
THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

research

THE MOST TRUSTED SOURCE ON BECOMING A BETTER LEADER

TITLE Perceived Stress, Holistic Wellness, and Leadership Practices of K-12, Public School, Building Level Administrators as Influenced by Selected Variables

RESEARCHER Walter H. Coulter
College of Education
University of Nevada, Reno
Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation: September 2010

OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study was to determine if relationships exist among the perceived stress, holistic wellness, and leadership practices of K-12, public school, building-level administrators.

METHODOLOGY Two-hundred sixteen of the estimated 700 building-level administrators self-selected for this investigation. The participants were a subset of the total population of K-12, public school, building-level administrators in one western state. They completed the Leadership Practices Inventory, the Five Factor Wellness Inventory (Hattie, Myers, & Sweeney, 2004), and the Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen & Williamson, 1988). The typical respondent was female (58%), married (80%), Caucasian (90%), with a masters degree (82%), either a principal (50%) or assistant principal (46%), and 48 years old. Respondents were fairly evenly distributed by school level (42% elementary, 22% middle and 31 percent high school), by school location (28% rural, 31% suburban and 41% urban), and by NCLB designation (13% high

achievement, 36% adequate achievement, 30% watch list, and 20% needs improvement).

KEY FINDINGS

The five leadership practices were all significantly correlated with Holistic Wellness and its five subscales (essential, creative, physical, coping and social). Perceived stress and all five leadership practices were significantly correlated in a negative direction. With perceived stress as the dependent variable, the holistic health scales of coping and social, and leadership practice of Model the Way accounted for nearly 39 percent of the variance (adjusted R^2).

Females reported engaging in all five of the leadership practices more frequently than did their male counterparts. Between academic groups, principals reported engaging more frequently than did assistant principals in the leadership practices of Inspiring and Challenging. Differences between school level groups were found for all of the leadership practices except for Modeling. Generally principals at the high school level engaged in Inspiring, Challenging, Enabling and Encouraging less often than did their counterparts at middle and elementary schools. School location showed only one significant difference, with principals from the suburbs engaging in Enabling significantly less than those from urban school locations. No significant differences in leadership practices were found on the basis of NCLB designations.