Chapter 51

Examining the 21st Century Workforce Leaders’ Perceptions of Ethical Leadership and Organizational Health

Gregory C. Petty
University of Tennessee, USA

Jessica H. Chambers
University of Tennessee, USA

ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationships between instructors’ perceptions of their leaders’ integrity as measured by the Perceived Leadership Integrity Scale (PLIS), and the instructional systems organizational health. The sample involved six hundred fifty (650) instructors who were surveyed online. Pearson product correlations revealed statistically significant relationships between Perceived Leader Integrity (PLI) and the composite score of the seven Organizational Health Inventory for Schools (OHI-S) dimensions. Multiple regression analysis showed the OH Index to have a strong independent effect with the factors of consideration, institutional integrity, and academic emphasis. These findings will broaden understanding of the relationship between leadership and ethics, an important link to effectively managing instructors utilizing today’s technologies for classroom instruction.

INTRODUCTION

Leaders of the 21st Century will certainly need to master the technologies of their trade. As important as mastery of technology however, are the mastery of ethical leadership and the effects of leadership on organizational health (Petty & Farris, 2012; Petty & Hill, 2005). It is agreed by adult educators that the Internet, Web 2.0 technologies and other cutting edge expertise have changed the classroom. But how does the leader now effectively interface with teachers in an ethical and organizationally healthy way? Few studies have explored the role of ethics on leadership (Petty & Brewer, 2008).

Educational leaders have the responsibility of creating effective learning communities (Strike,
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in the hands of the principals (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Miles, 2002; Sergiovanni, 2006).

This study examined the multiple aspects of organizational health and the effects leaders have on this important ethical concept. Although this is a single study, it involved more than 600 instructors in the Southeastern US and the implications are broad ranging with comprehensive leadership principles for today’s leaders of educational programs using instructional technologies.

NEEDS

Ciulla (1995) argued that researchers were spending too much time researching the definition of leadership; instead, they should have been determining what characteristics made a good leader. In a more recent article, Ciulla (2003) proposed that a good leader was not simply effective, but also morally good. Therefore, the question of concern posed from Ciulla’s earlier article became whether ethics was actually the difference between a good leader and an effective one.

Research into ethical leadership has been a fairly new development (Craig & Gustafson, 1998; Fowler, 2010; Northouse, 2004; Strike, 2007), with few studies published to date. Understanding the relationship between leadership and ethics has relied strongly upon conducting research from a variety of perspectives, cultures, and disciplines (Ciulla, 2005). Northouse recommended more intensive and more rigorous research in this area to clarify the relationship between leadership and ethics and to identify possible implications for policy and decision making.

Society today finds itself in an era of ethical decline (Bennett, 1999). Boeing, Enron, Tyco International, WorldCom, HealthSouth Corporation, and Arthur Anderson are among the major corporations impacted by severe ethical issues over the past decade (Uhl-Bien & Carsten, 2007). Walker Information National Study (2001) conducted re-