

## Chapter 17

# Understanding the Influence of Teacher Leadership and Teacher Quality on Student Performance

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The main objective of this study was to understand how teacher leadership and teacher quality impacted fourth grade student performance on the Louisiana Education Assessment Program (LEAP). The participants chosen were six schools in Louisiana who were labeled academically unacceptable for at least three years that taught fourth grade. A review of the data results provide an indication that, although standardized test scores of students are one piece of information for school leaders to use to make judgments about teacher effectiveness, such scores should be only a part of an overall comprehensive evaluation of the role of teacher leadership and teacher quality on student performance. The results varied by the characteristic of teacher quality and its impact on student performance.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Deming, Cohodes, Jennings, and Jencks (2013) stated there are many goals set by the public education systems, having standardized testing as a primary aspect of school accountability that impacted student's life-long outcomes. Standardized testing is an avenue for teacher bonuses and ideas for student improvement on assessments as a short-term goal (Deming, et al., 2013). The Federal Government's attempt to improve student performance by issuing standards for administering standardized high stakes test have led to a more centralized focus on teacher accountability (Saultz & Saultz (2017)). Saultz and Saultz reported, in the current era of increased testing for accountability, the assumption is the more advanced standardized scores the higher the quality of teacher. With the forceful consequences of not following the standards of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, schools are compelled to engage students in

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summative exams that will ultimately prepare them for the required end of year standardized test (Deming, et al., 2013). Teacher quality has often played a significant role in the quality of standardized test scores. The value of education provided to the students can affect the success rate of completing and passing the required testing. Teacher quality is vital because of many times the standardized test determines student's promotion. This study investigated how teacher quality influenced student performance in Louisiana analyzing data from the LEAP test. The Louisiana Education Assessment Program (LEAP) is a standardized test administered in the fourth and eighth grades that measure whether students have gained the skills and knowledge suitable for advancing to the next grade level or entering public school in the fifth grade (Abdulkadiroglu, Pathak, & Walters, 2015).

Teacher quality and its effects on performance scores are vitally important. Teacher quality in this study assessed the performance outcomes of the students taught. Teacher quality is the teachers' ability to educate and prepare the students to master the LEAP successfully. Teachers should provide elementary students more time and preparation to understand as well as reciprocate the necessary information. Teachers need to have the quality to be patient and understanding the needs of elementary students which important in building student teacher relationships.

It is essential to have the apparent proof that projects a significant relationship between the student's achievement and the quality of the teacher, having a highly qualified teacher (Araujo, et al., 2016). However, highly qualified teachers may also have students who are performing poorly on standardized testing, from lack of either understanding or lack of will to succeed (Araujo, et al., 2016). When a student is not receiving accurate or subject-specific information, it can cause poor performance (Araujo, et al., 2016). Which lead to poor teacher evaluations of teacher quality.

There have been debates about how to measure teacher quality. Rix (2013) discussed four ways a new system attempted to measure teacher quality the ability to design lessons, thoroughness and depth, philosophy of success, and level of student mastery of lessons. Araujo, Carneiro, Cruz-Aguayo, and Schady (2016) argued there are five teacher characteristics which are measurable that are assumed to determine teacher quality. These are teacher experience, their test scores, teacher certification, teacher coursework, and teacher preparation programs and degrees. This study used teacher evaluation, teacher experience, teacher certification, and teacher degree level to measure teacher quality.

This quantitative, ex-post facto study determined the relationship between teacher quality and student achievement on the LEAP test in Louisiana. Upon gathering the results of all schools in Louisiana who administered the LEAP, the focus was on Fourth-grade classes in schools that received an Academically Unacceptable Schools (AUS) label. More specifically those schools studied were those that obtained a five or six AUS score throughout the state for the 2016-2017.

## **Background of Study**

Academically the U.S. is on a decline when ranked with other countries (Ryan, 2013). Compared to other countries, the educational system in the U.S classified mediocre (Ryan, 2013). For instance, when compared to other countries the U.S. performs poorly on the standardized test in Reading, Math, and Science (Schleicher & Davidson, 2013). More specifically, research graded student achievement in the state of Louisiana as one of the poorest, especially on standardized testing. On a point scale of 100, Louisiana scored 30.33 in achievement (Sentell, 2016b). Louisiana is one of the states that currently struggle to meet Annual Yearly Percentage (AYP) having approximately 35% of the schools that are

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