

Public Abstract

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Title:AN EXAMINATION OF THE PREPAREDNESS OF PRINCIPALS THROUGH THE PORTAL OF THE HIGH SCHOOL ASSISTANT PRINCIPALSHIP

Weller and Weller (2002) stated that the assistant principalship is the gateway to school administration. The position of the assistant principal looks very different pending the setting and leadership of the principal (Burdett & Schertzer, 2005; Goodson, 2000, Marshall & Hooley, 2006). In this dissertation, a quantitative examination was employed to examine how the assistant principals perceived their preparedness to attain a school principalship. Additionally, this study investigated to find if a relationship between specific leadership styles (distributive, transactional, laissez-faire, and transformational) and the preparedness of assistant principals was present.

The participants for this quantitative study consisted of 100 practicing 7-12 high school assistant principals in the state of Missouri. Data collection methods included a researcher created survey identifying the perceived leadership style of their principal as well as their perceived preparedness to fill the role of principal.

The data revealed distributive leadership as the style most employed by the high school principals. Overall the assistant principals perceive they are prepared to assume the role of principal. However, there is a discrepancy in assistant principal's perceived preparedness in the area of instructional leadership as compared to disciplinarian and managerial skills. Overall, the distributive leadership style was shown to be the most effective method employed to increase preparedness of the assistant principal to fulfill the role of principal in the areas of disciplinarian and supervisor of students.

The implications for practice may impact the preparatory program of principals, as the programs seek ways to improve assistant principal training at the university level. In addition, there is a need to improve the mentorship of assistant principals by the principal examining how the principal can share in more depth the role and responsibilities of instructional leadership. To increase the preparedness of the assistant high school principal for the role of principal a myriad of roles and responsibilities, beyond disciplinarian and supervisor of students must be provided.