Exploring Staff, Student, and Parent Perceptions: Implications for Improving School Quality

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ABSTRACT

This study examined student, parent and school staff ratings of factors that contribute to school quality in four suburban Utah schools, with the aim of understanding stakeholder perceptions. The findings indicated that student ratings of aspects of school quality varied according to grade in school, gender, and ethnicity. Parents, students, and school staff also differed in their perceptions of school quality.

BACKGROUND

1. Researchers have examined the perceptions of students to evaluate school quality and achievements (Reck, 2009).
2. Positive perceptions of school quality are related to higher academic performance (Reck, 2008).
3. When individuals perceive that they have a high level of control and influence, they are more likely to work productively (Karasek & Theorell, 1990).
4. Specifically, students' perceptions of their autonomy, expectations, and support from their teachers and fellow students are related to academic outcomes (Samdal et al., 1999).
5. Few studies have addressed differences in stakeholder perceptions. When examined, such differences were typically a tangential feature of the research (e.g., Heck, 2000; Samdal et al., 1999).
6. Researchers and administrators might benefit from surveying stakeholders and taking differences into account, particularly when planning school-wide interventions.

INSTRUMENT

1. Indicators of School Quality (ISQ) is a set of tools developed by Heck (2000) to measure perceptions of school quality by exploring potential differences (parent, student, and staff).
2. Recent studies of surveys are addressed by the same parent, teacher, student, and school staff. The ISQ is comprised of three parallel surveys of stakeholder perceptions (parent, student, and staff survey).
3. The ISQ measures perceptions of school leaders, instructional quality, instructional quality, and school management. The ISQ is comprised of three parallel surveys of stakeholder perceptions (parent, student, and school staff).
4. Researchers and administrators might benefit from surveying stakeholders and taking differences into account, particularly when planning school-wide interventions.

RESULTS

The findings indicated that student ratings of aspects of school quality varied according to grade in school, gender, and ethnicity. Parents, students, and school staff also differed in their perceptions of school quality.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that various factors may influence students' perceptions of school quality, although effect sizes were relatively small.

FUTURE RESEARCH

1. Experimental research examining causes for shifts in stakeholder perceptions would be informative.
2. Survey comparisons can also provide impetus for qualitative studies examining perceptions at a specific school in more depth.

REFERENCES