

Title: A Study of the Relationships Between Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership and Specified Demographic Factors as Enablers of Teacher Empowerment in Rural Pennsylvania School Districts in Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8

Author: Thomas A. Estep III

Dissertation Chairperson: Dr. William Barker

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Cathy Kaufman
Dr. Elizabeth Gensante

Teacher empowerment has become a focus of attention among educators as they strive to better understand how the dynamics of relationships between teachers and their principals affect the education of students. This study looks for relationships between teachers' perceptions of empowerment and the leadership style of their principal as either a transformational leader or a transactional leader, and seeks to discover if other factors about schools, teachers, or principals influence the relationship between either of leadership styles of principals and teacher perception of empowerment.

Data were gathered from teachers during the 1998-99 school year using Short and Rinehart's School Participant Empowerment Scale, Bass' Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and a demographic questionnaire. Teachers in twenty rural school districts in Appalachia Intermediate Unit 08 in Pennsylvania were surveyed.

Multiple regression analysis, univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) and path analysis were conducted on the data. The analysis followed a causal model --or path diagram-- that was constructed using the hypotheses of the study. Correlated factors included were: teacher perception of principal leadership style, teacher perception of empowerment, teacher gender, principal gender and grade level. Both single and multiple path correlations were performed.

Analysis of the data indicates that the causal model accurately reflects reality: a significant effect was found indicating that teachers -male or female- who feel empowered are led by a leader whom they perceive to be transformational, although gender of neither teacher or principal appears to be a factor in teacher perception of either perception of empowerment or leadership style.

The study suggests that school districts might improve the satisfaction and performance of their teachers through hiring practices that will bring transformative principals into their schools, and/or providing staff development that will help their principals learn the leadership skills that lead to empowerment.