

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRINCIPAL'S POSITIVE LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS—TAKE SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AS THE MEDIATOR

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the mediation effect of school organizational culture on the correlation between the principal's positive leadership and school effectiveness. In accordance with the results of literature analysis, the hypothesis model with the mediator, school organizational culture, was proposed. Among the samples of 460 teachers in Taiwan with and 150 (32.6%) were males, and 302 were females (65.7%), tested with 3 questionnaires--Questionnaire of Principal's Positive Leadership, School Effectiveness, and School Organizational Culture. After analyzing with structural equation modeling(SEM), it is found that significantly positive correlation exists between principal's positive leadership and school effectiveness. Next, school organizational culture is the full mediator of principal's positive leadership and school effectiveness.

Keywords: Principal's positive leadership, school effectiveness, school organizational culture.

INTRODUCTION

Positive leadership refers to the leader deal with matters with positive thinking and therefore fosters the organization to be situated in a forgiving, grateful, and sympathetic positive climate that encourages the members support one another, and pay love and care in order to cultivate the positive relationship in workplace. In addition, the leader masters at using affirmatively positive communication to nurture the members' sense of positive meaningfulness, so that the common vision can be established and further raise organization's overall efficacy through leadership behaviors (Gordon, 2008). Moreover, positive leadership belongs to a newly emerging leadership concept developed from positive concepts. As proposed by Cameron (2008) in his book, Positive Leadership, the positive concepts are as the plant's phototropism, because people learn positive knowledge more efficiently than negative knowledge, and like positive language more than negative language; that is to say, all lives are oriented to positive energy. Some research even find that positive leadership behaviors can predict the employees' well-being and positive affection (Kelloway, Weigand, McKee, & Das, 2013) on one hand. On the other hand, Abdullah (2009) has verified that positive leadership behaviors serve as both intrinsic and extrinsic job resources coming from managers and involving performance feedback, skill variety, self-sufficiency, and learning opportunities, all positively associated with performance. Consequently, positive leadership's important is presented in Cameron's (2013) proposal of positivity's heliotropic

property. In other words, all living systems tends to move toward positive energy and away from negative energy, toward life-giving and away from life-depleting.

From the above mentioned, we can see the crucial role of positive leadership. Since the principal is the leader of the school, his/her leading style will influence on the school performance. As Marks and Printy (2003) stated, both transformational and shared guiding leadership exist in a whole form of leadership influencing on performance of school. Also, as Sagnak (2012), and Gkorezis (2016) found, there is a positive relationship between leadership empowerment and innovative behavior. At this sense, the principal's leading style will also affect school effectiveness.

School effectiveness research can be dated from 1970's (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000), which indicates that the school exerts the existing educational resources in the students' academic achievement and the teachers' work morale (Wolfendale, 2000). Since the school is a vital occasion for the students' learning, and has both direct and indirect impact on their learning effect and behavioral performance, a school with high efficacy plays an important role (Wu, 2014). Furthermore, in Taiwan's society, under rapid progress and big changes, the educational environment is undergoing a diversified age with rapid transformation, and the operation of school is becoming more complex and changeable increasingly. Therefore, the public have raised the standard of the school's educational quality, while the school's leader is facing more difficult and diversified challenges. At this point, the school's leader has to conduct purposeful reform and improve school effectiveness, so that the public's expectation of education and demand of the school teachers and students can be met (Wu, 1997).

The principal's positive leadership influences on school effectiveness

From just mentioned above, we can understand the importance of the principal's positive leadership and school effectiveness. Even from the aspects of theories and empirical results, we can find the causal relationship between the two.

To view theoretically, the theoretical foundation of the principal's positive leadership involves: 1. Positive psychology: Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) mentioned that positive thinking is beneficial to obtaining happiness, developing potential, and achieving job performance. 2. Positive organizational scholarship: Cameron, Dutton, and Quinn (2001) claimed positive organizational scholarship emphasizes that the organization with the characteristic of positive psychology can raise its ability of existence and organizational effectiveness. Cameron and Caza (2004) also stressed that positive organizational scholarship means to the organization's efforts in exhibiting and developing people's best potential, so the organization should cultivate a positive organizational environment and climate to induce the members' positive emotions, nurture their positive personality, set up positive organizational norms, enhance the organization's vigor, inspire the members' potential and advantages, and foster the organization to head towards prosperity. 3. Positive organizational behavior: Luthans(2002) proposed the idea of the positive organizational behavior, highlighting inspiration and management of the members' sense of psychological advantage, investigation on how to adopt positive approaches to bring the members' potential and advantages to a full play for effectively elevating the organization's performance. Based on the empirical results, Hsieh (2011) adopted the teachers ($N=925$) in elementary school in northern Taiwan as the research subject, and verified by SEM the relationship between the principal's positive leadership (exogenous variable) and school effectiveness (endogenous variable). The research results show that significant correlation exists in the two.

To sum up, we have learned that causal relationship exists in positive leadership and organizational effectiveness. In other words, if the principal applies positive leadership, he/she can enhance school effectiveness.

School organizational culture has mediation effect between the principal's positive leadership and school effectiveness

The organizational culture is obtained by the members through learning. The organization and the members share beliefs and values, and use them to solve problems. Since the organizational culture is the common consciousness pattern and norms shared by the organization's members, different organizations have a organizational culture with different characteristics (Schein, 2004). Through the organizational culture, the organization allows the members to share organizational values and beliefs, and assists them to understand the organizational functions as their behavioral norms. A powerful organizational culture can enhance the members' understanding of the organizational strategies and motivation, and support and instruct their behaviors (Slater, Olson, & Finnegan, 2010). As for the school organizational culture, it refers to sharing the school's faiths, as well as deciding and maintaining the behavioral norms, traditions, and process (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008).

Although the principal's positive leadership and school effectiveness have causal relationship, the school organizational culture has mediation effect between the two:

The principal's positive leadership influences on the school's organizational culture

As the saying that goes, "As is the principal, so is the school," the principal is the school leader, so his/her leadership will influence on shaping of the organizational culture. In Robbins' (2001) assertion, the organization's leader should set up the positive organizational culture, stress on the organizational members' advantages, and well use incentives to inspire the members' morale, so that an organizational culture emphasizing on the members' vitality and growth can be shaped. In addition, in Tichy and Cohen's (1998) view, according to the theory of a teaching organization, they highlight the organization's leader should take the role of the master to pass on and teach about his/her individual learning content and experiences to the organizational members, strengthen the organization's vitality, and further promote the organization's sustainable development. On such basis, if the principal can develop positive organizational environment and climate, induce the members' positive emotions, and nurture the members' positive personality, the members will generate common norms, values, or beliefs towards the organization under such condition.

School organizational culture influences on school effectiveness

Tichy and Cohen (1998) consider that the organizational competition will be enhanced if the organization can help the members set up challengeable goals, encourage the members to welcome challenges, assist the members design a autonomously operating work flow motivate the members to transcend self-enlightenment and proceed independent thinking, and comply with the external changing environment by timely updating concepts and ideas.

In the similar way, the school is also a kind of organizations; as a result, if such philosophy can be rooted in the school environment, or if the school's organizational culture engages the teachers in setting up challengeable goals, daring to challenge, operating autonomously, transcending themselves, thinking independently, and acting and thinking innovatively, then it will benefit the school from raising school effectiveness.

No studies relative to adoption of the school organizational culture as the mediator

Hsieh (2011) verified that significant correlation exists in the principal's positive leadership and school effectiveness with application of Taiwan teachers as the survey subjects. Besides, in Bhengu and Mthembu's (2014) findings, it is confirmed that the current propositions that leadership plays a prominent role in shaping and sustaining school cultures that promote effective teaching and learning. As for Day and Leithwood (2007), they integrated studies relative to the principal's leadership in various countries and proposed that the school organizational culture regards the principal's leadership has mediation effect influencing on school effectiveness, but in Taiwan, no one have verified such arguments yet.

In conclusion, in accordance with the theories and empirical results, it is generalized that the principal's leadership has mediation effect in the relationship between the school organizational culture and school effectiveness. Therefore, this hypothesis has been verified to be the purpose of this research.

METHODS**Research participants**

The participants rated how they agree with each item by Likert 5-point scale ranging from "1= disagree ", "2= a little agree", "3= partially agree" , "4= Mostly agree" to "5= Totally agree". The background allocation of the samples are as Table 1 shows:

Table 1: The Background Allocation of the Two Batches of Samples of Meaning at Work Scale

		<i>n</i>	Percentage%
Gender	1. Male	150	32.6
	2. Female	302	65.7
Age	(1) Under 30	25	5.4
	(2) 31 to 40	144	31.3
	(3) 41-50	238	51.7
	(4) Above 51	49	10.7
Service years in this school	(1) Under 5 years	96	20.9
	(2) 6 to 10 years	50	10.9
	(3) 11 to 15 years	136	29.6
	(4) Above 16 years	175	38.0
The principal's service year in this school	(1) Under 2 years	128	27.8
	(2) 3-4 years	165	35.9
	(3) Above 5 years	134	29.1
School scale	(1) Under 12 classes	129	28.0
	(2) 13 to 24 classes	88	19.1
	(3) 25 to 48 classes	143	31.1
	(4) Above 49 classes	98	21.3

Measuring instruments

In this research, we have prepared for three scales, all have proceeded 5 expert reviews and try-out (item analysis, factor analysis and reliability analysis), and the results are as follows:

Principal's Positive Leadership Scale

According to Cameron's (2008) perspective, this scale exerted Likert five point scale design, and the reliability and validity test results were categorized into four factors: 1. Positive Climate (foster compassion, forgiveness, and gratitude, 5 items): λ The range is between .70-.78, and $\alpha=.94$, while the items are like: "the principal can positively cultivate a warm and harmonious school climate." 2. Positive Relationship (build energy networks, reinforce strengths, totally 6 items): λ ranges between .70-.77, and $\alpha=.95$. The items are like "The principal can timely encourage the coworkers and cohere affection and consensus." 3. Positive Communication (obtain best-self feedback, use supportive communication, totally 5 items): λ ranges between .74-.79, and $\alpha=.91$. The items are like "the principal can keep the communication channel effective and accept the coworkers' diversified opinions." 4. Positive Meaning (affect human well-being, connect to personal values, highlight extended impact, build community, totally 5 items): λ ranges between .71-.74, and $\alpha=.95$. The items are like "the principal can help the teachers establish correct values and work meanings." The total variance of the 21 items is 79.18%, and the total reliability is $\alpha=.96$.

School's Organizational Culture Scale

This scale consulted Wallach's (1983) viewpoint, along with exertion of the Likert five point scale design, as well as the reliability and validity test results categorized into three factors: **1. Bureaucratic culture:** refers to the organization has clear classes, accountability, and job responsibilities, while the formal organization management rules can control the members' behaviors. The organization also values work performance and carefully enforces the policies, presents high stability, definite and mature oriented organizational characteristics. In this dimension, there are six items, with λ ranging between .64-.77, and $\alpha=.91$. The items' content is like "Our school has a complete regulative system and work flow." **2. Supportive culture:** The organization positively develops a diversified, supportive, and warm work environment, values the interaction and harmony in interpersonal relationship, encourages the members to cooperate, fosters team spirit, supports and affirms members' performance, and fully shows highly support, warm, and relationship-oriented characteristics of the organization. In this dimension, there are four items, with λ ranging between .61-.77, and $\alpha=.86$. The items' content is like "The colleagues in our school can care one each other, and support one another." **3. Innovative culture:** The organization is filled with innovative and changeable climate, and it encourages the members to innovate and venture, accept challenges, and shows high creativity, vitality, adventure, and challenge-orientation. In this dimension, there are four items, with λ ranging between .61-.83, and $\alpha=.90$. The items' content is like "the colleagues in our school can develop a creative climate, and host creative teaching activities." The total variance of the 16 items is 72.10%, with the total reliability as $\alpha=.94$.

School Effectiveness Scale

This scale referred to Hsu's (2012) viewpoint, and exerted the Likert five point scale design, while the reliability and validity test results were categorized into four factors: **1 Effectiveness of administrative leadership** (involves the principal's demonstrating the leadership style, well using leadership strategies, and leading the members to carry out the goals): λ is between .71-.80, $\alpha=.90$, and item content is like "Our school's administrative personnel have good communication and coordination abilities." **2. Effectiveness of Teacher's teaching** (relates to the teacher's ability of sufficiently applying the teaching

profession, and positively thrusts himself/herself into teaching, totally 4 items in this dimension): λ is between .69-.78, α =.90, and item's content is as "Our school's teachers can apply to diversified teaching methods to raise the students' learning effectiveness. **3. Effectiveness of student learning** (refers to the students' learning attitudes, learning achievement, behavioral performance, group activities, and learning satisfaction, and etc. totally 6 items): λ is between .68-.77, α =.91, and items are as "The students in our school have good learning attitudes." **4. Effectiveness of community identification** (means the parents' and the community residents' evaluation on and satisfaction with the school, as well as their intention to take part in promoting the school affairs and activities. 3 items): λ is between .71-.84, α =.92, and items are as "The parents and community residents can actively take part in the school activities." The total variance of the 17 items in the scale. The total variation is 75.56%, and the total α is .94.

Data Analysis

According to the literature analysis results, this research adopted the principal's positive leadership as the exogenous variable, school effectiveness as the endogenous variable, and school organizational culture as the mediator to analyze the three latent variables' mediating effect with SEM.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Correction Analysis

The covariance is the core concept of SEM, so SEM is also called covariance structure analysis that uses exogenous variables' correlation coefficient to multiply the standard deviation (Huang, 2010). Therefore, we provided the latent exogenous variable's product-moment correlation coefficient and the descriptive data first.

By summing up the scores in the dimensions of sense of meaning at work scale, we conducted product-moment correlation and got the product-moment correlation coefficients of the measured variables of the three latent variable as .40-.91, showing all had achieved significantly positive correlation (See Table 2).

Table 2 Descriptive statistics and product-moment correlations of principal positive leadership, school organizational culture and school effectiveness

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	M	SD
1. PCL	1										1	19.6	3.0
2. PRE	.90** *	1									1	23.4	3.6
3. PCO	.89** *	.91** *	1								1	19.3	3.1
4. PME	.85** *	.89** *	.87** *	1							1	19.5	3.1
5. BC	.52** *	.59** *	.61** *	.61** *	1						1	23.2	3.1
6. SC	.63** *	.66** *	.69** *	.66** *	.78** *	1					1	16.1	2.0
											1	2	7

7.IC	.60**	.64**	.67**	.67**	.71**	.82**	1				15.9	2.3	
	*	*	*	*	*	*					0	7	
8.EA	.52**	.58**	.60**	.62**	.75**	.74**	.66**				15.5	2.1	
L	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1			0	4	
9.ET	.44**	.49**	.51**	.53**	.68**	.71**	.68**	.73**			15.7	2.1	
T	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1		0	6	
10.E	.40**	.48**	.46**	.49**	.67**	.60**	.55**	.65**	.69**		22.6	3.2	
SL	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	7	6	
11.E	.44**	.50**	.45**	.50**	.52**	.50**	.51**	.54**	.57**	.73**		10.8	2.1
CI	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	4	0

Note: PCL: Positive Climate, PRE: Positive Relationships, PCO: Positive Communication, PME: Positive Meaning, BC: Bureaucratic Culture, SC: Supportive Culture, IC: Innovative Culture, EAL: Effectiveness of Administrative Leadership, ETT: Effectiveness of Teacher's Teaching, ESL: Effectiveness of Student Learning, ECI: Effectiveness of Community Identification. $N=460$.

*** $p < .001$.

Analysis of the Mediating Variable

Relationship between the principal's positive leadership and school effectiveness

For mediation effect, we must confirm first of the exogenous variable for the endogenous variable's path coefficient had achieved significance. Therefore, with SEM solely, we analyzed the correlation of the principal's positive leadership and school effectiveness, and the results showed that:

To begin with, results of the preliminary fit show: 1. In Θ_ϵ matrix entries, error variance of ϵ_1 to ϵ_9 are 0.93-3.08, and all are positive. 2. The t value of all error variances falls between 9.85-13.23, and all reaches the significant level of .001. 3. The standard error of the parameters is between .03 - .08, not very big. 4. The factor loading (λ_1 - λ_8) of the latent variable and its indices ranges between .75-.96, only A2 not meeting the standard of $>.50$ and $<.95$. Based on above, most results meet the standard.

Next, on overall fit of the initial model, $\chi^2 = 175.64$, $df = 19$, $p = .00$, RMSEA=.13, GFI = .92, AGFI = .83, NFI=.95, RFI=.93, IFI = .96, TLI = .94, and CFI = .96. Among them, χ^2 achieves significantly positive correlation, not meeting the standard of more than .90; RMSEA not meeting the standard of less than .10, and AGFI not meeting the standard of more than .90, but Anderson and Gerbing (1984) claim that AGFI ≥ 0.80 is fair. Most indices meet the standard.

According to the preliminary fit and overall fit, the initial model is acceptable, so with further verification of the latent paths of the exogenous variables of the principal's positive leadership and school effectiveness, both path coefficients are .65($t=13.54$, $p < .001$), which has reached at the significant standard.

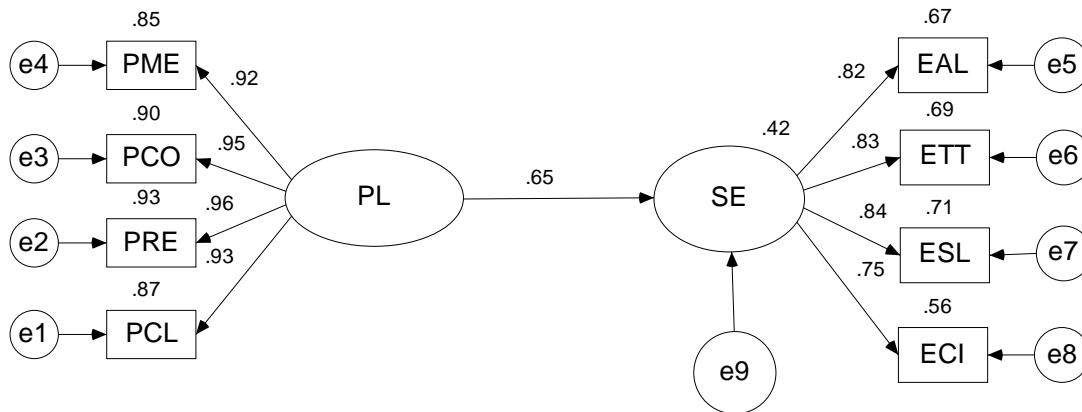


Figure 1 Path of the Hypothetical Model (standard solution)

Note: PL: Positive Leadership, PCL: Positive Climate, PRE: Positive Relationships, PCO: Positive Communication, PME: Positive Meaning, SE: School Effectiveness, EAL: Effectiveness of Administrative Leadership, ETT: Effectiveness of Teacher's Teaching, ESL: Effectiveness of Student Learning, ECI: Effectiveness of Community Identification. $N=460$.

Direct and indirect effects

Due to significant correlation between the principal's positive leadership and school effectiveness's potential exogenous variables, the mediator (the organizational culture) is further included into the model, and from the test results we have found the following items:

Firstly, the results of the initial fit tell us that: 1. In Θ_e matrix entries, the ε_1 to ε_9 error variances range between 0.33-3.76, all positive. 2. All error variances' t value is between 6.55-13.53, all reaching the significant level, .001. 3. The standard parameters' error ranges between .03 - .078, not very large. 4. The latent variable's factor loading (λ_1 - λ_{11}) and its indices vary between .69-.96, with only A2 not achieving the standard of $>.50$ and $<.95$. Accordingly, most results have met the standard.

In the second place, regarding overall fit of the preliminary model, $\chi^2 = 309.80$, $df = 41$, $p = .00$, RMSEA=.12, GFI = .89, AGFI = .82, NFI=.94, RFI=.92, IFI = .95, TLI = .34, and CFI = .95, among which χ^2 has achieved significantly positive correlation, but it has not met the standard of higher than .90; RMSEA has not met the standard of lower than .10, and AGFI has not met the standard of higher than .90. However, Anderson and Gerbing (1984) have claimed that $GFI \geq 0.85$ and $AGFI \geq 0.80$ are fair, so most indices have met the standard.

From the test results of the initial fit and overall fit, it is learned that the original model is acceptable; as a result, we have further conducted mediation effect as below:

Before verifying whether there is a mediator, we had to confirm whether the two paths are significant: 1. The path coefficient of the effect of principal positive leadership on organizational culture was $76(t=18.13, p < .001)$. 2. The path coefficient of the effect of organizational culture on school effectiveness was $.95(t=15.13, p < .001)$.

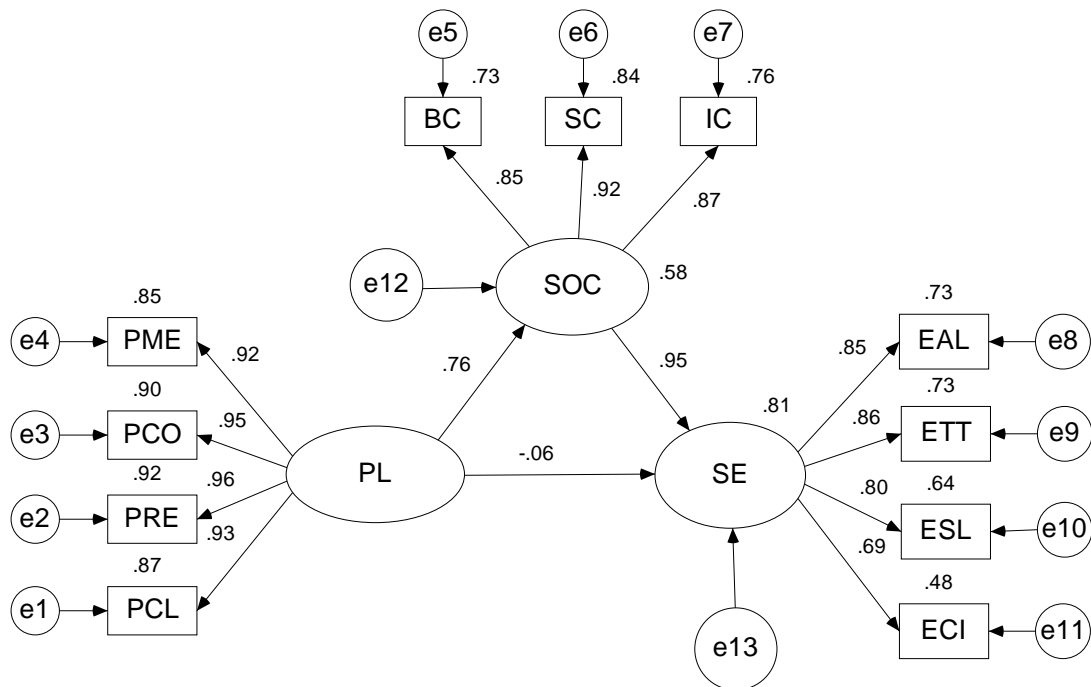


Figure 2 Path of the Mediating Hypothetical Model (standard solution)

Note: PL: Positive Leadership, PCL: Positive Climate, PRE: Positive Relationships, PCO: Positive Communication, PME: Positive Meaning, COC: School's Organizational Culture, BC: Bureaucratic Culture, SC: Supportive Culture, IC: Innovative Culture, SE: School Effectiveness, EAL: Effectiveness of Administrative Leadership, ETT: Effectiveness of Teacher's Teaching, ESL: Effectiveness of Student Learning, ECI: Effectiveness of Community Identification.

The two paths above had achieved significant standard, so we continued to analyze the path coefficient for the direct effect of the principal's positive leadership on school effectiveness, and obtained the path coefficient of $-.06$ ($t = -1.20$, $p = .23$).

As mention previously, the path coefficient of the principal's positive leadership's and school effectiveness's latent exogenous variables in the hypothetical model was $.65$. Here, after adding the organizational culture into as the mediator, for the three latent exogenous variables in the hypothetical model, the principal's positive leadership's and school effectiveness's latent exogenous variables turned to be $-.06$, decreasing from the original $.65$ to $-.06$, and even not achieving significant level. This tells us the presence of mediating effect. Moreover, as the variance of direct effect did not reach significance, it shows full mediating effect, while bootstrapping with confidence intervals was used to examine significance of indirect effects, resulting in $LL = .39$, $UL = .59$, $p = .005$, which means that mediating effect of gratitude reached significant level.

DISCUSSION

In verifying whether the school organizational culture is the mediator of the principal's positive leadership and school effectiveness, we began with the school organizational culture and school effectiveness as the latent variables to examine the two's relationship. The results show the existence of significant correlation between them. This is consistent with Hsieh's (2011) research finding. As Cameron (2013) mentioned, the reason why significant

correlation exists between the principal's positive leadership and school effectiveness is that in regard of organizational effectiveness, adopting positive leadership will lead to excellent positive performance, and adopting organizational efficiency will cause Extraordinarily positive performance. Consequently, the school organizational culture does have an influence on school effectiveness.

Next, Day and Leithwood (2007) consider that school organizational culture takes the principal's leadership as mediation effect on school effectiveness. In the same way, this research has also verified that the organizational culture has complete mediation effect, which explains that the principal's positive leadership's impact on school effectiveness must be done through the school organizational culture. Since *Positive leadership* refers to the facilitation of extraordinarily positive performance, it focus on strengths and capabilities and on affirming human potential, all can promote outcomes such as thriving at work, interpersonal flourishing, virtuous behaviors, positive emotions, and energizing networks (Cameron, 2008). In this sense, the leader should lead the team with positive attitudes without merely depending on command and order for managing the subordinators. The leader must be a model of practicing the principles in order to earn the subordinators' hearted identification and admiration, and intrinsic willingness to follow the organization leader (Fritz, 2008). Therefore, the principal should be a model to share the personal educational philosophy, apply to positive implication, use well positive communication to facilitate the positive relationship between the school members. As such, the school can be bathed in positive atmosphere, and develop a positive paradigm for leading the members to overcome the difficulties and achieve the organizational goals (Cameron, 2008).

CONCLUSION

This research has confirmed the principal's positive leadership will influence on school effectiveness, but the premise is that the organizational culture must be the mediator. It is thus understood that the principal's positive leadership plays the primary role in the process of shaping the school's organizational culture. As pointed by the Taiwan scholar, Wu (2014), to set up the exclusive organizational culture of the school will enhance the members' performance. Therefore, for the purpose of sustainable operation and development, it is top priority for the school leader to shape an exclusive organizational culture. Also, the Taiwan scholar Chang (2006) asserts that the principal is the guider of the school's organizational culture. He/she must be able to change the school's organizational culture timely and properly, perceive the educational philosophy profoundly, and implement the educational policies, so that the school can keep on developing steadily, satisfy its members' need, achieve the school's goals, and elevate school effectiveness. In Andronico's (2013) assertion, the principal should establish a positive school culture and further create a culture of accountability characterized with organizational effectiveness.

In Taiwan, facing the rapid changes of the educational environment and the impact of low fertility, the school leaders are encountering tough trials and challenges. In this respect, the principal's ability certainly has an influence on school development and school effectiveness. Consequently, the principal must be able to think positively, made good use of the positive leadership strategies, and bring school effectiveness to a full play, so that under the effective leadership of the principal, the school can successfully achieve the goals, and become one with excellent efficacy.

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