
Thank you for your request to our REL Reference Desk regarding evidence-based information about the effects that principals have on teacher and student performance. Ask A REL is a collaborative reference desk service provided by the ten regional educational laboratories (REL) that, by design, functions much in the same way as a technical reference library. It provides references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations on research based education questions.

The information below represents the most rigorous research available. Researchers consider the type of methodology and give priority to research reports that employ well described and thorough methods. The resources were also selected based on the date of the publication with a preference for research from the last ten years. Additional criteria for inclusion include the source and funder of the resource.

Question: *What are the direct and indirect effects that principals have on teacher and student performance?*

Search Process

Key words and search strings used in the search: *principal AND effect AND “teacher performance”; principal AND effect AND “student success”.*

Search databases and websites:

1. ERIC: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>
2. JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/action/showAdvancedSearch>
3. Google Scholar: www.google.com/scholar
4. Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Resources: <http://ies.ed.gov>
5. What Works Clearinghouse: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

Sample Citations Retrieved (NOTE: Abstracts and executive summaries are copied directly from the reports when possible to ensure accuracy):

Griffith, J. (2004). Relation of principal transformational leadership to school staff job satisfaction, staff turnover, and school performance. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 42(3), 333-356. doi: 10.1108/09578230410534667

Abstract/Summary: In the present study, the direct effect of principal transformational leadership to school staff turnover and school performance was examined, in addition to its indirect effect through school staff job satisfaction. Survey data were obtained from elementary school staff and students, and school-aggregated student achievement test scores were obtained from school archives. Results showed that staff reports of principal behaviors could be described in terms of the three components of transformational leadership: inspiration or charisma,

individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Principal transformational leadership was not associated directly with either school staff turnover or school-aggregated student achievement progress. Rather, principal transformational leadership showed an indirect effect, through staff job satisfaction, on school staff turnover (negative) and on school-aggregated student achievement progress (positive). Finally, higher levels of school staff job satisfaction were associated with smaller achievement gaps between minority and non-minority students. This result was more evident among schools having higher levels of principal transformational leadership. Results are discussed in relation to the role of transformational leadership in school performance and in recruiting, training, and evaluating school principals.

Grissom, J. A. (2011). Can good principals keep teachers in disadvantaged schools? Linking principal effectiveness to teacher satisfaction and turnover in hard-to-staff environments. *Teachers College Record*, 113(11), 2552-2585.

Abstract/Summary: This study hypothesizes that school working conditions help explain both teacher satisfaction and turnover. In particular, it focuses on the role of effective principals in retaining teachers, particularly in disadvantaged schools with the greatest staffing challenges. The study conducts quantitative analyses of national data from the 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey and the 2004-05 Teacher Follow-up Survey. Regression analyses combat the potential for bias from omitted variables by utilizing an extensive set of control variables and employing a school district fixed effects approach that implicitly makes comparisons among principals and teachers within the same local context. Descriptive analyses confirm that observable measures of teachers' work environments, including ratings of the effectiveness of the principal, are generally less positive in schools with large numbers of disadvantaged students. Regression results show that principal effectiveness is associated with greater teacher satisfaction and a lower probability that the teacher leaves the school within a year. Moreover, the positive impacts of principal effectiveness on these teacher outcomes are even greater in disadvantaged schools. These findings suggest that policies focused on getting the best principals into the most challenging school environments may be effective strategies for lowering perpetually high teacher turnover rates in those schools.

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2005). A review of transformational school leadership research 1996-2005. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 4(3), 177-199. doi: 10.1080/15700760500244769

Abstract/Summary: This paper uses evidence about transformational forms of leadership in schools provided by 32 empirical studies published between 1996 and 2005 to answer questions about the nature of such leadership, its antecedents, and the variables that both moderate and mediate its effects on students. Results indicate significant, primarily indirect effects of this form of leadership on both student achievement and engagement in school. These effects are mediated by school culture, teachers' commitment and job satisfaction, and a small number of other

variables. Few studies have examined the antecedents or moderators of transformational school leadership.

Marks, H. M., & Printy, S. M. (2003). Principal leadership and school performance: An integration of transformational and instructional leadership. *Educational administration quarterly*, 39(3), 370-397. doi: 10.1177/0013161X03253412

Abstract/Summary: Focusing on school leadership relations between principals and teachers, this study examines the potential of their active collaboration around instructional matters to enhance the quality of teaching and student performance. The analysis is grounded in two conceptions of leadership—transformational and instructional. The sample comprises 24 nationally selected restructured schools—8elementary, 8middle, and 8 high schools. In keeping with the multilevel structure of the data, the primary analytic technique is hierarchical linear modeling (HLM). The study finds that transformational leadership is a necessary but insufficient condition for instructional leadership. When transformational and shared instructional leadership coexist in an integrated form of leadership, the influence on school performance, measured by the quality of its pedagogy and the achievement of its students, is substantial.

Robinson, V. M., Lloyd, C. A., & Rowe, K. J. (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of the differential effects of leadership types. *Educational administration quarterly*, 44(5), 635-674. doi: 10.1177/0013161X08321509

Abstract/Summary: The purpose of this study was to examine the relative impact of different types of leadership on students' academic and nonacademic outcomes. The methodology involved an analysis of findings from 27 published studies of the relationship between leadership and student outcomes. The first meta-analysis, including 22 of the 27 studies, involved a comparison of the effects of transformational and instructional leadership on student outcomes. The second meta-analysis involved a comparison of the effects of five inductively derived sets of leadership practices on student outcomes. Twelve of the studies contributed to this second analysis. The first meta-analysis indicated that the average effect of instructional leadership on student outcomes was three to four times that of transformational leadership. Inspection of the survey items used to measure school leadership revealed five sets of leadership practices or dimensions: establishing goals and expectations; resourcing strategically; planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum; promoting and participating in teacher learning and development, and ensuring an orderly and supportive environment. The second meta-analysis revealed strong average effects for the leadership dimension involving promoting and participating in teacher learning and development and moderate effects for the dimensions concerned with goal setting and planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum.

Twigg, N. W. (2008). Educational leadership: The effects of perceived support, organization-based self-esteem, and citizenship behaviors on student performance. *Journal of School Leadership, 18*(3), 256-277.

Abstract/Summary: It is important to retain qualified teachers in any educational environment. This is especially true for teachers who work in a structured environment fraught with administrative, logistical, and political challenges. The principal is responsible for providing a supportive educational environment, which is necessary for an atmosphere where the teacher feels comfortable. This study suggests that leadership style influences the citizenship behaviors of teachers and student performance through a covenantal model that goes beyond economic, social, and psychological exchange models. Leadership style is measured with a triangulated design where the principal's self-reported leadership style is compared with administrators' and teachers' evaluations so that a top-down and bottom-up measure of leadership style is assessed. The covenantal model also shows a significant positive relationship to student performance as measured by the objective state assessment scores. Limitations of the study, implications for administrators, and directions for future research issues are discussed.

Witziers, B., Bosker, R. J., & Krüger, M. L. (2003). Educational leadership and student achievement: The elusive search for an association. *Educational administration quarterly, 39*(3), 398-425. doi: 10.1177/0013161X03253411

Abstract/Summary: This study revisits the existing scholarly debate on the possible impact of the principal's leadership on student achievement. Both 'direct effect' and 'indirect effect' models are discussed. A quantitative meta-analysis examines to what extent principals directly affect student outcomes. The small positive effects found in this meta-analysis confirm earlier research findings on the limitations of the direct effects approach to linking leadership with student achievement. Finally, lines of future research inquiry are discussed.

Referrals

Organizations:

- Educational Policy Improvement Center: College and Career Readiness: <http://www.epiconline.org/readiness/>
- National Center for School Leadership: <http://www.ncfsl.org/>

Federally Funded Resources:

- Institute of Education Sciences (IES), public search engine available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/>
- What Works Clearinghouse: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>
- The Center on Innovation and Improvement: <http://www.centerii.org/>
- The Center on Instruction (Literacy Strand, search "principal"):



<http://www.centeroninstruction.org>

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