

TITLE Relationship between Principals and Teachers in Urban Schools: An Examination of Principal Leadership Practices and Teacher Morale

RESEARCHER Tonya R. Norwood
School of Education
Wayne State University (Michigan)
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OBJECTIVE The purpose of the study was to analyze and measure the relationship between principal leadership practices and teacher morale in urban schools.

METHODOLOGY

This study took place in an urban school district in a large Midwestern city. The school district included six elementary/ middle schools, six high schools and three charter schools, with approximately 6,750 students, of which 96 percent were African-American, 75 percent were economically disadvantaged as determined by their qualification for free or reduced lunch programs, and the graduation rate for the district was 8.33 percent. The participants were 101 teachers (67% response rate) from one elementary/middle school and three high schools, and they completed the LPI-Observer and the Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire (Bentley & Rempel, 1967). Fifty-five percent of the teachers were Caucasian and 33 percent were African American). Forty-one percent had 1-5 years of teaching experience, 33 percent had 6-10 years, 21 percent had 11-20 years, and 5 percent had over 20 years of teaching experience. Internal reliability coefficients in this study were .90 Model, .91 Inspire, .92 Challenge, .94 Enable, and .96 Encourage.

KEY FINDINGS

No statistically significant relationship was found between the principals' leadership practices and teacher morale. Each of the leadership practices did significantly vary among the four schools. However, the analysis did not find any empirical support that leadership practices differed between teachers with the highest and lowest degrees of teacher morale.

The author concludes that: "Based on these findings, the assumption could be made that there are other factors contributing to low teacher morale; and not solely the leadership practices of the principal. For example, the mean scores showed that teachers for the most part perceived their principals to be fairly supportive, respectful and competent in carrying out their duties. However, other factors (i.e. teacher salary, teacher load, curricular issues, teacher status, community support, school facilities and community pressures) were contributing to low teacher morale. The previously listed factors are

entities that most principals do not control, and are often put in place by central office administrators and school boards. To address this concern, transformation leadership strategies should be implemented to discuss a process in which; both teachers and principals can benefit.” (pp. 86-87).