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TITLE High School Principals' Perceived Leadership Practices and Their Relationship to Student Performance on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS): A Cohort Study

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Unpublished doctoral dissertation: May 2007

OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study was to determine how leadership practices impact student performance as perceived by high school principals and selected site-based decision making committee members of high schools in Region V Education Service Center, Texas.

METHODOLOGY

The population of this study included the 29 high school principals in Region V Education Service Center, Texas and selected members of the Site-Based Decision Making Committee (SMDM) from each district. Twenty-six schools participated (90% response rate), with 26 Leadership Practices Inventory (Self) completed and 79 LPI-Observer surveys returned from SBDM members (60% response rate). All of the school principals were male and 77 percent were Caucasian while 70 percent of the observers were also men and 77 percent were Caucasian. Most principals had between 21-30 years of experience in the field (50%), while most SBDMs' had 11-19 years (46%). Seventy-three percent of the principals and 58 percent of the SBDMs were 41 years or older.

KEY FINDINGS

No linear relationship was found between perceived leadership practices of high school principals and the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills performance test. No significant correlations were found in student academic success as measured by TAKS and the five leadership practices. Generally the principals rated their leadership behaviors significantly higher than did their observers (constituents). Neither gender nor ethnicity impacted LPI scores, and this was also true for age and years of experience.

The author concludes: “Although there was no significance identified on student achievement, principals should consider the various elements of leadership mentioned in this study crucial to long-term success. Now more than ever, the demand for competent, capable leaders who can move organizations forward has peaked. The demand will provide significant opportunities for those who are willing to meet the challenge of organizational leadership in the field of education on any level. The longevity of leaders will be determined by one’s ability to recognize the important of remaining connected with stakeholders” (p. 113).