

TITLE: A Correlation of Self-Assessed Leadership Skills and Interpersonal Communication Competencies of Public School Principals in Five Illinois Counties

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OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between leadership skills and interpersonal communication competencies for public school principals.

METHODOLOGY: From the population of public school principals in the five Illinois counties of suburban Cook, Lake, DuPage, Kane and McHenry counties, 333 were randomly selected and 121 participated (36% response rate). Respondents completed the Leadership Practices Inventory and the 30-item Conversational Skills Rating Scale (CSRS) (Spitzberg, 1993). The typical respondent was male (60%), 47 years of age (average), with an average of 8 years as a principal and five of these in their current setting. The majority were in elementary-school districts (73%), with an average of 500 students, in suburban areas (90%)

KEY FINDINGS: Females reported significantly higher responses on nine of the 30 LPI statements than their male counterparts (four in Encouraging, three in Enabling, one each in Challenging and Inspiring). Twenty-seven of the 30 LPI items showed no difference in leadership practices based upon the type of school district and 28 of the 30 LPI items revealed no difference by location of the school. Eighteen LPI items were correlated with the principal's age, three were correlated with the years that the respondent had been a principal, no items correlated with the years that the respondent had been in his or her position, and two items correlated with the enrollment of the school. All individual questions on the LPI demonstrated a moderate to high correlation with at least one question on the CSRS, measuring communication competencies (attentiveness, composure, expressiveness, and interaction management).

“There was a strong correlation between leadership skills, as defined by Kouzes and Posner, and interpersonal communication skills, as defined by Spitzberg, in the job responsibilities carried out by a principal” (p. 280).

Factor analysis of the LPI ...”accounted for 63.465% of all of the variability among these 30 items truly represented the five leadership skills subgroups developed by Kouzes and Posner” (p. 283).