An Exploration of Christian School Educators’ Perceptions of Professional Development

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore Christian school educators’ perception of the value and relevance of professional development activities that identify an individual’s unique combination of abilities. The researcher created two professional development tools to assist Christian school leaders with the identification and cultivation of individual faculty and staff members’ strengths, spiritual gifts, languages of appreciation, and values toward enhancing their contribution. The Identification Tool includes four valid and applicable assessment instruments from the literature with supplemental activities. The instruments are StrengthsFinder 2.0, Spiritual Gifts Experience Assessment, Motivating by Appreciation Inventory, and Journey to Personal Purpose Self-Assessment–Values Clarification. The Cultivation Tool includes literature-based, highly relevant leadership strategies that facilitate cultivation of employees’ unique combination of gifts. The exploration of the perceived value and relevance of professional development activities that identify an individual’s unique combination of abilities occurred through a pilot of the Identification Tool with a Christian school leader, faculty, and staff members in a preschool-Grade 12 Christian school. A pretest/posttest instrument gathered data from each participant. The instrument used the Likert scale to ask participants to rate eight questions concerning their perceived value and relevance of professional development activities that identify their strengths, spiritual gifts, preferred languages of appreciation, and top three values at work. A dependent test
test analyzed the collected pretest and posttest data. Additionally, the researcher collected each participant’s results from the four inventory and assessment instruments. These data were analyzed with the demographic information provided of gender, age, role or position at the school, and number of years in education, using frequencies and cross-tabulation in order to determine if any themes existed. The major findings of the study revealed there was not a statistically significant change in perceptions of educators regarding the value and relevance of professional development activities. However, despite the lack of statistical significance, educators perceived high value and relevance of professional development activities that identify an individual’s strengths, spiritual gifts, preferred languages of appreciation, and top three values at work. These findings suggest Christian school leaders should provide ongoing professional development activities that involve identification of employees’ abilities.