scherer, 2009), which remains, as we have drawn attention to in the previous section.

In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, behaviourists offered relatively simple accounts of emotions. Thus Watson, the founder of behaviourism, sought to remove any sense of introspection/mental processes from accounts of emotions because such approaches were unreliable and unscientific (Watson, 1919). Later behaviourists, such as Skinner, felt that pure behaviourists should not refer to any inner states even physiological ones but only to clearly observable behaviours (Lyons 2009). Somewhat ironically, behaviourists' efforts to simplify understandings of emotions were undermined by scientific experiment (which they valued), which made it clear that distinguishing between the full range of emotions physiologically or behaviourally is not possible (Lyons 2009).

In recent times, there has been a general agreement that a richer conceptualisation of emotions is needed. This fuller conceptualisation is reflected in current definitions of emotions which differ in detail but contain broadly similar ideas. Thus for Matsumoto and Ekman (2009, p. 69): "*Emotions are transient bio-psychosocial reactions designed to aid individuals in adapting to and coping with events that have implications for survival and well-being*".

There are three main types of emotion theories/models: (1) Basic emotion theories; (2) Constructivist emotion theories; and (3) Appraisal theories of emotions.

**Basic emotion theories** assume that emotions are natural, distinct, involuntary and instinctive responses to events. Six basic emotions are typically identified: happiness, anger, fear, disgust, sadness, and surprise, although surprise, is not always included, see for example, Niedenthal, Krauth-Gruber, and Ric, (2006). Each category is a 'place-holder' for a range of related feelings. So, for example, the 'anger family' encompasses irritation, annoyance, exasperation, fury and rage, plus many others. The basic emotion framework thus covers a wide range of emotions. Each type of basic emotion has: a unique 'physiological signature' (Tomkins 1962); distinctive changes in mental activities and attention, subjective experience, and reliable non-verbal signals. For basic emotion

theorists, emotions are neurologically hard-wired, instinctive and universal; all people in all cultures experience them. Basic emotion theories have a long history, beginning with Darwin (1872), whose ideas Tomkins (1962) took forward. Drawing on Tomkins' work, Ekman (1984) then developed basic emotion theory. Subsequently, Izard (1992) developed differential emotion theory, which similarly considers that emotions are essentially organised as separate discrete units that function largely independently. Importantly, both Ekman (Matsumoto and Ekman, 2009) and Izard (2009) have recently acknowledged the complexity of basic emotions, the significance of social and cultural influences on them, and the interaction between the different basic emotion components.

**Constructivist emotion theories** are grounded in the idea that arousal brought about by activation of the sympathetic nervous system in response to an event generates feelings (Duffy, 1941). Schachter and Singer (1962) developed this perspective by arguing for two processes in the experience of emotion: (1) Increased arousal experienced by the individual as requiring an explanation, which is achieved by (2) cognitive analysis. Thus Mandler (1990) proposed that arousal serves to signal to the emotion system to construe the meaning of an event. Averill (1980; 1990) and Keltner and Haidt (2001) argue that, following increased arousal, individuals are free to interpret situational meaning and thus to identify the affective experience based on situational or motivational factors.

**The appraisal theories of emotions** are based on the notion that emotion is a process in which an individual who faces an event, situation or object of some kind, focuses attention on particular aspects of it and appraises it in a manner that generates physiological, psychological, and behavioural/social responses (Sander et al., 2005; Scherer 2009; Smith and Lazarus, 1990). The changes experienced include alterations to the individual's autonomic physiology (heart/breathing rate etc.); changes to their subjective feelings; action tendencies, which are the internal motive states that underlie the urge to act (Arnold, 1960; Fridja et al., 2009; Frijda, 2010; Frijda et al., 2014); and motor expression, which are actions of various kinds.

Appraisal theories, which are a revival and modification of an ancient Aristotelian concept (Lyons 2009), emphasise the representation of the object generating the emotion. In the literature, appraisal theories are often referred to as cognitive theories because cognitive processes are considered central in appraisal (Schachter and Singer, 1962; Oatley and Johnson-Laird, 1987; Lazarus, 1991). However, the term 'cognitive' is somewhat misleading (Lyons, 2009) because appraisal embraces not just cognitive processes, which include evaluation and interpretation, but also the physiological reactions and internal conscious feelings generated by the appraisal processes.

Four appraisal criteria have been identified: (1) Relevance; (2) Implication; (3) Coping; and (4) Significance (Scherer, 2001). Scherer's (2009) model identifies components that relate to the appraisal criteria as follows.

- Attention and memory – these criteria relate mainly to relevance.
- Motivation – this criterion relates mainly to implication.
- Reasoning – relates mainly to coping.
- Self – relates mainly to significance.
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Componential theories (Sander et al., 2005; Scherer 2009) seek to model the various appraisal components and criteria. Understandably, these componential models are very elaborate.

Appraisal of an actual or imagined object or event can instigate a motive to change an individual's relation to that event or object through an action of some kind (Frijda, et al.,

2014). The nature of the context of the event or experience motivates and shapes the selection of readiness for a specific form of purposive action. Complex contexts can give rise to multi-faceted appraisals, numerous motivations, and various changes in action readiness (Frijda, et al., 2014). These various and varying states of action readiness are likely to interact, possibly reinforcing or countering each other, processes that influence impulse control.

### ***Summary - the nature of emotions and educational leadership***

In summary, drawing on the definition of emotions offered by Matsumoto and Ekman (2009) above, the emotional process has transient biological/physiological dimensions, such as an increased secretion of adrenaline and a rise in heart rate. It also entails temporary psychological responses, which are changes to the individual's affective state and cognitive processes, and social responses, which enable individuals to act in relation to events that have implications for their well-being. These responses are a significant aspect of the emotion process. Reflecting on the nature of emotions, a number of issues come to the fore especially in relation to educational leadership, which we discuss below.

The interaction between any components of the emotion process, the physiological, psychological (both affective and cognitive aspects) and social responses, is likely to be considerable and the components may change because of those interactions. To talk of school leaders' emotions is to refer to very multifaceted, convoluted and composite processes of which changes to subjective feelings is but one part as Oplatka (2011) illustrates.

The emotion process is grounded in and shaped by an individual's current affective state – their mood - and their personality traits (Scherer, 2009) such as agreeableness and anxiety (Lee and Ashton, 2010). These influences may be significant and may impact on an individual's emotion processes and how the processes affect their action readiness, their motivation to act and what they then do. For example, the way a school headteacher/principal who is worried that the school will be inspected soon, has a tendency towards anxiety, and is experiencing marital problems is likely to react to emotion generating events in a way very different to a headteacher not experiencing those factors.

Distinguishing between basic and cognitive theories of emotion is useful, but in essence, they are broadly similar phenomena. The basic emotions may be 'hard-wired' neurologically as for example Ekman (1992; 1999; 2003) has argued but they may still be subject to re-configuration through appraisal processes. For example, a deputy headteacher/principal's (DH/P's) response to hearing an account of the sexual abuse of a student is likely to be very different depending who is present when she hears about it. The DH/P's appraisal process might over-ride her (hard-wired) social responses of, for example, anger and disgust. The context and the way it is appraised can configure the social response component of even the most 'basic' and 'hard-wired' emotion processes. The importance of the context is the basis of the notion of 'emotional zones', referred to earlier, those spaces in the widest sense which have 'rules' – norms and expectations - that shape the display of feelings in social actions (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). These rules guide individuals about the feelings that may be publicly expressed in specific settings. Emotional zones are very evident in schools and range widely (Bryan-Zaykov, 2012). The feelings that may be legitimately shown in social actions by teachers in the staff-room may be very different from the feelings displayed in social actions in the classroom or walking along the school corridors with students present.

Individuals can make their feelings apparent as actions in an enormous variety of ways, some of which would not be considered to be emotions (Crawford, James and Oplatka,

2017). A deputy headteacher closing the door to the headteacher's office somewhat firmly after a significant disagreement is a way of the deputy headteacher making her anger apparent. There is evidence that educational leaders tend to suppress many of their social responses that are part of their emotion systems, including the display of empathy (Oplatka, 2017).

The role of action readiness (Frijda et al., 2009) "*the individual's readiness or unreadiness to engage in interaction with the environment*" (p. 213) and the way it may change during the emotion process is particularly interesting. Action readiness and the tendency to act "*are central in the analysis of emotion*" indeed "*Action readiness is what links experience to behaviour*" (Frijda et al., 2009, p. 213). In emotions, we are moved to act, and it is our affective experience that motivates our actions. The daily experience of a school headteacher/principal in a school will typically be a continual series of emotion-evoking events that generate feelings, which then initiate actions. Experiencing and working with the emotion process is what they do.

The sequence depicting the emotion process, which we have summarised above, though extremely complex in practice, connects feelings and actions and a link between the affective experience of an event and actions is established. For those actions to become influencing actions and thereby leadership actions (Cuban, 1988; Bush, 2008; Connolly, James and Fertig, 2017), an exploration of actions and power is required, which we undertake in the next section.

### ***Connecting affect, actions, power and influence***

The concept of power is central to our argument and to organisational theory and organisational analysis generally and numerous organisational theorists confirm its importance. For example, Jackson and Carter (1991) argue that the concept of 'organisation' might not exist were it not for power and power relations. However, power and its role in organisations are problematic issues. As Bachrach and Lawler (1980) argue, power is an inherently primitive notion and Lukes' (1974) point that the power as a concept is "*essentially contested*" (p.9) remains valid. Despite this contestation, the centrality of power in organisational interactions is well established. As Hawley (1963, p. 442) long ago argued, "*Every social act is an exercise of power, every social relationship is a power equation, and every social group of system is an organisation of power*" (Our emphases). Further, the place and existence of power in social actions is central: "*Power only exists in actions*" (Foucault, 1980, p. 89).

Our point here is that the emotion process initiates social actions, which constitute an emotion-evoking event to those who experience them. The social action initiates emotion responses in them; they are influenced. The central place of affects in leadership in educational settings is therefore clear. What is not established however is a way of knowing, explaining and theorising the role they play in specific and observed educational leadership practices. We argue that a way of knowing/explaining/theorising can be provided by an affective paradigm for educational leadership theory and practice, which we explain in the next section.

### ***An affective paradigm for educational leadership theory and practice***

At the heart of our rationale for advancing an affective paradigm for educational leadership theory and practice is the notion that feelings cannot be ascertained and communicated about easily for ontological, epistemological and methodological reasons, as we discussed above. Feelings nonetheless influence actions in the emotion process, again as we have



discussed above. Another way of understanding feelings and the part they play in leadership actions, is to interpret and make sense of those actions on the basis of the underpinning affective emotional processes and on the assumption that actions have affective rationales. Interpretation within such a paradigm gives a deeper understanding of the rationales for leadership actions.

### ***Interpretation from an affective standpoint***

Interpretation of social phenomena provides reasons, rationales and explanations for individual and group behaviours (Willig, 2008; Ricoeur, 1970, 1996). So, an organisational event or process of some kind can be described using very robust data collection methods, but it cannot be explained until it is interpreted (Willig, 2008). The interpretive process requires a framework of linked concepts that enables empirical data to be considered and explained. In a metaphorical sense, the framework provides a lens through which data can be examined and understood fully. The interpretive lens enables the researcher to make sense to 'what is going on' in the event or the process the data describes. The affective paradigm we are advancing would fall into Ricoeur's 'suspicious' mode of interpretation in contrast to his 'empathetic' hermeneutic approach (Ricoeur, 1970, 1996). The intention of suspicious interpretation is to reveal hidden meanings in written/spoken words or images. To find these hidden meanings the researcher must make sense of the clues in the text/image. *"Surface meanings are not taken at face value but seen as signs which, if read correctly, will allow the researcher to access more significant, latent meaning"* (Willig, 2008, p.278). In social research texts, interpretation has a relatively minor place in comparison with the coverage given to other aspects of the research process, for example, data collection methods (Willig, 2008). Thus generally in social research, interpretation is underplayed.

In published research into the affective aspects of organising, four interpretive frameworks can be readily identified: organisational psychodynamics; social constructionist; Marxist and feminist. The organisational psychodynamics interpretive framework uses analytical psychological concepts and systems theory in its widest sense to interpret individual and group behaviours in social settings (James 1999; 2010; James et al., 2006). A number of concepts are central. The first is the notion of social defences where individuals and groups adopt behaviours to protect themselves against unacceptable feelings that threaten their deep but nonetheless vulnerable senses of identity, legitimacy and value (James, 2010). Anxiety is typically considered to be the most significant unacceptable feeling. The second central concept is the idea that unconscious mental activity can be important in explaining individual and group behaviours (James, 2010). The third is the notion of boundaries and the affective influence upon them (James, 2010). Boundaries in this context are places of discontinuity in an individual's external social world, within an individual's inner psychic structure, and between an individual's internal and external worlds. Examples of those working with this perspective in educational settings are James et al. (2006), Dale and James (2015) and James (1999; 2010; 2011).

The social constructionist framework is based on the idea that our affective world is formed collectively through life-long and continuous socialisation. The prolonged and continual socialisation is mediated by others' explanations of experience. As a consequence, shared understandings, rationales and axioms are established in relation to affective phenomena. Organisational practices from a social constructionist perspective are interpreted through the social/cultural influences on individuals and groups and social norms. Fineman's work in the affective aspects of organising is grounded in this perspective, see for example Fineman (1993; 1999; 2003) as is the work of Crawford (2007; 2009) and Oplatka (2011) in the study of the affective aspects of educational institutions.

The Marxist interpretation of organisational practices from an affective standpoint, is concerned with the way that feelings are used in the service of capitalism and corporate

financial profit. Work from this perspective, especially work in service occupations, is considered to be emotional work or emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983). Emotional work is undertaken whenever employees need to control their feelings in undertaking their role and to fulfil their responsibilities. Emotional labour requires employees to undertake emotional work as a specific requirement of their employment; their remuneration depends on it. Employees engaging in emotional labour are required to display feelings that are perhaps fabricated as actions authentically and in a manner required by those to whom they are accountable – their managers. It is a condition of their employment. This emotional labour may be undertaken at considerable personal cost. This perspective was established by the seminal work of Arlie Hochschild (1983) and has been applied to leadership in organisations generally, see for example Izatt-White (2009) and Humphrey, et al. (2008). Crawford (2011) has drawn on this perspective to illustrate the significance of emotion in educational leadership.

The final framework, the feminist interpretive perspective, considers feelings and their expression as emotions (or non-expression) and as a means of defining and distinguishing between men and women (Martin, Knopoff and Beckman's 2000). Male 'rationality', where cognition holds sway over affect, is considered to take precedence over female 'irrationality', where feelings are considered to dominate cognitive processes, and a male hegemony is established. Inter alia, the perspective argues for more affective authenticity and the legitimisation of a wider and fuller expression of feelings as actions in the work place. Martin, Knopoff and Beckman's (2000) work is an example of writing from this perspective in the organisational studies field, and Boler's (1999) text is also located in part in this perspective, as is Beatty's (2000) analysis of emotion and school leadership.

There is thus a range of conceptual frameworks for interpreting educational leadership practices from an affective standpoint. Maintaining their distinctiveness in the way for example, that Martin, Knopoff and Beckman (2000) seek to distinguish feminist and Marxist perspectives, is of value, as it enhances the potential for a more nuanced interpretation. At the same time, we also recognise their commonalities, for example the common ground between social constructionist and systems psychodynamics perspectives (Fineman, 2003). Furthermore, our purpose here is not to evaluate the various interpretive perspectives. Our intention is to argue the case for interpretation from an affective standpoint within an affective paradigm. Interpretation from any of these perspectives gives an opportunity to understand more fully educational leadership processes and practices and their affective rationales.

## **Concluding comments**

To recap, our argument in this article is as follows. Affects are of three kinds: feelings, moods and emotions. Feelings and moods are internal states, whereas emotions are processes potentially entailing a wide range of physiological, psychological and social responses, including inducing a state of action readiness, the motivation to act, and actions. The power embedded in these actions has the capacity to influence – lead - others and the central role of feelings in educational leadership practice is secured. The role of affect in leadership practice can be understood using an affective paradigm, which seeks to interpret and make sense of leadership actions from an affective standpoint. The nature of leadership actions when analysed in this way can give insights into individual's feelings and moods.

Our starting point for this article was that educational leadership theory and practice would be enriched by giving affect in general a more central role. However, giving affect that central place is challenging because researching affect – especially feelings and moods - is highly problematic. In this article, we have explored the nature of affects and considered

the nature of emotions in particular. Our analysis reveals the conceptual complexity of emotions as an analytic construct. Emotions are wide-ranging in nature and the emotion process is convoluted and multifarious, yet emotions are hugely important phenomena in everyday life. Arguably, an individual's daily experience, certainly that of a school leader, is a continual series of emotion evoking encounters (Crawford, 2009) that require appropriate responses (Oplatka, 2011). In the article, we have also established the role of feelings in initiating actions and thereby confirming its link with power in organisational interactions. A central role for feelings in educational leadership theory and practice is thus established.

In the article, we have also argued for an affective paradigm for educational leadership theory and practice and illustrated different approaches within such a paradigm. Knowing and understanding the role affects play in leadership practice requires the interpretations of actions and the context of those actions. This requirement brings sense-making and interpretation to the fore, which we consider, in agreement with Willig (2008) is much needed in qualitative research generally, and especially in educational leadership research. The meaning and sense of actions needs to be ascertained in any study of educational leadership. Such a viewpoint requires a sense-making/interpretive approach that has affect as a foundational part, which is why we argue for an affective paradigm for educational leadership theory and practice.

Establishing the relationship between affect, actions and power and making it explicit brings affect – feelings, moods and emotions - securely into play in understanding educational leadership theory and practice. Importantly, it strengthens educational leadership theory, giving an enhanced understanding of power and actions and then, educational leadership practice. The task of understanding the inter-relationships between affect, actions and power and the consequent influence remains. However, research with the affective paradigm holds most promise as a way of understanding, explaining and theorising the relationship.

We consider that the arguments we have brought together confirm and strengthen the significance of affects in educational leadership and open up new strands of enquiry, analysis and theoretical development in the study of educational leadership.

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