

TITLE: The Principal Hiring Enigma: Being Aware of Excellent Leadership Practices and Behaviors of School Principals and Selecting Principals with Those Practices and Behaviors

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OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a correlation between the leadership practices and behaviors of selected principals and their score on the Ventures for Excellence Administrator Interview.

METHODOLOGY: The sample included 32 elementary school principals in Sonoma County, California (51% of the population) and eight randomly selected teachers who have worked with these principals a minimum of three years. The teachers completed the Leadership Practices Inventory-Observer, and each principal was interviewed using the Ventures for Excellence Administrator Interview (Ventures for Excellence, 2002). Seventy-six percent of the teachers asked to participate returned surveys, with an average of six respondents for each principal. The typical principal was male (72%).

KEY FINDINGS: The responses of individual principals and their constituents was generally consistent. "There appears to be a strong correlation in almost all cases between the principals' LPI score and the Ventures for Excellence Administrator Interview score" (p. 110). Chi-square analysis showed a significant relationship between total LPI scores (categorized as low, good, high) and Ventures for Excellence Administrator Interview (categorized as low, good, high). Spearman Rho (measures the correlation of the ranks of the scores on the LPI with the ranks of the scores on the VEAI) indicated a significant degree of positive correlation (Spearman's ρ correlation coefficient = .8246) between how principals scored on the LPI and the VEAI.

Based upon these findings the author recommends that the VEAI be used in the hiring process for principals because it would "predict if a candidate will demonstrate successful leadership practices once he/she is hired" (p. 128). "In this study of thirty-two principals, 88 percent of them received a score in the same range for predicting leadership practices and behaviors as they received on a leadership survey of practices completed by some of their teacher" (p. 136).