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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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to determine how leadership practices impact student performance as perceived by principals and selected site-based decision making (SBDM) committee members of high schools in Region V Education Service Center (ESC), Texas. The study is one of four studies which examined perceived leadership practices of principals in the public school system in Southeast Texas. The other studies in this cohort focused on elementary principals, middle school principals and superintendents. This study compared the perceptions of high school principals and selected SBDM committee members regarding leadership practices and determined if selected demographic variables had an impact on the perceived leadership practices of the two identified groups. The investigation procedures for this study involved an analysis of the responses from principals and site-based decision making committee members to the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) developed by James Kouzes and Barry Posner (2003) which evaluates the use of five identified leadership practices. Student performance information for the 29 participating high school campuses was obtained from the Texas Education Agency Academic Excellence Indicator System. Findings indicate no linear relationship exists between perceived leadership practices of high school principals and the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) performance. Further analysis revealed no statistical significance in the correlation of student academic success as measured by TAKS and the five leadership practices identified by Kouzes and Posner(2002); Inspire a Shared Vision, Model the Way, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. The data indicated that Region V high school principals embrace the leadership practices identified by Kouzes and Posner at least moderately (between the 30th and 69th percentile) and in some cases at a higher level (70th percentile or above). Also, the data revealed that, as a group, the high school principals rated themselves higher overall regarding perceived leadership in comparison to their observers. Further analysis of the data showed that the demographic variables of gender and ethnicity did not have an effect on survey responses of the study participants. After examining the differences between the LPI responses of principals and their observers regarding age and years of experience, it was evident that such demographic variables did not impact survey responses.

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