# UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND THE PATH TO SUCCESS

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## ABSTRACT

*The concepts of leadership, management and administration overlap and have been accorded different emphases over time and in different contexts. Their usage varies across countries and professional cultures. In English-speaking countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the US, the role of leader is seen as of prime importance in raising standards and promoting school improvement, but this is not so in other countries, for example the Netherlands and Scandinavian countries. This difference in emphasis reflects variations in the functioning of education systems and their historical, national and regional policy contexts that will exert different degrees of influence on institutions' work and therefore on the role of leaders in schools. The distinction between the focus or concerns of organisational leadership and management has been summarised as follows. This correlational cross-sectional study identifies and tests research-based constructs of school leadership and teacher job satisfaction on the 2012 Tell MASS survey using exploratory factor analyses, confirmatory factor analyses, and reliability analyses. Hierarchical linear modeling is used to examine the relationship between the survey's school leadership and teacher job satisfaction scales. Multiple regression analyses are used to investigate the hypothesis that school leadership and student achievement on standardized tests in English Language Arts and Mathematics are also related, though this relationship is mediated by teacher job satisfaction.*

**Keywords:** Educational Leadership, Success.

## INTRODUCTION

The central role principals play at the school level, coupled with federally-imposed national accountability for turning around low-performing schools in the United States, supports further research into identifying specific principal leadership behaviors that influence improved student achievement within the context of low-performing schools. In addition, the evolution of a competitive global economy has brought about an unprecedented focus on educational accountability measured in terms of student achievement. A growing body of research ties educational results to economic growth in developed, as well as developing countries (International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), 2008; Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2013). At the turn of the millennium global competitiveness served as the impetus for the United States to implement a system of accountability for educational outcomes based on measures of student achievement. Although the drive for accountability originated at the federal level with revisions to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by No Child Left Behind (NCLB), accountability for student achievement ultimately rests on the shoulders of school principals (No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB], Pub. L. No. 107-110, § 115, Stat. 1425, (2002)). As noted in recent research, "Ten years ago, school leadership was noticeably absent from most major school reform agendas . . . (Wallace Foundation, 2013, p. 5)." Key studies from the turn of the millennium confirm the direct and indirect impact of leadership on student achievement (Cotton, 2003; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004; Marks & Printy, 2003;

Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). However, research is limited on specific leadership 2 practices impacting student achievement. While the effects of successful leadership have proven to be greater in the most challenged schools, there has been limited research on the specific behaviors displayed by principals in the context of low-performing schools (Leithwood et al., 2004; Robinson et al., 2008; Hallinger & Chen, 2015). The United States has long maintained its record as a leading global competitor; however, recent comparisons of educational outcomes tied to economic growth have challenged the ranking of the United States among other emerging economies. Results from the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) from 34 participating countries rank the United States at 27th in mathematics and 17th in reading, far behind Shanghai-China, Singapore, Hong Kong-China, Korea and Japan (OECD, 2013). Education is identified as a fundamental determinant of a country's aggregate level of economic growth as evidenced by the link of primary and secondary education to employability and income (IIASA, 2008). Whereas a secondary education supports economic growth in developing countries, a tertiary education is a determinant of economic growth in industrialized countries (IIASA, 2008). Evidence of the impact of enhanced workers' skills on employability is demonstrated by the 2009 OECD countries reporting a 74% employment rate for secondary school graduates in comparison to a 54% employment rate for secondary school dropouts (OECD, 2012).

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Global competition has woven a web of complexities and accountability throughout the world's educational systems which has manifested itself in increased involvement of the federal government in K-12 education in the United States

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