"THREE-SKILL" OF EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATORS AND THEIR COMFORT LEVEL IN THE CONDUCT OF THE PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to determine if there were significant relationships between effective administrator skills of K-12 public school administrators charged with the conduct of the performance evaluations of school psychologists, their comfort level, and their education and experience. The theoretical framework of Katz’s (1955) Three-Skill of Effective Administrators, and the expansion of that model toward performance evaluation conceptualized by Stronge (1991) were used to examine the strength of the aforementioned relationships. The three effective administrator skill areas for both Katz (1955) and Stronge (1991) included the following: (1) Technical Skill, (2) Human Skill, and (3) Conceptual Skill. A 42-item survey was e-mailed using SurveyMonkey.com to K-12 Michigan public school special education contact personnel of the public school districts and county intermediate school districts in the state of Michigan. Using linear regression analysis, comfort level and some experience variables predicted human skill and conceptual skill. The results of this study revealed administrators having high human and conceptual skills, but lower technical skill, suggesting limited understanding of school psychologists’ role and function. Increasing school leaders’ knowledge and understanding of the broader role and function of school psychologists may improve learning opportunities for all. Finally, establishing the validity, reliability, and utility, of performance evaluation instruments will help to more accurately evaluate and utilize school psychological services in K-12 public education.
This work is dedicated to my loving wife, Dr. Pamela June Dixon Thomas, and our children,

Jillian, Densu, and Savannah…

I love you.
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Background and Statement of the Problem

Performance appraisal research concerning school psychologists is limited (Crespi, Fischetti, and Lopez, 1998; Fischetti and Crespi, 1999; Kruger, 1987; Williams and Williams, 1990). Educational research concerning performance appraisal of teachers has been plentiful, while studies concerning performance appraisal of school support and administrative personnel have been relatively few (McAdams and Barilla, 2003). School psychologists have been recognized as administrative personnel (D. Franklin, personal communication, June 1, 2005; B. Kelly, personal communication, July 1, 1993). In this context then, it is the intent of this dissertation to further add to the limited body of knowledge regarding the performance appraisal of school psychologists. This dissertation will also attempt to help the reader understand the impact of how narrowly conducted performance appraisals of certain roles and functions of school psychologists might limit all that school psychologists could do to help children better learn. Kruger (1987) reported that when performance appraisals do not occur in a manner that promotes fairness in understanding school psychologists’ role and function, public opinion and funding support for school psychologists might seriously be jeopardized. This may particularly hold true for those who conduct school psychologists’ performance appraisals in the context of ever changing special education legislation and policy initiatives. It is, therefore, important to understand that the performance appraisals of staff in organizations such as K-12 public schools measure and improve the work performance of all of its employees (Waldman, Bass, and Einstein, 1987). Dobbins, Cardy, Facteau, and Miller (1993) discussed how performance appraisals focused solely on the characteristics of the appraised. The authors indicate that more recently, performance appraisals must begin to take into consideration the situational constraints,
such as rater and rating accuracy, which may account for ratees’ poor performance in the organization (Dobbins, et al., 1993; Hanges and Schneider, 1990).

_the importance of performance appraisal for the school psychologist_

The nature of school psychologists’ role and function and the relationship to performance appraisal by those who evaluate them are important, complex, and well documented (Cummings, 1996; Curtis, Chesno-Grier, and Hunley, 2002; Hagemeyer, Bischoff, Jacobs, and Osmon, 1998; Hosp and Reschly, 2002; Hyman and Kaplinski, 1994; Leung, Kampwirth, DuMond, Lewis-Mills, and Gonzales, 2001; Proctor and Steadman, 2003; Reschly, 2000; Stronge and Tucker, 1999; Sullivan and Leary, 1991; Watkins, Crosby, and Pearson, 2001). Historically, school psychologists’ primary role and function has been that of administering psychoeducational evaluations, report writing, and attending eligibility meetings for special education services. Hagemeyer et al. (1998) found this to be the case when they suggested school psychologists as having five major role functions, where psychoeducational assessment was at the top of this list. Assessment was followed by consultation, intervention/counseling, research and evaluation, and administration. The authors reported that role confusion regarding school psychologists’ function might then exist for teachers and principals due to their lack of knowledge of the duties, responsibilities, training, and skills of a school psychologist.

As in other professions, performance appraisal occurs based on the desire to maintain sufficient levels of productivity in order to promote the goals of the organization. Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (1996) recognized this when the authors claimed that performance evaluation occurs via a critical examination of the specific responsibilities of the job being performed. The authors added that in order to appreciate the responsibilities of the job being
performed, the evaluator should have an understanding of the organizational context in which the job occurs (Hersey et al., 1996). Herein lays the problem.

A lack of clarity concerning the role and function of school psychologists clearly exists (Crespi and Fischetti, 1997; Crespi et al., 1998; Fischetti and Crespi, 1999; Norton and Perlin, 1989). This not only can create disagreement between the appraiser and the appraised in terms of expectations and outcomes concerning actual job performance skills, but also may prevent continued professional growth in the broad range of services school psychologists bring in promoting educational achievement and emotional health to K-12 students (Fischetti and Crespi, 1999). The varying perceptions that appraisers have regarding school psychologists’ role and function help to facilitate an inaccurate perception by teachers and administrators, and limit the provision of more comprehensive services to children. Watkins et al. (2001) illustrated this in a study of 522 school staff who were surveyed concerning the importance of school psychological services. The authors found that although school psychologists desired a more involved role outside the role and function of psycho-educational testing, surveys results of teachers and administrators found that they wanted school psychologists to maintain this role. In another study, Peterson, Waldron, and Paulson (1998) examined teachers’ reliance on school psychologists for instructional support. Sixty-four certified teachers completed a survey, and the results indicated a significant number of teachers desiring support from school psychologists as first psychological examiners, and then problem-solvers. The results of these two studies help to sustain the opinion of teachers that school psychologists’ role and function is one primarily committed to diagnosis of educational learning disorders. This could have negative implications for how the role and function of school psychologists is perceived. Not only by those who enlist the services of school psychologists, but also by those who appraise their performance as well.
In an educational environment where teachers and administrators view the role and function of school psychologists as psychological testers of children (Peterson, et al., 1998), there leaves little room for the perception and utilization of school psychologists’ education and training in the other areas of psychoeducational service provision. School psychologists’ performance appraisals should take into consideration roles and functions other than the psychological testing of K-12 public school students. This, unfortunately, has not been the case. More often than not, the desire of teachers and administrators is for the school psychologist to determine, through psychological and educational testing, and before problem-solving models of intervention designed to differentiate whether or not suspected learning problems are of a psychoeducational nature or whether they are environmentally caused, if students have some special educational disability. This tendency of teachers’ and administrators’ attempt to problem-solve students’ poor school performance in this way goes undetected in the performance appraisal of school psychologists. An illustration of this can be seen in a study conducted by Watkins et al. (2001), where they revealed how teachers’ and administrators’ perceptions of school psychologists’ role and function can affect the perception of those who conduct their performance appraisals. The authors found school psychology as being dominated by assessment activity, alluding to established teacher and administrator perceptions of role and function of school psychologists. In the same study, Watkins et al. (2001) also indicated that although their research found that practicing school psychologists desired to provide a variety of school psychological services to K-12 students, it would be difficult to accomplish. The authors understood this to be primarily due to teachers’ and administrators’ desire for a continuous and intense frequency of psychoeducational assessment activities, and their own desire for a wide range of other psychoeducational services by school psychologists (Watkins et al., 2001).
Within the past several decades school psychologists have slowly begun to emerge from a role primarily committed to psychoeducational testing to one incorporating aspects of school and guidance counselor, special education administrator, and school-building administrator; positions that require the demonstration of leadership and management skills in the implementation education policy (Snapp, n.d.). This transition is not and has not been easy. It requires what a professor of school psychology once stated as, “…the ability to define one’s role and function as a school psychologist in the schools” (J. Zake, personal communication, September 30, 1991). Nonetheless, school psychologists’ role and function in that regard, have entailed complex administrative issues focusing on community change within schools, resistance to change, and personnel issues (Snapp, n.d.). Today, those issues of change could be viewed in light of the crises in the early identification of reading difficulties in students, large student-teacher classroom ratios, and a paradigm shift in how special education students will be identified. School psychologists’ role and function have come to incorporate a global focus on a variety of roles and functions throughout the educational process (Chafouleas, Clonan, and Vanauken, 2002; Cummings, 1996; Reschly, 2000; Rosenfield and Nelson, 1995).

The Role and Function of the School Psychologist

The role and function of the school psychologist has been one primarily responsible for the identification of students with disabilities from those without disabilities (Fagan, 2002; Hosp and Reschly, 2002; Peterson, Waldron, and Paulson, 1998; Reschly and Ysseldyke, 2002). Hyman and Kaplinksi (1994) indicated that the role of school psychologists was primarily that of assessment and diagnosis, the result of legislative mandates for the employment of school psychologists in public schools. Fagan and Wise (2000) reported similar role and function of school psychologists indicating that in the bureaucracy of education, school psychologists have
traditionally served three basic functions: First as a “sorter” of children identifying students eligible for special education services by assessment and diagnosis; second, as a “repairer” of children engaged in helping students through individual and group interventions, including that of the role of an classroom consultant; and third, as “engineer” acting as a systems change agent working with the overall delivery schemes of the school district concerning general and special education services to K-12 students.

Requests for psychoeducational testing have frequently been the primary request for assistance by school staff when students demonstrate a learning difficulty. Usually what occurs at that point is that teachers and building administrators relay their concern to parents whose only real request is to understand what they and/or the school can do to help their child better achieve in school. Too often, the assistance that parents and teachers look for takes the direction toward psychoeducational evaluation to determine if there is the presence of a special education disability. This line of problem-solving students’ low achievement by teachers and other school staff appears to translate to evaluation for special education services. Watkins et al. (2001) thought that the role and function of school psychologists has unfortunately concerned itself primarily with the assessment of children to determine eligibility for special education services, instead of systematically analyzing the learning environment at home and school to which the child is functioning in order to problem-solve children’s learning problems.

What school psychologists do, psychoeducational testing and report writing, has remained consistent; however, eligibility criteria for special education services vary from state to state (Hosp and Reschly, 2002). Therefore, having an impact on the amount of problem-solving time spent in intervention assistance team meetings, the type of psychoeducational assessment activities expected of school psychologist, and finally, how teachers and building-level principals
view school psychologists’ role and function interfaced between the activities of assessment and problem-solving. Hosp and Reschly (2002) surveyed 1,056 practicing school psychologists representing all nine U.S. Census regions. The authors found consistent patterns in school psychologists’ role and function concerning the eligibility activities of assessment, Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings, and other conferences focusing on differentiated learning for students with disabilities. This not only is meaningful in terms of the day-to-day activities of the school psychologist, but also has implications for the variance in measurement in how the performance of school psychologists is appraised.

Paradigm Shifting: Role and Function of the School Psychologist for the 21st Century

In the evolution of school psychological practice, school psychologists’ role and function has for a number of years attempted to provide more inclusive practices within the context of K-12 public education. According to some authors (Peterson et al., 1998; Ronas, Berkson, and Goh, 2001), school psychologists desire to be involved in inclusive practices designed to assist both students with and without disabilities. Because of school psychologists’ extensive training, which includes a year-long internship, and the requirement of, at the education specialist degree level, a change-agency project, and at the doctoral level, a dissertation, school psychologists are in an ideal position to act as change-agents (R. Wendt, personal communication, December 1, 1989). For example, school psychologists act as consultants to teachers, assist in the modification of curriculum for students being assisted by intervention assistance teams, and conduct in-service trainings in specialty areas of psychoeducational services and general special education programming (NASP, 2000). These varied roles help in promoting system-wide change and the evaluation of program effectiveness in K-12 public education (Peterson et al., 1998; Ronas, et al, 2001; Strein, Hoagwood, and Kimberly, 2003). This has been the position
statement and a longstanding attempt by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) to shift the conceptualization of school psychology from a field which the role and function has historically been identification and the categorization of K-12 students into special education classes, to that of delivering comprehensive psychoeducational services to children and their families (Reschly and Ysseldyke, 2002). These comprehensive psychoeducational services would include prevention strategies to improve learning, diagnosis and treatment of emotional problems, and utilizing assessment information as a means to differentiating student instruction (Harrison et al., 2003; Fagan, 2002; Hyman and Kaplinski, 1994). Fagan (2002) found school psychologists’ role and function in a comprehensive psychoeducational delivery of services as including early childhood assessment, child abuse treatment, crisis intervention, vocational and career development, reading disabilities, curriculum-based assessment, gifted programming, and secondary-postsecondary transitioning.

Fagan and Wise (2000) discussed issues relevant to the changing role and function of school psychologists. The authors maintained that the practice of school psychology includes a culmination of educational practice orientations in order to provide sound, utilitarian psychoeducational services in K-12 public schools. These activities include traditional and nontraditional psychoeducational assessment, consultation, counseling and psychotherapy, development of educational interventions, family systems work, school systems’ change-agency, and those educational issues relevant to the local school community (Fagan and Wise, 2000).

Reschly and Ysseldyke (2002), in their overview of the transformation of school psychological services maintained that the paradigm for the provision of school psychological services had shifted. The authors reported that the shift in paradigm was one focused more on problem-solving as opposed to the traditional delivery of services historically accomplished by
determining eligibility for special education services through psycho-educational testing (Reschly and Ysseldyke, 2002). In the context of change, the authors maintained that the paradigm shift concerning school psychological service provision must begin to be thought of not solely in terms of a practice of standardized testing leading to special education services, but rather toward an evidence-based, intervention model which may practically help to increase K-12 academic achievement (Reschly and Ysseldyke, 2002).

Fairchild (1986) contended that in order for school psychology to continue to thrive in K-12 public education, there must be a willingness by school psychologists’ to be open to systemic changes in education meant to increase children’s academic achievement. The author noted how proactive steps by school psychologists, using their research skills and knowledge of program evaluation, could help to facilitate a changing educational system, while at the same time understanding the needs of the consumers of school psychological services, assessing how those services are delivered, and modifying role and function in order to better serve children in K-12 public education (Fairchild, 1986).

Unfortunately, given the variety of activities school psychologists often perform that might positively impact public school students, they continue to be perceived by school administrators and teachers as primarily that of a psychometrist, individually testing and diagnosing educational disabilities in K-12 students (Agresta, 2004; Hagemeier et al., 1998, Jacobs, and Osmon, 1998; Peterson, et al., 1998). Because of the limited perception of school psychologists’ assistive capacity to help increase the school performance of at-risk students, beyond special education identification, it may be plausible that those limited perceptions might influence school psychologists’ performance appraisals. This would be dependent on what aspects of school psychological service those performance appraisals are designed to measure.
Tziner and Murphy (1999) discussed the notion of attitudinal influences on performance appraisals. The authors indicated how oftentimes the assumptions of performance appraisals are based on the assumed norms of organizational behavior and organizational expectations that in turn was thought to impact rater perceptions of organizational goals and the means by which ratees might attain them (Tziner and Murphy, 1999).

**Purpose of the Study**

Conducting performance evaluations of professional support personnel (PSP) has historically been the responsibility of the administrative leadership within the K-12 public education (Helm, 1995; Stronge, 1990; Stronge and Helm, 1992). The building-level principals or the special education directors/supervisors are the administrators most often associated with conducting the performance evaluations of school psychologists, oftentimes untrained and limitedly educated with respect to what school psychologists do (Crespi and Fischetti, 1997; Crespi et al., 1998). Whether the focus on the performance evaluation of school psychologists is conducted by a principal or a special education director/supervisor, both of these administrators are typically limited, if not lacking, in an overall knowledge and understanding of the role and function of school psychologists (Crespi and Fischetti, 1997; Crespi et al., 1998).

In order to assist administrators to become more effective, Katz (1955) conceptualized the idea of a ‘three-skill’ model for effective administrative development. Katz (1955) believed that effective administrators were developed, as opposed to having some innate leadership trait. Stronge (1991) later expanded on Katz’s concept, and linked it to the development of effective performance evaluation systems and how administrators utilized those improved systems. Both Katz (1955) and Stronge (1991) based the three-skill model of effective administration of administrators and their tools of performance evaluation, respectively, on the following three
developable skills: technical, human, and conceptual. It is with this framework in mind that this study will attempt to gauge administrative practices of administrators/supervisors who conduct the performance appraisals of school psychologists.

The purpose of this study was to determine what the effective administrative qualities are of administrators/supervisors of school psychologists who conduct their performance appraisals. This study also assists to understand the level of comfort administrators/supervisors acknowledge that they have in conducting the performance evaluation of school psychologists’ role and function in K-12 public schools. Finally, this study attempted to understand the significance of administrative/supervisor education and career experience with respect to their effectiveness as an administrator/supervisor of school psychologists.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are the effective administrative skills of school leaders pertaining to the performance evaluation of school psychologists with respect to technical, human, and conceptual skill domains?
2. What is the comfort level of administrators/supervisors charged with the performance evaluation of school psychologists’ role and function in K-12 public schools?
3. What is the formal education and training of administrators/supervisors who conduct the performance evaluation of school psychologists?
4. Is there a significant difference in the effective administrative skills (i.e., technical, human, and conceptual skills) across levels of administrators’/supervisors’ comfort level in their conduct of the performance evaluation of school psychologists’?
5. Is there a significant difference in administrators’/supervisors’ comfort level in the conduct of the performance evaluation of school psychologists’ role and function across levels of education and experience?

6. What is the relationship between effective administrative skills of administrators/supervisors who conduct the performance appraisal of school psychologists across levels of education and experience?

Theoretical Framework

From a historical context, organizations have been perplexed as to selecting and training good administrators, with little or no agreement among leaders of companies and organizations as to what makes a good administrator (Katz, 1955, 1956). According to Katz (1955), much of this misunderstanding originated from a trait approach to leadership in organizations (Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson, 1996). Katz (1955) described the trait approach to administrative practices of the time as top executives’ efforts to identify particular leadership traits in the selection of the ideal executive (i.e., administrator). This study used the theoretical framework of Katz (1955), who conceptually pioneered a developmental model, instead of a trait-based model, for effective administrative skills.

Katz’s (1955, 1974) framework sought to understand a more basic fundamental question: What observable skills does an effective executive (i.e., administrator) demonstrate? Katz (1974) believed that organizations should be more concerned with what a person can do rather than what that person is (i.e., trait theory). The approach Katz (1955) subscribed to was one that suggests that effective administration is based on three developable skills; technical skills, human skills, and conceptual skills. Important to note is that Katz (1955) understood that it would be unrealistic to believe that those developable skills were not interrelated in some
aspects, but that there could be real utility in investigating each skill individually and in understanding each skill’s compositional make-up separate from each other.

Katz’s (1955, 1974) first developable skill of an effective administrator was the technical skill. Katz (1955, 1974) implied that the use of technical skills in the context of what effective administrators could develop was “an understanding of, and proficiency in, a specific kind of activity, particularly involving methods, processes, procedures, or techniques” (p. 91). Therefore, Katz (1955, 1974) discusses an effective administrator as possessing, or having the capability to develop a particular technical skill, or being capable of developing an understanding, if not possessing or able to develop the actual technical skill, of the processes, procedures, or techniques, of specific technical skill sets.

Human skill, the second developable administrative skill that Katz (1955, 1974) conceived, is used in terms of the “the executive’s ability to work effectively as a group member and to build cooperative effort within the team he leads” (Katz, 1974, p. 91). In other words, Katz (1955, 1974) stated that human skill is primarily concerned with administrators working with people. These people skills are demonstrated by how the administrator perceives and recognizes the perceptions of others, inclusive of superiors, equals, and subordinates, and in addition, understands how these perceptions may impact his/her behavior (Katz, 1955, 1974). As Katz (1955, 1974) suggested, an administrator with well developed human skills is aware and understands the impact of his or her own attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs about individuals and groups of people, and is able to understand the usefulness and limitation that accompanies those perceptions. According to Katz (1955, 1974), an administrator, by accepting perceptions of others that may be different from their own, can become skilled and thereby more effective in understanding their own words and behavior. As a result of that human skill development, an
administrator may become more skillful in communicating with others, in their context, the clarity of meaning and understanding of his or her administrative actions. Katz (1955, 1974) thought that in working with others, human skill must become a natural, continuous activity. This is particularly so when it is applied at critical and sensitive times of decision making, as well as during the day-in, day-out behavior of individuals that administrators work with.

The third developable skill of an effective administrator Katz (1955, 1974) focused on was that of conceptual skill. The author thought of conceptual skill as involving:

- the ability to see the enterprise as a whole; it includes recognizing how the various functions of organization depend on one another, and how changes in any one part affect all the others; and it extends to visualizing the relationship of the individual business to the industry, the community, and the political, social, and economic forces of the nation as a whole. Recognizing these relationships and perceiving the significant elements in any situation, the administrator should then be able to act in a way which advances the overall welfare of the total organization. (Katz, 1974, p. 93)

The author is presenting a case which suggests that the success of an administrator is dependent on the conceptual skill he/she has who makes decisions and who puts those decisions to action (Katz, 1955, 1974).

Katz (1955, 1974) stated the importance of conceptual skill in an organization’s overall success as dependent on executives’ ability to conceptualize and implement the organization’s policy decisions. The conceptual skill can unify and coordinate the people within organizations, and should be considered important in the administrative process. The effective coordination of the various aspects of the organization relies on conceptual skills of administrators, and has implications for the future direction and cultural tone of the organization (Katz, 1955, 1974).
the author conceived, attitudes of administrators can positively or negatively impact the organizational culture and character of the organization’s response to the implementation of organizational policies. This can then act as a catalyst in determining what the author described as the “corporate personality”, which for better or worse helps to distinguish organizations, one from another (Katz, 1974, p. 93).

Stronge (1991) expanded on Katz’s (1955, 1974) three-skill model of an effective administrator in part by describing not only performance evaluation systems in education developed according to Katz’s three-skill model, but also by describing how administrators may effectively use Katz’s model in conducting performance appraisals of K-12 educators and professional support personnel (PSP). According to Stronge (1991) performance evaluation was historically designed to reflect human performance. It therefore followed that the construction and utilization of such a performance evaluation system ought to closely mirror the attributes of effective human performance (Stronge, 1991) or what Katz (1955) described as the skills of an effective administrator.

Stronge (1991) describes the work of Katz’s (1955) framework of the skills of an effective administrator as the “foundation” for his article on the dynamics of effective performance evaluation systems in education. The purpose of Katz’s (1955) three-skill framework was to focus performance evaluation on observable skills that effective administrators demonstrated (Stronge, 1991). Stronge (1991) had particular interest in not only how effective the evaluation system measured what it purported to measure, but also on how administrators used the evaluation system to conduct performance evaluations. That interest also included the performance evaluation’s subsequent purpose and utility for those being appraised (Stronge, 1991).
With a long, enduring history of supervision by administrators based on the classical administrative principle of ‘unity of command’, also known as the ‘single-administrator/supervisor concept’ (Stronge, 1991), K-12 public schools have primarily operated to this day by that principle. In understanding the principle of unity of command, formal communications and evaluations within school organizations have occurred administratively in a top-down, linear chain of command way (e.g., superintendent to director to principal to teacher). It is within this context that Stronge (1991) adapted Katz’s (1955) theoretical framework utilizing technical skill, human skill, and conceptual skill, in understanding what and how effective administrators conduct performance appraisals of K-12 educators and PSP.

Like Katz (1955, 1974), Stronge (1991) thought of the technical domain, specifically regarding performance evaluations, as concerned with the mechanics of the performance appraisal instrument and to how those who conducted performance appraisals used it. The technical domain that Stronge (1991) focused his attention on included the following: (1) the validity of the personnel evaluation defined as the degree to which the evaluation process measures the performance that it purports to measure, (2) the reliability or consistency of the personnel evaluation defined in terms of a balance between objective and subjective judgments by those conducting performance appraisals that is beyond mere collection, tabulation, and reporting of data, and (3) utility of the personnel evaluation defined in terms of the practical consideration that must be addressed if a performance appraisal is to have real organizational value beyond a technocratic level. An understanding of the use of these technical skills that globally utilize an understanding of the processes, procedures, and/or techniques, used by those who conduct performance evaluations, is a critical first step in appraising the technical skills required of the greatest number of people needing to be appraised (Katz, 1955, 1974).
Katz’s (1955, 1974) human skill of an effective administrator, as it relates to Stronge’s (1991) expansion of it with regard to effective administrative performance evaluations, considered the human relations domain as a human relations function. This is to say that human skill is concerned not only with how well people work, but as importantly if not more, with how well they work together (Stronge, 1991). According to Stronge (1991) the personnel evaluation process is based on the relationship between those conducting the performance evaluation and those being evaluated. With that in consideration, important to the human skill domain of the evaluator/evaluatee relationship in an effective evaluation system, the evaluator being a component of that evaluation system, are what Stronge (1991) identified as key issues to the human domain inclusive of the following: communication, cooperation, and consideration.

Regarding communication, Stronge (1991) described communication as “the underlying concept of personnel evaluation in educational settings” (p. 80). Under further exploration, the communication domain was analyzed by Stronge (1991) and described in more detail as composed of source credibility, context of the message, and clarity of the message. Source credibility referring to “audience perception of the source as knowledgeable and exert on the subject” (Stronge, 1991, p. 80). According to Stronge (1991) the evaluator is perceived as being the knowledgeable and expert source in the process of an effective performance evaluation system. As well, the context of the message concerning communication is equally as important as source credibility. When performance evaluation systems, inclusive of the evaluators who use them, cooperatively take into account and seriously consider the organizational goals of the institution, relative to those being evaluated, the performance evaluation process has a better chance of being viewed as both organizationally and individually meaningful (Stronge, 1991). Concerning human skills pertaining to communication, Stronge (1991) believed that the clarity
of the message must relate to understanding the purpose of conducting performance evaluations. Without both the evaluator and the evaluatee clearly understanding the reason for conducting the performance evaluation, the performance evaluation then becomes a meaningless exercise of paperwork contributing nothing to the attainment of the organization’s or the individual’s goals (Stronge, 1991).

With regards to cooperation, Stronge (1991) maintained the belief that both evaluator and evaluatee, in order to make meaning of the performance evaluation process, must attempt to accommodate and understand the concerns of each other. Stronge (1991) believed that given the tendency of conflict between evaluator and evaluatee in the conduct of performance evaluations, trust must be established. In order to accomplish this, the performance evaluation system, inclusive of the evaluator, must be honest concerning performance evaluation intent as well as putting aside any hidden agendas (Stronge, 1991). Consideration must be reciprocal in the performance evaluation of employees (Stronge, 1991). Stronge (1991) agreed with George (1987) who also suggested the establishment of communications and personal relationships within the context of the work environment by those conducting performance evaluations, in order to build and maintain a professional rapport with evaluatees. In order for performance evaluation to meaningfully thrive, Stronge (1991) believed that those conducting performance evaluations must with consistency use with those evaluated the consideration qualities of empathy and honest, while not subtracting from the evaluatee’s self-esteem, during the process of performance evaluation.
Definitions of Terms

*Administrator* can be defined as one whom, (a) directs the activities of other persons, and (b) undertakes the responsibility for achieving certain objectives through their efforts (Katz, 1955, 1974).

*Accountability* can be defined as the evaluative effort designed to systematically gather information relevant to the performance of school psychologists. It enables them to demonstrate the effectiveness of their service to others and it provides an evaluation of how well they have met their performance objectives. It is concerned with both quantitative and qualitative aspects of practice, and…it is particularly useful in improving service delivery and in enhancing professional development (Zins, 1984).

*Child find* can be defined as the IDEA requiring the SEA to implement policies and procedures to ensure that all children with disabilities (including those who attend private schools) are identified, located, and evaluated (Jacob and Hartshorne, 2003).

*Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA-2004 [Public Law No. 108-446])* is intended (a) to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living; (b) To ensure that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents are protected; (c) To assist States, localities, educational service agencies, and Federal agencies to provide for the education of all children with disabilities; and (d) To assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities (Russo, Osborne and Borreca, 2005).

*Performance appraisal* can be defined in the context of K-12 public school special education administration as a process that identifies key tasks that are critical to an
administrator’s job and compares the anticipated performance to actual performance. Performance appraisal is also considered as part of the accountability process with regard to special and general education compliance, personnel, facilities, resources, and leadership to support general and special education program development (Johnson, 1998).

*Psychoeducational testing* can be referred to as the individual administration of standardized, norm-referenced tests of academic achievement, adaptive behavior, cognitive ability, personality, and psychological processing, to students pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade.

*Professional Support Personnel* can be referred to as professionally certified school personnel whose roles contribute to the accomplishment of school goals primarily through other than classroom or administrative responsibilities. To clarify further the professional positions included as professional support personnel, counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and speech-language pathologists, shall be included (Stronge and Helm, 1990).

*School psychologist* can be used to mean a person trained in a variety of ways to provide psychological services to school-aged children in public, private, or institutional schools (Reynolds and Gutkin, 1999).

*School psychological services* can be defined as the provision of direct psychological services to K-12 students and their families, working as members of school-based problem-solving teams that also provide indirect services (e.g., consultation) to teachers and building-level administrators, as well as to central administrative staff (Curtis, Hunley, and Grier, 2002).

*Skill* can be defined as an ability which can be developed, not necessarily inborn, and which is manifested in performance, not merely in potential. Therefore, the principal criterion of skillfulness must be effective action under varying conditions (Katz, 1955, 1974).
Supervision can be defined as management by overseeing the performance or operation of a person or group.

Significance of the Study

School psychologists have historically been appraised in the performance of their duties by measures and standards associated with those of general education teachers, special education teachers, school counselors, guidance counselors, and building principals (Chafouleas, Clonan, and Vanauken, 2002). Although there are subtle role and function overlaps between school psychologists and other support staff (e.g., school speech-language pathologists, school counselors, and school social workers) (Agresta, 2004), distinguishing those differences between them is vital in the validation of school psychologists’ role and function and their performance appraisals in K-12 public education.

Norton and Perlin (1989) indicated how oftentimes school psychologists are evaluated by appraisal instruments regularly used for appraising teachers. In this generic approach to appraising the performance of school psychologists, school psychologists’ performance appraisals were, according to the authors, oftentimes performed by those untrained as school psychologists. Others, including Crespi and Fischetti (1997) and Crespi, Fischetti, and Lopez (1998), agreed with Norton and Perlin (1989) noting that in public schools, school psychologists are often supervised by supervisors having no formal education, training, or experience as school psychologists. The authors went on to say that it would not be uncommon for a teacher serving in the role of a Special Services Director to take on the responsibility of supervising school psychologists, without having the certification as a school psychologist (Crespi and Fischetti, 1997). With this being the case, it stands to inquiry as to the accuracy with which performance
appraisals occur for school psychologists whose performance may be appraised by those having no formal education, training, or professional experience.

Clearly then the professional competencies of supervisors of school psychologists become significant, relevant, and timely concerns with regard to the changes in federal and state regulatory rules governing the administration of K-12 public education. Rules by which school psychologists perform their role and function and by which their performance appraisals occurs; dependent on the educational training and experience of the supervisor/appraiser. Therefore it is in this context that this study is unique in that it is only one of two empirical studies conducted (Chafouleas et al., 2002), and one of several and limited known theoretical and editorial articles written (Bowser, 1981; Cobb and Stacey, 1987; Crespi et al., 1998; Curtis and Yager, 1981; Fischetti and Crespi, 1999; Kruger, 1987; Murphy, 1981; Peterson, 1981; Robinson, 1981; Yanowitz, 1981) concerning school psychological supervision and the performance appraisal of school psychologists. Furthermore, the significance of this study is related to how school psychologists’ performance appraisals occur across differing levels of knowledge bases of those who appraise them.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. The first chapter includes the introduction, statement of the problem, significance and purpose of the study, the research questions, a brief discussion of the theoretical framework, and a listing of key definitions and variables, the significance of the study, and the organization of the study. The second chapter provides an overview of relevant literature related to the historical development performance appraisal, role and function of school psychologists, the perceived role and function of school psychologist in K-12 public schools, a historical overview of the performance appraisal of school psychologists whose performance may be appraised by those having no formal education, training, or professional experience.
psychologist, and a detailed description of a developmental framework of those who conduct the performance evaluation of school psychologists using a 3-skill model of an effective administrator skills as they relate to the performance evaluation of school psychologists. The third chapter provides the methodology, description of participants, instrumentation, data collection methods, and the method of data analysis. The fourth chapter describes the findings of the study. Finally, the fifth chapter summarizes the findings in more detail, with recommendations, limitations of the study, and implications for further research.
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Concept of Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal has been referred to in a number of different ways by various researchers. It has been called performance review (Burke and Wilcox, 1969; Harper, 1986), performance evaluation (Arvey and Murphy, 1998; Harvey and Struzziero, 2000), and performance appraisal (Boswell and Boudreau, 2002; Dorfman, Stephan, and Loveland, 1986; Harper, 1986). Each of these terms attempts to describe a process by which an assessment of the performance of the role and function for a specific job can be monitored, assessed, and improved upon, continuously, for the greater productive good of the organization.

Burke and Wilcox (1969) viewed performance appraisal as serving several functions: a guide for long-range personnel planning, and a means toward the training and coaching of the variety of managers at various levels of management to improve their performance and to determine promotions and salary increases. Harper (1986) viewed performance reviews as crucial to an organization’s success. According to Harper (1986), organizations must not only encourage high levels of performance from employees, but must measure and reward performance. The author identified a couple of key components to maintaining high quality standards in performance reviews: the development of employee skills, and the provision of feedback of how the organization is managed. These components not only included the obvious purpose of performance review, the improvement of performance, but also were intended to develop employee skills, and introspectively, the appraiser in the use of the performance review (Harper, 1986).

Boswell and Boudreau (2002) described performance evaluation in terms of comparing the performance of individuals to a given set of standards, peers, or a comparison made on the
previous performance of the individual. In doing such comparison, the authors identify the process of performance evaluation in a developmental way. Boswell and Boudreau (2002) view the use of performance appraisal in terms of “enriching attitudes, experiences, and skills that improve the effectiveness of employees” (p. 392). In this way strengths and weaknesses may be identified, goals and objectives set, and the identification of professional development needs can be made (Boswell and Boudreau, 2002).

Arvey and Murphy (1998) reviewed research concerned with defining and understanding of the performance appraisal of employees. The authors’ literature review spanned the historical treatment and contextual regard of job performance to previous investigators’ attempts to define job performance. The authors found that between 1950 and 1980, performance appraisal research primarily focused on improving the instrument used to rate performance. These studies focused on different types of rating scales and ranking scales.

Arvey and Murphy (1998) followed the trend of researchers’ investigation into descriptions of other investigators’ analysis of how job performance (i.e., performance appraisal) is measured in relation to the broader context of team-based methods of productivity. The authors referred to the literature on personnel selection and the changing work environment authored by Cascio, Outtz, Zedeck, and Goldstein (1995). They suggested that rather than appraising individual performance and its impact on the organization, performance appraisal should assess employees’ skills and competencies relative to their collective impact on the structure and functioning of the organization as a whole. Cascio et al. (1995) described the need to reframe how performance appraisal had been thought of given how organizations had begun to rethink how they were comprised; large centralized conglomerates with many employees and a hierarchical ‘top down’ management style. The authors described most organizations as having
become smaller, less staffed, and less hierarchical in terms of management for a more networked group of specialists who cooperatively worked together, there by having more of a change-agency influence on each other. In this environment, Cascio et al. (1995) described a performance appraisal style which considered the system as a whole.

Arvey and Murphy (1998) also reviewed the work of investigators’ whose primary focus concerned itself with the practical use of performance appraisals. According to Arvey and Murphy (1998) those investigators believed that the goal of performance appraisal research was to establish objective means to appraise the work performance of employees. The consideration of rating- versus rank-ordering instruments to be used by those responsible for conducting performance appraisals, were key considerations to the accuracy in the practical appraisal of employees work performance (Arvey and Murphy, 1998).

In understanding the shifting contours of organizations, in that they are becoming less centralized in their organizational structure, and more decentralized, research has shifted to take into consideration the context in which performance appraisals occur. Arvey and Murphy (1998), thought performance appraisal to be more goal-oriented behaviors that the work context itself influenced; this is inclusive of supervisors’ own defined perspective of what that environmental context is viewed as.

Performance Appraisal Research

It is the intent of this dissertation to examine performance appraisal from a developmental theoretical framework. As Harper (1986) considered, managers and employees often approach performance appraisals with caution, however when considering performance appraisal from a developmental framework, it is viewed less defensively by both parties.
Boswell and Boudreau (2000) investigated the relationship between employees’ perceptions of performance appraisal use with the appraisal process itself and with those who appraise performance. In the study, two typical performance appraisal instruments were used, evaluative and developmental. Evaluative performance appraisal involved promotion decisions and salary increases, while the developmental performance appraisal was more concerned with the identification of individual strengths and weaknesses and the identification of individual training needs. Two hypotheses were generated focusing on the developmental aspects of performance appraisal use: (1) Employee perceptions that performance appraisal is used for development will positively associate with employee satisfaction with the performance appraisal; and (2) Employee perceptions that performance appraisal is used for development will positively associate with employee satisfaction with the appraiser. The study included a sample of 137 employees of a production facility in the South being administered surveys twice. One hundred twenty-eight employees completed both surveys. Two scales were used, one to measure performance appraisal satisfaction, and another to measure performance appraisal use. Results found that perceived performance appraisal use for development positively related to both performance appraisal satisfaction and satisfaction with the appraiser, supporting both developmental performance appraisal hypotheses.

The Boswell and Boudreau’s (2000) study demonstrated the differences between evaluative (i.e., summative) and developmental performance appraisals. Evaluative performance appraisals had no significant effect on employees’ reaction to performance appraisals or their appraisers. In an evaluative performance appraisal, employees were more apt to be intimidated or feel a certain level of possible threat due to the summative nature of the performance appraisal (Boswell and Boudreau, 2000; Burke et al. (1978). Whereas with developmental performance
appraisals, the Boswell and Boudreau’s (2000) study provided information that affirmed that perceived performance appraisal use intended to assist employees in developing job skills to improve their performance not only related to their satisfaction with what they do, but also improved their satisfaction with their supervisors and the appraisals the obtain from them.

In another study, Dorfman, et al. (1986) examined supervisor perceptions and their subordinates’ reactions to formal performance appraisal reviews. The performance appraisal behaviors of supervisors and their subordinates’ reactions to their appraisal of them were studied in a sample of university employees. Data were obtained from 242 employees of a medium-sized university in the Southwest, 121 pairs of supervisors each paired with an employee he or she supervised. Subordinates were selected randomly from the pool of employees that supervisor had appraised. Additionally, supervisors attended a four-hour workshop presented by faculty within the management department. The hypotheses generated related to a developmental approach to performance appraisal and were as follows: (1) The level of employee performance will be positively related to supportive behaviors by the supervisor in the performance interview, and it will be negatively related to the level of supervisor efforts to improve future performance, and (2) The level of support, discussions of employees’ strengths and weaknesses, clearing up job problems, and goal setting should be related both to employee satisfaction with the appraisal and supervisor, and to employee motivation. Results of this study found that there were three dimensions of formal performance appraisal: two of which were being supportive and emphasizing improvement in performance (developmental) and the third focusing on pay and advancement (administrative). Similar to previous studies examined (Boswell and Boudreau, 2000; Burke et al., 1978; Burke and Wilcox, 1969), results showed that
positive support demonstrated by supervisors in the performance appraisal process was related with higher levels of employee satisfaction and employee motivation (Dorfman et al., 1986).

The Boswell and Boudreau (2000) and Dorfman et al. (1986) studies were found useful in helping both those whose performance are appraised and those who appraise performance in order to help those involved in performance appraisals understand how performance appraisal can be used to develop job skills in a positively perceived way. It does not have to be a dreadful experience, but one that can help both supervisors and those supervised become more effective in their roles and functions to help them meet the goals and objectives of the organization. In the Dorfman et al. investigation, employees’ understanding of supervisors supporting them by allowing subordinates to know the disposition of their job performance in terms of strengths and weaknesses, while at the same time maintaining a helpful and supportive attitude, simply makes performance appraisal more tolerable, and less threatening. Similar outcomes were found with the Boswell and Boudreau (2000) study, which found that the developmental activities of supervisors in the appraisal of their subordinates, determining their individual training needs and identifying individual strengths and weaknesses, increased subordinates’ and appraisers’ satisfaction with the developmental appraisal approach.

Performance Appraisal of K-12 Public School Personnel

As in many organizations where performance appraisals are conducted (Arvey and Murphy, 1998; Boswell and Boudreau, 2000; Burke et al., 1978; Burke and Wilcox, 1969; Dorfman et al., 1986), K-12 public schools are also riddled with some of the same problematic concerns, including improving the job performance of those involved in the education of children (Russo, 2004; Stronge and Tucker, 1995). Teachers, principals, and ancillary service staff play an important part in the education of K-12 students. With this responsibility, it is important to
the organization of schools to attempt to assure that those working toward the education of children are sufficiently developed in their prospective educational fields. This, as in for-profit organizations, is accomplished through the use of performance appraisals.

The investigation of performance appraisal in the public schools has often been examined through the job performance of teachers. Teacher performance appraisal has often been connected with the school organization, particularly in terms of contract renewals/non-renewals and the time constraints associated with them (Hannay, Telford, and Seller, 2003). This is especially the case when viewing performance appraisal as a device to assist teachers’ professional growth. Hannay et al. (2003) in their study sought to shift the idea of performance appraisal from one of a summative approach (i.e., evaluation of skills) to that of a formative assessment (i.e., development/refinement of skills) of professional teaching skills. To accomplish this, the researchers had 13 teachers conduct action research on their practice, with their implementation of action research considered the foundation of their appraisal of their performance. Hannay et al. (2003) defined action research as a “process [that] encourages participants to be learners and to take charge of their own professional development…a means of conducting self-appraisal of job performance” (p. 123). Data collection occurred over the course of one school year, using audio-taped and verbatim transcription of focus groups to identify themes. Themes concerned themselves with teachers’ previous experiences with supervision, teachers’ anticipated outcomes from the use action research as performance appraisal of focus groups, and teachers’ thoughts of the implications of using action research as performance appraisal within their school district. This study found that teachers overwhelmingly preferred action research as a means of performance appraisal as opposed to a summative performance
appraisal process, help teachers learn and grow in their skills, as well as take ownership into their performance appraisal (Hannay et al., 2003).

Performance appraisals, in the context of teachers’ performance appraisal, is in most situations conducted by a supervisor-principal, an assistant principal, or a mentoring teacher (Collins, 2004; Krajewski, 1984; Marshall, 2005; Stansbury, 2001; Weller, 1983). In understanding this, one question that arises is what are the competencies of those conducting the performance appraisal of teachers? In an article discussing mentoring teachers as supervisors to new teachers, Weller (1983) suggested that if intern student teachers are to develop teacher competencies of a fully credentialed teacher, then competency-based supervision and subsequent performance appraisal is required for success. This is to say not only required of the new teacher, but also required of the supervisor as well (Weller, 1983). Competencies the authors indicated worthy of those supervising teachers included the ability to coordinate educator teams (i.e., peer assistance) to facilitate professional growth of the beginning teacher; the ability to create short- and long-range teacher planning to help students succeed; the ability to demonstrate interpersonal relations and conferencing skills to promote colleagueship and develop teacher-parent teaming; the skill of appraising teacher performance (i.e., summative and formative); demonstrating a mastery of instructional and classroom management skills; and demonstrating appropriate modeling behavior (Weller, 1983). In supervisors’ understanding and demonstrating these practices themselves, continuously, Weller (1983) concluded that teachers supervised by supervisors exemplifying these characteristics will be more successful in the classroom.

As do teachers, principals play an important role in the success of K-12 students (Lashway, 2003). As a leader in public school education, principals are often accountable for the performance appraisal of K-12 public schools’ educational staff. As leaders, their performance
appraisal is critical to the leadership of K-12 educators. Although most would agree with principals’ importance in schools, the empirical literature concerning principal performance appraisal is surprisingly sparse and dated (Lashway, 2003).

The Role and Function of School Psychologists

In understanding the performance appraisal of school psychologists it would stand to reason that an understanding of school psychologists’ role and function should be discussed. The National Association of School Psychologist (NASP), the largest organization of school psychologists in the United States, describes what a school psychologist is on its website. Globally, NASP (2008) describes school psychologists as psychologists that “…help children and youth succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. They collaborate with educators, parents, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments for all students that strengthen connections between home and school” (NASP, 2008). Today, the NASP describes school psychologists’ role and function in terms of the following responsibilities: (1) Consultation, (2) Evaluation, (3) Intervention, (4) Prevention, and (5) Research and planning (NASP, 2008). Regarding the consultation, NASP (2008) promotes school psychologists to function as collaborators with teachers, parents, and administrators to problem-solve students’ learning and behavior problems. In their consultation, school psychologists must help others understand children’s development and how it impacts students’ learning and behavior. Regarding the evaluation role and function of school psychologists, school psychologists also evaluates students to determine eligibility for special education services, as well as determining social-emotional development and mental health status of school-aged children (NASP, 2008). The NASP (2008) defines the role and function of school psychologists as also providing psychological counseling to help students and their families in
times of interpersonal and family crisis that can be a setback for students’ school performance. Assisting in the design and implementation of programs to help at-risk students succeed is a preventative means by which school psychologist function within the school environment (NASP, 2008). With regard to research and planning, school psychologists’ role and function are employed in the evaluation of the effectiveness of academic and behavior management programs, as well as helping to identify and implement broad strategies to improve schools (NASP, 2008).

The National Association of School Psychologists’ subscribes to school psychologists taking a broad role and function in the provision of school psychological services to K-12 public school children. The importance of school-aged children’s learning, particularly in the context of public school education, is the catalyst for what school psychologists do. In a national survey conducted by Bramlett, Murphy, Johnson, and Wallingsford (2002) eight hundred school psychologists of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) were surveyed in an attempt to, in part, assess what school psychologists’ actual role and function are in the day-to-day activity of public schools. A total of 391 surveys (49%) were returned. Item content was based on previous questionnaires used to measure role and function of school psychologists from the literature concerning professional practice (Bramlett et al., 2002). The results of this study indicated that conducting student evaluations and report writing was the most common role and function of the surveyed school psychologists. This was followed by consultations with teachers, the development and monitored implementation of classroom-based interventions for students, counseling students in crisis, conferencing with parents regarding their children’s learning and/or behavior, consultation with teachers and school administrators concerning at-risk students, providing in-service training to school staff on topics ranging from disorders of
childhood to strategies to improve children’s school performance, and assisting parents with parenting skills training were duties provided by the surveyed school psychologists (Bramlett et al., 2002). Bramlett et al. (2002) research supported Hyman and Kaplinski’s (1994) explanation concerning the historical treatment of the importance of psychoeducational testing as having limited the idea that school psychologists, besides testing children, might better be used in more preventative ways. To support this, Bramlett et al. (2002) results, like previous role and function studies of school psychologists (Reschly, 2000; Reschly and Wilson, 1995; Ronas, et al., 2001), found that 46% of their time was spent conducting psychoeducational testing and report writing on students referred for either learning, emotional, or physically impairing problem impacting school performance. Given that percentage of role and functioning of school psychologist engaged in psychoeducational testing, the remainder of their time was spent in smaller percentage activities of consultation (16%), student interventions (13%), counseling (8%), conferencing (7%), in-service provision (2%), research (1%), parent training (1%), and other (3%) (Bramlett et al., 2002).

Another study conducted by Ronas et al. (2001) investigated the job activities of school psychologists in inclusive elementary schools. The author defined inclusive elementary schools as those with the majority of students having, although not limited to, mild learning disabilities, and who are educated in the ‘regular’ classroom environment with their nondisabled peers. The methodology of this study included a mailing of 122 surveys to school psychologists working in all elementary schools within Nassau and Suffolk Counties of Long Island, NY. Participants were selected using a stratified random sample of elementary schools of all school districts in these two counties as found in the Directory of Public Schools and Administrators in New York State, 1998-1999 edition. Surveys were mailed to the school psychologists of each school. The
mailings resulted in a return of 75 surveys (approximately 61%). Of those surveys returned, 3 were unusable, providing a total usable sample of 72 surveys (approximately 59%) out of the 122 surveys mailed. Regarding the amount of time spent performing school psychological duties within the inclusive educational setting contrasted to the amount of time spent conducting traditional psychoeducational assessment. The survey instrument used in this study, the School Psychologist-Degree of Inclusion Interactions Scale (SP-DIIS), was designed specifically for this study. The SP-DIIS consisted of closed and open-ended questions, comprised of questions eliciting school psychologists to indicate amounts of time spent performing 22 school psychologists’ duties.

These duties included the following: (1) Assessment of children using standardized measures, (2) Curriculum-based assessments, (3) Classroom observations of environmental variables which might contribute to learning and behavioral difficulties, (4) Systematic classroom observations of children for design of behavioral plans, (5) Design of academic interventions, (6) Design of behavioral interventions, (7) Modification of curriculum materials, (8) Consultation with teachers (behavioral), (9) Consultation with teachers (academic), (10) Assist teachers in implementation academic interventions, (11) Assist teachers in implementation of behavioral interventions, (12) Conducting evaluations on effectiveness of interventions, (13) Participation in multidisciplinary support teams, (14) Conducting in-service training in areas such as learning styles, special education rules and regulations, (15) Conducting workshops for auxiliary staff such as cafeteria personnel and bus drivers, (16) Individual or group counseling, (17) Design of program evaluation procedures, (18) Review of current research in education, (19) Conducting research, (20) Organizational change activities, (21) Conducting parent workshops, and (22) Attending professional development activities. These duties were created
through a review of both empirical and theoretical literature including activities of school psychologists thought to be traditionally conducted, along with those duties thought to facilitate an inclusive school environment for both students with mild learning disabilities and those nondisabled students (Ronas et al., 2001). The results of Ronas et al. (2001) study found that school psychologists’ job activities primarily focused on psychoeducational assessment activities. This is to say that 75% of the respondents indicated that they were involved in the activity of psychoeducational assessment either often or very often. The authors found that 50% of school psychologists reported that they provided consultation to teachers regarding interventions for children’s academic and behavioral problems at least twice weekly. Also, Ronas et al. (2001) found that 85% of school psychologists surveyed met with school support teams two to three times weekly to design prereferral interventions.

In another study, Poulou (2003) investigated whether or not pre-service school psychologists may have already developed their own prospective ideas concerning the roles and functions of the public school psychologist. If school psychologist were found to have formulated their own identity as to their role and function, their determination of their role and function could have direct implications for the actual role and function of school psychologists in the future, as well as how that role interacts with the role expectations of school psychologists by other educational professionals in K-12 public education. Poulou (2003) studied pre-service school psychologists’ role perceptions of school psychological practice at the onset of their entering graduate training. The investigator examined whether or not pre-service school psychologists had already developed a pre-professional view on the role and function of the practicing school psychologist. In this study Poulou (2003) examined the role perceptions of pre-service school psychologists in terms of: (1) relationship to members of the school
community, (2) role expectations of pre-services school psychologists and school staff, (3) the variety of conditions which school psychologists’ roles take place, and (4) pre-service school psychologists’ feelings about school psychologists’ role.

Fifty students participated in this study, in which 33 of the students were in the third year of their studies and 17 students in the fourth year. Each student was asked to describe the role of the school psychologist using a metaphoric image, meaning, there were instructed to use a metaphoric picture (e.g., people following a leader), and to then describe their role perception of the school psychologist (Poulou, 2003). In the students’ description, the task was to answer the following questions: (a) Who is the school psychologist in your metaphoric picture? (b) What is (s)he doing? (c) Are there any other people with him/her and what are they doing? (d) What is taking place in your picture? (e) What is the school psychologist aiming to do?, and (f) What does the person(s) with him/her expect from him/her? Regarding the results of pre-service school psychologists’ perception of their future role and function, an analysis of pre-service school psychologists’ metaphors was conducted by three educational researchers. The analysis revealed a difference of perceptions by pre-service school psychologists, in the way school psychologically initiated classroom-based interventions might be initiated (Poulou, 2003). Pre-service school psychologist viewed their future role and function as a multidisciplinary team approach in order to problem-solve students’ learning and/or behavior, while others viewed their future role as distantly consultative, however ready to respond to some intervention request (Poulou, 2003). More specifically, 25-pre-service school psychologists (50%) viewed their future role as an active multidisciplinary participant, “appearing to guide the actions of other members in a spirit of cooperation and democracy, in an atmosphere of mutual interaction and interdependence” (Poulou, 2003, p. 382). Poulou’s study found that 3-pre-service school
psychologists (6%) metaphorically viewed the teacher as leader in intervening with students’ difficulties in learning and/or behavior, while the school psychologists made contributions to the teachers’ efforts. The study found that four pre-service teachers (8%) viewed the role of the school psychologist as equal to that of the classroom teacher; both of equal importance in intervention development and implementation (Poulou, 2003).

Those pre-service school psychology students who viewed themselves, metaphorically, as distant members of the school community in terms of their role and function in intervening with students exhibiting learning and/or behavioral problems, place their role outside those desiring to problem-solve, but in a position of ready access or in a position where the school psychologist would have more control of his/her role and function activity (Poulou, 2003). In this context, 6-pre-service school psychologists (12%) viewed themselves metaphorically as someone whom others could consult with for authoritative solutions without significant collaborative multidisciplinary interaction (Poulou, 2003). Another 6-pre-service school psychologists (12%) metaphorically viewed themselves in the role and function of a school psychologist as an outside observer by which school-based interventions occurred when the school psychologist thought it required (Poulou, 2003). Four pre-service school psychology students (8%) viewed their role and function as school psychologist as roving; sharing knowledge from one teacher to the next. Two pre-service school psychology students (4%) viewed their role as a school psychologist as being varied and complex; eclectically dynamic (Poulou, 2003).

Role Perceptions of School Psychologists

The role and function of school psychologists, as perceived by building-level school personnel, have varied for at least two- to three-decades. This variance was described by
Hagemeier et al. (1998) by which the authors indicated that five primary roles were perceived by those educators working in schools as what school psychologists do: individual testing, consultation, intervention/counseling, research and evaluation, and special education administration. The authors discussed how schools provide varying opportunities for educational professionals of all expertise to assist students in their learning. However, to sustain the quality of the education students attain, as well as the educational skills of those responsible with helping students learn, the understanding of roles and functions and the subsequent interactions between the various educational professionals must be understood by one another (Hagemeier et al., 1998).

Perceptions, more times than not, can direct how people respond and behave toward one another. Jim Brown, a famous football player for the Cleveland Browns was once was quoted, saying, “…I am who I am, and if you don't take the time to learn about that, then your perception is going to be your problem.” (Jim Brown, date unknown). As a football player, Jim Brown was perceived to be one of the toughest running backs in the National Football League (NFL). This perception of toughness followed him on the field and off. However, what many people did not know was that Jim Brown, for all the perceptions of toughness others placed on him, was a caring and charitable person. So charitable a person was he that he founded a program for “at-risk” young people called ‘The Amer-I-Can Program’; a training program designed to empower and enable at-risk youth to take responsibility for their own self-determination through education and job-training skills. To paraphrase Jim Brown, the wrong perceptions that people maintain can and do become a problem.

With that understanding in mind concerning the power of perceptions, and how sometimes, perceptions can be misleadingly problematic, Hagemeier et al. (1998) examined the
perceptions of school personnel of the role and function of school psychologists. They examined whether or not there existed role and function discrepancies between school personnel’s ideal versus actual understanding of school psychologists’ role and function (Hagemeier et al., 1998). The participants in the study were school personnel from elementary, middle, and high schools in Indiana and Illinois. The sample included 278 participants: 9 administrators, 240 general education teachers, 11 special education teachers, 2 area specialty teachers, and 16 other school personnel (i.e., counselors, teacher aides). Two surveys were created; a 12-item questionnaire using a 6-point Likert-type scale to assess perceptions of school psychologists, and the development of a performance rating scale to assess the perceptions of ideal and actual role and function of school psychologists. What was found was that the general education faculty held a narrowly defined view of the role and responsibilities of the school psychologist. The interaction with the school psychologist was described as minimal, usually involving a case conference meeting regarding a student, classroom observation, and/or behavioral checklist to be filled out by the classroom teacher (Hagemeier et al., 1998). However an important outcome of the study was that an increased amount of contact time with school psychologists by administrators and special education staff seemed to provide those administrators and special education staff with a more accurate understanding of the actual role school psychologists assume in addressing the special needs that children present in today’s schools.

Watkins et al. (2001) reported how school psychologists often indicate how they would like to reduce the number of assessments, perceived by other school staff as their primary role and function, they conduct in order to perform other school psychological service delivery activities. Watkins et al. (2001) investigated how school staff perceived the role and function of school psychologists in relation to their own school positions and perceived needs to help
students learn. The study was conducted in a suburban school district in the southwestern United States. The district employed 16.5 school psychologists, serving approximately 23,000 students in 21 school buildings (Watkins et al., 2001). A five-point Likert scale was used for a questionnaire asking respondents to ‘rate the importance of each school psychological role for you and your school’; this was followed by a list of nine roles with annotated descriptions. Of the 1,220 questionnaires distributed to school staff, 522 questionnaires were returned; 419 general education teachers, 18 administrators, 52 special education teachers, and 33 support staff (Watkins et al., 2001). In this study the researchers’ found that school staff believed that assessment activities (i.e., psychoeducational testing) was the primary activity for school psychologists, and that consultation, intervention development, and other psychological services outside of assessment were secondary and tertiary activities for school psychologists (Watkins et al., 2001). Results of this study also indicated a significant difference between special education teachers’ and regular education teachers’ perception of psychoeducational testing. Results showed that special education teachers found that the school psychological activity of psychoeducational testing to be more important to them than their regular education teacher counterparts. Additionally, elementary school teachers were found to significantly perceive school psychologists’ consultation activities as significantly important more so than did their secondary education teacher counterparts (Watkins et al., 2001).

Teachers are not the only individuals within the context of schools who maintain a perception of the role and function of school psychologists. Building level administrators also maintain a perception of what school psychologists do. In a study of secondary school administrators, Hartshorne and Johnson (1985) examined the perception of secondary principals’ view of what school psychologists’ do. In this study a questionnaire was mailed to 361
secondary school principals representing every tenth school of approximately 3,683 schools listed as members within the North Central Association of Secondary Schools (NCASS). The sample of school principals selected was selected from across 19 states (Hartshorne and Johnson, 1985). Of the 361 surveys mailed out, there were 316 (88%) returned. However, 113 of the surveys were unusable due to their either not being completed by the school principal, or they were completed incorrectly. This resulted in a usable return rate of 56% or 203 usable surveys (Hartshorne and Johnson, 1985).

A questionnaire was created in order to allow secondary school principals to rank order ten activities they perceived their school psychologist as engaging in. Each of the ten areas were ranked twice; once for actual time spent in the activity, and once for the time secondary principals thought they should spend in the activities (Hartshorne and Johnson, 1985). In this survey, principals were asked to consider influences that they thought impacted the amount of time school psychologists spent in various areas, including the following: (1) training, (2) personality, (3) circumstances unique to the school or setting, and (4) special education regulations. In addition, secondary school principals were asked to note the most important of the four primary influences for the ten functions that were listed on the survey that school psychologists engage in (Hartshorne and Johnson, 1985). The ten school psychologists’ activities were listed as follows: Case follow-up, Counseling, Consultation with administrators, Consultation with staff, Consultation with parents, Lead in-service training, Program development, Psychological testing, Research, and Staffings.

Results of this study showed very little difference between secondary school principals’ rankings between actual time spent by school psychologists’ activities, and secondary school principals’ rankings of ideal time spent by school psychologists in their daily activities.
(Hartshorne and Johnson, 1985). The areas of school psychologists’ activities that were ranked similarly by secondary school principals and in order of actual and ideal time spent were ranked as follows: (1) Psychological testing, (3) Consultation with staff, (4) Consultation with parents, (6) Consultation with administrators, (7) Case follow-up, (8) Program development, (9) Lead in-service training, and (10) Research. The rank orders were dissimilar for “Counseling students” and “Staffing for special education”. This pairing of school psychologists’ role and function activity was ranked (5) and (2) for actual time spent ranking, respectively, and ranked (2) and (5) for ideal time spent in activity by secondary school administrators (Hartshorne and Johnson, 1985). It might be that this result indicates that for the secondary school principals of this study would like more “counseling students activities” from their school psychologists, and less “staffing for special education” activities from them.

Hartshorne and Johnson (1985) also addressed factors which they thought influenced the role and function of school psychologists as perceived by secondary school principals. Secondary school principals selected, as indicated by a percentage, “Special education regulations” as the most significant influence on school psychologists’ time spent in the performance of this role and function. This included the activities of Staffings and follow-up; highly associated with special education regulations (Hartshorne and Johnson, 1985).

The Performance Appraisal of School Psychologists

The performance appraisal of school psychologists has oftentimes been misunderstood and poorly performed by those whom conduct the appraisal either due to a lack of understanding the role and function of school psychologists or due to being formally trained in some other profession within education. Crespi, Fischetti, and Lopez (1998) and Fischetti and Crespi (1999) attributed this misunderstanding to the lack of education and training as a school psychologist on
the part of the supervisor conducting the performance appraisals of school psychologists. These authors suggested that when clinical supervision is minimal, approximately 10% of school psychologists receiving formal clinical supervision (Crespi et al., 1998; Fischetti and Crespi, 1999), the range of duties that school psychologists are expected to assume then become many, making their perceived role and function unclear, with the risks of the benefits of appropriate supervision being lost (Fischetti and Crespi, 1999).

Understanding that, several researchers have concluded that there has been little evaluation literature focusing on the performance appraisal of professional support staff including school psychologists (Helm, 1994; Stronge and Helm, 1990; Stronge and Helm, 1992; Stronge, Helm, and Tucker, 1994; Stronge and Tucker, 1995; Tucker and Stronge, 1994). Not only do these authors report a serious lack of literature concerning performance evaluation for professional support personnel (PSP) in education, but they also suggests that the PSP evaluations have been historically “rare, inadequate, or both…when they were conducted at all” (Stronge and Helm, 1991, p. 3; Fischetti and Crespi, 1999). Stronge and Helm (1991) reported that the need for bettering the evaluation of PSP fulfills requirements arising from the demand that all educators, including PSP be competent within their specialty professions. The authors understood that by addressing the role of accountability for these professionals, poorly developed and implemented evaluation mechanisms often used to appraise PSPs in various human service organizations might be constructed and implemented more effectively (Stronge and Helm, 1991).

Chafouleas et al. (2002) reported how little attention has been given in the literature concerning the evaluation of school psychologists. The authors indicated how supervision is irrevocably connected to performance appraisal in order to assurance effective, accountable school psychological services (Chafouleas et al., 2002). In their study, the authors investigated
evaluation and supervision practices of school psychologists nationally. The purpose of their research was to summarize findings from a national survey of school psychologists concerning evaluation and supervision. This included information focusing on the type and amount of evaluation and supervision that was available, and who primarily conducted the evaluative and supervisory activities. Participants included 510 nationally certified school psychologists, 10 from each state of the United States including the District of Columbia. One hundred and eighty-nine usable surveys were returned (37%). Respondents answered a 5-point Likert-type questionnaire. A portion of the study used open-ended questions which were coded by two separate raters. The differences in coding answers were compared and discussed until there was an agreement for an appropriate category for the answer given. There were three sections of survey questions divided into demographic background, evaluation practices, and supervision practices. The researchers defined evaluation as a determination of the significance of an individual’s professional skills (Chafouleas et al., 2002). The results of the study found the sample of school psychologists somewhat to moderately satisfied with evaluation and supervision practices. Concerning the evaluation of school psychologists, Chafouleas et al. (2002) found that the evaluation procedures were most often conducted by an administrator with the primary function being for administrative “documentation” reasons (p. 323). Although the overall results for school psychologists in this study indicated a moderate satisfaction with the evaluation procedures, the general sample did not see evaluation as a means of professional development, or a way by which their job performance might be enhanced (Chafouleas et al., 2002). Furthermore, the results demonstrated that this sample of school psychologists were significantly more satisfied with the process of evaluation when conducted by a supervising psychologist, or when the evaluation’s items were specific to the practice of school psychology.
(Chafouleas et al., 2002). Other results of this study indicated that the evaluation process appeared to be one solely used for routine administrative purposes in order for the information to be placed into school psychologists’ employee file, or to merely document work completed or not completed (Chafouleas et al., 2002).

A comprehensive accountability system that assists in tracking the role and function activities of school psychologists is critical to the performance appraisal those in the field. For future school psychologists to benefit from their field experiences, school-based field experiences full-time practitioners experience regularly, formative and summative evaluations are necessary (Fairchild and Zins, 1992). Fairchild and Zins (1992) addressed the needs of practicing school psychologists using an accountability system originally intended to assist trainers of school psychologists in the evaluation of the professional development of those in training. Factors thought to be important in developing a comprehensive accountability system for school psychologists are the types of data desired, the methods of data collection, sources of data, duration of the field experience, and manageability (Fairchild and Zins, 1992). In terms of the type of information needed, the Fairchild and Zins (1992) suggested that it remain left to the discretion of the appraiser, however that the appraiser should strongly consider how the information collected would need to answer appraisal concerns; either enumerative data collection or process data collection. For example, if the appraiser of school psychologists wanted to know how school psychologists were perceived by teachers, a process data collection method would be an appropriate means of gathering that information (Fairchild and Zins, 1992). Alternatively, if an appraiser of school psychologists desired to collect information on how school psychologists spent their time, an enumerative data collection model (e.g., time-analysis) would be appropriate (Fairchild and Zins, 1992). In discussing the type of data sought, methods
of data collection must be considered. Understanding this, the methods of data collection in a comprehensive accountability system for school psychologists might include several options of data collection in order to answer the appraisal concerns of the organization. Such methods of data collection might include the following well-known means of gathering such information: tabulation, time analysis, case studies, interviews, expert opinion, peer review (i.e., 360-degree evaluations), questionnaires, and observations (Fairchild and Zins, 1992). Fairchild and Zins (1992) indicated how this model could also provide information germane to the quality of professional development and supervision received by school psychology interns.

Other considerations to a comprehensive performance appraisal system for school psychologists include sources of obtainable data and the management capability of the organization to support an accountability system for these personnel (Fairchild and Zins, 1992). Regarding the sources that could provide information concerning the performance of school psychologists, Fairchild and Zins (1992) included personnel such as site supervisor, principals, teachers, parents, as well as other consumers of the school psychology profession. The various data collection methods would then be employed to gather the information needed in order to answer the conduct an appraisal of school psychologists’ role and function in the context of performance appraisal concerns (Fairchild and Zins, 1992).

School psychologists’ role and function activity is often kept track of by a records keeping system usually maintained within the department in which they work; a way of monitoring role and function activity of school psychologists using an accountability records keeping system. The Hartshorne and Johnson (1985) study revealed that the majority of the time spent on various school psychological activities is often due to ‘Special Education regulations’ that can guide the activities of school psychologists (e.g., psychological testing and Staffings).
away from performing those activities that are not necessarily special education regulatory, but that are sound, good, best practices for helping children (e.g., counseling, in-service training, and research). In understanding this, it is important for school psychologists to account for the activities they participate in by utilizing an accountability system which accounts for all role and function practices they perform.

Prior to the Chafouleas et al. (2002) investigation of evaluation practices of school psychologists, Fairchild and Zins (1992) conducted a national survey concerning school psychological accountability practices. The Fairchild and Zins (1992) study investigated several facets of accountability areas including current accountability efforts and uses of the information, sources of accountability information and their methods, barriers to the collection of accountability information gathering, accountability efforts and demographic variables, and implications for bettering accountability efforts. Participants in this study included a sample of 360 school psychologists randomly selected from the 1990-1991 NASP Membership Directory, in which 161 usable questionnaires were returned. The results of this study indicated no statistically significant change in the percent of respondents engaging in accountability activities from 1984 to 1991 (Fairchild and Zins, 1992). Discussion of results indicate that 40% of respondents may not be required to collect basic information regarding what they do (Fairchild and Zins, 1992). One reason given by the researchers was that school psychologists may feel overwhelmed by their large caseloads, 1:1829, which is well above the NASP recommended level of 1:1000 making accountability issues low in priority in light of these school psychologists’ high ratios (Fairchild and Zins, 1992). Additional results obtained showed that enumerative information was widely used to describe school psychologists’, when implemented, data collection activity regarding school psychological services’ accountability. Fairchild and
Zins (1992) were additionally able to discover was that although useful in a ‘bean-counting’ sense, in terms of a number of times a specific service school psychologists provide is carried out, enumerative methodologies do not provide the needed information in order to describe the quality or effectiveness of school psychologists’ services, or means by which to improve their quality of practice.

Kruger (1987) proposed a functional approach to the performance appraisal of school psychologists based on the “high likelihood of increased public demand for accountability from the human service professionals” to appraise their function and importance. Similar to Fairchild and Zins (1992), the recommended process Kruger (1987) proposed for the development of a comprehensive accountability system for school psychologists outlined the following course of activities on the part of those who supervise them were as follows: (1) Determining what categories of performance needing to be appraised; (2) Constructing appraisal scales; (3) developing a plan for collecting data about performance; (4) using a scale to rate performance; (5) selecting performance categories for improvement efforts; and (6) maintaining performance improvement.

With regard to determining what a category of performance needs to be appraised, Kruger (1987) indicates that the school psychologist and the appraiser make a determination of what should be appraised. In doing so, legal regulations, current job-related activities, and relevant research from the school psychology literature, should be reviewed and discussed. Ideally, this should be contrasted to the current district roster of activities if already in existence (Kruger, 1987). If no such descriptions of district duties exist, then a daily activity log could be kept by the school psychologist for a period of time in order to generate an activity list in which later, additional activities could be added (Kruger, 1987). The next step in the construction of an
appraisal process according to Kruger (1987) would be the construction of an appraisal scale. Categories are selected, and then prioritized. The number of categories chosen to be appraised will depend on availability of resources, and should be a smaller number of categories as opposed to a larger inappropriate number (Kruger, 1987). At this time, the school psychologist and the appraiser need to agree on what behavioral indicators reflect satisfactory to unsatisfactory performance for each category.

Concerning the development of a data collection plan, four different types of measures could be used to collect data concerning the role and function activities of school psychologists: (1) Questionnaires, (2) Interviews, (3) Direct Observations, and (4) Reviewing work samples. Which ever type or combination of types is used, it must be practical in the context of organizational system it is employed in (Kruger, 1987). Kruger (1987) indicted that once data collection has occurred, the school psychologist and the appraiser should both rate each performance category. After having rated performance categories independently of each other, a discussion and resolution of any discrepancies between the ratings should take place between the school psychologist and the appraiser (Kruger, 1987).

Regarding the selection of a performance category for improvement efforts, Kruger (1987) indicated that three criteria should be (a) the extent to which school psychologist needs improvement in a particular performance category, (b) the relative importance the category has to one’s work, (c) the relative importance the category has to one’s long term professional goals, and (d) how much control the school psychologist has over improving the category. If an area is agreed on as needing improvement, short-range improvement goals should be set, basing the goals on current performance levels as reflected in the appraisal scales. Kruger (1987) then discusses the need to maintain performance improvement. Use of providing the school
psychologist with periodic feedback regarding performance was one method the author indicated. Another method to maintain improved performance was to provide the school psychologist with intermittent reinforcement increasing the probability of the improvement behavior being maintained over time (Kruger, 1985).

With regard to the performance appraisal model provided by Kruger (1985), the author highlighted areas which brings both the appraised and the appraiser together in order to come to an agreement on what performance is to be appraised, and also, what specific behaviors are in sync with the role and function activities of the school psychologist within the organization. Particularly of good insight was Kruger's (1985) awareness that categories for improvement can examine areas that might be either not relevant to the role and function of the school psychologist, may not be relevant to the long-term goals of the school psychologist, or that the school psychologist may not have much control over the improvement of the category. It appears that what is demonstrated in the work of Kruger (1987) is that performance appraisal might be being underutilized in the most disadvantageous way by those who appraise school psychologist and have no training or education in how to conduct them.
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study provided an analysis of educational administrators’/supervisors’ responses to a survey that focuses on their administrative skills in conducting the performance evaluation of school psychologists. Their responses to the survey were analyzed to determine if there are significant administrator qualities that are aligned with Stronge’s (1991) dynamics of effective performance evaluation systems in education extended from Katz’s (1955) “three-skill” framework based on technical, human relations, and conceptual domains of an effective administrator.

Population and Sample

The participants included those K-12 public school educational administrators responsible for the performance appraisal of full-time employed (FTE) school psychologists working in the state of Michigan. The sample of educational administrators worked in rural, suburban, and urban school districts throughout the state. The participants were selected from the Michigan Department of Education’s Michigan Directory of Service Providers for Infants, Toddlers, and Students with Disabilities 2007-2008 Edition, which contained a list of Intermediate School Districts and a list of Local School Districts in which FTE K-12 public schools’ school psychologists worked.

The Michigan Department of Education’s Michigan Directory of Service Providers for Infants, Toddlers, and Students with Disabilities 2007-2008 Edition was used because it provided the most recent contact information of administrative personnel in local and intermediate school districts (ISDs), specialized schools, and public school academies (charter schools). The directory is not meant to be a comprehensive list of all special education personnel, but instead
provides basic contact information (i.e., postal addresses, telephone numbers, fax numbers, and e-mail addresses) for administrators and others who provide services to infants, toddlers, and students with disabilities. The role(s) and function(s) the individual serves in a particular school or agency and, in some cases, specific title(s) are also provided. For example, if a person serves in the role of building principal at a particular school, the title “Principal” is listed. If the principal also serves in the role of local district special education contact person, that information is also indicated.

The role and function of the administrators/supervisors were confirmed by participants by completing the demographic items of the questionnaire. Also, participants’ names were cross-referenced with the area public schools within counties. This was done to ensure that participants would not be sent more than one questionnaire to complete regardless of the number of local education agencies (LEAs) in which they might conduct the performance evaluations of school psychologists. Local education agency (LEA) administrators/supervisors with multiple administrative responsibilities would also only receive one survey questionnaire.

Instrumentation

The three-skill of an effective administrator questionnaire is a 27-item survey instrument that was developed from the theoretical work of Stronge’s (1991) paper concerning the dynamics of effective performance evaluation systems in education. It consists of three subscales specific to becoming an effective administrator. These domain specific skills are technical skills domain, human relations skills domain, and conceptual skills domain. The technical skill domain is comprised of four items that assess the extent to which administrators/supervisors feel that the performance evaluation system they use appraises what school psychologists they evaluate do. The human relations skill domain is comprised of five items that assess the extent to which
administrators/supervisors feel that they work effectively and cooperatively with the school psychologists they evaluate. Lastly, the conceptual skill domain consists of six items that assess the extent to which administrators/supervisors envision the organization’s goals and objectives in the context of the performance evaluation of school psychologists. The survey is included as Appendix A.

In the demographic section of the survey participants indicated their formal education and experience. Participants indicated their highest degree obtained by selecting from a drop-down menu either (1) a bachelor’s degree, (2) a master’s degree, (3) an education specialist degree, (4) a doctoral degree, or (5) other degree. If participants have more than one degree obtained at any of the aforementioned educational levels, the participant selected from the drop-down menu the degree, regardless of the number of degrees at that educational level the participant may have, as their highest degree obtained. Participants indicated their experience as an administrator/supervisor who conducts the performance evaluations of school psychologists by asking them to indicate the number of years they have been active in the position using a drop-down menu with ascending numbers of years. Participants’ age, ethnicity, and gender were selected from drop-down menus. Regarding the age demographic, participants indicated their exact age at time of completing the survey instrument using a drop-down menu show ascending years of age. From a drop-down menu participants described the school district(s) in which they work, as well as aspects of their primary professional role concerning the following: 1) Whether they consider their school district to be rural, suburban, or urban, 2) The total number of professionals they conduct performance evaluations on, 3) The educational professionals, if any, they conduct performance evaluations on, 4) Whether or not they are shared between more than one school district, 5) The number of school psychologists they conduct performance evaluations
on, 6) What their primary professional role is within the school district(s) they work, and 7) If working in more than one school district, are their primary roles in each district the same.

To measure participants’ degree of comfort in conducting the performance evaluations of school psychologists’ using the National Association of School Psychologists’ (NASP, 2000) Standards of Professional Practice, a four-point Likert scale was used (i.e., 0-never, 1-sometimes, 2-often, and 3-always). Participants made selections from a drop-down menu. Items were constructed based on the following NASP Standards of Professional Practice Guidelines:

1. Using a multidisciplinary decision-making process;
2. Communicating and collaborating at the individual, group, and systems levels;
3. Developing cognitive and academic goals and progress monitoring these goals for all students;
4. Making decisions based on current scientific information to develop behavioral, affective, or adaptive goals for all students;
5. Working with individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds;
6. Demonstrating knowledge of school systems to facilitate organizational structure and public policies that create safe, caring, places of learning;
7. Utilizing health promotion and crisis intervention methods based on students’ and systems’ needs; and,
8. Assisting families through demonstration of understanding of family impact on students’ wellness and school achievement (NASP, 2000).

The comfort level measure contained items that describe what school psychologists do and the degree of comfort with which administrators/supervisors had while conducting the performance evaluation of school psychologists’ work.
Administration

The on-line survey instrument, using SurveyMonkey.com, was designed to collect anonymous data. It contained no identifying elements and no quotes were requested from those participating in this on-line investigation. Additionally, a statement of confidentiality was included in the letter of introduction to assure the participants that the confidentiality of the data would be ensured by limiting the access of the data to the researcher, members of the dissertation committee and/or those individuals or departments involved in the analysis of the data. The letter of introduction appears in Appendix B.

In addition, the information would be reported in aggregate and not by individual participant to limit the ability to link information back to the respondent. Demographic information that could be used to identify characteristics of participants was withheld from all persons not involved with the investigation, and was destroyed by the researcher upon completion of the study. Any identity-disclosing information (e.g., position title, school population, number of years experience, etc.) was summarized and used, in aggregate, for purposes of this investigation only. To avoid statistical exposure prior to the release of investigative findings, the information was carefully analyzed to minimize the possibility that it could be associated to the participants of this study. Community specific information was summarized and reported in a manner that maintained the confidentiality of the participants.

Prior to e-mailing the survey instruments via SurveyMonkey.com, a completed application was submitted to Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) at Bowling Green State University for approval. After obtaining approval from the HSRB at Bowling Green State University, the survey instrument was e-mailed to 547 Directors of Special Education Services of K-12 Public School Districts and Intermediate School Districts (ISDs) in the state of Michigan.
Each director of special education was e-mailed, using Bowling Green State University’s e-mail system, the six-page survey instrument and a one-page cover letter electronically attached to the e-mail sent out labeled “Confidential”. The “Confidential” label was used to demonstrate added assurance of confidentiality for participants of the investigation, and to distinguish it from the general bulk e-mail participants may receive. Participants could complete the survey instrument within 15 to 20 minutes without the need to research answers.

The surveys were e-mailed individually using SurveyMonkey.com so as not to mail them in bulk from the researcher in order not divulge the identity of participants’ local education agency (LEA) nor to give participants the impression that their responses were not an individually unique contribution to this investigation. The participants were provided one-week to complete the survey. A follow-up e-mail reminder providing a one-week extension was sent ten days later. The data from the surveys were entered into SPSS 13.0 to produce statistical reports for analysis. The reports of the investigation appear in Chapter IV.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study consisted of a multivariate design using multiple regression analysis to assess correlational relationships among the study’s dependent variables. Where administrator/supervisor level of comfort in conducting the performance evaluation of school psychologists’ role and function, education, and experience, are the independent variables (i.e., predictor variables), and the effective administrator skills, technical domain, human domain, and conceptual domain, are the dependent variables (i.e., criterion variable). In addition, this study attempted to evaluate the need to control for potential confounding variables, by implementing a series of correlations to evaluate the need to control for potential confounding variables.

Type of analysis techniques by research questions are as follows:
1. What are the effective administrative skills of administrators/supervisors who conduct the performance evaluation of school psychologists with respect to technical, human, and conceptual skill domains?

*Analysis technique:* Descriptive analysis using SPSS that will provide the mean and standard deviation.

2. What is the comfort level of administrators/supervisors charged with the performance evaluation of school psychologists’ role and function in K-12 public schools?

*Analysis technique:* Descriptive analysis using SPSS that will provide the mean and standard deviation.

3. What is the formal education and experience of administrators who conduct the performance evaluation of school psychologists?

*Analysis technique:* A descriptive analysis using SPSS will provide the frequency for this research question.

4. Is there a significant difference in administrators’/supervisors’ comfort level in the performance evaluation of school psychologists’ role and function across levels of education and experience?

*Analysis technique:* Pearson correlations to determine covariates prior to conducting regression analysis.

5. Is there a significant difference in the effective administrative skills of administrators/supervisors who conduct the performance appraisal of school psychologists across levels of education and experience?

*Analysis technique:* Pearson correlations to determine covariates prior to conducting regression analysis.
6. What is the relationship between effective administrative skills (i.e., technical, human, and conceptual skills) across levels of administrators’/supervisors’ comfort level in their conduct of the performance evaluation of school psychologists?

*Analysis technique:* Pearson correlations to determine covariates prior to conducting regression analysis.
CHAPTER IV. RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationships between effective administrative skills and the comfort level of K-12 administrators charged with the performance evaluation of school psychologists in Michigan. This chapter presents the statistical results based on the data collected from the School Administrator Skills and Comfort Level Inventory (SASCI). This instrument solicited feedback to items on effective administrator skills, inclusive of technical, human relations, and conceptual skills. The SASCI also solicited responses to items focusing on K-12 administrators’ comfort level in conducting the performance evaluation of school psychologists based on the National Association of School Psychologists’ (NASP) Professional Practice Guidelines (NASP, 2000). Findings regarding this investigation are presented in this chapter.

The results are presented for each research question. All statistical analysis was computed using SPSS Statistics Version 17.0 (2008). First, demographic characteristics of the sample population are presented, where frequencies and percentages were computed. Second, Pearson correlations were computed to determine if there were significant relationships between dependent variables and predictor variables. In order to evaluate the need to statistically control the background variables of experience and education effect on effective administrator skills and comfort level, Pearson correlations were performed. Third, multiple regressions analyses were conducted to examine the effect of administrator education and experience on comfort level, the effect of comfort level on administrative skills, and the effect of education and experience on effective administrative skills.
Characteristics of Sample

The participants in this research were K-12 public school administrators from Michigan. The sample included K-12 public school administrators who worked in traditional public school districts, county intermediate school districts, and regional educational resource agencies (RESAs). The sample did not include private or parochial schools; nor did it include public charter schools. The participants were selected from the Michigan Department of Education’s Directory of Service Providers for Infants, Toddlers, and Students with Disabilities 2007-2008 Edition (hereafter “Directory”). The Directory is a resource book containing the contact information, including e-mail addresses, of all administrative service providers for infants, toddlers, and students with disabilities across the 83 counties in the state of Michigan.

All 663 administrators listed in the Directory were electronically mailed the four-page survey and asked to participate in this study. The electronic mail collector used was SurveyMonkey.com. Five hundred-nine surveys were not responded to, 46 surveys were marked “delivery has failed” and bounced (not included in the sample), while seven survey participants chose not to participate (opted out). From the remaining sample of 154 surveys, four surveys were partially completed and unable to be used. From the remaining sample of 150, 56 surveys could not be used because participants endorsed item #12 in the negative, which asked, “Do you conduct the performance evaluation of school psychologists?” Because of the negative response to item #12, only 94 of the 150 surveys were considered as completed responses to the e-mailed survey, and deemed usable. Once per week, for four weeks, SurveyMonkey.com automatically sent to participants the survey instrument, with the letter requesting their participation, requesting participants’ participation and completion of the on-line survey. Those participants that responded and completed the survey, or who opted out, did not receive the electronic mailing of
the survey the next week. However, those participants who did not respond, or who responded partially or incompletely, did receive an automatic electronic mailing of the invitation and survey the following week. This cycle of automatic e-mailings continued until the close of the on-line survey collection process at the end of the four weeks.

Data Analysis and Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 provides a brief description of the gender of the participants of the study. Of the participants, 60 were females (64.5%) and 33 (35.5%) were males.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N and %</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 presents data on the ethnic composition of the study’s participants. The largest group of this study was comprised of 87 White administrators who conducted the performance evaluation of school psychologists (95.6%). The second largest ethnic group was 4 Blacks/African Americans, comprising of 4.4% of the sample population. Regarding other ethnic groups, no American Indians/Alaska Natives, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders, were part of the sample population.
Table 2

*Ethnicity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>95.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total N and %</strong></td>
<td>91</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Three participants did not respond to this item.

**Research Question 1**

What are the effective administrative skills of administrators/supervisors who conduct the performance evaluation of school psychologists with respect to technical, human, and conceptual skill domains?

Table 3 provides the descriptive analyses showing that participants scored well on the conceptual and human skills. On a Likert Scale measuring from 1 to 4 with a midpoint of 2.5, a human skill mean of 3.25 and a conceptual skill mean of 3.47 suggest that participants rated items of human skill and conceptual skill as relatively effective administrative strengths. Responses for technical skill were lower with a mean of 2.44.
Table 3

*Means and Standard Deviations for Technical, Human, Conceptual Administrative Skills with Comfort Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical Skill</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>.536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Skill</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Skill</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>.406</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Research Question 2*

What is the comfort level of administrators/supervisors responsible for the performance evaluation of school psychologists?

Table 4 reports the mean comfort level of administrators conducting the performance evaluation of school psychologists as 3.68, on a scale from 1 to 4.

Table 4

*Mean and Standard Deviation for Comfort Level of Administrators Conducting the Performance Evaluation of School Psychologists*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfort Level</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>.358</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 3

What is the formal education and experience of administrators who conduct the performance evaluation of school psychologists?

Table 5 presents information regarding participants’ highest degree obtained. The largest number of administrators, thirty-nine (42.5%), held an education specialist degree. Thirty-six participants (39.1%) held a master’s degree while 17 (18.5%) had obtained a doctorate. None of the participants indicated a bachelor’s degree as the highest degree held.

Table 5

Highest Degree Obtained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education specialist</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N and %</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Two respondents left this item blank.

Table 6 provides the demographic information of administrators currently maintaining a professional (PSP) certification.
Table 6

*Professional (PSP) Certification Held*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Certification</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N and %</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 provides the demographic information of administrators who currently hold a teacher certification. Sixty-five administrators (69.9%) responded yes to maintaining a teacher certification, while 28 (30.1%) responded no.

Table 7

*Administrators Maintaining a Teachers’ Certificate*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers’ Certificate</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>69.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N and %</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 offers the demographic information displaying the administrators who currently hold an administrative certificate. Seventy-six participants (82.6%) responded yes, while 16 participants (17.4%) responded no.
Table 8

Administrative Certificate Held

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Certificate</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N and %</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 provides the demographic information concerning the number of years administrators who conduct the performance evaluation of school psychologists have worked in their current position. Forty-one participants (43.6%) indicated having worked in their current position 1 to 5 years, 23 participants (24.5%) indicated 6 to 10 years, 13 participants indicated 11 to 15 years, 7 participants (7.5%) indicated 16 to 20 years, 6 participants (6.4%) indicated 21 to 25 years, and 2 participants (2.1%) indicated having worked in their current position 30 or more years. Two participants (2.1%) reported having worked in their current position less than 1 year.
Table 9

*Years Worked in Current Position*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years worked</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>43.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 or more</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N and %</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 provides the demographic information pertaining to the number of years administrators have conducted the performance evaluation of school psychologists. Thirty-three of the sample administrators (35.5%) had evaluated school psychologists between 1 and 5 years. Twenty-nine administrators (31.2%) indicated having evaluated school psychologists 6 to 10 years. The frequency of administrators continued to decline with the number of years having evaluated school psychologists. Six administrators (6.5%) reported having evaluated school psychologists for 16 to 20 years, and 7 administrators (7.6%) reported having evaluated school psychologists for 21 to 25 years. One administrator (1.1%) reported having evaluated school psychologists for 30 or more years.
Table 10

Number of Years Administrators Evaluated School Psychologists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Evaluating</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 to 29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 +</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N and %</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 provides demographic information regarding the number of school psychologists administrators evaluate. Twenty-two (23.7%) of the administrators conducted performance evaluations on 1 school psychologist, 17 (18.3%) conducted performance evaluations on 2 school psychologists, 13 (14.0%) conducted performance evaluations on 4 school psychologists, and 12 (12.9%) conducted performance evaluations of school psychologists on at least 10 or more.
Table 11

*Number of School Psychologists Administrators Evaluate*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of psychologists evaluated</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N and %</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 provides information as to administrators’ conducting the performance evaluation of ancillary staff. Seventy-six administrators (82.6%) indicated that they evaluate ancillary staff, while 16 administrators (17.4%) reported that they do not conduct the performance evaluation of ancillary staff.
Table 12

*Administrators’ Evaluation of Ancillary Staff*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation of ancillary staff</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N and %</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 reveals the demographic information regarding participants’ primary professional title. In all, the total sampling population responding to this item was 87 administrators. Of that, 57 (65.5%) were special education directors, 26 (29.9%) were special education supervisors, 3 (3.4%) were assistant superintendents, and 1(1.1%) was a principal. No participants indicated that they held the title of superintendent.

Table 13

*Primary Professional Title*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary professional title</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant superintendent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education director</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education supervisor</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant principal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N and %</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 4

Is there a significant relationship between the effective administrative skills and administrators’ comfort level in the conduct of the performance evaluation of school psychologists?

In order to evaluate the need to statistically control for the experience variables of education and experience, Pearson correlations between those variables were performed (see Appendix A). Results indicated that the number of school psychologists evaluated (NOPsy) and years in position (YrsInPos) were positively correlated with conceptual skill (ConSkill) and technical skill (TecSkill) ($r = .26$, $p < .05$ and $r = .23$, $p < .05$, respectively). Therefore, NOPsy and YrsInPos were entered as covariates for all multiple regressions in order to control for their effect on the regressions.

Table 14 shows the results of the linear regression analysis revealing no significant relationship between technical skill and comfort level, number of school psychologists evaluated, or years in position. However, it can be noted that the relationship between technical skill and YrsInPos approached significance with a significance level of $p < .051$. 
Table 14

*Linear Regression Analysis for Variables Revealing the Relationship between Technical Skill and Comfort Level, Years in Position, and Number of School Psychologists Evaluated*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE(B)</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfort level</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.294</td>
<td>.769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num of Psychs</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>.855</td>
<td>.395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Pos</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.209</td>
<td>1.981</td>
<td>.051</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* \(R^2=.051, \text{NS.}\)

Table 15 provides the results of the linear regression analysis predicting the effect that comfort level (\(p < .05\)) and number of school psychologists evaluated (\(p < .05\)) had on human skill. The relationship between human skill and YrsInPos was not significant at the \(p < .05\) level.

Table 15

*Linear Regression Analysis for Variables Revealing the Relationship between Human Skill and Comfort Level, Years in Position, and Number of School Psychologists Evaluated*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE(B)</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfort level</td>
<td>.450</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>.356</td>
<td>3.651</td>
<td>.002**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num of Psychs</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.146</td>
<td>1.499</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Pos</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.162</td>
<td>1.662</td>
<td>.100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* \(R^2=.190\)

**\(p < .01\)**
Table 16 provides the results of the linear regression analysis predicting the effect that comfort level (p < .001) and number of school psychologists evaluated (p < .05) had on conceptual skill. Years in position was not found to be statistically significant in relationship to administrators’ conceptual skill.

Table 16

Linear Regression Analysis for the Dependent Variable of Conceptual Skill and the Independent Variables of Comfort Level, Years in Position, and Number of School Psychologist Evaluated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE(B)</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfort level</td>
<td>.475</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>.423</td>
<td>4.530</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num of Psychs</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.231</td>
<td>2.469</td>
<td>.016*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Pos</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.726</td>
<td>.470</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R²=.257
*p < .05
**p < .01

Research Question 5

Is there a significant relationship between administrators’/supervisors’ comfort level in the performance evaluation of school psychologists’ role and function across levels of education and experience?

Table 17 provides the results of linear regression revealing no significant effect of education and experience predictor variables on the dependent variable of comfort level (ComLev).
Table 17

*Linear Regression Analysis for the Dependent Variable Comfort Level and the Predictor Variables of Education and Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE(B)</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>-.009</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>-.138</td>
<td>.890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ProCert</td>
<td>.273</td>
<td>.194</td>
<td>.349</td>
<td>1.410</td>
<td>.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TeaCert</td>
<td>.290</td>
<td>.191</td>
<td>.367</td>
<td>1.518</td>
<td>.134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AdmCert</td>
<td>-.049</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>-.046</td>
<td>-.374</td>
<td>.710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YrsInPos</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.195</td>
<td>1.147</td>
<td>.255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YrsEvaPsy</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.015</td>
<td>.156</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.101</td>
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<td>.420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.238</td>
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<td>.612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PrincTitle</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SESpvTitle</td>
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<td>.254</td>
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<td>.572</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* $R^2=.097$, NS.

*Research Question 6*

Is there a significant difference in the effective administrative skills of administrators/supervisors who conduct the performance appraisal of school psychologists across levels of education and experience?

Table 18 results reveal no significant effect of education and experience variables on technical skill.
Table 18

Linear Regression Analysis for the Dependent Variable Technical Skill and the Predictor Variables of Education and Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE(B)</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td>.264</td>
<td>-.056</td>
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<td>.823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TeaCert</td>
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<td>.261</td>
<td>-.180</td>
<td>-.744</td>
<td>.459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AdmCert</td>
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<td>.180</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>.988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YrsInPos</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.303</td>
<td>.763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YrsEvaPsy</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>.659</td>
<td>.512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.023</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.140</td>
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<td>.259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EvaAnStaf</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOSE Title</td>
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<td>.325</td>
<td>-.051</td>
<td>-.163</td>
<td>.871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PrincTitle</td>
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<td>.624</td>
<td>-.027</td>
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<td>.848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SESpvTitle</td>
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<td>.346</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.986</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R²=.067, NS.

Table 19 displays a linear regression analysis that reveals Years in Position (p < .05) and Director of Special Education Title (DOSETitle) (p < .05) significantly predict level of human skill. Other education and experience predictor variables revealed no significant effect on human skill.
Table 19

*Linear Regression Analysis for the Dependent Variable Human Skill and the Predictor Variables of Education and Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE(B)</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td>-.041</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-.099</td>
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<td>.667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>.011</td>
<td>.347</td>
<td>2.154</td>
<td>.035*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YrsEvaPsy</td>
<td>-.009</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>-.123</td>
<td>-.741</td>
<td>.461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>EvaAnStaf</td>
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<td>-.077</td>
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<td>.515</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOSE Title</td>
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<td>.658</td>
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<td>SESpvTitle</td>
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<td>.303</td>
<td>.516</td>
<td>1.701</td>
<td>.094</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note. R²=.186
*p < .05*

Table 20 presents the results of the linear regression analysis revealing that the number of school psychologists evaluated significantly predicts conceptual skill. The remaining education and experience predictor variables revealed no significant effect.
Table 20

*Linear Regression Analysis for the Dependent Variable Conceptual Skill and the Predictor Variables of Education and Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE(B)</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>-.197</td>
<td>-1.646</td>
<td>.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ProCert</td>
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<td>-.078</td>
<td>-.331</td>
<td>.742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TeaCert</td>
<td>-.105</td>
<td>.201</td>
<td>-.120</td>
<td>-.521</td>
<td>.604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AdmCert</td>
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<td>.139</td>
<td>.184</td>
<td>1.560</td>
<td>.123</td>
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<tr>
<td>YrsInPos</td>
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<td>.010</td>
<td>.269</td>
<td>1.657</td>
<td>.102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YrsEvaPsy</td>
<td>-.011</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>-.171</td>
<td>-1.025</td>
<td>.309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO Psy</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.243</td>
<td>2.074</td>
<td>.042*</td>
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<tr>
<td>EvaAnStaf</td>
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<td>.252</td>
<td>-.121</td>
<td>-1.022</td>
<td>.311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOSE Title</td>
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<td>1.106</td>
<td>.273</td>
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<tr>
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<td>SESpvTitle</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td>.216</td>
<td>.707</td>
<td>.482</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. R²=.168
*p < .05*
CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, & CONCLUSIONS

Chapter five begins with a brief integrative summary of the results. It contains a discussion and interpretation of the results, and their implications for both theory and practice. The chapter provides direction for future research and examines limitations of the current research. Finally, chapter five draws several conclusions about the study itself and its relevance to the practical and theoretical framework of the effective administrator skills of Katz (1955) and the implications of that framework, which Stronge (1991) theoretically expanded on in his attempt to bridge the Katz’s model to the effective administrative skills needed to conduct the performance evaluation of school psychologists and other professional support personnel (PSP).

Summary of Results

The purpose of this study was to identify and examine effective administrator skills of K-12 public school administrators charged with conducting the performance evaluation of school psychologists, and to determine any statistically significant effects of their comfort, education, and experience, on those effective administrator skills.

Briefly summarizing the findings, K-12 public school administrators identified more with human and conceptual skills than with technical skill. While at the same time demonstrating an affinity with human and conceptual administrator skills, the same administrators found that conducting the performance evaluations of school psychologists was not uncomfortable for them, but that they were able to conduct these performance evaluations with a high level of comfort.

Comfort level and the number of school psychologists evaluated had a significant predictive effect on administrators’ human skill in conducting the performance evaluations of school psychologists. Equally as important, it was discovered that administrators’ comfort level and the number of school psychologists evaluated on had a positive impact on administrators’
conceptual skill. Why this was not the case for technical skill will be explored later in this chapter.

Administrators’ education had no predictive effect on comfort in their conduct of the performance evaluation of school psychologists. That was the case, regardless of the highest degree administrators obtained, or whether or not administrators held a PSP, teacher, or administrative certification. At the same time, although administrators’ education and experience were not found to have significant effects on their comfort level, the administrative experience variable of “number of psychologists evaluated” was found to have a significant predictive effect on conceptual skill and years in position and status as a director of special education had a significant predictive effect on human skill.

Discussion of the Results

It is important to compare, contrast, and discuss the results of this study in terms of Katz’s (1955, 1974) theoretical model of the three-skill framework of effective administrators. This is accomplished with Stronge’s (1991) expansion of Katz’s model to the performance evaluation of school psychologists. Both Katz (1955, 1974) and Stronge (1991) viewed administrators as those who direct the activities of others in terms of achieving the objective of the organization. Therefore, within their understanding of what an administrator does, successful administrators are thought to utilize three basic skills: technical skill, human skill, and conceptual skill.

*Technical Skill and Comfort Level*

In the present study, administrators indicated having a high degree of human and conceptual skill in their conduct of the performance evaluation of school psychologists. However, concerning their technical skill, these same administrators indicated a much lower
degree of skill in their performance evaluations of school psychologists. The initial review of the
discrepancy between administrators’ self-reported high levels of human and conceptual skill
contrasted to their much lower self-reported technical skill, at first glance, appeared to this
investigator inconsequential. However, upon further examination, when viewing administrators’
responses with the understanding that those administrators’ mean technical skill level on a Likert
Scale of one to four was 2.44, rather than between three and four as with human and conceptual
skill. The stark contrast was made apparent, and generates the question, why?

Perhaps the reason for such a low mean for technical skill of administrators is concerned
with administrators’ limited knowledge of school psychologists’ role and function; specifically
with respect to their performance evaluations. Hagemeyer et al. (1998) studied the role and
function perceptions of school personnel regarding what school psychologists do. In short, the
researchers wanted to know if there existed conflicts of school personnel as to their ideal versus
actual understanding of school psychologists’ role and function. The result of their study
revealed that school staff maintained a narrow understanding of school psychologists’ role and
duties. Watkins et al. (2001) found that school staff maintained the perception that the role and
function of school psychologists was primarily that of special education testing. Hartshorne and
Johnson (1985) examined secondary principals’ role perceptions of school psychologists’ role
and function. A questionnaire was created and distributed to the principals asking them to
consider activities they thought relevant to what school psychologists spent their time
performing. The results found that secondary principals ranked psychological testing, more than
any other (e.g., staff, parent, administrator consultations), as the number one activity they
thought school psychologists should be involved in.
Limited knowledge in the course of performance evaluation goes against Katz’s (1974) technical framework of his effective administrator skill model. As Katz (1974) explained, technical skill assumes a comprehension on the part of the administrator of a specific kind or type of knowledge. As Katz (1974) explained further, technical skill for administrators is a developable skill. Given Katz’s (1974) understanding of technical skill being developable, or capable of being learned, the performance evaluations of school psychologists may require administrators to develop a basic working knowledge of school psychologists’ role and function in order to conduct effective performance evaluations (Stronge, 1991). Regarding administrators’ high comfort level mean it is reasonably plausible to assume that their high mean comfort level may be more a result of administrators’ high human and conceptual means. This is to say, human and conceptual skill may be more generalizable, thus understandable than administrators’ understanding of the technical skill of school psychologists.

Relative to Stronge’s (1991) viewpoint, Chafouleas et al. (2002) examined current perceptions of practicing school psychologists’ concerning how they were evaluated on their professional practices. Results of their study found that performance evaluations of many of the participants were most often conducted by an administrator who was unfamiliar with school psychology, which may have been the case in the present study as well. Furthermore, being unfamiliar with what school psychologists do, the school psychologists studied by Chafouleas et al. (2002) perceived administrators’ performance evaluations as having negative impact on their professional development opportunities. Crespi and Fischetti (1997), in their discussion on school psychologists’ professional supervision practices, indicated the ineffectiveness of supervision, and subsequently evaluation, by supervisors that lacked the training and credentialing as a school psychologist. Similarly, in this dissertation study, qualitatively far
more administrators indicated maintaining a teacher’s certificate than a PSP certification, 69.9% and 34.0%, respectively.

Stronge (1991) emphasized the education of school personnel as a key function to education reform. Likewise, this dissertation study recommends professional development programs specific to educating administrative staff as to the role and function of school psychologists, as well as to the education and training of administrative staff as to the use of the performance evaluation instruments used to conduct the performance evaluation of school psychologists. Representatives of the Georgia Department of Education (1991) presented a paper at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) that discussed the state of Georgia’s law requiring certified professional personnel employed in Georgia public school systems to undergo a yearly performance evaluation by trained evaluators. Those professional personnel included all teachers, administrators, superintendents, school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, media specialist, school social workers, and counselors. Georgia Department of Education (1991) recommended to the state of Georgia that it require school personnel responsible for conducting the performance evaluation of certified professional personnel to be trained to objectively and reliably use the performance evaluation instrument designed specifically for those professional personnel categories required to be evaluated. It is quite clear that the literature supports the education and training of school personnel charged with the performance evaluation of school psychologists, as well as other PSP (Georgia Department of Education, 1991).

Another explanation for the low technical skill mean of administrators within this study charged with the performance evaluation of school psychologists may lie within the design of the performance evaluation instrument that they use. Within the literature describing the role and
function of school psychologists, various authors have described the instruments used to conduct their performance evaluation as inappropriate due to those instruments having oftentimes been designed to evaluate more the performance evaluation of teachers rather than school psychologists. Stronge and Helm (1992) indicated that the evaluations of educators have primarily focused on the evaluation of classroom teachers, and even then, the process of evaluation was depended on the use of classroom observations versus a set of objective criteria. The authors’ further state that professional support personnel (PSP) had been historically “evaluated rarely or inadequately” (Stronge and Helm, 1992, p. 175). How so? Chafouleas et al. (2002) also found that oftentimes the criteria by which school psychologists were evaluated were often not developed to measure the specific roles and functions school psychology practice, but was more conducive to the performance evaluations of classroom teachers.

Stronge and Tucker (2003) reported that in the average elementary or secondary schools, twenty to forty-five percent of the educators who come and go throughout the school day are non-teaching and non-administrative employees. Performance evaluation procedures and systems have been in place for teachers and administrators; however, more times than not, school systems have “neglected” utilizing an appropriate performance evaluation instrument for PSP (Stronge and Tucker, 2003, p. 3). The performance evaluations of PSP are unique in that they require those charged with conducting the performance evaluations to understand the interplay of four basic factors: 1) multiple supervisors across settings, 2) the absence of well-developed job descriptions, 3) multiple specialty positions of a highly specialized training and practice, and 4) the need to use multiple data sources in the conduct of performance evaluation (Stronge and Helm, 2003). According to the literature as a whole (Crespi et al., 1998; Cummings, 1996; Curtis et al. 2002; Fischetti and Crespi, 1999; Hagemeier et al. 1998; Hosp and Reschly, 2002;
In determining a predictive effect of comfort level on technical skill, results of the linear regression analysis revealed no significant predictive effect of comfort level on technical skill. Also, there was no significant predictive effect for the covariates of “number of school psychologists evaluated” and “years in position” which were also entered into the regression analysis with comfort level to determine a predictive effect on technical skill. The lack of predictive effect of comfort level on technical skill may be again attributable to the relatively limited knowledge administrators have of the role and function of school psychologists (Chafouleas et al., 2002; Crespi and Fischetti, 1997), and how that limited knowledge interplays with the technical processes and procedures that Katz (1955, 1974) and Stronge (1991) have described concerning technical skill. With regard to administrators’ high mean comfort level, again it may be fair to consider their high mean comfort level to be a result of administrators’ high human skill and conceptual skill means. Administrators’ ability to communicate to, cooperate with, and consider others whom they work alongside (human skill) with their ability to understand their school districts’ vision and mission, and how each individual stakeholder plays an integral part in accomplishing school districts’ vision and mission (conceptual skill), may be more understandable to administrators’ and thereby more generalizable regardless of the
educational or experience backgrounds of the administrators of this study. Again, technical skill concerns itself with how well, or not, the performance evaluation system works (Stronge, 1991), which may be relative to performance evaluation instruments’ validity, how well the performance evaluation instrument used measures what it says it will; reliability, how consistently does the performance evaluation instrument used measure overtime and from one evaluator to another similar evaluation outcomes; and utility, the practical consideration of the performance evaluation beyond viewing and using it as a perfunctory administrative duty.

Although “years in position” was not found to have a predictive effect on technical skill when entered as a covariate with comfort level and “number of school psychologists evaluated”, a significant strength in the relationship between “years in position” and technical skill was found using Pearson $r$ correlation. This was not the case when “years in position” and “number of school psychologists evaluated” were entered as covariates with comfort level in the regression on technical skill. The reason why “years in position” and “number of school psychologists evaluated” had no significant predictive effect as covariates on technical skill when entered in the regression analysis is because regressing the covariates with comfort level on technical skill reduced the strength of the relationship to a non-significant level.

*Human Skill, Conceptual Skill, and Comfort Level*

This study found that administrators indicated having a high mean human and conceptual skill. This could be attributed to these skills being transferable to performance evaluations regardless of the type of educational profession. To further explain, and as discussed earlier, administrators indicated having a certification as a teacher (69.9%) more so than having a certification as a PSP (34.0%). Given the majority of the administrators in this study having a teachers’ certification, it could be that administrators think of human and conceptual skills in
more generalized terms, regardless of the type of education professional they evaluate.

According to Katz (1974) and Stronge (1991) human skill for these administrators means the ability to communicate, cooperate, and consider, while conceptual skill means the ability to understand how the individual functions of the organization are interrelated. Administrators’ having indicated having a teachers’ certificate may, because of their own meaning of human and conceptual skills from their perspectives as former teachers, consider the performance evaluation of school psychologists on those domains as less intimidating. As a caveat, the corollary to that might be that technical skill in the performance evaluation of school psychologists, requiring an understanding of a specific activity involving methods or procedures (Katz, 1974), may not be as intimidating as demonstrated by their lower technical skill mean (2.44).

Regarding the linear regression analysis of the predictive effect of comfort level on both human skill and conceptual skill, comfort level had a significant predictive effect on both human and conceptual skills. As a covariate, “number of psychologists evaluated” was also found to have a significant predictive effect on human and conceptual skills. What could be occurring regarding the predictive effect of comfort level on human skill and conceptual skill is that administrators who rated themselves as having high comfort level also rated themselves as having high human skill. Katz (1974) defined human skill as “an executive’s ability to work effectively as a group member and to build cooperative effort within the team he leads” (p. 91). In this understanding of human skill, “years in position” could have had significant predictive effect on human skill because of administrators’ opportunities to gain a variety of human skill experiences (e.g., communication, cooperation, and consideration) that could lead them to improved and refined human skill as described by Katz (1955, 1974) and Stronge (1991). The possibility of administrators gaining continued professional development regarding the role and
function of PSPs, inclusive of school psychologists, might also explain the significant predictive effect of the DOSE variable on human skill. That is, it is not the title of DOSE which might be providing a positive predictive effect on human skill, but the educational coursework and collateral training requirements set by the Michigan Department of Education (2009) that is the principle catalyst of the effect on human skill. When contrasted to the other professional titles (e.g., Assistant Superintendent, Special Education Supervisor, and Principal), it is the DOSE title that is found positively predictive of human skill for this study’s sample population.

Comfort Level, Education, and Experience

In this study education and experience of administrators had no predictive effect on administrators’ comfort level in the conduct of performance evaluation. Although uncertain as to why the predictor variables of education and experience did not have a significant effect on comfort level, one reason might be due to a ceiling effect of the instrument measuring administrators’ comfort. Although administrators revealed having a high mean comfort level, there was very little variance, as the results demonstrated. Future research should consider validity factors associated with the scaling of the measure. In fact, Stronge (1991) thought of validity in personnel evaluation as “the degree to which the evaluation process measures the performance that it purports to measure” (p. 81). However, in personnel evaluation validity, with the instrument is frequently and systemically not adhered to (Stronge, 1991). Using an instrument designed to measure teacher performance in order to measure school psychologists’ performance is an example. If the procedures used to measure performance evaluations are invalid, the outcomes resulting from using such a procedure will not improve the performance of those it was intended to assist (Stronge, 1991).
Another reason this study did not find a predictive effect of education and experience variables on comfort level could be because of the high percentage of administrators that were not certified as school psychologists. The majority of the administrators of this study held teacher certification and not professional support personnel (PSP) certificates. This might explain why administrators’ education and experience had no significant effect on comfort level in the regression analysis; their education and experience were from the perspective of teachers rather than from the perspective of school psychologists or other PSP. As discussed earlier within this chapter, a plausible reason could be due to the instrument’s ceiling effect caused by the scaling of the comfort level measure; the present measure did not provide enough variance.

An exhaustive search of the literature provided no reference for the use of the term comfort level throughout any of the performance evaluation literature. This study attempts to bring the term comfort level in performance evaluation to the forefront of performance evaluation research.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Leadership Practice

The implications of this study have significant meaning to the conduct of performance evaluations for K-12 school psychologists. Administrators having held a teacher’s certificate had no significant predictive effect on administrators’ comfort level. That is, this study reasoned the lack of teacher certification having no predictive effect on administrators’ comfort level as due to performance evaluations conducted from teachers’ (now administrators) perspectives, and a lack of understanding of school psychologists’ role and function. With this understanding, some have offered critique concerning the lack of education and training for those charged with the performance evaluation of school psychologists (Crespi and Fischetti, 1997; Crespi et al.,
This study recommends the need for administrators to obtain professional development specifically designed to assist them in better understanding the role and function of school psychologists, as well as alternative ways of delivering school psychological services that is in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations, as well as the National Association of School Psychologists’ (NASP) Guidelines for the Provision of School Psychological Services (NASP, 2000). Curtis et al. (2002) supported this idea by recommending that educating administrators on the professional standards for the provision of school psychological services would be an effective means of professional development, and greater understanding of school psychologists’ activities. Educating administrators on the role and function of school psychologists might promote an improved understanding for administrators and school psychologists the interplay between each others’ duties. By doing this, it may increase, by development, the technical skill of administrators charged in the performance evaluation of school psychologists.

Another recommendation would be for school districts to review the performance evaluation instruments they currently use to evaluate school psychologists’ performance, and then attempt to match those performance indicators, to the extent possible for their districts, with those performance indicators of the NASP Guidelines for the Provision of School Psychological Services (NASP, 2000). This could promote better understanding of the role and function of school psychologists for administrators charged with the performance evaluation of school psychologists. This could increase the technical skill of administrators, in terms of their increased knowledge and understanding of the role and function of school psychologists, and subsequently lead to an improved level of comfort in those administrators’ conduct of school psychologists’ performance evaluations.
To illustrate, the professional development of K-12 administrators in the state of Georgia was furthered when the Georgia Department of Education (1991) overhauled not only performance evaluation procedures for evaluating school personnel, but more importantly the performance evaluation instrument itself. This was accomplished by the passage of the Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act of 1985. It required that all certificated school personnel, including superintendents, would have their performance evaluated every year by trained evaluators using valid measures. The PSP evaluation instruments included the Georgia School Psychologists Evaluation Program (GSPEP), the Georgia School Counselor Evaluation Program (GSCEP), the Georgia School Social Worker Evaluation Program (GSSWEP), the Georgia Media Specialist Evaluation Program (GMSEP), and the Georgia Speech-Language Pathologist Evaluation Program (GSLPEP). The Georgia School Psychologist Evaluation Program (GSPEP) is comprehensive and specific to only school psychologists, relying on observations, review of records, peer review, and an optional staff survey. The GSPEP contains a manual which describes the performance evaluation instruments and a summary of procedures of using the GSPEP. Administrators attend a multi-day training program, and orientation materials are provided for school psychologists prior to performance evaluation (Georgia Department of Education, 1990).

The Georgia Department of Education’s GSPEP is a good example of improving the technical skill (Katz, 1955, 1974; Stronge, 1991) of those who conduct the performance evaluation of school psychologists through professional development and training on an evaluation instrument validated to the profession of school psychologists and other PSP. The outcomes for these practical recommendations could have a impact on administrators’ understanding of school psychologists’ broader role and function, and its meaning in the context
of performance evaluation and the subsequent benefits to the school organization as a whole (Stronge, 1991). When school psychologists are allowed to work outside the range of activities they have been prescribed (Reschly, 2000; Stronge and Tucker, 2003), and able to utilize the full range of skill sets as indicated in both the NASP Professional Conduct Manual Guidelines for the Provision of School Psychological Services (NASP, 2000) and the NASP Standards for Training and Field Placement Programs in School Psychology (NASP, 2000), maybe then, school district administrators responsible for their performance evaluation will begin to evaluate their performance accordingly.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research utilizing Katz’s (1955, 1974) theoretical framework of technical, human, and conceptual skills, and the construct of comfort level in the conduct of school psychologists’ performance evaluations, should be replicated with K-12 public school administrators in other states. In addition to replicating this study, or a variant of it, validating the comfort level measure would be important to accomplish. By validating the measure, the relationship suggested in this study between comfort level and technical skill might become stronger. Also, by validating the comfort level measure, we help assure that the process of performance evaluation is measuring the performance it claims to measure (Stronge, 1991), having practical implications for educational leadership, setting goals for the organization, and achieving organizational outcomes (Katz, 1955, 1974; Stronge, 1991).

Another research recommendation would be to replicate this study by obtaining the perspective of school psychologists’ of their administrators’ administrative skills who are charged to conduct their performance evaluations. School psychologists’ perceptions of supervision and performance evaluation have been examined (Chafouleas et al., 2002), however
not in the context of Katz’s (1955, 1974) three-skill theoretical framework or with a comfort level measure. In examining perceptions of school psychologists with regard to how administrators rated themselves, a truer determination of effectiveness and comfort might result. This might be accomplished by using a 360-degree experimental design by which school psychologists’ rate their administrators on effective administrative skills and comfort level, while administrators rate themselves on measures of the same effective administrator skill and comfort level construct.

Having conducted a quantitative study that did not answer all research questions posed, future research might utilize a qualitative research strategy in order to explore and determine why there appeared to be no significant predictive effect according to the research questions of this study. A strategy to use could mean interviewing administrators, and then determining central themes throughout the interviews that might explain their thoughts on research questions that were unanswered using a quantitative approach.

Conclusion

The limited ways by which school psychologists are utilized in K-12 public schools (Dawson, Cummings, Harrison, Short, Gorin, and Palomares, 2004; Sheridan and Gutkin, 2000; Tapasak and Keller, 1995) prompted this investigation into their performance evaluations. Administrators’ ability to view performance evaluation as a developmental (formative) process as opposed to a summative process is critical (Boswell and Boudreau, 2002; Harper, 1983; Katz, 1955, 1974). Katz (1974) shared a similar position with regard to broadening the activities of personnel when he said, “…management’s real concern should be for what a person can do rather than what he is” (p. 90). Katz’s (1955, 1974) model is a framework that holds to the position that effective administrator skills are developable. It does not believe that leaders have
innate traits or characteristics that prevent the development of leadership (Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson, 1996).

In conclusion, if K-12 public administrators in Michigan who conduct the performance evaluations of school psychologists fail to maintain or develop effective administrator skills, they may find themselves behind in understanding school psychologists’ role and function. This could lead to poor utilization of school psychological services for children (Proctor and Steadman, 2003), that in turn, could lead to children’s poor school performance. To promote an increase in knowledge regarding school psychologists’ role and function, incorporating the NASP Professional Conduct Manual Guidelines for the Provision of School Psychological Services (NASP, 2000) as part of the performance evaluation instrument used would be a positive step in the right direction to improving and conducting meaningful performance evaluations for school psychologists. Couple the development or refinement of the evaluation instrument with ongoing professional development of K-12 administrators on the role and function of school psychologists and other PSP, and you have a sampling of some of the ingredients for all children’s school success.
REFERENCES


Harvey, V. S., & Struzziero, J. A. (2000). *Effective supervision in school psychology.* NASP Publications, 4340 East West Highway, Suite 402, Bethesda, MD 20814 (members, $53.95; nonmembers, $59.95). Tel: 301-657-0270; Fax: 301-657-0275; Web site:


Bethesda, MD: The National Association of School Psychologists.


APPENDIX A

Demographic, Education, and Experience Items

1. Gender?
2. How old are you?
3. What is your ethnicity?
4. What is the highest degree you have attained?
5. What is your primary professional title?
6. How many years have you worked in your current position?
7. Do you currently hold an administrative certification?
8. Have you previously, or do you currently, maintain a professional support personnel certification or license as a school psychologists, school social worker, speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, or physical therapist?
9. Have you previously, or do you currently, maintain a professional teacher certification or license as a classroom teacher, media specialist, or guidance/school counselor?
10. Do you conduct the performance evaluations of occupational therapists, physical therapists, school social workers, special education teachers, and/or speech-language pathologists?
11. How would you describe your school district?
12. Do you conduct the performance evaluations of school psychologists?
13. How many school psychologists do you conduct performance evaluations on?
14. How many years have you conducted the performance evaluations of school psychologists?
15. With which group of students do the school psychologists you evaluate primarily work?
3 – Skills of an Effective Administrator Items

Rate, according to the Likert-Scale, how often the following things occur during the course of your evaluations of the school psychologists that you supervise:

A. <Technical Domain>
   1. How comfortable do you feel with the performance evaluation system you use to evaluate school psychologists? Click here (Stronge, 1991)
   2. Do you believe that the performance evaluation tool utilized in your school district measures what school psychologists do? Click here (Stronge, 1991)
   3. Have you had to modify portions of the performance evaluation tool to better evaluate school psychologists’ job performance? Click here (Stronge, 1991)
   4. How often do you find the performance evaluation tool to be consistent in evaluating school psychologists’ performance from one year to the next? Click here (Stronge, 1991)

B. <Human Relations Domain>
   5. How often do you communicate with the school psychologists that you conduct performance evaluations on? Click here (Stronge, 1991)
   6. How often do you think school psychologist perceive you as having substantive knowledge regarding what they do? Click here (Stronge, 1991)
   7. How often you think school psychologists find your leadership in harmony with school district and their own professional goals? Click here (Stronge, 1991)
   8. Do you discuss areas of professional expectations and professional development with school psychologists prior to the performance evaluation? Click here (Stronge, 1991)
   9. Do you and school psychologists reciprocally try to satisfy concerns one another might have? Click here (Stronge, 1991)

C. <Conceptual Domain>
   10. I try to know and understand the goals and the directions my school district takes? Click here (Stronge, 1991)
   11. I try to readily respond to the organizational changes within my school district? Click here (Stronge, 1991)
   12. Are you insightful and sensitive to the global needs of your school district? Click here (Stronge, 1991)
   13. I understand the needs of school psychologists I evaluate? Click here (Stronge, 1991)
   14. I demonstrate sensitivity to the needs of school psychologists’ I evaluate? Click here (Stronge, 1991)
   15. I have a broad view of the performance evaluation of school psychologists in my school district? Click here (Stronge, 1991)
On a Likert-scale of zero to three with 4=Very Comfortable, 3=Somewhat Comfortable, 2=Somewhat Uncomfortable, 1=Very Uncomfortable, 0=Not Evaluated, rate how comfortable you are in evaluating school psychologists on the following items:

1. School psychologists’ skill in collaborating as a member of a multidisciplinary team using a problem-solving process (NASP Practice Guideline 1, 2000).
2. School psychologists’ skill in understanding educational and developmental aspects of children’s learning to facilitate effective learning opportunities for all students (NASP Practice Guideline 1, 2000).
3. School psychologists’ skill in listening, participating, and conveying information at an individual, group, and systems level (NASP Practice Guideline 2, 2000).
4. School psychologists’ skill in understanding how district, state, and federal educational policy influence the provision of school psychological services (NASP Practice Guidelines 2, 2000).
5. School psychologists’ use of assessments and the subsequent use of the information to develop instructional strategies to meet the individual needs of children (NASP Practice Guidelines 3, 2000).
7. School psychologists’ skill in using decision-making models (e.g., Response to Intervention or Functional Behavioral Assessment) to facilitate effective learning and socialization (NASP Practice Guidelines 4, 2000).
9. School psychologists’ ability to recognize in themselves and others the subtle racial, class, gender, and cultural influences these biases may have on student outcomes (NASP Practice Guidelines 5, 2000).
10. School psychologists’ participation in the development or refinement of policies and procedures that advocate for effective programs and services (NASP Practice Guidelines 6, 2000).
11. School psychologists’ skill in providing direct counseling and indirect interventions using consultation for students who may be at-risk of social-emotional-behavioral problems (NASP Practice Guidelines 7, 2000).
12. School psychologists’ skill in linking schools, families, and community agencies, coordinate services when helping strategies involves or requires multiple agencies (NASP Practice Guidelines 8, 2000).
APPENDIX B

February 2, 2009

Title: Administrator Skills and Comfort Level in the Conduct of the Performance Evaluation of School Psychologists.

Dear Administrator/Supervisor,

I am a doctoral candidate of the Leadership and Policy Studies program, College of Education and Human Development, at Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.

I am inviting you to participate in my dissertation study surveying public school administrators/supervisors who conduct the performance evaluation of school psychologists. Why? In order to: 1) Provide a critical examination of K-12 public school administrators’ and supervisors’ administration skills, and 2) Examine administrators’/supervisors’ level of comfort, with respect to their administrative skills, in how school psychologists performance evaluations are conducted. The results of this study could assist in the preparation and professional development of school administrators, as well as expanding the role and function of school psychologists and other professional support personnel.

Understanding that your time is extremely valuable, the survey should take approximately 20-minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw your participation at any time without risk or explanation by clicking on the OPT OUT/REMOVE button. With that said, and at the risk of sounding repetitive, I believe that your participation in this study could have significant implications for K-12 public school administrators’ continued development of effective administrative skills, as well as the improved provision of school-based psychological services to children. It is for this reason, as well as this doctoral study being a partial fulfillment for my doctoral degree, that I would greatly appreciate your full participation in what I feel is a very timely and pertinent study.

Your informed consent to participate in this study is assumed by your completion of the survey and by clicking on the SUBMIT button. The information you provide will not include personally identifiable information, and will remain anonymous and cannot be revealed to me, the principle investigator (PI), or anyone else. General demographic information and your endorsement of survey items will be the only data collected and analyzed by me and members of my doctoral dissertation committee.

You can access the entire survey at: (www.surveymonkey.com >> link address later). This survey will be closed by midnight, March 9, 2009.

If you have any questions, or would like a copy of the results of my dissertation research, regardless of your participation or not, you may contact me at: (home) 734.929.2072, (mobile) 419.340.9642, or (e-mail) clarence.h.thomas@gmail.com, and I would be more than happy to answer your questions or send you the results when completed. You may also contact my dissertation advisor: Dr. Patrick Pauken, Associate Professor, Leadership & Policy Studies, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH, at office: 419 372 2550, or email: paukenp@bgsu.edu. The Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) at Bowling Green State University has approved this study. If you have any concerns about your rights as a participant in this study you may contact the HSRB via email at (hsrb@bgnet.bgsu.edu) or by telephone at (419.372.6916).

Sincerely,

Clarence H. Thomas
Doctoral Candidate
APPENDIX C

Correlations between experience and education variables

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Note.
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)