

PROFESSIONAL TREATMENT OF TEACHERS AND
STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

by

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(ABSTRACT)

The effect of a principal's leadership on school climate and instructional organization seems apparent to parents and teachers. However, there is little evidence that a principal's leadership has a direct measurable effect on student achievement. Maehr's (1990) causal model, that ties school culture to student motivation and student motivation to student achievement, and Heck's (1990) structural equation model, that relates instructional leadership to student achievement, were the basis for posing relationships among professional treatment of teachers, school climate, instructional organization, and student achievement.

A professional treatment index, derived from highly correlated school climate variables, was used to separate elementary schools in Virginia Beach, Virginia, into four groups. Analysis of variance, followed by Duncan's new multiple range test, indicated that the academic achievement of students was significantly higher in the schools where teachers recorded the highest levels of professional treatment than in schools where teachers recorded the lowest

levels of professional treatment for three of the four years studied.

Focus-group interviews at schools recording high levels of professional treatment enabled teachers to describe how their principals treated them. Key attributes of treatment were trust and confidence, a comfortable and caring environment, professional and personal respect, delegation of decision making, no fear of taking risks, listening, support, high expectations, and encouragement and praise. By emulating the attributes described as professional treatment by teachers, principals may influence student academic achievement.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
1	THE THESIS	1
	Theoretical Evidence Related to the	
	Thesis	2
	Research Evidence Related to the Thesis	13
	Need for Further Investigation of the	
	Thesis	29
	Summary and Outline of Succeeding Chapters	30
2	FURTHER INVESTIGATION OF THE THESIS	31
	Hypothesis	45
	Definitions	45
	Populations and Samples	50
	Instrument	54
	Data Gathering Procedures	58
	Methods of Analysis	60
	Summary	60
3	RESULTS OF FURTHER INVESTIGATION	62
4	CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION	82
	REFERENCES	94
	APPENDICES	99
	A. Virginia Beach Education Association	
	Annual Surveys, 1990-91 Through	
	1993-94	100
	B. Coefficients of Determination for	
	Student Achievement, School Demographic	
	Variables, and School-Related Items on the	
	Virginia Beach Education Association's	
	Annual Survey, 1990-91 Through 1993-94	126

C.	Demographic Data for Elementary Schools in the Virginia Beach City Public Schools, 1990-91 Through 1993-94	127
D.	Table D1: Teachers' Explanations for High Professional Treatment Ratings at Their Schools by Category, N=30	131
	Table D2: Teachers Participating in the Focus Group Interviews	138
E.	Student Achievement and Professional Treatment in Virginia Beach Elementary Schools from 1988-89 to 1996-97	140
VITA	141

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
1	School-level Responses of Subjects to Questions Concerning the Use of Instructional Leadership Behaviors by Principals	9
2	Summary of Studies Linking Principal Leadership or School Climate Variables to Student Achievement	25
3	Priority Given to "Ensure Professional Treatment of All Unit Members" by Virginia Beach Teachers in Annual Surveys, 1987-1993	32
4	Percentage and Mean Score of Elementary School Teachers Who Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree with the Statement, "I am Treated Professionally by My School's Administration" in the 1993-94 Virginia Beach Education Association Annual Survey by School	34
5	Pearson Coefficients of Correlation for School Climate Variables and Professional Treatment of Teachers from Annual Surveys of Virginia Beach Elementary School Teachers, 1989-90 Through 1994-95	37
6	Pearson Coefficients of Correlation Between School Climate Variables and the Professional Treatment of Teachers in the 1994-95 Virginia Beach Education Association's Annual Survey of Elementary School Teachers, N=2,337	40
7	Percentage of Students Receiving Free or Reduced-Price Lunch and the Degree of Professional Treatment of Teachers Measured in the 1990-91 Virginia Beach Education Association's Annual Survey as Predictors of Student Achievement	43

TABLE		PAGE
8	Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, Beta Weights, and Standard Errors for Iowa Tests of Basic Skills Composite NCE Scores Regressed on Percentage of Students Receiving Free or Reduced-price Lunches and the Professional Treatment of Teachers, 1987 Through 1993	44
9	Factor Loadings of School Climate Items Used to Create a Professional Treatment Index for 1990-91 Through 1993-94	48
10	Items Comprising the Professional Treatment Index and the Years the Items were Included in the Index	51
11	Placement of Elementary Schools into Four Groups Based on the Professional Treatment Index, 1990-91 Through 1993-94	52
12	Grade-Four Iowa Tests of Basic Skills Composite Percentile Scores, Number of Students Tested, and Percentage of Total School of Total School Population Receiving Free or Reduced-Price Lunches, 1990-91 Through 1993-94, Virginia Beach Public Schools	55
13	Number, Percentage, and Demographic Information on Virginia Beach Elementary School Teachers Completing the Virginia Beach Education Association's Annual Survey, 1990-91 Through 1993-94	56
14	Summary of Analysis of Variance for 1990-91 NCE Achievement Scores of Schools Grouped by Professional Treatment Index ...	63
15	Summary of Analysis of Variance for 1991-92 NCE Achievement Scores of Schools Grouped by Professional Treatment Index ...	64
16	Summary of Analysis of Variance for 1992-93 NCE Achievement Scores of Schools Grouped by Professional Treatment Index ...	65

TABLE		PAGE
17	Summary of Analysis of Variance for 1993-94 NCE Achievement Scores of Schools Grouped by Professional Treatment Index ...	66
18	Iowa Tests of Basic Skills Composite NCE Achievement Scores for Virginia Beach Elementary Schools, 1990-91 Through 1993-94	68
19	Means and Standard Deviations of Composite NCE Achievement Scores for Virginia Beach Elementary Schools Grouped by the Professional Treatment Index, 1990-91 Through 1993-94	70
20	Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges of Three Professional Treatment Index Items (Professional Treatment, Fosters High Morale, Meaningful Involvement) for Virginia Beach Elementary Schools, 1990-91 Through 1993-94	71
21	Means and Standard Deviations for Professional Treatment and Other School Climate Items and Correlations Between the Professional Treatment Item and Other School Climate Items Included in All Four Years of the Virginia Beach Education Association's Survey of Elementary Teachers, 1990-91 Through 1993-94	76
22	Frequency of Ranking and Mean Ranks of Teachers' Complaints of Unprofessional Treatment Ranked by 25 Virginia Education Association UniServ Directors ...	80
23	Teachers' Complaints of Unprofessional Treatment Ranked by Frequency Compared to Professional Treatment Themes	84

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Far West Lab instructional leadership model	3
2	Predictive model of principal instructional leadership variables influencing student achievement (Heck et al., 1990, p. 101) ...	5
3	Predictive model of principal instructional leadership variables influencing student achievement with LISREL parameter estimates for individual and school levels. (Heck et al., 1990, p. 114)	12
4	Model of principal instructional leadership and student achievement (Hallinger et al., (1990, p. 22)	20
5	Mean scores for three professional treatment index items (professional treatment, fosters high morale, and meaningful involvement) for Virginia Beach elementary schools, 1990-91 through 1993-94	73
6	Standard deviations of the mean scores of three professional treatment index items (professional treatment, fosters high morale, and meaningful involvement) for Virginia Beach elementary schools, 1990-91 Through 1993-94	74