The Effect of Leadership Style on Preservice Concerns about Becoming a Principal

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Abstract: This study investigated the interactive effects of supervising principals' and preservice principals' leadership styles on preservice principals' pre and post internship concerns about becoming a principal. These findings suggest that the principal's leadership style is an influential determinant of preservice principals' concerns about becoming a principal. The findings also highlight the need to closely examine the relationship between preservice principals and their supervising principals.

Introduction

The purpose of the internship is to provide preservice teachers and principals with the opportunities to develop their skills in teaching and school leadership. Since 1969, numerous researchers (Fuller, 1969; Hall, George, & Rutherford, 1977, 1998; Hall & Hord, 1987) have documented preservice teachers' internship related concerns about becoming teachers. The results from their work revealed that preservice teachers depart their internship experiences with self concerns, task concerns, and impact concerns for teaching. Teacher education units

have used this research to address their concerns during and after the internship.

However, no research has sought to determine if preservice principals depart their internship with self concerns, task concerns, and impact concerns about the principalship. In addition, no research has investigated the possible relationship between these concerns and the leadership styles of preservice principals and supervising principals. Therefore, this study investigated the interactive effects of preservice principals' leadership styles and supervising principals' leadership styles' on pre and post internship concerns about becoming principals. The two research questions for this study were as follows:

1. What are preservice principals' pre and post internship self, task, and impact concerns about becoming a principal?

2. What are the interactive effects of preservice principals' leadership styles and supervising principals' leadership styles on self, task, and impact concerns about becoming a principal?

The significance of this inquiry is threefold. First, many first year principals struggle with providing schools with effective leadership (Adams, 1999). These problems may be a result of a lack of focus on their concerns during the internship. Thus, the implications are to identify and address these concerns. This approach may create better prepared first year principals.

The second significant point is that preservice principals need to develop a clear understanding of their leadership style. The identification process should begin either before or during the internship. By identifying their leadership style, preservice principals will be better prepared to determine how to be effective leaders for schools. In addition, they can use the internship experiences to hone their skills for becoming needs-satisfying principals. Third, this study could bring significant attention to another dimension on the leadership influence of the principal. Deal and Peterson (1999) indicated that a principal's leadership affects every element of the school culture. Both the preservice principal's leadership style and internship are a part of the school culture. The principal's leadership style would presumably impact the nature of the internship experience for preservice principals. This study, however, could indicate that either or both the supervising principal's leadership and preservice principal's leadership influence the preservice principal's internship related concerns regarding the principalship. Such findings would provide school districts and principal preparation programs with more insight on how principals and preservice principals influence preservice principals' concerns for leading schools.

Theoretical Framework

Transformational and Transactional Leadership

Many theorists have discussed the differences between transformational leadership and transactional leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1997; Burns, 2002; Einstein & Humphreys, 2001). One critical difference lies in how transformational leaders and transactional leaders view their relationships with the people (Burns). Whereas the people oriented transformational leader has followers, the task oriented transactional leader has subordinates (Einstein & Humphreys).

According to Burns (2002), transactional leaders care about the subordinates following orders and getting the job done. As such, these school leaders use rewards and punishments to set expectations for their organization. Transformational leaders, however, see people as being motivated through a shared vision and commitment to organizational goals. Because of their commitment to relationship-building, they focus on cultivating trust, respect, and empowerment within the organization (Burns).

Concerns Theory

In 1969, Fuller theorized that preservice and inservice teachers experience stages of self, task, and impact concerns regarding their teaching. During the concern for self stage, teachers are focused on their ability to survive in the profession. They are especially concerned about dealing with the daily problems that accompany teaching. During this stage, many new teachers report that their teacher education programs did not prepare them for the reality of teaching. During the concern for task, teachers are concerned about performing the daily requirements of teaching (Fuller, 1969). These tasks range from securing instructional materials to participating in parent teacher conferences. When teachers move to the impact concerns stage, they are focused on making a difference in the profession of teaching (Fuller, 1969). During this stage, teachers are concerned abut developing innovative ways to help students. They also seek opportunities to participate in staff development opportunities.

Related Literature

Transformation and Transactional School Leadership

Extensive research has highlighted the impact of transformational school leadership and transactional leadership on the school environment (Deal & Peterson, 1999; Griffith, 1999; Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins, 1990, 1992). Bass and Avolio (1997) indicated that transformational

school leaders build a climate of trust, respect, and collegiality within their schools. They also inspire faculty and staff members to develop shared visions for accomplishing the goals of the schools. Barnett (2005) reported that transformational school leaders instill teachers with unwavering confidence to teach students. They accomplish this goal through instructional behaviors such as observing classrooms and conducting constructive teacher observations. Kirby, King, and Paradise (1992) related that transformational principals not only talk with children about their academic progress, but also create professional development opportunities on best practices for curriculum and instruction. These leadership behaviors transform the school into a professional learning community.

Geijsel, Sleegers, Leithwood, and Jantzi (2002) denoted that transactional school leaders focus on giving directions, controlling processes, and managing the school. Additionally, transactional school leaders emphasize the use of rewards and punishment to motivate faculty members to accomplish the goals of the school. In many instances, transactional principals reinforce this behavior through management by exception and negative remediation (Ball, Trevino, & Sims, 1994; Silins, 1994; Wyatt, 1996).

Wyatt (1996) stated that transactional principals are usually inattentive to the need for observing classrooms and developing teachers' self-efficacy for improving student achievement (Barnett, 2004). However, they do give mandates and directives for delivering instruction to students. Muchinsky (2000) posited that most transactional principals lack interpersonal skills to raise the performance level of other people. In addition, they rarely include faculty and staff members' expertise in plans for facilitating school improvement. This culture causes these stakeholders to feel unappreciated by the principal and disconnected to the mission of the school (Barnett).

The Principal Preparation Internship

Many researchers (Capasso & Daresh, 2001; Cordeiro & Sloan-Smith, 1996; Daresh, 1987; Murphy & Hallinger, 1993) have indicated that the internship should bridge the gap between theories and best practices for the principalship. According to Alford & Spall (2001), the internship should provide preservice principals with practical leadership experience.

Duffrin (2001) posited that the internship experience should allow preservice principals to:

1. Develop a practical understanding of the human relations skills needed to serve as principal;

2. Participate in experiences that link acquired theories and real world applications of the principalship;

3. Observe the supervising principal on a daily basis;

4. Recognize the differences between the managerial and leader-ship aspect of the principalship;

5. Complete simple and complex tasks that accompany the principalship;

6. Focus on building relationships with faculty, staff, students, and parents; and

7. Reflect on progress towards becoming an effective school leader.

However, Fry, Bottoms, and O'neill (2005) reported that preservice principals mostly observe and follow orders instead of directing and leading activities. They continued that university personnel and school districts seldom collaborate to provide a meaningful internship for preservice principals. Finally, most preservice principals depart their internship experiences without a clear understanding of the role of the principal. The researcher believes that these factors may cause preservice principals to show concerns about becoming a principal. This study sought to determine if these concerns are also related to the leadership styles of the preservice principal and supervising principal.

Methodology

Participants

This study consisted of 69 preservice principals from the researcher's university. Thirty-six (52%) preservice principals completed the internship under the supervision of transformational principals. Whereas 19 (27%) students indicated that they were transformational leaders, the remaining 17 (28%) students indicated that they were transactional leaders.

Thirty-three (47%) preservice principals indicated that their internship experiences would be guided by transactional principals. This population consisted of 18 (26%) transformational preservice principals and 15 (21%) transactional preservice principals. All of the students worked with their principals for 2 or more years. Because of their time in the same school as the principal, the researcher believed that they could identify the leadership styles of these school leaders.

Instrumentation

The researcher administered a "Principals Concerns" survey to the students. The survey was adapted from Fuller's (1969) concerns survey for preservice teachers. The survey consisted of two sections. In addi-

tion to containing race and gender, this first section also identified the leadership styles of the preservice and supervising principals. The second section contained 33 Likert format response items regarding the concerns about becoming a principal. The questions were categorized into a "Self Concerns" construct, "Task Concerns" construct, and "Impact Concerns" construct. The response choices ranged from 1-Not Concerned to 5-Very Concerned. Prior to engaging in survey administration, the researcher consulted with a panel of male and female elementary, middle, and high school principals to establish the validity of the survey. A reliability analysis of the survey produced a Cronbach score of .92.

Procedure

At the beginning of the fall semester of 2006, the researcher met with the preservice principals to provide them with an in-depth review of the internship experience. The researcher then administered the "Principal Concerns" survey to the preservice principals. The preservice principals returned the surveys and began their internships. In addition to assigning a university supervisor to each group of students, the researcher also mailed a checklist to the supervising principals. The checklist consisted of the 33 items of the survey.

At the conclusion of the Fall semester of 2006, the researcher met with preservice principals to collect their internship materials. The researcher also administered the same "Principal Concerns" survey to them. The surveys were then collected and compared to the survey responses from the beginning of the semester.

Data Analysis and Results

Two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) procedures were used to determine the interactive effects of the preservice principals' and supervising principals' leadership styles on concerns about becoming a principal. The two ANOVA results for pre internship responses showed a statistically significant main effect for the supervising principal's leadership style on preservice principals' self concerns, $F(1,66)=4.037$, $p=.012$, partial$=.314$; task concerns, $F(1,66)=5.367$, $p=.024$, partial$=.381$; and impact concerns $F(1,66)=3.465$, partial $.412$, about becoming a principal. These findings revealed that both preservice principals with transformational supervising principals and transactional supervising principals held similar concerns about becoming a principal (See Table 1).

Other findings did not reveal statistically significant main effects for the preservice principal's leadership style on their , $F(1,66)=2.234$, $p=.512$, partial$=.010$; task concerns, $F(1,66)=1.267$, $p=.524$, partial$=.011$; and impact concerns $F(1,66)=2.015$, $p=.313$, partial$=.042$, about becoming a

principal. In addition, no interactive effects of the leadership styles of the preservice principals and supervising principals existed for self concerns, $F(1,66)=2.492$, $p=.612$, partial$=.015$; task concerns, $F(1,66)=3.047$, $p=.024$, partial$=.011$; and impact concerns $F(1,66)=3.015$, $p=.531$, partial$=.025$, about becoming a principal.

The two ANOVA results for post internship responses showed a statistically significant main effect for the supervising principal's leadership style on preservice principals' self concerns, $F(1,66)=5.067$, $p=.001$, partial$=.214$; task concerns, $F(1,66)=4.579$, $p=.020$, partial$=.181$; and impact concerns $F(1,66)=3.065$, $p=.018$, partial $.314$, about becoming a principal. These findings revealed that preservice principals with transformational supervising principals were more concerned about becoming a principal than were preservice principals with transactional supervising principals (See Table 1).

Other findings did not reveal statistically significant main effects for the preservice principal's leadership style on their self concerns, $F(1,66)=1.534$, $p=.402$, partial$=.029$; task concerns, $F(1,66)=2.617$, $p=.224$, partial$=.004$; and impact concerns $F(1,66)=4.015$, $p=.578$, partial$=.029$, about becoming a principal. In addition, this study did not show interactive effects for the leadership styles of preservice principals and supervising principals on the preservice principal's self concerns, $F(1,66)=3.252$, $p=.282$, partial$=.050$; task concerns, $F(1,66)=2.117$, $p=.057$, partial$=.092$; and impact concerns $F(1,66)=4.225$, $p=.429$, partial$=.065$, about becoming a principal.

Table 1. Mean Scores and Standard Deviations Concerns about Becoming a Principal.

| | Pre Internship | | Post Internship | |
| | Leadership Style Supervising Principal | | Leadership Style Supervising Principal | |
Concerns Category	Transformational Mean (SD)	Transactional Mean (SD)	Transformational Mean (SD)	Transactional Mean (SD)
*Self Concern	19.62 (5.01)	18.79 (5.73)	23.12 (6.38)	17.49 (4.01)
*Task Concern	28.12 (7.17)	29.02 (7.49)	32.46 (7.49)	28.31 (5.49)
*Task Concern	18.34 (5.46)	18.42 (6.41)	24.02 (6.13)	17.02 (5.01)

*Subscale Concern Score

Discussion

This study revealed several noteworthy findings. First, only the supervising principal's leadership style had a statistically significant impact on the preservice principals' pre and post internship concerns about becoming a principal. In effect, the supervising principal has a greater impact on the nature of the internship experience than the preservice principal. One reason is that preservice principals completed their internship in a school culture that was created by their principals. Second, the supervising principal determines how the presrvice principal proceeds through the internship experience. The third reason is that as apprentices, preservice principals may not focus on how their leadership influences internship related concerns about becoming a principal. Instead, they will presumably focus on how to benefit from the principal's use of leadership to affect change in school.

The second significant finding focuses on the differences in pre and post internship concerns for preservice principals with transformational supervising principals and transactional supervising principals. During the pre internship phase, all of the preservice principals initially held similar pre internship concerns about becoming a principal. These findings imply that the preservice principals entered the internship with similar understandings about the demanding role of the principal. In addition, they had not experienced opportunities to work in a leadership role with their principals.

The post internship findings, however, showed statistically significant differences between preservice principals with transformational supervising principals and transactional supervising principals. Regardless of their leadership styles, preservice principals with transformational supervising principals were more concerned about becoming a principal than preservice principals with transactional supervising principals.

These differences point to the differences between working with a transformational principal and transactional principal. The researcher believes that preservice principals with transformational supervising principals may have gained authentic experiences with demonstrating collaborative leadership in their schools. Their principals may have modeled and guided them on performing various leadership duties. However, these experiences could have caused both transformational preservice principals and transactional preservice principals to develop concerns about emulating the transformational leadership behaviors of their principals. The researcher deduces that they were probably also worried about their abilities to perform the same tasks and impact related concerns in their own schools.

The post internship findings show that the preservice principals

with transactional supervising principals had lower overall mean scores regarding their concerns for the principalship. One reason may be that they could have mostly observed their principals complete these leadership tasks and duties in a controlling manner. If the principals' behaviors produced desired results, the preservice principals may have adopted some of the transactional leadership styles. Consequently, both transformational preservice principals and transactional preservice principals will not be very concerned about their abilities to fulfill self, task, and impact concerns at their own schools. Unlike preservice principals with transformational supervising principals, they may be less likely to use transformational strategies for leading their schools.

Implications

This study bears several important implications. One implication is that supervising principals need to become more aware of how their leadership style affects prospective administrators' views about entering the principalship. The transformational and transactional principals may or may not realize that their leadership style does have a significant impact on aspiring principals' internship experiences. By making the principals aware of this correlation, school districts can inform principals of the need to serve as transformational school leaders. In addition, principals may probably try to serve as better mentors for preservice principals.

Second, university personnel and supervising principals should collaboratively build the internship around preservice principals' concerns and needs. Prior to the internship, the university supervisors should survey students to determine their concerns about becoming a principal. They should also assist preservice principals with identifying their leadership styles. The university supervisors should then meet with the principals and preservice principals to discuss these concerns and leadership styles. They should develop an action plan that allows preservice principals to use their leadership styles to address these concerns.

A checks and balances mechanism would be used to monitor and adjust this plan. In addition, the university personnel and principals should hold weekly meetings with the preservice principals. During the discussions, the preservice principals could reflect on their progress towards addressing these concerns. They could also indicate how their progress is affected by the leadership behaviors of supervising principals. Consequently, the supervising principals can gain insight on how their leadership behaviors affect preservice principals' feelings about becoming a principal. Equally significant, this process will be inclusive of the preservice principals' concerns, leadership style and needs.

Summary/Conclusion

The principal preparation internship is designed to prepare preservice principals for becoming principals (Wimore, 2002). Research has documented that the internship experience should consist of experiences that enhance their knowledge, skills, and disposition about school leadership (Capasso & Daresh, 2001). This study showed that principals' leadership styles can affect preservice principals' concerns about using these factors to negotiate the principalship.

Both preservice principals with transformational principals and transactional principals had similar pre internship self, task, and impact concerns about the principalship. At the end of the internship, however, the preservice principals with transformational principals were more concerned about task and impact related implications of the principalship than were the students with transactional principals. The implications from these findings warrant the need to develop a more student-centered principal preparation internship. In addition, more research should focus on how the leadership style of the preservice principal influences their concerns for becoming a principal.

Overall, the researcher believes that preservice principals' concerns about the principalship should be the topic of discussion among university supervisors, principals, and the preservice principals. In addition to dialogue, they should create strategies that will also address the preservice principals' concerns about the principalship. These steps will increase the preservice principals' confidence to depart their internship with the intent of providing schools with self, task, and impact related leadership.

Limitations

This study contained two limitations. First, the study consisted of a small number of participants from one university. Therefore, the findings can only be generalized to a certain population of preservice principals. Second, this study was not inclusive of the gender of the principals. Some researchers assert that gender does contribute to the leadership style of school leaders (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Eagly, Karau, & Johnson, 1992; Harris, Smith, & Hale, 2002). People cannot change their gender, but they can change their leadership styles. In conducting this study, the researcher wanted to focus on connecting the preservice principals' feelings with leadership, a trait that can undergo a transition. The researcher also chose this design to show that leadership style is a significant part of the internship treatment for preservice principals. This study indicated that the leadership style of

the supervising principal is a more influential factor than the leadership style of the preservice principal.

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Appendix: Principal Concerns Survey

Check one blank for each category.

A. Race: ____Caucasian-American ____African-American ___Hispanic/Latino American

B. Gender: ____ Male   ____Female

C. I have a_____leadership style.   A. Transformational B. Transactional

D. I will complete my internship under the supervision of _____ principal.
   A. Transformational Principal   B. Transactional Principal

Directions: As a school administrator, you will be required to perform various duties. To that end, please circle the number that highlights your present concerns about the ability to perform each of the listed duties.

1=Not Concerned; 2=Not Really Concerned; 3=Somewhat Concerned;
4=Concerned; 5=Very Concerned

Self Concerns
1. Maintaining poise and confidence in front of teachers and student.
                          1   2   3   4   5

2. Feeling like a competent principal.
                          1   2   3   4   5

3. Being accepted and respected by parents and students.
                          1   2   3   4   5

4. Being accepted and respected by teachers, other administrators, and district level officials.   1   2   3   4   5

5. Receiving a positive evaluation from teachers and students.
                          1   2   3   4   5

6. Receiving a positive evaluation from the Superintendent.
                          1   2   3   4   5

7. Maintaining a professional relationship with faculty and staff members.
                          1   2   3   4   5

8. Implementing my philosophy of educational leadership into the school.
                          1   2   3   4   5

9. Receiving the opportunity to participate in staff development activities for principals.   1   2   3   4   5

10. Receiving a mentor.   1   2   3   4   5

Task Concerns
11. Ordering and providing teachers with instructional materials in a timely manner.   1   2   3   4   5

12. Completing paper work in a timely manner.
                          1   2   3   4   5

13. Sending correspondence to parents.
                          1   2   3   4   5

14. Finding the time to serve as the instructional leader of the school.
                          1   2   3   4   5

15. Managing and allocating budget funds.

        1   2   3   4   5

16. Responding to e-mails, letters, and other correspondence in a timely and appropriate manner.   1   2   3   4   5

17. Finding substitute teachers to cover classrooms.

        1   2   3   4   5

18. Being Flexible with students and teachers.

        1   2   3   4   5

19. Using consistent discipline to manage student behavior.

        1   2   3   4   5

20. Working 14-15 hour days.   1   2   3   4   5

21. Supervising after school activities.

        1   2   3   4   5

22. Solving disputes between faculty members or faculty members and parents.   1   2   3   4   5

23. Raising test scores.   1   2   3   4   5

24. Conducting parent teacher conferences.

        1   2   3   4   5

25. Providing teachers with timely and meaningful feedback about teacher observations.   1   2   3   4   5

Impact Concerns

26. Challenging and preparing students for becoming contributors to society.

        1   2   3   4   5

27. Ensuring that ALL students receive meaningful teaching and learning activities.   1   2   3   4   5

28. Involving families in the school.

        1   2   3   4   5

29. Creating professional development activities that improve the teaching and learning process.   1   2   3   4   5

30. Identifying the students who need special services.

        1   2   3   4   5

31. Securing additional community resources to enhance the school.

        1   2   3   4   5

32. Involving students in meaningful extracurricular activities.

        1   2   3   4   5

33. Convincing community leaders to support the vision and mission of the school.   1   2   3   4   5