

ORGANIZATIONAL FEATURES AND
SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

(ABSTRACT)

The purpose of this study was to determine the odds of school organization features predicting schools meeting district or state performance goals. The school organization features were organizational complexity, shared decision making, and leadership behavior. The dependent variable was school performance, operationally defined as a principal's *yes* response or *no* response to the question, "did your school meet district or state performance goals." The independent variables representing organizational complexity were school size, diversity of role, span of control. The independent variables representing shared decision making were curriculum influence, policy influence, and professional development influence. The leadership behavior feature was a composite variable. The percent of school lunch was the covariate, as determined by the percentage of students receiving free lunch and reduced price lunch.

The sample for this study was taken from the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS) Public-Use Data (NCES: 2004-372) collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The sample consisted of 5,312 public schools and 5,312 public school principals. Data from the SASS Public School Questionnaire and the SASS Public School Principal Questionnaire were used for the data analysis.

The methods of data analysis consisted of the identification of indicator variables from SASS, the development of scales, and the fitting of a parsimonious logistic regression model. A principal components analysis was used to extract patterns of association among the indicator variables, shared decision making and leadership behavior.

The logistic regression analysis revealed that the best model for predicting the odds of whether schools would meet district or state performance goals consisted of the variables curriculum influence, policy influence, professional development influence, size, diversity of role, span of control, and the covariate, percent of free lunch. The significant variables were curriculum influence, policy influence, professional development influence, and span of control. The odds of school organization features predicting whether schools would meet performance goals was estimated to be .7243, which was less than one or less than chance. There were several limitations of this study that need to be considered when interpreting the results.

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Four years ago, my life's journey carried me down the path towards a Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies.

“I gained it so —
By climbing slow —
By catching at the Twigs that grow
Between the Bliss and Me
It hung so high”
Emily Dickinson (1955)

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