

**TITLE:** Ethical Leadership and School Culture: An Exploratory Study of Nine Middle-Level Schools

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**OBJECTIVE:** To test how well existing instrumentation applies in school settings and explore the relationship between school culture and ethical leadership.

**METHODOLOGY:** Thirty middle or junior high schools in Eastern and Central Minnesota (N = 66) were randomly invited to participate; nine agreed. Instruments were completed by both the school principals and their faculty (N = 277): (a) Integrity Audit (White & Wallace, 1988), (b) Brookover Teacher Climate Scales (Brookover, *et al.*, 1979), (c) Teacher Efficacy (Gibson & Dembo, 1985), and (d) LPI (Self and Other). Ethical leadership philosophy of each principal was gathered by using a structured interview protocol (Shapiro, 1989). Student SES composition, community type, and average student attendance were also reported.

**FINDINGS:** "In summary, the LPI discriminated among these nine schools. It had expected intercorrelations within sub-scales and maintained conceptual integrity when subjected to factor analysis. The combine scale and three of the five sub-scales met both criteria for interval data. The LPI-Other means and standard deviations were similar in their ranges and patterns with senior federal executives and senior private sector executives. The distribution of LPI-Self scores approximated the distribution reported by Kouzes and Posner for the LPI-Self. Finally, the participants validated 81% of the salient principal scores as actual patterns of behavior in their experience...it can be concluded that the Leadership Practices Inventory is valid in its application to the study of educational leadership in middle level schools." (178).

There were no statistically significant relationships between any of the teacher characteristics (length of teaching experience or service at the school, grade level, gender, or degree level), school (size or middle level versus junior high) characteristics, average daily attendance, or Teacher Efficacy scores and the principal's leadership behavior (LPI).

"Principal's ethical leadership philosophy determined by Shapiro's Ethical Leadership/Followership interview protocol was related to the LPI-Other mean scores in two ways. First, within the interview process, principals made statements that were content analyzable within the framework of the LPI descriptors. The number of these statements per principal strongly correlated with the LPI-Other scores for the principals ( $r = .84$ ,  $p$

<.001). Second, both the number of statements and the LPI-Other scores of the principals with transformational ethical philosophies were significantly higher than those principals with transactional ethical philosophies ( $T = 6.60, p < .001$ )" (251).

Faculty completed either the LPI-Other or the Integrity Audit. All five leadership practices significantly correlated ( $<.67$ ) with the Integrity Audit and generally all of its subscales as well. Modeling had the strongest correlations across the Integrity Audit.

The author concludes: "the principal's ethical leadership philosophy is strongly related to the principal's leadership practices...(and)...the principal's leadership practices are strongly related to the school's ethical climate" (303).