

ABSTRACT

Maciel, Rosemarie Gomez, Do Principals Make a Difference? An Analysis of Leadership Behaviors of Elementary Principals in Effective Schools. Doctor of Education (Ed. D), May 2005, pp. 187, 33 Tables, 1 Figure, 216 references.

Studies have shown principal instructional leadership behaviors to be a factor in student achievement. There has been little research on principal leadership instructional behavior in schools where the principal and student body are predominately Mexican-American.

This causal-comparative study examined the relationships among the school, the achievement scores of third grade students as measured by the reading portion of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) and leadership behaviors of elementary school principals. A key variation in this study is that the sample is entirely comprised of Mexican-American leaders of schools that have undergone (within three years after the naming of a new school leader) a transformation from a low-performance rating to a high-performance rating on the Academic Excellence Indicator Rating (AEIS) of Texas. The conceptual model tested in the present study was developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1986).

Twenty elementary school principals and 100 teachers in deep South Texas agreed to participate in the study. Two questionnaires, the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (Hallinger, 1985) which defines the instructional leadership behaviors of principals and the School Effectiveness Questionnaire (Baldwin, Coney, Fardig, and Thomas, 1993) which identifies the strengths and weaknesses that have an impact on school effectiveness were used to collect the research data.

The research findings based on the results of regression analysis suggest that the principal's leadership has a significant correlation with school effectiveness as measured by students' academic achievement. Instructional leadership behaviors such as Instructional Support, Monitoring Instruction, Visibility and Time on Task provided the strongest correlation found in the study ($p < .05$). Conclusions of the present study are: (a) there is a relationship between school contextual variables and the principal leadership behavior constructs of Instructional Support, Monitoring Instruction, Visibility and Time on Task consistent with the literature, (b) the data supported a relationship between principal leadership behavior and school effectiveness as measured by student achievement, and (c) Mexican-American principal leadership behavior is consistent with the findings in the literature. Principals in this present study replaced the school's mainstream culture of individualism and competition with values of collectivism, cooperation, and strong relational ties those values that are often found in traditional Hispanic communities.