TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION IN A CHANGING
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TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION IN A CHANGING EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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This mixed methods study explored the factors that lead to job satisfaction in a changing educational environment. The study was completed in a rural school district in the central Ohio area. The data were collected through the administration of Hackman and Oldham’s Job Diagnostic Survey along with conducting individual interviews and focus groups. Multiple sources of data were collected from participants at varied times. Themes from both quantitative and qualitative approaches were cross-checked, while findings were compared to the literature review. The data analysis led to the following themes: importance of instructional support from administration and colleagues, commitment to student success, teacher self-efficacy, and a belief in job significance. Data also revealed that educational changes have resulted in the participants’ break in psychological contract, which has triggered feelings of fear and loss of confidence.
DEDICATION

To my husband Mark: Because I couldn’t do this without my best friend by my side. Thank you for your love and support as we embark on our many adventures together. To my sweet children, Haley and Davin. Because your unending smiles and encouraging words served as a constant motivator to help me finish. Dream big, my loves. To my parents, Jack and Kathy, who demonstrated and instilled the importance of perseverance and commitment. Thank you for always believing in me.
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CHAPTER I

This dissertation is a mixed methods research study that identifies factors that lead to educator job satisfaction in a highly changing environment. The first chapter of the dissertation presents the background of the study, identifies the problem statement, outlines the purpose and significance of the study, describes delimitations, and clarifies key terms that will be used throughout the dissertation.

INTRODUCTION

“Here we go again – another unfunded mandate.” “Just wait it out – this will go away.” “How much can they expect us to do?” “Morale is low. The administrators need to do something to increase morale because of all these changes.” These comments and many others may be heard throughout school buildings across Ohio as teachers prepare for an intense amount of change. A curricular switch to Ohio’s New Learning Standards, new assessment system, and a new teacher evaluation system are only three of the change initiatives mandated by the state and federal government in the past 5 years. The degree of change in K-12 education along with external pressures applied by the media, legislation, and community members have widened the spotlight placed on teacher effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

Educational change initiatives mandated by the federal government throughout the past 15 years have placed a tremendous amount of pressure on stakeholders in the educational system. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 served as the newest version of the Elementary and Secondary Education (ESEA), the major federal law authorizing federal funding on programs to support K-12 schools. Although NCLB covered numerous federal programs, the law’s requirements for testing, accountability
and school improvement received the most attention. The passage of the NCLB Act in 2001 revised the existing federal accountability framework to make schools responsible for student achievement. The forced imposition of annual testing in grades 3-8 along with required high school graduation tests were coupled with the introduction of annual performance measures. Individual schools, districts, and states were required to report student results publically through a report card system.

On top of this, NCLB demanded student proficiency in reading and math by the year 2014. Threats to impose state interventions for chronically underperforming school districts triggered increased accountability for teachers and students. In addition, revisions presented in the Obama administration’s A Blueprint for Reform targeted intervention directed at the lowest 5% of schools based upon academic achievement, academic growth, and graduation rates (Maxcy, 2011). Schools identified within this lowest 5% faced a potential turnover of staff, administration, transformation, or even closure.

Additional school reform introduced through the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) initiated the $4 billion Race to the Top (RttT) competition. RttT ushered in significant change designed to pursue higher educational standards, improve teacher effectiveness, use data effectively, and adopt new strategies to help struggling students. This initiative offered bold incentives to states and districts willing to spur systematic reform to improve teaching and learning in schools. School districts throughout Ohio received federal funding as a result of a comprehensive reform plan designed to ignite educational change. A high profile effort to implement provisions
required within the RttT plan drove districts to raise standards and align policies and structures to meet the goal of improved teaching and learning.

Reform that resulted from provisions within the RttT plan increased the pressure for change in the educational environment in Ohio. In an effort to establish uniform standards for all students across the United States, the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association lead an effort to implement Common Core standards in the areas of English language arts and mathematics. In 2010, Ohio’s State Board of Education adopted the Common Core standards, while renaming them as Ohio’s New Learning Standards. Compounding that, more rigorous standards in the areas of science and social studies were adopted by the State Board of Education in 2010. As a result of the adopted standards, educators throughout Ohio were forced to redesign their curriculum to focus on higher levels of student learning, often without the adoption of resources to help support students in meeting the required learning goals. Ohio schools were mandated to implement Ohio’s New Learning Standards in the areas of English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies by the 2014-15 school year.

School reform intensified in 2011 when Ohio’s State Board of Education adopted the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES). This adoption mandated a uniform evaluation system for all schools throughout the state of Ohio. The required evaluation system measures teacher effectiveness through two key components which combine to form a holistic rating. The first component measures teacher effectiveness through administrative observations that focus on teaching and learning objectives encompassed in a required rubric. The second component measures teacher effectiveness as
determined through student achievement and growth from state and local assessments. The two measures combine to determine a teacher’s final rating, which districts submit to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE).

State government mandates continued in 2012 when Ohio joined a consortium of 13 states called the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). This group designed new assessments to measure learning outcomes in the areas of English language arts and mathematics. The assessments, required by Ohio’s State Board of Education, amplified rigor and intensity through increased amounts of testing and higher cognitive demand from students. In addition to the PARCC tests, Ohio partnered with the American Institute of Research (AIR) to design new assessments to measure learning outcomes in the areas of science and social studies. Ohio’s state government administered the directive that all schools implement the new assessments during the 2014-15 school year.

The transition to new learning standards and assessments stirred further educational change in 2013 when ODE released the plan for a new accountability system applicable to all schools in Ohio. The accountability system utilized a report card framework that integrated 36 measurable indicators that reflect student achievement and growth within the school population. This model changed in 2015 when ODE revealed a revised accountability system. Within this system, the number of indicators that measure student achievement will increase and vary over the next few years during the transition.

Mandated school reform over the past 15 years has changed the work environment for educators. During this timeframe, educators have implemented two similar rounds of mandated changes related to new educational standards and assessment
systems, while measured by different accountability models. These educational mandates imposed by the state or federal government have established an environment of constant change with little support for educators to implement these mandates. Educators have scrambled to make the required changes, often without the needed leadership, structural framework, support, or capacity.

The mandated change imposed by the federal and state government creates intense change in the educational environment. Recognizing the amount of changes throughout the past 15 years, it is critical to explore how much change educators can implement while striving for increased student achievement. Teachers feel pressure from both internal and external stakeholders, which impacts the extent to which people enjoy or feel satisfied with their jobs. Fritzsche and Parrish (2005) defined job satisfaction as the extent to which people enjoy their jobs. Lawler (1974) stated that job satisfaction refers to individuals’ affective relations to their work role and is a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one’s job and what one perceives it is offering. Job satisfaction is a key issue that concerns both the individual and the organization and may have a significant impact on the person’s emotions, work behavior, and performance.

Works plays a prominent role in an individual’s life; it occupies a significant part of the day and provides the economic foundation for a person’s lifestyle. Mehta (2012) stated that a highly satisfied person is able to perform better in some situations than those that are not satisfied. Having more satisfied employees is a good indicator of high morale which leads to higher productivity in an organization (p. 55). Adversely, job stress is an important factor that can impact one’s job satisfaction. Farber (1991) claimed that
teacher stress and burnout have affected and will continue to affect the lives of teachers, administrators, students, and their families. This stress is a result of a demand made by the internal or external environment. Stress created by this imbalance can lead to low self-efficacy which may lead to a low professional self-esteem (Ashton, 1995).

Educational change throughout the past 15 years has placed strong demands on teachers that have impacted their professional role and work environment. It is critical that educators remain satisfied in their role, while not succumbing to the stress and burnout that may result from the educational changes. As a result of these concerns, this mixed methods study aimed to identify factors that influence job satisfaction in a changing educational environment.

**Significance of the Study**

As a result of the changes mandated from the state and federal government, school districts have approached implementing reform in various and unique ways. These approaches support assumptions that imposing mandates, despite limited resources, will make a significant impact on student achievement. A key factor when implementing school reform is the influence of the teacher on student achievement and growth. This study focused directly on feedback provided by teachers who experienced swift education change by identifying factors that lead to job satisfaction. The information gleaned in this study is significant to educational leadership in several ways.

Educational leaders need to be aware of how change factors may influence educator satisfaction in their current job. A better understanding of the change factors has the potential to lead to a less stressful change environment and more productive student learning environment. It may also have the potential for leaders to better
understand how the change factors affect teacher intentions to remain or leave the teaching profession. Further, this could impact a leader’s ability to retain quality teachers. This study is also significant in its ability to help school leaders promote an organizational culture that fosters factors that lead to teacher job satisfaction. A leader’s ability to recognize and promote factors that lead to job satisfaction in a changing educational environment increases the quality of the work environment for teachers and therefore enhances a more productive learning environment for students.

**Researcher’s Lens**

There are a variety of approaches an individual can take through his or her research. It is important to know the values, assumptions, and beliefs of the researcher. This set of values and beliefs, called a “research paradigm”, constitutes the position the researcher takes throughout the research and informs choices at every stage of the research process (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). As a researcher, I have approached this study with an interpretive lens, where my research focused on understanding and interpretation of the experiences and perspective of teachers in a changing educational environment. I believe that educators are in the midst of major educational changes. The interpretive approach framed my understanding that participants have constructed a perceived reality through their experiences with change. A single observable reality does not exist; therefore, I have sought to understand the experience and perspective of educators, who serve as important sources of knowledge.

Throughout this research study, my role co-existed as an educator and as a researcher. I first entered the education profession 15 years ago. My perspective as a researcher has been influenced through my experience as a teacher, central office
administrator, and building principal. The last 5 years of my professional experiences in administration have taken place in the era of major educational reform. New learning standards, a revised teacher evaluation system, and a reformed accountability system have driven major changes in the educational environment. As an educator immersed in the educational mandates, I believe that swift reform movements have impacted the job satisfaction of teachers. Teachers have been forced to implement a vast number of reform initiatives without having a solid understanding of the change or the proper training needed to implement the change. I have witnessed educational mandates and the constant cycle of change impact teachers’ attitudes and behavior in their educational role, while provoking feelings of dissatisfaction for the job. Further, contractual restraints imposed by districts’ collective bargaining agreements and pressure from external stakeholders, including the media, all add to the frustration experienced by educators. It is a challenging time for educators.

My experiences as a student and educator have formed my belief system of what it means to be a great teacher. Encompassed as more than credentials, intelligence, or experience, a great teacher leads from the heart. Teaching serves as a humanistic profession where compassion, empathy, and kindness form the environment which makes students feel cared for, welcomed, and loved. These behaviors build relationships and an environment which establish the foundation needed for the ultimate goal of impacting student learning. I believe in the importance of great teachers and recognize the value and influence they have on students, parents and the community. Despite the challenges they currently face, I believe that many persevere and sustain their commitment to the complex and challenging environment. Many educators maintain their purpose, ideals,
and core values, in face of the difficulties that could quickly lead to cynicism and burn-out.

As educators and leaders, it is important to understand and strengthen the motivation that sustains teacher commitment. Educators bring a wealth of experience and perspective, while serving as important sources of knowledge. Outstanding educators committed to their job are the key to great schools. It is critical that we examine the feedback of these teachers to identify factors that lead to job satisfaction. While the imposed mandates from the government created a changed work environment, educators’ current reality has shifted through their construction of new experiences and social interactions. Leaders must identify, recognize and promote factors that influence job satisfaction in order to enhance high internal work motivation and work performance.

A conceptual framework posed by Hackman and Oldham (1976) served as the backdrop for my research and motivation with this study. The Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) summarizes and integrates a large amount of research by identifying the main features of jobs which affect employees’ attitudes and behavior. The model predicts that jobs higher in skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback will create a greater experience in three critical psychological states; meaningfulness of work, enhanced responsibility and knowledge of results. An increase in the three psychological states, in turn, predicts greater personal and work outcomes, leading to high internal work motivation, high quality work performance, better work performance, and lower levels of absenteeism and turnover.
**Methodological Overview**

This mixed methods study served to identify factors that lead to job satisfaction within a changing educational environment. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were utilized to strengthen the study. The primary research questions that guide the study are: (a) What factors influence job satisfaction among teachers? (b) How does the changing educational environment influence the degree of satisfaction teachers have with their job? (c) Do common themes exist between Hackman and Oldham’s Job Characteristic Survey findings and perceptual data provided by teachers about their job satisfaction?

A systematic sampling strategy was utilized to identify teachers to participate in the quantitative component of the study. A total of 26 participants completed the Hackman and Oldham short form survey. Data were entered through Microsoft Excel spreadsheets; results were analyzed through the use of numerical and graphic techniques to report descriptive statistics.

Similar to the quantitative approach, a systematic sampling strategy was utilized to identify teachers to participate in the qualitative component of the study, which included individual interviews and focus groups. Accessibility and availability of the identified teachers drove the decision making process when determining teacher participation in interviews or focus groups. Four teachers participated in individual interviews, while six teachers participated in focus groups. All interviews and focus group sessions were audiotaped and sent to a transcriptionist, who transcribed the interviews into Microsoft Word documents. Initial data analysis began with a preliminary exploration of reading transcripts to familiarize myself with the data while
memoing ideas. Further, transcripts were loaded into NVivo Analysis to code data and assist with theme identification. Five themes emerged from the data analysis. A written report of the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data analysis is found in Chapter IV.

Definition of Key Terms

This study uses terminology provided by Hackman and Oldham’s Conceptual Framework, which may not be clear to the reader. The following terms are provided for clarification:

*Job Diagnostic Theory* - proposes that positive personal and work outcomes (high internal motivation, high work satisfaction, high quality performance, and low absenteeism and turnover) are obtained when three “critical psychological states” are present (experienced meaningfulness of the work, experienced responsibility for the outcomes of the work, and knowledge of the results of the work activities) (Hackman & Oldham, 1974, p. 5).

*Job Diagnostic Survey* - a survey tool intended to (a) diagnose existing jobs to determine if they might be redesigned to improve employee motivation and productivity and (b) evaluate the effects of job changes on employees (Hackman & Oldham, 1974, p. 5).

*Core Job Dimensions* - objective properties of skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback which contribute to the effectiveness and satisfaction of employees (Hackman & Oldham, 1974, p. 5).

*Skill variety* - A core job dimension that measures the degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities, skills, and talents of the employee (Hackman & Oldham, 1974, p. 5).
**Task identity** - A core job dimension that measures the degree to which requires completion of a “whole” and identifiable piece of work (Hackman & Oldham, 1974, p. 5).

**Task significance** - A core job dimension that measures the degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives or work of other people (Hackman & Oldham, 1974, p. 5).

**Autonomy** - A core job dimension that measures the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion given to the employee when determining the procedures used when carrying out the work of the job (Hackman & Oldham, 1974, p. 5).

**Feedback** - A core job dimension that measures the degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job results in the employee obtaining information about the effectiveness of his or her work performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1974, p. 5).

**Critical psychological states** - Psychological states known as experienced meaningfulness of the work, experienced responsibility for work outcomes, and knowledge of results. The psychological states mediate between the core job dimensions and the outcomes of the work (Hackman & Oldham, 1974, p. 5).

**Personal and work outcomes** - Refers to general and specific satisfactions and internal work motivation experienced as a result of doing a job (Hackman & Oldham, 1974, p. 5).

**Affective reactions** - Personal and affective reactions or feelings a person obtains from performing the job (Hackman & Oldham, 1974, p. 6).

**General satisfaction** - The degree to which an employee is satisfied and happy with the job (Hackman & Oldham, 1974, p. 6).
Internal work motivation - The degree to which the employee is self-motivated to perform effectively on the job (Hackman & Oldham, 1974, p. 6).

Specific satisfactions - Short scales that provide separate measures of satisfaction related to job security, compensation, social satisfaction, supervision, and opportunity for personal growth and development on the job (Hackman & Oldham, 1974, p. 6).

Individual growth need strength - A characteristic which is used predicted to influence how positively an employee will respond to a job with objectively high motivating potential (Hackman & Oldham, 1974, p. 6).

Motivating potential score - A single index score of the degree in which the objective characteristics of the job will promote high internal work motivation (Hackman & Oldham, 1974, p. 6).

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Limitations

This is a study of one school district with a unique set of demographics and characteristics. The schools which comprised the research study have consistently received academic awards of excellence from various organizations; moreover, the schools have consistently received the highest rating from the Ohio Department of Education. The district has a history of successfully passing school levies, enabling teachers to work in an environment equipped with the resources needed to perform their job. Further, the rural community in which the schools serve is economically diverse; however, it is not racially diverse. The symbolic context of academic and demographic factors, in addition to the individual contribution to a high performing school may influence one’s perception of job satisfaction.
Through the role of a participant observer, I made a diligent attempt to bracket my own perceptions and remain as objective as possible to the data gathering and analysis process. Through self-reflection, my experience with the impact of educational change related to my job satisfaction was considered. Within my 13 years of education, I have experienced a significant amount of educational change. As a researcher, it was imperative that I diminish my thoughts and experiences related to educational change in order to remain objective and unbiased.

Further, my previous affiliation with the organization may have influenced my bias as a researcher. As a longstanding employee in the organization, I had a historical perspective of the educational reform initiatives that the district has implemented. My experience as a leader and participant in the change process may influence my bias in the study. Further, I am aware that my supervisory position within the district may have created an element of influence or skewing of participant responses. Although I do not evaluate the job performance of the participants, I work closely with their direct supervisors. It was important that I acknowledged the influence of my supervisory role within the organization and its potential effect on the degree of participant comfort and honesty.

**Delimitations**

Throughout the preparation of the research study, there were several parameters I established as the researcher in order to design the framework for a valid study. As the researcher, I enlisted the help of the district’s HR manager to assist with the participant identification and selection process; this assistance ensured an objective approach when gathering a sample representative of the district’s population. Prior to participation
identification, I developed parameters that served as a guide when choosing participants for the study. The following parameters were shared with the HR manager when identifying participants for the study:

- Participant began their career as an educator.
-Participant had a minimum of five years teaching experience.
-Participant was in good standing and did not have professional or ethical misconduct violations.
- Participants did not have a direct reporting relationship to the researcher.

Following the above criteria for participant selection, the district’s HR administrator assumed responsibility when identifying a list of potential participants. Due to incomplete information, the HR manager was unable to identify educators who began their career as an educator, therefore that factor was not considered when identifying a list of potential participants. Following the application of the above criteria to identify potential participants, the HR manager produced a list of 137 educators. Through the utilization of a systematic sampling strategy, 45 participants were selected to receive an invitation to participate in an online survey. Using a similar strategy, 20 educators were invited to participate in an interview or focus group.

It is important to note that teachers within my building supervision were not included as participants in the survey, interview, or focus group. I recognized that my supervisory position could hinder participant comfort and honesty; therefore, teachers who are a direct report to me were not included in the sample.
Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation contains five chapters as well as references, and appendices. Chapter I includes an introduction, problem statement, significance and purpose of the study, delimitations, and definition of key terms. Chapter II discusses a review of literature relevant to the study. Chapter III describes the study’s methodology, including the approach, participants, data collection and analysis. Chapter IV presents the results of the study. Chapter V summarizes the research findings, conclusions, and guides further recommendations.
CHAPTER II

Review of Related Research and Literature

The review of literature is structured into three sections. Section one presented information on the history of educational changes throughout the United States over the past 60 years. *A Nation at Risk, No Child Left Behind* and *Race to the Top* are explored, in order to highlight legislative acts that have served as an impetus for major educational reform. Section two discusses the concept of self- and collective efficacy, among teachers. Efficacy is further explored through discussion on its impact on student learning. Section three provides an overview of job satisfaction. A thorough review of Hackman and Oldham’s Job Characteristics Model is discussed.

A Historical Perspective of Educational Changes

Educational policy makers have long searched for a system that increases student achievement, raises standards, and recognizes and promotes high quality educators and outstanding practice. The federal government’s influence and investment in public education has driven and challenged the educational status quo over the past several decades. Recent scholarship suggests that, “education has been put near the top of the national public agenda by starting an ambitious and well-publicized elementary and secondary education reform, lasting more than a quarter of a century, spanning both Republican and Democratic administrations” (Johanningmeier, 2010, p 347). A series of legislative movements throughout the past 60 years has pushed a consistent flow of educational change throughout the United States’ educational system. At the heart of the legislative acts lies a desire to close the achievement gap, develop higher standards, and improve overall academic achievement. These similarities exist among all the
educational changes; however, the approach to achieving the results has been designed from different perspectives.

**A Nation at Risk**

As early as the 1940s, major industrial and professional groups began to feel the manpower pinch, particularly with respect to highly educated persons (Johanningmeier, 2010). As president, Franklin D. Roosevelt expressed concern about the nation’s supply and need for manpower; therefore he recommended the National Manpower Commission. For a decade, this group received support from the Ford Foundation. As the Korean war ended in 1953, the federal government recognized a need and pursued interest in scientific research in establishing ways to support science. Vannevar Bush, director of Scientific Research and Development reported that the United States would have to support basic research and train scientists to maintain the nation’s defense and the strength of its economy (Johanningmeier, 2010). This eventually led to the establishment of new curricula in mathematics and science in the nation’s public schools.

The launching of Sputnik by the Soviet Union in 1957 served as an impetus for change in public education. The Sputnik launching challenged the American belief that the U.S. was superior in math and science to other countries (Kessinger, 2011). Many in the U.S. voiced concerns that the U.S. was losing ground on its earlier edge in scientific research and dominance from the WWII era. These concerns created a spotlight on American schools and the education provided to all students. Congress began an attempt to bring the country’s schools up to speed. First, federal assistance provided the country with defense-oriented personnel targeted toward foreign language scholars, area studies centers, and engineering students. Second, federal assistance provided government
sponsored loan programs to enroll thousands of students in colleges and universities. In 1965, Congress passed the first in a series of Elementary and Secondary Education Acts. The first act would “focus on educational aid to the children of the poor” (Spring, 2005, p. 121). This landmark legislation would further impact future legislative efforts by providing federal aid tied to other national policy concerns such as poverty, defense, and economic growth (Kessinger, 2011).

The spring of 1983 brought about another fundamental change in education (Borek, 2008). Terrell Bell, President Reagan’s Secretary of Education, had empaneled the National Commission on Excellence in Education to study available research and data on public education and make recommendations to the President. According to Borek (2008) the report did not do what President Reagan had hoped in terms of opening the door to prayer in school and school choice. The appearance of the report is said to have “spurred the greatest national debate on education since the launching of Sputnik in 1957” (Stedman & Smith, 1983, p. 85). Due to the Soviets’ progress in producing scientists and engineers, public education had already moved to the top of the national agenda when the United States entered the Cold War.

The educational discourse and criticism from the previous forty years came to the forefront through the publication of *A Nation at Risk*; a well-written and well-organized synthesis of claims and arguments that had been made since the end of World War II (Johanningmeier, 2010). The media and public quickly picked up on the arguments presented in the report. The commission recommended four years of English, three years of mathematics, three years of science, three years of social studies, and one-half a school year of computer science for high school students. The remaining credits required for
graduation consisted of courses in foreign language, music, and physical education. Furthermore, in an attempt to articulate a need for multicultural understanding, the commission recommended that students work towards earning proficiency in a foreign language in elementary school (Borek, 2008).

Borek (2008) explained that commissioners expressed concern over the intellectual, moral, and spiritual health of the American people. They made recommendations for more rigorous standards at all levels of schooling, while recommending that four-year colleges raise admission standards. Furthermore, commissioners recommended standardized tests of achievement be implemented at “major transition points from one level of schooling to another and particularly from high school to college or work” (A Nation At Risk, 1983, p. 28).

The commissioner’s report also targeted teachers. Commissioners wrote of teachers’ ability to inspire or stifle learning. Although the report did not quantify “many,” commissioners stated that teachers came from the bottom quarter of students, therefore suggesting that teachers were not qualified to teach the curriculum needed to prepare students. The primary recommendations for teachers focused on salaries that were “professionally competitive, market-sensitive, and performance-based” and that teachers demonstrate “competence in an academic discipline” (A Nation At Risk, 1983, p. 30).

No Child Left Behind

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) continued the flow of educational change throughout the United States. The NCLB Act of 2001 requires school districts across the nation to set standards for student learning, meet or exceed educational benchmarks, and
accurately measure student progress (Butzin, 2007; Umpstead, 2008). Additionally, the Act required all states to get all students to reading and mathematics proficiency by 2014 (Barnes, 2011). NCLB focused on setting high standards and holding students, teachers, and administrators accountable for student performance (Amrein-Beardsley, 2009). States were left to define a level of proficiency on the standardized tests; if students did not achieve the standards, then states risked not getting their funding. Analysts have suggested that this state decision making has led to many states setting low standards of proficiency (Barnes, 2011).

The NCLB act was intended to ensure that all students received a high quality education, while also closing the academic achievement gap that existed among high and low performing students (Jahng, 2011). Although the core nature of the law focused on students, the act had serious implications for teachers, administrators, and school districts. The development of standardized tests had implications for multiple stakeholders. Because of NCLB, students might be retained or unable to graduate due to low or failing test scores. Some teachers received merit pay, designed to reward teachers who achieved high test scores. Contrary to that, teachers could be terminated or transferred to a different school if students do not achieve proficiency. Likewise, high test scores might result in bonuses for administrators, while low test scores could result in termination or transfer. The publication of district test scores also opened up the opportunity for praise or scrutiny from the public.

Another large component of NCLB is the mandated requirement that all schools staff highly qualified teachers. A “highly qualified teacher” according to NCLB, means that teachers should be fully licensed or certified by the state and must not have had any
certification or licensure requirements waived on emergency, temporary, or provisional basis. Teachers must also demonstrate subject matter competence. NCLB has complicated the process of providing highly qualified and fully certified educators in public schools; the requirement creates instabilities in the system and negates years of teaching experience as not significant by requiring teachers with years of experience to still meet the guidelines of highly qualified teachers (Gehrke & McCoy, 2007; Houston, 2007). Ingersoll (2005) stated that solving the problem of highly qualified teachers is much more complex than NCLB proclaims. Differences in pay, barriers in teacher mobility, poor incentives, and fiscal constraints are examples of the inequities, which lead to hiring unqualified teachers (Gay, 2007).

A challenge stemming from NCLB’s demands is that the necessary funding is not in place to adequately obtain the provisions of this legislation (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Gay, 2007). Further, the plan’s focus on high-stakes testing and accountability to raise achievement in math and language arts has shown unsuccessful results. The NCLB Act of 2001 intended to “close the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement gaps between minority students, and between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers” (Jahng, 2011, p. 100). However, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), one of the nation’s most trusted metrics, has shown that 12th grade scores in reading have remained flat (Onosko, 2011). Using the same metric, 49 of 50 states failed to see their reading scores increase in fourth- and eighth-grade NAEP reading scores between the years of 2007 and 2009. Further, between 1998 and 2008, the respective scores for White and Latino
students have dropped 2 points, while Black students have increased by 3 points over the 10-year time period.

According to Onosko (2011), student achievement among incoming college students has also failed to improve. Over the last five years, SAT scores in reading, math, and writing have declined in every student subgroup except Asian American or Pacific Islander. Likewise, among the 1.6 million students who have taken the ACT, scores have flatlined across the last five years. Furthermore, the United States has not improved student test scores on international comparisons. According to a recent report from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), “there was no measurable change in the U.S., 15 year olds” between the years of 2000 and 2009 (NCES, 2010).

A decade later, limited empirical evidence on the standards and assessment movement have resulted in more effective schools and higher student achievement (Maxcy, 2011). Although the performance gains have not been recognized at the federal level, the policy changes that resulted from NCLB have influenced activity at the local level. A heightened awareness of the importance of closing the achievement gap and improving student learning among low achievers has redirected the attention and focus of administrators and teachers. Increased attention and focus on the academic content standards and high stakes assessments has transformed the mindset of educators throughout the country. Despite the lack of evidence supporting NCLB’s benefit, it has made a huge impact on the current educational system.

**Race to the Top**

Educational change continued at the onset of President Obama’s tenure in office. In 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
(ARRA). According to the United States Department of Education (USDoE) (2012), this legislation provided a $4.35 billion foundation designed to support and invest in innovative strategies that most likely lead to improved results for students, long-term gains in schools, and increased productivity and effectiveness. The USDoE (2012) Race to the Top (RttT) program divides the strategies into five assurance areas outlined by the following components:

- State success factors designed to sustain capacity to execute statewide
- Adoption of standards designed to prepare students to succeed and compete in college, career, and a global economy.
- Build a data system designed to measure achievement and growth
- Recruit, develop, retain, and reward effective teachers and leaders
- Turn around low-achieving schools

An extensive list of criteria is used to select recipients of the competitive grant. Point values assigned to each item are used to determine if states have adequately complied with all the components within the initiative.

Onosko (2011) stated that as part of the RttT initiative, the United States Department of Education had awarded $361 million to two assessment companies, SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). The assessment companies were created to design and deliver national assessments that measure curriculum aligned to the Common Core standards. States had a choice when deciding who to select for assessment development; however both assessment companies developed a test that could replace their current assessments.
Although each assurance area in the Race to the Top initiative is important, a considerable amount of focus lies on the quality of teachers. Utilizing the percentage assigned to each assurance area as a basic of importance, the most critical assurance area is the development of effective teachers. According to Hershberg and Robertson-Kraft (2010), the quality of instruction is now understood as the single most importance influence on student progress. Similar to No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top emphasizes the importance of improving teacher quality and closing the student achievement gaps.

Emphasis on improving teacher quality through the measurement of student growth is a required component of Race to the Top. Research has demonstrated that academic credentials and years of experience have a limited impact on student learning (Goe & Stickler, 2008; Walsh & Tracy, 2004). To receive funds, states RttT proposals must include student growth as one of the multiple measures in a newly enhanced teacher evaluation system. Critics of the administration’s decision to include student growth as part of the evaluation system contend that a teacher’s impact on student learning cannot be measured without error, therefore this presents an impossible task to create a fair and reliable system that evaluates and rewards teachers (Hershberg & Robertson-Kraft, 2010). The implementation of the new teacher evaluation methods should inform new rewards and consequences; pay-for-performance and dismissal of ineffective teachers aligns with RttT’s strategy of aligning the new evaluation system with goals and rewards. The designed system establishes monetary incentives and career advancement for highly effective teachers.
Self and collective-efficacy

Self-efficacy

Bandura has provided a significant amount of research regarding self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is the belief in one’s abilities to accomplish desired outcomes, powerfully affect behavior, motivation, and success or failure. Teacher self-efficacy is further defined as a teacher’s perceived ability of knowledge and ability to influence student behavior or academic ability. Further research provides increasing evidence that correlates a teacher’s self-efficacy with the goals that are set, effort that is invested in their teaching, and persistent response when challenges arise (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster (2009). Moreover, Maddux and Gosselin (2003) took a different approach in defining self-efficacy. Although their definition of self-efficacy mirrors Bandura’s, they believe that self-efficacy is not a set of competencies or skills; instead, it serves as an individual’s prediction about behavior or intent to achieve desired goals.

Social cognitive theory provides the theoretical base for self-efficacy. According to Bandura’s (1997) social cognitive theory, self–efficacy beliefs refer to an individual’s beliefs about their capabilities to carry out a particular course of action. Social cognitive theory focuses on the notion that individual factors such as behaviors, thoughts, and environmental circumstances intermix with each other. A person’s efficacy beliefs determine how these environmental opportunities and challenges are viewed, how much time is spent on an activity, and the amount of persistence one will exert when faced with a challenge (McCoach & Colbert, 2010).
A teacher’s self-efficacy is increasingly important, especially amid a profession that is experiencing change at an extremely rapid pace. Information on teacher self-efficacy can provide information about actions and behaviors associated with one’s attitude, beliefs, and perceptions. Further, information related to teacher self-efficacy has led to valuable insights into teaching and assessment practices, and can also give us information on how those instructional practices and classroom behaviors affect student outcomes (Yilmaz, 2011). A teacher’s self-efficacy can also influence the environment he or she creates, in addition to instructional practices they model in order to improve student learning. Further research investigating the relationship between teachers’ efficacy and its relation to student performance has cited increased instructional innovation, classroom management, and a considerable impact on student proficiency (Yilmaz, 2011).

Although teacher self-efficacy is a key motivational belief that affects teacher behavior and student learning, research related to sources of teacher self-efficacy has been criticized for its low reliability and questionable validity. A recent review in Educational Psychology investigates the state of teacher self- and collective efficacy research conducted between 1998 and 2009 (Klassen, Tze & Betts, 2011). The review described an increase in overall teacher efficacy research, yet described problems associated with a lack of attention to sources of efficacy and a lack of evidence linking teacher efficacy and student outcomes.

Further review of literature describes varying sources of teachers’ self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) posited that teachers’ perceptions of individual self-efficacy is based on the following factors: verbal encouragement of colleagues such as supervisors or
administrators (verbal persuasion), the success or failure of peer role models (mastery experiences), perceptions of past teaching (vicarious experiences), and their emotional response experienced as they anticipate and practice teaching. These beliefs are specific to particular teaching contexts; teachers form perceptions of their personal capabilities without regard to the requirement of the task or initiative.

Similar to Bandura, Clipa (2010) stated that the teacher’s self-efficacy is developed within the teaching experience, as one reflects upon teaching modalities and experiences. Self-efficacy can be developed through simulation in seminars or other pedagogical activities related to teaching and learning. The reflection, analysis, and evaluation of the experiences held within the training strongly contribute to the development of the self-efficacy and motivation of that teacher. Additionally related to the development of teacher self-efficacy is the involvement of collaborative learning in teacher education. Collaborative learning refers to a teaching strategy in which individuals work together in small groups, with the purpose of enhancing their individual and group learning (Ishler, Johnson, & Johnson, 1998). Research developed by Ruys, Keer, and Aelterman (2010) reveals that collaborative learning is an important part of the implementation process of instructional innovations. The opportunity to learn from peers (vicarious experiences) allows teachers to grow and further develop their self-efficacy.

**Collective Efficacy**

Teachers’ perceived self-efficacy affects the quality of instruction and rate of student progress in an individual classroom; although, teachers rarely work in complete isolation. Often, they work collectively in a school setting comprised of an established culture; therefore, school districts operate under a system of interdependence. Although
academic success achieved in a school is the product of the combined efforts of teachers in their individual classrooms, the interdependence that exists within a school can contribute to a teachers’ collective sense of efficacy (Bandura, 1993). District and building-wide accountability systems proposed through No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top have promoted the utilization of structures designed to build capacity to collaboratively achieve the goals of the organization. Collective teacher efficacy focuses on the extent to which teachers believe their collective efforts contribute to students’ academic achievement (Bandura, 1993; Goddard, 2002; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000). Interest in collective teacher efficacy has coincided with changes in teacher accountability; the connection is likely fueled by No Child Left Behind and assessing whole school reforms (McCoach & Colbert, 2010).

The accountability system implemented through No Child Left Behind promotes assessment measures that communicate group performance at the individual grade, building, and district level. This mandated structure pressures school districts to analyze group performance, in addition to individual student performance. Although collective efficacy broadens the scope from the individual to the group, many similarities exist between the two separate but related constructs. Similar to the role that individual self-efficacy plays in one’s performance, collective efficacy beliefs impact group performance. Although findings show that successful teachers are likely to possess a strong sense of self-efficacy, successful schools are characterized by teachers’ collective beliefs in their schools’ capabilities to promote student achievement. Further, collective efficacy is believed to stem from the same indicators that promote individual efficacy such as past experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional
experiences. (Klassen, Tze, Betts, & Gordon, 2010). When teachers’ motivation is lowered due to failure or setbacks, the challenges may be amended by the belief in the group’s ability to overcome the challenges. Therefore, a teacher’s self-efficacy beliefs are related to group efficacy beliefs, but connect to how teachers collectively respond to group challenges.

**Impact on student learning**

Teachers exert a significant amount of influence when creating effective and appropriate learning environments for their students. Multiple variables can determine the success of the students within the learning environment of the classroom. Evidence suggests that a teacher’s belief in their instructional practice can impact the classroom atmosphere (Bandura, 1993). Findings from Gibson and Dembo (1984) suggest that teachers that have a high sense of self-efficacy devote more time to academic learning, provide more time and attention to students that need additional help, and praise students for their accomplishments. Further, teachers that have a low sense of instructional self-efficacy are critical of students, while also spending more class time on non-academic areas. This leads to the conclusion that teachers who have a strong self of self-efficacy will create positive, learning experiences for their students, while teachers that have a low sense of self-efficacy will stunt the learning development of their students.

The belief systems that exist within a school culture can have vitalizing or demoralizing effects on how well schools function as a social system; therefore, a staff’s collective self-efficacy can also contribute to school-level achievement (Bandura, 1993). Schools in which the staff perceive themselves as capable of promoting student achievement establish a positive school atmosphere. Furthermore, schools in which the
staff collectively judge themselves as powerless in impacting student achievement
generate a sense of academic futility that can cloud the culture of the school and therefore
negatively impact the academic success of its students.

Studies have shown that teachers’ collective efficacy is significantly related to
student achievement and academic climate, even after controlling for demographic
characteristics, socioeconomic status and prior student achievement (Bandura, 1993;
Goddard, 2002). Bandura (1993) evaluated the role of perceived collective efficacy in
how well schools performed by utilizing path analysis to test for influences among
student demographics, collective efficacy, and prior levels of student achievement.
Figure 2.1 shows the role of perceived collective efficacy in the casual structure of school-
level achievement of reading and mathematics.

![Figure 2.1: Collective Efficacy on School Achievement](image)

Bandura’s findings show that a high proportion of students from low socioeconomic
levels and a high student absenteeism and turnover lower the staffs’ beliefs in their
efficacy to achieve academic progress. Moreover, these same schools performed worse
Teaching longevity, representative of the number of years teaching in the same school and same grade, has a small, positive effect on academic achievement; however, it creates a tainted view of the school’s collective efficacy. The most significant contribution to the students’ academic achievement stems from the staffs’ collective sense of efficacy that they can promote high levels of academic achievement. Bandura concludes the following:

> Staffs who firmly believe that, by their determined efforts, students are motivatable and teachable whatever their background, schools heavily populated with minority students of low socioeconomic status achieve at the highest percentile ranks based on national norms of language and mathematical competencies. (1993, p. 143)

School reform literature includes teacher self-efficacy or collective efficacy. Brown, Anfara, and Roney (2004) studied the difference between high-performing suburban middle schools and low-performing urban middle schools through a qualitative analysis. Although major differences existed between the socio-economic status and related social capital factors between the schools, differences were found among the technical, managerial, and institutional factors of the overall organization. Through an intensive interview process, teachers discussed student expectations, institutional integrity, curriculum leadership, and individual self-efficacy. Data analysis show that teachers in high-performing schools held high student expectations, a strong sense of collegiality, strong parent and community engagement, and high self-efficacy. Teachers in low performing schools reported exactly the opposite; a weak parent and community engagement, lower self-efficacy and school collegiality.
Job Satisfaction

Work plays a critical role in our lives. Often, it occupies more time than any other activity throughout the day and provides the economic foundation for our lifestyle. Individuals often define satisfaction with work or job differently. Job satisfaction is an affective, cognitive or attitudinal response to work with significant organizational outcomes (Spector, 1997). Fritzche and Parrish (2005), defined job satisfaction as the extent to which people enjoy their jobs. Weiss and Cropanazni (1996) stated that job satisfaction represents a person’s evaluation of the job and work context. Moreover, Davis and Wilson (2000) defined job satisfaction as the extent to which an employee has favorable or positive feelings about work and the work environment. Although researchers define job satisfaction differently, most researchers perceive job satisfaction as a general attitude that includes psychological and emotional experiences.

Job satisfaction portrays the perception of the person towards his or her job. According to Mehta (2012) it is often believed that satisfied employees are productive employees of an organization. It is also found as contributive to organizational effectiveness; however, a lack of it is a major reason for teacher turnover (Choi, 2011). Factors that influence job satisfaction are dependent upon various organizational, social, cultural, and environmental factors. Satisfaction that teachers gain from their work can be experienced individually; however, teaching does not take place in isolation. Job satisfaction and motivation are influenced by a teacher’s interaction with peers and students; further, these factors may be influenced by the cultural values and environment of the organization.
A considerable amount of educational and psychological research has been conducted on job related beliefs (Klassen & Anderson, 2009). Herzberg, one of the first and most influential theorists on job-related beliefs began his research back in 1966. He proposed that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are separate and independent variables. Job satisfaction stems from the nature of the work performed, such as achievement and recognition related to the work. Thus, job satisfaction exists when intrinsic feelings of happiness promote job satisfaction in the teacher. In contrast, job dissatisfaction is derived from the extrinsic circumstances in which the work is conducted. It is impacted through salaries, interpersonal relationships, resources, and working conditions. Addressing and reducing the factors related to job dissatisfaction will not necessarily increase a person’s job satisfaction, therefore they are inversely related to each other. Criticisms of Herzberg’s model contend that the same factors can cause job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Brunetti, 2001). For example, the amount of money that an employee is paid can be a component that leads to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Teacher job satisfaction and sources of dissatisfaction continue to receive attention due to the connection and influence that a teacher’s well-being has on motivation, commitment, and morale. A variety of different factors have been studied to try to determine a predictor of job satisfaction. Personality factors, gender, age, teaching position, leadership styles, and workplace factors have all been studied in an attempt to determine predictors of job satisfaction. As research indicates, a single variable alone cannot be used to determine job satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Griffin, 2010).
Personal and professional identities

The social conditions in which a teacher works influence his or her identity; personal and professional elements of teachers’ lives, experiences, beliefs, and practices are integral to one another. Tensions that exist in one area can impact a teacher’s identity, which further impacts their sense of purpose, self-efficacy, motivation, commitment, job satisfaction, and effectiveness (Day, Kington, Stobart, & Sammons, 2005). Teachers’ professional identities are constructed from the technical and emotional aspects of teaching, such as student test results, classroom management, and subject area knowledge. Further, they are heavily influenced by both how they feel about themselves and how they feel about their students. Therefore, an unavoidable relationship exists between teachers’ personal and professional identities due to the significant amount of personal investment involved in teaching. According to Kelchtermans (1993), a teacher’s identity evolves over time and consists of the following five interrelated parts:

- Self-image: how teachers describe themselves through past experiences and stories
- Self-esteem: how an individual is defined by self or others
- Job motivation: decisions teachers make when deciding to stay, remain committed, or leave the job
- Task perception: how teachers define their jobs
- Future perspective: ambition or expectation for future growth of their job

A significant portion of a teacher’s professional identity is constructed through the technical aspects of the job, along with the experience and management of emotions. The emotional climate of the school and classroom will impact the attitudes and practice of
teaching and learning (Day et al., 2006). Excitement, fear, joy, anger, care, surprise, and happiness are all emotions felt when examining students’ academic achievements and growth. Because of this emotional investment in their professional and personal lives, educational change can greatly disrupt the affective state of teachers. When teachers’ control over established educational principles and instructional practices is challenged, or when trust or respect from parents or the community is diminished, teachers tend to experience a range of negative emotions (Day et al., 2006). Frustration, anger, stress, anxiety, sadness, blame and shame are all negative emotions felt when teachers lose control experienced through one’s identity. Further, these negative emotions are often a result of goal incongruence, which creates a gap between the desired outcome and current reality. Therefore, emotions play a key role in the construction of a teacher’s personal and professional identity.

Negative emotions experienced by teachers often lead to work-related stress. Teaching is often a stressful occupation due to increased demands driven from administrators, colleagues, students, parents, and external accountability systems. Klassen, Usher and Bong, (2010) suggest the influence of teachers’ attitudes and performance; further; they suggest that self-efficacy and collective efficacy contribute to teachers’ job satisfaction. Teacher stress is inversely related to teacher self-efficacy and positively related to poor teacher-student rapport and low levels of teacher effectiveness (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Kokkinos, 2007). A high amount of job related stress may lead to burnout, depression, poor performance, or loss of job satisfaction. Although job related stress is inevitable, proper leadership can help to circumvent some of the challenges associated with stress. Proper communication among staff and a strong sense of staff
collegiality help teachers experience lower levels of stress and higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment (Klassen et al., 2010).

**Factors Leading to Job Satisfaction**

The most valuable and accessible resources within a school district are the teaching staff (Huysman, 2008). Often, teachers are interested in being participants in the processes and activities within a school building. Teachers desire active participation in curriculum design, professional development, and other generalized procedures within a school. The commitment and enthusiasm from teachers are fundamental components of job satisfaction, yet they are often compromised when teachers perceive their talents, experience, and expertise as underutilized or dismissed (Huysman, 2008). Teacher empowerment in many schools has expanded the role and involvement of teachers in the planning and decision making process of school goals and policies (Davis & Wilson, 2000). Furthermore, Davis and Wilson (2000) claim that the more that teachers share in the decision-making process, the greater the job satisfaction.

Several authors have theorized that leadership plays an important role in creating an empowering environment that promotes teacher satisfaction and self-efficacy (Davis & Wilson, 2000). According to Darling-Hammond (2003), leaders can nurture intrinsic empowerment through the encouragement and establishment of positive, collaborative relationships that strengthen both personal and professional growth. Davis and Wilson (2000) refuted this statement; their finding shows that principals engaged in behaviors that were personally empowering increased teachers’ understandings of choices in work completion and their perceived impact on student learning. Therefore, even though a principal engaged in behaviors perceived as developing the capacity of individuals within
the school to work together to make decisions, those perceived efforts were not associated with the value that teachers assigned to their tasks and overall purpose.

**Job Characteristics Model**

A conceptual framework posed by Hackman and Oldham (1976) has served as an impetus for much research in the area of job redesign. The Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) serves to summarize and integrate a large amount of research by identifying the main features of jobs which affect employees’ attitudes and behavior. The model, depicted in Figure 2.2, predicts that jobs higher in skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback will create a greater experience in three critical psychological states: meaningfulness of work, enhanced responsibility and knowledge of results. An increase in the three psychological states, in turn, predicts greater personal and work outcomes, leading to high internal work motivation, high quality work performance, better work performance, and lower levels of absenteeism and turnover. Specific causal links are shown in Figure 2.2.
Hackman and Oldham’s creation of the Job Characteristics Model (JCM) began with a search for psychological states that promote satisfaction at work. Through
identification of psychological states important for job satisfaction and motivation, Hackman and Oldham developed the Job Characteristics model; they then worked backwards to identify job characteristics that would elicit the psychological states. Thus, the JCM is centered around the psychological states. As a result of their research, they identified three primary areas labeled as the critical psychological states. Hackman and Oldham (1975) defined the psychological states as the following: (a) an individual must experience meaning and value in their work, (b) an individual must experience responsibility and accountability for the results of the work, and (c) an individual must have knowledge of the final results and effectiveness of his/her job performance. All three psychological states must be present in order to develop and maintain strong work motivation.

Using the psychological states as the foundation, Hackman and Oldham questioned how the critical psychological states could be created. As a result, they identified the core job dimensions of skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback; these five characteristics foster the psychological states, which in turn promote personal and work outcomes. Further, Hackman and Oldham (1975) suggested that skill variety, task identity, and task significance contribute to experienced meaningfulness of the work while autonomy contributes to experienced responsibility in work outcomes, and feedback contributes to knowledge of work results.

The Job Diagnostic Survey

An assessment tool designed by Hackman and Oldham (1974) to develop the overall motivating potential of a job in terms of the core job dimensions is the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS). The instrument is multi-faceted in terms of its utilization.
through the diagnosis of jobs prior to their redesign, and in research and evaluation activities designed to assess the effects of redesigned jobs on the people that perform them (Hackman & Oldham, 1974). The use of the job diagnostics instrument aids in the diagnosis of motivational properties of jobs, which helps change agents plan and implement work related to the redesign of jobs. Further, it allows behavioral scientists to understand how and why job enrichment works and what goes wrong when it does not work.

Comprised of 83 items presented in the form of questions or statements, the JDS asks participants to respond according to their perceptions of their job and reactions to it. A brief form of the JDS serves as an alternative to the full form with its inclusion of only 46 items. Some scales in the JDS are not included in the short form while others are measured with fewer items (Hackman & Oldham, 1974). The scales measuring the job dimensions themselves are measured identically as in the JDS.

The JDS had its origins in previous methodologies developed by Blood and Hulin (1967), Hackman and Lawler (1971), Herzberg (1966), Turner and Lawrence (1965). The aforementioned researchers examined the relationship between specific objective characteristics of tasks and employees’ reactions to their work. Based upon these findings, Hackman and Oldham designed the conceptual framework which states that a job should be designed to include foundational characteristics that establish conditions for high work motivation, satisfaction, and performance. According to Hackman and Oldham (1975), the JDS provides measures of the five core dimensions described below:

- **Skill variety** – The degree to which a job requires different activities that involve the use of a variety of skills and talents of the employee.
• **Task identity** – The degree to which a job requires the completion of a “whole”, which enables the employee to complete a job from beginning to end, and see a visible outcome.

• **Task significance** – The degree to which a job has an impact on the lives of work of other people within the organization or in the external environment.

• **Autonomy** – The degree to which the job provides freedom, independence, and discretion when carrying out the responsibilities of the position.

• **Feedback from the job itself** – The degree to which the employee receives direct and clear information about his or her effectiveness when carrying out the responsibilities of the job.

• **Feedback from agents** – The degree to which an employee receives direct and clear information about his or her performance from co-workers or supervisors.

• **Dealing with others** – The degree to which the employee works closely with other people when carrying out the responsibilities of the organization.

The JDS provides measures of personal outcomes obtained from doing the work by providing measures of personal, affective reactions or feelings that a person experiences from doing his or her job (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). The instrument does not measure actual outcomes such as productivity, employee perception of productivity, turnover, or absenteeism. Instead, it measures three specific personal outcomes. First, general satisfaction is measured in order to determine the degree of satisfaction or happiness with the job. Second, internal work motivation is measured to determine the degree that the employee is self-motivated to perform effectively on the job. Third, specific measures of satisfaction are measured to determine satisfaction related to job security, compensation,
social satisfaction, supervision, and opportunity for professional growth. The survey items measuring general satisfaction are combined with survey items related to the three psychological states. Respondents report directly how satisfied they are with various aspects of their job related to the five specific satisfactions.

The JDS shows measures of each of the three psychological states. Hackman and Oldham (1975) described experienced meaningfulness of the work (degree to which an employee experiences the job as meaningful), experienced responsibility for work outcomes (accountability and responsibility a person feels for the results of the work), and knowledge of results (knowledge and understanding an employee experiences as the mediating factors between core job dimensions and personal work outcomes).

Following the above proposed theory, it is possible to calculate a score that reflects an overall “motivating potential” of a job in terms of its core dimensions. A job high in motivating potential must be high on at least one of the three core job dimensions in order to prompt experienced meaningfulness of the work, and high on autonomy and feedback, in order to create conditions that foster all three critical psychological states (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). The motivating potential of a job can be calculated through the computation of an overall motivating potential score. The motivating potential score (MPS) provides a quantitative diagnosis of the job satisfaction by means of scores obtained by the JDS (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). The MPS is computed as follows:

$$\frac{Skill\ Variaty + Task\ Identity + Task\ Significance}{3} \times (Autonomy) \times (Feedback)$$
Hackman and Oldham (1974) stated that the theory is not expected to work with equal effectiveness for all individuals. For example, individuals who strongly value personal feelings of accomplishment and growth should respond highly to a job high in motivating potential. Hackman and Oldham (1980) demonstrate this as strong growth-need strength. On the contrary, individuals who do not value growth and accomplishment will feel anxiety or discomfort by it, therefore identifying employee growth-need strength.

Although the Job Characteristics Model is the most frequently used instrument for the measurement of job characteristics, at least two other self-report questionnaires exist (Fried and Ferris, 1987). Also developed by Hackman and Oldham (1971), the Yale Job Inventory (YJI) and the Job Characteristics Inventory (JCI), developed by Sims, Szilagyi, and Keller (1976) are two other self-rated measures that assess individuals’ attitudinal response. Both measures have allowed researchers to rely mainly on self-rated questionnaires as the most convenient way to evaluate the various parts of the Job Characteristics Model.

Fried and Ferris (1987) stated that due to the large amount of research that has been generated on the JCM, it is important to review and assess the evidence that supports the JCM. Therefore, they assessed the validity of Hackman and Oldham’s JCM through a comprehensive review of nearly 200 relevant studies on the model as well as by applying meta-analytic procedures to a large portion of the data. Of the seven investigated issues, the first four (similarity between objective and perceived job characteristics, influence of irrelevant cues on job perceptions, the similarity between the perceived job characteristics-work outcomes relationships and the objective job
characteristics-work out comes relationships and the dimensionality of the JDS) were evaluated based on narrative review. The other three investigated issues (job characteristics-work outcomes relationships, the mediating effects of the critical psychological states, and the influence of moderator variables) were examined through the use of the Hunter-Schmidt meta-analytic procedure. The meta-analysis was based on relevant correlational studies; additional studies examined in the narrative review increased the number of studies used to nearly 200.

The Job Diagnostics Survey has also been utilized in education. The JDS was given to 393 teachers in twelve elementary schools in Jeffersonville and St. Francois counties in Missouri (Gibbons, 1995). Upon examining the characteristics of job satisfaction for elementary school teachers, results revealed a relationship among job dimensions, psychological states, and personal work outcome measures. The results mirrored previous findings from Hackman and Oldham. Upon further comparison to the national norms, he found that teachers scored higher in all categories of the JDS, with the exception of pay and growth need strength (Gibbons, 1995).

**Job Satisfaction through Educational Change**

Because of the high amount of educational reform driven by federal mandates, educators are experiencing a large amount of educational change. According to Fullan (1991) the meaning of change involves learning how those involved in change come to comprehend what should be changed and how it can best be accomplished, while also realizing that the what and how constantly react and shape each other. The uniqueness of the individual organizational setting is a large factor in the implementation of change, as reform is interpreted within a cultural framework (Meister, 2010). Moreover, Meister
(2010) contends that no matter how beneficial a school initiative may be, its initiation into an organization will become part of a history of success and failure within that setting. This is significant as an increased frequency in failed or negative attempts at implementing change increases the apathy or cynicism of the change, regardless of the merit (Fullan, 1991).

The inclusion of teachers in decision making within the change process is critical to the success of the change (Stoll, 1992). Teachers make hundreds of decisions throughout the course of the day; however, they are often excluded from the decisions that directly affect them. This creates a distance between ownership of the change related to the goals of the organization. According to Stoll (1992), this lack of commitment to educational goals promotes teachers working in isolation, therefore making it hard for them to even imagine collaborating with others. Research shows that collaboration on a change process ties into job satisfaction (Meister, 2010). Meister argued that educators become inspired, learn and grow professionally, and find their identity within a group; therefore, collaboration within a group setting is a powerful strategy when implementing change. Additionally, group work allows teachers to attempt innovations they might not have attempted on their own. The teamwork that resides within the group’s decision making in shaping the tasks and outcomes of the process serve as an integral component of the change process. Thus, teachers working in a group are provided with a built-in support system that enables them to talk about their teaching and learning (Meister, 2010).

Administrative support and leadership are additional determinants that impact job satisfaction throughout the change process. Meister (2010) wrote that a supportive and
understanding principal enhances their success and satisfaction in their job. Principal behaviors that ensure a sense of safety by supporting risk taking connected to a sincere effort on behalf of the change are connected to satisfied teachers. Further, a strong foundation for change stems from a principal’s professionalism and vision of a better education for children.

Summary

The review of literature was structured into three sections. Section one presented information on the history of educational changes throughout the United States over the past 60 years. *A Nation at Risk, No Child Left Behind* and *Race to the Top* were explored, in order to highlight legislative acts that have served as an impetus for major educational reform. Section two discussed the concept of self- and collective efficacy, among teachers. Efficacy was further explored through discussion on its impact on student learning. Section three provided an overview of job satisfaction. Specific examples of leadership behaviors that lead to educator satisfaction were discussed.

The literature informed my study in several different ways. Reviewing the history of educational changes helped me to better understand some of the impetus for change driven by the federal government. A better understanding of the federal government’s involvement in education helped to portray a framework of ongoing change and a continued sense of urgency to improve student achievement. Further, it helped to highlight some of the repetitive mandates that exist in each change initiative. Research related to self and collective efficacy helped identify factors that influence efficacy; further, it made a connection between efficacy levels and its potential impact on student learning. Finally, research related to job satisfaction provided specific examples of
factors that increase or decrease the level of engagement or motivation that teachers experience. This information will help to identify potential research questions to frame the study.

It is my hope that findings from my research will add to the literature that relates to how mandated change impacts job satisfaction of teachers. My findings, along with the related literature will identify factors that lead to job satisfaction and engagement in an ever-changing educational environment, which can be used to help school leaders increase job satisfaction. It is my hope that this increased level of efficacy and engagement will have a positive impact in the classroom and therefore promote and increase student learning.
CHAPTER III

Research Methodology

This research study focused on determining factors that influence teacher job satisfaction in a changing educational environment. A mixed methods approach was used and included participant completion of the Hackman and Oldham Job Diagnostic Survey (1974), and subject participation in interviews and focus groups. Prior to conducting the study, the Human Subjects Review Board approved the application for human subjects research in April 2014 (see Appendix A). I then met with the superintendent of the participating district and gained approval for district participation in the research study (see Appendix F).

The mixed methods research design involved the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data to understand the research problem. According to Creswell (2008), the basic assumption for the use of a mixed methods design is that both quantitative and qualitative methods provides data that leads to a better understanding of the research problem and questions than either method by itself. In this study, data collection capitalized on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data.

This study used an explanatory mixed methods design to structure the sequence of data collection. Creswell (2008) described an explanatory mixed methods design as one whose procedure first involves the collection of quantitative data and then collects qualitative data to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results. This study utilized a two-pronged method of first collecting quantitative data through participant completion of the Hackman and Oldham Job Diagnostic Survey. After completion of the survey, a separate group of individuals participated in interviews, followed by a separate
group participating in focus groups. A prescribed list of questions was utilized to gather data through this qualitative approach (see Appendix D). Using the mixed methods approach, I analyzed data from the survey, interview, and focus groups to identify factors that lead to job satisfaction in an educationally changing environment.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study’s theoretical framework was based on my lens as an interpretivist. Using this lens, one main assumption throughout the study is that reality is constructed by the environment and is shaped by both the perception of the people in the room as well as the nature of the event. The interpretive approach is also described as research focused on understanding, interpretation, and social meaning (Merriam, 2009). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) stated that interpretivists’ value the collective capacity of humans and the sensations that form their reality.

The interpretive approach to qualitative research studies is closely associated with phenomenology. Similar to interpretivists, phenomenologists do not believe in one single reality. Instead, they focus on how the experience is lived through the experiences and relationships with others. Phenomenology is not only a philosophy; it is a research method for capturing the lived experiences of individuals (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Phenomenologists use a variety of research methods such as observations, interviewing, along with written accounts of experiences. My interpretive approach within this study capitalized on the use of interviews and focus groups to understand and interpret the experiences of teachers in the educational change process.

The use of interpretive approach as the theoretical framework is seen in multiple areas of this research study, including but not limited to the interview questions,
observation notes, coding, and data analysis. Merriam (2009) stated that a study’s findings reflect the constructs, concepts, language, models, and theories that originally structured the study. The reality constructed through my data analysis process reflects my interpretation of the thoughts, feelings, and beliefs that have been socially constructed and shared by participants.

**Research Questions**

This study is guided by three primary research questions which include the following:

a) What factors influence job satisfaction among teachers?  
b) How does the changing educational environment influence the degree of satisfaction teachers have with their job?  
c) Do common themes exist among Hackman and Oldham’s Job Diagnostic Survey findings and perceptual data provided by teachers about their job satisfaction?  

Data to address the research questions were gathered through the use of Hackman and Oldham’s Job Diagnostic Survey (see Appendix B) and the Interview Protocol (see Appendix C). The research questions were explored in a rural school district in Central Ohio, with the study’s sample reflecting a heterogeneous group of teachers that met pre-determined criteria.

**Ethical Rights**

Prior to the data collection process, I began the study with careful consideration and respect for the rights of the participants in the study. Understanding the moral integrity of my role as a researcher was vital when ensuring the research process and findings were valid. Consideration of the ethical rights of participants was a key first step when planning the data collection process.
The proposed study was submitted to Ashland University’s Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) to ensure that the benefits of the study outweighed the risks. I received approval from the committee in April 2014. Once the dissertation proposal had received committee approval, I contacted all participants through school district email and presented a participation consent letter (see Appendix E). The informed consent letter was designed to help participants understand their role in the study, while including information about potential risks, and how participation would contribute to the project’s goals. Further, school district approval to perform onsite interviews was obtained (see Appendix F).

**Participant Selection**

All teachers that participated in this research study were selected from a rural school district in the central Ohio area. Although close to a major city, the community in which the school district resides resembles a rural area. Composed of 122 square miles, the school district borders the suburbs of a major city. The average district student enrollment among the five buildings is 2163 students. Approximately 165 teachers make up the teaching staff throughout the five buildings. 100 percent of the teaching staff is White/Caucasian; eighty-two percent of teachers are female while eighteen percent are male. 100 percent of the teaching staff has a Bachelor’s degree, and seventy-nine percent of those teachers have a Master’s degree.

The school district is comprised of five buildings that serve students that range from preschool age to twelfth grade. Due to my supervisory role, teachers in one school were excluded from the participant pool; therefore educators in only four of the five buildings participated. I am cognizant that the supervisory power relationship that I have
with the teachers may make them feel uncomfortable or could potentially lead to biased data collection; therefore, teachers within that building were not included in the study.

**Participant Selection – Quantitative**

For the purpose of the online questionnaire administration, I employed the technique of a systematic sampling strategy to ensure an equal percentage of teacher representation from each participating building. When generating the candidate pool for this research study, I sought the assistance from the district HR manager, who serves as the primary personnel data manager throughout the district. After generating a list that reflected building staff members alphabetized by last name, the HR manager selected every fourth person on the list, beginning the process with the first person on the list. This process identified 34 potential participants.

After receiving the list of potential participants, I then sent a private email invitation to the selected teachers’ school district email account. Teachers were informed that research was being conducted as part of a research study and participation in the survey was voluntary. The website link to the online questionnaire was included in the initial email to prospective participants. When participants chose to participate in the study, they had immediate access to the questionnaire through the link provided in the email. Further direction to participants was provided through guidelines embedded within the email and at the beginning of the questionnaire. Participants were encouraged to complete the questionnaire as honestly and frankly as possible. To ensure anonymity, participants’ names were not recorded through submission of data.

Participants were given two weeks to complete the questionnaire. Within that timeframe, 26 participants completed the online questionnaire, resulting in a response
rate of 76%. Following the end of the administration window, the questionnaire was closed so additional participants could not participate.

**Participant Selection - Qualitative**

A differing method of participant selection was used for the qualitative segment of this study. The list of teacher candidates was limited in order to meet the study’s requirements, meaning that only teachers that met certain requirements were included in the list as potential participants. In order to begin this purposeful sampling process, I first determined the selection criteria that were essential in choosing the individuals to study. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) used the term criterion based selection to create a list of the attributes essential to the study and then find the subject to match the list. I selected the parameters because I felt that it was critical to learn from educators who have experienced the educational change process over a period of time. The following criteria were given to the HR manager to include educators as part of the sample:

- Participant began their career as an educator.
- Participant had a minimum of five years teaching experience.
- Participant was in good standing and had not had professional or ethical misconduct violations.
- Participants did not have a direct reporting relationship to the researcher.

The HR manager generated a list of all district teachers that met the above criteria. Due to available personnel information, determining whether potential participants began their career as an educator was inaccessible through available records; therefore that requirement was eliminated.
The HR manager generated an alphabetized list of all district who that met the available selection criteria; this list included 109 teachers. Using this list, every fifth teacher was chosen which resulted in 21 potential participants for the qualitative segment. The HR manager sent me the names of the potential participants; I sent those individuals a letter of transmittal through school district email (see Appendix G). Participants were informed of the purpose and procedures involved in the study, in addition to receiving a copy of the informed consent form and interview questions. A total of 13 teachers agreed to participate in the study. As a result of time restraints and scheduling conflicts, ten participants confirmed participation in the study. Follow up conversations were held in order to establish an interview date, time, and location convenient to the participant. Participation in an individual interview or focus group was determined by availability of participants. Table 3.1 provides more information regarding the study’s participants.
Table 3.1  
*Participant Characteristics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Grade Level Taught</th>
<th>Interview or Focus Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brittany</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janis</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15-20 years</td>
<td>Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25-30 years</td>
<td>Business, Library Science</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15-20 years</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macy</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10-15 years</td>
<td>Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenna</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15-20 years</td>
<td>English, Math</td>
<td>11 &amp; 12</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tricia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15-20 years</td>
<td>Language Arts, Social Studies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindy</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20-25 years</td>
<td>Language Arts, Social Studies</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristen</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30-35 years</td>
<td>Physical Education, Health</td>
<td>K-4</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Collection**

Three separate groups of teachers were selected to participate in this mixed methods research study. For the quantitative segment, 26 teachers completed an online questionnaire. For the qualitative segment, four teachers participated in individual interviews, while six teachers participated in focus group sessions.

**Data Collection - Quantitative**

Participants completed the Hackman and Oldham Job Diagnostic Survey Short Form (see Appendix C). This questionnaire is a non-copyrighted instrument that can be used without the permission of the authors (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Originally
designed as part of a Yale University study of jobs and how people react to them, the questions were designed to obtain individual perceptions about core job characteristics, critical psychological states, and personal/work outcomes. The questionnaire contained 46 questions and is divided into three sections. The questionnaire was uploaded into a Google Form to allow participants to complete and submit the questionnaire electronically.

Through a systematic sampling strategy described earlier, 34 participants were identified to receive an invitation to participate in the online survey. These participants received an invitation to complete the questionnaire through a private email message sent to their school district email account. Teachers were informed that participation in the survey was voluntary, with the research being conducted as part of a research study. The website link to the online questionnaire was included in the initial email to prospective participants.

A total of 26 teachers chose to participate in the study. Participants had access to the questionnaire through the link provided in the email and could complete the questionnaire immediately. Directions for survey completion were embedded in the email and at the beginning of the survey. Participants were encouraged to complete the questionnaire as honestly and frankly as possible, in addition to a reassurance that confidentiality was kept at all times. To ensure anonymity, participants’ names were not recorded through submission of data.

**Data Collection - Qualitative**

Through a systematic sampling strategy, a total of 21 teachers were identified to participate in the qualitative segment of this research study. These identified teachers
were contacted through school district email in an initial attempt to generate participants for the research study. Follow-up phone calls and personal conversations were made to solidify participants. Through participant interest and availability, ten participants were selected to participate in either an individual interview or focus group.

The data collection process began through individual interviews with four participants, each of whom participated in two separate interviews. For the purpose of the first interview, four individual interviews were each completed at a location conducive to the participant. All interviews were conducted using a semistructured approach (Merriam, 2009) which included a mix of more and less structured interview questions. A pre-established interview protocol was established to guide the first interview (see Appendix D). Seven open-ended questions were posed to the participant, with each question broken down into sub-questions. Follow up questions were used to expand the thinking of the participants.

Following the first interview with each participant, a second interview was conducted to ask follow-up questions and explore potential areas of participant experiences. It also served as an opportunity to share my emergent findings with the participant and dig deeper into their experiences. Data collected from this second interview was used to validate or expand upon initial themes from the initial analysis of data.

Two focus group sessions were conducted to gather data for the research study. A method of qualitative research data collection, a focus group involves an interview with a small group of individuals who are knowledgeable on the topic. Merriam (2009) explained that data obtained from the focus group is socially constructed within the
interaction of the group, therefore a constructive perspective underlies this data collection procedure. In each focus group session, three teachers, who respectively taught in separate buildings throughout the district, were grouped together during an hour-long interview session.

Developing trust with all participants was a key role in the interview process. According to Merriam (2009), a skilled interviewer should be respectful, nonjudgmental and nonthreatening to bring about a positive interaction with the respondent. It was important that the respondent feels comfortable with the researcher and the interview process. Prior to the interview, I reviewed the following protocol to establish trust and comfort with the participant:

- **Introduction** – Explanation of myself and purpose of study. Thank participant for involvement in the study.
- **Interview** – Brief summary of interview procedures. Remind participant that audio device will be used to record dialogue.
- **Confidentiality** – Remind participant that all information will remain anonymous and confidential; pseudonyms will be used and participant will never be identified.
- **Results** – Inform participant that findings will be presented in researcher’s dissertation and direct quotes from participant may be used.

All interviews were recorded through an audio device and were then transcribed by a professional transcriptionist into Microsoft Word documents. I then loaded the documents in the NVivo data analysis software. The NVivo software program combines the management of non-numerical, unstructured data with powerful processes of
indexing, searching and theorizing (Creswell, 2008). Additionally, the program allowed for rapid coding, thorough explanation, and management of the data analysis, and also provided the visual mapping of categories identified throughout the data analysis process. This system assisted with the data analysis process.

**Data Analysis**

Quantitative data were obtained through basic questionnaire techniques outlined in the Hackman and Oldham Short Form Survey. Data were analyzed through Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. Results of the survey were reported through the use of numerical and graphic techniques to report descriptive statistics.

Following the interviews and focus groups, I used a process of theme identification and analysis. I first explored the data by reading through the transcripts numerous times. Creswell (2008) described this as a preliminary exploration analysis; this exploration process is used to obtain a general sense of the data, memoing ideas, thinking about the organization of the data, and considering whether more data are needed. The transcripts were then entered into the NVivo computer program, which was used to code the data. According to Creswell (2008), coding is the process of segmenting and labeling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data.

Through this coding identification process, I organized the codes to develop potential themes in the data. Creswell (2008) suggested the development of 5-7 themes that participants discuss most frequently, have the most evidence to support them, or those one might be able to find the most when studying the phenomenon. The themes emerged from a close examination of the data. Once the data analysis was complete, the written report of the findings was generated. Vivid detail was included within the
analysis, by including direct quotes from the interview data which captured feelings and emotions related to the participants’ experiences. Dialogue and evidence that provide support for the themes, tied back to the original research questions is included. This report is included in Chapters IV and V.

Validity/Reliability

The Job Diagnostic Survey has been found to have satisfactory psychometric characteristics, and summary scores from the instrument show substantive validity (Hackman & Oldham, 1974). The table below represents the internal consistency reliabilities as measured by the Job Diagnostic Survey. The JDS was given to 6930 employees working on 876 jobs throughout 56 different organizations located throughout various geographical regions across the United States. Jobs were heterogeneous in nature, including professional, sales, and managerial work from governmental and service organizations. The results are similar to those reported in previous surveys (Dunham, 1976; Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Katz, 1978).
Table 3.2

*Survey Reported by Hackman, Oldham, and Stepina (1978)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JDS Scale</th>
<th>N (a)</th>
<th>Reliability (b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skill Variety</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Identity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Significance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from Job</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from Agents</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with Others</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced Meaningfulness</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced Responsibility</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Results</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Satisfaction</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Motivation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay Satisfaction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Satisfaction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Satisfaction</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory Satisfaction</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth Satisfaction</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would Like GNS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Choice GNS</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total GNS</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

(a) Number of items composing each scale

(b) Reliabilities calculated by obtaining the average correlation for all items scored on each scale and then adjusting median by Spearmen-Brown procedures to obtain an estimate of the reliability of the scale score.

**Trustworthiness**

**Credibility**

Several steps were taken to increase the study’s trustworthiness. It was important to consider and work through ethical issues that might impact this study’s trustworthiness. Merriam (2009) stated that the nature of social science inquiry makes it imperative that researchers have confidence in the conduct of the investigation and the results of the study (p. 210). To strengthen the credibility of my research I employed
three strategies recommended by Merriam (2009): “member checks” (p. 217), “reflexivity” (p. 219) and “triangulation” (p. 216). Further, I employed Creswell’s (2003) recommendation of the use of “thick, rich description” (p. 196) to convey the findings of the study.

The first method I used to establish credibility involved the use of member checks (Merriam, 2009). Through this method, I employed two practices to influence the credibility of the results. First, I took steps to establish rapport and build trust with the participants. I began each interview and focus group by reviewing the information presented in the participant consent form (see Appendix ‘E’). It was important that participants understood the purpose and background of the study, data collection and analysis, and presentation of findings. This also served as an important step to reduce my supervisory relationship within the district by reviewing the procedures related to confidentiality and rights of participants. This review strengthened the emphasis of my role as a researcher, as opposed to that of an administrator. Additionally, each interview began by engaging participants in conversations related to their tenure as an educator. The first interview gathered professional demographic information related to length of time in education, subject areas and grade level taught, and number of districts served.

Throughout the data collection process, I interviewed each participant twice. During the first interview with each participant, I used a structured set of questions to gather information related to job satisfaction in a changing educational environment. Following an initial analysis of the data, I met with each participant a second time. This served as an opportunity to share my emergent findings with the participant and dig deeper into their experiences. The second interview also allowed me to determine
whether my preliminary analysis was an accurate reflection of their experiences. Member checking served as an important method of identifying my own biases and understanding of what I had observed.

Following Merriam (2009), triangulation methods increased credibility and internal validity of the study. I gathered multiple sources of data collection through observations at different times and places, interviewed individuals with different perspectives, and conducted follow-up interviews with participants. I cross checked themes from my interviews and focus groups with other sources to identify regularities in the data. For example, I cross checked data from the JDS online questionnaire with data from the individual interviews and focus group discussions. Findings were compared with the literature presented in the literature review.

The third method to enhance credibility involved the use of reflexivity. As a researcher, it was important to be aware and transparent with my research position by sharing my biases, disposition, and assumptions that I brought to the study. Within this study, I served as the instrument; therefore, it was necessary for readers to understand how my position may influence the conclusions of the study. To accomplish reflexivity, I recorded my thoughts and perceptions of my own biases, along with observations of participants throughout the process of data collection. Used as a self-reflective process, notes were reviewed throughout the study and cross-checked with my findings.

**Confirmability and Dependability**

Merriam (2009) stated that reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated. Within the social sciences framework, reliability is problematic because human behavior is never static, nor is what many experience
necessarily more reliable than what one person experiences (p. 221). Through qualitative research, researchers seek to describe and explain the world in which individuals interpret and experience it. Because there are many interpretations of what is happening, replication of a qualitative study will not yield the same results; however, that does not discredit the results of a study. The important component in qualitative research is whether the results are consistent with the data collected. Lincoln and Guba (1985) were the first to conceptualize “dependability” and “consistency.” Rather than demanding that outside researchers get the same results, dependability and consistency occur when the results of the data are consistent with the data collected in this study.

In this study, four strategies were used to obtain confirmability and dependability. Three of the four methods; triangulation, member checking and reflexivity, were already described in the previous section. The fourth strategy I employed, identified as an audit trail, is a method suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to authenticate the findings of a study by following the trail of the researcher. The audit trail describes in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry. When documenting the audit trail, I kept a research journal to record reflections, questions, or memos related to the problems, issues, or ideas encountered in the data. Upon completion of the data collection and analysis process, it served as a detailed account of how the study was conducted and how the data were analyzed.

**Transferability**

To enhance the possibility of the results from the study transferring to a different setting, I utilized several techniques. Creswell (2003) described the use of “thick, rich descriptions” to convey the findings (p. 196). Using participants’ direct quotes and
interview comments to support themes provided adequate evidence which will be presented in the following chapter. This helped to create context for my interpretation of participants’ perceived characteristics of job satisfaction and helped establish credibility and transferability of this research to future studies.

An additional strategy to enhance transferability involves careful attention when selecting the study’s sample. Merriam (2009) referred to maximum variation as purposefully seeking variation or diversity in sample selection to allow for a greater range of application of findings. Whether it is the site selected for the study or the participants interviewed, a study has a greater possibility of generalizing to more people if variation in the characteristics of the participants (e.g., gender, age, education, length of time employed) occurs. A systematic sampling strategy was utilized to generate potential participants. Using an alphabetized list of all district teachers, the district HR manager generated a list of teachers that met the selection criteria, separated by building. From the list, a systematic sampling strategy was used to generate a potential list of participants, which served as an anonymous cross section of teachers across the school district.

**Ethics**

Creswell stated that ethical practice involves much more than merely following a set of static guidelines. Writers need to anticipate and address any ethical dilemmas that may arise in their research (2008, p. 88). Researchers need to protect participants, develop trust with them, promote the integrity of the research, and guard against misconduct that might reflect on their organizations. In order to practice research in an ethical manner, I submitted my research proposal to Ashland University’s Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB). In April 2014, the HSRB approved the research
proposal and granted permission to proceed with the project. Further, I met with and gained permission from the district superintendent to conduct research within the school district.

To mitigate ethical issues that may have arisen during the data collection, analysis, and interpretation component of the research, I took several protective measures to conduct the research in an ethical manner. Prior to the interview process, I presented and reviewed the informed consent document with all participants. This included informing participants of (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the procedures throughout participation, (c) privacy and confidentiality of data, (d) benefits and use of data and (e) each participant’s right to decline or withdraw their participation in the study. In addition to informing participants’ of their rights, I also assigned each participant a pseudonym in order to maintain their confidentiality. All data were stored on a secure computer and database with password protection. Data will only be stored for the required 36 months period, and then I will follow deletion and encryption protocols outlined by the Human Subjects Review Board and participating school districts.

Summary

The objective of this study was to determine factors that influence job satisfaction in a changing educational environment. A mixed methods approach was used through subject completion of the Hackman and Oldham Job Diagnostic Survey and subject participation in interviews and focus groups. Several steps, including member checks, triangulation methods, and reflexivity, were taken to increase the study’s trustworthiness. Through the data collection and analysis process, an understanding of the factors that
influence job satisfaction in a changing educational environment was explored. The following chapter will report the findings of this research study.
CHAPTER IV

Introduction

Change has been a constant factor in the current educational climate. Recent legislative mandates such as the Common Core standards, a new assessment and accountability system, along with a new teacher evaluation system have all influenced changes in the educational environment. I believe that we need to explore the impact of these changes on teachers’ perception of their job satisfaction. To explore the impact of educational changes on teachers’ perceptions of their job satisfaction, I conducted a mixed methods study at a rural school district in central Ohio. The primary research questions of the study were: (a) What factors influence job satisfaction among teachers? (b) How does the changing educational environment influence the degree of satisfaction teachers have with their job? (c) Do common themes exist among Hackman & Oldham’s Job Characteristic Survey findings and perceptual data provided by teachers about their job satisfaction? This chapter presents findings and evidence that resulted from the study.

The participant pool for the study was from a rural school district in central Ohio and was comprised of teachers that represented all subject areas taught in kindergarten through twelfth grades. Data were collected through Hackman and Oldham’s Job Diagnostic survey, individual interviews and focus groups. A systematic sampling strategy was used to generate 3 separate lists of educators to participate in the study. Twenty-six participants completed the Job Diagnostic Survey. Four teachers participated in individual interviews, while two groups, each consisting of three teachers, participated in focus groups. Data from the interviews and focus groups were audiotaped and
transcribed verbatim; data were triangulated to increase credibility and internal validity. Through triangulation, I used multiple sources of data collection through observations at different times and places, data collected through people with different perspectives and conducted follow-up interviews with the same people. In an effort to ensure the confidentiality of all participants, survey respondents’ names were not collected from the survey and pseudonyms were assigned to interviewees and focus group participants. Specific information that may have identified participants was omitted from interview excerpts used in this chapter to secure the privacy of all participants.

Results of Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

A total of 26 participants completed the Hackman and Oldham Job Diagnostic Survey. The survey was designed to obtain participants’ perceptions of their job along with their reaction to it. The Survey was uploaded into a Google Form; this allowed participants to complete and submit the questionnaire electronically. The questionnaire contained 46 questions and was divided into three sections. Participants were encouraged to complete the questionnaire as honestly and frankly as possible. Survey responses were compiled in an Excel spreadsheet.

Table 4.1 lists participants’ mean scores when completing the first two sections of the survey. The questions in these sections were aimed at identifying participants’ perceptions of each core job dimension in their current teaching role. The survey provided participants with specific examples of each core job dimension; participants were then asked to describe how each example matched their current job. Hackman and Oldham (1974) define the core job dimensions as the following:
• Skill Variety – The degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities, skills, and talents of the employee.

• Task Identity – The degree to which a job requires completion of a “whole” and identifiable piece of work.

• Task Significance – The degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives or work of other people.

• Autonomy – The degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion given to the employee when determining the procedures used when carrying out the work of the job.

• Feedback - The degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job results in the employee obtaining information about the effectiveness of his or her work performance.

The scores were determined using a composite of two different Likert scales. Section one of the survey identified the degree to which the core job dimensions were present in the participant’s role (1 = very little; 4 = moderately; 7 = very much). The second section of the survey identified the accuracy of given statements when describing the participant’s job (1 = very inaccurate; 4 = uncertain; 7 = very accurate). The results of the first two sections of the survey are listed in Table 4.1.
Table 4.1

*Job Dimension Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.Dev</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skill Variety</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>6.28</td>
<td>.782</td>
<td>.611</td>
<td>-1.172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Identify</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>1.305</td>
<td>1.702</td>
<td>-.311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Significance</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>.686</td>
<td>.470</td>
<td>-1.789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>1.154</td>
<td>1.332</td>
<td>-.401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>1.121</td>
<td>1.257</td>
<td>-.742</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As presented in the table, mean scores for all core job dimensions were higher than 4.0, which indicate that all job characteristics appeared in participants’ current role and range from appearing at a moderate amount to appearing very much. Participant survey results showed the perception that *task significance*, as identified by a mean score of 6.55, serves as the core job dimension that appears most in the role of a teacher. These results show that teachers perceive that their job has a high level of significance and importance. There was also less variability in participant responses for this job dimension as the smaller variance suggests (.470). Participant responses show that *skill variety*, with a mean score of 6.28, was the second core job dimension that appeared most in teachers’ current role. This information suggested that teachers’ perceive that their job requires them to do a variety of work, while using a number of skills and talents to do many things.

Participant responses show that *feedback*, with a mean score of 5.26, is the third leading core job dimension present in teachers’ jobs. Participants perceived that they
receive a moderate amount of feedback about the effectiveness of their work performance from supervisors and co-workers. With a mean score of 5.03, participant responses show that autonomy ranks as the fourth. These results suggest that participants perceive a moderate amount of autonomy in their role. There standardized tasks that are not under their control; however they can make some decisions about the work.

Participant responses showed that task identity ranked as the 5th core job dimension, with a mean score of 4.74. This job dimension had the largest variability in participant responses as indicated by its large variance (1.702). While task identity was perceived to be the job dimension that appeared the least among all job dimensions, participants perceived that this job dimension is still seen a moderate amount in their current role. Participants perceived that their job is a moderate-sized part of the overall work, while their own contribution can be seen in the final outcome.

Table 4.2 lists participant responses as identified by Hackman and Oldham’s (1975) model of calculating the Motivating Potential Score (MPS). In Table 4.2 below, the participant job dimension and MPS results are compared to the national norms of educators, as established by Hackman and Oldham (1975).
Table 4.2

Motivating Potential Score Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Participant Results</th>
<th>National Norms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skill Variety</td>
<td>6.28</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Identity</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Significance</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating Potential Score</td>
<td>154.95</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The MPS measures the extent to which the job exhibits the five core job dimensions. According to Hackman and Oldham (1975), the MPS is an index of the degree to which a job has an overall high standing on the person’s degree of motivation. Therefore, a high MPS is likely to promote favorable personal and job work outcomes. Jobs scoring higher in a combination of the five dimensions result in higher job satisfaction than jobs scoring lower in a combination of the five dimensions. The MPS of individual participants ranged from 62.48 to 323.56; however, the participants’ average resulted in a score of 154.95.

The fourth section of the survey identified teachers’ perceived current level of job satisfaction with five different characteristics present on any job. Participant responses identified their current level of job satisfaction in the following areas of pay satisfaction, security satisfaction, social satisfaction, supervisory satisfaction, and growth satisfaction.
Participants’ responses were guided as: 1 = extremely dissatisfied; 4 = neutral; 7 = extremely satisfied). Table 4.3 shows the results of participants’ responses.

Table 4.3

**Job Satisfaction Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Satisfaction</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pay</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>1.943</td>
<td>-.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>2.426</td>
<td>-.731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.496</td>
<td>-1.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>1.726</td>
<td>-.998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>-1.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As presented in the table, participants indicated that their highest level of job satisfaction was *social satisfaction*. With a mean of 5.77, participants perceived that their colleagues impact their level of job satisfaction the most. *Social satisfaction* also showed the lowest variability in responses with a variance of .496. According to Hackman and Oldham’s (1975) scale, participant responses indicate that they are satisfied with this aspect of their job; they perceive that they have an opportunity to talk with and help others, while getting the chance to know others in the organization. The second highest level of job satisfaction was *growth satisfaction*. Participant responses (M = 5.67) indicate that they are satisfied with this aspect of their job. Hackman and Oldham’s model indicates that participants view their role as a vehicle for personal growth and acquire a sense of achievement and success in their role.
Participant responses reflected that the lowest degree of job satisfaction was their pay satisfaction. With a mean score of 3.95 participants feel neutral in their perception of whether they receive fair pay and benefits. Participant responses show a high variance (V = 1.94) in their range of scores.

**Qualitative Data Analysis**

Ten teachers participated in individual interviews and focus group sessions. From that group, four teachers participated in individual interviews. Two focus group sessions were held, with three teachers participating in each focus group session. Table 4.4 provides information about the study’s participants.
Table 4.4

*Participant Characteristics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Grade Level Taught</th>
<th>Interview or Focus Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brittany</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janis</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15-20 years</td>
<td>Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25-30 years</td>
<td>Business, Library Science</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15-20 years</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macy</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10-15 years</td>
<td>Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenna</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15-20 years</td>
<td>English, Math</td>
<td>11 &amp; 12</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tricia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15-20 years</td>
<td>Language Arts, Social Studies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindy</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20-25 years</td>
<td>Language Arts, Social Studies</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristen</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30-35 years</td>
<td>Physical Education, Health</td>
<td>K-4</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After careful review of the transcript data from the interviews and focus groups, I began to cluster similar topics together. The topics were then abbreviated into codes which revealed eight initial themes. The eight themes were (a) student learning and results, (b) opportunities for students, (c) colleague support and assistance, (d) leadership/administrative support, (e) self-fulfillment and feeling valued in the organization, (f)
organizational distractions, (g) external pressures that triggered fear, and (h) teacher self-efficacy. After further review of the transcripts, it became apparent that data were coded with themes that were similar in meaning. As a result, I continued a more in depth data analysis process through further review of interview excerpts and studied field notes from the interview process. Additionally, interview and focus group data were compared with data from the JDS online questionnaire. This in depth analysis resulted in four themes which included the following (a) instructional support, (b) student success, (c) self-efficacy, and (d) external pressures that lead to fear and lack of confidence. Table 4.5 provides an overview of the four themes and also lists characteristics of each theme.

Table 4.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Instructional support</td>
<td>• Leadership from administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collaboration with colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Success</td>
<td>• Opportunities for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Engagement in learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>• Feeling valued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Self-fulfillment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Pressures that Trigger Fear</td>
<td>• Psychological Contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Lack of Confidence</td>
<td>• Impact on self-efficacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Importance of Instructional Support**

The first theme that emerged from the analysis of the interview and focus group data was the teachers’ perception of the importance of instructional support for educators. Participants expressed an understanding of the influence of their profession in helping students succeed on an academic and social-emotional level. They indicated their intrinsic tendency to continuously strive for improved instruction and positive student
achievement and growth results. Teachers in the focus group sessions described the importance of instructional support and its influence on their professional learning, which ultimately impacts student success. More specifically, participants shared three primary ways that instructional support leads to job satisfaction, which include (a) leadership from administrators, (b) professional learning opportunities, and (c) collaboration with colleagues.

**Leadership from Administration**

The first way that participants identified instructional support as a factor that leads to job satisfaction is the instructional leadership from administrators. Seven participants shared the positive influence of an administrator providing academic or instructional assistance to teachers. They described the benefit of having someone who will help them if they are struggling. For example, Janis portrayed the importance of a positive relationship with an administrator as a factor that influenced her job satisfaction. She perceived her accessibility to an administrator who provides instructional support as a factor that leads to her job satisfaction. In her interview, she described the challenges of working with a high poverty population, while being provided with few instructional resources. Teaching in a building where 85% of students in her classroom are defined as living in poverty, instructional resources are not plentiful. She described the daily challenges when working with students, which range from academic to social-emotional needs. She portrays this by stating,

I feel like the trust factor just has to be there. I need to be comfortable going to an administrator for help with a matter especially if I’m finding trouble getting resources or not knowing how to best respond to a student’s needs. It is someone
who is willing to put the time in to help us because they know the bottom line is that they’re not just helping their teacher, but they’re helping the students and that’s what it’s all about.

Six other participants described the link between their job satisfaction and the administration’s academic leadership. Three participants used the word ‘visionary’ when describing their ideal image of the role of an administrator in their service as an instructional leader. As an example, Caroline described academic leadership as a factor that would increase her happiness. It is important to note that throughout the interview, Caroline used the word, ‘happy’ interchangeably when describing her perception of ‘job satisfaction’; she referred to job satisfaction as a feeling of happiness with one’s job. Caroline described academic leadership as a factor that leads to her happiness by working for someone who is visionary. She described this as someone that thinks differently and comes up with different ideas for the building, while helping define where they are going as a building and how teachers can contribute to that vision. Caroline stated,

The academic leadership would be a factor that would really increase my happiness [read: job satisfaction.]. A guide who really understood the academics, and took it to a place where it elevated expectations of teachers and students in the learning environment. When I was saying to you earlier about the whole idea of mindset, and not looking at education like this, but being able to look at it in a completely different way. That would make me so happy, yeah, to work under someone who was visionary.

The influence of academic leadership and its influence on job satisfaction was also expressed by Denise and Macy in a focus group session. Both participants shared
their frustration with their current building principal, who is close to retirement. Denise focused on the excitement she felt by an impending new building principal. Denise stated, “I’m more excited about my job ‘cause (and I know this is terrible) but I see that we’re finally getting a leader! Dag gone, I’ve been here 25 years – it’s time, you know?” Macy shared this perspective by describing a recent professional learning opportunity that involved working with another school for five days. There, she was able to see the power of an academic leader working with the staff. She described her culminating feeling when leaving the workshop:

I came home from that conference changed. I felt cheated. On the way home, I was like, “Oh my God. We deserve that. We deserve a principal like that. We need someone like her. We saw that made a difference.”

Brittany shared her thoughts of the influence of leadership on job satisfaction by describing the link between leadership and culture in the building. Within her five years of teaching, Brittany has reported to three different building principals. She stated, “Leadership in the building can create that culture that can be detrimental or contribute to job satisfaction.” Similar to Caroline’s perspective, she shared her perception of the important of a leader’s visionary influence in the building. She described it as:

What is our focus? What types of relationships do we have with each other? How do we support each other? Are we all focused and working towards the same goal? Do we feel like things are positive here and we are excited to be here and help each other? Those are all things I look for in a school culture and I think they definitely influence people’s desire to [you know] come and be a part of
what we have at our school. Not only for our teachers but for our kids too. The leadership plays a huge role in setting this up for our building.

This statement suggests that Brittany recognizes the influence of leadership and job satisfaction. The above statement was directed toward the school culture; however, she was direct in identifying the role of the building administrator role in influencing the culture of the building. Within Brittany’s interview, she also described colleague support and its influence on her job satisfaction. Support and collaboration with colleagues is a characteristic that emerged from participants as a factor that influenced their job satisfaction.

Collaboration with Colleagues

Nine participants described the influence of collegial collaboration on their job satisfaction. They shared how collaboration with colleagues strengthens their professional capacities as educators, while enabling them to grow professionally in their respective fields in order to better serve students. Participants also reported that collaboration with colleagues has evolved as an area of job satisfaction due to an absence in administrative leadership. Participants identified a subgroup of colleagues that challenge their mindset while helping them learn and grow as educators. Caroline portrayed this by describing colleagues that value and hold a mindset of professional learning. She shared how collaboration with these individuals has led to happiness in her role by stating:

You know what makes me happy? When you have groups of people and you’re engaged in conversation. It’s that same feeling you get when you watch your students’ learning. You’re watching each other learning and [you] are learning
from them and that fuels you. So I think it has to be collaboration with people who are of the same growth mindset because if you’re in collaboration where people are consistently negative and don’t want to think outside the box, you’re just stuck and it doesn’t move anywhere. So you have to be able to take those risks and move forward, and when people do that it makes me happy.

Caroline made the connection between collaboration with colleagues and job satisfaction by describing colleagues who hold a growth mindset. She described individuals that hold a growth mindset as those who have a desire to learn from each other. Caroline reported that collaboration with teachers who hold a growth mindset has a strong influence in her job satisfaction.

Within Caroline’s interviews, she refers to the lack of administrative support in helping her grow as a professional. This factor serves as an impetus for Caroline’s desire to seek out colleagues who want to grow professionally. She views these colleagues as individuals that will provide instructional support which therefore fills a void she feels due to lack in administrative ability to provide the support.

The influence of peer collaboration and its connection to job satisfaction was reinforced within a focus group setting where Tricia and Mindy spoke about the impact of peer collaboration on their job satisfaction. Similar to Caroline, both Tricia and Mindy sought the support of colleagues as a result of low administrative support. They experienced struggles professionally when attempting to meet the requirements for the new teacher evaluation system. Low administrative support and increased teacher frustration led to a teacher-formed professional development group. Mindy shared that a new component of the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System requires teachers to design
assessments to measure student growth. She stated, “So many of us ended up having problems with our assessments; we begged and begged and begged – please give us some professional development on how to create valid and reliable assessments. I haven’t gotten it. So we learned on our own.”

Mindy and Tricia shared that they started a professional development group in their building to help themselves and peers with needed support in the area of assessments. They described how the role of their professional development group impacted their job satisfaction. Both participants described the group as a learning community where teachers come to each other with new ideas for the classroom. They shared their excitement in helping people to step outside of the box. Tricia stated:

They’re motivated. We’re doin’ some different things that we couldn’t, we know we need to do, we’ve known that for years. It’s nothin’ new but we just couldn’t get people to do it. And I think they’re gonna have to, with Common Core, they’re gonna have to change. It’s like getting students to take control of their learning or the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. They do so much better when they can, you know, when they have that ownership of their learning.

While Mindy and Tricia discussed peer support as a factor that leads to their job satisfaction, they also described their desire for increased faculty support. Both participants shared their frustration when they do not feel support from colleagues. Tricia described it as:

I feel like so many teachers, when we talk about new ways to do things, think,

“That means I have to change the old things. That means I have to go outside my
binder [where all teaching materials for the class are held]. That means I have to do more work. That means I have to do this or I have to do that.” And, they immediately – whoosh – wall goes up. Even when we share new things at meetings, you can see people [teachers] immediately disengage. And that is so disheartening to me.

In this example, Tricia and Mindy continued to express their desire to continue their professional learning in collaboration with peers. Kristen [the third participant in the focus group] added, “I just wish people wouldn’t be afraid. We all have different jobs. There are different things we are good at. We need to help each other.” The focus group discussed the number of resources [central office personnel and professional learning opportunities] that are available to teachers. The focus group participants reported a greater desire to work together to utilize the resources to better help the students.

In an individual interview, Janis also described the value of peer collaboration and its influence on her job satisfaction. She stated, “It takes good colleagues that you can collaborate with. You know, if you’re struggling with something, it helps to have somebody you can go to for help with how to do it.” Similar to Caroline, Janis described the difference between colleagues who are professionally supportive versus colleagues hold a negative attitude toward collaboration. She described experiences when working with colleagues in her 18 years of teaching:

I just switched teaching partners, after working with the same person for ten years. What a change in job satisfaction! The person I worked with was constantly setting up roadblocks and never wanted to focus on solutions. I felt uncomfortable asking her for help and we never planned together, unlike most
teachers in the building. I felt very alone and often considered changing grade
levels or buildings. Now that I have a new teaching partner, it is so different. We
are constantly working together to plan for instruction or help each other with
ideas when addressing student needs.

In this example, Janis illustrates her increase in job satisfaction when she received peer
instructional support. She went on to describe the value of peer collaboration and its
influence on her job satisfaction. Janis reported that having a collaborative peer has had a
huge impact on her outlook during the past school year. She shared that they openly
share resources and teaching strategies, which has a positive impact on student learning.
Janis indicated that she no longer feels so isolated in her role and believes she has a
stronger impact on her students when a collaborative approach is used to plan for
instruction.

Student Success

The second theme that emerged from the data analysis is the participants’
perceptions that they were able to see their students achieve success in various situations.
Teachers shared scenarios to depict how student success served as a factor in their job
satisfaction. The data revealed that the following factors lead to teacher job satisfaction:
(a) student engagement in learning situations; and (b) opportunities for students to
enhance their learning.

Student Engagement in Learning

Nine out of ten participants reported that student success leads to their job
satisfaction. When teachers began describing factors that lead to job satisfaction, student
success was the initial response they shared. Participants identified situations where
students were engaged in learning activities where they were able to explore, collaborate with peers, and apply their learning in various contexts.

Caroline shared a passionate view of her feelings as an educator when she witnessed her students engaged in learning. She described how her job satisfaction increased when she observed students applying learned skills in varying contexts. As an educator, she utilized a curriculum that the Ohio Department of Education requires her to teach. She has spent a great deal of time mapping out curriculum in order to sequence the curriculum in a fashion that established rigor and relevance with the students. She described her excitement when students apply the required curriculum by sharing the following statement:

I can’t describe it. It’s like a high. It’s an unbelievable high that you’re on, when things are humming along and you know kids are getting it and you see them engage. You might have taught the vocabulary and then you walk by and listen to a discussion and they’re using the vocabulary or they’re extending their ideas further. And you’re like, “Ooh, wow.” And you just step back and watch it happen. And that’s powerful, and it’s not a power trip in any way; it’s that I am watching other people be good and successful, and learn.

In the second interview with Caroline, she further elaborated on the impact of student learning on her job satisfaction. She shared her experience in teaching a new group of high school students. In previous years, she was responsible for teaching low academic, at-risk students. Although student apathy generated challenges, she found happiness when those students recognized how much they learned and were able to see their academic growth. She stated, “When they see what they’re learning, that’s fantastic! It
opens up different opportunities for them. That’s the same kind of happiness that occurs for me. Student learning definitely impacts your happiness.”

In an individual interview, Janis reinforced Caroline’s sentiment about the influence of student learning on her job satisfaction. Like Caroline, she referenced the academic struggles of low level students. She described the satisfaction she felt when seeing students work through their struggles and finally come to an answer. She stated, “It’s satisfying to watch them try to work through what they’re doing and when they finally come to an answer, it’s almost like a celebration in their eyes.” Janis also cited the challenges that stem from the state mandated Common Core. She described the shift in thinking that is required by students as a result of the new curriculum. In Janis’ second interview, she elaborated on the challenges associated with students achieving success with the Common Core curriculum. She stated, “It is requiring our students to demonstrate new skills that they are not comfortable or familiar with; therefore, it is requiring us [teachers] to do things differently.” Janis reported the fulfillment she feels when students achieve success in mastering the curriculum. She stated

Seeing them succeed is a win-win for all of us. The students are proud because they accomplished a goal. Teachers are proud because the students worked through their struggles and were able to show what they learned. That kind of experience is so rewarding to be part of.

As part of a focus group session, Mindy reiterated the message of student learning and its influence on job satisfaction by describing her excitement when struggling students achieve academic success. She described the patience teachers need when
working with students because it can sometimes take a while before students can achieve success. She described this as:

This is kind of cliché and classic but all teachers have that light bulb moment when you have been working on a particular skill for a long time and they’re not getting it. Whether it’s the way you explain it or do something just a little different and you can then see the snap, the spark, and they’re like, “Oh, I get it now!” You don’t see immediate results a lot of times. It’s a really long time. But all the blood, sweat, and tears…you know, it eventually pays off.

Further reinforcing the property of student success, participants in the focus groups shared that the overall success of students is a factor that influenced their job satisfaction. The participants in the focus groups discussed student success by sharing examples of non-academic factors that lead to student success. They focused on character traits such as respect, integrity, perseverance, and kindness. All participants in Focus Group A discussed the overall well-being and long term success of students as a factor that leads to job satisfaction. Jenna described this as wanting her students to be good citizens of the world. She made a direct connection between her students’ long term success and her success as a teacher. She stated

I want them to grow up to be good citizens of the world, you know? They are not all gonna grow up and be, you know, president of some corporation, or a business leader, or a doctor or whatever. But, if they can just be good citizens of the world and have good manners, then I feel like I have succeeded.

The group discussed the role of a teacher as someone whose responsibility goes far beyond teaching the academic curriculum. They discussed their role as critical in
teaching and modeling character traits that lead to student success. Participants stated that their role goes so much further than ensuring that the students learn the academic content; the role serves to reach the social-emotional needs of students as well. In the focus group discussion, Jenna described this by stating

We have students that [sic] come to us from difficult home life situations. They may have little to no parental support and are on their own every night.
Sometimes our students have food at home; sometimes they do not. No one is there to help them with homework. When they come to school hungry, tired, or feeling unsafe, learning is a challenge for these kids. It all points to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. We have to meet those needs to make them feel safe before learning will ever occur.

While the group discussed the challenge of meeting the behavioral and social emotional needs of students, they described the satisfaction they feel when they see those students experience success inside and outside of the classroom. Denise shared that the focus of teachers’ time with students requires a push towards teaching the curriculum due to the accountability of mandated testing. She stated that there is often not enough time to address some of the mental health or social-emotional needs of students. As a result, she has to find unique ways to help students in these areas. She added, “These students are up against so much. Whether it is a small or large accomplishment – when they pass a hurdle, I am so proud of them. It definitely leads to my satisfaction as a teacher.”

**Opportunities for Students**

Coinciding with student success, participants discussed learning opportunities for students as a factor that influenced their job satisfaction. Participants made a direct
connection between opportunities for students and the link to student success. Various examples were given which illustrate teacher perception of student opportunity and its link to student success.

In an individual interview, Caroline described how opportunities for students influence her job satisfaction. She described technology as a silly reason, yet shared the positive influence it has on her students, which therefore influences her level of job satisfaction. She compared two different learning scenarios; one where the technology in her classroom did work against another scenario where the technology did not work.

We were in pods working [using Chromebooks] on our personal essays. One of the kids had a question about how to get rid of “be” verbs in a sentence [while editing personal essays]. We were working side-by-side and the technology [Chromebooks] worked. I didn’t have to worry about the technology not working and spending all my time trying to troubleshoot whatever was going on with the machines. Everybody was engaged working and collaborating. We were all just humming along. It was seamless. It sounds so silly but it makes me happy.

Here Caroline described how technology provides an opportunity for students to be immersed in learning situations. Caroline reported that the purchase of Chromebooks and wireless connection was new in her school. The addition of Chromebooks and wireless connectivity added an opportunity which was new for students in the building. This reinforces earlier statements which reflect student success and its connection to job satisfaction.

In a focus group session, Tricia and Mindy further emphasized the importance of technology and the opportunity it provides for students. They discussed ways that the
technology serves as an opportunity for students, especially when technology is minimal in their school. Similar to Caroline, Mindy described the difference that it makes with students.

When we can bring Chromebooks in here, it really makes the difference with the kids. They’re fast and the kids don’t spend all this time waiting around on technology. Teachers and students waste so much time trying to get technology to work. I think it would blow taxpayers’ minds if they knew how much time we spent wasted on crappy machines that don’t work. We need to put the right things in the kids’ hands and let them go.

In the same focus group session, Kristen added to the discussion by sharing her experience integrating technology in the physical education class. She reported that she advocated for the integration of Chromebooks to allow students to quickly document their times and scores on activities. Kristen shared, “You typically don’t hear of students using technology in gym class. I am proud that I am doing something to stay current and that makes me feel good about what I am doing.”

Participants in the study clearly indicated that learning opportunities for students impact their job satisfaction. Most participants shared stories of how students engaged in learning opportunities leads to teacher job satisfaction. The data analysis also showed that participants perceive that the success of students in non-academic factors (citizenship and character) leads to teacher job satisfaction.

Self-efficacy

The third theme that emerged was participants’ professional self-efficacy and the value teachers bring to the organization. Participants expressed personal feelings in two
specific properties; (a) self-worth teachers feel when fulfilling teaching responsibilities; and (b) value teachers bring to the organization. Both properties were identified by participants as factors that influence job satisfaction. Stories that expressed internal feelings of self-fulfillment related to job performance were shared. Additionally, participants discussed how the emotion of feeling valued in an organization influences their job satisfaction. This professional value was expressed through their contribution to the organization’s vision, along with feedback provided by peers and administrators. Participants expressed the desire to be part of the organization’s culture and be perceived as someone that brings value to the organization.

Self-fulfillment

The first property expressed by participants pertained to their feelings of self-worth when they fulfilled their teaching responsibilities. Participants reflected upon their thoughts and feelings of how they lived up to their job performance on a daily basis. They discussed their perception of how they perceive they fulfill their professional responsibilities by focusing on execution of lessons, assessment creation, and how well students responded to a lesson. Participants expressed an internal desire to create lessons that engage students, while feeling personal responsibility when students did not perform well. In an individual interview, Brittany described it as,

There are days that my students didn’t perform the way I wanted them to perform, and I take that as a reflection on me. Those are days where I might not come home with the happiness that I do other days. It’s not about being dissatisfied with my job though; I guess I tie it back to myself and how well I performed that day. That’s something I think about a lot.
In this example, Brittany shared her self-reflection process of analyzing her instructional practices when students do not learn the needed skills. In the first interview with Brittany, she shared that she takes her professional growth very seriously and understands that good teaching involves strong reflection of her teaching practices. For example, she stated that if students are not learning, she understands the need to revise what she does and try a different approach to best help her students.

In a second interview with Brittany, she further discussed her self-reflection process as tied to the obligation she feels when fulfilling her mission as an educator. She stated that she spends an incredible amount of time reflecting on her job performance and fulfillment of her mission as an educator. She described it as a reflection process of how well she performed that day and what could be done to make tomorrow better. Brittany stated, “I don’t look for a job to make me happy but I think I find fulfillment in what I do. I guess I reflect more on my job performance and tie a lot of job satisfaction to how I feel I performed that day.”

In an individual interview, Jack echoed statements made by Brittany when talking about his self-fulfillment in meeting his daily teaching responsibilities. He described the many responsibilities of teachers by discussing the pressure teachers feel to not just focus on the academic support students need, but also the role of building positive relationships with students. Jack described the additional responsibilities that come with teaching, which he feels take away his focus in fulfilling his teaching responsibilities. For example, he discussed his involvement in a large number of meetings, in addition to research based practices that do not seem reasonable to him. He described this as,
There are just some things that take away from my daily classroom responsibilities. There are lots of meetings; not that they are not important, but they just take up a lot of time. Plus there are research based practices but sometimes I feel like I don’t have enough time to do them. For example, we have all this student data to sort through. I want to do this but sometimes there’s too much data to look at, and I can’t even use it all practically. So sometimes it just gets pushed to the side. If I could focus all my energy on building relationships with the students and creating meaningful lessons to engage them every day, I think that would lead to more satisfaction because I’m fulfilling what I’m supposed to do and be here for.

Here, Jack prioritized his focus of strong instructional planning to prepare for daily instruction. In the second interview, Jack expanded on this statement. He perceived a stronger sense of self-fulfillment and job satisfaction when spending time with students. He identified meetings as an important component of his professional responsibilities, yet did not connect it to job satisfaction.

Jack and Brittany perceived self-fulfillment within their profession as a factor that influences job satisfaction. Both linked their self-fulfillment to their happiness within their profession, which had a direct connection to their job satisfaction. Macy and Caroline also shared their story of changing from the business world to the teaching profession. Both participants attributed self-fulfillment in the teaching profession as a factor that influences their job satisfaction. Further, both teachers stated that a lack of fulfillment in their previous role influenced the change to the teaching profession.
Macy described her quick move through the ranks of the corporate world as a young professional. Once she got into management, she served as a HR director for a TV station. In a focus group session, Macy described this as,

I hated it – hated it – hated it. And, I kept waiting to like it. I kept going to my boss and I’m like, “I don’t know what I’m doing.” I don’t know if this is the right fit. I’m not feelin’ good about this.” And he’s like, “Just give it time. Give it six months. Give it a year and you’ll figure it out and grow into it.” And, six years later, I’m like, “Eh…no.”

Following her self-removal from the corporate world, she completed the required teacher training and began her career as a second grade teacher. With great emotion, Macy described the fulfillment she experienced when serving her students. She did not describe her teaching job as work; she described the fulfillment she experiences when working with her students by stating,

This is my kingdom. I left a job that paid a lot of money. My salary was cut by two-thirds when I left the corporate world to come teach. But I’m OK with that ‘cause I’m much happier here than I was with that big, fat paycheck. I mean, I’ve got 27 eight and nine year olds. What more do you want? I get up every morning and enjoy coming here. That is happiness.

Like Macy, Caroline described her transition from a career in journalism to one in education. Caroline spent 12 years in corporate communications and speech writing. As a young working mother, she remembered having a feeling of emptiness in her career. She described it as, “I can’t work like this and have kids. I have to work at something that means a lot. It has to be meaningful. If I’m gonna leave and do something different,
it’s got to be something that’s truly meaningful.” She applied for a teaching program, which she described as a life changing event. Now, as an educator who has taught at the high school level for 8 years, she described her job as a great place to learn how to teach. She expressed the great amount of freedom given to her to try different things which creates a sense of safety in her role. She shared her happiness as a teacher by focusing on the fulfillment she feels through the responsibility of teaching. She stated,

> For me, what I do [teaching] is a passion. I mean, it is my passion and I really feel like I was called to do this, on a very religious level. I felt like I had this talent to teach. And that, uh, it fueled my passion. And the more I did it, the more I couldn’t understand why no one else wanted to do it. Why wouldn’t you want to be a teacher? It’s amazing!

Caroline reflected upon her self-fulfillment she felt as an educator. Similar to four other participants, she shared her feelings of the importance of value and appreciation and how it influences job satisfaction. She stated, “Feeling valued – that is part of being happy. I really enjoy knowing I contribute to this place and I’m looked at as someone that does contribute, so that makes me happy.” Five participants shared this importance of feeling valued by being perceived as someone that contributes to the organization. Feeling valued was described on several different levels; participants shared stories of ways they felt valued through comments and appreciation from students, peers, and administrators.

Feelings of value and appreciation from students were expressed in the focus group session with Tricia and Mindy. They discussed the importance of student relationships by describing how student gratitude influences their confidence and self-efficacy as a teacher. More specifically, Mindy described this as
I have that innocent trust from the students. When they feel like they are learning, it opens up their mind. I’m helping them to open up that mind by making a little difference with some kids. When you see you’ve made a little difference or that kid that’s been graduated for five or six years comes up to you and says, “Hey, you know you were responsible for this or that.” That never gets old.

To further support Mindy’s claim within the focus group session, Tricia described this as I’ve been insecure about teaching this new class that I have never taught before. I’ve been really insecure about this but have been working real hard to stay a half step ahead of the students. The other day, some of my students were in a different class where they were learning a certain concept. They told each other, ‘Just wait ‘til we get to publications. Mrs. Smith [Mindy] will explain this to us.” That made me feel like, you know, I’ve still got it.

Participants’ responses suggest they recognize the influence of student gratitude on their job satisfaction. In addition to the influence of student gratitude, Jack suggests that he enjoys the appreciation when it is specific. He added, “I like to know that I am appreciated, not in a blanket sense, but when it is specific and targeted to something I did.” He described how previous emails he has received from past students, have made an impact on him through increasing his self-efficacy and value he believes he brings to the organization.

Denise added to the statements from teachers related to the influence of student gratitude. She described her frustration with the new teacher evaluation process by sharing her experience in reviewing student growth from an assessment she created. When describing her student results, she shared
I didn’t get good assessments results last year. I crashed and burned. I was distraught and had to pick myself up off the floor and dust myself off. With this new OTES [Ohio Teacher Evaluation System] and SLOs [Student Learning Objectives] and my evaluation, at the end of the day, if my students think I’m a good teacher. That’s all that really matters.

Denise elaborated further within a second session. She stated that it took a significant amount of time processing her results with colleagues who provided encouragement. The encouragement from colleagues helped Denise recognize a sense of value she brought to the organization, which she perceived was crushed by test results. Additionally, Denise recognized that although the test results were difficult to review, she felt personal success through relationships and positive feedback she received from students.

Through these comments from participants, it is clear that teachers perceive value and recognition as a factor that influences job satisfaction. Participants identified challenges related to educational changes, yet perceive the feeling of being valued within the organization as a characteristic that leads to job satisfaction.

**External Pressures that Lead to Fear and Lack of Confidence**

Throughout the interviews and focus group sessions, participants identified various factors that lead to job satisfaction. Although the interview questions centered on this topic, participants cited specific examples of factors that lead to dissatisfaction in their role. Within this context, participants identified changes in the current educational environment as factors that have impacted their work life. Among the changes in the educational environment, participants discussed how external pressures from both a new evaluation system and assessment system, as well as a major change in curriculum have
added to the stress they feel with their job. Analysis of data reflects the notion that participants perceive a break in their psychological contract, which creates detachment in their roles and responsibilities as an educator. A participant’s psychological contract refers to the actual, but unwritten expectations of an employee or workforce towards the employer (Schein, 1980, p. 24). This contract represents the obligations and rights the participant believes he/she is “owed” by his/her employer in return for the employee’s work and loyalty. This break in participants’ psychological contract has produced a perceived feeling of fear, ambiguity, a loss of control, and increase in work responsibilities. Participants suggest that these feelings lead to a loss of confidence and satisfaction in their current educational role.

**Psychological Contract of Participants**

Eight participants discussed the discouragement they felt with the new Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES). The evaluation system’s framework has broadened educators’ responsibilities by presenting an evidence based framework, therefore requiring educators to provide evidence or documents to support instructional practices. Participants perceive the new requirement of an evidence based model as an added responsibility to their already busy role as an educator. This has created distress over workplace expectations therefore establishing a sense of imbalance in their role. Although participants perceived the OTES model as a positive process with educational purpose, they expressed frustration over the heightened expectation that has been placed upon them by the employer.

Caroline shared her experience when preparing for the observation, as required by the OTES model. She described this as an unbelievable amount of work, given the fact
that she spent around 70 hours preparing for her administrative observation. Caroline stated,

It was almost to the point where it was paralyzing because there was so much that had to be done. I spent around 70 hours preparing for that lesson. Then to have, you know, a brand new assistant principal to come into your room, who’s pretty scary and intimidating to the kids, and I designed a student led lesson, and the kids froze because they’re scared of him. I was like, “Whoa. I spent 70 hours preparing for a lesson that bombed, which really doesn’t evaluate what you see in my classroom on a daily basis. That’s not good teaching.” So for job satisfaction, that doesn’t make me happy. It’s just like evaluating kids. You can’t give them a snapshot and say, “This is what you are.”

Caroline went on to describe the amount of stress and additional time the OTES process has added to her responsibilities as a teacher. Although reiterating that it was a positive process for her, the paperwork created a sense of wasted time that did not connect to the overall priority of student learning.

In a focus group session, Denise and Macy support Caroline’s claim related to the amount of paperwork within the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System. Both stated that it is not about the work that goes into the evaluation; it is the paperwork requiring them to complete forms to justify what it is they are doing. Denise described this as

Getting all the paperwork done stresses me out. What the rubric asks me to do does not because I should be doing that anyhow. I should be teaching exactly what those standards say. I should be doing all those things in my classroom. It’s…it’s a lot of paperwork. And a lot of hoops, and a lot of jumping.
The responsibilities as required by the OTES model add a new expectation that participants perceive as unfair. They perceive irrelevance in required paperwork they are forced to produce for the employer and its value to their students. Although Denise disagreed with the testing and paperwork components of OTES, she recognized the benefit of the model. The model helped Denise realize that she wasn’t assessing her students correctly and needed to assess them in better ways. Further, Denise stated, “The OTES model has made me a better teacher.” Similar to Caroline, both participants suggested that OTES was a positive process; however, the paperwork involved created stress that added pressure to their already busy roles.

When participants discussed the educational changes that influenced their level of job satisfaction, they often spoke of the influence of Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), the new student assessment system for the state of Ohio. Participants expressed fear when referencing how they felt about the new assessment system. The ambiguity related to the content of the assessment, the rigor of the assessment items, and the potential accountability reflected on school district report cards and teacher evaluations were all cited as specific examples of the fear that teachers perceive when expressing feelings about PARCC. Participants described these feelings as factors that led to a loss of job satisfaction.

Caroline expressed fear when describing the new PARCC assessment. She stated, “Oh, PARCC is scary. PARCC scares me. It is going to be tough. There is a lot of pressure riding on this.” Caroline’s statements indicate that her fear is triggered by the rigor and accountability that accompany the new tests. Educators received information related to the intended rigor in assessment questions, yet had little time to prepare for the
new curriculum that the new tests measure. As a result of ODE’s decision to tie student assessment results to teacher evaluations, Caroline perceives a sense of fear over the rigor of the assessment and its potential results. For example, she shared her experience when meeting with colleagues to review a practice PARCC test. The adults had difficulty responding to practice PARCC questions, even though the test questions were below the grade level they taught. She stated, “If a group of highly educated teachers that serve as experts in the content area cannot even figure out how to respond, how do we expect our students to be able to do it?” Caroline clearly expressed how the mandated PARCC assessment has created frustration among educators.

Brittany echoed this frustration and concern when discussing how the PARCC assessment impacts her. As an 8th grade Language Arts teacher in a small district, she is responsible for over half the students in that grade level. Her student results are published publically while her students’ value added growth exists as a public document which can be accessed by anyone through the Internet. She described the amount of pressure she has experienced when preparing her students for the test. When describing this, she stated

“I’ve never felt this pressure before. Especially with the value added and the rating on my evaluation. I feel like the pressure has increased. As a reading teacher, everybody in the state knows how my kids did, and that’s not necessarily a bad thing, but I think it has created more pressure. Also, with the first PARCC assessment coming up, I’m just kind of waiting, wondering what it’s going to look like and hoping that my students do OK. It’s definitely a feeling of uncertainty that we haven’t had before because we don’t know what the test is
gonna really look like for our students. The PARCC assessment is definitely something we’re thinking a lot about this year.

In this example, Brittany expressed emotions of fear related to public criticism of the test results and the connection to community perception of her quality as an educator. She perceives a sense of unfairness in public publishing of test results. Brittany described herself as a reflective educator that takes student achievement very seriously. The added layer of published test results and perceived community criticism of potential poor student test results adds pressure to the fragile feelings she already holds of the new testing requirements and her core values in student learning. This feeling detracts from her job satisfaction as it moves away from the core values she holds in feeling self-fulfilled as an educator.

In a second interview, Brittany asserted frustration related to the lack of guidance from the Ohio Department of Education when releasing information about the assessment. Her concern centered on student and teacher results following the assessment administration. The ODE has provided little information about the framework of the assessment. Yet, 50% of teacher evaluations will be based on how her students’ perform on the assessment. She stated, “How will I prepare my students for a test that we know nothing about? What if my students do horrible and my rating from the state tells me that I am an ineffective teacher? It is scary.” These experiences leave her with concerns about the validity of the PARCC data, which serve as the primary measure of teacher effectiveness. The pressure that Brittany feels from the educational changes has triggered emotions and frustration that take away from her job satisfaction.
Participant interviews reveal that fear and ambiguity of educational changes lead to a sense of job dissatisfaction. All participants in both focus group sessions expressed concerns over the teacher workload that has accompanied the educational changes. These new obligations present responsibilities that participants deem as impractical within the realm of their job. Participants cited examples such as the design of new curricula, a lack of instructional resources, and increased preparation for the evaluation system as added responsibilities to an already busy occupation. With a new curriculum, participants described their responsibility in designing new lesson plans and assessments to reflect the new Common Core standards. Participants expressed frustration with their increase in workload which stems from the need to provide resources that align with the new curriculum. Participants shared that their workload has increased drastically as they are spending a significant amount of time planning for instruction.

In a focus group session, Mindy described the change in her role over the past several years. She depicted herself as a confident teacher when planning for student learning prior to the implementation of Common Core. Her statements reveal that her self-confidence has diminished with the impetus of Common Core. She stated

We spend so much time trying to figure it out – what are we going to do next - we need to make sure we meet this goal – we are not moving fast enough. You lose sight of the day-to-day stuff. I go home thinking, what am I doing tomorrow? I don’t have any lesson plans. I used to have stuff laid out ahead of time. And now it’s from day to day. I’ve been at this for 11 years; it shouldn’t be this hard anymore. It shouldn’t feel like I’m starting over from my first year of teaching.
Mindy proceeded to describe that she is not alone in her frustration with the implementation of Common Core. Also participating in the focus group session, Kristen added that co-workers are feeling the same challenges when attempting to implement the Common Core standards. She described that she believes in using high quality, authentic resources when designing instruction, yet the fast paced implementation of the standards has left districts scrambling to purchase resources or even find money to purchase instructional resources. In an individual interview, Jack echoed these statements by describing the experiences of teachers when planning for instructional lessons. He reported their experiences by stating:

For the past few years, we have been grasping at straws. As we have moved towards Common Core, I feel like our curriculum has been Pinterest or whatever we can get our hands on. I find myself scrounging through papers left around the copy machine to see if there is something I can use in my classroom. It is whatever you can get your hands on. It is a really tough place to be in.

Jack proceeded to describe how this frustration decreases his job satisfaction. He perceived the feeling of being unprepared along with the ambiguity of not knowing what is coming next, as a feeling that leads to his distress and loss in job satisfaction. He stated, “It takes all the fun out of teaching. It’s a job and I know it’s not supposed to be all fun and games, but . . . it’s scary.”

Janis shared her feelings related to her increase in workload as a result of Common Core. Similar to colleagues, she deems the added responsibilities as impractical within the context of her role. She expressed frustration with the amount of time she spends preparing for instruction. Although she perceived a slight sense of relief when
comparing the current teaching year to the previous year, her planning time in the
evening and weekend is significant. She described

I always have grading or planning to do. It’s hard to pinpoint a specific amount
of time. It’s just part of what I do. I don’t like the feeling of being behind. A 30
minute daily planning period is just not enough to create high quality lesson plans
in all subject areas.

Brittany also described a large workload in preparing for Common Core. She specifically
described her change in perspective when thinking that things would get easier for her as
she gained years of teaching experience. Jokingly, she stated that she had hoped that her
workload would decrease as she gained experience teaching. She described this as

Impacting my work life, Common Core has been a lot of time. Naively, I thought
my lesson plans would be reusable year after year, but that is not the case. I guess
it’s not a bad thing because I think that every year I want to make things better.

So [laughing] my workload hasn’t necessarily decreased, which is something I
hoped for but that is OK.

Brittany proceeded to describe her perception that things would get better as she grew
more comfortable with Common Core and had a better understanding of what was
expected along with what the new standards looked like in the teaching units. She stated,
“With anything new, there is a learning curve. We preach that to our kids all the time. I
think we’ll get there.”

Denise had a different perception when describing her future as an educator. She
clearly stated the correlation between Common Core and her decrease in job satisfaction.
She cited examples of her burnout along with the perceived burnout of her co-workers.
Describing her worklife, Denise shared that her typical workday involves her staying until 6:30pm, even though students release at 3:30. She described

I’ve always been one of those teachers that stays and works until late, but if I’m home by 6:00, that’s early. And then I go home and grade papers or look at stuff on the internet. Many nights, I fall asleep on the couch and wake at 12:30, or 2:00 or 4:00. Then off to bed and start all over. You know, there’s only so much that someone can take. If it’s too much, you’re gonna lose people before they get to the point where they’re comfortable.

In a second interview with Denise, she reported her increased desire to retire as a result of all the changes. Again citing the immense responsibilities and increase in workload, she questioned her tenure in education. She stated, “I just don’t know how much more of this I can take.”

Participant responses indicate that an increase in work responsibilities from the implementation of Common Core has had a significant impact on their work life. Participants suggest that they are spending more time and energy to design high quality instructional resources in order to implement the Common Core standards. The responses also suggest that the increase in work responsibilities along with the break in the participants’ psychological contract has contributed to a decrease in their job satisfaction.

**Summary**

This fourth chapter presented the data that were analyzed to identify factors that lead to teacher job satisfaction in a changing educational environment. The data was generated from a two-pronged approach. Quantitative data was gathered through the
Hackman and Oldham Job Diagnostic Survey, which was completed by 26 participants. Qualitative data was gathered through interviews and focus groups and were transcribed, member checked, and triangulated to ensure validity. The four identified themes were related to factors that influence teacher job satisfaction in a changing educational environment.

This study found several themes that influence job satisfaction of educators in a changing educational environment. Survey data indicated that social satisfaction has the most significant impact on teachers. This reflects teacher perception that they value the ability to talk to, help and work with others while having a chance to get to know others in the organization. Through interviews and focus group sessions, this study found the first theme that had an influence on teacher job satisfaction is the importance of instructional support. Teachers indicated that leadership from administrators, support from colleagues, and instructional support were all factors that influenced their job satisfaction. The next most impactful theme related to student success. Teachers stated that students’ success in academic or other learning opportunities served as a factor that influenced their job satisfaction. The next theme reflects teacher self-efficacy. Participants shared their desire to feel valued as a member that contributes to the organization. The fourth theme identified educational changes that lead to job dissatisfaction. Data analysis revealed that participants’ Psychological Contract of their roles and responsibilities has been altered, which has created a sense of impracticality and unfairness in their role. This has led to frustration therefore generating a sense of job dissatisfaction. Implications of these themes and their impact on school organizations will be discussed further in the following chapter.
CHAPTER V

Summary of Findings

This chapter seeks to summarize and add greater depth to the findings of this mixed methods research study. It will present a summary of the findings, limitations of the study, implications for administrators, and recommendations for future research. This study was guided by three primary research questions: (a) What factors influenced job satisfaction among teachers? (b) How did the changing educational environment influence the degree of satisfaction teachers have with their job? (c) Did common themes exist among Hackman and Oldham’s Job Diagnostic Survey findings and perceptual data provided by teachers about their job satisfaction? Data from this study were gathered through the administration of a two-pronged approach, which collected survey data and perceptual data through individual interviews and focus groups. Findings from the data analysis identified that instructional support, student success, and teacher self-efficacy serve as the three primary areas that influence teacher job satisfaction. Common themes between the survey data and perceptual data were apparent.

Factors that Influence Job Satisfaction among Teachers

The first and most prominent theme that emerged from the data analysis regarding factors that influence job satisfaction was the teachers’ perception of the importance of instructional support. This was evident in both quantitative and qualitative data. In interviews, participants cited leadership from administration and collaboration with colleagues as two characteristics that influence their job satisfaction. A majority of participants described the benefit of having an administrator, colleague, or professional learning group to assist when struggling with professional responsibilities. Participants
shared examples of instructional planning with colleagues and the formation of professional learning groups designed to assist and help others improve their professional practice. Similarly, the quantitative data analysis revealed social satisfaction and growth satisfaction as two primary areas that participants perceive influence their job satisfaction. Responses indicated that teachers were most satisfied with this area of their job and believe that they have an opportunity to talk with and help others grow in a professional capacity within the organization.

The second most prominent theme that emerged was participants’ professional self-efficacy and value they bring to the organization. In the interviews, most participants discussed the feeling of being valued in the workplace. Their perceived contribution to the organization’s vision and culture, along with a desire to be recognized as someone who brings value to the organization were cited as factors that influence job satisfaction. Further, participants identified a multitude of skills and talent needed to engage students in learning. Fulfillment of professional responsibilities related to the execution of lesson planning, assessment creation, and strategic student engagement activities were cited as challenging tasks that took specialized training and expertise. Further enhancing this finding, quantitative data analysis revealed that teachers identified “task significance” as their leading job dimension present in their teaching role. This finding shows that teachers perceive that their job has a high level of significance and importance in the organization.

The third theme that emerged from the data analysis was the participants’ perception of academic and social-emotional growth in students. Findings revealed that student opportunities and engagement in learning situations led to the success of students.
Participants described the challenge of meeting the diverse needs of students, yet perceived job satisfaction when they saw students experience success through perseverance in academic challenges. Participants also shared examples of how non-academic factors such as student character and citizenship influenced their job satisfaction.

**Influence of the Changing Educational Environment on Job Satisfaction**

This study also shows that the implementation of the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System, Common Core, and the PARCC assessment has created strong feelings of distress and dissatisfaction among teachers in this research. Participants described how these initiatives have increased work responsibilities, induced stress over new workplace obligations, and led to fear and a loss of professional confidence.

Analysis of the data revealed that participants perceive a break in their psychological contract, which is, according to Schein (1980) the unwritten expectations an employee holds towards the employer. This break has resulted in participants’ loss of trust, control, and confidence, while heightening fear and ambiguity. Participants suggested that these feelings led to dissatisfaction in their teaching profession.

**Common Themes from JDS and Perceptual Data**

This study’s findings reflect common themes between Hackman and Oldham’s Job Diagnostic Survey participant findings and perceptual data provided by teachers in focus groups and interviews. The most prevalent theme from both quantitative and qualitative segments is the importance of social satisfaction and professional growth. Findings from the JDS data revealed that participants identify social satisfaction and growth satisfaction as their top two areas of job satisfaction. Findings from interviews
and focus groups enhanced this information by providing specific examples of how these two areas lead to teacher professional job satisfaction. Participants cited examples of collaboratively planning for instruction, forming teacher learning groups, and utilizing different strengths to assist others in their professional growth. Most participants stated that colleagues strengthen their professional capacity as educators, which enabled them to grow professionally to better serve students.

The second prevalent theme mirrored in both the JDS and qualitative findings reflects the influence of task significance and self-efficacy on participants’ job satisfaction. Participants’ identification of the significance of their role, involving the multitude of skills and talents needed to perform within that role, served as a top area of job satisfaction for participants. Teachers described feelings of self-worth when fulfilling teaching responsibilities and contributing to the vision of the organization. Participants expressed feelings of job satisfaction when students, parents, and administrators share their appreciation for the work teachers accomplish.

**Implications for School Leaders and Teachers**

The implications of this study for school district leaders and teachers are important. When both groups are aware of the factors that influence job satisfaction and its impact on the work environment, then can better understand what is needed to implement change in the organization. The findings from this study cite administrative leadership as an important influence in teachers’ professional work, teaching colleagues as a strong support network, strong teacher commitment to the academic success of their students, and a belief that the teaching role has a high level of significance as key factors that influence job satisfaction in the educational environment. These factors, when
operationalized, can transform the implementation of change initiatives and influence the job satisfaction of educators.

Accountability has taken an aggressive turn in public education (Meister, 2010). The pressure for large-scale reform stresses all organizational members. For example, findings from this study indicate that teachers feel an imbalance and loss of trust in leadership and the organization. Participants described how educational mandates have led to drastic changes in workplace obligations. They shared feelings of being cheated by their building leader, defeat due to administrative intimidation, and a lack of instructional leadership when supporting teachers through change initiatives. Galford and Drapeau (2003) stated that often the damage is not a result of the incident itself but of how it is handled internally. In times of crisis, leaders quickly become distracted by external pressures; therefore they do not address the internal crisis with care and attention. This leaves employees feeling unsafe and quick to find reasons why they can’t trust their leader.

Findings in this study suggested that participants lost trust in their leaders and organization. District and building leaders must understand that trust is the glue that holds the organization together. Kouzes and Posner (2003) stated that trust is at the heart of collaboration; without it, leaders cannot lead, and consequently, things cannot get done. When trust is badly damaged, a leader’s only choice is to take strategic steps to rebuild it within the organization. First and foremost, leaders must live by the ethical values that they communicate (Maxwell, 2007). Instead of talking about ethical values, leaders must demonstrate these values in personal and professional conduct. A clear and consistent set of values must be shared and modeled for employees. Setting an example
is the most powerful act leaders can do; they must model the highest level of integrity and professionalism for employees. In addition, trust is rebuilt through open and honest conversation. Instead of withdrawing from the challenges, effective leaders are physically and emotionally accessible to employees (Galford & Drapeau, 2003). They create a culture of trust and compassion by listening to employees and showing that they care. A leader must exhibit competence, connection, and character to make trust possible.

**Redefined Roles for Superintendents and Principals**

The role of the superintendent and principal in establishing successful models of collaboration is another important implication of this study. Findings in this study reveal that social satisfaction and collaboration with colleagues led to educator job satisfaction. School district leaders must understand that increasing the skills and knowledge of individual teachers is not enough to foster and sustain school improvement (Klassen & Anderson, 2009). Instead, they should focus on increasing collective capacity of the organization by building work teams throughout the organization. French and Bell (1999) stated that much of the organization’s work is accomplished directly or indirectly through teams. Building collective capacity requires more than simply sending teachers off to isolated workshops. It involves job embedded learning through the daily habit of educators working together. A carefully designed approach to implementing change in a social setting helps educators accomplish the goals of the organization rather than individuals pursuing their personal interests and agendas.

Administrators should begin by focusing on the systematic development of the art of collaboration, through a series of problem-solving and decision-making exercises
designed to lay out the principles of collaboration (Wriston, 2007). They must make strategic decisions to build effective organizational structures to best meet the mission and goals of the school. Through internal core learning groups within the school or more broad external learning communities, teachers can provide support to assist each other through the change process. Fullan (1991) stated that teachers need help in the beginning stages of a change initiative so they do not revert back to old ways of knowing and doing. A learning community that fosters true collaboration aligned to the mission and goals of the organization can successfully work through the process of implementing change.

Another finding from the present study indicates that teachers perceive that their job has a high level of significance. As schools continue to be pressured with the implementation of educational change initiatives, teachers remain at the forefront of making the student success happen. Superintendents and principals must recognize the many talents of educators and encourage them through the change process. Caring lies at the heart of leadership; leaders who do not show others that they care will have constituents who will not value what their leader says or knows (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). As this study indicates, participants identified task significance as the strongest core job dimension. They felt that their job had an extremely high degree of impact on the lives and work of other people. School leaders must commend and recognize teachers for achieving the values and goals of the organization. This leadership practice provides courage, inspiring their own ability to deliver, even when the pressure is on (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Further, it expands awareness of their value in the organization, therefore establishing a sense of connectedness. A sense of connection between district leaders and teachers matters. School leaders must encourage the efforts
of teachers; this builds a connection that signals the message that everyone is in it together.

Findings from this study also have implications for teachers. As the number of educational initiatives increases, educator time, resources, and emotional energy are constant. Teachers can no longer take a passive stance to educational mandates. They must hijack leadership opportunities to help each other through the educational change process. Teachers command their path and mindset towards student learning. They must engage and participate in collaborative professional learning groups to assist in the change implementation process. Further, teachers must adopt a growth mindset that allows them to embrace challenges, persist through setbacks, and value their effort as a path to student success. Educational change is a journey that requires collaboration between leaders and teachers throughout the change process.

Limitations of the Study

Although I attempted to capture an objective reality of factors that increase educators’ job satisfaction, I recognize that limitations may impact the readers’ perception of the study’s validity. Upon initial consideration of this study’s limitations, I saw my role as the human instrument as a potential limitation. In fact, Merriam (2009) stated that when a human acts as a data collection instrument, the researcher’s bias and ethics could affect the study’s results. Any unintentional bias can affect the overall results and generalizability of the study. Upon further reflection, putting in place a tight qualitative methodology, the human as the instrument becomes a strength in making sense of the experiences of others. A unique vantage point of the researcher in a
qualitative study personalizes the data collection and analysis, and rich description characterizes the end product.

My role as an administrator in the participating organization served as one of the study’s limitations. The supervisory power relationship of my administrative role may have hindered the participants’ responses. Potential participants whom I had a direct supervisory position over were excluded to mitigate that possibility. However, my role as an administrator who worked closely with the participants’ direct supervisors could have had an unintended negative impact on participants’ responses. My experience and tenure as an educator within the participating organization also serves as a limitation of the study. As an unintended consequence, my experiences may have influenced my objectivity as a researcher. To minimize my bias as a researcher, I journaled my thoughts and feelings of educational change in order to identify the bias I brought to the study. Further, I approached the study with an interpretive lens, focusing my research on understanding and interpreting the experiences of teachers in a changing educational environment.

The third limitation of the study resulted from the small sample size and lack of demographic diversity. The sample consisted of 26 teachers who completed the questionnaire along with 10 teachers who participated in interviews and focus groups. All teachers were employed in one school district. Further, the study lacked gender and ethnic diversity: 95% of the participants were female and only Caucasian teachers worked in the study’s setting. The lack of diversity combined with the small sample size serve as limitations in generalizing the study’s findings to the general population.
Recommendations for Future Research

Although a significant amount of research exists on factors that influence job satisfaction, further research related to job satisfaction in a changing educational environment is needed. Through expansion of this research, administrators and policymakers could better leverage this information to establish policy and educational initiatives. The implementation of policy and change initiatives has an important impact on student learning, which is a common goal of all stakeholders.

In order to continue research on this topic, I suggest the following. First, the participant sample should be expanded to include a more diverse group of teachers in order to enhance the generalizability of the study. Second, I suggest expanding the administration of the JDS to larger sample groups of teachers to provide more specific information related to gender differences, educational setting, or years of teaching experience. Third, future researchers should explore the following questions:

1. Is there a relationship between years of teaching experience and degree of job satisfaction?
2. Do factors that influence job satisfaction of educators that teach in a state-tested subject area differ from factors that influence the job satisfaction of educators that teach in a non-tested subject area?
3. Does a school’s socio-economic diversity influence the job satisfaction of teachers?

My fourth recommendation is based on the following: in the qualitative segment of this study, seven teachers cited the influence of administrative leadership as a factor that influences job satisfaction. Therefore, I recommend further exploration of the
relationship between administrative leadership and teacher receptivity to change initiatives to help clarify how teachers respond to school change. Quantitative data that explore participants’ responses to various leadership styles could be collected to identify effective leadership practices that promote job satisfaction in a turbulent educational environment. Further, a phenomenological study that analyzes the lived experiences of teachers and their response to administration with varied leadership styles could be explored to learn administrative practices that promote successful school change.

A final recommendation for future research is a case study that follows a small group of educators who experience change within their teaching profession. Research pertinent to the implementation of instructional practices or educational programs and its impact on student learning is easily accessible. However, a key puzzle piece in educational change involves teachers. An in-depth case study that puts a human face on the impact of educational changes on teachers is needed. The voice of teachers is missing and an in-depth story of the influence of educational changes on their job satisfaction must be shared.

**Conclusion**

Concern over the quality of public education in the United States is long-standing and only continues to intensify. However, the creation and attempted implementation of drastic educational reform, along with unfunded mandates, is not an appropriate response to improving the quality of public education. Lawmakers should use caution when establishing policy and mandates they expect educators to implement. The findings in this study should be considered by lawmakers and administrators as they highlight important considerations for educational policy and practice in schools. Teachers need
support for their commitment, skills, and passion as they grapple with the demands set forth by governmental and educational policy. School leaders play a critical role in influencing teacher job satisfaction as they attempt to enhance student learning in a challenging educational environment. Effective support that provides instructional leadership, enhances meaningful collaboration with colleagues, and promotes active participation in professional learning opportunities are needed to enhance teacher job satisfaction.

Above all, student learning serves as a common goal among all stakeholders. Because of this, researchers, policymakers, administrators, teachers, and parents should all advocate for the best way to positively impact student achievement. The role of the teacher is instrumental and has the largest effect on this goal; therefore teacher job satisfaction should be taken seriously. This study has provided important insights that have far reaching implications. It takes a strong community of invested stakeholders to positively impact student learning. It is my hope that this study has provided ways to help reach the ultimate goal of student learning.
References


Hershberg, T., & Robertson-Kraft, C. (2010). Maximizing the opportunity provided by 'race to the top'. *Perspectives On Urban Education, 7*(1), 128-131.


APPENDIX A

HSRB APPROVAL
HSRB Approval

TO: Jamie Fund and Dr. Constance Savage
FROM: Carol Reece, HSRB Chair
DATE: April 22, 2014
SUBJECT: Human Subjects Review Board Approval
PROJECT TITLE: Job Satisfaction in a Changing Educational Environment
HSRB APPROVAL CODE: 04-15-14-#096

The Human Subjects Review Board has approved the research proposal you submitted. You may proceed with the project.

The primary function of the HSRB is to ensure protection of human research subjects. As a result of this mandate, we ask that you pay close attention to the fundamental ethical principles of autonomy, justice, and beneficence when establishing your research proposal. These ethical principles pertain specifically to the issues of informed consent, fair selection of subjects, and risk/benefit considerations.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Carol Reece, DNP, APRN-CFNP
Phone: 419-521-6877
E-mail: creece1@ashland.edu
APPENDIX B

PERMISSION TO USE
PERMISSION TO USE

The Job Diagnostic Survey is a non-copyrighted instrument that can be used without the permission of the authors (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). The authors specifically state, “The JDS is not copyrighted and therefore may be used without the authors’ permission. However, prior to using the JDS, one should carefully read the users’ guide for administering and interpreting the instrument” (p. 275).

APPENDIX C

JOB DIAGNOSTIC SURVEY – SHORT FORM
JOB DIAGNOSTIC SURVEY - SHORT FORM

This questionnaire was developed as part of a Yale University study of jobs and how people react to them. The questionnaire helps to determine how jobs can be better designed, by obtaining information about how people react to different kinds of jobs.

On the following pages, you will find several different kinds of questions about your job. Specific instructions are given at the start of each section. Please read them carefully. It should take no more than 10 minutes to complete the entire questionnaire. Please move through it quickly.

The questions are designed to obtain your perceptions of your job and your reactions to it.

There are no “trick” questions. Your individual answers will be kept completely confidential. Please answer each item as honestly and frankly as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation.
SECTION ONE

1. To what extent does your job require you to work closely with other people (either clients, or people in related jobs in your organization)?

1-----------------2-----------------3-----------------4-----------------5-----------------6-----------------7

Very little: dealing with other people is not at all necessary in doing the job.

Moderately: Some dealing with others is necessary.

Very much: dealing with other people is an absolute essential and crucial part of the job.

2. How much autonomy is there in your job? That is, to what extent does your job permit you to decide on your own how to go about doing the work?

1-----------------2-----------------3-----------------4-----------------5-----------------6-----------------7

Very little: the job gives me almost no personal "say" about how and when the work is done.

Moderate autonomy: many things standardized and not under my control, but I can make some decisions about the work.

Very much: the job gives me almost complete responsibility for deciding how and when the work is done.

3. To what extent does your job involve doing a "whole" and identifiable piece of work? That is, is the job a complete piece of work that has an obvious beginning and end? Or is it only a small part of the overall piece of work, which is finished by other people or by automatic machines?

1-----------------2-----------------3-----------------4-----------------5-----------------6-----------------7

My job is only a tiny part of the overall piece of work; the results of my activities cannot be seen in the final product or service.

My job is a moderate-sized "chunk" of the overall piece of work; my own contribution can be seen in the final outcome.

My job involves doing the whole piece of work, from start to finish: the results of my activities are easily seen in the final product or service.

4. How much variety is there in your job? That is, to what extent does the job require you to do many different things at work, using a variety of your skills and talents?

1-----------------2-----------------3-----------------4-----------------5-----------------6-----------------7

Very little; the job requires me to do the same routine things over and over again.

Moderate variety.

Very much: the job requires me to do many different things using a number of different skills and talents.
5. In general, how significant or important is your job? That is, are the results of your work likely to significantly affect the lives or well-being of other people?

1-2-3-4-5-6-7
Not very significant: The outcomes of my work are not likely to have important effects on other people.

Moderately significant:

Highly significant: the outcomes of my work can affect other people in very important ways.

6. To what extent do managers and co-workers let you know how well you are doing your job?

1-2-3-4-5-6-7
Very little: people almost never let me know how well I am doing.

Moderate: sometimes people may give me “feedback;” other times they may not.

Very much: managers or co-workers provide me with almost constant “feedback” about how well I am doing.

7. To what extent does doing the job itself provide you with information about your work performance? That is, does the actual work itself provide clues about how well you are doing--aside from any “feedback” co-workers or supervisors my provide?

1-2-3-4-5-6-7
Very little: the job itself is set up so I could work forever without finding out how well I am doing.

Moderately: sometimes doing the job provides “feedback” to me; sometimes it does not.

Very much: the job is set up so that I get almost constant “feedback” as I work about how well I am doing.
SECTION TWO

Listed below are a number of statements which could be used to describe a job.

You are to indicate whether each statement is an accurate or inaccurate description of your job.

Once again, please try to be as objective as you can in deciding how accurately each statement describes your job—regardless of whether you like or dislike your job.

Write a number in the blank beside each statement, based on the following scale:

How accurate is the statement in describing your job?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Very Inaccurate Mostly Slightly Uncertain Slightly Mostly Very Inaccurate

1. The job requires me to use a number of complex or high-level skills.

2. The job requires a lot of cooperative work with other people.

3. The job is arranged so that I do not have the chance to do an entire piece of work from beginning to end.

4. Just doing the work required by the job provides many chances for me to figure out how well I am doing.

5. The job is quite simple and repetitive.

6. The job can be done adequately by a person working alone—without talking or checking with other people.

7. The supervisors and co-workers on this job almost never give me any “feedback” about how well I am doing in my work.

8. This job is one where a lot of other people can be affected by how well the work gets done.

9. The job denies me any chance to use my personal initiative or judgment in carrying out the work.

10. Supervisors often let me know how well they think I’m performing the job.

11. The job provides me the chance to completely finish the pieces of work I begin.

12. The job itself provides very few clues about whether or not I am performing well.

13. The job gives me considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do the work.

14. The job itself is not very significant or important in the broader scheme of things.
SECTION THREE

Listed below are a number of characteristics which could be present on any job. People differ about how much they would like to have each one present in their own jobs. We are interested in learning how much you personally would like to have each one present in your job.

Using the scale below, please indicate the degree to which you would like to have each characteristic present in your job.

Note: The numbers on this scale are different from those used in previous scales.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Would like having  | Would like  | Would like  
this only a moderate having this this extremely 
amount (or less) much

___ 1. High respect and fair treatment from my supervisor.

___ 2. Stimulating and challenging work.

___ 3. Chances to exercise independent thought and action in my job.

___ 4. Great job security.

___ 5. Very friendly co-workers.

___ 6. Opportunities to learn new things from my work.

___ 7. High salary and good fringe benefits.

___ 8. Opportunities to be creative and imaginative in my work.

___ 9. Quick promotions.

___ 10. Opportunities for personal growth and development in my job.

___ 11. A sense of worthwhile accomplishment in my work.
Now please indicate how satisfied you are with each aspect of your job listed below. Once again, write the appropriate number in the blank beside each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How satisfied are you with this aspect of your job?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Extremely Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Slightly Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Slightly Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Extremely Satisfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The amount of job security I have.
2. The amount of pay and fringe benefits I receive.
3. The amount of personal growth and development I get in doing my job.
4. The people I talk to and work with on my job.
5. The degree of respect and fair treatment I receive from my direct supervisor.
6. The feeling of worthwhile accomplishment I get from doing my job.
7. The chance to get to know other people while on the job.
8. The amount of support and guidance I receive from my direct supervisor.
9. The degree to which I am fairly paid for what I contribute to this organization.
10. The amount of independent thought and action I can exercise in my job.
11. How secure things look for me in the future in this organization.
12. The chance to help other people while at work.
13. The amount of challenge in my job.
14. The overall quality of the supervision I receive in my work.
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Interview Protocol

Prior to the Interview:

- Introduction – Explanation of myself and purpose of study.
- Interview – Brief summary of interview procedures. Remind participant that audio device will be used to record dialogue.
- Confidentiality – Remind participant that all information will remain anonymous and confidential; pseudonyms will be used and participant will never be identified.
- Results – Inform participant that findings will be presented in researcher’s dissertation and direct quotes from participant may be used.

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.
   - How long have you been a teacher?
   - What subjects have you taught?
   - What grade levels have you taught?
   - How many schools/districts have you taught in?

2. When you hear the phrase “job satisfaction” what comes to mind?
   - How do you describe job satisfaction?
   - What do you think or feel about it?

3. Broadly speaking, what influences your satisfaction with your job?

4. When it comes to working in a school environment, what factors would increase your sense of job satisfaction?
   - Can you share a story or experience with me?

5. Comparatively speaking, how would you view or describe your job now in 2014 compared to your job five years ago?

6. How have educational changes (such as the new Common Core Learning Standards, PARCC assessment system, and Ohio Teacher Evaluation System) impacted your work life?
   - Can you share an example with me?

7. Can you share with me where you fell on the OTES rating scale for Teacher Performance Standards and Student Growth Measures?

Following the Interview:

- Thank you – Express appreciation to participant for involvement in the study.
APPENDIX E

PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
Job Satisfaction in a Changing Educational Environment

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
Jamie Pund, a doctoral candidate in Ashland University’s Leadership Studies Program, is conducting a research study on educator job satisfaction in a changing educational environment. You are being asked to participate in this study.

B. PROCEDURES
If you agree to be in the study, the following will occur:
1. You will receive an invitation to complete a survey. This invitation will be delivered through your school district email. You will be given a week to complete the survey.
2. A time will be arranged for a 30-45 minute individual, face-to-face interview. The interview will be audiotaped.
3. Pseudonyms will be used on data and additionally, all identifying information will be removed or changed to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of all subjects.

C. RISKS/DISCOMFORTS
1. Some of the questions might be difficult to answer, however it is important to answer all questions honestly and to the best of ability.
2. Participation in this research will involve no loss of privacy and all records will be handled confidentially.

D. BENEFITS AND USES OF DATA
This study provides an opportunity for schools to learn about factors that influence educator job satisfaction. Jamie Pund will use the information for her doctoral dissertation at Ashland University. No publication or presentation of the study’s results will contain any identification of the individuals who participated in the study.

E. COSTS/PAYMENT
Your participation in this study will result in no cost to you. Additionally, you will receive no payment for your participation in this study and you will not lose anything if you do not participate in this study.

F. QUESTIONS
You have the opportunity to ask Jamie Pund any questions about this study. Please contact Jamie Pund via email at jpund@ashland.edu. You may also contact the chair of this dissertation: Dr. Constance Savage at csavage@ashland.edu

The Ashland University Human Subjects Review Board regulates research ethics at Ashland University. If you have concerns, contact Carol Reece, Chair, phone: (419) 521-6877, or e-mail: creece1@ashland.edu
G. CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You are free to decline to participate in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. Your decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on the present or future status of your employment.

If you agree to participate, please sign below.

__________________________________________  ________________________
Date                                               Signature of Participant
APPENDIX F

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH LETTER
Permission to Conduct Research Letter

SCHOOL DISTRICT CONSENT FORM
Job Satisfaction in a Changing Educational Environment

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND
Jamie Pund, a doctoral candidate in Ashland University’s Leadership Studies Program, is conducting a research study on educator job satisfaction in a changing educational environment. I am requesting your permission for teachers employed within your school district to participate in the research study described below.

B. PROCEDURES
If teachers agree to be in the study, the following will occur:
1. Teachers will receive an invitation to complete a survey. This invitation will be delivered through school email. Participants will be given a week to complete the survey.
2. A time will be arranged for a 30-45 minute individual, face-to-face interview. The interview will be audiotaped.
3. Pseudonyms will be used on data and additionally, all identifying information will be removed or changed to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of all subjects.

C. RISKS/DISCOMFORTS
1. Some of the questions might be difficult to answer, however it is important for participants to answer all questions honestly and to the best of one’s ability.
2. Participation in this research will involve no loss of privacy and all records will be handled confidentially.

D. BENEFITS AND USES OF DATA
This study provides an opportunity for school leaders to learn about factors that influence teacher job satisfaction in a changing educational environment. Jamie Pund will use the information for her doctoral dissertation at Ashland University. No publication or presentation of the study’s results will contain any identification of individuals who participated in the study.

E. COSTS/PAYMENT
Participation in this study will result in no cost to participants. Additionally, participants will receive no payment for participation in this study and will not lose anything if they do not participate in this study or opt out of the study once it has commenced.

F. QUESTIONS
You have the opportunity to ask Jamie Pund any questions about this study. Please contact Jamie Pund via email at jpund@ashland.edu if you have questions or concerns. You may also contact the chair of this dissertation: Dr. Constance Savage at csavage@ashland.edu
The Ashland University Human Subjects Review Board regulates research ethics at Ashland University. If you have concerns, contact Carol Reece, Chair, phone: (419) 521-6877, or e-mail: creece1@ashland.edu

G. CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.
PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. Participants are free to decline to participate in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. The decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on the present or future status of employment at Jonathan Alder Schools.
If you agree to participate, please sign below.

____________________  ________________________________________________
Date                                                            Signature of Superintendent
APPENDIX G

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL
September 14, 2014

Dear Participant,

I am writing this letter to request your participation in a research study that I am conducting regarding job satisfaction in a changing educational environment. The study is being conducted by myself, with the guidance of Dr. Constance Savage, through the Leadership Studies Department at Ashland University. The major research questions for this study will be the following:

1. What factors influence job satisfaction amongst teachers?
2. How does the changing educational environment influence the degree of satisfaction teachers have with their job?

Consent to participate in this research study is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. There are no risks to you related to the research study. The study will consist of 8-12 interview questions. All information obtained through this study will remain confidential. Results of this study may be published but will not include personal information that could identify participants.

Questions related to the research study should be directed to Jamie Pund, at the phone number or email listed below. Questions related to the study or research subjects’ rights may also be addressed to the dissertation chair, Dr. Constance Savage.

Sincerely,

Jamie Pund
614.209.7728
jpund@ashland.edu