

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

research

THE MOST TRUSTED SOURCE ON BECOMING A BETTER LEADER

TITLE	The Relationship of Principal Leadership and Teacher Morale
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OBJECTIVE	The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between a principal's leadership practices and the morale of the school's teachers.
METHODOLOGY	The population consisted of all teachers from seven middle schools within a school district in metropolitan Atlanta. They were randomly assigned to complete either the Leadership Practices Inventory (Observer) or the Perdue Teacher Opinionaire (Bentley & Rempel, 1972). The total return rate for both surveys at all schools was 45 percent (N=210), with 111 for the LPI. The typical teacher had an average of 9.6 years experience in education, was female (80%), Caucasian (93%), with a bachelor's degree (54%).
KEY FINDINGS	There were no significant differences in teacher moral (total PTO) between the seven middle schools. However, there was a significant positive correlation ($r = .437$, $p < .001$) between teacher morale (PTO) and principal leadership practices (LPI). Seven of the ten morale categories significantly correlated with the total LPI score (rapport with Principal, Rapport among

Teachers, Teacher Salary, Teacher Status, Community Support, School Facilities and Services, and Community Pressures). Enable correlated most strongly to the total PTO score followed by Model, Challenge, and Encourage.

The author points out that:

educators may not notice until they work with an ineffective administrator, but the school's principal does have a noticeable impact on the school's environment. It is extremely detrimental to the morale of teachers to have an ineffective principal (p. 56).

The leadership practice of Enable Others to Act had the strongest correlation. Teachers appreciate authority in their individual areas, being listened to by their leader, and having their decisions supported. It is important that the leader provide an environment that fosters respect and cooperation among teachers and with administrators. Additionally, this leadership practice includes the principal supporting opportunities for professional growth. It takes a strong, self-assured principal to empower teachers and share the decision-making. As indicated by the correlations of this leadership practice, which were the strongest found through this research project, Enable Others to Act had the greatest relationship to teacher morale (p. 57).

The research findings lead to implications for educational practice. The relationship between teacher morale and leadership showed the importance of the school's principal. The daily actions of the principal did greatly influence teacher morale. The practical implications apply to principal preparation programs, self-assessments for current principals, and a tool for

upper-level district administrators (pp. 66-67).