

ABSTRACT

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An Investigation of the Relationship between Teachers' Perceptions of School Improvement and the Academic Achievement of their Students

(Major Professor: Wilton Barham)

The purpose of this study was to investigate relationships between teachers' perceptions of school improvement and academic achievement of their students. The study utilized a causal comparative, *ex post facto* research design to examine teacher responses on 12,250, 60-item questionnaires that were distributed by the Louisiana Department of Education in 439 public schools encompassing 50 school districts statewide in Louisiana during the 2002-2003 school year. The data were generated from The Louisiana Department of Education School Analysis Model (SAM 2000) *Instructional Staff Questionnaire* that has a calculated internal reliability coefficient of .80.

The following independent variables were examined to determine relationships with student academic achievement: accountability, assessment, teacher quality, effective teachers, academic ability of students, professional development, and leadership capacity. The study examined the following demographic data to determine relationships with academic achievement: years of teaching experience, years of teaching experience at this school, levels of formal education, and number of days absent for professional development activities. The dependent variable was student academic achievement and the dependent measure was school performance scores.

Descriptive statistics indicated teachers' perceptions of teacher quality ($m=4.14$) were the highest predictor of student academic achievement, however there was no significant difference found in the regression analysis. The intercorrelations of the independent variables indicated a significant relationship between all variables. For the independent variables, highest correlation was found between professional development and leadership capacity (0.66). Correlations between the independent variables and dependent variables were also found, highest correlation was found between student academic achievement and academic ability (0.36).

An adjusted R^2 of (0.15) was calculated using the independent variables as predictor variables. Study findings indicated that academic ability of students ($B=0.33$) and effective teachers ($B=0.16$) were the highest predictors of student academic achievement. The analysis of variance indicated a direct positive relationship between years of teaching experience at this school and student academic achievement ($m=79.17$).