

Teachers' and Principals' Perspectives of Leadership: A Search for Within-School Alignment

Tara N. Gabriel, Honors Student
Adriana L. Medina, PhD



Background and Purpose

Background Problem

- School Administrators struggle to find a reliably efficient and effective way of stabilizing academic reform implementation within educational institutions (Anderson, 2017; Cooke, 1985; Ravitz, 2010)
- Research has indicated that various methods of applying personal leadership techniques, attributes, and skills can help school administrators promote and sustain school reform (Cooke, 1985; Fullan, 2014; Heck et al., 1990; Lowenhaupt & McNeill, 2019)
- Not only is it more beneficial for a leader to have leadership characteristics and skills, but it is imperative to be able to use them to collaborate as a team and share responsibilities to successfully implement change (Cooke, 1985; Klar, 2013)
- Along with strategies and personal leadership characteristics, leadership management influences team commitment, preparation, and student achievement (Anderson, 2017; Cooke, 1985)
- There is lack of research in middle school leadership, specifically regarding transformative leadership practices

Purpose: To further the field's understanding of educational leadership by analyzing survey responses related to how middle principals and teachers perceive leadership responses.

Research Question and Framework

Question: How close do teachers' and principals' perceptions of leadership practices align with the same school?

The research applied a Transformational Leadership Theory Framework lens, as well as a interpretive epistemological perspective to understand the participants' responses from the questionnaire.

Literature Review

Transformational Leadership

- Leadership Styles (Atasoy, 2020)
- Leadership Attributes (Cooke, 1985)
- Leadership Behaviors (Heck et al., 1990)
- Distributive Leadership (Cravens, 2014; Klar, 2013; Ishimaru, 2013; Lowenhaupt and McNeill, 2019)

Organizational Reform

- Schoolwide Reform (Desomine, 2002; Klar & Brewer, 2013)
- Implementation of Organizational Reform (Heck et al., 1990)

Community Influences

- School Size (Klar & Brewer, 2013; Ravitz, 2014)
- Community Communication (Ishimaru, 2013)
- School Setting (Klar, 2013; Lowenhaupt & McNeill, 2019; Ravitz, 2010)

School Influences

- School Culture focuses on the faculty relationships that support whole-school growth
- School Climate is the environmental atmosphere between students, teachers, and the community in relation to school endeavors
- Scholarly articles stated that researchers:
 - Underrepresenting or misunderstanding school and/or community populations, or
 - Completely overlooking the importance of the environmental influences
- To combat this, the primary investigator reviewed existing state and district reports to further understand the demographics, location, academic proficiencies at each participating school (Atasoy, 2020; Heck et al., 1990; Klar & Brewer, 2013; Lowenhaupt & McNeill, 2019)

Methods



2 SCHOOLS



2 PRINCIPALS



Principal Questionnaire
15 open-ended questions



Teacher Questionnaire
13 open-ended questions



6 TEACHERS



Time Span
September - October



REVIEW OF ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS



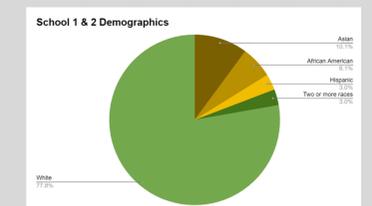
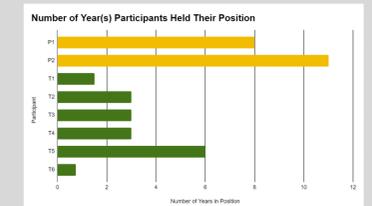
QUALITATIVELY CODED RESPONSES



CROSS-COMPARISON BETWEEN TEACHERS & PRINCIPALS



FORMULATED CATEGORIES & THEMES



Findings & Discussion



Metz et al. (2019) created caretogies of transformational leadership to progress school change:

- Humane Characteristics: demonstrating compassion toward others
- Communication: verbal or written discussion
- Collaboration: multiple individuals working together
- Shared Vision: multiple individuals agreeing to achieve one or more goals
- Supportive Characteristics: supporting others to progress school change

Overarching Themes

Leadership

School 1: School teachers define leaders as individuals having qualities that fall under all of these five categories, whereas the principal sees a leader who possesses qualities that fall under only two of these categories (Humane & Supportive).

School 2: School teachers define leaders as individuals having qualities that fall under all of these five categories, and the principal sees a leader who possesses qualities that fall under four out of the five categories (excluding Shared Vision).

Categorized Themes



SHARED VISION



COMMUNICATION



COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY



SUPPORT THROUGH RESOURCES

Limitations & Implications

Only Middle Schools

Small Sample Size

Short Time Span

Elementary, Middle & High School; Various Geographical & Demographic Settings

Larger Sample Size of Principals & Teachers; Parent & Community Perspectives

Longer Time Span

School 1		School 2	
Principals	Teachers	Principals	Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "[D]iscussed monthly" by the SIT and "weekly in PLCs" "We are one team with one goal and no excuses" indicated that teachers have goals that relate to the SIP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision and mission needed to be implemented by all leaders One teacher: "I make sure to do my part" Make goals that align with the school goals; Include them in their daily lesson plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "[I]ncorporated in everything"; mentioned in staff meetings, daily announcements "[D]edicated person" for implementing the vision/ mission Administrators holds monthly SIP meetings and embed the SIP goals into their PDP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers did not mention consistent practices, instead, "several times a year" they revisit the mission and vision statements One teacher: "I am not sure of the school's vision or mission" Teachers also embed the SIP goals in their PDP and lessons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using various large and small group meetings (i.e., SIP meetings, department meetings, and PLCs) as methods to communicate with school staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All teachers were satisfied with the amount and type of communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent meetings in smaller settings; "find more success in starting changes" when meeting with grade levels and departments rather than whole staff meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of teachers were not completely satisfied with the form and frequency of communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledged importance of the community involvement, "a lot of community history, several generations of families have gone to school there" Strong generational continuity led to "there have not [being] any radical changes" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Want an increase of parental and student involvement and more communication to families. Seemed to be misalignment between administration and the teachers' perceptions of community communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community's influence is embedded into school changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two teachers' responses aligned with the administration's ideas; they teach with a focus on local issues and community events. One teacher felt the School Board influenced the school's changes, not the community itself
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School offers "early release professional development days" and staff meetings (e.g. grade level meetings) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers either satisfied or indicated with accessible resources. Teachers are satisfied with educational training to further professional development Different understanding of the term "[A]ssessible resources" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold "monthly and weekly meetings" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teachers' responses varied between dissatisfied to satisfied Teachers felt either neutral or satisfied with the professional development, regarding educational training resources seem to be insufficient in meeting all teachers' needs

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