

TITLE The Correlation Between Leadership, Culture, and Student Achievement

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this investigation was to determine the relationship between leadership practices, school culture, and student achievement.

METHODOLOGY

A total of 310 teachers from 31 elementary, middle, and high schools in Southwest Mississippi schools were selected to participate in an online survey, with 216 responding (70% response rate). Approximately 79 percent of the teachers were Caucasian and 88 percent were female. Respondents completed the LPI-Observer, the School Culture Survey (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998), and provided demographic information. Student achievement data for the 2011-12 school year was obtained from the Mississippi Department of Education website.

KEY FINDINGS

Inspire, Challenge, Enable, and Encourage all contributed at the .05 level of significance (Model at .08 level) to a regression equation on school culture, accounting for 36 percent of the variation in collaborative leadership, 22 percent of the variance in teacher collaboration, 24 percent of the variance in collegial support, 29 percent of the variation in unity of purpose, 27 percent of the variance in professional development, and 15 percent of the variation in learning partnership. The authors note that “the findings indicated that a significant relationship existed between leadership practices and school culture” (p. 58). No significant relationship was found between the leadership practices and student achievement.

The authors conclude: “The findings of this study implied that school leaders who effectively utilize the Kouzes and Posner’s leadership practices have a healthier and more positive school culture” (p. 59). “It is recommended that principles employ Kouzes and Posner’s five transformational leadership practices in order to positively influence school culture. Furthermore, this study advocated that school leaders improve academic achievement indirectly through creating a positive school culture” (p. 60).