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# An Investigation of the Factors Influencing West Virginia Educators' Decisions to Pursue the Principalship

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An Investigation of the Factors Influencing West Virginia Educators' Decisions to Pursue
the Principalship


by

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ABSTRACT

An Investigation of the Factors Influencing West Virginia Educators' Decisions to Pursue the Principalship

The purpose of this descriptive study was to investigate how professional educators in West Virginia view the principalship and identify factors that influence a qualified principal candidate to pursue a position as principal. A review of the literature provided ten factors that frequently serve as deterrents to professional educators when considering the principalship and eleven factors that could motivate a principal candidate to pursue a position as principal.

Using the Survey of West Virginia Educators Holding Principal Licensure, data were collected from professional educators who were currently serving as educators in West Virginia but were not currently in an administrative position. Descriptive statistics were used to identify and rank the factors that discourage and motivate educators to seek principal positions.

The respondents identified the most important motivating factors to entering the principalship as being the personal and professional challenges, the desire to be a leader, self-actualization, strategic influence on education, the desire to broaden career options, increased salary, a stepping stone for a higher job and encouragement from colleagues.

The respondents indicated that high stress, a large time commitment, accountability for achievement, large amount of paperwork, insufficient compensation, and too much responsibility were the main deterrents to pursuing the principalship.

Participants in this study identified the personal and professional challenge associated with school leadership as the top reason for pursuing a school principal position. The desire to be a leader and self-actualization were the second and third most reported factors. These factors are intrinsic in nature and provide motivation associated with achievement, recognition and responsibility.

The number one reason identified by participants for not becoming a school administrator was high stress. Time commitment and accountability were listed as the second and third reasons. It could be concluded that participants in this study view the principalship as extremely stressful with unrealistic time and accountability expectations.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife Mindy and my four children, Tanner, Carsyn, Troy and Camryn. To my wife, I sincerely appreciate the encouragement throughout this process with its many challenges. Thank you for being a caring motivator, cheerleader and a proofreader. To my children, thank you for serving as a source of inspiration for me to complete the task and a reminder to keep my life in perspective. I am truly grateful for the sacrifices you all have made and the support you have given me over the years.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

*A silent crisis is building in school leadership. At a time
when the demands of our society for improving education
and the needs of our children cry out for leadership, the
leadership is being abandoned (Houston, 2000).*

Mounting evidence supports that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find

qualified school principals at a time when they are needed most (Adams, 1999;

Barksdale, 2003; Copland, 2001; Gajda & Militello, 2008; Howley, Andrianaivo & Perry,

2005; Howley & Pendarvis, 2002; Malone, Sharp & Thompson, 2000; Orozco & Oliver,

2001; Pijanowski & Brady, 2009; Robicheau, 2007; Winter, 2001).  Opinions vary as to

the causes of this perceived shortage of school leadership. Some reports blame it on an

inability to recruit top candidates into the field of educational leadership. Other studies

criticize preparation programs for not adequately preparing the students enrolled. The

environment within our schools has changed drastically since reforms in the early 1980s.

Most recently, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* has put emphasis on the need for

strong instructional leadership in schools with the major responsibility for school

improvement being placed upon the principal (Barksdale, 2003).  Two decades of school

reform have created expectations for the principalship that are so excessive that they are

too overwhelming for one person (Copland, 2001).

When comparing the perceived principal shortage with the number of candidates

who are available across the country this matter becomes even more troubling. Even

though many school districts across the United States are finding it increasingly difficult

to fill principal vacancies, studies show the number of educators holding administrative

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licensure far exceeds the number of principal vacancies. The problem is that many of

these teachers holding administrative licensure are not interested in becoming principals

and are simply choosing not to apply for principal positions (Adams, 1999; Andrews &

Grogan, 2002; Barksdale, 2003; Roza, 2003). For years educators have heard about the

approaching shortage of school administrators. According to a 2001 report, California

was producing 2,000 to 3,500 newly licensed and prepared prospective administrators

annually. With such an abundant supply there should have been sufficient applicants to

fill vacancies in California; however, a mere 38% actually assumed positions. The

remaining 62% chose to remain in the classroom or leave the profession (Orozco &

Oliver, 2001). This same phenomenon was supported by the Consortium for Educational

Policy at the University of Missouri that claimed there were two to three times as many

aspiring principals produced in the estimated 500 principal preparation programs across

the United States as there are job vacancies. However, the projected shortage of

"qualified" candidates was as high as 55% for secondary and 47% for elementary schools

(Andrews & Grogan, 2002).

Another factor to consider in the shortage discussion is the potentially large

number of practicing administrators who will leave the profession due to a variety of

reasons. Robicheau (2007) examined the potential number of future openings within

school leadership positions in the state of Minnesota. This 2006 study indicated that over

the next six years 60% of administrators surveyed planned on leaving the profession due

to retirement. Forty-three percent of principals surveyed said they would leave

administration for reasons other than retirement. Similar results were discovered by

Gajda in a 2008 Massachusetts study. Sixty-three percent of principals surveyed reported

that they would leave their positions over the next five years with the majority leaving due to retirement. Thirty percent said they planned to leave due to issues related to stress, insufficient pay and the time involved. Regardless of the reason, evidence suggests that survival of the principalship is in question.

In order for educational change to occur, it is imperative that highly skilled candidates be recruited and retained for the projected large number of principal vacancies in the United States. Essentially, great principals can create great schools through their ability to lead change. They can inspire students and staff to make improvements happen and involve community members in the change process. Even though effective principals are crucial to school improvement it is becoming more difficult to find high quality applicants. The job has become more complex and demanding and skilled principals are in short supply (National Association of State Boards of Education, 1999).

In this study, data will be gathered from professional educators who have acquired the necessary licensure to become principals but are not currently employed in any administrative positions. This research is intended to assist superintendents, certification program directors, lawmakers, state educational leaders, and others better understand the factors that make the job attractive or unattractive. As a result, it is hoped these individuals can create long-term solutions to address the shortage of qualified school leaders.

Background

Much research has been carried out on the evolution of the principalship from its early stages of recognition to the present era of accountability (Andrews & Grogan, 2002; Goodwin, Cunningham & Childress, 2003; Lashway, 1999). In the early days school administration was not recognized as an essential element of schools and did not involve difficult tasks. School administrators learned on the job with no formal specialized training. It was not until the early 1900s that programs focusing on school administration became available (Murphy, 1998). The decade of the 1920s involved a focus on basic pedagogy with a school and family ideals connection. The 1930s involved a shift away from family values toward an emphasis on basic management of schools. Due to World War II, the principalship of the 1940s and 1950s saw patriotic values come into the spotlight. This focus became more evident when the launch of Sputnik by the Soviet Union sparked a more direct focus on excellence in math and science. Principals began utilizing experimentally derived strategies for management and instruction (Andrews & Grogan, 2002). It was in the 1970s that school leaders began to face social problems such as racial tension, drug abuse, and teen pregnancy that pulled them away from academic leadership and toward finding remedies for these issues. In the 1980s, international competitors such as Japan and *The Nation at Risk* report led school leaders to refocus on student achievement (Andrews & Grogan, 2002).

Now, two decades into the age of school reform, the job of principal has become one with massive expectations. School leaders nationwide face a multitude of problems ranging from school violence to crumbling facilities to low academic achievement and test scores. Schools are under constant pressures to meet parent expectations, develop

skilled workers, adapt to changes in technology, and compete with the growing popularity for private education (The Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000). No longer can the principal simply serve as the building manager. Even though school leaders must still address personnel issues, balance budgets, maintain school discipline, and see that transportation and food services are operating correctly, they must now also serve as the educational leaders that help teachers strengthen skills, rally students toward higher academic achievement, analyze test data, and meet a multitude of other new challenges for the 21st century. Even though demands on the principalship have changed drastically, the characteristics of the job have not changed to meet those demands. According to a report of the Task Force on the Principalship, "Principals increasingly say the job is simply not doable." At the same time, school districts are more frequently reporting a shortage of skilled candidates for principal vacancies (The Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000).

In an analysis of articles on the principal shortage, three key factors surfaced as the most common deterrents for applying for principal positions. The most frequent reason identified in the literature by educators for not applying for the principalship is the lack of sufficient compensation. Often the pay differential between veteran teachers and new principals is not enough to encourage experienced educators to apply. Essentially, when taking all the demands of the job into consideration, many principal candidates believe it just does not pay enough (Cranston, 2006; Cranston, 2007; Cushing, Kerrins & Johnstone, 2003; Cusick, 2003; Ferrandino, 2001; Gilman & Lanham-Givens, 2001; Hancock, Black & Bird, 2006; Hargadine, 2002; Howley, Andrianavo & Perry, 2005; Malone, Sharp & Thompson, 2000; McCreight, 2001; Olson, 1999; Shen, Cooley &

Wengenke, 2004). The second most common factor identified was the overwhelming number of tasks involved with the principalship. According to respondents, there are too many demands and responsibilities to justify accepting a job as principal. Even though the principal's primary task is serving as the school's instructional leader, the multitude of managerial tasks often makes it very difficult, if not impossible (Cranston, 2006; Cushing et al., 2003; Cusick, 2003; Ferrandino, 2001; Gilman & Lanham-Givens, 2001; Hancock et al., 2006; Howley et al., 2005; Malone et al., 2000; Moore, 1999; Shen et al., 2004). Based on the research, the third most common reason for not pursuing the principalship is the amount of time required. The long hours are scaring potential applicants away. Principals on average work over 50 hours per week. In addition to working a full day administrators must be present for evening and weekend activities (Cushing et al., 2003; Hargadine, 2002; Howley et al., 2005; Malone et al., 2000; McCreight, 2001; Moore, 1999; Newton, 2001; Olson, 1999; Shen et al., 2004).

Other factors that emerged from the literature as reasons for a lack of interest in the position of principal were:

1. The job is too stressful. This factor comes from a vast array of areas and can manifest itself in health problems if the principal is not careful (Cushing et al., 2003; Ferrandino, 2001; Hargadine, 2002; Howley et al., 2005; Malone et al., 2000; Newton, 2001; Olson, 1999).

2. There is too much accountability. This factor can be in the form of increased responsibility for student achievement or pressure from the media or other outside interest groups (Barty, Thomson, Blackmore & Sachs, 2005; Cranston, 2006;

Cusick, 2003; Gilman & Lanham-Givens, 2001; Hargadine, 2002; McCreight,

2001).

3. There is too much pressure from parents (Barty et al., 2005; Cusick, 2003,

Hargadine, 2002; Malone et al., 2000; Moore, 1999).

4. Family life suffers from the long hours and time away from home (Cranston,

2006; Cusick, 2003; Howley et al., 2005; Kolek, 2002).

5. There is a lack of support from the central office (Howley et al., 2005; Kolek,

2002; McCreight, 2001).

Research on the principal shortage has also identified factors that influence

educators to pursue a career in administration.  A common factor identified in the

literature by prospective principal candidates for gaining licensure is the desire to make a

difference for others. Aspiring principal candidates have identified the desire to be a

positive influence on students and teachers and be a leader as being motivating factors for

gaining administrative licensure (Kossack, 2006; Schutte, 2003).   This finding is

supported by Moore (1999) who discovered three common motivations as being the

desire to make a difference, initiate change and have a positive impact on students, staff

and the community.  Like Moore (1999), Harris, Arnold, Lowery and Crocker (2000)

suggested that potential candidates are most favorably attracted to the principalship due

to a desire to have a positive impact, make a difference and the personal and professional

challenges associated with the job.  These aspiring administrators are motivated by

intrinsic aspects that will allow them to contribute to education in a positive manner,

according to Harris et al. (2000).  Other studies have identified the desire to influence

education and improve student achievement as reasons for entering the principalship

(Cranston, 2007; Hancock et al., 2006; Pounder & Merrill, 2001). Even though studies indicate that individuals most often seek the position to make a positive impact on education, the importance of increased compensation cannot be overlooked. The position's salary and benefits have also been indicated as motivators (Hancock et al., 2006; Harris et al., 2000; Pounder & Merrill, 2001).

The literature points toward a dominance of extrinsic factors, such as the work environment, workload or impact on personal life as being deterrents to the application for the principalship (Harris et al., 2000; Shen et al., 2004). Therefore, it has been suggested that the position be restructured to make the job more appealing to those intrinsic and service-oriented educators who seek the principalship (Harris et al., 2000; Shen et al., 2004). Recommendations have been made to school boards, such as increasing salaries, reducing paperwork, shrinking bureaucracy and providing greater support (Harris et al., 2000; Shen et al., 2004).

Placing more emphasis on curriculum and less on managerial duties, increasing the support services and increasing the principal's authority are additional suggestions found in the literature (Moore, 1999). Other evidence suggests that some school districts are considering assigning co-principals to schools which would share responsibilities both during the regular day and after school. In essence one person would not be required to provide direct oversight for all aspects of the school (Houston, 2000; Pounder, 2001).

Problem Statement

In the midst of the current state of urgency for change in the public school system and the call for increasing achievement for all students, discussions of a principal shortage have been a dominant topic of conversation. A shortage of qualified principal candidates has been documented in professional literature and has been a popular focus in the media (Howley et. al., 2005; Orozco, 2001).  It might be assumed that a shortage of principals is due to a lack of certified individuals in the field. However, studies show that there are far more teachers with administrative licensure in our schools than there are vacancies (Roza, 2003).  It appears that fewer and fewer of these certified educators are willing to apply for principal positions. Unless educators and legislators gain a better understanding of how teachers view the principalship and develop ways to make the position more attractive, school districts will continue to have trouble filling vacancies with highly qualified principals. Therefore, it is important to determine what factors influence a qualified principal candidate to enter the principalship.


Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1.  What are the motivating factors that influence the pursuit of employment in principal positions by West Virginia professional educators who hold the appropriate administrative licensure?

2.  What factors do qualified candidates view as major deterrents to applying for principal positions?

Operational Definitions

1. Motivating factors that influence the pursuit of employment in principal

   positions – This variable will be defined by responses on the Survey of West

   Virginia Educators Holding Principal Licensure

2. Deterrents to applying for principal positions – This variable will be defined by

   responses on the Survey of West Virginia Educators Holding Principal Licensure.

Significance

U.S. school districts are facing a potential crisis due to the difficulty in finding

new principals to replace the record number of school administrators who are reaching

retirement age (Howley et al., 2005).  Not only is this evident in large urban areas, but

also in rural districts where the jobs of school leaders can be just as complex and

stressful. Cruzeiro and Boone (2009) indicated that the rural principalship can be

multifaceted, frequently working in isolation without the help of an assistant principal

and with less pay than in larger school districts. Rural communities can also suffer from

poverty, unemployment, and have similar social problems found in larger urban areas.

Hurley (1992) interviewed teachers identified as having "principal potential" in five rural

school districts in a southeastern state. The majority of teachers surveyed had no plans to

pursue the principalship due to a variety of issues, such as the magnitude of the job, the

number of non-instructional tasks, and the amount of time away from family. Common

complaints of administrators include long hours, low pay and conflict with school boards

and other constituents.

Motivated by reports of a looming principal shortage, school leaders from the largest school district in West Virginia led an inquiry into the demographics of the Kanawha County (WV) school system to examine the potential for loss of school administrators due to retirement. The county system is diverse in nature, containing urban, suburban and rural areas. Analysis indicated a significant potential for loss of school administrators, which led to the formation of a leadership academy to identify and train potential school leaders within the district (Cunningham & Hardman, 1999).

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of how educators view the principalship and identify factors that influence a qualified principal candidate to pursue a position as principal. According to research by Barksdale (2003), Cranston (2007), Hargadine (2002), Kossack (2006) and Schutte (2003), this study is needed and relevant. Findings from this study can be used by district superintendents, principal preparation program directors, state lawmakers, state educational leaders, and other individual responsible for making decisions about training, staff development and recruitment of school principals. This information can help identify ways to magnify the attractants to the profession and better restructure the job that would encourage more qualified educators to pursue the principalship.

Methods

The study will be descriptive in nature examining factors that affect a qualified candidate's decision to pursue a position as principal. Qualified principal candidates will respond to the *Survey of West Virginia Educators Holding Principal Licensure* and indicate their perceptions of the principalship and the factors that would influence their decision of applying for and accepting jobs as principal.

*Participants*

Participants of this study will consist of educators who have received licensure for the principalship in West Virginia but have not accepted an administrative position. Participants will be asked to participate voluntarily. Data will be obtained through a self-administered survey mailed to a sample of public school educators from all 55 counties within the state of West Virginia. Inclusion criteria for the subjects will be obtained from the West Virginia Department of Education and the Office of Professional Preparation.

Limitations

The results of this study will be limited due to the use of convenience sampling of teachers holding administrative licensure in one state. The state was selected due to the proliferation of alternative licensure programs in West Virginia. Unique problems associated with the state will be examined. This study will be limited to educators from West Virginia who have completed the necessary licensure requirements to become eligible for a professional administrative certificate. Participants in the study will have completed the minimum degree requirements from an accredited institution of higher

education and will have completed at least three years experience as a classroom teacher. An additional limitation of this study will be the willingness of educators to participate and return the questionnaire.

Summary

A crucial element in school improvement is the ability of school systems to attract qualified principals. Many states are reporting that it is becoming more difficult to fill principal vacancies with qualified applicants and that fewer teachers are moving from the classroom into school leadership positions. The purpose of this study is to identify factors that influence a qualified candidate's decision to pursue the principalship in West Virginia.

CHAPTER TWO

Introduction

School districts indicate that it is becoming more difficult to find qualified school leaders. In a 2002 paper, Andrews and Grogan stated that there were approximately 500 university-based principal preparation programs in the United States developed to prepare aspiring principals to fill school leadership positions. Even though reports show that these programs produce two to three times as many trained aspiring principals as there are job openings in this country, superintendents claim that there is a shortage of "qualified" candidates available (Andrews & Grogan, 2002). Therefore, a real need exists to fully study relevant literature to gain a better understanding of the factors that qualified principal candidates view as incentives and deterrents to applying for principal positions. The purpose of this literature review is to critically examine previous research related to the principal shortage and provide a framework through which the information gained in this study can be better understood.

This study expands upon current research related to the crisis facing the principalship in two ways. First, it provides a large-scale analysis of teacher perspectives of the principalship from an entire state, in this case West Virginia. Many previous studies have focused on small samples often from principal preparation programs or from a single school district. Also, it examines the factors that principal candidates find as being incentives and deterrents to pursuing the principalship. Much of the current research has focused upon the perceptions of practicing administrators such as superintendents, principals or assistant principals (Howley et al., 2005).

The Changing Role of the Principal

Over time the role of the school principal has changed considerably. Even though the term principal appeared in educational reports as early as 1838, the role was historically filled by a head teacher or teaching principal who performed duties that were hardly different from teaching (Grady, 1990). Originally, unrecognized as an essential component of school operations, the early school administrator learned his/her profession on the job with no specialized training. The minimal education provided to teachers at the time was considered adequate for aspiring administrators. Programs specific to school administration did not exist until the early 1900s (Murphy, 1998). The work of early 19th century principals barely extended beyond teaching and involved simple administrative duties, such as general supervision or keeping attendance. In the mid 1840s the school district in Cincinnati, Ohio gave the principal the responsibility of monitoring exams and ringing the bell for class changes and recess. Later, principals were given the authority to suspend students for using profane language or leaving without permission (Rousmaniere, 2007).

A rapid growth and expansion of administration programs was seen in the 20th century. By the end of World War II there were 125 institutions throughout the country that were actively preparing school administrators, whereas in 1900 there were none (Murphy, 1998). It was also during this time that the responsibilities of the principal began to involve less teaching. By the 1920s there were numerous administrative positions, such as principals, assistant principals, deans, attendance officers and clerks that had no teaching responsibilities. Even though teaching principals were common in small rural schools, by the 1930s 70% of urban administrators had no teaching

responsibilities (Rousmaniere, 2007). Also, during this time there became a distinction between the way administrators and teachers were trained. Between 1923 and 1934 the number of states presenting administrator certificates grew from 7 to 27. Nearly one-third of all states and half of Canada provided educational training that was specific to principals by the 1950s (Rousmaniere, 2007).

Scientific management of schools was the theme in the 1930s with a focus on patriotic values in the 1940s and 1950s, due to World War II and its repercussions. The Cold War and the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik during the late 1950s inspired a new focus on education that stressed the importance of math and sciences and a strong society. During the 1950s and 1960s, principals began placing emphasis on research-based strategies for managing schools and instruction (Andrew & Grogan, 2002).

Racial tensions, drugs and teen pregnancy were a few of the growing social problems of the 1970s that required new remedies by school leaders. Later in the 1980s and 1990s the principal began to be an instructional leader instead of simply a building manager. Focus was placed on increasing student achievement of all children, mainly disadvantaged children and children of color (Andrew & Grogan, 2002).

According to 1993-94 statistics by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the average public school principal in the United States was a white non-Hispanic male that was 47.7 years old that earned an annual salary of $54, 857. Data listed 71.9% of the administrators as being in elementary positions as compared to 24.4 % on the secondary level (NCES, 1997). A more recent study by NCES (2004) provided a demographic breakdown by state level with information specific to the typical West Virginia school principal during the 2003-2004

school year. The vast majority of West Virginia administrators were white non-Hispanic (95.8%) with only 1.8% being black non-Hispanic. The average annual salary for principals was $57,200. School principals in West Virginia spent an average of 58.4 hours per week on school-related activities as opposed to 22.7 hours per week interacting with students.

According to The Institute for Educational Leadership (2000), the overarching goal for leadership in the 21$^{st}$ century will be student learning and will be defined in terms of:

1. Instructional leadership that involves a focus on teaching and learning, professional development and making decisions based on data and accountability.

2. Community leadership that involves an awareness of the school's role in society and the relationship with community members and parents.

3. Visionary leadership that demonstrates energy, commitment and confidence that all students can succeed while inspiring others to join in this vision.

With the increase of programs over the last decades of the 20$^{th}$ century, principals often find themselves overseeing complex and multifaceted systems. As the principalship has evolved it has also expanded significantly. It has not discarded one role to take on another but has continued to amass roles and responsibilities. Today, the job has reached overwhelming dimensions that the one-room school teacher could not have imagined two centuries ago (New York State School Boards Association, 1989). Leadership is in crisis. As the "Boomer" generation retires, the recruitment and retention of educational leaders is becoming a major concern. The failure to attract quality leaders can be attributed to

such issues as job stress, inadequate school funding, more rigorous curriculum standards, and the threat of termination for not showing instant results (Davies, 2005).

Principal Shortages

According to a 2003 study by Roza, there are far more principal candidates certified as principals than there are vacancies. Gathering data through written surveys and telephone interviews to human resource directors, superintendents and district level officials in 83 public school districts in 10 regions across the country, the study team discovered the principal "shortage" is actually a matter of definition. There are plenty of licensed applicants but a lack of candidates with the necessary leadership skills to meet the demands in today's schools. The study suggested there are disparities in the distribution of applicants among school districts and schools. Applicants appeared to avoid some districts known to have high levels of poverty, high concentrations of poor and minority students, low per-pupil expenditures and low principal salaries. Applicants selectively avoided challenging positions and actively pursued positions where working conditions were more favorable.

The challenge then is for many districts to find principals who can produce results that were never expected from principals in the past.  However, in one of the most unrelenting periods of criticism and change in public education, districts are faced with a shrinking pool of capable educators interested in becoming principals. Leaders who can encourage school improvement are desperately needed, but it appears that current approaches to reform are convincing our most promising educators to avoid leadership roles (Barker, 1996; Donaldson, 2001).

Leadership forecasts estimate that 54% of U.S. principals are over the age of 50. With overwhelming workload and impossible expectations, principals on average are leaving after five years on the job because they are unprepared (Lovely, 2004). Across the United States school districts are beginning to bear the burden of a leadership deficit. California produces between 2,000 and 3,500 newly licensed administrators yearly, but only 38 % become principals. The majority choose to remain in the classroom or leave the education profession entirely (Orozco & Oliver, 2001). Approximately half of New York's 1,100 public schools are led by principals with three or fewer years of experience (Archer, 2002).  A 2001 report claimed that 163 New York City schools started the school year with only a temporary principal (Groff, 2001). Shortages are expected to hit some regions particularly hard. A 1999 University of Minnesota study estimated that by 2010 about 75 % of school principals in Minnesota would be lost through retirement or attrition. At the same time student enrollments are expected to grow by nearly 20 percent (IEL, 2000).  For every administrator leading a school in Minnesota, there are three educators with principal licensure who do not hold leadership positions. Still superintendents in Minnesota report having a difficult time filling principal positions (IEL, 2000).

Adding further support to a perceived shortage in Minnesota, Robicheau (2007) surveyed 2409 practicing school administrators who were actively serving throughout the state of Minnesota. Of those responding, 57.63% were principals, 17.91% were superintendents and 15.73% were assistant principals. Within the next six years, 52-69% of respondents anticipated leaving the current position through retirement, transfer or

leaving the field of education.  With an aging workforce combined with a large

percentage of principals considering leaving the profession, the potential exists for a high

level of turn over in Minnesota's leadership.

Using online survey research methods, Gajda and Militello (2008) also found a

shortage of educators in the state of Massachusetts who want to assume and remain in the

role of principal. A sample of 1137 principals was given a survey that sought information

about the reasons for becoming principal and whether he/she anticipated leaving the

profession within the next five years. Results indicated that 63% of the respondents plan

to leave the position in the next five years for reasons involving stress, low salary, time

demands and retirement. As in other parts of the country, the survival of the principalship

in Massachusetts is in question.

Additional research was conducted by Pijanowski, Hewitt and Brady (2009) by

surveying 245 superintendents throughout the state of Arkansas to gain their perception

of the nature of the principal shortage. Responses were received from 197

superintendents for a response rate of 80%. Surveys asked superintendents to identify the

number of applicants they received for open positions and determine how many were

qualified for the positions by considering licensure, experience, quality, and other factors.

The data supported previous research that suggested rural schools are at a disadvantage

when compared to urban schools in their search for new principals and receive

significantly fewer applicants overall for job openings.  However, rural superintendents

reported little anxiety regarding the size of candidate pools and relied on the practice of

growing their own leadership. On the other hand, while large urban districts received

more applicants, many did not meet the minimum criteria to be interviewed when pool

quality was examined. Pijanowski et al. (2009) suggested a closer examination of incentives associated with principal recruitment and retention and how these factors increase or inhibit the perceived principal shortage.

*West Virginia Shortages*

A study by the West Virginia Department of Education (2008) indicated that over 61% of West Virginia's 1,928 school administrators were over the age of 50 and 25 % were between 40 and 49 years of age.  Additionally, trend data from this WV study indicated it has become more difficult to fill posted administrative positions. Over a four-year period from the 2003-2004 school year to the 2006-2007 school year, there has been almost a 3% decrease in the number of posted positions that have been filled by qualified applicants. When combined with the fact that such a large number of West Virginia administrators are eligible for retirement in the near future, there lies the potential for a shortage leaving thousands of schools without experienced administrators.

Recognizing a possible leadership crisis, school system leaders in Kanawha County (WV), examined the demographics of administrators within their county school system. The largest county school system in the state, Kanawha County has close to 31,000 students in 87 schools. When considering loss of workforce through retirement and attrition it was evident that the potential was there for a lack of leadership in the near future (Cunningham & Hardman, 1999).

Reported Deterrents to Entering the Principalship

Even though reports claim that there are sufficient numbers of educators acquiring administrative licensure, these candidates are not seeking employment as school leaders. The principalship is much more demanding today than ever before. The typical elementary principal works an average of nine hours a day and 54 hours a week. They lead larger schools and supervise more people than in past decades (Ferrandino, 2001). Many secondary principals report they are working 60 to 70 hour work weeks and still unable to get the job done (Cushing, Kerrins & Johnstone, 2003).

Educators are often deterred from pursuing a career in administration due to the increased amount of time that must be committed to both the work day and school year. There is the perception that after school parent meetings, committee meetings, discipline and community affairs create unwanted time constraints. Additional time commitments may involve more consultation with teachers and parents and an ever-increasing special education workload (Moore, 1999). In addition to time, negative influences by outside parent groups and overwhelming paperwork hinder the functioning of the principalship. The perception is that there is too much beauracratic paperwork for the principal to serve students and faculty effectively (Moore, 1999).

Equally important, a 2001 study by Newton at the University of Alabama surveyed 139 educational administration students to examine whether job characteristics and working conditions influence teacher attraction to the principalship. The study indicated that the participating teachers were highly attracted to the job itself but discouraged by the circumstances in which the work must be carried out. Workplace

conditions, such as job related stress and time requirements, narrowed the positive

influence of the job aspects.

Studies by The Educational Research Service (2000) have identified several

factors that appear to be discouraging educators from applying for the principalship:

1. Compensation is not sufficient to justify responsibilities.

2. There is too much stress.

3. There is too much time required.

4. Parents and community members are difficult to satisfy.

5. Societal problems make it difficult to focus on instruction.

Similar themes have arisen in other research, especially the stressful nature of the job and

the overwhelming amount of time involved. These deterrents are due to a variety of

factors such as the increased demands for accountability and pressure from various

groups (ERS, 2000).

*Insufficient Compensation*

One factor that could be affecting the number of applicants is the level of pay. In

a 2003 paper, Cushing, Kerrins & Johnstone discussed some possible reasons for a

shortage of principal applicants. A common complaint is that the pay differential between

a new principal and a veteran teacher is not that great if it even exists at all. If calculating

a principal's salary on an hourly scale, the principal may actually make less than a

teacher due to longer school days, weeks and years. Often, the most highly effective

principals are in demand for other better paying positions both within and outside the

education system.  According to McAdams (1998), the average teacher works around 45

hours a week for approximately 1,710 hours per year. On the other hand, the

administrator working over 55 hours a week accumulates close to 2,640 hours in a year.

This extra 930 hours may yield as little as $6000 or roughly $6.50 per hour. Often, the

opinion of many potential candidates is the amount of work simply does not match the

compensation (Cooley & Shen, 1999; Cushing, Kerrins, & Johnstone, 2003).  This

finding was supported in a 2007 Australian study by Cranston that revealed assistant

principals felt that the extra remuneration as a principal was not worth the extra

responsibilities. Drawing data from 146 assistant principals in state primary and

secondary schools in Queensland across 2005-2006, the vast majority (82%) of

respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their current role as assistant

principals because the work-life balance was much easier to attain.

Similarly, Hargadine (2002) found numerous factors serving as deterrents to

entering the principalship while surveying school superintendents in 452 Missouri public

school districts during the 2000-2001 school year. The two highest reported deterrents in

the Missouri study were insufficient salary or compensation and too much time beyond

the regular work day.  Comparable responses were found in a Michigan qualitative

research study by Cusick (2003).  Interviews were conducted with ten superintendents,

ten principals and one focus group from one Michigan school district. In addition,

interviews were carried out at a principal/professor symposium at Michigan State

University. Participants in the study stated that school administration is definitely less

attractive than it once was and the primary reason is the money. More specifically, the

problem is the difference in salary between what teachers make and what administrators

make.  Many potential administrators look at days lasting from 5:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and

involving attendance at evening activities as far too time consuming in comparison to the pay and decide not to apply (Cusick, 2003). The combination of a meager salary differential, loss of tenure security, increased time commitments and overwhelming bureaucracy create strong disincentives to pursuing principal jobs (Hancock, Black & Bird, 2006).

Examining the perceived narrowing gap between teacher and principal pay that is having a discouraging effect on applicants, Pijanowski and Brady (2009) gathered data from the Arkansas Department of Education Teacher Salary Analysis and the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators annual administrator salary survey. The researchers examined the degree of difference in compensation that potential administrators face at each stage of their career. Findings indicated that in Arkansas' largest high schools a principal will experience a 97.5% increase in salary over a midcareer teacher with a master's degree. This alone would suggest that pay is not an issue in addressing the principal shortage in Arkansas. However, in smaller, more rural and poorer districts, the gap is significantly lower. Even though research indicates that money is an incentive that draws teachers into leadership, it is the working conditions that will determine if they stay. Research by Pijanowski, Hewitt and Brady (2009) suggest that money isn't enough to compensate for the stress and working conditions for the job. It is important to consider both compensation and working conditions together.

Likewise, in a 2003 report by Lankford, O'Connell and Wyckoff key findings from four studies conducted by researchers from the University of Albany were summarized. Overall, the studies focused on various New York State school leadership issues and had varying sample sizes. Some important findings that were consistent across

the studies involved salary. Salary was found to be both a reason for seeking

administrative licensure initially and enticing certified individuals to consider a

leadership position, but also a reason for refusing leadership positions. Over half of those

declining a leadership position indicated salary was a key factor. In addition, respondents

who had turned down an administrative position also said it was due to working

conditions (Lankford et al., 2003).


*Overwhelming Responsibilities*

There simply are not enough hours in the day to effectively allow for the

mounting responsibilities required of an administrator and instructional leader

(Ferrandino, 2001).  Even though serving as the instructional leader should be the

principal's primary task, the following statement by Gilman and Lanman-Givens (2001)

reflects the reality the principal position in the school:

> The principal is the school's community relations director, disciplinarian,
>
> business manager, marketer, safety officer, facilities supervisor,
>
> fundraiser, labor relations officer, medical supervisor, social service agent,
>
> facilitator, and enforcer of laws, policies, and regulations from various
>
> levels of government. (p. 73).

Research by Shen, Cooley and Wegenke (2004) indicated that the principalship

has become more layered with more and more responsibilities placed on top of the others.

Data obtained from questionnaires mailed to 198 teachers, 306 principals and 370

superintendents in the state of Michigan suggest that the position involves more

management tasks and has become more complex and ambiguous. These overwhelming

tasks have negatively impacted the morale of the principalship (Shen, Cooley &

Wegenke, 2004). The job has become enormous. The daily routine may involve

personnel problems, budgeting issues, bus schedules, monitoring the cafeteria, hallways

and playground for safety, student discipline and then trying to be the instructional

leader. It has become more than one person can handle (Groff, 2001). The principal could

be compared to Superman. Ferandino and Tirozzi (2001) stated that the principal "must

be more powerful than a locomotive, faster than a speeding bullet, and be able to leap tall

buildings in a single bound" (p.6).

Even though compensation is an important factor to consider, many respondents

claim that the changes in the job itself have made it less attractive. As Cusick (2003),

stated:

> Legislated expectations, increased parental demands, and the expanding
>
> number of things school are expected to do increase the number and kind
>
> of responsibilities that fall to the principal – school improvement, annual
>
> reports, accountability, core curriculum, student safety, gender and equity
>
> issues, mission statements, goals and outcomes, staff development,
>
> curriculum alignment and accreditation (p.3).

In a 2003 paper, Growe, Fontenot and Montgomery identified some of the most

pressing issues facing schools today. Due to problems in society, schools are responsible

for an increasing number of issues that are unrelated to education. Seeing that

disadvantaged students are provided lunch and breakfast, combating drugs and crime in

the school or trying to prevent teenage pregnancy are just some of the issues that have

contributed to the overload that principals feel. Principals are forced to fill the complex

role of principal, parent, counselor, mediator and negotiator. As a result, many

administrators are leaving their positions because of the added accountability and

responsibility. Likewise, Daresh and Capasso (2002) indicated that a wide range of

factors is causing people to avoid entering the principalship. By interviewing 30

educators in two different states that had either left administration or indicated they had

no interest in becoming principals, Daresh and Capasso (2002) discovered that

respondents perceived the principalship as a noneducational career path.

As Lieberman and Miller (2005) discussed, schools are asked to do more with less

and principals are struggling to serve as the instructional leaders at the same time they

face overwhelming management issues. Principals are trying to lead schools where there

is a common feeling of anxiety, stress and confusion.

*Time Demands*

Another commonly reported deterrent to applying for jobs is the time

commitment and long hours associated with school administration. Principals frequently

spend four to five nights a week at school events and even have commitments on the

weekend (Cushing, Kerrins, & Johnstone, 2003; Hargadine, 2002; Moore, 1999; Schutte,

2003).   Likewise, in a study of perceptions of educators holding secondary licensure in

Iowa, Schutte (2003) found the tremendous time commitment as one of the largest

barriers to pursuing the secondary principalship. Additional expectations associated with

teacher consultations, parent groups, school-community meetings and an ever

challenging special education workload have expanded the principals traditionally long

work week.  Modern principals devote in excess of 55-60 hours per week due to after

school parent meetings, committee meetings, discipline issues or extracurricular activities. By contrast, the principal of 30 years ago may have only put in a 45-50 hour week (McAdams, 1998).

Using the Principals' Hauora-Wellberg electronic survey in 2005, Hodgen and Wylie gathered data from 1,523 New Zealand principals about their perceptions of the amount of stress and time involved in the profession. Forty percent of the respondents described their current stress level as extremely high. Over 90% of principals interviewed worked over 50 hours or more per week and 42% worked in excess of 60 hours. In spite of making hundreds of decisions per day and working excessive hours per week, principals often report they never feel they are on top of these responsibilities due to fragmented time that leaves little time to reflect on problems or improve performance (Gilman & Lanman-Givens, 2001).

Being the principal means being on call all the time. In addition to regularly scheduled evening and weekend activities, principals may be called day or night. The principal is called when the school's alarm goes off or the school is vandalized. Being the principal means meeting the emotional and physical demands of students, teachers and parents and still not neglecting the needs of your own family at home (Ruder, 2006). The long hours also leave little time to get enough exercise. In their 2005 New Zealand study, Hodgen and Wylie found less than a third of 1,523 principals surveyed got the recommended physical activity needed for good health. Even though most principals appeared healthy and participated in fewer risk behaviors than the general population, they exercised less. Over half reported they would have difficulty running the length of a football field.

Demands of the job in terms of stress and time make the move to the principalship undesirable according to a 2009 Georgia study by Arthur, Mallory and Tekleselassie. Using qualitative methods, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews of twelve educators working in Georgia who had completed their leadership certification in the last five years but were not currently serving in an administrative role and one focus group of 37 educational leadership interns who were completing their master's degree and initial certification in leadership. Participants in the study unanimously agreed that the more they learned about the duties of the principalship, the less appealing it became. According to Arthur et al. (2009), most participants in the Georgia study believed that evening activities and responsibilities would take up too much time away from their own families. One participant stated, "I won't sacrifice my own children to take care of someone else's children" (p.32).

*High level of Stress*

As expectations and accountability have increased for administrators, so has the level of stress (Cushing, Kerrins, & Johnstone, 2003; Ferrandino, 2001; Olayiwola, 2008; Whitaker, 1996). Job level stress of the school principal comes from various areas such as criticism from the public, high accountability, and high levels of responsibility. Often, job stress reveals itself as high blood pressure, weight gain and other health issues (Cushing, Kerrins, & Johnstone, 2003). People experience stress when demands are placed on them that they are unable to achieve.

Examining the dimensions of job stress among principals, Olayiwola (2008) surveyed 100 principals from all 937 public secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Using a 40 item questionnaire, the study also compared differences in job stress among various demographic characteristics of principals. Findings revealed that only 6.4% of respondents reported their job was either not stressful or mildly stressful. Most (76.6%) of the participants reported their job was at least moderately or considerably stressful. About 17.0% of the participants rated their job as being very stressful or extremely stressful. In regard to demographic differences, the findings indicated that principals are experiencing stress regardless of gender, experience, school type or location.

Using the Maslach Burnout Inventory involving the constructs of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal accomplishment, Whitaker (1996) surveyed 107 principals from one western state to examine which elements of administration most contribute to burnout. In-depth interviews were conducted with 13 principals who scored high in both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Respondents in the study indicated that emotional exhaustion was a significant problem, resulting from daily work pressure, or emotional overload. Fragmented time, increased paperwork, budget cuts and greater expectations from the public and central administration were common problems identified in the study. Principals surveyed complained of heart problems, difficulty sleeping, high blood pressure and marital problems as being common consequences of the job. According to studies by NAESP, one out of every 10 principals surveyed had been involved in a civil lawsuit due to playground accidents, disciplinary action or other work-related activities (Ferrandino, 2001).

The emotional aspects of administration, including stress, burnout and frustration were also determined to be a significant concern in Cooley and Shen's 1999 study

involving 189 students enrolled in a Midwestern university's educational leadership

program. Students were given a survey identifying factors that would influence their

decision to apply for an administrative position. Over 65% of the respondents indicated

that the emotional aspects of administration were a major concern when pursuing the

principalship.

Comparable results were found in a 2000 study by Malone, Sharp and Thompson

through surveying 581 principals and 55 aspiring principals in Indiana. Respondents were

in agreement as to the major barriers for a person who was considering the principalship

as a career. Job stress was identified as the most serious deterrent by principals and

aspiring principals when considering the principalship, followed by too much time

required and insufficient compensation.

Whether it is testing and accountability, time demands, societal problems or

demands of parents and community, each of these areas involves an overall stress or

pressure that is placed on the principal. In 2008 Hewitt, Pijanowski and Denny sent

surveys to all 245 school districts in Arkansas asking superintendents to distribute to

teacher leaders within schools that have exceptional leadership qualities, but have chosen

not to go into administration. Teachers were asked to rank 11 identified factors that

would discourage teachers from seeking a career in administration. There were 391

teachers who responded from 139 different school districts. Interestingly, it was found

that the top five items identified all deal with stress or pressure related factors.

*Accountability*

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was signed by President George W. Bush in 2002. The aim of NCLB is to improve student achievement and close achievement gaps (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). NCLB has set the goal of having all students reach mastery of state-determined educational standards by the end of the 2013-14 school year. Any school or school district that does not meet the criteria for adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two straight years will be considered to be in need of improvement (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

The pressures of accountability and test scores can be overwhelming with student achievement now becoming the foremost responsibility of principals (Gilman & Lanman-Givens, 2001). Even though standardized test scores were originally intended to serve as a tool to diagnose student weakness, they have become a means of judging principals' abilities. This pressure is evident in reports of desperate administrators encouraging cheating to gain satisfactory test scores (Gilman & Lanman-Givens, 2001). With the increased focus on higher standards, testing and accountability has come a shift in the principal's responsibilities. Even though it is widely accepted that the principal should be the instructional leader, the overwhelming management and discipline duties have not gone away. These massive demands have created a job that is just not doable for many principals (Ferrandino & Tirozzi, 2001).

Along with a sharp increase in responsibility has come a steady decrease in authority for the principal. As state legislatures amplify the focus on student achievement, principals are feeling the pressure of being held directly accountable for student performance. Caught in a bind, more principals are experiencing frustration with

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increased stress and loss of job satisfaction (McAdams, 1998).  Increasingly volatile

disciplinary measures are causing more principals to carry personal liability insurance.

More principals are being sued personally for things that go wrong in the school (Groff,

2001).

Similarly, Harris, Arnold, Lowery and Crocker (2000) found in a study of 151

students enrolled in principal preparation programs at four universities that a large

number of the reported deterrents to entering the principalship are directly related to the

current era of accountability, such as paperwork and bureaucracy, increased time

commitments, potential litigation and pressures from standardized testing.   Increasing

litigation and the continued national move toward high-stakes testing of students have

clearly increased the burden of accountability. Unfortunately, the majority of this burden

falls directly on the principal (Harris, Arnold, Lowery & Crocker, 2000).

*Strain of Family Life*

Research has indicated a general disengagement of potential applicants from

seeking the principalship. One of the key factors playing a role in this disengagement

determined by Cranston (2006) is that aspirants are seeking to maintain a lifestyle that

allows for work, leisure, family and other pursuits. Using the *Aspiring Principals*

*Questionnaire*, Cranston (2006) surveyed 146 assistant principals working in primary and

secondary public schools in Queensland, Australia about their views of the principalship.

Respondents indicated that increased accountability, work load, complexities and

challenges make it difficulty to maintain this type of lifestyle while serving in the

principalship. Additionally, the assistant principals reported that this work-life balance

was easier to manage in the current assistant position and the extra pay of principal was not worth the extra responsibilities (Cranston, 2006). Cooley and Shen found in their 1999 study of one midwestern university's educational leadership program that 72% of respondents surveyed said they would consider the impact of administration on their home life when applying for an administration position. Evidence suggests that certain aspects of the position and their perceived impact on candidates' personal life presents a major deterrent when considering administration.

Hancock, Black and Bird (2006) attempted to identify the motivators and inhibitors that impact teachers' decisions to pursue the principalship by surveying 357 students enrolled in a Master of School Administration degree program in North Carolina. Respondents indicated they had been discouraged by family members when considering the principalship. Known inhibiting factors associated with administrative jobs not only increase stress on the individual but also on the individual's family. School districts must acknowledge this connection and take steps to address the needs of the family support group such as creating activities for the spouse or allowing for child-care services. Other options may involve social gatherings or enhanced health care benefits for the family (Hancock, Black & Bird, 2006).

The significantly longer work week might have been acceptable during the days when the stay-at-home mom was more common. Because two income households are the norm today, couples are already stretched for time, especially if they have children. This situation creates a disincentive for teachers to enter the principalship and take on additional demands associated with the job (McAdams, 1998). According to research by Schutte (2003), both male and female principal candidates indicate the principalship's

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perceived negative impact on their families is a major barrier to pursuing the

principalship. Data were collected from 66 professors of principal preparation programs

and 860 students participating in educational administration classes from 52 University

Council for Educational Administration member universities across the nation. The

Schutte (2003) findings suggested that both professors and students felt that increased

stress, time commitment, testing accountability, family responsibilities and excessive

paperwork were significant barriers entering the principalship.

*Negative Parental or Community Relations*

Parent and community support has a significant impact on the principal's ability

to lead; therefore teachers are very much aware of these factors when considering a

principal position. A study by Cooley and Shen (1999) found that 75% of teachers

enrolled in a midwestern university's educational leadership program identified

community support as a major issue when applying for administrative positions.

Knowing that parent and community support is critical in their ability to lead, teachers

look carefully at issues such as funding, violence, student drug and alcohol use,

community politics, and parental involvement in schools when considering an

administrative position.

Difficulty stems from a lack of consistency between the responsibilities placed

upon principals by state and federal mandates or the community and other immediate

tasks associated with running the school, such as attending to parents who are often more

interested in the treatment of their child than test scores. Principals spend a large

percentage of their time attending to questions and requests of parents (Cusick, 2003).

Conflicting obligations, such as meeting the demands of NCLB, keeping the facility

clean, and meeting with parents who want their child to have a good experience make the

job unappealing to many teachers who might otherwise apply (Cusick, 2003).

*Lack of Support*

The number one factor identified by Cooley and Shen (1999) that teachers

consider when applying for administrative positions is the relationship among the board,

administration and teachers. Over 81% of the respondents indicated that the amount of

support from the district office was the most important factor to consider when entering

the principalship. Teachers may be reluctant to accept a position in a district that has a

history of conflict between board members, teachers and administrators (Cooley & Shen,

1999).

According to Cusick (2003), principals in the Michigan study repeatedly stated

that their district office does not support them in disputes with parents. They complained

that district officials would rather sacrifice the principal than accept criticism from a

parent. Parents are more critical about issues today and expect the school to respond to all

of their requests personally. Principals also complained of the state department taking the

side of the parent, always assuming the school is guilty of something. Laws on tenure,

special education or student discipline are all geared to protect the individual. As a result,

the school must always be on the defensive because of being second-guessed (Cusick,

2003).

Motivational Theories

Theories of motivation attempt to explain human behavior. Content theories of motivation take a descriptive approach at identifying the factors within humans and their environments that direct behavior. The assumption is that all people are motivated by a common set of factors (Barnabe & Burns, 1994). Three commonly referenced content theories are Maslow's theory of human motivation, Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory and Alderfer's existence, relatedness, growth (ERG) theory (Bass, 2004).

Maslow (1943) developed a model in which basic needs must be satisfied before higher-level needs are pursued. In this hierarchical model, as a need is satisfied, it no longer motivates allowing the next higher need to take its place. Maslow's hierarchy of needs consisted of (a) basic physiological needs that are vital to survival, (b) safety and security, (c) social needs such as love and affection, (d) self-esteem and personal worth, and (e) self-actualization. Maslow believed these are the primary forces that drive human behavior. Needs at the bottom of the hierarchy involve basic physical requirements. As people move up the hierarchy, higher-order needs that are more psychological are addressed.

Expanding upon Maslow's theory of needs hierarchy, Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene theory suggested that individuals look for fulfillment of higher order needs associated with achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement and growth (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959). The two-factor theory suggested that there are certain characteristics in the workplace lead to worker satisfaction while other factors lead to dissatisfaction. Factors such as recognition or responsibility are intrinsic in nature and help to motivate an individual to a higher level. On the other hand, factors

known as hygiene factors do not give positive satisfaction but workers are dissatisfied in their absence. Examples of these hygiene factors may be salary or working conditions, which are extrinsic in nature (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959).

In additional response to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, Alderfer (1972) developed his existence, relatedness, growth (ERG) theory. Within this theory, Alderfer distinguished three categories of human needs that influence behavior: (a) existence, (b) relatedness, and (c) growth. Existence needs include physiological and safety factors such as food, water, health and well-being. Relatedness needs involve social factors such as involvement with family or friends. Growth needs involve internal and self-actualizing needs such as creativity or productivity. Although similarities exist with Maslow's hierarchy, Alderfer's ERG theory suggests that different levels of needs can be followed at the same time and do not require lower level existence needs to be satisfied before satisfying growth needs. In addition, the ERG theory proposes that the order of needs can vary for different people. Even though the ERG theory is a model that represents a progression of needs, the steps are flexible and allow for a wide range of behaviors.

According to Wolverton (2004), content motivation theories provide some explanation to what attracts people to the teaching profession. The simple fact of having a teaching job satisfies Maslow's survival needs and Alderfer's existence needs for shelter, food and security. The innate need of teachers for affiliation is evident in the desire to work with children and to enjoy contact with colleagues. Also the desire to be respected and appreciated seems to indicate that Maslow's self-esteem need is being met.  Even though engagement in teaching is partially driven by a love of children, educators probably find the profession rewarding because it challenges them to grow and reach

their potential. When teachers who plan to move into the principalship have satisfied their

lower-order needs, they resume their achievement, growth and self-actualization needs

(Wolverton, 2004).

In contrast, process theories of motivation are more analytical in nature. They are

concerned with the interactions between personal characteristics and job characteristics.

They attempt to explain how environmental factors are affected by personality and

psychological states to energize and shape behavior (Barnabe & Burns, 1994). One

process theory called the Expectancy Theory by Vroom (1964) assumes that an

employee's performance can be explained by taking into account the expectations one

has about obtaining a desired outcome.  Vroom suggested that employees will be

motivated if they believe that putting in more time will lead to successful job

performance, better job performance will lead to rewards and the rewards will be valued.

In other words, employees could be motivated by showing them a desirable goal,

reinforcing that it is achievable and straightforward to get there and then providing

support and valued rewards.

<div align="center">Reported Motivating Factors</div>

As it becomes increasingly important within our nation's schools to attract and

retain highly qualified administrators, understanding the factors that motivate teachers to

seek administrative positions is essential (Hancock, Black, & Bird, 2006).  In a paper

examining the fundamental factors of the principal shortage, Moore (1999) discussed

factors that would motivate educators to seek to the principalship in addition to factors

that would deter them from applying for principal positions. Commonly reported factors

serving as motivators are the "internal or psychic satisfaction one receives from one's

<div align="center">40</div>

work, such as the desire to make a difference, the personal and professional challenge, the ability to initiate change, and to have a positive impact on students, staff and the community" (p. 4). Similarly, the National Education Association (1997) indicated that individuals frequently pursue careers in administration due to many of the same motivating factors that caused them to choose teaching as a career.

For the purpose of examining potential candidates' views of the principalship job's attributes as well as the position's overall job attractiveness, Pounder and Merrill (2001) surveyed 170 middle school principals and assistant high school principals from one western state. Findings from the study revealed that potential candidates were attracted to the principalship due to the need to achieve and influence education and the increase in salary and benefits. Likewise, in Cranston's 2007 Australian study, involving both city/urban and rural assistant principals, results suggested that people choose to enter the principalship because of a desire to influence the lives and learning of young people, have more strategic influence on education and wish to work with diverse individuals and groups.

Similarly, a 2001 study by Malone, Sharp and Walter examined the perceptions of elementary, middle and high school principals in Indiana to gather information about the positive features associated with their jobs. Principals were randomly chosen allowing for a total of 153 elementary principals, 64 middle school principals and 66 high schools principals. A total of 238 questionnaires were mailed and 125 responded for a 44% return rate. Survey results indicated 75.2% of the responding principals stated they like the contact with the students. The opportunity to impact students received the second highest rating by 72.8% percent of the responding principals. The chance to make a difference in

teaching and having positive input in the direction of the school were also noted as favorable aspects of the job.

Gaining an alternative viewpoint, Hancock, Black and Bird (2006) attempted to identify factors that motivate teachers in seeking principal positions by surveying 329 students enrolled in an administration degree program in North Carolina. Based on responses from participants in the study it was suggested that factors such as the desire to experience professional and personal challenges and the ability to have a positive impact on others were very influential factors. Other notable aspects of the position such as the possibility for increased compensation and professional advancement and the opportunity to have a leadership influence could also motivate teachers into entering the principalship.

Equally important in the examination of the perceptions of students in administrative programs, findings by Harris, Arnold, Lowery and Crocker (2000) indicated several influencing factors that motivate educators to become school leaders. Data acquired by surveying 151 students enrolled in four university principal preparation programs signified that the most important motivating factors were having a positive impact, making a difference and the personal and professional challenges involved in school administration. These data suggest that the respondents were clearly motivated by intrinsic and service-oriented aspects that allow them to make a positive contribution to education and the people involved. Status, prestige and using the prinicpalship as a stepping stone for another position were found to be some of the least important factors.

Another study of the perceptions of students in administrative programs was conducted in 2000 by Newton in which 139 teachers were surveyed to find the variables

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that are most likely to attract teachers into the principalship. Most respondents indicated they were highly attracted to the job and the work itself but were discouraged by issues related to the working conditions. It was also noted that female teachers were more likely to be discouraged from the principalship by the working conditions than were male teachers.

Other equally important viewpoints can come from teachers who are certified and available but have not yet served in an administrative position. In examining why educators initially choose to gain leadership certification, Arthur et al. (2009) discovered four major themes that emerged from the data: (a) the desire to diversify career options, (b) the drive to make a difference in the profession, (c) encouragement from mentors, and (d) self-actualization. Educators indicated that the most common reason for gaining licensure was to diversify or broaden their career options. The next most common reason for gaining licensure was to make a difference in education above and beyond what they could in the classroom. Many respondents reported they gained certification after being encouraged by supervisors or colleagues or being put into leadership roles by their principal. The fourth recurring theme was self-actualization.  According to Arthur et al. (2009), earning leadership certification "provided them the credibility that complements their identity as leaders" (p. 31).


Solutions to the Principal Shortage

Arguably, current expectations for the principalship have reached a point that exceeds what should reasonably be expected from one person.  Many school districts are heeding the need to restructure or redefine current leadership roles in order to attract

more qualified applicants to the principalship (Copland, 2001). In some states, distributed leadership has gained in popularity. This concept of multiple leaders could develop into the new model of leadership for the 21st century in which multiple individuals lead the school (Arthur et al., 2009). This model of collaborative leadership or "split model of school governance" in which two principals at the same school assume different roles could increase the pool of potential applicants (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). A shift from the traditional assistant principal/principal model to a model of managers and instructional leaders may be needed. Some districts are considering systematic ways to support principals such as allowing co-principals to share the responsibility and accountability or delegating technical aspects of the job to an administrative assistant (Cushing, Kerrin & Johnstone, 2003).

Recommendations for improving the principalship were presented by Bass (2006) after surveying 957 students in principal preparation courses in 52 University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) universities across the nation. Respondents cited stress, unrealistic expectations and work conditions combined with a lack of monetary incentives as reason for a shrinking applicant pool. Based on his research findings, Bass (2006) made several recommendations to encourage more talented educators to pursue administrative positions. First, principal preparation programs must better prepare aspiring principals to deal with the increase in stress, time commitment, accountability, and other overwhelming tasks that they will undergo on a daily basis. University preparation programs may accomplish this task by ensuring sufficient training opportunities are available through internships or other real life opportunities. Second, principals must be given realistic job descriptions that do not lead to diminished health

and family life. Next, adequate time must be available to place emphasis on curriculum and less on managerial tasks. Also, school leaders must offer monetary incentives that attract talented candidates. To assist with recruitment and retention, school districts must work to identify and recruit quality aspiring educators and then allow for ongoing professional development focused on student learning.

Additional solutions for attracting quality principals, as suggested by Ferrandino (2001), involve providing adequate staffing to meet school needs and eliminating the link between principal tenure and student performance on standardized tests. Ferrandino (2001) also suggested that, after teachers with leadership ability are identified and actively recruited, districts need to create an equitable compensation formula based on preparation, experience and responsibility that will encourage teachers to apply. Arthur et al. (2009) suggested more adequate staffing such as additional clerks or classified employees could be hired to reduce the management duties of the principal and allow for more leadership opportunities. Reducing many of the routine tasks and duties that engulf principals could allow them more capacity to make a difference.

In order to attract and retain bright and talented principal candidates, school leaders must offer salaries and benefits that better match the responsibilities of the principalship (Bass, 2006). Ferrandino and Tirozzi (2001) suggested boosting pay to a level of other professionals with similar responsibilities. Additional incentives for excellent performance and other rewards such as time off or other advanced training would also be helpful.

To accomplish the goal of preserving the principal's role of instructional leader, McAdams (1998) recommended several changes to reduce workload. Districts should

allow for more emphasis on curriculum and instruction by adding support services including secretarial assistance. Other duties in areas of student activities, facilities management and student attendance could be assigned to teachers on supplemental contracts. McAdams (1998) further recommended school boards adopt a shorter work week and year for principals and provide a more generous vacation policy in the absence of greater pay.

As Ferrandino and Tirrozi (2001) stated, there is no simple solution to this problem. In order for significant changes to occur in schools, there must be a major change in society and the way the public sees the role of the principal. Only when the principal has adequate time and expertise to serve as the instructional leader will we see real school reform take place.

Summary

A review of the literature presents much evidence of the impending principal shortage in many districts across the nation. Even though principal preparation programs are training sufficient numbers of principal candidates, many districts maintain that it is becoming more and more difficult to fill positions with skilled leaders. With the increased pressure on school leaders to improve student achievement as evidenced through test scores, many teachers are gaining administrative licensure but deciding not to take on the demands of the principalship. This new age of accountability has created a multifaceted principalship involving a new set of pressures. Factors such as accountability, increased workload, strain on personal life and conflicts with parents and community groups are steering promising candidates away from administrative jobs.

Increased job stress, as a result of trying to meet overwhelming demands and working 60-70 hours per week, serves as another frequently reported deterrent to entering the principalship.  Additionally, many principals feel they receive inadequate compensation when taking into account the amount of time involved in their jobs.  With the need to attract talented educators into the principalship becoming more important, it is vital to gain a better understanding of those factors that make the job attractive.

CHAPTER THREE


Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of how principal candidates view the principalship and identify factors that affect their decision to apply for principal vacancies. Using survey research methods, qualified principal candidates responded to the *Survey of West Virginia Educators Holding Principal Licensure*. Descriptive statistics were used to identify the perceived factors that motivate or discourage a qualified principal candidate to pursue a position as principal. Demographic data were also gathered indicating the educator's professional experience, marital status, gender, and age of children living in the home.


Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the motivating factors that influence the pursuit of employment in principal positions by West Virginia professional educators that hold the appropriate administrative licensure?

2. What factors do qualified candidates view as major deterrents to applying for principal positions?

Design

       This study used descriptive statistics to examine the factors contributing to a principal candidate's decision to pursue a position as principal. Using survey research methods, educators responded to the *Survey of West Virginia Educators Holding Principal Licensure*. The survey instrument collected data to answer the research questions and contained three sections: demographics, deterring factors, and motivating factors.

Participants

       The West Virginia Department of Education provided a listing of individuals in West Virginia to whom an initial or renewal professional administrative certificate was issued between January 2004 and May 2010. From an original list of 1820 educators, efforts were made to eliminate those who did not meet the researcher's criteria. These criteria included individuals who were currently serving as educators in West Virginia and possess principal licensure but were not currently in an administrative position. The total population was narrowed to fit these criteria. A spreadsheet was created with the names of individuals, email addresses and mailing addresses of their current place of employment. After the database was created, a survey invitation letter was mailed to each educator.  Responses were kept confidential and participants' names were not published.

Instrumentation

The *Survey of West Virginia Educators Holding Principal Licensure* was used to collect data for this study. The survey consisted of three sections: demographics, deterring factors and motivating factors. Part one of the instrument was designed to collect basic demographic information about the West Virginia educators surveyed. Information was collected on gender, ethnicity, marital status, age of children in the home, and professional experience. Part two of the survey was designed to gather information about specific factors that serve as deterrents to the pursuit of the principalship, and part three identified factors that motivate qualified candidates to apply for principal positions. The researcher targeted individuals holding principal licensure in grade K-12.

Validation of Instrument

The survey was validated by two expert groups. First, the survey was examined for readability by a selected middle school faculty. They were asked to provide feedback on the wording and make general comments to make the survey easier to read and understand.  Second, principal candidates enrolled in a doctoral level survey class were also invited to complete a paper and pencil version of the survey. They were asked to provide feedback on the overall structure. Based on the feedback, minor changes were made to improve the survey.

Data Collection and Analysis

The *Survey of West Virginia Educators Holding Principal Licensure* and a personalized letter were mailed during the first week of October 2010 to a sample of 600 currently employed West Virginia educators who have principal licensure but are not currently in an administrative position. A self-addressed stamped envelope was enclosed with the survey to assist with the return. All surveys were coded to determine which participants responded. Participants who did not respond by mid October received an email encouraging their participation in the study. A second survey was mailed to all non-respondents. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS.

Summary

This study was designed to collect data regarding the perceived factors that motivate or discourage a qualified principal candidate to pursue a position as principal. To gather this information, a survey instrument was distributed the first week of October 2010 to 600 currently employed educators in West Virginia who hold principal licensure, but are not currently in principal positions. The instrument gathered perceptions that address motivation, barriers and demographics with Likert scale items. The research study utilized descriptive statistics and quantitative methodology to examine the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

Introduction

This study examined factors that influence a qualified candidate's decision to pursue a position as principal. Chapter Four is a presentation of the data gathered from the *Survey of West Virginia Educators Holding Principal Licensure* (see Appendix A). The first section will discuss the sample and demographics. The second section will discuss the method of data collection. The final section will examine the major findings of the study including discussion for each research question.

Sample and Demographics

The population for this study (N= 1500) consisted of professional educators in West Virginia to whom an initial or renewal professional administrative certificate had been issued between January of 2004 through May of 2010. The sample included 600 (n=600) individuals randomly selected by using a sample width model where every 2nd (k = 2) participant was selected from a randomized list (Bohrnstedt & Knoke, 1994). The initial survey instrument distribution was followed by an email reminder. Finally, a second paper copy of the survey was sent to all remaining non-respondents.

Data Collection

The *Survey of West Virginia Educators Holding Principal Licensure* consisted of 34 questions in three different sections. The first section requested demographic information that included gender, ethnicity, marital status, age of children currently living at home, current professional assignment, total years in professional career, and questions

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related to the pursuit of administrative positions. Section two consisted of 10 Likert Scale questions and one open response question related to reasons an educator might be deterred from pursuing a position as principal. Section three consisted of 11 Likert Scale questions and one open response question related to reasons an educator might be motivated to pursue the principalship. The level of agreement for each question was measured using a 4-point Likert Scale format ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

The initial survey instrument was distributed the first week of October 2010 via the United States Postal Service along with a survey consent cover letter (see Appendix B) and self-addressed stamped envelope. After approximately two weeks, an email reminder (See Appendix C) was sent to the sample. Approximately three weeks after the first mailing, a second questionnaire was sent to the remaining potential respondents including a revised survey consent cover letter (Appendix D). The surveys were coded in order to eliminate unnecessary mail backs to non-respondents. The primary investigator maintained the coded list of addresses in his office. Upon return, the co-investigator emailed the survey codes to the primary investigator. The primary investigator maintained the list of non-respondents in his office. There were 379 surveys returned from the 600 that were mailed.

Although the request for mailing information was made for only persons who held administrative license and did not have an administrative position, the employment of school personnel is never a static event, and some persons receiving the instrument were actually in administrative positions. Therefore, the respondents were asked if they had ever served as a school administrator and if the response was "no," the individual was

determined to be an appropriate respondent and was included in the usable sample size. If the response was "yes," indicating the individual was currently serving in a school administrative role or had served in the past, the individual was determined not to be an appropriate respondent. A total of 94 individuals responded "yes" and were determined to be ineligible. This reduced the original sample of potential respondents to 506 (Dillman, 1978). With 379 questionnaires returned, the response rate was 74.9%.

Table 1 outlines relevant demographic data from the study sample. Most of the respondents (74%) were female, the most common racial/ethnic composition was Caucasian (99%), and three quarters (75%) were married. Just over half of the participants had children living at home. Of those with children, 13% were preschool age, 20% were elementary age, 6% were middle level age, 7% high school age and 10% were post high school age but living at home. Most of the participants were teachers at either the elementary (30%), middle (19%) or high school (24%) levels with about a quarter (27%) working in another area of public school education.

Table 1

*Demographic Summary of Respondents*

|  | Frequency | Percent |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Sex |  |  |
| Male | 73 | 25.6 |
| Female | 212 | 74.4 |
|  |  |  |
| Ethnicity |  |  |
| Caucasian | 282 | 98.9 |
| African-American | 2 | 0.7 |
| Hispanic | 0 | 0.0 |
| Asian | 0 | 0.0 |
| Other | 0 | 0.0 |
| No Response | 1 | 0.4 |
|  |  |  |
| Marital Status |  |  |
| Single | 70 | 24.6 |
| Married | 214 | 75.1 |
| No Response | 1 | 0.3 |
|  |  |  |
| Age of Children living at home |  |  |
| Preschool age | 37 | 13.0 |
| Elementary age | 56 | 19.7 |
| Middle School age | 16 | 5.6 |
| High School age | 20 | 7.0 |
| Post high school, but living at home | 29 | 10.2 |
| None | 127 | 44.6 |
|  |  |  |
| Current Professional Assignment |  |  |
| Elementary Teacher | 86 | 30.2 |
| Middle School Teacher | 55 | 19.3 |
| High School Teacher | 68 | 23.8 |
| Other | 76 | 26.7 |

Table 2 displays descriptive statistics for variables including the participants' years in professional career, years held administrative licensure, number of times interviewed and offered a position and the years until retirement. The years of experience of the respondents varied greatly with a range of 1 to 42 years in their professional career. The mean total years in their professional career was 18.75 with a standard deviation of 9.52. The number of years that respondents held licensure ranged between 1 and 31 with a mean of 6.18. The number of times interviewed for a principal position ranged between 0 and 20 with a mean of 2.54. The mean number of years until retirement was 14.16.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics for Variables Related to Career*

|  | Min | Max | Mean | Mdn | SD |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Years in Professional Career | 1 | 42 | 18.75 | 17.50 | 9.52 |
| Years held licensure | 1 | 31 | 6.18 | 4.00 | 6.42 |
| Number of times interviewed for position | 0 | 20 | 2.54 | 2.00 | 3.34 |
| Number of times offered position | 0 | 20 | 1.67 | 2.00 | .47 |
| Number of years to retire | 0 | 40 | 14.16 | 15.00 | 8.86 |

Major Findings

*Research Questions*

Q1: What are the motivating factors that influence the pursuit of employment in principal

positions by West Virginia professional educators that hold the appropriate administrative

licensure?

In analyzing the results for this question, means were computed for each of eleven

factors that were identified in the literature as being motivators for pursuing the

principalship. Using a Likert scale, respondents indicated *strongly agree, somewhat*

*agree, somewhat disagree, and strongly disagree* for each statement. The responses

indicated that the most important motivating factor toward pursuing the principalship was

for the *personal professional challenges* (*M* =3.60) of the job, closely followed by the

*desire to be a leader* (*M* =3.54). The *desire to reach potential or self-actualization* was

the third most cited motivating factor (*M* =3.44), the desire to have a *strategic influence*

*on education* (*M* =3.39) was fourth, and the *desire to broaden career options* (*M* =3.32)

was fifth. *Increased salary* (*M* =3.30) was sixth, *stepping stone for a higher job* (*M*

=3.07) was seventh and being *encouraged by colleagues* (*M* =3.01) was the eighth

highest rated factor. The two factors that respondents least agreed were motivators were

the *desire to work with diverse groups* (*M* =2.95) and *status and prestige* (*M* =2.75).

Reponses are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics for Motivating Factors*

|  | Min | Max | Mean | Mdn | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personal and Professional Challenges | 1 | 4 | 3.60 | 4.00 | .600 |
| Desire to be a leader | 1 | 4 | 3.54 | 4.00 | .658 |
| Self-Actualization/Desire to reach potential | 1 | 4 | 3.44 | 4.00 | .662 |
| Strategic Influence on Education | 1 | 4 | 3.39 | 4.00 | .697 |
| Desire to broaden career options | 1 | 4 | 3.32 | 3.00 | .717 |
| Increased Salary | 1 | 4 | 3.30 | 3.00 | .770 |
| Stepping stone for higher job | 1 | 4 | 3.07 | 3.00 | .819 |
| Encouraged by colleagues | 1 | 4 | 3.01 | 3.00 | .774 |
| Desire to work with diverse groups | 1 | 4 | 2.95 | 3.00 | .766 |
| Status and prestige | 1 | 4 | 2.75 | 3.00 | .880 |

In summary, the personal and professional challenges associated with the job and the desire to be a leader were the two biggest motivators for pursuing the principalship. Other strong motivators rated by the respondents were self-actualization or the desire to reach one's potential and having a strategic influence on education. Having an increased salary was only the sixth highest rated motivating factor. Status and prestige was the factor that respondents rated as being the least motivator.

Q2: What factors do qualified candidates view as major deterrents to applying for principal positions?

In analyzing the results for this question, means were computed for ten factors that were identified in the literature as being deterrents for pursuing the principalship. Using a Likert scale, respondents indicated *strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, and strongly disagree* for each statement. Table 4 displays descriptive statistics for factors that deter candidates to applying for principal positions. The highest reported factor was related to the job being *highly stressful* ($M$ =3.42). The second highest reported factor was the *large time commitment* ($M$ =3.36), closely followed by *accountability for student achievement* ($M$ =3.29). The *amount of paperwork* ($M$ =3.24) was fourth and *Insufficient compensation* ($M$ =3.09) was the fifth highest rated deterrent. *Too much responsibility* ($M$ =3.04) was rated sixth, *societal problems* ($M$ =2.96) was seventh and *negatively affects family life* was rated eighth with a mean of 2.88. The deterring factor that received the lowest rating by respondents was *lack of district support* with a mean rating of 2.73.

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics for Deterring Factors*

| | Min | Max | Mean | Mdn | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Highly Stressful | 1 | 4 | 3.42 | 4.00 | .680 |
| Large Time Commitment | 1 | 4 | 3.36 | 4.00 | .750 |
| Accountable for Achievement | 1 | 4 | 3.29 | 3.00 | .794 |
| Amount of Paperwork | 1 | 4 | 3.24 | 3.00 | .774 |
| Insufficient Compensation | 1 | 4 | 3.09 | 3.00 | .848 |
| Too Much Responsibility | 1 | 4 | 3.04 | 3.00 | .814 |
| Societal Problems | 1 | 4 | 2.96 | 3.00 | .815 |
| Negatively Affects Family Life | 1 | 4 | 2.88 | 3.00 | .812 |
| Negative Parents and Community | 1 | 4 | 2.82 | 3.00 | .828 |
| Lack of District Support | 1 | 4 | 2.73 | 3.00 | .915 |

In summary, the factor most often cited by the respondents as being a deterrent to seeking an administrative position was the highly stressful nature of the job. The second and third most often mentioned deterrents to pursuing the principalship were the large time commitment and the accountability for achievement. The amount of paperwork was also cited as a strong deterrent. Interestingly, insufficient compensation was the fifth most cited deterrent in the study, and increased salary was the sixth ranked motivator. According to the respondents, the lack of district support was the least deterring factor.

CHAPTER FIVE

This chapter presents a summary of the research study including a review of the purpose, population and sample, and methods used.  The chapter also includes a summary of the findings and conclusions of the research. Additionally, the implications and recommendations for further study are discussed.

Summary of Purpose

The intended purpose of this study was to investigate how professional educators in West Virginia view the principalship and identify factors that influence a qualified principal candidate to pursue a position as principal. A review of the literature provided ten factors that frequently serve as deterrents to professional educators when considering the principalship: (a) large time commitment, (b) paperwork, (c) negative influences by parent and community groups, (d) high stress, (e) societal problems, (f) insufficient compensation, (g) overwhelming responsibilities, (h) accountability, (i) strain on family life, and (j) lack of support from district office. Additionally, review of the literature revealed eleven factors that could motivate a principal candidate to pursue the principalship: (a) the desire to make a positive impact on teachers and students, (b) the professional challenge, (c) increased salary, (d) the desire to work with diverse groups of people, (e) the desire to have a strategic influence on education, (f) the desire to be a leader, (g) status and prestige of administration, (h) professional stepping stone, (i) encouragement from colleagues, (j) the desire to broaden career options, and (k) self-actualization.

The following research questions were used as a guide for this study.

Q1: What are the motivating factors that influence the pursuit of employment in principal positions by West Virginia professional educators that hold the appropriate administrative licensure?

Q2: What factors do qualified candidates view as major deterrents to applying for principal positions?

## Summary of Population/Sample

The population for this study (N= 1500) consisted of professional educators who were currently serving as educators in West Virginia and possessed principal licensure but were not currently in an administrative position. Educators who had previously served in administrative role were also determined to be ineligible. The sample included 600 (n=600) randomly selected individuals.  This sample was adequate to allow generalization of the findings to the population as a whole.

## Summary of Methods

The *Survey of West Virginia Educators Holding Principal Licensure* (Appendix A) was sent to 600 randomly selected professional educators in West Virginia. The initial survey instrument was distributed via the United States Postal Service.  After approximately two weeks, an email reminder (See Appendix C) was sent and approximately three weeks after the first mailing, a second questionnaire was sent. A

second paper survey was sent to remaining non-respondents.  With 379 questionnaires

returned, the response rate was 74.9%.

An analysis of the quantitative data involved using SPSS. A broad view of the

respondents was achieved by analyzing the survey data using a descriptive format which

provided information about the demographics of eligible principal candidates, the

available applicant pool, and gave some indication as to their experience with pursuit of

administrative positions. The reported mean scores represented the participants'

responses.

## Summary of Findings

*Research Question 1:* What are the motivating factors that influence the pursuit of

employment in principal positions by West Virginia professional educators who hold the

appropriate administrative licensure?

Participants were asked to rate 11 factors that were identified in the literature as

being motivators for pursuing the principalship.  Eight of these factors, personal and

professional challenges, desire to be a leader, self-actualization, strategic influence on

education, desire to broaden career options, increased salary, stepping stone for higher

job, and encouraged by colleagues were all strong motivating factors scoring between

somewhat agree and strongly agree. The two remaining factors, desire to work with

diverse groups and status and prestige had a lower rank as motivators scoring between

somewhat disagree and somewhat agree.

Respondents were also asked to indicate other factors, if any, that could motivate

them to pursue the principalship. Comments included:  (a) desire to change educational

policies, (b) desire to make a difference, (c) frustration with current administrators, (d)

frustration with teaching, (e) desire to create a successful learning environment, and (f) desire to have a positive impact on the community.

*Research Question 2:* What factors do qualified candidates view as major deterrents to applying for principal positions?

Participants were asked to rate ten factors that were identified in the literature as being deterrents for pursuing the principalship. Six of these factors, highly stressful, large time commitment, accountable for achievement, amount of paperwork, insufficient compensation, and too much responsibility were rated as strong deterrents scoring between somewhat agree and strongly agree. Six factors, societal problems, negatively affects family life, negative parents and community and lack of district support were indicated as having less of an impact as deterrents scoring between somewhat disagree and somewhat agree.

Respondents were also asked to indicate other factors, if any, that could deter them from pursuing the principalship. These were compiled into the following categories: (a) negative interview process, (b) discouraged by colleagues, (c) unfair hiring practices/ nepotism, (d) not enough student contact, and (e) thankless job.

## Conclusions and Discussion

Behind any effective school lies quality school leadership. Research has repeatedly identified sustained quality school leadership as the primary component of successful schools. There has been increasing attention as to who will lead our schools in

the twenty-first century and what are the factors that motivate and discourage educators in pursuing the principalship (Hewitt, Pijanowski & Denny, 2009).

Research by Lankford et al., (2003) indicated that educators receiving administrative licensure primarily want to become school leaders with 68% of those administratively certified reporting that they had applied for at least one administrative position during their careers. Of the applicants in the Lankford et al. (2003) study, 87 % of the men and 93 % of the women interviewed for positions at least once. However, one-third of all non-administrators reported that they had been offered at least one job that they later turned down. Personal reasons, salary and working conditions were reasons given for declining an offer.  Similarly, of the 285 individuals that responded to question number 9 on the *Survey of West Virginia Educators Holding Principal Licensure,* over two-thirds (67.37%) indicated that they had interviewed for an administrative position. Just under a quarter (20.70%) of the participants reported that they had been offered administrative positions. These data are important to consider when examining the nature of the principal shortage and the characteristics of individuals in the applicant pools.

This study identified many factors that could serve to motivate educators to seek a position as principal, as well as factors that discourage or deter principal candidates.  It is possible that school districts not effectively recruiting younger leadership candidates paired with experienced candidates dropping out of the search process have contributed to an aging school leadership, a decline in experience in the job pool and a surplus untapped leadership talent still working as classroom educators (Hewitt et al., 2009). Better understanding what motivates and deters educators to pursue the principalship is

vital for making decisions about recruitment and retention of educational leaders in the future.

Participants in this study reported that the personal and professional challenge associated with school leadership was the number one reason for pursuing a school leadership position. This motivating factor was closely followed by the desire to be a leader and self-actualization. This finding is supported by Moore (1999) who indicated those aspiring to the principalship identified factors associated internal satisfaction from one's work, such as personal professional challenges as high priority motivators.

Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene theory would suggest that these factors intrinsically motivate educators to pursue a position in school leadership. Factors associated with achievement, recognition and responsibility are intrinsic motivators that lead to personal satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). On the other hand, factors that do not motivate individuals and are extrinsic in nature are known as hygiene factors. This theory could explain why salary was found to be only the fifth highest reported motivator in the study. Salary could be considered a hygiene factor. It does not necessarily give positive satisfaction but workers may be dissatisfied in its absence (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Research on principal shortages has suggested that many teachers holding administrative licensure are not interested in becoming principals and are simply choosing not to apply for principal positions (Adams, 1999; Andrews & Grogan, 2002; Barksdale, 2003; Roza, 2003). This unwillingness of educators to pursue the principalship paired with a reported increase in retirements of administrators present a challenge to the educational community. Educators in West Virginia that participated in this study identified six factors that were most agreed upon as deterrents to pursuing the

principalship: (a) high stress, (b) large time commitment, (c) accountability, (d) paperwork, (e) insufficient compensation, and (f) too much responsibility.

The number one factor that participants chose for not becoming a school administrator was high stress. The second and third most reported deterrents were time commitment and accountability. All of the top three could be viewed as interrelated. It can be concluded that educators view the principalship as extremely stressful with unrealistic time and accountability expectations. These findings are supported by a 2009 Hewitt, Pijanowski and Denny study that also identified testing/accountability pressures, job stress and time commitment as the top three reasons for not becoming a school administrator.  The highly stressful nature of the job is mentioned frequently in the literature as a deterrent to entering the principalship (Cushing et al., 2003; Ferrandino, 2001; Hargadine, 2002; Howley et al., 2005).

Interestingly, salary was found to be only the fifth highest reported deterring factor in this West Virginia study.  This finding is in contrast to Cooley and Shen (1999) and Cusick (2003) who found that salary was one of the top factors that aspiring principal candidates consider when applying for an administrative position.  However, in this study, Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene theory would suggest that, as a hygiene factor, administrative salaries in West Virginia did not generate major levels of dissatisfaction.


Implications

The top three deterrents identified by respondents in this study were related to stress, the large time commitment and accountability. The solution for school systems is to find ways to reduce these aspects of the position while finding ways to make the

position more attractive for aspiring school leaders. Therefore, the overriding

recommendation to school systems must be to restructure or redefine the current

leadership role that allows for more emphasis on instructional leadership and lessens the

burden of building management (Bass, 2006; Copland, 2001). This redefinition involves

providing adequate staffing, such as classified employees to meet school needs and

reduce the management duties of principals and allow more time for leadership

opportunities (Arthur et al., 2009; Ferrandino, 2001; McAdams, 1998).  It could be

suggested that the responsibilities of the principal have become too overwhelming to be

assumed effectively by one person. Therefore, the concept of multiple leaders should be

considered by school districts which would allow for co-principals to share the growing

amount responsibilities and accountability (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Cushing et al.,

2003).


Recommendations

1. Conduct a qualitative study of a similar nature to determine if the factors discovered in

this study are consistent with this quantitative study.

2.  Perform a study comparing the recruiting and hiring practices of county school

systems in West Virginia.

3. Explore the factors that have influenced educators to leave leadership positions in West

Virginia in the last three years either through retirement or by going back to classroom

teaching positions.

4. Perform a national study to examine the perceived success of alternative leadership

models, such as using co-principals, in the recruitment and retention of principals.

5. Perform a study examining the relationship between salary indexes in county school systems in West Virginia and the longevity of principals.

6. Perform a study examining the perceived stress of principals and the success of their schools in making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

7. Explore other variables that could motivate educators to pursue the principalship.

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**APPENDIX A**

**SURVEY OF WEST VIRGINIA EDUCATORS HOLDING PRINCIPAL**

**LICENSURE**

# Survey of West Virginia Educators Holding Principal Licensure

*The Survey of West Virginia Educators Holding Principal Licensure consists of three parts. **Part one** requests demographic data about you. **Part Two** asks for information concerning your perception of the factors that serve as deterrents to educators pursuing the principalship. **Part Three** asks for your perception of the factors that might motivate an individual to gain administrative licensure and pursue the principalship. Your responses will be kept confidential.*

*Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope.*

### Part 1    For each question, please place an "X" in the box that best describes you.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Gender | ☐ Male | | ☐ Female | | | | | | |
| 2 | Ethnicity | ☐ Caucasian | ☐ African-American | | ☐ Hispanic | | ☐ Asian | | ☐ Other | |
| 3 | Marital Status | | ☐ Single | | ☐ Married | | | | | |

4. Age of children that currently live in your home (Check all that apply)

     ☐ Preschool    ☐ Elementary    ☐ Middle School

     ☐ High School    ☐ Post Secondary    ☐ None

5. Your current professional assignment

     ☐ Elementary Teacher    ☐ Middle School teacher

     ☐ High School Teacher    ☐ Other _____

6. Total number of years in your professional career    _____ years

7. Have you ever served as a school administrator    ☐ Yes    ☐ No

8. How many years have you held an administrative license    _____ years

9. How many times have you interviewed for an administrative position    _____ times

10. How many times have you been offered an administrative position    _____ times

11. How many years until you plan to retire    _____ years

### Part 2    Please read each statement and put an X in the box to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the reasons an educator might be <u>deterred</u> from pursuing a position as principal.

| | | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 12 | Requires a large time commitment | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 13 | Involves an enormous amount of paperwork | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 14 | Negative influences by parent and community groups | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 15 | Highly stressful | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 16 | Societal problems make it difficult to focus on instruction | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 17 | Compensation is insufficient for the amount of responsibilities | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 18 | Has too many responsibilities | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 19 | Is highly accountable for student achievement | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 20 | Negatively effects administrator's family life | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 21 | Lack of support from the district office | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 22 | Other: | | | | |

**Part 3**     Please read each statement and put an X in the box to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the reasons an educator might be <u>motivated</u> to pursue the principalship.

| | | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 23 | Positive impact on students and teachers | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 24 | Personal and professional challenges | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 25 | Increased salary and benefits | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 26 | Desire to work with diverse individuals and groups | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 27 | Desire to have a strategic influence on education | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 28 | Desire to be a leader | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 29 | Status and prestige of administration | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 30 | Stepping stone for a higher position | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 31 | Encouragement from a principal or colleagues | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 32 | Desire to broaden career options | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 33 | Self-actualization or desire to reach potential | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

34    Other:

Please add any comments that you would like to share:

**Thank you for participating in this survey.**

**If you cannot locate the return envelope, please mail this survey to:**

Joel Harris
Collins Middle School
601 Jones Avenue
Oak Hill, West Virginia 25901
jaharris@access.k12.wv.us

**APPENDIX B**


**IRB APPROVAL**

September 28, 2010


Michael Cunningham, EdD
Leadership Studies, MUGC

RE: IRBNet ID# 191519-1
**At:** Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Cunningham:


| | |
|---|---|
| **Protocol Title:** | [191519-1] An Investigation of the Factors Influencing West Virginia Educators' Decisions to Pursue the Principalship |
| **Expiration Date:** | September 28, 2011 |
| **Site Location:** | MUGC |
| **Type of Change:** | New Project                    APPROVED |
| **Review Type:** | Exempt Review |


In accordance with 45CFR46.101(b)(2), the above study and informed consent were granted Exempted approval today by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Chair for the period of 12 months. The approval will expire September 28, 2011. A continuing review request for this study must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date.

This study is for student Joel Harris.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/ Behavioral) Coordinator Bruce Day, CIP at (304) 696-4303 or day50@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

**APPENDIX C**


**SURVEY CONSENT LETTER FROM FIRST MAILING**

October 2, 2010

**Survey Consent**

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled "An Investigation of the Factors Influencing West Virginia Educators' Decisions to Pursue the Principalship" designed to identify the factors that motivate educators that hold administrative licensure to apply or not apply for open administrative vacancies.

The study is being conducted by Dr. Michael Cunningham, EdD, Leadership Studies Program Director for Marshall University Graduate School of Education and Professional Development. This research is being conducted as part of the dissertation requirements for the Doctoral Program of Education for Joel Harris, Doctoral Student.

This survey asks for information concerning your perception of the factors that might motivate educators that hold administrative licensure to apply or not apply for open administrative positions. It should take about 10 minutes to complete. Neither your name nor any personal identifier will be collected for the survey, and your responses will remain confidential. There are no known risks involved with this study. Participation is completely voluntary and there will be no penalty or loss of benefits if you choose to not participate in this research study or to withdraw. If you choose not to participate you may either return the blank survey or you may discard it. You may choose to not answer any question by simply leaving it blank. Returning the survey in the SASE that is provided indicates your consent for use of the answers you supply.

If you have any questions about the study you may contact Dr. Michael Cunningham, EdD at 304-746-1912 or Joel Harris at 304-469-3711. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant you may contact the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity at (304) 696-4303.

By completing this survey and returning it you are also confirming that you are **18** years of age or older.

Thank you for your participation in this research.

Sincerely,

Joel Harris
Principal, Collins Middle School
Doctoral Student
304-469-3711
jaharris@access.k12.wv.us

**APPENDIX D**

**EMAIL REMINDER**

October 19, 2010

Two weeks ago I sent you a letter inviting you to participate in a research project entitled "An Investigation of the Factors Influencing West Virginia Educators' Decisions to Pursue the Principalship." I am conducting this research to identify the factors that motivate educators that hold administrative licensure to apply or not apply for open administrative vacancies. The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete and responses will remain confidential.

If you have already completed and returned this survey, thank you for your assistance. If not, please do so today and return it in the self addressed stamped envelope that was provided. Your completion of the survey is voluntary, but greatly appreciated.

If you have questions about the study, you may contact Dr. Michael Cunningham, EdD at 304-746-1912 or Joel Harris at 304-469-3711. If you need another copy of the survey, please contact me at jaharris@access.k12.wv.us

Sincerely,

Joel Harris
Principal, Collins Middle School
Doctoral Student
304-469-3711
jaharris@access.k12.wv.us

**APPENDIX E**

**REVISED SURVEY CONSENT LETTER**

October 30, 2010

About three weeks ago I sent you a letter inviting you to participate in a research project entitled "An Investigation of the Factors Influencing West Virginia Educators' Decisions to Pursue the Principalship." I am conducting this research to identify the factors that motivate educators that hold administrative licensure to apply or not apply for open administrative vacancies. The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete and responses will remain confidential.

If you have already completed and returned this survey, thank you for your assistance. If not, please do so today and return it in the self addressed stamped envelope that was provided. Your completion of the survey is voluntary, but greatly appreciated.

If you have questions about the study, you may contact Dr. Michael Cunningham, EdD at 304-746-1912 or Joel Harris at 304-469-3711. If you need another copy of the survey, please contact me at jaharris@access.k12.wv.us

Sincerely,

Joel Harris
Principal, Collins Middle School
Doctoral Student
304-469-3711
jaharris@access.k12.wv.us

CURRICULUM VITAE
JOEL HARRIS

## EDUCATION

Marshall University
    Master of Arts in Leadership Studies, 2001
West Virginia University
    Bachelor of Science in secondary Education, 1993

## CERTIFICATION

State of West Virginia, Professional Teaching Certificate, Permanent
    Endorsements: General Science, 5-12 and Biology, 9-12
State of West Virginia, Professional Administrative Certificate, Permanent
    Endorsements: Principal K-12

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1995-2005    Teacher, Collins Middle School, Fayette County, West Virginia
2005-2009    Assistant Principal, Collins Middle School, Fayette County, West Virginia
2009-Present  Principal, Collins Middle School, Fayette County, West Virginia