Title: Principals’ leadership styles and teacher empowerment as perceived by teachers in Seventh-day Adventist High Schools in South India

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Abstract:

The major purpose guiding this study was to provide insights to educational leaders regarding the relationships between leadership styles and teacher empowerment. Linked to this purpose were certain corollary intents: to determine the extent to which the teachers of Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) high schools in South India perceived themselves as empowered and to determine the relationships between principals’ leadership styles and teacher empowerment in these schools.

This survey involved 229 teachers from 26 SDA high schools in South India. This study used two instruments, the Teacher Empowerment Scale originally developed by Rantung (1995), and modified by the researcher and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 1995).

The major conclusions of this study were as follows: (a) There is a strong relationship between positive leadership styles and teacher empowerment, especially in the case of contingent reward, individual consideration, and inspirational motivation leadership styles. (b) Although principals used a combination of both positive and negative leadership styles, the most predominant leadership style perceived by teachers is inspirational motivation and the least is laissez-faire. (c) Teachers perceive themselves as moderately empowered. Perception of
teacher empowerment decreases, however, as years of teaching experience increase. (d) Teachers who are younger and less experienced perceive their principals as using Management-by-Exception leadership style more frequently than do older and more experienced teachers. (e) Statistically strong predictive models of teacher empowerment include contingent reward, individual consideration, and inspirational motivation leadership styles. (f) A typical principal in SDA high schools in South India is a male and holds a master’s degree. Nearly half hold a master’s degree. (g) Turnover rate of principals and teachers in these schools is moderately high.

Major recommendations include (a) that board member to take initiative in providing leadership training for the principals; (b) that principals address the high turnover rate of teachers; (c) that researchers replicate the study including both principals and teachers as participants and in other cultures and school levels; and (d) that a three factor structure of transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership styles be explored for the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire.