

This study was undertaken to determine the impact of rule-making as one of the components of leadership.

Principals' Perceptions of the Rule Making Aspects of Leadership in Hawaii

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The perceptions of principals about how district (area) superintendents carry out their rule making and enforcement responsibilities as a part of their perceived leadership functions in a large, highly bureaucratic, statewide school district is the focus of this study.

The Hawaii Department of Education (DOE) is a unique situs for a study of this type since both its organization (the single statewide system) and its culture (a highly centralized top-down governance and administration system) have the effect of controlling for certain factors which may tend to affect the outcomes of such studies in other school districts. For example, while there is only one district, the board of education has created seven quasi-autonomous area districts. Each of the districts has an appointed superintendent who reports to the Superintendent of Schools and in turn the principals, who are appointed by the board of education, report to the district superintendent. In an organizational sense these district superintendents are expected to exhibit leadership in providing superior educational outcomes while at the same time acting as the administrative officer who has the responsibility of operationalizing the rules, regulations and programs that are created by the state level bureaucracy and the board of education. Consequently, they have a good deal of latitude in some matters and very little in others.

All of the seven district superintendents who are appointive officers come from the ranks of the DOE administrators and were previously teachers in the system. Tenure in their current office has a range from one to nine years and the median length of service is five.

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The principals in the DOE, a sample of whom provided data for this study, have a similar profile. That is, the overwhelmingly majority, perhaps as high as 85 percent, are clearly place bound. That is, they have spent all, or nearly all, of their professional careers in the Hawaii DOE.

There are important aspects of this study for a number of reasons. First, it is clear that both the superintendents and the principals have been acculturated into the same professional and organizational culture. That is, they have served in a very centralized system with a strong bureaucratic orientation: a system where all of the finance is appropriated directly by a state legislature from non-property tax sources and a proclivity to micro-manage the schools through the use of legislative appropriations. Their titular superiors are a statewide elected board of education which has no constitutional franchise to raise revenue as all of the funds are appropriated by the legislature. Nonetheless, they have authority to appoint, and at least in theory, to remove the superintendents and principals.

There are at least two other players that have an impact on the system and its culture. One is the statewide education bureaucracy to whom the funds appropriated by the legislature are entrusted and who oversee the day-to-day operations of the system of 245 schools. It is headed by a superintendent of schools and four assistant superintendents who have recommending authority for the employment of both district superintendents and the principals. The other participant is a fairly strong union which includes the principals and many of the central office personnel. The union has by statute (H.R.S. Chap 89) the right to bargain for and represent all of the principals in this study. Through approximately 20 years of bargaining, the union has put in place a series of work rules which tend to insulate the principals from the vicissitudes of both the bureaucracy and the board of education. In fact, during the last two decades only three principals have been demoted or discharged.

While there are major differences among the school communities throughout the state, they have not been major players in the relations which govern the rule administrative aspects of this study. The plethora of rules, regulations, statutes, union agreements, etc., have acted to neutralize the community as far as impact on the matters involved in this study. This condition may undergo radical change in future years as site-based management, currently in its infancy in Hawaii, comes a more potent management force.

A second factor, although much less important, which has tended to create a certain uniformity to the administrative population in Hawaii is the fact that all of the formal preparation for becoming a school administrator has been delivered by a single state university which has had a very stable faculty over the past 20 years. Thus, while concepts taught have, of course, changed, the general model has been quite enduring, and nearly all of the current administrators have been prepared through that mode.

A third, and quite important factor, has been the type and scope of the staff development for administrators. In the single statewide, centralized school district, staff development has tended to be uniform in content and delivered on a statewide basis. The state bureaucracy has generally been the organizing agency for this training and as such has been able to maintain a uniform tone and content to these activities. Thus, the current district superintendents and principals have all (or nearly all) participated in the same developmental activities at approximately the same time and conditions.

These naturalistic controls tend to make this study unique. Problems such as different district organization, financial resources, school cultures, school board regulations and philosophies, and union work rules that have plagued researchers in other jurisdictions are fairly well controlled in

study. Likewise, the aspect of training both formal, e.g., university, and the district staff development, have tended to be uniform and have reduced the variance which could certainly be a confounding factor in a less homogeneous setting. In summary, Hawaii may be the best laboratory setting in the United States for administrative studies of this type.

Based upon the natural controls stated above, this study attempts to analyze the following questions:

1. Are there differences in the perceptions of the sample of principals about the rule making aspects of leadership among the seven district superintendents in the DOE?
2. If there are systematic differences, who differs from whom among the districts?
3. Are there significant differences in the perceptions of the leadership skills of superintendents among the districts, and if so, who differs?
4. Given the strong union of school level administrators, is there a difference in militancy among districts, and if so, does it play a part in the perceptions of the rule making or leadership aspects of the superintendent?
5. Can a proportion of the variance in scores on a leadership instrument be explained by variables such as rule administration, militancy and/or a set of personal and demographic variables?

Review of Literature

Alvin Gouldner (1954), using Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy as a basis for a study, looked very thoroughly at the method by which rules are enforced or administered by management in a bureaucratic organization in his book, *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy*. His examination revealed three distinct types of rule administration used by leaders to administer rules in their organizations. The three patterns of rule administration were:

1. *Representative rule administration* is characterized by joint support for and/or modification of rules. The rules are enforced by management and obeyed by workers. In sum, there is joint participation in the rule acceptance.
2. *Mock rule administration* is when the rules are neither obeyed by the staff nor enforced by management and evaded by employees. There is clear conflict in rule acceptance.
3. *Punishment-centered* is characterized by disaccord between the rule enforcer and the employee affected by the rule: that is, rules enforced by the leader that are evaded or accepted as punishment by the employees. Punishment-centered rules are enforced by management and evaded by employees. There is clear conflict in rule acceptance.

Lutz and Evans (1968), capitalizing on the Gouldner model, conducted an investigation in New York City to determine the relationships, if any, between the rule administration of principals and the leadership climate of the school. The results of their study showed that principals who demonstrated high representative rule administration were perceived by teachers to be high in leadership. On the other hand, principals who exhibited high punishment-center rule administration were perceived to be low in leadership.

Based on results of the New York study, the necessity of goal integrative behavior for school administrators and the increasing demands from teachers to participate in education decision making through collective bargaining and that hostility might take the form of increased teacher militancy, Spaulding (1973) and McDaniel (1973) undertook studies to investigate the relationships between the manner in which a principal adminis-

ters rules and teachers' perceptions of the principal's leadership and staff militancy. Generally, the results of these two studies left little doubt that when principals are perceived by teachers as being representative-centered in their rule administration, they are also perceived as having high leadership; whereas, when they are perceived as being punishment-centered, they are also perceived as having low leadership behavior.

Building on these studies, Spaulding (1973) and McDaniel (1973) concluded that the leaders in organizations must be concerned with employee's goals, that organizational goals are better met as they can be made congruent with individual employee needs, and that leaders are more effective as they are perceived as considerate of their subordinates. Nugent (1993) undertook a study to determine whether there were significant differences among district superintendent's rule administration behavior, leadership behavior and staff militancy as perceived by principals in their districts, using scores on three behaviorally based instruments as well as a number of demographic characteristics.

Methodology

The population to which this study generalized is the 245 public elementary and secondary principals in the Hawaii Department of Education. A sample of 155 principals, sufficient in number to meet a .95% confidence level was randomly selected from among the school level cohort. All seven district superintendents were used as the independent variable.

A packet with three instruments were used: The Rule Administration Scale developed by Spaulding (1973) with three subscales (1. Representative, 2. Mock, and 3. Punishment centered) which measured three types of rule administration; the Executive Professional Leadership Instrument (EPI) by Gross and Herriott (1965) made up of twelve statements which purport to measure leadership skills of educational administrators; and a Militancy Scale originally developed by Carlson (1967) which was modified for use with principals. Also, a short information sheet asking about some general personal and demographic data were enclosed. Due to the potentially sensitive nature of the responses, complete anonymity was strictly preserved and the districts were coded so that the actual district superintendents could not be identified. A satisfactory return rate of 85% was achieved.

The hypotheses were tested by the use of a series of One-Way ANOVAS with Scheffé tests, when required, as well as Multiple Regression Analysis.

Findings

The five questions that were previously enumerated were tested using a $p < .05$ probability. The results of a One-Way ANOVA and the mean scores of the principals' responses by district on the subscale of Representative Rule Administration are presented in Table 1.

In all other districts the means did not differ from others enough to meet Scheffé default level. The null hypothesis was rejected for two of the subscales (representative and punishment-centered). On the Representative Rule subscale, the two districts with the highest means were significantly different from the two with the lowest means. The other district means D = 2.87, E = 3.31, G = 3.31 did not enter the Scheffé analysis.

One district (with the higher mean for punishment centered rule administration) varied from the two lowest. The four other districts did not enter. The scaling for the representative subscale was 1 which means little representative rule making to 5 which was high. On the punishment-centered, 1 means there was little use of threat or punishment to enforce rules to 5 which was high.

The third question was analyzed by asking each principal in the sample to rate the leadership ability of his/her superintendent use the Executive Professional Leadership Instrument. The results of the ANOVA and Scheffé tests are presented in Table 2.

Table 1. Results of the One-Way ANOVA Among Districts and the Mean Scores of the Various Districts on the Representative and Punishment-centered Subscales Which Differed on the Scheffé Test

Source	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Sq	F-Ratio	Sig. Level
Representative					
Districts	13.634	6	2.272	4.750	.0002*
Residual	68.895	144	.478		
Punishment Centered					
Districts	7.134	6	1.189	3.636	.0022*
Residual	47.090	144	.327		
Mock Rule (No significant difference)					
Mean of district which differed on the Scheffé Tests**					
Representative			Punishment Centered		
District B	3.54 vs. C 2.77 vs. A 2.82		District C	2.46 vs. F 1.84 vs. F 1.84	
District F	3.48 vs. C 2.77				
*p < .05					
**Scheffé p < .05					

Table 2. Results of One-Way ANOVA and Scheffé Tests on the Principal's Perception of the Leadership Behaviors of Their District Superintendent

Source	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Sq	F-Ratio	Sig. Level
Districts	39.214	6	6.537	8.050	.0000*
Residual	116.099	143	.811		
Scheffé Test Results					
District	Mean				
B	4.65	v	A 3.59 D 2.84		
E	4.32	v	D 2.84		
F	4.18	v	D 2.84		
G	4.12	v	D 2.84		
*p < .05					

It is clear that principals perceived the leadership behavior of their superintendents differently and that their differences could be generalized to the rest of the school level administrators at a very high level of probability. One district with a low mean score provided most of the differentiation in the Scheffé analysis. This instrument also employed a 1 (low) to 5 (high) scaling.

The fourth question analyzed several potential explanatory variables to determine whether on a univariate basis one or more might be related to responses made by principals on the previous questions. The first part of the analysis dealt with the aspect of principal militancy. The responses on the Militancy Scale indicated that there was significant differences in militancy among the seven districts. The calculated F ratio was 2.522 with a probability level of $p = .0237$. The Scheffé test could only isolate two districts as different from the others. Principals in district E with a mean of 3.83 differed from G = 3.19. However, both of these districts had high means on the leadership behavior of the superintendent.

A set of personal (age, sex) and demographic (years of experience as a principal) variables were tested against scores on rule administration and leadership behavior by the use of an N-way ANOVA. None of the variables produced either main effects or interaction differences at or beyond the $p < .05$ level.

The fifth question used all of the scores on the rule administrator subscales, the militancy score and all of the personal and demographic data as criteria (independent) variables and the scores on leadership behavior as the predictor (dependent) to determine by use of a multiple regression analysis how much

of the variance (R squared) in leadership scores were related to these variables. A step-wise forward inclusion technique was used to determine which variables would enter the model at a non-chance probability of $p < .05$.

Seven variables (1) Representative, (2) Mock, (3) Punishment-centered rule administration, (4) The Militancy score, (5) Age, (6) Sex, and (7) Experience of the principals in the sample were used. Of these, only two met the default standard ($p < .05$) and were retained in the model. They were representative rule administration which contributed 26% of the variance in leadership scores, and punishment-centered rule administration which produced 3.4% of the variance. In all, a respectable 29.4% of the variance in the principal perceptions of leadership behavior were explained by the two rule administration variables.

Conclusions and Discussion

This study was undertaken to determine the impact of rule making as one of the components of leadership. It was carried out in a rather unique setting since by the nature of the district a number of potentially confounding variable were fairly well controlled. These naturalistic controls included an administrative selection process which led to a situation where all of the district superintendents are long service employees of the DOE. The single statewide district provided a professional and social acculturation that was very similar in all of the seven administrative districts. There was nearly no variance in level of funding (per pupil) among the districts. The principals who supplied the data were all subjected to the same staff development since it was all determined and provided by the statewide bureaucracy.

Given all of these controls which might reasonably be expected to produce a homogenizing tendency among the principal's views on rule administration among the seven districts, that did not happen. In fact the principals in four of the districts had significantly different views on how their superintendents performed their rule administration duties which could be generalized to the population of the principals. Further, these views did not appear to be factor of the age, sex or years of experience of the principals who shared their perceptions.

Likewise, the fact that the superintendents were all similarly acculturated, extremely place bound, and exposed to the same organizational, financial, and personnel goals and policies, the principals (who were similarly situated) perceived differences in leadership behavior among the superintendents. Apparently leadership is at least partially independent of factors which have generally been perceived as powerful determinants of leadership behavior in other studies.

Is rule administration a major aspect of the concept of leadership? Apparently it is in the Hawaii Department of Education. Approximately 30 percent of the variance in leadership behavior scores was accounted for by variance in the scores on rule administration. At least among this group of administrators, who are employed by a highly bureaucratic system, rule administration is related to leadership, and there are perceived differences among several of the district superintendents on their ability to administer rules.

If these findings have relevance for other districts and states in the United States, it may be time to place a greater emphasis on this often under-emphasized aspect of leadership in public schools. The payoffs may be substantial.

References

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