Article critique: “Effects of Leadership on Student Success through the Balanced Leadership Framework”

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ABSTRACT

Cetin and Kinik wrote an article entitled “Effects of Leadership on Student Success through the Balanced Leadership Framework” and this critique focuses on this article. The author aims to investigate the role of balanced leadership for students’ success despite the mismatch between his purpose and the way he discussed balanced leadership. In this study, after reviewing the literature, a qualitative analysis related to the 8 leadership responsibilities (Culture, Ideals and Beliefs, Communication, Visibility, Input, Relationships, Situational Awareness, Affirmation) that are necessary to form the Purposeful Community (which is not exactly match with the intended purpose students success) has been made. The author raised interesting issue in the leadership arena but the issues raised are not in line with the role of balanced leadership on students’ success that goes beyond this creation of purposeful community which seems broad aim to be succeed after long time of schooling. To this end, reviewer underscored that however the author inclined to bring hot and ample issue the way he pass through needs revision and re correction, ways of sampling, singularity of data collection instrument leads to problem of generalizability, replicability and trustworthiness of the findings.

Keywords: Balanced Leadership, Leadership Responsibilities, Student Success, Purposeful Community
Introduction
There is great interest in educational leadership in the early part of the twenty-first century. This is because of the widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and student outcomes (Gunter, 2001, Marzano, Waters and McNulty, 2005, Bush, 2008). The article, “Effects of Leadership on Student Success through the Balanced Leadership Framework” by Cetin and Kinik sought to assess the effects of applying balanced leadership framework on students’ success. The authors of the article seem impressed to find out to what extent the newly emerging balanced leadership approach was effectively utilized to improve students learning and their academic achievements. While the article produced significant results showing that the effects of balanced leadership on students’ success have been clarified explicitly with limitations of replicability, sample, and generalizations.

Summary
Cetin & Kinik (2016) used a sample of 15 teachers (purposefully selected from private and state, primary and secondary schools and from different fields of study) to collect data for the purpose of assessing the effect of balanced leadership on students success when measured using specific leadership responsibilities standards. Cetin and Kinik reported that data were collected through open ended questionnaires containing 6 items related to basic leadership responsibilities. They used narratives type qualitative study and forwarded some findings and conclusions but not summarized results based on the literature they reviewed and the analysis results they obtained.

The researchers studied the contemporary and relevant issue related to school leadership. This issue is relevant agenda in general and balanced leadership in particular. The problem in this article is the mismatch between the objective of the research and the title which indicates the effect of leadership on students’ success. The researchers seem confused to state that the role of leadership in the form of purposeful community and the effect of leadership on students’ success that are not the same and cannot be approached in a similar way. For me creating purposeful community is broad that can be measured after long years as a result of the education students received which cannot be observed easily in such short term study (needs impact assessment after a completion a program). In addition, throughout their literature discussion they mentioned “purposeful community” repeatedly which deviates from their intention of assessing the effect of balanced leadership on students’ success. The selected responsibilities (Culture, Ideals and Beliefs, Communication, Visibility, Input, Relationships, Situational Awareness, Affirmation) are all interesting but related with creating purposeful community rather than students success (p. 677).

According to Deal (2010:199) the abstract is representative of the whole research sometimes called a “summary” that “deals with all the main subsections of the research article and can even have invisible subtitles such as Background/Method/Results/Conclusions”. In this regard, the researchers didn’t express the purpose of the study as required; sampling procedures and techniques are not clearly set (except writing as they took 15 teachers), the results obtained and selected implications are not well reported. The researchers make their abstract full of explanations on the identification procedures of leadership responsibilities made by any other group McREL (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning) rather than focusing on their own business. Cooper (2010) cited in Creswell (2016), pointed out that mentioning the problem being addressed, stating focus of the study, providing information about the sample, population, or subjects, summarizing key results that relate to the
proposed study are important features of an abstract that these researchers missed.

The researchers introduced their study explaining more of irrelevant information repeating what they have done in the abstract. It was better to show how balanced leadership is employed in addressing students’ success and perceived challenges and why they are initiated to conduct this study after reviewing related literature but they didn’t. The only thing they described is to what extent leadership studies have been conducted as a result educators and policy makers redefine it. They tried to indicate that leadership standards are analyzed and new leadership approach: the balanced leadership has come to practice. However, they missed to write their actual background to start their study and how they can treat it. In relation to introduction writing Deal (2010: 1) stated as:

*You may want to start your introduction by describing the problem you are trying to solve, or the aim of your work, but as you will see when you examine published work, this is not how most research papers begin-and therefore it is not the best way for you to begin.*

Thus, it is mandatory to refer and know the how of writing the introduction of an article. It is advisable to begin with clear opening, continue to discuss our own central issue supporting with literature (a little bit good in this article), and explaining the reason behind our study are important.

The researchers tried to bring literature in line with balanced leadership, selected responsibilities of leaders and the interrelation ship between leadership and purposeful community creation. According to Cooper (2010) and Marshall and Rossman (2011) cited in Creswell (2014), a literature relates a study to the larger, ongoing dialogue in the literature, filling in gaps and extending prior studies. When I look at the figure used on page 676 in the article, genuinely speaking they are not in line with the effect of leadership on students’ success but depict how purposeful community relates leadership. To put it succinctly, the researchers devoted their time searching for unrelated literature.

In the methodology section the researchers has put research design, study group, data collection tool, [data collection] and data analysis separately. They reported qualitative data collection gathered in order to find out teachers’ perception of school leaders’ leadership responsibilities considered necessary for developing the purposeful community which is not in line with their title stated boldly. Their samples were 15 teachers selected using purposeful [conventional] sampling (for me it is vague) from private and state, primary and secondary school teachers and from different fields of study in the 2013-2014 Academic Year. In addition they reported that 6 open-ended questions adapted from (McREL’s 8 leadership responsibilities: Culture, Ideals and Beliefs, Communication, Visibility, Input, Relationships, Situational Awareness, Affirmation) were used to collect teachers’ opinions about leadership. For supplementary information related to points to be included Merriam (2009), advised that the method section begins with introduction reminding the reader of what the problem and purposes of the study are, followed by your research questions. You might also tell the reader what topics you plan to cover in this chapter (i.e., design of the study, sample selection, etc.).

The sampling and instruments used implied that there is a likelihood of making generalization. The samples are taken from different contexts that may affect the results. They obtained to report whether the leadership or the context brought students success (however they shifted to purposeful community) that needs to be explained and how they handle the extraneous effects. In addition, using a single instrument (questionnaire) may lead to problem of generalizability as well as acceptability. Moreover, the researchers didn’t show their justification why they used teachers.
only as a sample as far as their concern is to find out the role of leadership on students’ success. Creswell (2013) explained that all of the samples need to have stories to tell about their lived experiences. Similarly Masson (2002) indicates that identifying potential data sources is important. Thus, all the selected teachers’ might not have leadership experiences. This needs clear justification.

Content analysis was used so as to analyze the data obtained from the teachers. The ethical considerations (coding respondents) used are acceptable. But the problem is lack of relating each of the analyses with the intended question to be answered (however the researchers failed to explain their research questions vividly unless they assumed that are expressed in the form of objectives).

The researchers reported their findings and suggested their comments in line with each of the six leadership responsibilities. The way they approached to report the responses received is acceptable. The problem I found here is lack of clarity of reporting what codes stands for what on one hand and its direct relation with students’ success. Example for this is the table given on page 678 (Exhibit 4, Distribution of themes and codes). It is impossible to identify the coded responses and their meanings. To make the problem visible, the researchers reported the response in such a way: “Under the theme “culture”, four different codes that are differences, consensus, teacher, abstract concepts are examined from the answers of the teachers” (P. 678). What does differences, consensus, teacher and abstract concepts mean in this report? This is one of the problems or reporting repeatedly observed in this article. And most of the responses reported by the researchers are out of the title of the research as a result the conclusions made by the researchers are not in line with the findings.

The researchers concluded the results of the study referring some literatures on leadership and based on the results obtained. The structural procedure they followed was good but it is not possible to ensure the results obtained and the conclusions made coincide. Let me bring one of the responses reported as an example on page 680 responded for autocracy “Our principal makes important decisions in an autocratic way. Even if he asks for the teachers’ opinions, he makes the final decision. This approach causes students not to improve themselves.” (9) “. How is this response is related to students’ success directly? What are the decisions made by the principals? are questions to be stated clearly. But the researchers made their conclusions taking such response which makes their study skeptical.

**Conclusion**

To sum up this critique, the researchers open their mind to see one of the relevant aspects of leadership which is timely, researchable and connected with students’ success. The dimensions of leadership (they call it leadership responsibilities) are good instruments if they were used properly and designed in line with measuring the actual students success rather than the long run mission of education (creating purposeful community). Therefore the big problem in this article is the mismatch between the title (the effect of leadership on students success and the main content included (creating purposeful community) in its thorough discussion. This problem nullifies all the efforts made by the researchers however they put forth their capacity to bring new knowledge to the world.

**Suggestion**

Finally I would like to suggest that the efforts made to produce the article is considerable, it is not possible to say nothing is added from the study. But to make it the effort fruitful looking deeply using magnifying glasses (like reputable journals, well known research books, professionals) is important to understand what is right and what is not. Thus, it shall better to modify the title or revise the contents included in the literature to create a match throughout the study.
References


