

International Forum
Vol. 12, No. 2
October 2009
pp. 61-75

FEATURE

**Teachers' and Principals' Perceptions of
Principals' Leadership Effectiveness in
Selected Adventist Schools in the Philippines**

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***Abstract:** The literature on school leadership repeatedly refers to the need for effective leadership of principals. This small (n = 85) study investigated the perceptions of teachers' and principals' on leadership effectiveness of the principals in selected Adventist schools in the Philippines. The respondents indicated their views of leadership effectiveness in observation and coaching in the learning process, setting and shaping expectation, creating disequilibrium, and engaging staff knowledge transfer. The result showed that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of respondents about effectiveness of the principals when grouped by demographic variables. However, when each sub item was carefully analyzed, there was one significant difference found with gender. The comparison means indicated that female respondents are more positive about principals' roles in improving curriculum, assessment, and instruction when compared to male respondents.*

Principals are the central figure of school organization. What they say, do, or think has a significant effect on organizational performance (Spark, 2007). A principal's interaction and participation can increase the learning climate, productivity, achievement and school reputation (Sergiovanni, 2007). The accomplishments of a school and even whether or not it achieves its goals and mission can be determined by the principal's effectiveness as a leader, both foresight and hindsight (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2001). A principal's effectiveness can have a positive effect on student academic achievement, organizational management, and staff development. Their leadership can promote human relationships, management motivation, collegial relationships, school improvement, and collaboration with stakeholders including students,

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teachers, parents, staff, and the community. A good principal envisions a mission for the school that accomplishes the needs of the community (Hoerr, 2008; Barth, 2006). Only effective principals can deal with the fast-paced changes and the demanding expectations of today's society (LaPointe & Davis, 2006). Effective leadership makes possible the "harmonious development" of each student. Effective principals inspire the support of constituents, stakeholders, teachers, students, parents and community.

This study explored factors that make principals effective in their leadership and how teachers perceive principals' effectiveness within Seventh-day Adventist schools in the South Central Luzon Conference (SCLC), Philippines.

Related Literature

It is very difficult to define "effective principals." They are individuals who pursue their leadership capabilities to foster the school's philosophy with farsighted horizons; they understand the diverse characteristics of their school and their stakeholders, and they promote a team building spirit to generate collaboration and commitment to fulfill their mission. O'Hanlon and Clifton (2004) observed effective principals as individuals "who exhibit the principles of positive psychology in their everyday work, and bring to their school something extra that produces greater growth for all involved" (p. vi).

The literature identifies a number of outstanding characteristics of effective principals. Effective principals begin with a clear understanding of their destination. They have a clear map in their mind about the position of the school, where it is heading, what the challenges are, and how to satisfy the stakeholders (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2001). They inspire the teachers and students by presenting a realistic vision for the school. They do future planning for the growth of the school, teachers, and students (Everard, Morris & Wilson, 2004), and share their vision with all stakeholders. They can visualize the big picture and take initiative to face the upcoming challenges through problem solving skills (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005).

Effective principals have a significant influence on student performance (Stronge, Richard & Catano, 2008). Their instructional leadership is directly linked with student performance, quality education, and the success of the school (Bennett, Crawford & Cartwright, 2003). Effective principals encourage their students and facilitate successful learning (Hoerr, 2008). They identify individual needs of students, and consider diversity of cultures, background and abilities. They focus on various learning dimensions and multiple intelligences to enhance self development for high performance (Rallis & Goldring, 2000). They monitor students and teachers and help to provide positive conditions that interact to strengthen instruction and academic achievement (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008).

Effective principals concentrate on various management skills (Dessler, 2008). They engage teachers, parents and other stakeholders in planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and evaluating to advance the school and improve achievement (Bernardin, 2007; Everard, Morris, & Wilson, 2004). Effective principals ensure efficiency and take action if standards are not met. They follow “due process” to implement the policies of the governing board for recruitment, selection, appointment, ranking appraisal and disciplining the teachers and staff (Bernardin, 2007; Dessler, 2008).

Effective principals take personal responsibility for the daily operations of all financial planning and other management controls (Bernardin, 2007). They have a comprehensive awareness about the school’s funds and other resources. They ensure the best use of resources and provide excellent programs and services for the students (Garner, 2004). They engage the community and work hard to obtain funds for educational excellence. They carefully monitor the funds and make sure they are used for the intended purposes. They follow the policy for budgeting and allocating funds allied with estimated income and expenditures and seek the school board’s approval to safeguard the school’s funds (Dessler, 2008; Garner, 2004).

Effective principals are change agents (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2001). They respect and refine the existing culture and foster change in the school (Deal & Peterson, 1999). They empower teachers and use the skilled personnel to train others by sharing their expertise (Bennis & Nanus, 2003). In the change process they minimize the threats and optimize the opportunities. They focus on intrinsic, rather than extrinsic changes (Sergiovanni, 2000), and motivate teachers and students to build value, trust, and respect for the change (Barrett, 2006). They do ongoing coaching to ensure that change will happen by effective communication with resourceful individuals to transform the values and norms of the school (Deal & Peterson, 1999).

Effective principals create trust among the teachers and students (Covey, 2004). They mind their own duties and keep focus to build trust by articulating a proper direction for the school (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2001). They do their best to reduce the uncertainties within the school (Barth, 2006; Blasé & Blasé, 2006). They do not grasp the opportunities to step over others, but rather stretch out a helping hand for teachers to overcome weaknesses and limitations (Northouse, 2007). They consistently practice integrity in everyday operations to create trustworthiness (Covey, 2004, Barth, 2006); by maintaining high standards of moral and ethical conduct in every service. Simply put, they “do things right” (Sergiovanni, 2007; Northouse, 2007).

Effective principals provide teachers with opportunities for professional growth and development by providing feedback (Sergiovanni, 2007). They use reward and recognition (intrinsic and extrinsic) to empower their teachers and

staff (Blasé & Blasé, 1994; Sergiovanni, 2000). Effective principals provide training, seminar, conference, workshop, and other services for teachers and students to increase the organizational standards (Blasé & Blasé, 2004). They clarify the practices and reinforce positive interactions within the school (Mandel, 2006; Robbins, 2005).

Effective principals consider teacher evaluation as a rudder that leads the school to fulfill its chosen goals and objectives and to help teachers to be enlightened. They consider evaluation as “collaborative process” where all parties are engaged—including students, parents and others (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Effective principals organize evaluation procedures (pre-conference and post-conference; Fisher, 2003). They believe that teacher evaluation is an ongoing process to cultivate professional skills, knowledge and practices (Wanzare & Costa, 2005).

Effective principals care for both people within the school and people outside of the school by building caring relationships (Noddings, 2000). Effective principals maintain good communication with students, parents, colleagues, school leaders, supervisor, board members, and the community who are directly or indirectly related with the teaching profession. They nurture collegiality and collaboration among stakeholders to generate respect and credibility (Barth, 2006). They unite teachers to increase professional commitment and minimize doubt, competition, and uncertainties among teachers and other administrators (Blasé & Blasé, 2004).

Effective principals create a safe and secure learning environment. They consistently welcome students, teachers and parents to foster a positive school climate (Stronge, et al., 2008; Halawah, 2005). They involve the entire school community including teachers, parents, students, school board, and others to create an environment for meaningful learning and teaching (Stronge, et al., 2008). They listen to parents/guardians carefully if they bring any complaints and clarify the issues (Sergiovanni, 2000). They focus on the curriculum and instruction management to promote an appropriate school climate (Stronge, et al., 2008). They provide learning materials, information, and other equipment to nurture meaningful learning and teaching (Halawah, 2005).

Demographic Profiles

This study includes demographic profiles such as gender, age, highest degree completed, teaching level, and years of teaching experience of the respondents from selected schools. Research conducted by Schuttle and Hackmann (2006) found that principals who were 41-50 years old were more effective compared to other age groups. Research done in India by Kurian (1999), found that teachers’ perceptions about principal leadership differs according to their age group. On the other hand, research conducted by

Renomeron in the Philippines (as cited in Bairagee, 2008) found that teachers' age had no relationship with their perception of principals' leadership effectiveness.

In education some researchers found that there is a gender trend in effectiveness such that women are more effective in elementary education compared to men, whereas male principals are more effective in high schools and higher education than females (Harris, Bennett, & Preedy, 1997). To a certain extent women are more democratic, empathetic, and cooperative and exchange ideas more effectively compared to men (Tomlinson, as cited in Jáuregui, Olivos, & Beoutis, n.d.). A study conducted by Mauri (2008) in Indonesia revealed that male principals are more active in pursuing norms of principalship. Considering these different findings from various countries and cultures, it is clear that generalizing gender differences across cultural boundaries is difficult, and, as a minimum, requires further study.

A recent study in Bangladesh (Bairagee, 2008), found that teachers with a master's or higher degree scored lower in their perceptions of principals' leadership effectiveness compared to teachers with a bachelor's degree. A study in China by Lue and Najjar (2009) revealed that there was no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of their principals' effectiveness by demographic factors of gender, age, years of experience and academic attainment.

This study endeavored to determine teachers' and principals' perception of principals' leadership effectiveness in selected schools in the Philippines. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study including the demographic variables, Effective Principal 360°, principals and teachers.

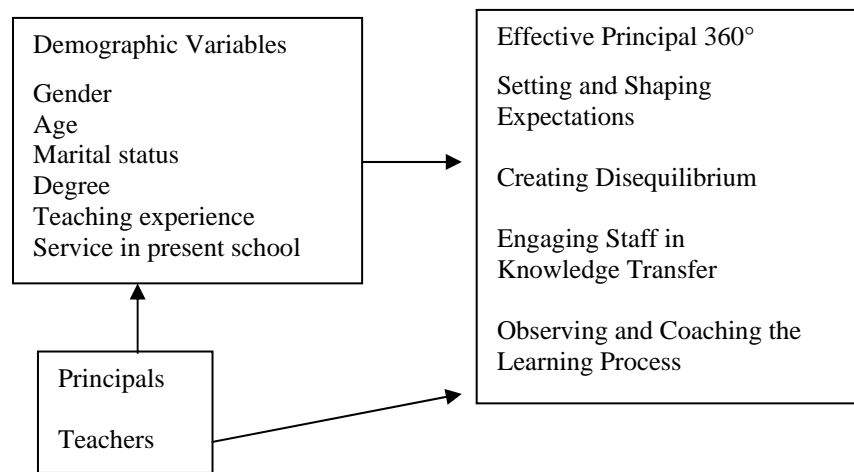


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study.

Methodology

This is a demographic comparative study. The sample for this study consisted of 85 respondents (75 teachers and 10 principals) of selected schools in the South Central Luzon Conference (SCLC). A survey questionnaire with Likert scale items (1 = Never to 5 = Almost Always), developed by Timothy Berkey, 2009 (Effective Principal 360°: Principal's Observer Assessment) was used, with permission, to collect the data for this study. The research questions dealt with the demographic profile of the teachers and principals of selected Adventist schools in SCLC, and the perceptions of teachers and principals about the leadership effectiveness profile of the principals.

Descriptive statistics were used to compute frequencies according to demographic variables. One-way ANOVA and *t* test were used to find the significant differences when the respondents were grouped by demographic variables. The reliability was checked via computation of alpha coefficients.

Results

The purpose of this study is to explore the potential of leadership effectiveness and identify the importance of effective leadership in day to day operations as perceived by teachers and principals in selected Adventist schools in the South Central Luzon Conference (SCLC).

The reliability of the Effective Principal 360° instrument was rechecked in the Asian context, and the results compared to past studies. It has 48 items with 4 scales, and 14 subscales. It is a research instrument developed by Berkey (2009) with criterion validity established via correlation with national studies on the impact of administrative practices on student achievement. Factor analysis was used to establish construct validity. Table 1 provides the comparative alpha (α) values for the reliability analysis.

The reliability coefficient in the present study for the scale is .91 and for the each item, scores ranged from .75 to .95. The present study found the alpha coefficients for each subscale ranging from .92 to .95, which represents firm internal consistency of each factor. Table 1 shows that the present study has comparable reliability with the previous study.

Table 1
Reliability Analysis: Effective Principal 360°

Scale and subscales	Previous study ⁴	Present study ⁴
Effective principal 360° (scale)	.94	.91
Setting & shaping expectations	-	.95
Rebuilding a passion for change	.70-.93	.86
Focusing on teaching and learning	.70-.93	.84
Strengthening relationships	.70-.93	.86
Setting high expectations	.70-.93	.83
Creating disequilibrium	-	.92
Modeling change	.70-.93	.85
Managing change	.70-.93	.87
Engaging staff in knowledge transfer	-	.94
Finding best practices	.70-.93	.75
Encouraging & creating transfer	.70-.93	.84
Ensuring & evaluating transfer	.70-.93	.83
Improving curriculum, assessment & instruction	.70-.93	.86
Observing and coaching the learning process	-	.95
Conducting classroom walkthroughs	.70-.93	.86
Coaching effective instruction	.70-.93	.86
Resolving learning problems	.70-.93	.85
Reaching all learners	.70-.93	.89

The demographic variables studied were age, gender, highest degree, level taught, and years of experience. As might be expected (see Labao, 2003), there were more female than male teachers (see Table 2); actually three times more females, which is a higher proportion than what has been reported in previous research. Yap (2008) reported that “only about seven percent of DepEd [the Philippine Department of Education] teachers are male” in the Philippines. One reason could be “over the years, the teaching profession had apparently failed to attract more male teachers” in the Philippines (Esplanada, 2009). Another reason could be that male teachers tend to change their profession faster than female teachers in the Philippines (Esplanada, 2009 & Yap, 2008). Interestingly, Siniscalco (2002) reported that in Eastern Asia teaching is more favored by females than males; however, in developing countries the result is often vice-versa, where the teaching profession is dominated by males (Siniscalco, 2002).

Table 2
Demographic Variables

Demographic variables		Frequency	Percentage
Age in years	21-30	26	30.6%
	31-40	22	25.9%
	41-50	22	25.9%
	51-60	11	12.9%
	61 & above	4	4.7%
Total			100%
Gender	Male	21	24.7%
	Female	64	75.3%
Total			100%
Degree	Bachelor	79	92.9%
	Master's	5	5.9%
	Above master's	1	1.2%
Total			100%
Level taught	Elementary	60	70.6%
	High school	19	22.4%
	Both	6	7.0%
Total			100%
Years of experience	1-5 years	26	30.6%
	5-10 years	17	20.0%
	11-15 years	11	12.9%
	16-20 years	18	21.2%
	21-25 years	5	5.9%
	26-30 years	2	2.4%
	31 & above years	6	7.1%
Total			100%

The age of the respondents ranged from 21-61 and above, and the age variable was divided into five groups for the purpose of comparison (see Table 2). The largest category was the 21-30 year old group (30.2%) and lowest was the group of 61 years old and above (4.7%). It is evident that the respondents in SCLC were relatively young as the first two categories 21 to 40 years comprised the majority of the respondents (56.9%). This age range is similar to the study of

Siniscalco (2002) that revealed more than 80% of teachers are less than 40 years old in the developing countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines.

Most of the respondents of this study were elementary teachers, i.e. (70%) of total respondents. The rest of them were either high school teachers or teaching in both elementary and high school (see Table 2). All the teachers had completed a bachelor's degree, since that is the minimum requirement allowed for teaching (Yap, 2008). Additionally, 5 of the teachers (5.9%) had completed a master's degree. Only 1 (1.2%) had completed a degree beyond the master's level (see Table 2).

The present study showed that one third (30.6%) had only 5 years or less teaching experience. On the other hand, about one half (49.5%) of the respondents had 10 or more years of teaching experience (See Table 2). This figure shows that teachers' retention in SCLC is high even though turnover rate among teachers is significantly higher than for other occupations in the Philippines (Dessler, 2008). Teachers engaged in the teaching profession for more than 30 years was 7% and revealed that some teachers' have a high commitment to the teaching profession. This finding is similar to the results found in research by Susada (2008).

Leadership Effectiveness

This study found that the leadership effectiveness in SCLC is satisfactory. The leadership effectiveness was ranked with the highest 5 (almost always) and lowest 1 (never). The data showed that the means of leadership effectiveness ranged from 3.63 to 3.95, which is closest to 4 (practice frequently) on a 5-point Likert scale. The mean of leadership effectiveness revealed that principals in South Central Luzon Conference (SCLC) frequently practice effective procedures/practices (see Table 3).

Table 3
Level of Leadership Effectiveness

Items	N	M	SD
Setting and shaping expectations	85	3.95	.653
Creating disequilibrium	85	3.94	.825
Engaging staff in knowledge transfer	85	3.69	.732
Observing and coaching the learning process	85	3.63	.846

Differences Between Teachers and Principals

In order to determine the differences of the perceptions about leadership effectiveness of principals of selected Adventist schools in SCLC, t tests were performed. The corresponding null hypothesis “there is no significant difference between the perceptions of teachers and principals in terms of the leadership effectiveness” was accepted. However, in every aspect of principals’ effectiveness, principals rated themselves higher than the teachers rating of principals’ effectiveness (see Table 4). Interestingly, both teachers and principals scored lower on their perception about observing and coaching the learning process than other effectiveness areas. These perceptions revealed that principals need to improve their skills in observing, and coaching the learning process (see Table 4).

One way ANOVA and t test were performed to find out the differences of the perceptions of the respondents about the effectiveness of the principals when grouped by demographic variables. The corresponding null hypothesis stated that “there is no significant difference in the perceptions of respondents about effectiveness of the principals when grouped by demographic variables.” The null hypothesis was retained. However when each sub item was carefully analyzed, there was one significant difference found with gender. The male (M = 3.21) and female (M = 3.71) significantly differ in their perception about improving curriculum, assessment and instruction (see Table 5).

Table 4
Differences Between Teachers and Principals

Factors	Profession	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)																																
Setting and Shaping Expectations	Principals	10	4.14	.637	.950	83	.345																																
	Teachers	75	3.93	.656				Creating Disequilibrium	Principals	10	4.07	.661	.527	83	.600	Teachers	75	3.92	.847	Engaging staff in knowledge transfer	Principals	10	3.76	.517	.323	83	.748	Teachers	75	3.68	.758	Observing and coaching the learning process	Principals	10	3.65	.510	.088	83	.930
Creating Disequilibrium	Principals	10	4.07	.661	.527	83	.600																																
	Teachers	75	3.92	.847				Engaging staff in knowledge transfer	Principals	10	3.76	.517	.323	83	.748	Teachers	75	3.68	.758	Observing and coaching the learning process	Principals	10	3.65	.510	.088	83	.930	Teachers	75	3.63	.884								
Engaging staff in knowledge transfer	Principals	10	3.76	.517	.323	83	.748																																
	Teachers	75	3.68	.758				Observing and coaching the learning process	Principals	10	3.65	.510	.088	83	.930	Teachers	75	3.63	.884																				
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	Teachers	75	3.63	.884																																			

Table 5
 Gender: Improving Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction

Gender of the respondents	Equivalence of variance	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	ICAI Equal variances assumed	21	3.21	1.019	-2.440	83	.017
Female		64	3.71	.743			

Note: Significant at $p < .05$

The means indicated that female respondents are more positive about principals' roles in improving curriculum, and instruction compared to male. Other demographic variables (age, teachers of types of school and years of teaching experience) were not significantly different. One of the demographic variables (highest degree obtained) was abandoned from the testing as the majority of the respondents (92%) had obtained only a bachelors' degree, hence comparison was not advisable.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore the potential of leadership effectiveness and identify the importance of effective leadership in day to day operation as perceived by teachers and principals in selected Adventist schools in the South Central Luzon Conference (SCLC). The demographic results show that typically an Adventist school teacher in SCLC is a female between 21-50 years of age who has only a bachelor's degree (see Table 2). These teachers have taught for 15 years or less. The means showed that most of the principals are perceived effective as in leadership roles even though the principals were not observing and coaching the learning process consistently. The line between effective and non effective leadership is multifaceted and therefore difficult to substantiate.

Given the findings of this study 4 recommendations can be made.

1. Principals need to create a balance between teacher gender. It is important in the Asian context for students to experience the "holistic view of family" (parental relationship including father and mother) within the school (See Susada, 2008).
2. Principals need to demonstrate current knowledge of curriculum, assessment, and instruction in collegial work with teachers to improve and strengthen teaching and learning in every classroom.

3. Principals need to practice and facilitate the collection, distribution, analysis, and use of data to drive improvements in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
4. Principals need to provide teachers with common planning time on a daily basis, and participate in their meetings to collaborate on specific classroom improvements.

According to this study, these four recommendations could make principals effective in their leadership within SDA schools in South Central Luzon Conference (SCLC).

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