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Gerald M. Beach

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Conditions Affecting the Decision to Seek or Not Seek

a Position as a School Assistant Principal/Principal

By

Gerald M. Beach

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College of the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

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In Educational Administration

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Abstract

Conditions Affecting the Decision to Seek or Not Seek

a Position as a School Assistant Principal/Principal

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The purpose of the study was to determine the conditions affecting the decision to seek or not seek a position as a school assistant principal or principal. The principalship presents unique challenges to the individual who aspires to building level leadership, and school districts are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit highly qualified new principals. Reports suggest that filling vacant principalships is becoming problematic because the pool of qualified candidates willing to assume positions as school leaders is growing smaller.

This study consisted of a survey to determine the self-perceptions of administrator candidates' decision to seek or not seek a position as a school assistant principal/principal. The Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM) was completed by study participants during the spring of 2010. The survey instrument was derived from an Ohio study of teacher perspectives of the conditions that affect the decision to seek or not seek a position as an assistant principal or principal, and was adapted to be worded for educational administration candidates. The questionnaire was completed in class during the spring semester of the 2009-2010 school year by educational administration candidates currently enrolled in an educational administration master's degree program

offered by a post-secondary institution accredited by the North Central Association Higher Learning Commission, and by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

The independent variable was career goal as determined by the self-reported likelihood of becoming an assistant principal/principal in the next ten years (possible, likely, or probably). The dependent variables were the mean scores on the career, reputation, and legacy constructs of the Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM). Implications of this research may be helpful in understanding the incentives and disincentives affecting the decision to seek or not seek a position as a school assistant principal or principal.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Education officials and policymakers across the United States have come to a staggering conclusion – the shortage of school administrators to lead the nation’s schools is real and is reaching crisis proportion (Quinn, 2002). Teacher shortages have been forecasted for many years, but recognition of a shortage of principals specifically, and school administrators in general, is a developing phenomenon (Coulter, Gates, Jugant, Pye, & Stanton, 2007).

School districts are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit highly qualified new principals, while, at the same time, record numbers of school administrators are now reaching retirement age (Howley, Andrianaivo, & Perry, 2005). School districts nationwide are finding it harder to recruit principals as standards get tougher and the list of demands from the state and federal government gets longer (Hill & Banta, 2008). The principalship presents unique challenges to the individual who aspires to building level leadership. Recent reports suggest that filling vacant principalships is becoming problematic because the pool of qualified candidates willing to assume positions as school leaders is growing smaller (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003).

In 2001, in a survey of nearly 400 superintendents conducted by the Association of California School Administrators, 90% of respondents reported a shortage in the pool of applicants for advertised high school principal openings. A total of 84% of the superintendents reported a shortage of middle level applicants, and 73% reported a shortage of elementary school principal candidates (Quinn, 2002). When asked in a

Michigan study, with the exception of upscale districts that typically do not have problems recruiting, respondents agreed there is a shortage of principals (Cusick, 2003). Research in rural Montana schools indicated an inability to attract candidates to fill principal vacancies due to lower pay, rural isolation, lack of women and minority candidates, and no strategy to grow their own leaders from within the system (Erickson, 2001).

Filling vacant principal positions has become problematic as the pool of educators qualified and/or willing to assume positions shrinks. The National Association of Secondary School Principals reported a serious shortage of applications for vacant principal positions in the United States, claiming there was only a trickle of qualified applicants, if any, willing to fill the positions (Walker & Qian, 2006). Winter and Morgenthal (2002) stated that one of the most alarming developments confronting public schools today is the shrinking applicant pools for principal vacancies.

An examination of a theory of organizational behavior may provide insight regarding the interrelationship with those identified incentives and disincentives associated with the decision to seek an assistant principal/principal's position. Maslow (1970) and Herzberg (1993) base their studies of motivation on content. However, of particular relevance to this study is the work of Clayton Alderfer (1972) who identifies three categories of needs ordered in a non-sequential hierarchical manner, entitling it ERG theory.

Alderfer first notes existence needs which includes a person's physiological and physically related safety needs such as food, shelter and safe working conditions.

Secondly, there are relatedness needs which include a person's need to interact with other people, receive public recognition, and feel secure around people. The third category identifies growth needs consisting of a person's self-esteem through personal achievement (Alderfer, 1972). Incentives and disincentives associated with the position of assistant principal or principal have been identified by researchers and could readily fall into each of the three categories (Cooley & Shen, 1999; Cusick, 2003; Howley, Andrianaivo, & Perry, 2005). While this theory may help explain in a broad sense what motivates educators to become school leaders, the specific factors can assist those who train, hire, and coach potential administrators to make the critical task of building leaderships more inviting.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the conditions affecting the decision to seek or not seek a position as a school assistant principal or principal.

Research Questions

The following research questions were drawn from literature and were used to guide the study:

Research Question 1: What conditions do educational administration candidates perceive as affecting the decision to seek or not seek a position as a principal/assistant principal?

Research Question 2: Based upon career goal, do the responses of educational administration candidates differ on the Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM)?

Question 2a: Based upon career goal, do the responses of educational administration candidates differ on the career factor of the AIM?

Question 2b: Based upon career goal, do the responses of educational administration candidates differ on the professional reputation factor of the AIM?

Question 2c: Based upon career goal, do the responses of educational administration candidates differ on the legacy factor of the AIM?

Assumptions

This study had several strong features. All study participants were enrolled in an educational administration master's degree or endorsement program offered by the University of Nebraska-Omaha, a North Central Association Higher Learning Commission accredited post-secondary institution. In addition, the University of Nebraska-Omaha was accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. Upon successful completion of the educational administration master's degree program coursework, study participants were eligible for K-6, 7-12, or K-12 principal certification granted by the Nebraska Department of Education.

Study participants completed the survey during class time; however, no grade or other incentive was given for participating. Surveys were completed anonymously, so it can be assumed study participants supplied candid, honest responses.

Delimitations of the Study

The study findings, results, and discussion were delimited to graduate students enrolled in a K-6, 7-12, or K-12 educational administration master's degree program at the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

Limitations of the Study

This exploratory survey was administered to students enrolled in educational administration graduate classes during the spring semester of 2010. Responses were solicited only from those individuals who have made the commitment to pursue an educational administration endorsement. Using replies from students already enrolled in educational administration classes did not address those individuals not in specific programs because of disincentives identified within the study. Using results from the survey administered only during the spring semester may have reduced the utility and generalizability of the findings.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms were used:

Assistant principal. The individual holding the building level administrative position in which she/he aids the principal in supervising and facilitating the daily operations of a school, and having similar expectations as noted for the principal. The assistant principal can usually be involved to a great extent in student discipline (Fiore, 2009).

Career goal. The end result of an individual's commitment to attaining a position as a building assistant principal or principal through establishing a vision for success, setting goals, reinforcing those goals in symbolic ways, and remaining focused on achieving high levels of student learning (Cotton, 2003).

Career conditions. The circumstances inherent to the position of assistant principal/principal that transcend prior experiences as a teacher. These may include, but may not be limited to, greater expectations for performance from a widening range of school stakeholders (Fullan, 1997).

Disincentives. Disincentives are defined as those perceived difficulties and frustrations associated with the job of the principal/assistant principal. Disincentives are identified as factors influencing the decision to not seek the position of principal/assistant principal (Cusick, 2003; Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Howley et al, 2005).

Endorsement. Endorsement is defined as an area of specialization indicated on a certificate issued pursuant to Nebraska Department of Education Title 92 NAC 21 signifying that the individual has met specific requirements contained within Chapter 24 of Title 92 (Nebraska Department of Education – Rule 21 & Rule 24).

Incentives. Incentives are defined as those perceived positive conditions associated with the job of the principal/assistant principal. Incentives are identified as factors influencing the decision to seek the position of principal/assistant principal (Cranston, 2007; Howley et al, 2005).

Legacy conditions. Overarching beliefs, evidenced by actions, that an individual's contributions as a principal make a difference in a school setting (Evans, 1996; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).

Mandates. The operational expectations placed upon Nebraska school systems by, but not limited to, the federal government (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1965; NCLB, 2008), the state (Nebraska Department of Education Rules & Regulations, 2010), and locally developed school board policy.

Master's degree program. A course of study in which an individual (referred to as the "candidate") must complete a minimum amount of course work as defined by the post-secondary institution. The candidate must pass a written comprehensive examination at or near the end of the course work, and maintain a 3.0 grade point average in all course work taken in the program (University of Nebraska-Omaha, 2010).

Principal. The individual holding the building level administrative position in which she/he supervises and facilitates the daily operations of a school, and characterized as the leader of the school (Cranston, 2007). Research indicates many leadership traits of principals are positively related to student achievement, attitudes, and social behavior (Cotton, 2003). Principals have expectations for effective performance in areas such as, but not limited to: establishing visions and goals for high levels of student performance, having high expectations for student achievement, creating a positive and supportive school climate, promoting a safe and orderly school environment, maintaining high visibility among school populations, and responding to all matters that arise in a school setting (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; Cotton, 2003; Fiore, 2009; Grubb & Flessa, 2006;).

Principal's endorsement. Educational administration master's degree program courses of study leading to Nebraska Department of Education endorsements allowing an individual to serve as an assistant principal or principal in school districts or buildings with grade level configuration of grades K-6, grades 7-12, or grades K-12 (Nebraska Department of Education – Rule 24, 2008).

Principalship. The administrative environment in which an individual supervises and facilitates the daily operations of a school.

Reputation conditions. Anticipated skill sets, rewards, and expectations inherent to the position of an assistant principal/ principal. Skill sets required of the assistant principal/principal may include decisiveness, judgment, oral/written communication, organizational ability, sensitivity, and stress tolerance (Cranston, 2007; Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Witters-Churchill, 1991). Other factors may include greater status in the school and /or community setting, greater financial compensation, more autonomy in actions and decision-making, and opportunities for innovation (Eckman, 2004; McKay, 1999).

Views about the principalship. Views about the principalship are conditions affecting a survey respondent's decision to seek or not seek a position as a school assistant principal or principal, and includes considerations of identified incentives and disincentives (Howley et al, 2005).

Significance of the Study

This study contributed to research, practice, and policy. The study was of significant interest to post-secondary educational administration master's degree program

faculty and administration in view of the perceived conditions affecting the decision to seek or not seek a position as an assistant principal or principal.

Contribution to research. A review of professional literature suggested that more research was needed regarding the perceived conditions affecting the decision to seek or not seek a position as an assistant principal or principal. There was also a need for more research on the views and values influencing individuals considering the assistant principalship or principalship.

Contribution to practice. A post-secondary educational administration master's degree program-granting institution faculty and administration may consider developing strategies to address factors influencing individuals prior to choosing or not choosing the K-6, 7-12, or K-12 assistant principalship or principalship as a career path.

Contribution to policy. The results of this study may offer insight into what individuals considered to be conditions affecting the decision to seek or not seek a position as an assistant principal or principal. Pursuant to study outcomes, post-secondary institutions may choose to review and modify professional preparation course content and engage aspiring school leaders in meaningful dialogue about conditions affecting the decision to seek or not seek a position as an assistant principal or principal. In addition, school district governing boards may choose to review hiring practices and related policies to attract and retain individuals seeking, or holding, the position of principal/assistant principal.

Organization of the Study

The literature review relevant to this research study was presented in Chapter 2. This chapter reviewed the professional literature related to conditions affecting the decision to seek or not seek a position as an assistant principal or principal. Chapter 3 described the research design, methodology, independent variables, dependent variables, and procedures that were used to gather and analyze the data of the study. Chapter 4 presented an analysis of the data generated from this study. Additionally, Chapter 5 presented interpretations of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

To determine the conditions affecting the decision to seek or not seek a position as a school assistant principal or principal, it was first necessary to develop an overview of the building level principalship and its constructs. The main areas of literature reviewed here are: (1) the importance of school building-level principalship, (2) the shrinking pool of principal candidates, and (3) factors influencing decisions to pursue, or not pursue, the building-level principalship.

The Importance of the School Building-level Principalship

Leaders are measured by their sense of purpose, ability to get others engaged with them as they translate purposes, manage the enterprise, and intervene when required to keep the system on target (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). Researchers and writers state the case for the importance of the school building-level principal as a leader. School effectiveness, leadership, and educational change literature point to leadership, and particularly the leadership of the principal, as a crucial ingredient in school improvement (Evans, 1996; Fink & Brayman, 2004; Fullan, 1997). Effective building level leadership, in the form of a dedicated, skilled principal, is a key in creating and maintaining high quality schools (Cusick, 2003). Quinn (2002) points to the building level principalship as a pivotal position in the school setting. The principal is generally seen by teachers, parents, the wider community and ‘the system’ as the leader of the school (Cranston, 2007).

School leadership has been documented to have an impact on the overall school culture and teacher job satisfaction (Berry, 2009). The importance of school leadership is now such that many governments are providing significant resources to both better understand it, as well as develop it among their current and aspirant leaders (Cranston, 2007). It is hard to overestimate how important a strong leader is to the success of a school (Goldstein, 2001). When TIME Magazine (2001) picked six Schools of the Year, the one thread they had in common was dynamic, dedicated principals who inspired teachers, parents and students to do more than anyone thought possible. However, there simply are not enough people in education right now who demonstrate these qualities (Goldstein, 2001). In schools of high need, particularly in urban schools, the initiative for developing support services to help low-income students usually falls on the principals (Grubb & Flessa, 2006). The case for the importance of the building-level principal cannot be overstated (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).

The current position of building principal may be seen as a culmination of evolving job descriptions and duties, and position expectations. As organized by Murphy (1998), distinct areas of school administration emerged. The beginnings of the building level principalship can be traced back to a period of time framed from 1900-1946 labeled as the Prescriptive Era. During this time, many states were requiring formal coursework in educational leadership for administrative positions and were certifying graduates of preparation programs for employment. More and more principals and superintendents embarked on their careers with university training in the practice of administration. Outside of the educational setting, business began to exert considerable influence over preparation programs for school administrators. Pre-service education for school

executives tended to stress the technical and mechanical aspects of administration, specific and immediate tasks, and the practical aspects of the job. During the Great Depression and World War II, training for educational administrators saw the incorporation of new material into training programs: human relations in cooperative educational activities, social foundations and the human factor in general. By the end of the Prescriptive Era, preparation was still highly technical in nature.

In a time frame from 1947-1985, the Scientific Era saw the position of educational administrator undergo rapid growth. While approximately 125 institutions were in the business of preparing school leaders in 1946, 40 years later, over 500 were involved. The number of doctoral degrees doubled during each decade throughout this period. From 1986 to the present, a time period labeled the Dialectic Era, observers of the field of education argued that school administrators were mere managers, nurturing a dysfunctional and costly bureaucracy. Across the spectrum of those involved in education, there was a cry for leadership being heard on all fronts.

The job of a school principal continues to become increasingly complex. In simple terms, the scope of expertise that principals need continues to expand (Reddekopp, 2008). Grubb and Flessa (2006) suggest that the multiple demands on the principal and the related image of the strong principal carrying all the burdens of running and improving the school come in part from conventional rational models of organizations, relying on a hierarchical division of labor with the principal at the apex. As the conceptualizations of schools and schooling for the future change, the complexities and demands of the principalship are likely to increase (Cranston, 2007).

The literature on effective schools concludes that all effective schools have strong leaders (Grubb & Flessa, 2006).

The building-level principal is responsible for supervising teachers, coordinating bus schedules, communicating with parents, disciplining children, overseeing the cafeteria and commons, supervising special education and other categorical programs, and responding to all the “stuff that walks in the door” (Grubb & Flessa, 2006, p.519). Typically, it is the principal who remains in the hot seat and who, under self-managing school models, essentially is now responsible and accountable for almost everything that happens in the school (Cranston, 2007).

In addition to the managerial and political tasks that have historically engaged principals, reformers have demanded that principals become instructional leaders (Grubb & Flessa, 2006). The job is now more challenging because school reform mandates place greater emphasis on principals being instructional leaders directing the effort to improve student achievement (Winter & Morgenthal, 2002). In an era of accountability, policy makers have imposed new requirements, and the principal is responsible for enhancing progress on multiple (and often conflicting) measures of educational achievement (Grubb & Flessa, 2006). As a building leader, the principal has to recognize that she/he will have to operate within the context of the organization or within a set of mandates established or heavily shaped by another agency (Guthrie & Schuermann, 2010).

The building-level principalship is particularly important for poorly performing schools. The passage of the federal “No Child Left Behind” legislation (2001) and Michigan’s YES! School Accreditation Initiative (Cusick, 2003) raised the stakes for

schools and principals across Michigan as each law calls for the removal of principals in their schools if students fail to meet standards for AYP – adequate yearly progress.

Not only are principals expected to be the educational leaders of their schools but, under the increasing managerialistic models of school operations, their role has emerged into something akin to a CEO in the private sector (Cranston, 2007). When asked to identify what they feel are the most important aspects of their jobs, more than 80% of principals surveyed in Massachusetts noted all aspects of staff development, 66% noted curriculum development and implementation, and 65% noted dealing with parent concerns. When asked how they actually spent their time, the most-often cited task (51%) was implementing state mandated initiatives (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2007).

The Shrinking Pool of Principal Candidates

With a preponderance of literature supporting that the building-level principal is crucial to the effectiveness of a school, the challenge of filling that position must be addressed. Recognizing the importance of building leadership, the concern for replacing school administrators, specifically the school principal, began being addressed years ago. In 1998, after hearing state executives across the United States sharing anecdotes regarding a shortage of qualified applicants for the principalship, the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals asked the Educational Research Service to investigate whether this was just a “here-and-there fluke”, or a growing national trend. In January, 1998, a telephone

poll of 403 rural, urban, and suburban school districts, the Educational Research Service found that fully half experienced difficulty in filling K-12 principalships (Sava, 1998).

Leaders of the National Association of Elementary Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals note a critical nationwide shortage of qualified applicants for the principal's position (Carr & Million, 2010). Dr. Mike Dulaney, Executive Director, Nebraska Council of School Administrators; Dr. Kay Keiser, University of Nebraska-Omaha; Dr. Ken Nelson, University of Nebraska-Kearney; Dr. Marge Harouff, Nebraska Department of Education; and Dr. Larry Dlugosh, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, agree that the shortage of qualified professionals to assume the role of the building principal is "real" and occurring right now in all sizes of Nebraska schools (personal communication, August, 2007).

A focus on principals comes at a time when the pool of people ready and willing to serve as principals is shrinking (Cusick, 2003). Shortages of applicants at all levels are reported, with authors reporting that the shortage of principal applicants is especially acute at the high school level. A respondent to a survey noted, "I would hate to be trying to hire a high school principal right now – the candidates are just not there" (Winter & Morgenthal, 2002, p. 320). Although the average age of building principals has risen over the past 20, years, and increasing numbers of principals are retiring, the large number of retirements does not alone explain the shortage of candidates, because the position – particularly in secondary schools – has increasingly opened up to women, a significant source of potential candidates who traditionally had not been considered (Cusick, 2003). Trends indicate that filling open principalships will become more difficult in the next decade as retirement rates of experienced principals increase, high

percentages of current principals move to non-administrative positions, and numbers of qualified applicants choosing to become school leaders decrease (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003).

The shortage of qualified applicants for building level principals is not limited to a specific geographic area. Rural schools face challenges in attracting candidates due to location and smaller budgets. However, the shortage affects city schools as well. At the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year, 195 public school buildings in New York City opened without a principal (Hinton & Kastner, 2000).

Increasingly, literature suggests that the shortage of principal applicants may not be a shortage of individuals who are principal certified and nominally qualified to apply for position vacancies. Succinctly, there is a shortage of teachers wanting to become principals (Grubb & Flessa, 2006). There may be sufficient numbers of individuals qualified to apply for position vacancies, but they are not pursuing the job (Winter & Morgenthal, 2002). The replacement demand itself for the principalship would perhaps not be a matter of major concern were it not that there is increasing evidence that the aspirant pool is not all that large – that is, the number potentially moving into the principalship is smaller than expected (Cranston, 2007). The declining numbers of teachers seeking administrative certification and the fact that many who are studying for the degree do not plan to seek an administrative position after completing degree requirements, exacerbates the problem of replacing building principals (Cooley & Shen, 1999). People are earning administrative certificates, but fewer are actually applying for available positions (Mezzacappa, 2008; Winter & Morgenthal, 2002).

Historically, teachers have represented the group from which the largest numbers of school administrators was likely to be drawn, but fewer and fewer of them seem willing to seek administrative positions (Howley, Andrianaivo, & Perry, 2005). Teachers who do come into or are already in the profession are all too aware of the challenges confronting principals and are increasingly reluctant to embrace it (Walker & Qian, 2006). Another study of teachers who hold principal certification shows that fewer than half are willing to consider the job (Cusick, 2003).

The reluctance of individuals who have the appropriate degree or certification to assume the position of principal cuts across state lines in the United States. A study of Michigan schools conducted by Cusick (2003) indicated teachers represented the vast majority of principal candidates, and fewer teachers were willing to take on the job. School executives responding to questions posed during the study noted that the number of candidates applying for principal positions was about half to two-thirds the number it was 15 years ago. A suburban Detroit principal reported that his school needed two assistant principals and had four applicants. A Michigan urban district personnel director recounted that, "In 1989, when we had a principal opening, we had 100 or more people apply, and half were qualified. Now it's 10 or so, and maybe 5 are qualified." A principal interviewed during the study stated, "There are two teachers in this building who would make good administrators, but they don't want to touch it" (Cusick, 2003, p.2).

Being qualified for, but not interested in pursuing, a principal position is not unique to Michigan. In a study of rural Montana schools, it was found there were teachers committed to a particular school or community, and among those who called that

rural community “home” were teachers who demonstrated leadership potential and teaching excellence and who would make good principals. Yet, those individuals were not interested in pursuing a principal’s position (Erickson, 2001). In Pennsylvania, 5,242 people earned elementary and secondary principal certificates between 1995 and 1999; 26% more than the number of certificates issued between 1989 and 1994 (McKay, 1999).

A 1998 survey commissioned by the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals noted that half of the school districts surveyed reported a shortage in the labor pool for K-12 principal positions they were trying to fill that year regardless of location (NAESP, 2007), noting that qualified professionals are not seeking the position of school principal. Along with the shortage of principal candidates reported throughout the United States, other countries are reporting the same challenges regarding educators eligible to become principals, but not pursuing the position. Cranston (2007) referred to several studies of schools, within the United States and abroad, in which researchers reported a shortage of principal candidates. He reported a declining interest in the principalship in Scotland’s schools, and found a declining interest in the principalship schools located in the United Kingdom. Brooking et al reported principal recruitment problems in primary schools in New Zealand (2003).

Getting effective principals into schools is a challenge, and literature indicates the challenge will remain well into the future. The process of becoming a principal is seldom compacted into a year or two of graduate leadership studies; rather it begins much earlier when teachers as graduate students engage in professional activities with fellow teachers and principals. Teachers’ experiences in informal and formal leadership, both prior to

and while participating in a training program, help to mold their conception of the principalship. Leadership studies alone do not help students conceptualize the work of principals or to begin the necessary socialization process (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003).

Several initiatives are underway in an effort to address the issue of recruiting and retaining effective build-level principals. The Allegheny County Schools in West Virginia are phasing in a plan to base principals' pay on a formula indexed to the top of the teachers' salary schedule. Fairfax County Public Schools created LEAD Fairfax, a training and internship program for aspiring principals. The Maryland state department of education established a Principals' Academy for new administrators to provide encouragement, tools, and a peer group with which to network for day-to-day solutions. The Academy is a component of the Maryland Educational Leadership Initiative, designed to attract, train and retain principals. The School Leadership program of the 2002 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind) distributed grants totaling \$10 million during FY2002 to help address the shortage (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The program's purpose is to help high need districts recruit and retain principals (NAESP, 2007).

It is an article of faith that principals occupy a pivotal position in the quest for genuine school reform, yet the task of recruitment and selection of school leaders looms large as a significant barrier to better schools. While in office, then U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige illustrated this point when he observed that school leadership on both the local and central level remains the stealth issue in the battle for educational improvement (Quinn, 2002).

Factors Influencing Decisions to Pursue, or not Pursue, the Building-level Principalship

While applicant pools for principal vacancies are shrinking nationwide, researchers cite numerous factors impacting those applicant pools. The factors impacting applicant pools for the principalship may have many descriptors. However, common themes can be identified, and these factors appear to be consistent throughout the research. The age profile of current principals is consistent with the baby-boomer retirement phenomena (Brooking, 2008; Cranston, 2007; Cusick, 2003; Harris, 2007). The changing nature of school administration – in terms of professional status, complexity of tasks, time demands, and accountability for results – is another deterrent to pursuing an administrative career (Winter & Morgenthal, 2002). Negative views of the principalship are reported in both the academic literature and the media (Cranston, 2007). The perception among potential principal candidates is that one must be a “superman” to meet all the expectations of the position (Eckman, 2004). Increased job demands include greater accountability on the part of the principals for student achievement (Harris, 2007; Winter & Morgenthal, 2002). There is a de-motivation resulting from bureaucracy, excessive paperwork and constant change (Cranston, 2007). Men and women who entered the field as teachers years ago, and who have since garnered the experience and training to qualify as administrators, are refusing to take that step (Sava, 1998).

The demands of the principalship have placed more stress on individuals and made the job less appealing. At the same time, the position has become more demanding. A great amount of new responsibility has been placed on principals. The average workday and work year has been extended. The typical workday of principals begins at 7 a.m. and ends at 7 p.m. They work an average of 54 hours per week, and they are

contracted for an average of 240 days a year. In contrast, teachers are contracted for 180/190 days per year and their workday is dramatically shorter. Principals are expected to attend PTA meetings, sporting events, plays, community meetings and many other activities outside of school hours (Hinton & Kastner, 2000). Faced with that picture of the job at hand, it is perhaps not surprising that many potential principals are thinking carefully about whether they want to take on such a daunting role (Walker & Qian, 2006).

Today's principal, and the principal of the past, may share similar duties, but the expectations and profile have evolved over the past decades (Hinton & Kastner, 2000). Winter and Morgenthal (2002) observed that, rightly or wrongly, the school principals of 30 years ago were in many ways the masters of their domains. Principals enjoyed a parental rather than a quasi-legal relationship with students and experienced far less formal and less frequent interactions with parents and community groups. Changes over the last few decades have enhanced the power and influence of students, teachers, and the community and helped advance democratic governance (Evans, 1996; Winter & Morgenthal, 2002). The school principal has been characterized as an underpaid workhorse juggling the demands of instructional leadership, bureaucracy, official mandates, and adverse interest groups (Howley, Andrianaivo, & Perry, 2005).

Nationally, principal recruitment is one of the most critical issues facing public schools today (Winter & Morgenthal, 2002). Coupled with the increasing responsibility and accountability demands being placed on principals in these new times making such roles more demanding and complex, there is a strong interest in a context of availability of a quality aspirant pool (Cranston, 2007).

Cooley and Shen (1999) conducted a study of 189 master's students enrolled in a Midwestern university's education leadership program. Study subjects were asked to complete a survey identifying factors that influenced their decision to apply for an administrative position.

The nature of the work was listed by nearly 62% of the educational leadership students as a consideration in applying for an administrative position. Administrative job responsibilities for most entry level positions include discipline, attendance, teacher evaluation, supervision of co-curricular activities, and a myriad of other assignments. Student discipline, drug and alcohol abuse, teacher-administrator conflict, and increased public skepticism continue to complicate the administrator's role, responsibilities, and the nature of administrative work. The demands of a modern society have complicated and intensified the administrator's work responsibilities.

Working conditions relate to a number of interconnected issues, including the wealth of the district, size of the district, administrator-student ratios, composition of students, and board and community expectations. More than 62% of the teachers identified "poor working conditions" as a factor they would consider in applying for an administrative position.

Respondents also perceived administrators as having little freedom and discretion in completing administrative responsibilities. These conditions included excessive paperwork, long hours, and little discretionary time and freedom. The administrative work week in many instances exceeds 65 hours, with administrators often working three or four nights per week. After shadowing an administrator, one teacher noted that the

dynamics and demands of the school environment forced the principal to complete paperwork and reports after regular hours. The demands of administration often discourage teachers from seeking administrative positions.

The emotional aspects of administrative were a major consideration for 65% of the respondent when applying for an administrative position. Teachers often question if the extra compensation and prestige is worth being second-guessed and criticized by both internal and external stakeholders. Teachers recognize stress as a critical part of administration.

District location was identified by 68% as a factor in applying for an administrative position. Teachers preferred to work in rural and suburban districts. Respondents also considered the proximity of the district to a metropolitan area when applying for an administrative position. Although district location is important, prospective administrators are willing to consider a variety of educational settings. Surprisingly, only 20% of the teachers indicated they would seek a position in the district in which they currently taught.

The superintendent's reputation was a key factor to 70% of the respondents. Educational leadership students suggested that the superintendent's leadership style, accessibility, and his or her rapport with faculty and staff influenced a teacher's decision to enter administration in a particular district. The diminished pool of qualified administrative candidates illustrates the importance of the superintendent's reputation and leadership style. This is especially true in districts that experience significant geographic

and financial disadvantages, as compared to their more affluent and progressive counterparts.

The long work day, politics, lack of job security, and ongoing conflict all have an impact on an administrator's home life. Seventy-two percent of the teachers stated they will consider the impact of administration on their home life when applying for an administrative position. It seems clear that the position and its perceived impact on the family constitute a significant barrier to teachers entering administration.

Teachers expressed concern for quality housing, cultural activities, and recreation in communities where they might seek an administrative position. There are communities in which teachers do not want to live and work. More than 72% of the teachers identified quality of life issues in the community as a consideration in applying for an administrative position. This certainly places a burden on boards, administrators, and communities as school district officials attempt to recruit the best and most capable educational leaders. Regrettably, school officials and community leaders have little discretion in terms of quality of life in the community.

Teachers applying for administrative positions are acutely aware of the importance of community support. Seventy-five percent of the respondents identified community support as a factor in applying for an administrative position. Issues such as school funding, violence, student drug and alcohol use, community politics, and parental involvement in schools affect teachers' decision whether or not to apply for an administrative position. Community support has a critical impact on the administrator's capability to lead, develop programs, and meet the needs of faculty, staff, students, and

the communities they serve. Community support also influences the administrator's perception of job security within the school-community.

While an administrator's contract may approach 240 days with the salary superior to that of teachers, the reality is that the daily rate may be equal to or less than that of teachers who are at the top of the salary scale. Seventy-six percent of the teachers indicated that the administrator's salary must be commensurate with responsibilities. The teacher's official work day is defined by the master contract, while the administrator must participate in a number of evening activities. The daily and after-school responsibilities of administrators demand that boards re-examine salary and benefits provided to administrators.

The most crucial factor that teachers consider in applying for an administrative position is the relationship among the board, administration, and teachers. More than 84% of the respondents stated that the relationship among board members, administrators, and teachers represented the most important consideration in applying for an administrative position. Teachers witness discord between the board, superintendent, principals, and teachers. Teachers might be reluctant to seek a position in a district that has a history of teacher-administrator strife and board tendencies to micromanage. No one wants to uproot their family and move to a district with ongoing conflict between board members, teachers, and administrators. The reality is that in school districts where boards, teachers and administrators work together, boards and superintendents are more likely to attract and retain quality administrators (Cooley & Shen, 1999).

Numerous conditions affecting the decision to seek or not seek a position as a school assistant principal or principal have been identified. There is no tenure associated with the position. An individual would lose tenure as a teacher if seeking the position within the same school. Openings are not well published. The position is impacted by inadequate funding for schools. Bad press or public relation problems associated with the district add pressure to the position. The positions may be viewed as less satisfying than previously thought. Testing and accountability measures are too great. Societal problems make it difficult to focus on instruction. There is increased difficulty in satisfying the demands of parents and the community. Too much time is required to complete job tasks. The job is generally too stressful. Compensation for the job is insufficient compared to the responsibilities (Hinton & Kastner, 2000). A significant factor affecting the decision to pursue or not pursue a building-level principalship is that while principals put stress on teachers to improve outcomes, teachers often do not lose their jobs over low accountability ratings – principals do (Hill & Banta, 2008).

What is being done to ensure that America's school will have strong leaders? At the state and district levels, the focus is on aggressive recruitment of likely candidates, support of new principals, redefinition of priority tasks, and implementing competitive pay rates (NAESP fact sheet, 2007). Principal recruitment is also a concern for education researchers because despite the existence of empirical studies about teacher recruitment, the education literature is virtually devoid of empirical research about administrator recruitment (Winter & Morgenthal, 2002). One of the key drivers in assuring a pool of candidates will be determined by the motives and intentions of potential building-level

administrators, depending in large part on what candidates actually think about school leadership, and the principalship in particular (Cranston, 2003).

Howley, Andrianaivo, and Perry (2005) noted that few empirical studies have addressed the issue of principal shortages even with the increased emphasis on the need to recruit building-level principals. The profession is growing significantly more complex and constraining and is a source of considerable stress. Principals lack the means and support for doing a good job. The salary is too low, and daily and yearly hours are too long. Family life suffers from the demands of the position. There is a perception that hiring practices tend to privilege certain individuals over others on the basis of their gender or ethnic identity. There are high demands for public accountability and conflict management.

State by state studies of factors influencing the decision to pursue, or not pursue, the building-level principalship are not available. However, a study conducted in Michigan provides a picture of factors judged to be significant by superintendents, human relations directors, principals and administrative teams (Cusick, 2003). Study results indicated that salary compensation is a major factor:

While principals earn \$10,000 to \$25,000 more each year in annual salary (than teachers), they work between 20 and 40 more days per year than teachers. Perhaps more important, their days are often 10-12 hours long, starting between 5:30 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. and going into the evening with activities and events. Many would-be administrators, particularly those

raising children, look at the time required and decide not to apply (Cusick, 2003, p. 2).

While money was mentioned first by study subjects, the main reason identified for the decline in qualified principal candidates was that changes in the job itself made it less attractive. Factors cited included legislated expectations, increased parental demands, and the expanding number of things school were 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, special education and accreditation (Cusick, 2003).

Other reasons noted in research for not pursuing a building-level principalship included complex and extremely time-consuming responsibilities. There is a lack of compensation for after-school and weekend duties, and a perceived deterioration of the quality of family life brought about by the heavy workload for the principal. The sense of isolation from and conflict with different educational constituents arose as a reason for not pursuing a building-level principalship. Even more troubling may be the physically and psychologically draining effects of trying to address multiple contradictory expectations with limited resources (Howley, Andrianaivo, & Perry, 2005).

Other conditions considered as disincentives and affecting the decision to seek or not seek a position as a school assistant principal or principal are that managing a work-life balance is easier in a current role and a high satisfaction in a current role so there is little desire to change (Cranston, 2003).

Incentives associated with the principalship include making a difference for kids and influencing the direction principals' school were taking. Being ready for more responsibility was characterized as an incentive. Furthermore, wanting a new challenge to expand horizons and wanting a chance to use good ideas were identified as incentives identified with the principalship (Howley, Andrianaivo, & Perry, 2005).

Cranston (2003) found that a pool of aspiring principal candidates identified four main factors acting as potential incentives for seeking the principalship. He noted the capacity to achieve work-life balance, school location acceptable to the family, good work conditions, and good remuneration.

Conclusion

A wide range of variables determines the conditions affecting the decision to seek or not seek a position as a school assistant principal or principal. Central to these issues is a background on: (1) the importance of school building-level principalship, (2) the shrinking pool of principal candidates, and (3) factors influencing decisions to pursue, or not pursue, the building-level principalship. Within the United States, and in other countries, similar concerns challenge school leaders in filling open principal positions.

Research is lacking in Nebraska in regards to identifying the conditions affecting the decision to seek or not seek a position as a school assistant principal or principal. The purpose of this study **will be** to determine if there **is** a relationship between varying personal and institutional demographics and educational administration candidates' decisions to seek or not seek a position as an assistant principal or principal. The specific methodologies associated with this study **will be** addressed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The purpose of the study was to determine the conditions affecting the decision to seek or not seek a position as a school assistant principal or principal. In this chapter, details and descriptions are given of the research design, participants, instrumentation, variables, research questions, data analysis, and procedures utilized in this study.

Research Design

This study, collecting descriptive and inferential data, consisted of a survey to determine the self-perceptions of administrator candidates' decision to seek or not seek a position as a school assistant principal/principal. The Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM), a self-administered questionnaire, was completed by study participants during the spring of 2010. The questionnaire was completed in class, thus promoting a high participation by respondents in an efficient manner as it is important to select as large a group as possible so that the sample will exhibit similar characteristics to the target population (Creswell, 2008; Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006). The survey instrument was derived from an Ohio study of teacher perspectives of the conditions that affect the decision to seek or not seek a position as an assistant principal or principal, and was adapted to be worded for educational administration candidates.

Participants

Number of participants. The AIM was distributed to 86 educational administration candidates, and complete data sets were returned by 81, or 94% of the

educational administration candidates currently enrolled in an educational administration master's degree program offered by a post-secondary institution accredited by the North Central Association Higher Learning Commission, and by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. For the study subjects, there were no restrictions based on gender, with 36 males and 45 females participating. The age range of the study subjects was 22 to 57 years of age ($M = 34$, $SD = 9.60$). The range in years as an educator was from 2 to 33 ($M = 10$, $SD = 6.00$). Thirty-six (44%) of the study subjects held bachelor's degrees and 45 (56%) of the study subjects held master's degrees. Forty-five (56%) of the study subjects had coached an athletic team and 60 (76%) of the study subjects had sponsored a co-curricular activity. When asked to characterize a study subject's current school district, one (1.23%) identified a mostly rural public district; no one identified a mostly rural private district; 34 (41.98%) identified a mostly suburban public district; 3 (3.70%) identified a mostly suburban private district; 39 (48.15%) identified a mostly urban public district; 3 (3.70%) identified a mostly urban private district; and, one (1.23%) did not respond. All candidates were completing a master's degree or endorsement in educational administration and have successfully completed a bachelor's degree in education. There were no subject restrictions based upon race or ethnic origin. The single inclusion criterion for participation in the study was enrollment in the educational administration master's degree or endorsement program.

Instrumentation

The Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM), a self-administered questionnaire, was completed by study participants (see Appendix A). The AIM was a quantitative instrument used to determine educational administration candidates' views

about the principalship. The AIM measured candidates' responses in a career dimension, a reputation dimension, and a legacy dimension. For each item, candidates were asked to mark their level of agreement on a scale (1=very low extent, 2=low extent, 3=high extent, or 4=very high extent). The career dimension of the AIM consisted of items such as, "expectation for the principal to spend more time in the building," and "lack of clarity about job expectations of principals." The reputation dimension included items such as, "improved annual salary as a principal," and "higher status as a school leader." The legacy dimension included items such as, "increased opportunities for professional growth as a principal," and "anticipated satisfaction associated with 'making a difference' as a principal."

Validity

Content validity was provided through the original study by Howley, Andriananivo, and Perry (2005) of 1,381 educational administration graduates and 433 teachers who were not educational administration graduates. Construct validity of the AIM was then evaluated with a factor analysis using a principal axis factoring followed by a varimax rotation of the number of factors extracted. The career factor had an eigenvalue of 6.71 and accounted for 19.73% of the total variance. The reputation factor had an eigenvalue of 3.67 and accounted for 10.79% of the total variance. The legacy factor had an eigenvalue of 2.79 and accounted for 8.20% of the total variance.

Reliability

Cronbach's alpha was computed to see if participants were consistent in their responses on the survey. The career subscale had a reliability estimate of .81, the

reputation subscale had a reliability estimate of .71, and the legacy subscale had a reliability estimate of .78.

Variables

Independent variables

For this study, the independent variable – career goal – was determined by the self-reported likelihood of becoming an assistant principal/principal in the next ten years (possible, likely, or probably).

Dependent variables

The dependent variables were the mean scores on the career, reputation, and legacy constructs of the Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM).

Research Questions

The following research questions were drawn from literature and were used to guide the study:

Research Question #1. What do educational administration candidates perceive as conditions affecting their decision to seek or not seek a position as an assistant principal or principal?

Research Question #2. Do the responses on the Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM) career factor differ among study participants as grouped by responses related to anticipated career goals?

Research Question #3. Do the responses on the Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM) reputation factor differ among study participants as grouped by responses related to anticipated career goals?

Research Question #4. Do the responses on the Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM) legacy factor differ among study participants as grouped by responses related to anticipated career goals?

Data Collection

Surveys were distributed by institution faculty members during the spring of 2010 to educational administration candidates enrolled in an educational administration master's degree program offered by a post-secondary institution accredited by the North Central Association Higher Learning Commission, and by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. Completing the survey was voluntary, and no grade or other incentive was given for participating. Surveys were completed anonymously with results tabulated and formatted into a spreadsheet for analysis using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software.

Data Analysis

Research question 1 was tested using descriptive statistical measures. Means and standard deviations were reported for 34 survey items, individually and by factor. Research questions 2 through 4 were tested using one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA). Independent variables included survey participants who thought it slightly possible, somewhat possible, quite likely, or almost definite that they would be an assistant principal/principal in the next 10 years. ANOVA is a parametric test of

significance used to determine whether a significant difference exists between two or more means at a selected probability level. This determines if the differences among the means represent true, significant differences or chance differences due to sampling error (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006). A one-way ANOVA was selected as it was efficient and kept the error rate under control (Gay et al., 2006). The significance level was .05. Chapter 4 presented an analysis of the data generated from this study. Additionally, Chapter 5 presented interpretations of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the conditions affecting the decision to seek or not seek a position as a school assistant principal or principal. The Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM) survey was administered by institution faculty members during the spring of 2010 to educational administration candidates enrolled in an educational administration master's degree program offered by a post-secondary institution accredited by the North Central Association Higher Learning Commission, and by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. The number of study participants was 81.

Research Question #1

What do educational administration candidates perceive as conditions affecting their decision to seek or not seek a position as an assistant principal or principal?

Among study participants, responses for the career goal, reputation goal, and legacy goal were generally positive as mean scores commonly fell between "low importance" and "high importance" when indicating the impact a factor had on the decision to seek or not seek a position as a school assistant principal/principal.

For career factor, study participants indicating that it was slightly possible that they would be an assistant principal/principal in the next 10 years ($n = 13$) reported a mean score of 2.30 with a standard deviation of 0.26. For career goal, study participants

who indicated that it was somewhat possible that they would be an assistant principal/principal in the next 10 years ($n = 9$) reported a mean score of 2.16 with a standard deviation of 0.30. For career factor, study participants who indicated that it was quite possible that they would be an assistant principal/principal in the next 10 years ($n = 31$) reported a mean score of 2.27 with a standard deviation of 0.27. For career factor, study participants who indicated that it was definitely possible that they would be an assistant principal/principal in the next 10 years ($n = 28$) reported a mean score of 2.11 with a standard deviation of 0.29. Table 1 displays mean scores and standard deviation for career factor responses.

For reputation factor, study participants indicating that it was slightly possible that they would be an assistant principal/principal in the next 10 years ($n = 13$) reported a mean score of 2.57 with a standard deviation of 0.24. For reputation factor, study participants indicating that it was somewhat possible that they would be an assistant principal/principal in the next 10 years ($n = 9$) reported a mean score of 2.38 with a standard deviation of 0.30. For reputation factor, study participants indicating that it was quite possible that they would be an assistant principal/principal in the next 10 years ($n = 31$) reported a mean score of 2.56 with a standard deviation of 0.28. For career factor, study participants indicating that it was definitely possible that they would be an assistant principal/principal in the next 10 years ($n = 28$) reported a mean score of 2.45 with a standard deviation of 0.27. Table 2 displays mean scores and standard deviation for reputation factor responses.

For legacy factor, study participants indicating that it was slightly possible that they would be an assistant principal/principal in the next 10 years ($n = 13$) reported a mean

score of 0.91 with a standard deviation of 0.08. For legacy factor, study participants indicating that it was somewhat possible that they would be an assistant principal/principal in the next 10 years ($n = 9$) reported a mean score of 2.72 with a standard deviation of 0.27. For legacy factor, study participants indicating that it was quite possible that they would be an assistant principal/principal in the next 10 years ($n = 31$) reported a mean score of 3.02 with a standard deviation of 0.30. For legacy factor, study participants indicating that it was definitely possible that they would be an assistant principal/principal in the next 10 years ($n=28$) reported a mean score of 3.34 with a standard deviation of 0.24. Table 3 displays mean scores and standard deviation for legacy factor responses.

Research Question #2

Do the responses on the Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM) career factor differ among study participants as grouped by responses related to anticipated career goals?

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the participants' career goal and the mean score of the career factor. The independent variable, the career goal or likelihood of becoming an assistant principal or principal, included four levels: slightly likely, somewhat likely, quite likely, and almost definite. The dependent variable for the one-way ANOVA was the mean score for the career construct. Homogeneity of variances was met. Table 4 displays results of career factors by anticipated professional career goal.

Research Question #3

Do the responses on the Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM) reputation factor differ among study participants as grouped by responses related to anticipated career goals?

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the participants' career goal and the mean score of the reputation factor. The independent variable, the career goal or likelihood of becoming an assistant principal or principal, included four levels: slightly likely, somewhat likely, quite likely, and almost definite. The dependent variable for the one-way ANOVA was the mean score for the reputation construct. Homogeneity of variances was met. Table 4 displays results of professional reputation factors by anticipated professional career goal.

Research Question #4

Do the responses on the Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM) legacy factor differ among study participants as grouped by responses related to anticipated career goals?

The ANOVA was significant at the $\alpha = .05$ level, $F(3,77) = 4.05, p < .01$. Table 6 displays results of career factors by anticipated professional legacy goal. Due to the assumption of homogeneity of variance, post hoc comparisons were conducted using the Tukey HSD test. There was a significant difference in the means between those slightly and definitely anticipating a building level career goal, $F = 0.62, p = 0.01$. Table 7 displays results of post hoc contrast analysis comparisons for career factor by anticipated professional legacy goal.

Table 1

AIM Responses for Career Factor by Anticipated Professional Career Goal

| Item | Slightly (n = 13) | | Somewhat (n = 9) | | Quite (n = 31) | | Definitely (n = 28) | |
|--|----------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
| Expectation for the principal to spend more time in the building | 2.31 | 0.63 | 2.56 | 0.88 | 2.52 | 0.85 | 2.57 | 0.79 |
| Lack of clarity about job expectations of principals | 2.15 | 0.80 | 1.78 | 0.83 | 2.10 | 0.79 | 1.82 | 0.48 |
| Principals' increased burden of responsibility for local, state and federal mandates | 2.62 | 1.12 | 2.56 | 0.88 | 2.55 | 0.89 | 2.11 | 0.79 |
| Low levels of administrative support | 2.31 | 1.03 | 2.11 | 0.78 | 2.19 | 0.87 | 2.04 | 0.64 |
| Less job security as a principal | 1.77 | 0.83 | 1.67 | 0.50 | 1.94 | 0.81 | 1.79 | 0.69 |
| Stress associated with anticipated conflict with teachers' unions | 2.38 | 1.04 | 1.78 | 0.30 | 2.00 | 0.68 | 1.79 | 0.50 |
| Anticipated stress associated with leaving a peer group of teachers | 2.15 | 0.99 | 2.00 | 0.71 | 2.23 | 0.72 | 2.00 | 0.82 |
| Expectation for the principal to attend extracurricular activities | 2.46 | 0.97 | 2.22 | 0.83 | 2.39 | 0.92 | 2.11 | 0.74 |

Table 1 (continued)

AIM Responses for Career Factor by Anticipated Professional Career Goal

| Item | Slightly (<i>n</i> = 13) | | Somewhat (<i>n</i> = 9) | | Quite (<i>n</i> = 31) | | Definitely (<i>n</i> = 28) | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
| Anticipated satisfaction associated with the change in focus from dealing with childfree to dealing with adults | 2.15 | 0.07 | 2.22 | 0.44 | 2.58 | 0.85 | 2.61 | 0.79 |
| Decreased opportunity to work with children directly | 2.31 | 1.11 | 2.22 | 1.09 | 2.29 | 1.13 | 2.04 | 1.00 |
| Anticipated stress associated with lack of respect for school principals | 2.00 | 1.00 | 2.11 | 0.60 | 1.74 | 0.77 | 1.89 | 0.63 |
| Anticipated stress associated with having to “play politics” | 2.46 | 1.20 | 2.33 | 0.87 | 2.39 | 0.84 | 2.18 | 0.77 |
| Anticipated stress about having less time at home with family members | 2.77 | 1.17 | 2.56 | 1.13 | 2.65 | 1.08 | 2.54 | 0.92 |
| Total Career Factor | 2.30 | 0.26 | 2.16 | 0.30 | 2.27 | 0.27 | 2.11 | 0.29 |

Table 2

AIM Responses for Professional Reputation Factor by Anticipated Career Goal

| Item | Slightly (<i>n</i> = 13) | | Somewhat (<i>n</i> = 9) | | Quite (<i>n</i> = 31) | | Definitely (<i>n</i> = 28) | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
| Improved annual salary as a principal | 2.54 | 0.88 | 2.56 | 0.73 | 2.58 | 0.72 | 2.43 | 0.63 |
| Greater control over one's work schedule as a principal | 2.69 | 0.95 | 2.11 | 0.60 | 2.35 | 0.75 | 2.07 | 0.86 |
| Higher status as a school leader | 2.54 | 1.05 | 2.67 | 0.50 | 2.81 | 0.75 | 2.75 | 0.59 |
| Improved benefit package for principals | 2.38 | 0.87 | 2.22 | 0.67 | 2.29 | 0.74 | 2.32 | 0.86 |
| Need for greater amounts of technical knowledge required in the principalship | 2.23 | 1.17 | 2.11 | 0.60 | 2.52 | 0.72 | 2.32 | 0.67 |
| Opportunity as a principal to implement creative personal ideas | 3.23 | 0.83 | 2.78 | 0.44 | 3.13 | 0.88 | 2.93 | 0.77 |
| Accountability for societal conditions beyond an educator's control | 2.77 | 1.09 | 2.56 | 1.01 | 2.39 | 0.88 | 2.43 | 0.69 |
| Opportunity as a principal to act autonomously | 2.15 | 0.80 | 2.00 | 0.71 | 2.45 | 0.85 | 2.36 | 0.83 |
| Total Reputation Factor | 2.57 | 0.34 | 2.38 | 0.30 | 2.56 | 0.28 | 2.45 | 0.27 |

Table 3

AIM Responses for Legacy Factor by Anticipated Professional Career Goal

| Item | Slightly (<i>n</i> = 13) | | Somewhat (<i>n</i> = 9) | | Quite (<i>n</i> = 31) | | Definitely (<i>n</i> = 28) | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
| Increased opportunities for professional growth as a principal | 2.62 | 1.04 | 2.67 | 0.71 | 3.19 | 0.75 | 3.14 | 0.65 |
| Anticipated satisfaction associated with "making a difference" as a principal | 3.31 | 0.95 | 3.00 | 0.87 | 3.35 | 0.75 | 3.54 | 0.58 |
| Encouragement to become a principal offered by practicing administrators | 2.15 | 0.90 | 2.22 | 0.83 | 2.52 | 0.85 | 3.07 | 0.86 |
| Chance to have a greater impact as a principal | 3.46 | 0.88 | 2.89 | 0.60 | 3.19 | 0.70 | 3.46 | 0.51 |
| Anticipated satisfaction of providing support to staff | 3.23 | 0.83 | 2.78 | 0.44 | 2.87 | 0.92 | 3.18 | 0.61 |
| Ability to affect the lives of a greater number of children | 3.31 | 0.85 | 2.78 | 0.67 | 3.00 | 0.97 | 3.64 | 0.56 |
| Total Legacy Factor | 3.01 | 0.51 | 2.72 | 0.27 | 3.02 | 0.30 | 3.34 | 0.24 |

Table 4

Results of Analysis of Variance for Career Factor by Anticipated Professional Career Goal

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | Mean Square | <i>df</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> |
|---------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Between Groups | .842 | 17.11 | 3 | 1.45 | .24* |
| Within Groups | 14.911 | 45.17 | 77 | | |

* = not significant

Table 5

Results of Analysis of Variance for Professional Reputation Factor by Anticipated Professional Career Goal

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | Mean Square | <i>df</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> |
|---------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Between Groups | 0.434 | 0.145 | 3 | 0.72 | .54* |
| Within Groups | 15.464 | 0.201 | 77 | | |

* = not significant

Table 6

Results of Analysis of Variance for Legacy Factor by Anticipated Professional Career

Goal

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | Mean Square | <i>df</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> |
|---------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Between Groups | 3.085 | 1.028 | 3 | 4.050 | .01 |
| Within Groups | 19.551 | 0.254 | 77 | | |

Table 7

Post Hoc Contrast Analysis Comparisons for Legacy Factor By Anticipated Professional Career Goal

| Ed Admin Candidates | F^a | p |
|-------------------------|-------|--------|
| \bar{A} vs. \bar{B} | -0.29 | 0.55 |
| \bar{A} vs. \bar{C} | 0.03 | 1.00 |
| \bar{A} vs. \bar{D} | 0.37 | 0.22 |
| \bar{B} vs. \bar{C} | 0.32 | 0.34 |
| \bar{B} vs. \bar{D} | 0.62 | 0.01** |
| \bar{C} vs. \bar{D} | 0.30 | 0.19 |

^a Negative F is in the direction of subjects not motivated to become a building leader.

Note. A = Educational Administration Candidates Who Thought It Slightly Possible to Be an Assistant Principal/Principal in the Next 10 Years, B = Educational Administration Candidates Who Thought It Somewhat Possible to Be an Assistant Principal/Principal in the Next 10 Years, C = Educational Administration Candidates Who Thought It Quite Likely to Be an Assistant Principal/Principal in the Next 10 Years, and D = Educational Administration Candidates Who Thought It Almost Definite to Be an Assistant Principal/Principal in the Next 10 Years

** $p = .01$

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions and Discussion

The purpose of the study was to determine the conditions affecting the decision to seek or not seek a position as a school assistant principal or principal. The Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM) survey was administered by institution faculty members during the spring of 2010 to educational administration candidates enrolled in an educational administration master's degree program offered by a post-secondary institution accredited by the North Central Association Higher Learning Commission, and by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. The number of study participants was 81.

The Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM), a self-administered questionnaire, was completed by study participants (see Appendix A). The AIM was a quantitative instrument used to determine educational administration candidates' views about the principalship. The AIM measured candidates' responses in a career dimension, a reputation dimension, and a legacy dimension. For each item, candidates were asked to mark their level of agreement on a scale (1 = very low extent, 2 = low extent, 3 = high extent, or 4 = very high extent). The career dimension of the AIM consisted of items such as, "expectation for the principal to spend more time in the building," and "lack of clarity about job expectations of principals." The reputation dimension included items such as, "improved annual salary as a principal," and "higher status as a school leader." The legacy dimension included items such as, "increased opportunities for professional

growth as a principal,” and “anticipated satisfaction associated with ‘making a difference’ as a principal.”

Conclusions

Research Question #1

Research Questions #1 was used to determine what educational administration candidates perceived as conditions affecting their decision to seek or not seek a position as an assistant principal or principal.

Survey participants identified themselves in relation to how likely it was that they would be an assistant principal/principal in the next 10 years, with survey participants falling into one of four categories – slightly possible, somewhat possible, quite likely, and almost definite. Among study participants, responses for the career goal, reputation goal, and legacy goal responses fell between “low extent” and “high extent” when indicating the impact a factor had on the decision to seek or not seek a position as a school assistant principal/principal. There was no distinctive pattern on a majority of the items.

Research Question #2

Research Question #2 was used to determine if the responses on the Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM) career factor differed among study participants as grouped by responses related to anticipated career goals.

Among educational administration candidates in the domain of career goal, there was not a distinct pattern in responses of what motivated survey participants. The lowest

mean scores for each respondent group, slightly possible ($M = 1.77$, $SD = .83$), somewhat possible ($M = 1.67$, $SD = .50$), quite likely ($M = 1.94$, $SD = .81$), and almost definite ($M = 1.79$, $SD = .69$), was in response to the factor “less job security as a principal.” For those identified as “slightly possible,” factors scoring the highest were, “anticipated stress about having less time at home with family members” ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 1.17$), and “principals’ increased burden of responsibility for local, state, and federal mandates” ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.12$). For those identified as “somewhat possible,” factors scoring the highest were, “expectation for the principal to spend more time in the building” ($M = 2.56$, $SD = .88$), “principals’ increased burden of responsibility for local, state, and federal mandates” ($M = 2.56$, $SD = .88$), and “anticipated stress about having less time at home with family members” ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 1.13$). For survey participants characterized as “quite likely,” factors scoring the highest were “anticipated stress about having less time at home with family members” ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 1.08$), and “anticipated satisfaction associated with the change in focus from dealing with children to dealing with adults” ($M = 2.58$, $SD = .85$). For those identified as “almost definite,” factors scoring the highest were “anticipated satisfaction associated with the change in focus from dealing with children to dealing with adults” ($M = 2.61$, $SD = .79$), and “expectation for the principal to spend more time in the building” ($M = 2.57$, $SD = .79$).

Research Question #3

Research Question #3 was used to determine if the responses on the Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM) reputation factor differed among study participants as grouped by responses related to anticipated career goals.

In the reputation goal domain, there was not a distinct pattern in responses of what motivates survey participants. For the “slightly possible” respondent group, the factor scoring the lowest was “opportunity as a principal to act autonomously” ($M = 2.15$, $SD = .80$). For that same group, the factor scoring the highest was “opportunity as a principal to implement creative personal ideas” ($M = 3.23$, $SD = .83$). For those identified as “somewhat possible,” the lowest-scoring factor was “opportunity as a principal to act autonomously” ($M = 2.00$, $SD = .71$), with the highest-scoring factor identified as the “opportunity as a principal to implement creative personal ideas” ($M = 2.78$, $SD = .44$). For survey participants characterized as “quite likely,” the factor scoring the lowest was “improved benefit package for principals” ($M = 2.29$, $SD = .74$), and the highest-scoring factor was “opportunity as a principal to implement creative personal ideas” ($M = 3.13$, $SD = .88$). For those identified as “almost definite,” the factor scoring the lowest was “greater control over one’s work schedule as a principal” ($M = 2.07$, $SD = .86$) with the factor highest-scoring factor identified as “opportunity as a principal to implement creative personal ideas” ($M = 3.13$, $SD = .88$).

Research Question #4

Research Question #4 was used to determine if the responses on the Administrator Index of Motivators (AIM) legacy factor differed among study participants as grouped by responses related to anticipated career goals?

For the legacy factor, there was a significant difference in responses. Data suggests the items identified with the legacy factor are significantly higher among the survey participant groups – slightly possible – somewhat possible – quite possible –

definitely possible – as an extremely stronger commitment is reflected to the extent they thought they would be an assistant principal/principal in the next 10 years.

For the “slightly possible” respondent group, the factor scoring the lowest was “encouragement to become a principal offered by practicing administrators” ($M = 2.15$, $SD = .90$). For that same group, the factor scoring the highest was “chance to have a greater impact as a principal” ($M = 3.46$, $SD = .88$). For those identified as “somewhat possible,” the lowest-scoring factor was “encouragement to become a principal offered by practicing administrators” ($M = 2.22$, $SD = .83$), and for this same group, the highest-scoring factor identified was the “anticipated satisfaction associated with making a difference as a principal” ($M = 3.00$, $SD = .87$). For those survey participants characterized as “quite likely,” the factor scoring the lowest was “encouragement to become a principal offered by practicing administrators” ($M = 2.52$, $SD = .85$), and the highest-scoring factor was “anticipated satisfaction associated with making a difference as a principal” ($M = 3.35$, $SD = .75$). For those survey participants characterized as “quite likely,” the factor scoring the lowest was “encouragement to become a principal offered by practicing administrators” ($M = 3.07$, $SD = .86$), and the highest-scoring factor was “ability to affect the lives of a greater number of children” ($M = 3.64$, $SD = .56$).

Discussion

The school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment (Fiore, 2009). It would seem that the individual aspiring to be this kind of leader must not only possess the requisite skills to

perform the duties described, but must first have the motivation to take on this kind of challenge. The AIM survey identified a number of incentives and disincentives related to what educational administration candidates perceived as conditions affecting their decision to seek or not seek a position as an assistant principal or principal. The results of the survey were analyzed scientifically, but the results led to several observations outside the realm of data analysis.

Incentives were defined as those perceived positive conditions associated with the job of the principal/assistant principal. Incentives motivate an individual to pursue a particular course of action. If that individual has aspirations of pursuing a building principalship, identifying the motivators may establish a framework from which to confirm a decision.

Survey factors found in the career domain of the AIM survey included descriptors such as “lack of clarity about the job expectations of principals,” “expectation for the principal to attend extracurricular activities,” and “expectation for the principal to spend more time in the building.” Yet, survey results and analysis indicated that across the categories, these incentives, or motivators, were not significant.

“Salary” and “improved benefit package for principals” are samples of factors in the reputation domain of the AIM survey. However, survey results indicated that across the categories of study participants, salary was not a significant incentive, or motivator. This finding is in contrast to Cooley and Shen (1999) and Cusick (2003) who found that those aspiring to the principalship identified salary as a high priority motivator.

It was in the legacy domain of the AIM where significance was identified.

Alderfer (1973) and Campbell et al. (1970) report the difference between two types of motivation. One type is “mechanical” or “process” which could be interpreted to parallel the career and reputation domains identified in the AIM study. However, it may be the other type of motivation identified, “substantive” or “content,” that most fits the legacy domain of the AIM survey. Those survey participants who identified themselves as being highly committed to being an assistant principal/principal in the next 10 years prioritized legacy factors such as “anticipated satisfaction associated with making a difference as a principal” and possessing the “ability to affect the lives of a greater number of children.” This ability to make a difference is consistent with the work of researchers who found those who hold administrative positions reporting that one of their greatest sources of satisfaction was the ability to make a difference (Cranston, 2007; Howley et al, 2005; McKay, 1999).

Considering the AIM survey results across three career goal domains – career, reputation, and legacy, post-secondary institutions and school districts attempting to recruit educational administration candidates may want to pay close attention. A singular question may be, “Are those committed to being principals different than others?”

Alderfer (1972) suggests that terms such as “need,” “drive,” and “instinct,” are synonymous with “motive.” It would seem that individuals who may potentially enroll in educational administration graduates programs should possess characteristics associated with Alderfer’s terms. Organizations recruiting for the principalship should consider screening applicants to help frame the motives influencing a candidate’s decision to seek the position of assistant principal/principal. A mechanism that reflects the presence of a

balance related to AIM survey factors in the three domains – career, reputation, legacy – may prove most helpful in recruiting the most potentially successful candidates to educational administration training programs. Strengthening educational administration, and particularly principal preparation and finding ways of preparing those principals in different ways may be a product of the conversation surrounding motives (Grubb & Flessa, 2006).

Implications for practice

In setting a school's purpose and goals, the principal frames and conveys a vision for his or her school that affects staff expectations, influences teacher selection and motivation, and increases the likelihood of staff consensus regarding the school's mission (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009).

Individuals who take educational administration graduate coursework generally have classroom teaching experience and bring with them skills transferrable to a new role as an assistant principal/principal. However, teachers in the classroom may not have a concrete grasp of all the responsibilities that fall to an assistant principal or principal. The time required to effectively lead a building, its staff, and students is only one factor to be considered while aspiring to be a building level leader. As suggested by Fiore (2009), the hours high school principals work are among the longest in public school administration posts. Moving from the classroom to assuming the role of a building level administrator is challenging, and students require support to move through multiple phases of career changing (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003).

This study examined three domains – career, reputation, and legacy. The factors unique to those domains framed an individual’s perception of what it took to be an assistant principal/principal.

Principals are essential actors in schools and significantly influence whether or not their schools experience academic success (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009). Of note is how external pressures impact the principal’s position. The role of principals in implementing innovations is more often than not a case of being on the receiving end of externally initiated changes (Fullan, 1997). It is difficult to manage the day to day challenges and routines in a building when faced with pressure from Federal, state, and local mandates.

Of particular note in this study was a career goal item – “less job security as a principal” – which survey participants scored low as to the extent it would influence the decision to seek or not seek a position as an assistant principal/principal. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has special meaning to principals in the United States as states and districts are given increased flexibility in how they spend their education dollars in return for setting standards for student achievement and holding educators accountable for results (Cotton, 2003). It would seem that with this environment of accountability, and the current nationwide identification of Persistently Low-Achieving Schools (PLAS), an individual would need to consider this factor with greater interest.

Pursuant to Federal guidelines, persistently low-achieving schools may qualify for Federal funds to support remediation efforts. The money is tied to four aggressive intervention models – two require closing the school and either reopening it through a

charter company or sending student to other schools. A third involves replacing the principal and at least half the staff. The fourth, and sometimes characterized as the least intrusive strategy, replaces the principal and addresses other areas of reform in the school (Reist, 2010; Talking Points, NDE, 2010).

Recently, the Lincoln (Nebraska) Public Schools transferred the principal of the Elliott Elementary School, a move district officials called “repugnant” but necessary to secure what could be millions of federal dollars (Reist, 2010). The principal was characterized by district officials as an outstanding educator and leader, but was the principal of a school that was anticipated to be identified as a persistently low-achieving school. When the Nebraska Department of Education released its list of persistently low-achieving schools, Elliott Elementary was on the list, and but since the principal had been transferred, the district became PLAS eligible for a portion of \$17 million in Federal money available to Nebraska. Decisions such as that made by the Lincoln Public Schools are being prompted by the U.S. Department of Education requirements for school districts that want to share a portion of \$3.5 billion in Federal stimulus money.

Within the items found in the reputation domain was, “opportunity as a principal to implement creative personal ideas.” Data analysis of participant responses indicated this factor affected to a high or very high extent the decision to seek or not seek a position as a school assistant principal/principal. This would indicate survey participants had the desire to be innovative in the school environment, but the nature of realities in the principal’s position may compromise those efforts. Fullan (1997) proposed that a principal must be willing to let go of control, and be supportive of staff. The principal should be should be present in the building, willing to stand up to district demands, and

be positive. In addition, the principal should be a real expert on the accelerated school process, be open-minded, listening to everybody's opinions, and be sensitive to staff morale. And of paramount importance, the principal must believe every child is capable of success. These are expectations or perceptions of the traits a principal should exhibit, but in the end, the principal has to balance the accountability for test results in an environment that may not be so results driven. Fiore (2009) portrays classical decision-making: recognizing the problem – brainstorming alternatives – evaluating alternatives – making the decision – taking action as a strategy that elicits input from others and may be viewed as creative. However, when considering mandates and expectations from the Federal, state, and local level, it is ultimately the principal who will be held accountable for the success or failure of the school.

Implications for policy

Principals must plan their time to enable them to spend most of it in instructional leadership activities, student relationships, teachers' professional development, and parent-principal contact, whereas management should be de-emphasized (Cotton, 2003). That being stated, it would appear the reality of the principal's world may be more accurately portrayed by Gutherie and Schuermann (2010) who suggested that much of America's day-to-day school activity is shaped strongly by policy dynamics that take place in and among physically and psychologically distant individuals and institutions.

Within Nebraska, building principals will be accountable for guiding their buildings through the framework of accountability. Principals will need the skills, and the commitment, to implement systems to assure students success and institutional

responsibility. The Nebraska Department of Education provided its framework for reporting student success when it released its approved definition of Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools (PLAS). Graduation Rate will mean the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Graduation Rate from all secondary schools that is averaged for the three latest years. The initial year of identifying the persistently lowest-achieving schools would use 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2007-08 data. The Performance Rank will mean the total number of students in the “all students” group at the proficient level in both Reading and Math divided by the total number of students enrolled a Full Academic Year (FAY as defined for AYP) in Reading and Math to determine a percent proficient for each school. A Progress Over Time Rank will mean the total number of students in the “all students” group at the proficient level in Reading and Math for the three latest years divided by the total number of students enrolled a Full Academic Year (FAY) in Reading and Math for the three latest years to determine a percent proficient. Weighting will mean the performance rank will be weighted (multiplied by two) and added to the progress over time. And, Final Rank will mean the combination of performance rank and the progress over time rank (Nebraska Department of Education, 2010). While schools move forward, they must adhere to the tenets of policy and procedure as state governance and control of education is itself an enormously layered phenomenon (Guthrie & Schuermann, 2010).

Successfully meeting the challenges of leading a building, the principal will have to possess the tools to bring all audiences into the planning and implementation of effective teaching strategies. Learning the pedagogy of evaluation falls in line with professional reputation goals as identified in this study. The evaluation of any school program is a strategy for discovering ways to improve effectiveness, and evaluation

frameworks can help principals and educational partners understand what, why, and how a program is expected to benefit teachers, families, and students (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009; Witters-Churchill, 1991).

Within the study, the factors related to the legacy goal were most significant. The desire to create a system or framework for success that outlasts an individual's tenure in a school appears to be of higher value than those factors related to career or reputation. The individual who aspires to leave a legacy reflects a commitment that the administrator holds herself or himself accountable for the success of the whole school. Successful principals not only monitor and report student progress, but they also ensure that findings are used to improve the instructional program (Cooley & Shen, 1999; Cotton, 2003). Aspiring to leaving a legacy falls in line with Evans (1996) who stated that leaders build their practice outward from their core commitments rather than inward from a management text.

Implications for further research

The results of this study point to the need for further research. A great deal more can be learned with additional research into the relationship of career, reputation, and legacy factors and their influence on the decision to seek or not seek the position of assistant principal/principal. It may be appropriate to widen the field of study to include survey participants from urban and rural post-secondary institutions. Establishing links between educational administration graduate programs through the administration of this survey could yield important information.

Practicing educational administrators and principals in particular, may want to take particular note of their influence on aspiring assistant principals/principals. Further research to determine the influence of recruitment/mentoring programs for aspiring administrators may bridge the wisdom of experience with the exuberance of those new to the administrative profession. The essential challenge of the leader is not attaining perfection, but acknowledging imperfections and obtaining complementaries – you cannot do it alone (Reeves, 2006). Matching those complementaries with prospective assistant principals/principals bears further examination.

Writers and researchers continue to point toward the building level assistant principal/principal as the key to student and staff success. And, despite all the attention on the principal's leadership role, schools appear to be losing ground, as evidenced by the increasing lack of highly effective, satisfied principals (Fullan, 1997; Howley et al, 2005; Mezzacappa, 2008). Efforts can be made to determine other factors that influence the decision to become an assistant principal/principal. The position of principal can be a solitary existence, and with the heightened emphasis on implementing effective teaching strategies that promote student success, post-secondary institutions may conduct further research to determine appropriate strategies that support the principal.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument

Administrator Index of Motivators

February 2010

Dear EDAD Candidate,

The faculty of the Department of Educational Administration and Supervision would appreciate your input on the attached survey. Its purpose is to assist us in improving our program to meet student needs.

Your survey should remain anonymous, and will only be analyzed in aggregate. When answering items that seem to have more than one right answer please choose your best response, and please answer all items including those that may not seem currently applicable to you.

If you have already completed this survey this year, you may return your blank copy to the folder where completed surveys are being gathered.

Thank you for your time and effort. Your information will help current and future candidates in school leadership through aligning objectives and activities in the EDAD program at UNO.

Administrator Index of Motivators

Part I: Views about the Principalship To what extent do the following conditions affect your decision to seek or not seek a position as a school assistant principal/principal?

| | Very low extent | Low extent | High extent | Very high extent |
|--|-----------------|------------|-------------|------------------|
| improved annual salary as a principal | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| lower per diem salary as a principal | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| greater control over one's work schedule as a principal | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| expectation for the principal to spend more time in the building | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| the principalship involves excessive pressure to perform | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| higher status as a school <i>leader</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| improved benefit package for principals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| the principalship is overly dominated by males | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| high levels of administrative support | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| increased opportunities for professional growth as a principal | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| need for greater amounts of technical knowledge required in the principalship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| anticipated satisfaction associated with "making a difference" as a principal | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| lack of clarity about job expectations of principals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| principals' increased burden of responsibility for local, state, and federal mandates | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| low levels of administrative support | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| encouragement to become a principal offered by practicing administrators | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| opportunity as a principal to implement creative personal ideas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| accountability for societal conditions beyond an educator's control | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| chance to have a greater impact as a principal | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| less job security as a principal | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| stress associated with anticipated conflict with teachers' unions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| anticipated satisfaction of providing support to staff | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| anticipated stress associated with supervising staff | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| anticipated stress associated with leaving a peer group of teachers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| expectation for the principal to attend extracurricular activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| anticipated stress associated with the change in focus from dealing with children to dealing with adults | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| opportunity as a principal to act autonomously | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| anticipated respect for a principals' authority | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| anticipated satisfaction associated with the change in focus from dealing with children to dealing with adults | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| decreased opportunity to work with children directly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| anticipated stress associated with lack of respect for school principals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| anticipated stress associated with having to "play politics" | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| anticipated stress about having less time at home with family members | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| ability to affect the lives of a greater number of children | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Part II: Value Positions How important are the following values to you personally?

| | Not important at all | Not important | Important | Very Important |
|---|-------------------------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| remaining in the school district in which I am employed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| not having to relocate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| making a name for myself in the field of education | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| staying in the same community for most of my life | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| traveling to broaden my horizons | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| setting down roots | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| leaving home to seek career opportunities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| living in a larger community than the one in which I was raised | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Part III: Information about You Please circle your choice where appropriate.

- Gender: Male Female
- Age:
- Years as an educator:
- Years in current position:
- Highest degree obtained: Bachelor's Master's Doctorate
- Have you ever coached an athletic team? Yes No
- Have you ever sponsored a co-curricular activity? Yes No
- What is the grade level at which most of your teaching takes place? K-6 7-12 K-12
Not Applicable
- Marital Status: Single Married Divorced Widowed
- Are you responsible for the care of pre-college aged children? Yes No
- If so, how many pre-college aged children are in your household?
- Are you responsible for the care of elderly relatives? Yes No
- If so, how many elderly relatives are in your household?
- Where are you in your educational administration program? (Credit hours earned)
12 or less 13-24 25+
- How soon after completing your educational administration program do you plan to apply for an assistant principal/principal's position?
Immediately Eventually Never

APPENDIX B

Institutional Review Board

Board Approval

State that IRB approval letter is available upon request

IRB # 269-10-EX