

Principal Leadership Style and Teacher Stress among a Sample of Secondary School Teachers in Barbados

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This paper which represented part of a larger principal leadership study examined the relationship between principal leadership style (which was operationalized in terms of the principal functions as follows: planning, decision making, communicating, organizing and coordinating, delegating, evaluating, and social and professional support. The dependent variable was teacher stress. A cohort of ninety (90) teachers and eleven (11) principals were selected from eleven (11) secondary schools in Barbados, using purposive sampling. The study found significant negative correlations between the dependent variable of teacher stress and principal leadership style. Additionally, the study found that younger and inexperienced teachers reported higher levels of stress than their older and more experienced counterparts on several of the variables. There was also a significant difference in the stress scores reported by newer secondary school teachers and older secondary school teachers. The present research findings suggest that there is a need to develop differentiated stress management systems to address the different levels of stress that are being experienced by older and newer secondary school teachers. Based on the negative correlation between principal leadership style and teacher stress, it is recommended that principals re-examine how they lead their schools and seek wherever possible to identify what aspects of their leadership could be contributing to teacher stress and institute corrective measures in the areas where such action is warranted.

Key words: principal leadership style; teacher stress; teacher perceptions; experienced teachers

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