

Principalship desirability – what counts?

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Background of Study

- The shortfall in the number and quality of people applying for school principal positions has triggered some studies to explore the reasons behind.
- Four groups of factors have been proposed by various writers
 - Expanded responsibilities of school leaders
 - School factors
 - Demographic factors
 - Motivational factors
- Lack of a holistic model bringing four groups of factors together

Objectives of Study

- To develop a model incorporating the four groups of factors together; and
- To identify the respective effects of each group of factor on vice-principals' decisions about whether they want to become principals

Methodology

- Target respondents : VPs in all Hong Kong secondary schools (331 responded)
- Measures
 - Role responsibilities (57 items covering 7 job dimensions)
 - School factors (student achievement, size, type)
 - Demographic factors (gender, age, qualification)
 - Motivational factors (existence, relatedness, growth ; each measured by 5 items)
 - Desire for principalship (2 items)
- Sequential multiple regression was used to investigate the respective effect of each of the four blocks of factors on the VPs' desire for principalship (dummy variables were created for categorical variables).

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	R^2	F	p	ΔR^2	p
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Demographic factors	.218	4.237	.000	.137	.000
Motivational factors	.280	4.484	.000	.063	.000

Standardised Coefficients of Sequential Regression

Role responsibilities	β	p
External communication & connection	.020	.984
Quality Assurance & Accountability	.030	.685
Teaching Learning & Curriculum	-.091	.224
Staff management	.000	.995
Resources Management	.065	.313
Professional Growth	.226	.003 *
Strategic planning	.032	.674

Standardised Coefficients of Sequential Regression

School Factors	β	p
Dummy variable 1 – <i>high-achieving school=1, others=0</i>	-.091	.245
Dummy variable 2 – <i>mediocre school=1, others =0</i>	-.022	.770
Dummy variable 3 – <i>government school=1, others= 0</i>	.157	.103
Dummy variable 4 – <i>aided school=1, others=0</i>	.103	.284
No of students	.082	.212

Standardised Coefficients of Sequential Regression

Demographic Factors	β	p
Dummy variable 5 – <i>male=1, female=0</i>	.073	.217
Dummy variable 6 – <i>age from 45 to 54=1, others =0</i>	.189	.001 *
Dummy variable 7 – <i>age 55 or above =1, others= 0</i>	-.082	.160
Dummy variable 8 – <i>masters qualification=1, others=0</i>	.196	.685
Dummy variable 9 – <i>bachelor or certificate=1, others=0</i>	-.087	.856

Standardised Coefficients of Sequential Regression

Motivational Factors	β	p
Existence Needs	.115	.125
Relatedness Needs	-.170	.012 *
Growth Needs	.204	.010 *

Findings

- VPs' desire for principalship was affected by responsibility, demographic and motivational factors, but not school factors
- More specifically, desire for principalship is
 - Positively linked to involvement in professional development
 - Strongest amongst the 45 to 54 age group
 - Positively linked to growth needs
 - Negatively linked to relatedness needs.

Implications

- Professional development is a possible way to increase both the quality and quantity of principal aspirants
- School-related factors are not criteria guiding decisions about whether to apply for a principalship (principals are generally drawn from the serving VP from the school or the same sponsoring body)
- The prevalent group-oriented culture in Hong Kong in which school harmony is highly valued also appears to contribute to issues of quality principal supply and demand
- Additional professional development built around human resource issues may be useful.