

TITLE The Relationship between Principal Leadership Behavior and Principal Experience

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study was to determine if principal leadership behavior, as perceived by principals and teachers, is related to principal longevity at the current school and total principal experience in the Midlands Region of South Carolina.

METHODOLOGY

The sample population was selected from information provided on the South Carolina Department of Education website. It includes principals of elementary, middle, and high schools in the Midland's Region of South Carolina. Private, magnet, parochial, charter, technology, and alternative schools were not included in the sample and only schools with pre-k through twelfth grades were included. Fifty-nine principals completed the LPI (53% response rate) and they requested 3-10 randomly selected teachers to complete the LPI-Observer. Fifty-four percent of the teachers invited to participate returned the survey (N=235). Demographic information included the school location, grade configuration, principal longevity at the current school and total principal experience. Nineteen principals were considered new (1-3 years of longevity), 21 with 4-6 years (mid-career), and 19 with 7+ years (experienced). In terms of total principal experience, 17 were new (1-5 years), 21 were mid-career (6-9 years), and 21 were experienced (10+ years).

KEY FINDINGS

Enable and Model were reported by principals as their most frequent leadership practices, followed by Encourage, Inspire, and Challenge. Through not as frequent as the principals, the rank order of the leadership practices was the same from the perspective of teachers. There was little correlation between the principals' leadership practices and their years of experience at their current school, and suggests "that principal leadership experience at the current school does not appear to be a factor in determining principals' self-perceptions of leadership behavior" (p. 81). A similar finding and conclusion was found between principal perceptions of their leadership behavior and total principle longevity. The relationship between the principal's leadership behaviors from the perspective of their teachers and the principals' longevity at either their current school or in total.