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I, Christen M. Davis, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Curriculum & Instruction.

It is entitled:
Elementary Teachers' Perceptions of Administrators and Job Satisfaction

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Elementary Teachers’ Perceptions of Administrators and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate administrative influence on teacher job satisfaction based on the perspectives of teachers using Frederick Herzberg, Bernard Mausner, and Barbara Snyderman’s Two-Factor Theory on job satisfaction as the theoretical framework. This study also explored the administrative actions and behaviors that teachers felt contributed to teacher job satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

This qualitative study used open-ended interviews to gather all data. Through these interviews, the administrative qualities that emerged as important were: integrity, leadership, professionalism, support, and communication. Integrity included trust, honesty, and being ethical. Leadership involved making decisions, administrator knowledge, consistency, ownership and responsibility, and ability. Professionalism pertained to teachers being treated as knowledgeable, with respect, and as team members. Administrative support included classroom, parent, personal, and professional support. Communication involved open communication between the members of the school.

Findings of this study showed that administrators do effect teacher job satisfaction. These participants also felt that administrative influence was the most influential variable effecting teacher job satisfaction. They also believed that teacher job satisfaction effected the students, which indirectly connected administrators to student success.
Acknowledgements

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother, Mildred K. Christensen. She began this journey with me as one of my biggest cheerleaders and constant support systems. She always knew that this was a project that I would successfully complete.

To my amazing family for their continued support. I love you all very much. I would like to especially thank my partner in this life, Jody Davis, for the continued faith and positive encouragement for whatever our family and I needed throughout this voyage.

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# Table of Contents

## Chapter I: Study Overview
- Reflexivity: 3
- Research Problem: 4
- Purpose: 6
- Significance: 6
- Theoretical Framework: 7
- Research Questions: 11
  - Questions: 11
  - Delimitations: 11
- Conclusion: 12

## Chapter II: Literature Review
- Job Satisfaction: 13
  - Teacher Job Satisfaction: 14
    - Teacher Retention: 15
    - Teacher Commitment and Motivation: 15
    - Teacher Empowerment: 16
  - Administrative Importance: 17
    - Administrator/Teacher Relationship: 17
    - Leadership: 18
    - Environment: 19
    - Empowerment: 20
    - Retention: 21
    - Support: 21
    - In Summary: 23
- Conclusion: 23

## Chapter III: Methodology
- Research Design: 25
- Setting and Population: 27
- Data Collection: 28
  - Sampling Method: 28
  - Instrument: 30
  - Procedures: 33
  - Role of the Researcher: 35
  - Validity and Reliability: 35
- Data Analysis: 36
- Conclusion: 38

## Chapter IV: Findings
- Introduction: 39
- Importance of Teacher Perceptions: 39
- Integrity: 45
Chapter I: Study Overview

This chapter provides an overview of this qualitative study and discusses the reasoning behind and importance of why the topic of administrative influence on teacher job satisfaction was chosen. The goal of this research study was to deeply explore teacher perceptions on the significance of administrators on teacher job satisfaction using Frederick Herzberg, Bernard Mausner, and Barbara Snyderman’s Two-Factor Theory (1959) on job satisfaction as the theoretical framework. This chapter includes: an explanation of why this topic is important, the research problem, the purpose and significance, and the specific research questions along with the delimitations of this study.

Reflexivity

I chose to research the question of how principals affect teacher job satisfaction because as a previous teacher and a current assistant principal, this topic has affected me personally and professionally for many years. My passion for this topic originated from the fact that I am from a family full of teachers where education has always been a top priority. For as long as I can remember I have always known I would be an educator and had strong feelings as to the importance of education and its effects on the world.

Growing up, one commonality that continued to surface whenever discussing school-related topics with family members was always something about the administrators in the buildings and school districts. This could have been in a positive light yet just as easily a negative one. But it always seemed to have some bearing on the attitudes of my family members. Once I actually became an educator, I got to experience firsthand how administrative influences affected myself and the other teachers around me. I also felt that influence transferred into the classrooms and to the students. I had five different building administrators as a teacher and
frequently heard the same positive and negative rumblings from fellow teachers that I had heard before from my family. Since my professional goal was one of administration, I made a great deal of notes on what to do and not to do based on the many informal family and teacher discussions I had overheard or been a part of over the years. Just as Baughman (1996) stated that one of the most critical elements of effective schools is the creation of a work atmosphere conducive to meeting the needs of both students and teachers, I believed as an administrator I should strive to do everything possible to ensure that I promoted a productive, successful environment for everyone. I feel certain that administrators have a strong connection and influence on teacher job satisfaction; this is why I chose to formally research a topic that I have informally been researching for years. As a result, my research took an in-depth look into the relationship between administrators and teacher job satisfaction.

Research Problem

Job satisfaction can be simply defined as the degree to which people like their jobs (Spector, 1997). It is the most frequently studied variable in organizational behavioral research (Spector, 1997). Research clearly establishes that job dissatisfaction can lead to increased absenteeism, physical and/or psychological health problems, relationship issues, higher turnover and attrition rates, and lower productivity (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Littrell, Billingsley, & Lawrence, 1994; Stride, Wall, & Catley, 2007).

The typical workweek is thought to be 40 hours per week, which would mean about one-third of the day is spent at work. This helps explain why job satisfaction is an important issue and so well studied. Many people could easily count up the lengthy hours spent both at a job or working on some aspect of that job even when they are not physically there, probably easily totaling up over the typical 40 hours a week. Educators are definitely no exception to this. When
schools are not in session, teachers are usually continuing with their professional development responsibilities and preparing for the following school year. But when schools are open, teachers on average spend over 50 hours each week on teaching duties, which is the highest since starting to track that data back in 1961 (National Education Association, 2003). In the United States, students typically attend school around 7 hours a day for 5 days a week. A school district is designed with elementary, middle or junior high, and high school levels where an average student would hopefully graduate after completing the typical 13 years in school. Teacher job satisfaction should be a top priority for our nation since those educators obviously spend a tremendous amount of time with the children in this country. Bogler (2002) stated that teacher job satisfaction is a single, general measure that is a statistically significant predictor of effective schools. Teachers have the most direct access to the students, which is why school effectiveness and success happens within the classroom with the teachers. Teacher job satisfaction is extremely important to the success of our schools and students.

With the implementation of the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* in 2001, schools have been held more accountable than ever. Frequently, American schools are criticized by the business community for not producing the quality of learner that is needed to mold into a valuable employee. Many times they do not have the necessary skills and training needed to complete their jobs in this country let alone compete internationally. Many colleges are also concerned with the students they are getting that are graduating from high school without the knowledge and skills that they should have. There seems to be a growing need for lower-level and remedial classes in colleges. Teachers are the key in order to change and/or improve the students’ knowledge and ability and hence create a successful school system. In reality, all of us have a vested interest in the school systems. That interest could be as far reaching to include our
country as a whole and as close to home as to the schools that serve our own children and/or the community in which we reside.

Purpose

The purpose of this case study was to investigate administrative influences on overall teacher job satisfaction based on the perspectives of teachers. In addition, this study also explored administrative actions and/or behaviors that teachers felt may have contributed to either their level of job dissatisfaction or job satisfaction. This was done by interviewing teachers in depth for the purpose of discovering their perceptions and experiences in respect to administrators, and then to more directly consider how those pertained to their level of job satisfaction.

An important goal of this study was to move beyond simply identifying the administrative factors that affect teacher job satisfaction, but to also seek explanations of how those factors influence teacher job satisfaction. Additionally, the consequences of teachers’ perceptions of certain administrative actions and/or behaviors and the outcomes associated with the presence or absence of these factors based on these participants’ views, was also explored. In conclusion, this study allows greater insight into the nature of the relationship between teachers and their administrators.

Significance

There has indeed been a great deal of research that has been conducted on job satisfaction in general. Teacher job satisfaction specifically has been examined much less. Within this area, there is a definite lack of research that only examines the relationship of teacher job satisfaction in regards to their administrators. In addition, the large majority of the research regarding job satisfaction, as well as teacher job satisfaction, is quantitative in nature (Bogler, 2001; Day,
A qualitative study exploring the significance of the teacher/administrator relationship and the effects that has on teacher job satisfaction is beneficial to all educators as well as will considerably add to the pool of research that is already in existence regarding teacher job satisfaction. This study can also help educators to better understand the importance of the teacher/administrator relationship and what can be done to improve it. In fact, this understanding is vital for educators to acknowledge since teacher job satisfaction has already been linked to administrators (Blase & Blase, 2001; Ellis & Bernhardt, 1992; Whaley & Hegstrom, 1992). Furthermore, this study shows just how very close the ties truly are between administrators and the level of teacher job satisfaction.

Administrators and teachers have a very direct relationship with each other. This relationship is an extremely important one that can enhance or damage the school environment simply by affecting the level of teacher job satisfaction (Baughman, 1996; Bogler, 1999; Schulz & Teddlie, 1989). Teacher job satisfaction obviously involves much more than just the teachers and their feelings. By improving the level of teacher job satisfaction, and treating the administrator/teacher relationship as an important one, the entire school community and more will benefit greatly.

**Theoretical Framework**

Frederick Herzberg, Bernard Mausner, and Barbara Snyderman’s Two-Factor Theory (1959) on job satisfaction provided the theoretical framework for this study. Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) simultaneously investigated what kinds of attitudes individuals had toward their jobs, what caused them to have those attitudes, and the consequences that occurred because of those attitudes. Their research established that there are specific factors that lead to job dissatisfaction, as well as a different set of factors that lead to job satisfaction (Herzberg,
Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). Their theory showed that there is more to job satisfaction than just one common set of factors that run on the same continuum, with the location on the continuum determining the level of job satisfaction. The two different sets of factors are referred to as the hygiene factors and the motivation factors.

The work of Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) involved two pilot studies that consisted entirely of male factory workers from 52 different plants all within a 30-mile radius of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in the 1950s. The first study focused on the perceptions of production line and clerical workers, while the second study involved workers in middle management. Their research did not include any workers in top supervisory roles, which would be similar to administrators in the education profession. My research will share some of these same guidelines as in focusing on the perceptions of those directly working on the products (teachers with students) and not those who are the upper supervisors (administrators) but also have some significant differences. My study examined the same three aspects but from the perspectives of a small number of teachers all of whom were working within the same public elementary school in a rural area of Ohio. Thus the focus was on teachers’ attitudes toward their jobs and administrators, the pertinence of administrators to those teacher attitudes, and the consequences that occur because of them. An obvious difference is that my research involved a public educational setting while the work of Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) involved the private manufacturing sector. There are many differences between the two fields. In the school district where this research took place (as with most), once teachers spend at least three years in the district and earn a certain number of college graduate credits they are granted a continuing contract, which ultimately earns them a great deal of job security. In this school district, neither teacher contracts nor their salaries were based on their or their students’ performance levels. On
the other hand, the private sector often includes performance as a main predictor of both job continuation and salary.

The first part of Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s (1959) theory involves the factors that lead to job dissatisfaction, which are referred to as the hygiene factors. According to the theory, hygiene issues cannot motivate employees but can minimize dissatisfaction. Although hygiene issues are not the source of satisfaction, these issues must be dealt with first to create an environment in which employee satisfaction and motivation are even possible. The hygiene factors include company policies and their administration, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relations, salary, status, and security. In essence, these are all issues related to the employee’s environment. Company policies and administration pertains to the adequacy of company organization and management as well as the harmfulness or beneficial effects of the company’s policies. Supervision deals with the competence, fairness, and/or willingness of the supervisor. Working conditions are the physical conditions of work, the amount of work, and/or the facilities available for doing the work. This may include adequacy of ventilation, lighting, tools, space, and other such environmental characteristics. Interpersonal relations are the interactions between peers, classified members, and superiors either inside or outside of the work environment. Salary is the compensation itself and fairness of pay, and status pertains to a perceived benefit due to a specific job, while security refers to tenure or company stability. These job dissatisfiers deal with the factors that define the job context. The negative presence of these factors would in fact produce a dissatisfied employee; yet satisfying these factors would not create satisfaction but would instead prevent dissatisfaction thereby allowing for the implementation of the second part of the theory in order to truly achieve job satisfaction.
The second part of Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s (1959) theory consists of the factors that lead to satisfaction, the motivation factors. The satisfaction of these factors would increase job satisfaction beyond the neutral point. The lack of satisfaction of these factors would merely drop an employee back to a neutral level but would not produce a dissatisfied employee. The motivation factors include achievement, recognition, responsibility, growth/advancement, and interest in work. Achievement is the successful completion of a job, solution to problems, and/or seeing the completed results of one’s work. Recognition is some form of notice, praise, or blame. Responsibility involves being given accountability for one’s own work or for the work of others or being given new responsibility. Growth pertains to the opportunity to rise or advance within the company. Advancement is the change in the status or position of the employee within the same company. Interest in work involves wanting to do the job or the tasks of the job.

In summary, Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s Two-Factor Theory (1959) on job satisfaction explains that the hygiene factors cannot produce a satisfied feeling related to work but without satisfying those factors there will be a feeling of job dissatisfaction. Conversely, the motivation factors create satisfaction by fulfilling individuals’ needs for meaning and personal growth in regards to what an employee actually does on the job. Once the hygiene areas are addressed and met, the motivators will promote increased levels of job satisfaction and further production. See Table 1 for Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s Two-Factor Theory (1959).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frederick Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s Two-Factor Theory</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hygiene Factors (Dissatisfiers)</strong></td>
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<td>Company policies and administration</td>
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<td>Supervision</td>
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</table>
Working conditions                     Interest in work
Interpersonal relations                Responsibility
Salary, status, and security           Growth and advancement

*Research Questions*

*Questions*

The research questions that were investigated for this study were: what impact do administrative influences have on overall teacher job satisfaction based on the perspectives of teachers; and what administrative actions and/or behaviors do teachers feel contribute to teacher job satisfaction. These questions addressed the importance of the connections between teachers, administrators, and teacher job satisfaction. Through open interviews with several teachers, administrator actions and behaviors and how those teachers felt those affected teacher job satisfaction were thoroughly discussed, as well as the consequences that may result.

*Delimitations*

There were a few delimitations for this particular research study. The primary limitation would be that other aspects of teacher job satisfaction could have been explored. This study focused exclusively on the significance of administrators on teacher job satisfaction. Another restriction of this study was that the research was based solely from teachers’ perceptions. No other viewpoints or ideas were included. Because this project was a case study, all of the teacher participants were from the same elementary school. This did ensure that they had all been exposed to at least one common administrator, although many had in fact shared several of the same administrators over the years from teaching in the same building. A frequent concern with any case study is generalizability, which refers to whether the findings in a study hold up beyond the specific research subjects and the setting involved (Bodgan & Biklen, 1998). A question
would be if this study would be pertinent to teachers and administrators working in other schools in Ohio, or educators working in different levels (junior high or high school), or in different settings (suburban or urban areas) or other parts of this country and abroad. A goal of the study was not to achieve generalizability, but only to investigate the perceptions that a group of teachers had regarding the connection of administrators and teacher job satisfaction.

Conclusion

This chapter establishes the need and importance of investigating the significance of administrators on teacher job satisfaction and the administrator/teacher relationship. Since teachers are the direct links to the students, teacher job satisfaction needs to be viewed as essential for student and whole school success. Understanding the importance and connection that administrators have to teacher job satisfaction allows for improvement and growth in that area.
Chapter II: Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of the literature regarding job satisfaction, teacher job satisfaction, and the importance of administrators in the educational setting. General job satisfaction was explored then more specifically teacher job satisfaction. That section further explains the significance of teacher retention, teacher commitment and motivation, and teacher empowerment. The last part of this chapter entails overall administrative importance and connections to the administrator/teacher relationship, administrator leadership, the environment, teacher empowerment, teacher retention, and administrative support.

Job Satisfaction

According to Spector (1997), more studies have been done to understand job satisfaction than for any other variable in organizations. He defines levels of job satisfaction as the extent to which people like (which is satisfaction) or dislike (which is dissatisfaction) their jobs. Job satisfaction has been associated with many important behaviors and outcomes for employees that have implications for both organizational and personal welfare. In addition, the assessment of this specific employee attitude has become a common activity in organizations in which management is concerned with the overall health of the people they employ. Spector also believed that if organizations could determine which parts of the job produce satisfaction or dissatisfaction, they could pinpoint where to improve and what changes need to take place, ultimately improving satisfaction and bettering the business.

Another primary reason that employee job satisfaction is important, other than because it leads to behaviors of employees that affect the organizational functioning, is because people deserve to be treated fairly and with respect (Harvey & Ventura, 1996; Spector, 1997). Job satisfaction is critical in whether an employee will decide to be absent from work, leave the job
altogether (turnover), and/or experience adverse physical and psychological health issues (Spector, 1997). People who are happy with their job are typically eager to go beyond what is required of them (Harvey & Ventura, 1996; Spector, 1997). Also, when employees are offered opportunities to participate in decisions that affect them, positive benefits are produced for both the organization and the people in it (Harvey & Ventura, 1996; Spector, 1997). Employees like to have explanations, be treated with fairness, appreciated, recognized, as well as to feel like part of a team where they are decision makers (Harvey & Ventura, 1996).

Research has shown that job satisfaction is an important component of people’s lives and one that is well researched in the business community. The large majority of the research that has been done on job satisfaction has been quantitative in nature. This study took a more specific look at job satisfaction in teachers where a qualitative process was used to better understand a small number of participants.

**Teacher Job Satisfaction**

Teacher job satisfaction is a multifaceted construct that is a strong predictor of teacher retention, a determinant of teacher commitment, and an initiator of school effectiveness (Shann, 1998; Woods & Weasmer, 2002). Teacher job satisfaction also enhances collegiality, improves teacher performance, and has a direct impact on student outcomes (Shann, 1998; Woods & Weasmer, 2002). The education world succeeds or fails depending on the way teachers feel about their work, and how satisfied they are with it (Bogler, 1999). Ultimately, teachers’ job satisfaction has an effect on their perceptions of the effectiveness of the school as an organization (Schulz & Teddlie, 1989).

Teachers with a strong sense of efficacy create higher levels of satisfaction for others and efficacious teaching is critical if the complex needs of students are to be met (Quaglia, Marion,
& McIntire, 1991). If teachers are dissatisfied with their work lives and lack commitment to their organization, not only will teachers suffer but their students will suffer also (Wu & Short, 1996). Students in classrooms with teachers who are not satisfied are not receiving the highest quality of education possible (Mertler, 2002). Morale is a state of mind determined by the individual’s anticipation of the extent of satisfaction of those needs that she/he perceives as significantly affecting her/his total work situation (Evans, 1997). The morale of teachers can have far reaching implications for student learning (Mertler, 2002).

Teacher Retention

Retaining teachers in the education profession is needed for continuity in a school building and district as well as producing experienced educators that may help to improve student success. Bogler (2002) stated that it is important to study job satisfaction because of its effect on teacher retention. Teachers are more likely to leave the profession in their early years due to a high incidence of job dissatisfaction (Menon & Christor, 2002). Teachers who perceive their teaching job as a profession that is highly significant to their lives feel greater job satisfaction; this can affect their teaching quality as well as their intent to remain in the teaching profession (Bogler, 2002). Job satisfaction cannot only help retain teachers but can improve teaching indirectly (Latham, 1998).

Teacher Commitment and Motivation

Job satisfaction may be an indicator of whether individuals will be affectively connected to an institution, merely comply with directives, or will quit (Ma & MacMillan, 1999). Mertler (2002) stated that poor teachers could actually have a lack of motivation and satisfaction with their jobs more than having poor teaching abilities. Teachers have certain expectations (what they feel can realistically be fulfilled) of their jobs (Evans, 1997). When these expectations are
not met, teacher commitment and motivation levels are compromised (Day, 2008; Evans, 1997). Satisfaction occurs when expectations have been fulfilled (Reyes & Hoyle, 1992). A key factor in teacher commitment is their perception of meaningful, organizational involvement (Ma & MacMillan, 1999). Teachers need this work to not be routine, with their energies spent on bureaucratic issues. Instead, they need to be focused on teaching and learning rather than rules and procedures (Baughman, 1996). Allowing teachers to have increased levels of responsibility will in turn give them higher levels of satisfaction (Bishay, 1996). Bishay stated that the gratification of these types of higher-order needs is most important for teacher job satisfaction. Research also shows that intrinsic rewards play a greater role than extrinsic ones when it comes to teacher motivation and job satisfaction (Fresko, Kfir, & Nasser, 1997; Latham, 1998). Tanguma and Luster (2002) showed that job performance and student results are in fact intrinsically linked. Teachers are more motivated when they see their roles as significant, with some sense of autonomy, and receive quality feedback from supervisors (Ellis & Bernhardt, 1992). When teachers feel that sense of professionalism, there is a positive correlation to overall student success and job attitudes (Cheng, 1996). Teacher commitment will also increase when the internal communication is more effective; this results in improvement within the organization (Iheanacho, 1992). Reyes and Hoyle (1992) found that satisfaction with communication is associated with job satisfaction, morale, and organizational commitment.

Teacher Empowerment

Teachers’ perceptions of their level of empowerment are significantly related to their perceptions of job satisfaction and commitment to their organization (Wu & Short, 1996). Teachers who believe they make a difference contribute more to the organization, increase their participation in activities, and work harder to succeed (Littrell, Billingsley, & Lawrence, 1994).
Teacher empowerment and motivation can make teachers more professional and improve performance (Davis & Wilson, 2000). When teachers are empowered as agents for change, they become “active agents rather than passive workers” (Woods & Weasmer, 2002). Decision-making plays a crucial role in teacher empowerment, strengthening and increasing teacher effectiveness (Short, 1998). The more teachers share in decision-making, the greater the job satisfaction and sense of empowerment (Davis & Wilson, 2000).

Administrative Importance

The effective school principal has been consistently recognized as being essential for successful schools (Baughman, 1996; Blase & Blase, 1998). Strong leadership has been shown to have a direct link with overall school effectiveness (Taylor & Tashakkori, 1995). Burrows, Munday, and Tunnel (1996) said that poor administrative management is a major factor in the decline in public education. Teachers’ perceptions of principals are very important, since schools are primarily interpersonal settings (Schulz & Teddlie, 1989).

Administrator/Teacher Relationship

The relationship between a principal and faculty members has a pivotal effect on instructional effectiveness (Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton, 2003). Chenoweth (2010) on the other hand, stated that school leaders must be guardians of their students’ future and not as concerned with their staff members’ happiness. When there is positive rapport, levels of trust, and respect between teachers and principals, the likelihood of improved pedagogy and increased student achievement is almost assured (Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton, 2003). Shann (1998) argued that top schools are made because administrators aggressively recruit good teachers and spend the time getting rid of the ineffective ones. Either way, current findings have provided a first step in a line of research relating principals to teachers to students (Bogler, 2001).
Leadership

The way a principal leads has been shown to increase teachers’ consideration and tolerance for students, planning creativity, and monitoring of student learning (Blase & Blase, 1999a). Administrator methods and actions used in reaching organizational goals affects staff perceptions of and feelings about the administrator, the workplace, and their general morale (Blase & Blase, 1999b; Tanguma & Luster, 2002). Research has shown that morale is affected by the school leadership, the school climate, and the school infrastructure (Mertler, 2002). Lack of participation in decision-making was the number one contributor to low teacher morale (Kreis & Brockopp, 1986). Leadership and the perceived role of the leader in the organization contribute to effective education (Burrows, Munday, & Tunnell, 1996). Evans (1997) found that both leadership and collegiality greatly influenced the attitudinal effects on teachers in the implementation of reforms (Evans, 1997). Schools with collective or collaborative problem-solving strategies based on an underlying sense of commitment had success in reform where bureaucratic administered schools did not (Ma & MacMillan, 1999).

Bogler (2002) stated that principals need to be aware of the effect of teachers’ perceptions of their occupation on their level of job satisfaction. Supervisors are the greatest source of role ambiguity and role conflict at work, both of which have been shown to correlate with job satisfaction (Spector, 1997). Teacher job satisfaction is positively related to participative decision-making and transformational leadership (Bogler, 2002). Bogler (2002) defined transformational leadership as having charisma and being inspirational, while having consideration for others, and providing opportunities for intellectual stimulation. While transactional leadership was described as being more negative and contingent on reward (Bogler, 2002). Bogler (1999) did conclude that principals’ decision-making style was not found to
significantly affect teacher satisfaction. Evans (1997) stated that weak leaders were thought of as avoiding difficulties and confrontation, frequently being dominated by some staff members, not handling issues when brought to attention, and generally avoided making decisions. Administrative control was the most important workplace condition that positively affected teacher satisfaction (Ma & MacMillan, 1999). Principals need to provide an environment in which teachers develop competence, gain a sense of efficacy, and take pride in being teachers (Jorissen, 2002). Leadership research suggests engaging all school participants in solving problems, creating opportunities, and overcoming barriers to student learning (Short, 1998).

Environment

    School administration is important not only to promote teachers’ satisfaction with their work but also to reduce the negative impact on teaching experiences (Ma & MacMillan, 1999). Creating an environment where teachers are more satisfied need not be expensive but requires school principals to pay attention to their needs (Baughman, 1996). Open, collaborative, and trusting environments will raise the level of job satisfaction (Baughman, 1996). To become stakeholders, teachers need to know that their contributions to the school culture are honored (Woods & Weasmer, 2002). Common complaints among teachers are there not being enough listening and trust in the teacher-principal relationship (Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton, 2003). Administrators even have some control over the job design—paperwork, resources, working conditions (Tanguma & Luster, 2002). A study showed that there was a significant relationship between how teachers perceive their principals’ communication and how satisfied they are on the job (Whaley & Hegstrom, 1992). Seventy percent of school administrators’ time is spent in communication (Reyes & Hoyle, 1992). This facet of a principals’ professionalism was strongly associated with school organization and all measures of principal leadership (Cheng, 1996).
A principal’s role as leader in an educational setting is crucial to the overall effectiveness of the school (Burrows, Munday, & Tunnell, 1996). There is a significant predictive effect of certain leadership substitutes on the degree of teacher organizational commitment and general job satisfaction (Burrows, Munday, & Tunnell, 1996). Teachers are more committed when principals offer feedback, encouragement, acknowledgment, collective decision-making, and collaboration (Littrell, Billingsley, & Lawrence, 1994). Principals who are considerate encourage participation in decision making, provide recognition and approval, trust teachers to work in a responsible way and encourage interpersonal relationships in the school environment, and have teachers who are more satisfied with their jobs (Littrell, Billingsley, & Lawrence, 1994). Kreis and Brockopp (1986) also found that teacher autonomy is linked to administrators.

Teachers strongly value intrinsic rewards, which are partially contingent upon the principal (Schulz & Teddie, 1989). Opening opportunities for teachers to be involved in decision-making is an important source of intrinsic satisfaction (Taylor & Tashakkori, 1995). Also, if used correctly, feedback would be an effective means for changing or improving employee performance (Lindsay, De Pry, & Sugai, 2002). Both self-efficacy and professional growth significantly predicted job satisfaction and commitment (Wu & Short, 1996). A lack of professional development produces feelings of professional incompetence (Holloway, 2003; Ma & MacMillan, 1999). Research indicated that professional development, ongoing mentoring, and fostering teacher empowerment can help schools keep experienced teachers in the classroom and increase job satisfaction (Holloway, 2003).

**Empowerment**

School principals are the key to empowered schools (Short, 1998). Power involves the formal authority or control over organizational resources, and empowerment is the process of
sharing that power (Davis & Wilson, 2000). Leadership plays an important role in creating an empowering environment (Davis & Wilson, 2000). Administrators must be sensitive to the importance of teacher empowerment to satisfaction levels of teachers and must foster participatory decision-making so that teachers have a voice in policy (Quaglia, Marion, & McIntire, 1991). Empowering workers to decide on a wide range of job-related issues increases their productivity, improves the quality of their work, and heightens their morale (Shann, 1998). Principals can increase empowerment by providing leadership opportunities and giving public recognition opportunities for teachers (Holloway, 2003). In fact it is vital for school management to encourage and recognize effort of individuals (Evans & Poppleton, 1999). Lack of feedback and recognition from administrators may even cause some teachers to question their effectiveness (Billingsley, 1993).

Retention

Teachers who were planning to leave the profession reported less satisfaction and a more negative attitude toward teaching as a career and toward the school administration (Blase & Blase, 1999c; Bogler, 2002). Haser and Nasser (2003) found that supportive school administrators improved both teacher retention and job satisfaction. Previous surveys of dissatisfied teachers or teachers who have left, found school administration factors to be associated with their levels of job frustration (Menon & Christor, 2002). In fact, lack of administrative support contributed to fifty percent of new teachers leaving the profession in the first five years of their career (Woods & Weasmer, 2002).

Support

Dissatisfaction with teaching as a career was most commonly attributed to inadequate support from the administration (Connolly, 2000). Most experienced teachers who leave the field
do so because of lack of support from administrators and colleagues and insufficient involvement in decision-making (Holloway, 2003). Supportive principals foster participation, develop clear goals and policies, hold people accountable, are persuasive and effective, solve conflicts, are inspirational and charismatic, as well as emphasize and encourage professional development and teaching improvement (Cheng, 1996). Those principals seem to be well rounded in all areas.

Administrative support has been linked to attrition and retention with higher levels of support helping teachers have less stress, more commitment, and more satisfaction with their jobs (Billingsley, 1993). Teachers who reported being dissatisfied with teaching as a career, have specified their concerns are with inadequate support from administration (Tanguma & Luster, 2002). Leohardt (2010) states that there must be administrative support for good teachers also, not just the ones who seem to need the most support. Menon and Christor (2002) also found that administrative support and leadership, the school atmosphere and teacher autonomy to be strongly associated with teacher satisfaction. Littrell, Billingsley, and Lawrence (1994) describe supportive as producing work that is more rewarding, productive, motivating the work environment, lower attrition rates, less job-related stress and burnout. Nonsupportive was listed as creating a frustrated and unimportant atmosphere of ill will and helplessness (Littrell, Billingsley, & Lawrence, 1994). Unsupportive work environments lead to stress, burnout, and attrition among educators (Billingsley, 1993; Yoon & Gilchrist, 2003). Not only does a lack of support link to teacher stress but it also contributes to low commitment (Yoon & Gilchrist, 2003). Poor administration and little administrative support are stressors (Connolly, 2000). The best way to attract teachers is to be a competent and fair principal; this is key not only in getting teachers there but also in keeping them (Borsuk, 2010). Most important thing for a new teacher is that the school principal accepts, cares, values, and respects them (Hewitt, 2010).
Yoon and Gilchrist (2003) believed that the effects of administrative support were not clear in the current literature. Administrative support is multidimensional so it is critical to investigate how the effects of specific types of leadership behavior influence career decisions (Billingsley, 1993). In conclusion, principal support influences the feelings that teachers have about themselves and their work (Littrell, Billingsley, & Lawrence, 1994).

In Summary

Tanguma and Luster (2002) found little information that specifically examined how satisfied school staffs were with the administrators’ performance of their leadership, managerial, and supervisory roles. Mertler (2002) felt that additional research would need to target dissatisfied groups and find weaknesses or gaps in existing incentive systems. Blase and Blase (1999a) have linked principal behaviors to effects on school climates, which affect student achievement, but call for further investigation on those behaviors. Tanguma and Luster (2002) stated that teacher satisfaction with supervision appears to influence general job satisfaction. Job satisfaction may be improved just because management pays attention to the employees (Spector, 1997). Evans’ (1997) research showed that not a single day passed without teachers expressing concern about the quality of leadership and repercussions they perceived it to have on the school function. If a work unit is performing well and is satisfied, the leader can assume that he/she is also performing well, but in contrast, if the system is not performing up to par, then the leader probably isn’t either (Whaley & Hegstrom, 1992). Administrators need to address teacher satisfaction as a strategy for educational reform (Shann, 1998).

Conclusion

Most of the research on teacher job satisfaction uses various theories. Several have used or included Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s two-factor theory on job satisfaction, which
has seemed to produce contradictory results to support the theory. For example, Johnston’s (1990) research that included student descriptions of teacher qualities that were best and least liked, produced the results of student perceptions of teacher attributes that did not lend much support for Herzber, Mausner, and Snyderman’s Two-Factor Theory. Yet Bogler (1999) and Quaglia, Marion, & McIntire’s (1991) results supported the theory.

Previous research is clear that there is some importance and connection that administrators have on teacher job satisfaction. This study discovered what previous literature was missing by strictly focusing on the administrator link to teacher job satisfaction, not just merely including it in as one part of satisfaction. This study was designed to provide the in-depth detail into teachers’ perceptions of their administrators and job satisfaction that previous research has been lacking using Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s Two-Factor Theory (1959).
Chapter III: Methodology

This chapter provides an explanation of the designs and methods used for this qualitative study on teachers’ perceptions of administrator influence on teacher job satisfaction. This chapter also includes a detailed description of the research design, the research site and the members within it. The process of data collection and analysis is expounded upon and justified. In addition, the section on data collection includes the sampling method, the instrument and procedures used, the role of the researcher, and how validity and reliability were ensured.

Research Design

This research was a qualitative study in which teachers’ perspectives on the affects their administrators have on their level of job satisfaction was investigated. More specifically, this research answered the questions of: What perceptions do teachers have about their administrators; and how do administrative actions and/or behaviors affect teacher job satisfaction? What is the relevance of administrators to teacher job satisfaction? What are the consequences resulting from teachers’ perceptions of their administrators and job satisfaction? Qualitative research is an approach to studying socially and historically constructed perspectives and meanings with a focus on the quality of relationships, activities, situations, or materials (Creswell, 2003; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Qualitative research should be emergent, evolving, naturalistic, and interpretive. Data being collected in the natural setting are continually emerging and evolving because of the constant interpretation of them. Moreover, the patterns and themes that develop during a qualitative study may very well require additional investigation or alteration. Ultimately, the overall goal of qualitative research is to better understand human behavior and experience, while being aware of the processes by which people construct meaning, and then finally describing what those meanings are—it tells a story (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).
Qualitative research allows for hypotheses to emerge as the study develops, for narrative and literary descriptions to be used throughout, and for expert and purposive samples to be used (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Qualitative research also promotes an unwillingness of naturally occurring phenomena to be tampered with (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

In order to focus on a small number of participants and talk with them in depth over a period of time, I chose to do a collective case study as the research design. Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) defined a case study “as a form of qualitative research where a single individual or example is studied through extensive data collection” (p. G1). Creswell (2003) described case studies as those in which a researcher can explore a program, event, activity, process, or an individual(s) in depth. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) made the analogy of a case study to a funnel. At the beginning there is a wide range of possibilities and aspects involved in this type of study, but as it progresses the focus needs to become more narrowed based on the data that are being collected and interpreted. Continual modifications only help to keep reducing the funnel’s width.

More specifically, a collective case study involves multiple cases being researched at the same time as part of one overall study. In this case, that meant each teacher was a separate case study. A significant advantage of using a collective case study is that the results of multiple-case studies are often considered more compelling, and they are more likely to lend themselves to valid generalization (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2003). This study does not examine a single perception but multiple ones with the participants having been from different grade and subject levels as well as having varying years of experience. An obvious disadvantage or limitation of this collective case study is that all of the participants were from the same school building.
Setting and Population

This qualitative research project involved participants who were all teachers from the same elementary school. Each teacher was considered one case study. The data collected were organized, analyzed, and reported in the form of a multiple- or collective case study. The setting of this research took place in an elementary school building located in a rural Ohio public school district. The district consisted of three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school, with a total population equaling approximately 2400 students at the time of the study. The Ohio Department of Education used a rating system of Academic Emergency, Academic Watch, Continuous Improvement, Effective, and Excellent to score the public school systems within the state. This particular district had recently received an improved rating of Effective on the District Report Card, while the research site’s rating was in the Continuous Improvement category on the Building Report Card. Out of the three elementary schools, the research site had the second lowest average of socio-economic status (SES) families, as well as having the second highest population. This elementary school served approximately 500 students with over one-third of them qualifying for free or reduced lunches. An estimated 99 percent of the population was Caucasian, with the other 1 percent being bi-racial, Hispanic, or Asian students. The facility itself consisted of updated technology and equipment, as well as curricular materials. The building had also received several different renovations over the years, making it a modern facility.

The participants in this study were six certified/licensed teachers, all working full-time at the research location. Two of the participants taught in the primary grades (kindergarten through third grade), two taught in the intermediate grades (fourth through sixth grade) and two were special education teachers who serviced students from each of the grades. Since there were two
participants at each level, a mixture of elementary perspectives was possible. The participants ranged in ages of 31 to 52, with their years of experience varying between 10 to 26 years. Actual years of teaching within this particular facility range from 4 to 28 years. There were a total of 34 full-time certified/licensed staff members working in this building: 24 general education teachers, 2 males and 22 females; 3 special education teachers, all females; 4 special area teachers, 1 male and 3 females; 1 guidance counselor, female; and 1 administrator, male. The entire staff of this building, as well as the district, was Caucasian. Each of the participants had experience working with different administrators.

Data Collection

Sampling Method

Convenience and purposeful sampling were the sampling procedures used for this study. A significant advantage in using both convenience and purposeful sampling procedures is that they allow the selection of specific participants in order to obtain in-depth data pertaining to particular issues which relate to the purpose of the study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). The major limitation in using both of these sampling procedures is that the results from using a small sample from one research site might not necessarily be generalizable to the entire education population (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

A clear advantage in using the convenience sampling method is that it is convenient; but the just as obvious disadvantage is that there is probability that the sample will be biased (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). One reason I chose convenience sampling for this research project was because the location of the research site was readily available to me. Another plus of having one research site was that the participants had been exposed to a few of the same administrators throughout their careers, which helped to show similar patterns, themes, and/or inconsistencies.
Since there were 31 certified and/or licensed teachers in this facility, that left a total of 31 possible participants for this study.

Purposeful or purposive sampling was also chosen for this study. The important advantage in using purposeful sampling is that participants are chosen based on their knowledge and ability to provide the data needed; while the real disadvantage is that the researcher’s judgment about the participants may be incorrect (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). To help prevent such bias, I was attentive on specific points and criteria when selecting them.

I started by only focusing on the 17 teachers who had volunteered and participated in a previous pilot study I conducted on the same topic of teacher job satisfaction in regards to administrators (Davis, 2003). Almost all of the teachers expressed interest in continuing their participation in this current research study. At that point in the process, there were 15 possible participants. The final six participants were selected based solely upon information I had obtained from working with them on my previous pilot study. I first looked for teachers who expressed distinct feelings and/or opinions about job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Meeting this first condition allowed me to obtain greater depth and detail on the topic of teacher job satisfaction. Since the teachers themselves stated whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs, they had a clearer impression and opinion of the topic itself, which was beneficial when collecting data. Lastly, based on my initial study in 2003, I looked for the participants who were willing to share examples and stories and not just simply answer interview questions when reflecting on their past and present experiences, as well as their willingness to give of their time for interviewing, clarification, and analysis purposes. This produced the six participants for the study.
**Instrument**

The instrument that was used in this study was individual face-to-face open-ended interview questioning. Open-ended interviewing was chosen so a detailed description of teachers’ perceptions regarding their administrators and how they felt that related to their job satisfaction could be obtained. This open approach to interviewing allowed for a more comfortable discussion making it possible to delve deeper into chosen aspects of the conversation as the interview progressed. There were three scheduled interviews per participant, each projected at lasting about 45 to 60 minutes, but due to the nature of open-ended interviews, the length was sporadic depending on the participant and the discussion occurring at the time. The interviews themselves were semi-structured, in that a general interview guide was used, but the interviews were informal and conversational in nature. The guide simply provided a common line of inquiry that was followed with each person, with the idea that aspects of the interview would be explored, probed, and additional questions asked to expound upon and illuminate any particular subject (Bogdan & Biklan, 1998). Participants were encouraged to share examples and opinions prompting further and possibly alternate discussions to occur. I also asked additional questions whenever necessary to illicit deeper descriptions and clarity.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), “an interview is a purposeful conversation, usually between two people, that is directed by one in order to get information from the other” (p. 93). The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is on peoples’ minds, such as what they think or how they feel about something (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Using open-ended interviewing in this study afforded me the opportunity not only to find out the perceptions, thoughts, and meanings that the participants possessed, but also the ability to compare one individual’s views to another. I was able to constantly make participant comparisons to know
what additional questions or patterns to explore during the participant interviews. All in all, interviews allow the collection of data that cannot be directly observed (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Patton, 2002; Seidman, 1998). Interviewing in this study allowed the participants to reflect and discuss in detail how they felt about their administrators and their level of job satisfaction, both of which were not observable. A very pertinent limitation involved in using interview questioning is that there is always some degree of artificiality present in an interview situation (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). I had to be aware of the discussions and questions that emerged from the interviews and ask participants to elaborate or explain what they meant as needed. I explained that it would not be an accurate account if I used my perception of what they meant; that clarity was essential.

The interviews were also recorded on audiotape with the participants’ permission. A major advantage in using audiotapes is they may be played over and over for continued study and analysis (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Audio recording also allowed me to hear participant responses while observing their reactions and body language behaviors. My full attention was on the participant. Following the conclusion of each interview, I wrote out the behaviors I observed and listened to the responses again from the tape to have a more complete understanding of the discussion. Interviews were immediately transcribed and reviewed with the participants to alleviate any mechanical problems that may have occurred. Two disadvantages of audio recording are that it may be difficult to distinguish the voices on the tape, and noise is difficult to control and can interfere with the understanding of the content (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Another limitation of audio recording is that it could possibly make participants uncomfortable and/or make them feel that they cannot be completely honest in their discussions, which could ultimately affect the findings of the study. A few participants expressed concern about having
their conversations on tape in case anyone else might hear what they were saying. I reassured
them that no one from the school would be listening to the interviews and the audiotapes were
not kept at the school building. In order to help compensate for some of the uneasiness of being
recorded, a conversational-type climate was used.

Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s (1959) framework was used as the guide in
creating the interview questions. The interview sessions were designed to first discuss teacher
job satisfaction and administrators, then dissatisfiers, and finally satisfiers to see if the
participants’ responses followed Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s findings. This study only
concentrated on administrators and the control they possessed over those factors. The below
questions were strictly used as an interview guide with the participants while adjustments were
continually being made dependent on what the participants were discussing and sharing.

INTERVIEW GUIDE #1

1. What are your perceptions of your administrators?
2. Why do you feel you have these perceptions towards your administrators?
3. How do you feel those perceptions relate to how satisfied you are with your job?
4. What do you feel your administrators could do to help ensure or improve job
   satisfaction?
5. How do you feel having a positive perception of your administrators affects or would
   affect you?
6. How do you feel having a negative perception of your administrators affects or would
   affect you?
7. How important is it to be satisfied with your job? Why?
INTERVIEW GUIDE #2

1. What types of actions and/or behaviors should administrators demonstrate?
2. What are the outcomes when administrators do not show those types of actions and/or behaviors?
3. What are the outcomes when administrators do show those types of actions and/or behaviors?
4. How does this affect your level of job satisfaction?

INTERVIEW GUIDE #3

1. What is important to you in your job?
2. What can administrators do so that teachers receive what is important to them?
3. How can administrators hinder teachers receiving what is important to them?
4. What are the outcomes when these are received?
5. What are the outcomes when these are not received?
6. How would you classify your level of job satisfaction? Why?

Procedures

The study began by gaining access to the research site. I did this by first discussing the project with the building administrator and then asking his permission to continue. I also made him aware of the confidentiality of the participants as well as the school and district. Once he agreed to allow this study to be conducted in his building, I then followed the same procedure by discussing and asking permission to conduct my research with the central office administration. Once again, explaining the confidentiality rights of the study participants. It was important to get the cooperation of both the building and central office administrators so uncomfortable or surprising situations and experiences were avoided. An obvious issue to gaining access was that
the building administrator as well as the central office administrators might not have wanted this type of study to be conducted in their building or district since it concerned teachers’ perceptions of administrators and how that related to their level of job satisfaction. I reassured them that this study was not initiated because of a strong sense of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction with this particular school building, but I was interested in this group of teachers due to the convenience in location. I also explained that I would like to become an administrator and this is a topic that has always been of importance to me.

Once complete access was gained into the facility, I went to the six participants who were chosen for this study individually and explained the project and answered any questions they had. Since all of the teachers still wished to participate in the study, I went over the Informed Consent form that they originally signed a year ago with them. This served to refresh their memory on the guidelines of conducting research as well as their rights as participants. I told them that their original Informed Consent form applied to this current project and gave them another copy. I also assured them their confidentiality would be protected and reiterated that my role as the researcher would strictly be one as an interviewer. Patton (2002) states that the purpose of interviewing is to enter into the other person’s perspective. Interviewers cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions; nor can they observe how people organize their world and the meanings they attach to that; the job of the interviewer is to ask people questions about those things (Patton, 2002).

The interviews were then scheduled at a convenient time for the participant in a location they felt comfortable in. Interview sites included an isolated office (with no windows or possible access by anyone else), their classrooms, their homes, or my home. Three 45 - 60 minute interviews were planned with the knowledge that follow-up interviews would be necessary. All
of the participants allowed me to use audiotapes to record all interview sessions. The interviews were then transcribed immediately afterward to ensure there were no concerns as well as to look for emerging patterns. I wrote down any observable behaviors that the audiotape could not detect. This was done after each interview so as not to distract from the discussion that was taking place. The interviews were then coded while checking for additional patterns to add or explore during future interviews. I also went over every transcription with each participant to ensure accuracy. The participants will be given a copy of the completed study.

*Role of the Researcher*

I had worked with these participants on a previous study I had completed prior to conducting this current study. Since I had previous interaction with these participants, I may have been privy to avenues that complete outsiders or strangers would not have had. Since teachers volunteered to participate in this study, there may already have been a valuable trust level present from the onset of the project that would not have existed so rapidly or to the same degree.

As the researcher in this study, I took the role of a research interviewer who actively probed the participants for responses. I had to be cognizant about letting the participants tell their stories without involving any of my own interpretations in the meanings or reasons into what they were saying. This is why it was vital to check the accuracy of every transcription with the participants. After working with the participants for any interviewing, transcribing, clarifying, and analyzing purposes needed, I had no other contact with them relating to this particular project.

*Validity and Reliability*
In quantitative research, validity depends on ensuring the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure; in qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument (Patton, 2002). As for reliability, qualitative researchers tend to view it as a fit between what they record as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Fraenkel & Wallen (2003) define reliability as the consistency of the inferences made from collected data over time, location, and circumstances. Therefore, in order to enhance both validity and reliability within this qualitative study, I was first mindful of my actions as the researcher. I used the procedures of checking one participant’s description of their administrators with another participant’s description to see if any discrepancies meant the data were possibly invalid. Fraenkel & Wallen (2003) describe this as one technique to check perceptions in order to ensure that the researcher was not being misinformed—that they are in fact seeing and hearing what they think they are. Member checking with each participant regarding their interview sessions was also used to allow for clarifications and helped make certain that what was written was what they meant. Lastly, using audiotapes gave me additional opportunities to recheck myself as well as the participants. All of these procedures enhanced the validity and reliability (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). I also used face validity to construct the three interviews’ guiding questions by having an outside group of educators choose and adapt questions that best met the purpose of this study from a pool of questions that I created.

Data Analysis

The data analysis utilized for this study included using both deductive and inductive analysis. Deductive and inductive approaches can be combined to incorporate already existing dimensions based on previous research while still allowing other themes to emerge directly from the current research data (Patton, 2002). Deductive analysis will only be used to examine already
presented findings and frameworks contained in the pertinent literature on teacher job
satisfaction. One example of this would be Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s Two-Factor
Theory, which has very specific dissatisifier and satisfier factors (Herzberg, Mausner, and
Snyderman, 1959). I used what I discovered from the participants in this study to compare to any
themes already known in the existing literature focusing on Herzberg, Mausner, and
Snyderman’s theory factors of policies and administration, supervision, working conditions,
interpersonal relations, and salary, status, and security along with achievement, recognition,
interest, responsibility, and growth and advancement. A limitation in using deductive analysis
only is that there are predetermined categories that current data is analyzed and placed in. This is
why deductive analysis was not the primary method utilized and was used in conjunction with
inductive analysis for this particular study.

The analysis method in this study largely involved inductive analysis. Patton (2002)
states “the strategy of inductive designs is to allow the important analysis dimensions to emerge
from patterns found in the cases under study without presupposing in advance what the important
dimensions will be” (p. 56). Specific data or evidence is not looked for to prove or disprove
research hypotheses, instead categories are built as the particulars are gathered and grouped
together (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). I constantly made comparisons from the data being collected
while looking for any patterns or themes that were forming. Consistently making comparative
analyses only deepens understanding of the individuals involved (Patton, 2002). The main
limitation to inductive analysis is that the patterns will be unknown initially with the possibility
that there are none existent.

Each interview was analyzed immediately and independently of the others to discover
any patterns that existed and contributed to answering the research questions in this study. Then
each interview was used to make comparisons and contradictions to the others. Once patterns started forming or were established, transcripts were beneficial for going back to look for similar or differing patterns across participants. This also allowed me to investigate any new avenues that surfaced with the participants to gather additional data.

**Conclusion**

This was a qualitative research study that involved six elementary teachers as part of a collective case study. Interview questions were used as guidelines for open-ended discussions. Convenience and purposeful sampling were used as the data was collected while both deductive and inductive methods were used for data analysis. The procedures for gaining permission were thorough and specific so access would be granted.
Chapter IV: Findings

Introduction

There were six teachers involved in this study regarding their perceptions about their administrator, desired administrative actions and behaviors, and the effects administrators have on the level of teacher job satisfaction. The teachers (all names have been changed to protect the identity of the participants) in the study are: Martina Peace, Diana Harper, Sandra Gregory, Linda Dodge, Kathryn Dean, and Jane Williams. The administrator was Mr. Pat Watson. He was the principal of this elementary school during the study and for three years prior to the study. He did not hire any of the study participants; they were already teachers in this particular building before he became the principal.

This study was completely dependent upon teacher perception. The views of these six teachers were the only source of data used and included within the study. The teachers collectively felt that their current principal was not effective and his lack of effectiveness had a negative impact on their level of job satisfaction. Through the participant interviews, the administrative qualities that emerged as important for leading effectively were: (1) administrator integrity, (2) administrative leadership, (3) administrative professionalism or treatment toward teachers, (4) overall administrative support, and (5) levels of administrative communication.

Impact of Teacher Perceptions

The participants in this study had strong beliefs and perceptions regarding their level of job satisfaction. They felt that teacher job satisfaction was extremely important to not only them and their families, but also to the students they were responsible for. The perceived their level of job satisfaction as a determinate of how long they would continue on in their current job or the profession. One teacher said, “Our job satisfaction makes a big difference in the effectiveness of
our school. Whether anyone believes that or wants to acknowledge it I don’t know, but it’s true.”

Another participant summed it up by stating, “I am more satisfied with life in general when I’m happy with my job!” Another participant stated that, “If you don’t have a positive perception of your administrators, you are sour and it takes the fun out of it. When I stop having fun and feel that I am not effective. I’m out of here, I don’t care how old I am!” Yet another teacher concluded that, “You have to like what you are doing, that has to be the number one thing.

When it’s not I’m out of here.” Mrs. Peace remarked that:

I’ve not liked administrators before, and I’ve had to drag myself in. I avoided them like the plague. I knew when they ate lunch and that is when I checked my mail. People learn to avoid what they don’t like. At some point that becomes such a burden, you have to do something drastic—like leave.

Mrs. Peace felt that avoidance was a good technique in dealing with administrators she was not fond of. When that would become too much or not feasible she would consider leaving her job.

Not only did these teachers believe that their job satisfaction affected their current assignment, many also actively debated whether they would continue their teaching career. Mrs. Harper had struggled with not only leaving this elementary building but also leaving the profession altogether. She explained it as:

I mean I have been doing this for 15 years. Unfortunately some years it is not because I want to, but because I have to, to feed my children. I want to be able to do this because I want to do this. And I think it makes a huge difference on job satisfaction as to whether I continue to do this from day to day. Because I do love the kids but if you look at the whole picture it does make it real tough to get up in the morning and face what you’ve got to face everyday. The principal holds all of the keys for that to happen.
Mrs. Harper wanted to enjoy and have an interest in her work. She did not want her job to be something she was forced into doing because she had to provide for her own family. Mrs. Gregory felt that her level of job satisfaction directly affected her overall happiness as well as her students and their successes. She concluded that:

If you are happy then that is going to come through to the professionals around you and to the kids. If you are unhappy that is also going to come through so you’ve got to be satisfied so that you want to be here and you want to be the best so you can expect the same from the kids.

Mrs. Gregory felt that happiness and job satisfaction were connected. She also felt that others would notice unhappiness/happiness and that would affect her students. Mrs. Dean summed up the importance of having a high level of job satisfaction as relating to her overall effectiveness and ability as an educator. She explained it as:

I think it is very important to be satisfied with your job because I think that makes you who you are. If you feel satisfied with your job you’re more able to meet the challenges that are in your classroom everyday, you’re better prepared to help the kids. And you’re more creative in thinking of solutions, you’re all that.

Mrs. Dean believed that being satisfied with the job would produce a better employee. All of the participants perceived their level of job satisfaction as having an effect on their lives and relationships outside of school. Mrs. Williams added that:

I think you are better with all of your relationships, your outside of work and inside of work relationships, if you’re satisfied with your job. I think your whole life is more satisfied and fulfilled. This is a big chunk of my life and I don’t want it to be over or die
tomorrow and wished I had been happier or felt like I wish I had made a bigger
difference. If I’m not satisfied, that’s going to be what happens.

Mrs. Williams summed it up with having a high level of job satisfaction would make for a better
person in a variety of working and personal relationships. She felt life was too short to not be
fulfilled.

All of the teachers in this study felt their perceptions were the reality of the building, and
believed that most of the other teachers within this building would share similar views. The six
teachers in the study were not made aware of the identities of the other participants. Despite
being from different grade levels and not close acquaintances, they shared many of the same
experiences, beliefs, and perceptions about their administrator and administrators in general.
They also believed that their perceptions of their administrator affected their level of job
satisfaction, as well as their life both in and out of the classroom. As Mrs. Harper stated, “If I
feel good about what I’m doing, if I’m satisfied at work, then I’m better at home, I’m better with
my own kids.” All of these teachers also felt that the correlation between administrators and job
satisfaction was a significant and strong one. Mrs. Williams even commented that, “As bad as I
hate to even think or admit that someone else has control of my happiness at school, the principal
does. He has the ability to make this a great place to work or a nightmare where everyone is
miserable.” Mrs. Gregory stated several times that she was excited that she could be involved in
this study because she hoped it would make a difference for other educators, especially
administrators. She summed it up with:

My perception is my reality, your perception is your reality, Pat’s perception is his
reality, but what I think you will find when you are finished with this project is, the
teachers will have very similar if not the same perceptions of our jobs, of him, and of our
job satisfaction, but he would be clueless as to how everyone feels. This information
could be so important to him and other administrators. They could know how to maintain
or greatly improve job satisfaction and keep quality educators around for a good long
time. This sounds cheesy but it’s true, we could be one big happy family working
together to help our students succeed at school and at life.

Mrs. Gregory understood that individuals have their own perceptions of their experiences but
hoped that administrators could learn from the perceptions of their teachers. She believed
administrators could improve job satisfaction and retain quality teachers from leaving.

The participants in this study had very clear ideas of the qualities they felt the ideal
administrator would possess. Those administrative behaviors included an encompassing
knowledge base of the job and of the students in the building and remaining consistent yet able
to be flexible and adjust to individual circumstances. These teachers expected a strong principal
to be an instructional leader who would be knowledgeable in a wide variety of areas such as
curriculum, child development, and even school law. As teachers they wanted to be treated with
respect and regarded as the professionals they felt they were. But the qualities that seemed to be
of the utmost importance to being an effective leader, were having integrity and being honesty
and trustworthy. The belief was that these qualities needed to be in existence in order for the
others to even be possible. Without integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness no one would ever
have confidence or even believe that other qualities were present, no matter in actuality whether
they were or were not. Mrs. Dean summed it up with:

An administrator could be great at everything related to their job and be extremely
knowledgeable about a lot of school issues, but if they are not honest or struggle with
integrity, the other stuff would mean nothing. I would never truly believe they know
everything or that they love our kids or any of that, because they are dishonest and can’t be trusted. The honesty and integrity have to come first, without it nothing else counts. Mrs. Dean believed that without integrity or honesty, other administrator qualities would not be possible due to an extreme lack of trust.

These teachers also continually talked about wanting a solid support system with open communication where everyone would be a valued team member working together for the benefit of children, sharing the strong belief that the school would not be a true success without the satisfaction of the people inside it. Mrs. Peace declared:

Just like the old saying goes about if mama’s not happy nobody’s happy, schools work the same way. If the teachers aren’t happy then nobody’s happy, and by nobody I mean the students, their parents, the community, the support staff, and probably not the administrator either. We all need to support one another and that starts and could stop at the principal. He or she has a great deal of control of the school support system. Mrs. Peace felt that happiness started at the top and would filter all the way down to the students. They all felt that it was possible to have a sort of “utopia” if the administrator had the qualities they felt were needed and important to running a successful school building. Mrs. Dodge explained it as:

If an administrator has all of the qualities that teachers want, I’m not naïve enough not to realize there are going to be some tough or bad days, but the majority would have to be so fulfilling and satisfying. It would make any rough day not so rough, and I would know that tomorrow would bring a brighter and happier day. Wow, what an amazing feeling that would be!
Mrs. Dodge believed that being satisfied in her job would make any bad days tolerable with the hope for an improvement the next day. She would approach her days more positively than if she was not satisfied.

These participants felt certain that their perceptions of their administrators and administrators in general were important in determining their levels of job satisfaction. These teachers had strong and clear perceptions of what administrative actions and behaviors they believed would make them satisfied and/or unsatisfied with their jobs. They perceived the administrative qualities of integrity, leadership, professionalism, support, and communication as vital for being an effective leader who could improve or maintain teacher job satisfaction.

**Integrity**

Integrity emerged as the most discussed and emotionally charged administrative quality that teachers perceived as vital to being a “good” administrator. All of the participants felt that this was a behavior that correlated to teacher job satisfaction levels. They all also agreed that this was not a quality their current administrator possessed. Most shared passionate stories of how the lack of integrity had caused them personally or someone they were close to, issues.

For the purpose of this study, integrity was defined including trust, honesty, and ethics or the lack thereof. Mrs. Peace defined integrity as:

When I say you have to have integrity, I mean that you are an honest, upstanding person who works for what you believe in. Your morals and character values are in the right place. Would I ever believe anything that was done or said if you have no integrity? Of course not, I would only wonder what the real intent was and be waiting for the other shoe to drop.
She felt that Mr. Watson lacked integrity and “seems to always have a hidden agenda so you always have to wonder what’s hiding behind the door”. She also added:

You would think that a principal would want as little conflict as possible, especially among his staff. He will actually try to play people against each other to either get them to talk about the other or for them to feel like they are a confidant of his so he can have a mole. The gossip mill he has created is unbelievable and like I have never seen before. He will actually go door to door to find out what’s happening, and this is all while we are trying to teach!

Mrs. Peace believed that due to Mr. Watson’s lack of integrity he had created an inappropriate environment where gossiping was encouraged. With a lack of trust comes an insecure feel in the amount of confidentiality that would be present. Mrs. Harper told a personal story where a lack of confidentiality forever changed her ability to trust Mr. Watson:

Earlier this year I was going through a very personal, very private situation at home. I knew it was going to affect work and just me in general so I wanted to talk to Pat about it. I told him how private this situation was and that no one else knew about it but I wanted him to know where my mind might be or if I needed to even leave school. Do you know that within the hour he went to one of the second grade teachers, who he knew I was close with, and started discussing it with her? I had actually told her but she didn’t let him know and he told her everything I said and then wanted to talk more about it. I was devastated, hurt, and mad all at the same time. I knew then that anyone who would do that is unethical to the core and not able to be trusted—ever.

Mrs. Harper felt her confidentiality was completely disregarded which damaged her trust in this principal. Opposite to Mrs. Harper’s experience, Mrs. Gregory had been on the other side where
Mr. Watson frequently would come to her to discuss private matters involving other staff members. She concluded:

Pat can definitely not be trusted. He comes to my class at least twice a week to discuss something other teachers have told him or to talk about them. I never say a word because I know he runs to someone else doing the same thing. I watch everything I say around him because it will get passed along and even changed up. I hope I never find out he is using my name even though I never say anything, but I wouldn’t be shocked if he did. Even though Mrs. Gregory was included in the group that Mr. Watson discussed issues with, she lacked trust in him based on his actions and comments to her. Interestingly enough, Mrs. Dean believed that she was the one not trusted by Mr. Watson. She stated that:

I know he talks to a lot of different people about things—gossiping is probably the best word for it. I know he doesn’t trust me because he never comes to my room to ask me anything or to get my opinions on things around the building. I feel like one of the few outsiders that he doesn’t let in his group. I’m not sure what I’ve ever done to make him not trust me. It’s probably for the best; he obviously struggles with integrity from what I do hear about those secret conversations.

The teachers were all aware of Mr. Watson’s discussing situations with a variety of other teachers, Mrs. Dean perceived the fact that she was not included to mean that Mr. Watson did not trust her. Mrs. Williams thought of the building as running like a high school where cliques were running the school. She felt that:

He is destroying my school and turning it into a place where cliques have to be formed for survival. This building has never been divided until Pat came and it just keeps getting worse and worse. All he does is go to different people and talk about the other cliques—
this just ensures that they keep going. I honestly can’t believe a word he says. I would trust him about as far as I could throw him. I think he has done so much damage at this point; it would take a miracle to fix.

Mrs. Williams felt that Mr. Watson’s wide spread level of deceit had created separation and groups among with teaching staff. She was unsure as to the possibility of those ever resolving. Mrs. Dodge did not share the same strong emotions as the others when it came to Mr. Watson’s lack of trust and honesty. She attributed most of Mr. Watson’s dishonest and gossiping behaviors to his own “insecurities” and once he gains more experience that would “probably get better”. She stated that:

Pat is so worried about what everyone else thinks and if he is making the right decisions that he goes about collecting that input the wrong way. He almost tries to trick people into telling him what they think. I’m pretty sure most everyone knows the game he plays now so he’s probably the one getting played. I sure hope he grows out of that.

Mrs. Dodge believed that Mr. Watson lacked the experience yet hoped that through experience the drama he continued to create would stop.

The participants collectively felt that an administrator has to have integrity, to be openly honest, and to be trustworthy in order to promote positive unity and a team feel. They felt this trait had to be present for there to be a high level of job satisfaction or any at all. People cannot be happy or content when they are always wondering what is being said or done behind the scenes. The teachers also believed a lack of integrity created a divided building where no collaboration and camaraderie could exist; it promoted a lack of trust amongst everyone. Four out of the six teachers felt that integrity would be hard if not impossible to “all of a sudden just have”. As one teacher stated, “Integrity is within someone and does not seem like it is anything
that could be learned.” Yet another participant felt differently and simply “hoped and prayed he would see the error of his ways and just stop”. The participants felt that is was safer to just “stay out of the way” or to just “stay in my hole and do what I want to do” to avoid the daily “drama”.

These teachers believed the outcomes of having little or no integrity produced a stressful workplace for the teachers, a negative outlook, and an “insecure, non-trusting, lying staff”. They all strongly felt that if the teachers were upset or worried, the students would not only notice it but they would be negatively affected both emotionally and academically. As one participant put it:

Do you really think you can get everyone that worked up and paranoid and it won’t transfer to the kids? Yeah right. No one knows whom to trust, so you just don’t. The sad thing is, and I guess it just comes with being a shady person, is that I don’t think he cares. His morals are definitely out of whack. I’m not sure why he is even in education—it’s not for the right reasons.

This teacher felt that the uneasiness that Mr. Watson has created not only transfers to the students but also makes him an immoral person who should not be in education. If the opportunity were available, they all made it known they would leave their current job simply to work for a different administrator. Mrs. Williams said:

I love teaching and he can’t take that away from me, but I would in a second go to a different building with a different administrator. I don’t like the way it physically and emotionally feels to be in such turmoil everyday. It just can’t be good for our health.

Mrs. Williams felt that leaving the profession was not an option for her but would be willing to move schools to work for another administrator which she believed would improve her physical and emotional well being.
In conclusion, although previous literature has included some mention of trust as a factor in the principal/teacher relationship and overall job satisfaction, integrity was a significant factor in this study (Blase & Blase, 1999c and Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton, 2003). Every participant felt that integrity was a key quality to being an effective administrator. Without integrity, a lack of trust ensues. When there is little or no trust, confidentiality and camaraderie are compromised. Without integrity teachers felt like stress levels would increase and they would be “worried” and focused on aspects of their day that would not be beneficial to student learning. All of the participants felt powerfully that administrator integrity is closely connected with teacher job satisfaction.

Leadership

Blase & Blase (2001) and Bogler (2001) researched the importance and significance of leadership on teacher job satisfaction. Another administrative quality that teachers in this study thought should be present in their supervisor was being a leader. Teachers wanted to view their administrator as a strong leader who would be capable of guiding the masses. Without a common leader, there would be too many different directions being followed and a lack of unity and consistency would result. All of the study participants believed this quality indeed contributed to their levels of teacher job satisfaction. They all also thought that this was one of the weaker qualities of their current principal and “one he needed to improve in”. The leadership category that these teachers felt administrators should have were making decisions, vast knowledge, consistency, taking ownership, and possessing the ability to lead.

Making Decisions

Several studies have included decision making as an important shared component between administrators and teachers, while there seems to not be a great deal of literature on the
administrator’s ability to make decisions (Evans & Poppleton, 1999 and Jorissen, 2002).

Participants’ in this study thought the ability for an administrator to make valuable decisions was key to leading. They felt that a leader needed to be able to make quick as well as thought-out decisions based on what would be best for the “big picture”. Administrators should be able to stand firm and back up the decisions they make but also be willing to alter those decisions if there is a better way. All felt their current administrator lacked the ability to make decisions on his own without “confirmation from others” or simply “following a directive from a superior”.

Mrs. Gregory said:

Pat likes to makes decisions when others tell him what to decide—which really isn’t him making a decision at all. Teachers see that and notice it for what it is. When he is forced into making a decision he rarely stands by it or follows through with it. I’m sure it’s because he has asked everyone and their brother their opinion and changed it to match the majority. Or he has spoken with one of the other principals and they told him something different. That seems to happen a whole lot and then he likes to blame them so it doesn’t look like it was his idea. Even sometimes a decision he has made may never get mentioned again and just fade away. He would never make a high-stakes decision about anything; that’s probably a good thing though based on his track record for making menial decisions. All this really does is make him look weak and confused.

Mrs. Gregory felt that not being able to make a decision without the approval of others showed weakness and a lack of leadership skills.

Teachers want to look to their leaders as being willing and able to make decisions. These decisions range from the “simple everyday ones” to the more challenging “harder” ones. An administrator needs to be able to decipher the views of the many or the situation at hand and
make the best decision for the entire school community. The administrator needs to analyze the circumstances and make a sound decision based on what is in the best interest of the whole. Teachers felt that their administrator being able to make quality decisions is part of being an effective leader and increasing teacher job satisfaction.

Knowledge

Another leadership quality that was included in this category was having a solid knowledge base regarding most every educational issue. There seems to be a lack of previous literature that zones in on administrator knowledge and the effects that has on teachers. The knowledge base in this study included curriculum, evaluation procedures and feedback, appropriate child development for the students in the building, of the laws and procedures that should be followed, any educational current trends or research, and professional development ideas. The administrator was expected to “be a jack of all trades” with anything pertaining to the education world. Mrs. Peace commented on her view of Mr. Watson’s special education knowledge:

Pat is clueless when it comes to special education. I know that the laws and requirements are constantly changing but he should stay updated on all of that and be a resource for us. Many times I go to him and ask about something I’ve heard from someone in another district and he has no idea, and he sure doesn’t have the gumption to go find out either. That sure doesn’t give me much confidence in following his lead. It also makes me wonder how important special education matters are to him.

Mrs. Peace felt that Mr. Watson was not knowledgeable or a resource to her when it came to special education, she also felt as if her subject/level was not important to him. An effective administrator should have a clear idea of the end result as well as the knowledge of how to travel
to successfully arrive there. Part of being knowledgeable in a variety of areas involves knowing where the end road is, knowing “the big picture” and being able to show and guide others to what that is. Mrs. Peace said that:

If he doesn’t know what the goal is, what the end result or the process of getting to the end result is, then he can’t hold us accountable for when we don’t arrive at it. That’s what happens here sometimes. He needs to take ownership and responsibility for his part and start looking for solutions instead of making excuses. I tell my kids all the time to be a part of the solution not the problem. At this moment, he is the main problem.

Mrs. Peace wanted her principal to know what the goals were or should be and act accordingly. She did not feel comfortable thinking that Mr. Watson was learning along side of her.

Instructional knowledge allows for an administrator to give constructive and worthy feedback. Teachers felt that a leader possessing this type of knowledge would help them grow and develop as well as stay current in their field. Mrs. Dean felt that constructive feedback would only improve what she thought was already solid teaching practices. She stated:

I feel like I am a good teacher and I thoroughly enjoy this profession. But I do feel that going to professional development opportunities would only strengthen what I already do. I don’t have to go anywhere; he is supposed to be our instructional leader. He should be the know-it-all of our curriculum and teaching practices and if he’s not, then he should be going to workshops to know what’s going on. He knows the end product or what the big picture is supposed to be—or at least he should know so he can travel down the right road and lead us with him. Part of being the leader is knowing how to help us improve and grow.
Mrs. Dean wanted the opportunities to further develop professionally. She felt that Mr. Watson was not giving her these opportunities nor supporting her to go to other places for training.

The teachers in this study did not feel their current administrator had a solid knowledge base. Half of them thought that Mr. Watson was unaware of his lack of knowledge and seemed to be learning as they did. They perceived him as waiting to be informed by fellow building principals or district administrators instead of being the lead or an integral part of leading. The other half felt that he did not view this part of his job as important enough to spend the time and energy that it would take to become an expert. Either way, they believed that not having a wide array of knowledge in a variety of educational areas influenced the effectiveness of the administrator. They also felt that administrator knowledge has an effect on levels of teacher job satisfaction.

Consistency

Consistency was another common thread throughout the study that was perceived by the participants as being an important administrative quality. The teachers in this study frequently discussed the altering “mood swings” and how Mr. Watson’s “emotional state” could vary daily along with the rules and expectations. They had all experienced some form of frustration over this type of inconsistency. Mrs. Harper explained:

Consistency has to be in place to avoid total chaos. This means the same that is expected for one is expected for all. I mean to me if you had a consistent principal and you know what his expectations were every single day then it doesn’t matter if he is in a good mood or a bad mood, it takes a lot of the emotions out of the mix. You know when you come in that this is what is expected from you. We don’t have that now, his mood determines his
expectations and that seems to be ever changing. It’s hard to play when the rules are constantly changing—it’s very frustrating.

Mrs. Harper felt insecure with the inconsistent behavior of Mr. Watson. She never knew what to expect or what was expected of her, which caused her anxiety and frustration.

Just as Baughman (1996) showed that consistency was related to improving teacher job satisfaction, the participants in this study also believed that. The teachers agreed that consistency needed to be in place to avoid confusion and to make expectations clear and achievable. As one participant stated, “You can’t hit what’s always moving.” Three of the participants felt that having an inconsistent administrator produced discrepancies within the classroom due to the continuous changes. All of the participants believed that Mr. Watson was inconsistent on an almost daily basis. They also felt that having a consistent administrator would improve teacher job satisfaction.

Ownership

Taking ownership or responsibility for the “state of affairs” or how the building is being led was another theme that these teachers felt administrators should be able to do. One teacher gave an example of, “If the staff as a whole is struggling with a new curriculum movement or expectation, take responsibility for it not being presented or initiated correctly or clearly.” Mrs. Williams agreed that taking ownership is a needed part of being a leader. She thought that:

Part of being an administrator is taking ownership. For example, if something is wrong in my staff as a whole then maybe I need to look at what I’m doing as an administrator before I go to my staff and start pointing fingers or blaming. The problems don’t just involve one person or even ten, it’s everyone and it’s throughout the entire building. Pat
is the common denominator; you don’t have to be a genius to figure that out where the problem is.

Mrs. Williams believed that part of being an effective leader entailed recognizing when responsibility or ownership should be used. She felt that the teachers were blamed too often for issues where the principal should have taken responsibility for and worked on a fix.

The teachers in this study felt that they had a principal who rarely took ownership or responsibility for his own actions or for his involvement within a given situation or project. One participant said, “Any new initiatives are teacher initiatives or to dos, not building initiatives or goals. That would require him to be an active participant.” All had discussed times when they felt the teachers were “held accountable” or “blamed” when complications arose. Five of the six participants believed Mr. Watson would “take the credit” or accept ownership of something successful happening. They all perceived that an administrator with this quality would improve teacher job satisfaction.

Ability

All of the participants discussed an administrator’s “ability to lead”. The ideas on how that ability could be acquired varied among the participants. Three of them believed that true ability to lead was part of someone’s personality. As one teacher stated, “Some people are born to lead and some are born to follow.” Another participant stated that:

Not everyone can be a leader; you have to have the innate personality for it. It’s one of those God-given gifts—you got it or you don’t. Yes, it can always be improved and grow, but if you don’t have a leadership type of personality, you’re not going to be as good at it and you will probably be miserable as you are doing it.
This teacher believed that leadership ability is born and not nurtured just as personality is. Mrs. Dean also agreed that administrators were just born and trying to be someone that you are not would produce negative results. She remarked that:

It takes a special person to be an administrator, just like it takes a special person to be a teacher. I’ve had high school teachers that have said to me they can’t imagine how I do what I do. Well I feel the same about the high school level. We were designed for certain jobs. The conflict comes when we try to go outside of what our personalities are comfortable with. I think in Pat’s case he sees a title, not even the money, but a title, he feels more important now and that’s sad. This is why he struggles; he’s not got the personality to be an administrator, not a good one at least.

Mrs. Dean discussed how teachers have a desire and drive for a certain age and that administrators have to have a specific personality to be a successful leader. Contrary to those views, Mrs. Dodge felt that leading was best learned through experience. She summed it up as:

An administrator, just as a teacher, has to experience the job in order to grow from it. There are just some things that a college class just can’t help you with. Everyone gets better with experience, or at least they should. I think the important thing is how fast they can grow. I do think there are certain people who just aren’t cut out to be a principal. Those are the people who worry about conflict, or worry about not being liked—we all know in that job everyone is not going to like you or agree with what you do. There are also many occasions where conflict happens and the administrator is the one having to deal with it, especially when dealing with upset parents. I think someone who struggles with those things could still do it and maybe even be good at it, but I don’t think they would enjoy their job and I think that would show to others. But once again, the
experience of being in those uncomfortable situations would also help that administrator grow.

Mrs. Dodge felt that Mr. Watson should be allowed time and through experience he would grow and improve.

The participants felt that ability level affected how successful an administrator was. Even though half of the participants thought that without the necessary personality traits there could only be so much growth in this area, the other half thought that leadership ability could improve with enough experience and practice ability. At the time of the study, all of the participants felt that their principal lacked ability to be an effective administrator. They all also agreed that leadership ability is part of being a good administrator and effects teacher job satisfaction.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers felt the result of not having an administrator who can make quality decisions, lacks necessary knowledge and ability, is inconsistent, and does not accept ownership and responsibility of situations would produce confusion and ineffectiveness. No one would ever have a solid grasp of what the expectations were or the confidence that what they were doing was the best that could be done. They felt like they would continually be worried and stressed about what they might be missing or what they might be doing incorrectly. Teachers want feedback. They want to feel secure that they have a leader who knows and understands, and can be a resource to their betterment. Ultimately, teachers wanted a leader to “take on the responsibility of leading”. One of the teachers left it with, “Be the authority figure, be the principal, and be the leader, that’s really all we ask.” These participants wanted a leader who could make decisions, was knowledgeable, was consistent, had a sense of ownership, and possessed leadership ability.
Professionalism

All participants agreed that professionalism, or as one teacher called it “teacher treatment”, is another behavior exhibited by an effective administrator. They all felt that this quality was strongly linked to teacher job satisfaction. In this study, professionalism involved being treated as a knowledgeable professional, being respected, and being treated as a valued member of the school team. The teachers in this study felt like the professionalism they received from their most recent principal was very inconsistent in all areas of this category.

Knowledgeable

These teachers wanted to be regarded as experts in the education profession. They believed they had been both formally and informally educated in the field to have earned that. They also felt that since they continually read, attend workshops, network with other educators, take college coursework, and various other avenues of professional development that they both meet the state licensing requirements as well as stay connected to the ever-evolving world of education. They were certain that they knew their curriculum and students better than anyone else, including the administrator. There were times where they felt valued and were treated as the experts they considered themselves to be. Yet there seemed to be an equal number of times if not more that they were treated “as second class citizens” who were “too stupid” to make their own decisions let alone important building or grade level ones. Mrs. Peace gave the following example:

One of the things that happened to me at the very beginning of this year, for the first time in 23 years of teaching, was that I was not allowed to set my own IEP dates. He has told me before how well written and thorough my IEP’s are, but yet I’m not competent enough to schedule the meetings. So, I was handed the schedule at the beginning of the
year. They had been all screwed up, and would have ended up being in non-compliance had I not caught it—but I’m the idiot. That ended up causing me a lot of needless time and effort to fix, and I think we looked bad to the parents—we looked unprofessional.

Mrs. Peace felt that she was an experienced expert in her department. When she was not allowed to manage her schedule as in the past, she felt untrusted and that she was viewed as lacking the knowledge to do so correctly and effectively. Since teachers viewed themselves as knowledgeable professionals, they took it very personally when they were treated that way by the principal. Mrs. Dodge stated:

Administrators are always notorious for telling us that we are professionals but yet not providing us the opportunities to show that. I do get a little upset when he seems repeatedly to make sure we are on task. They are always on our backs about making sure we’re on task or making sure we are teaching this or practicing that. We are teachers—what do they think we are doing. And his whole tone and demeanor just make it worse, it’s like we are trying to sneak and get out of teaching. That definitely doesn’t come across as we know what we are doing here. Teaching is our passion, our life mission; it’s totally insulting when he does that. That goes back to another issue he has, if someone isn’t doing their job then deal with that directly, don’t offend the other 90 percent of us by telling us to make sure we are doing our jobs when we always are.

Mrs. Dodge wanted to be treated like a professional who chose the education profession because she has a love and passion for it. She did not like being patronized and treated like she is “trying to get away with something”.

Respect
The teachers wanted to be respected by their students, the parents, their peers, and their leader. But on many occasions, the administrator seemed to be the most disrespectful and degrading of them all. One participant commented, “What is expected of us, is not given to us.” Another one said, “He demands respect but yet is nothing but disrespectful to us.” Mrs. Gregory told of a story where at a grade level meeting one of the teachers walked in about five minutes after the start time. She explained it as:

We were all meeting as a grade level one morning and Pat was joining us on this particular day. Meg walked in about five minutes after the start time and he didn’t say anything and we didn’t think anything about it either. At the next staff meeting, he went into a big speech about how the meetings start at 8:20 AM and that time is his time and we better be respectful of it. He even said that he was at a meeting and someone had the nerve to walk in late when they knew he was going to be there. Come to even find out, Meg was meeting with a parent about one of her students. He never asked, but worse he made a blanket statement to the whole staff. He wants us to respect him but the reverse is far from happening.

Mrs. Gregory believed that to get respect it must be earned, not demanded. Not only was the situation not respectful to the teacher directly involved but also to the others Mr. Watson was making comments to. Another instance was when a participant was told, “Glad to see you’re on task,” she “felt like a small child being patronized by a bullying adult.” Mrs. Peace summed it up with, “I think a major problem that Pat has is talking to the staff like children. I mean we are peers, I don’t care whether he is the boss or not. Don’t talk down to us.”

Teachers also wanted to feel respected for their time. One participant commented that, “I hope they don’t call meetings for the sake of calling meetings because we need that time. We
spend a lot of time working for our kids and this school. I just hope they know that.” All of these participants had weekly lesson plan requirements, daily duties, and were all on a building committee. Mrs. Dean felt that she takes great pride in her detailed lesson plans and any other duties she is a part of. She remarked that:

   He needs to be respectful of our time. I think sometimes principals forget how time consuming it is to make five days worth of valuable lessons. I take my committee work seriously. Teaching is my profession and my desire; I want to be the best I can be. I don’t want to be devalued by being given useless duties or sitting in meetings just because it has been a week since we had one. Value my time, know and respect that I’m using it wisely.

Mrs. Dean did not mind the paperwork or expected duties as long as they were legitimate. She felt she worked hard at those expectations and did not want meaningless work. The teachers also felt that allowing for collaboration and purposefully building camaraderie would be an excellent use of time. Mrs. Williams agreed that a good use of her time would be working and fostering “a team feel” among other members of the teaching staff. She commented:

   There needs to be time allowed for collaboration. Any time we can build camaraderie with our departments or our grade levels would be time well spent. We never get time to do that since Pat has been here, and if we somehow end up together there is an administrator around to watch us. Camaraderie builds a sense of trust and teamwork where we all feel like we are a part of something bigger than us. We can help one other and brainstorm ideas to better help our students. We all have something to give and share that is valuable.
Mrs. Williams believed that time for camaraderie would build unity and promote teamwork. She felt that would be a way to accomplish more and produce quality work together. Just as Mrs. Williams desired a team approach to working together, Mrs. Harper also felt that getting time to collaborate and brainstorm with other educators was beneficial for the teachers and the students. She took offense when that was not noticed or appreciated and when she felt the principal hindered that process. She added:

Administrators act like when we get time together that it is going to be a bitch session about them. Believe me, they are not the only thing we think about. Get over your paranoia and let us work as a team. Appreciate what we do for this school and for you.

Mrs. Harper felt the distrust of the principal hampered the teachers’ ability to work together and to have meaningful conversations.

*Team Member*

Teachers also collectively felt that they wanted to be a part of the team, a contributing member of the team. They did speak of times when their input or feedback was wanted and valued. The problem seemed to be in guessing when that was. As many found out, input typically was only wanted when it was asked for. If a staff member provided such input, opinions, or feedback at an unsolicited time, then they felt not only was it not wanted, but also Mr. Watson would actually get upset. Mrs. Dodge told of one occasion:

The teachers actually helped create the specials schedule last year. It was coming time to get together to go over that schedule again and so I went to him with some ideas that I thought had several benefits. When I first went in his office he questioned why I was there to discuss the specials schedule. He then told me that I would need to make an appointment with him for when he had time for this issue and me. He then followed it up
with telling me that he will determine the schedule from now on and I just need to teach when he tells me to. I felt like a child being scolded for talking out of turn. I was embarrassed and initially felt silly for going to him with my ideas.

Mrs. Dodge felt pushed away and out of place when she tried to share an idea regarding scheduling. She felt that interaction would affect her publically brainstorming when the principal was around in the future.

Conclusion

Teachers believed that if there was a lack of professionalism in the workplace, the levels of job satisfaction would lower and it would promote a sense of hierarchy. The administrators being at the top level with everyone else below them. They felt it would also affect the confidence of teachers and overall staff morale. In addition, the participants also felt that this discouraged professional growth and stifled teamwork as well as lowered the level of teacher job satisfaction. These teachers wanted to be treated like knowledgeable professionals, with respect, and as a valued member of the school team.

Support

Administrative support has been repeatedly proven to contribute to retaining teachers in the profession and increasing teacher job satisfaction (Bogler, 1999 and Hewitt, 2010). Administrative support was another reoccurring theme amongst the participants of this study also. Support included backing teacher actions in the classroom related to student discipline, supporting teachers in their dealings with parents, as well as personal and professional support. All of the participants felt certain that this administrative behavior related to levels of teacher job satisfaction. Once again they thought their current administrator was inconsistent and unreliable when it came to being supportive.
For these teachers, the importance of support by their administrators included any type of help or advice needed in dealing with students and parents as well as with issues relating to a range of issues from instruction to discipline. One participant commented that, “When we come to them with problems, to know that they are either going to help you find a solution or take care of the problem themselves, that’s important to me.”

Classroom

Five out of the six teachers believed that the administrator being physically present in their classroom also gave them a feeling of administrative classroom support. They believed this presence would also show students that the principal and teacher were “on the same page” with classroom behavioral expectations as well. Mrs. Williams commented that:

I had an administrator once who was always in and out of my classroom. The students would never get nervous or wonder why he was visiting our room. As a matter of fact, there were many occasions when they couldn’t wait to show him what they were working on or brag about how well they had done something. Those students knew he was there to support us all. But when Pat enters, the tension is thick enough to cut with a knife. We are all wondering what he is looking for. Support is not the vibe that is being put off.

Mrs. Williams wanted her administrator to frequently be in her classroom and interacting with the students. She felt this would provide her with a sense of support.

Parent

The participants in this study wanted to know that they would be openly supported with the parents. When they were unsure of what level of support they would have from their administrator, they were nervous and stressed when parents contacted Mr. Watson. Mrs. Dean
commented about a positive experience she had with being supported by her principal with one of her student’s parents:

One time a parent called Mr. Watson and was complaining about me and saying that her child was telling her these outlandish things I was saying. He told me that he let her know that as long as he has known me he has never heard or seen me doing anything of the sort and told the parent they should contact me directly. I felt so good about that and felt like he had my back.

Mrs. Dean believed that even when the administrator did not agree or wanted a situation handled differently, that being supportive in front of the parent was vital. Unfortunately she also experienced the other side when she did not feel supported and backed up with a parent complaint:

A different time a parent called about the way I disciplined her child. He was being completely disruptive and I had given him several warnings and ultimately removed him from the class. She didn’t want him removed because of how important his education was and Pat completely said he agreed with her. Now he has made it clear to that parent that I am not an expert on managing my classroom nor am I the authority figure in the room. He completely undermined me and made it look like I was to blame. I felt like I lost some control of my class and classroom at that point.

Mrs. Dean believed that due to not receiving the needed parent support from the principal that the management of her classroom was damaged. She felt that the parents and students now knew she was not supported by her leader and would challenge her often. Fortunately, most situations that were mentioned during the participant interviews involving parent support were short lived.
compared to a past experience Mrs. Harper had. She will never forget the importance of how support helped her through a difficult time:

I have had a previous supportive principal and a current not so supportive one. In my last district we were going through a two-year due process case. It was very stressful but I knew every single meeting that my principal was there to support me and speak up on my behalf for me.

Mrs. Harper felt that having principal support helped her cope with an uncomfortable situation. She unfortunately did not feel supported on a situation with the current administrator until after an incident occurred. She explained it as:

And then I come here and I have a violent student that I have been told by Mr. Watson and the student’s parents that it is my job to deal with him. He eventually stabbed me with a pencil before I got any support from him with the parents. Now he supports me and I feel so much more comfortable in the meetings with that student’s parents.

Mrs. Harper felt that she had to be at risk before she received any support from Mr. Watson with a parent regarding an aggressive student. She at least felt that the support was better to be received after the fact then to remain at having none at all.

Personal

Teachers also desired personal support from their administrators. This entailed a personal interest in them as individuals—“caring about me.” As one participant stated, “As long as you feel like they are interested in you and what you’re doing, you have a positive relationship with them.” This encouraged a team environment that consisted of the vested members of the school community. They could now share goals and ideas about the betterment of the school. One participant explained that, “When we all support and believe in each other we can promote a
better place for us, our students, and their parents without worrying about ulterior motives.
Everyone can be happier.” Mrs. Dodge felt that:

For the most part I think Pat has been personally supportive to me. Granted I keep to myself and don’t share many personal things with him due to some trust issues, but there have been several times that I have had to leave or miss work with some family issues and he was very flexible about that and seemed concerned about me.

Mrs. Dodge felt that she could ask for flexibility in the schedule or for personal support and would receive it from Mr. Watson. She did not feel comfortable sharing truly private information with him though. Four of the six teachers had children themselves and felt that Mr. Watson should be supportive of their children’s education even though none of them attended this school district, simply because he was an educator. Mrs. Williams shared a personal story where she needed support from Mr. Watson but unfortunately did not get it:

I have a son in middle school that was getting into a little bit of trouble and was having problems with his teacher. There were a few meetings I needed to go to and Pat acted like I was asking him to sacrifice his first-born child. He expects the parents of our students to drop everything to come in because he makes it known that they are their children not ours, but he doesn’t support me being a part of my own child’s education. I even explained the situation to him and I still didn’t feel like he cared. He seemed more concerned with having to cover my class for an hour.

Mrs. Williams did not feel supported in her children’s education. This made her feel unappreciated and that there was a double standard expected of them and what they expected out of the parents of their students.

*Professional*
General teacher support or professional support was also a contributing factor in how supported the participants felt. This included teachers being recognized and shown how their efforts were appreciated. One participant said that, “If I know that you know how hard I work and appreciate that, then I will want to work even harder.” They also wanted to be praised by their administrators for their accomplishments both in and out of the classroom. One teacher even commented, “It doesn’t always have to be a negative conversation. Genuine praise is nice sometimes.” Administrators were viewed as showing support when they encouraged their teachers to attend professional development activities and gave them time with their peers. Both of these aspects were seen as helping to improve and develop their teaching skills. One participant explained it as, “Instead of just preaching about the importance of professional development, it is putting your money where your mouth is when you pay for me to go. I appreciate the support and encouragement to improve myself.” Mrs. Dodge had a positive experience to share:

Pat started this drop in a bucket idea. It was raindrop shapes that our peers or even he could write something positive on and then place in a particular person’s bucket. I know most people thought it was silly but I thought it had a good message behind it. I think it was nice to receive positive recognition where I felt supported for my professional efforts as a teacher.

Recognition and encouragement were viewed by some as an added support that was a bonus to have from administration while others believed it to be a motivator to continue what they were doing. Mrs. Peace stated that:

I find it very interesting that Pat is always looking for ways to recognize and encourage students but never gives that to us. We all want to find ways to motivate our students and
willing to do anything that might give them a step up so I’m not faulting that. He constantly wants people telling him how hard he works and praising him but he can’t consistently do that for us. My point is, if you know the students need that and you need it, shouldn’t he automatically know that the teachers need that type of support also. It makes me want to work even harder when I feel appreciated.

Mrs. Peace felt that Mr. Watson was not transferring what he understands students to need to the needs of the teachers. Mrs. Gregory also felt like the support was insufficient from Mr. Watson and that certain efforts demand recognition. When recognition is withheld, teacher participation and effort will decrease. She described an example as:

I chaired one of the curriculum committees a few years back. It required a tremendous amount of work and time outside of my normal day. I felt we developed an amazing curriculum map for the entire social studies department. We were all so energized and proud of what our hard work had achieved. He never said anything about it, not one word. I’ve never chaired a committee since and have no plans of doing so.

By not recognizing Mrs. Gregory’s hard work and effort, Mr. Watson discouraged her from participating on future professional committees or teams.

Conclusion

Teachers felt that if they were given the necessary support from their administrators, they would just naturally work harder, “go above and beyond”, and feel better about the work they were doing. They would want to do quality work and continue to actively participate within the building. Teachers would have more confidence and be more self-assured. “It gives people the security to try things”, said one of the teachers. They also felt the more supported they were, the
more support they gave their students. These participants wanted to be supported by their administrator within the classroom, with parents, as well as both personally and professionally.

Communication

Previous research has shown that administrative communication increases leadership effectiveness and the principal-teacher relationship (Iheanacho, 1992 and Reyes & Hoyle, 1992). The participants in this study also felt that administrative communication played a role in teacher job satisfaction as well as affected several of the other desired administrative qualities that teachers previously named. The participants in this building felt like communication was encouraged with words but discouraged through actions. As one participant put it, “Actions speak louder than words and your actions are screaming that you want me to shut up.” Mrs. Peace stated that:

There was a time where I felt I could talk to Pat about anything. I have since learned that is not the case, so now I don’t communicate with him any more than I have to. Because of his reactions and his behavior, the communication is this building has almost come to a halt.

Not being able to openly discuss building issues hindered both the quantity and quality of communication. Mrs. Harper described one example where a lack of communication had wide spreading negative consequences:

It is almost like you having to be on the same page and if you’re not then he doesn’t want to know that you’re not on the same page. You just have to do what it is that he expects you to do, and do it with your mouth shut and a smile on your face. One horrible situation that happened here a few years back was when he felt like he needed to move people around for some reason. I know that it is well in his rights as an administrator, because he
told us that, but how it was done I think was done in very poor taste. I think in a situation like that, if you would have taken everybody and just sat us down and said okay look we have a problem. What we are doing now isn’t working as a staff so I’ve decided we need to move things around. I think he would have gotten a different response if he had communicated with us.

When communication is used ineffectively or improperly, the level of trust and confidentiality was damaged. Mrs. Gregory summed up her feelings of Mr. Watson’s communication skills, or the lack thereof:

His form of communication is talking about everyone else. He wants to say that he has an open line of communication and we could always come to him, but everyone knows that’s not true. Sure we can come to him if we want everyone knowing our business. He’s severed the communication lines so bad I’m pretty sure he could never repair them.

Mrs. Gregory believed that communication once damaged would be hard to mend effectively. She also believed that Mr. Watson was not attempting to fix or acknowledge the problem either. In contrast, Mrs. Dean felt the strain of the communication disconnect but had hope they could be mended if Mr. Watson could “see what he’s doing”. She described it as:

The lines of communication are strained right now. I think Pat comes across like everything is top secret and he has the magic key. Behavior like that discourages communication between the teachers and administrators, and that’s how the us against you feelings originate. I think once he sees and probably feels what he’s doing to the communication here he will learn from it and surely fix it.

Mrs. Dodge not only felt that the communication disconnect could be fixed but also she thought that Mr. Watson was unaware of his actions. While Mrs. Dodge acknowledged the importance of
having an open line of communication between teachers and between teachers and administrators, she was more understanding of why Mr. Watson was not always open. She further explained it as:

Administrators can’t always share everything they know. They are responsible and expected to maintain district and building confidentiality. Sometimes teachers just need to realize that there are certain things and we will be told about when we need to know. Some things are on a need-to-know basis. Now when there are things we should be told or talked about and that is kept from us, which are what damages the lines of communication for me.

Mrs. Dodge believed there were times when administrators had to keep the communication to a minimum to protect the district. She did not view it as an act of secrecy. Deficient administrative communication not only affects the teaching staff; students and parents are also touched. If communication is weak from the leader down, then teachers cannot keep their students and parents abreast of current situations within the building. Mrs. Williams described the lack of communication that branched outside of the teacher and administrator connection in this elementary building:

I think Pat needs to improve communication all the way around. I think he doesn’t have the open communication that he always tells us is here but he also doesn’t communicate with the students, parents, and community very effectively either. I’ve had a few parents this year and heard people talking at soccer games about how they feel they don’t know what is going on in the school. That’s nothing but a lack of communication and he controls that—that needs to improve.
Mrs. Williams believed that Mr. Watson’s lack of communication transferred down to the students and parents. She felt that it left the community with a sense of privacy and secrecy that they should not have.

When administrators were “good listeners” and “do not discount other people’s feelings” they were encouraging more open communication between teachers and principals. But on the contrary, when administrators were “talking about other staff members with peers” and not trusted because “you have to watch what you say” they discouraged the communication between the two groups. When there was open communication it allowed for teacher input, which in turn made the participants feel more professional, reduced scheduling conflicts, and the teachers felt free and safe to come to the administrators with any issues of concern. Closed communication led to rumors, the exclusion of certain members of the school, hindered feedback, teachers afraid to express opinions, and blanket statements being made to the entire staff. All of which as one participant put it, “leads to serious resentment.”

Other Factors

There were two other factors that were included in Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s Two-Factor Theory (1959) that were briefly mentioned in this study. Salary and security were both discussed in the participants’ interviewing session. Only one participant gave any mention of salary and another one talked about security. Each one brought it up on only one occasion and it was not discussed again.

Salary

Only two out of the six participants mentioned salary and it was to say that salary was not a contributing factor of their job satisfaction or decision to be and stay a teacher. One participant said:
I think we make a great salary here but I wouldn’t care if I made a doddle as long as I was happy or could be happy. Administrator turnover happens too much for me to leave at this point but if Pat stays around and things don’t change then I may look around or retire and salary won’t be a determining factor on my decision, money means nothing more than that. My son wanted to literally dig ditches instead of going to college but he loved it. I told him I supported him 100 percent to see that smile on his face and excitement to go to work. I want that back for myself.

This participant was happy with her salary and even compared it to her beginning salary. She did make mention that salary would not keep her in a job if she were unhappy for an extended period of time.

*Security*

Only one participant mentioned job security or “tenure” during the participant interviews. Three out of the six participants did not have a continuing contract, the teacher who talked about it being one of them that did not. She stated:

I try to not upset him too much because without tenure I can’t trust that he wouldn’t try something spiteful just because. When and if I leave this job or teaching I want it to be my decision and not his. He always finds a way to tell us that same story of how you just have to throw one person against a locker and the others know not to mess with you. I mean, how are we supposed to take that? The teachers in my boat should all be worried about that being directed towards us.

This participant would feel more secure and able to participate more without the fear of termination or retaliation if she had a continuing contract.
In conclusion, the teachers in this study perceived their administrator had a direct hand in their level of job satisfaction. They believed that administrators largely control the effectiveness of the administrator-teacher relationship and ultimately control the level of teacher job satisfaction. The most commonly desired administrative qualities that emerged from the participant interviews revealed that if administrators have the needed amount of integrity, leadership abilities, professionalism, support, and communication, they feel their stress levels would decline, they would have increased confidence, and they would have positive feelings towards all aspects of the school and their job—their job satisfaction would increase. They also felt that this in turn all transfers or as one participant said, “causes a ripple effect” to occur and affects their peers, students, parents, and the greater community.
Chapter V: Conclusion and Implications

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine what a specific group of teachers believed about the influence of administrators on job satisfaction. Based on these six teachers’ perceptions, this study showed that the actions and behaviors of administrators directly affected their job satisfaction. These participants did blame and/or credit their administrators with having a great deal of control over job satisfaction. As a matter of fact, all of the teachers in this study stated that the administrator was the most influential factor in teacher job satisfaction. They also believed that improving the relationship between teachers and administrators could make for a more successful environment for all. From these participants’ perspective, administrators hold the master key to the success or failure of this relationship. As one participant stated, “I often wonder how important this type of relationship is to them, I know it’s important to us.” All participants echoed that same sentiment. They doubted that administrators viewed that relationship as being as important as they did.

The findings led to the conclusions that these teachers wanted their administrators to have integrity, to be leaders, to show and extend to them professionalism, support, and an open line of communication. All of these perceived qualities affected the level of teacher job satisfaction. These teachers believed that if they could feel a sense of being a professional, of being supported, and of being included in an open communication environment, they would be more satisfied with their job. When they have a trustworthy and honest leader, they feel more secure and their levels of job satisfaction increase. They felt it gives them the tools they need to create a successful environment for their students and themselves, and that everyone with any vested interest would benefit in some way.
Teacher job satisfaction in turn led to many other aspects that contributed or hindered a successful school climate. These participants strongly believed their job satisfaction directly affected students. They believed students’ emotional and academic states are at risk when their teachers are not satisfied with their jobs. This belief that students are affected is yet another reason why teacher job satisfaction should be an extremely important issue for administrators.

Administrator integrity was the most significant factor in job satisfaction for these participants. These participants felt that integrity was vital for the other qualities to be able to be in place and succeed. Administrators need to realize that teachers notice when they are dishonest and they need to be aware of the absolute importance of this behavior. These teachers believed this quality had the most effect on the others. Without it, the entire educational process is at risk. When there is a lack of trust, it breeds a lack of confidence, and confidence facilitates growth (Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton, 2003).

Strong leadership is associated with school effectiveness (Taylor & Tashakkori, 1995). Administrators need to lead; and they need to be confident and authoritative when doing so. Teachers need to feel comfortable in their administrator’s leadership abilities. These participants wanted someone who was not afraid to make the hard decisions or tackle change. Knowledge is power and these teachers believed that the administrators should have many of the answers or be willing to find them. Without the leadership skills, administrators will not have the trust and faith of their teachers.

Professionalism was a major factor of teacher job satisfaction in this study. These teachers needed and wanted to be treated as professionals in order to think and behave as such. Whether they were treated as incompetent individuals or important stakeholders, they felt they acted accordingly. Teacher job satisfaction is many times associated with extrinsic and intrinsic
rewards. Teachers are many times cut off from sources of extrinsic rewards so they often turn to intrinsic sources of satisfaction. One example of an important source of intrinsic satisfaction is when teachers are given opportunities to be involved in decision making (Taylor & Tashakkori, 1995). When they contribute to various aspects within the school program, a sense of ownership and professional pride may very well develop. In fact, these six teachers felt that administrators have tremendous ability to create and nurture a sense of professionalism for the teachers within a school building, which will then improve job satisfaction.

Support is another vital aspect of teacher job satisfaction perceived by these teachers. In fact, principal support influences the feelings that teachers have about themselves and their work (Littrell & Billingsley, 1994). Teachers who characterize their principals as supportive find work more rewarding, enjoy a more productive and motivating work environment, demonstrate lower attrition rates, and experience less job-related stress and burnout (Littrell & Billingsley, 1994). This study indeed showed this to be what the teachers perceived. These teachers believed they had to feel supported by their administrators in order to promote and encourage a high level of job satisfaction.

This study showed just as Whaley and Hegstrom (1992) stated, that worker satisfaction could be improved when leaders make sure certain communication needs like mission, goals, feedback, rewards, and support are met. These participants perceived that effective communication from administrators to teachers improved teacher job satisfaction and without it the level of trust was also compromised. This study showed that these teachers perceived that open communication between administrators and teachers promoted a healthy, camaraderie type of atmosphere. Without communication, expectations are unclear and teachers start deciphering the meanings on their own. Ultimately, expectations become jumbled and confused.
Knowing that teachers’ perceptions of their administrators alters or at the least greatly relates to teacher job satisfaction, allows for the possibility of knowing what needs to be changed or improved and how to go about implementing a change in regards to this topic. Administrators need to understand and accept the importance of teacher job satisfaction, especially when teachers themselves are aware of the effects it has on them and others. Educators want effective schools for children. Improving teacher job satisfaction is one way to strive toward making that goal a reality. In summary, this study shows that these teachers perceive a strong connection with administrators, if not the connection, to their level of job satisfaction.

In conclusion, these teachers felt their level of job satisfaction increased when administrators had integrity, showed leadership abilities, treated them like professionals, provided support, and effectively communicated with them. Participants believed that their level of job satisfaction transferred to others they had contact with. This entailed interactions that occurred both in and out of the classroom setting, as well as in and out of the school setting. These participants perceived a strong correlation between these administrative behaviors and actions and their level of job satisfaction.

**Limitations**

There were limitations of this research study. One limitation being that other aspects of teacher job satisfaction was not explored. This study focused exclusively on teachers’ perceptions about the significance of administrators on teacher job satisfaction. There were no other views or job satisfaction elements investigated.

Another limitation was that there were only six participants involved in the study. All of the participants were working in the same elementary building. The building consisted of thirty-four certified/licensed educators and only the perceptions of six were explored. Only three of the
six participants ever briefly mentioned another administrator, which means almost exclusively all of the data collected in this study pertained to their current building principal. All six of the participants were also experienced teachers. That does leave the uncertainty of whether new or newer educators would perceive and interpret situations in the same ways. Also since all of the participants were in the same rural location, there is the question of whether this study would be pertinent to teachers and administrators working in other schools in Ohio, or educators working at different levels (junior high or high school), or in different settings (suburban or urban areas) or other parts of this country and abroad.

**Contributions to the Literature**

A great deal of the literature on teacher job satisfaction includes administrator influence as a variable. This study looked at the administrator/teacher relationship as the only variable and was based solely on teacher perceptions. This research showed that this particular group of teachers strongly believed administrators to have the most significant affect on how satisfied teachers are with their jobs. This study also exposes the administrative qualities that teachers believe can increase job satisfaction as well as the consequences of their absence.

**Theory**

Frederick Herzberg, Bernard Mausner, and Barbara Snyderman’s Two-Factor Theory (1959) on job satisfaction was used as the theoretical framework for this research. The theory splits the levels of job satisfaction in two sections: the hygiene factors that are responsible for causing dissatisfaction, and the motivation factors that allow for satisfaction. Once the administrator qualities that these participants perceived caused dissatisfaction and/or satisfaction were discovered, they were compared to Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s Two-Factor
Theory (1959) to see if there were any similarities. Refer to Table 2 and Table 3 for the comparisons.

Table 2

*Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s Two-Factor Theory and Findings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hygiene Factors (Dissatisfiers)</th>
<th>Study Findings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company policies and administration</td>
<td>Integrity, Leadership</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
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<td>Supervision</td>
<td>Integrity, Leadership,</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Working conditions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal relations</td>
<td>Professionalism, Support,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Salary, status, and security</td>
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Table 3

*Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s Two-Factor Theory and Findings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation Factors (Satisfiers)</th>
<th>Study Findings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Professionalism, Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Support, Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Professionalism, Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Growth and advancement</td>
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The teachers in this study attributed the inadequacy of the administrator and the building policies he created and managed (company policies and administration); his lack of competency, fairness, and willingness (supervision); and the inappropriate interactions between other staff members and himself (interpersonal relations) as all greatly contributing to and lowering their job satisfaction. Most likely since the elementary building these participants worked in was a modern, updated site, the working conditions category was never mentioned by them. But there is also the possibility that working conditions are not a significant factor of teacher job satisfaction. In this study salary was also not a contributor to either dissatisfaction or satisfaction, but only as an insignificant reason to stay in a position or in the profession if unsatisfied with the job. The teachers in this district were also the highest paid in their county. This may explain why it is not significant in this study or it is possible that educators may not view salary as a deterrent in their job satisfaction. Possessing a continuing contract, or tenure is security for teachers. It did affect stress levels when it had not been obtained for one participant. Status was also absent from this study.

Just as Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s (1959) stated many years ago: Asking people what is important to them in their jobs will bring responses that are classified as motivators (p.114). The teachers in this study most often mentioned receiving recognition, being allowed to have responsibility and the support to grow as educators from their administrator as important to increasing their levels of job satisfaction. They believed having those motivators would naturally produce an interest in their work. These participants viewed themselves as lifelong teachers with no desire to move or change positions within the school system, therefore growth and advancement was not a factor in this study.
Even though there were several parts of Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s Theory (1959) that did not contribute to these participants’ dissatisfaction or satisfaction, this study does provide support for their theory in regards to research on teacher job satisfaction. The hygiene factors were most important to these teachers, and they identified glaring deficiencies in administration, supervision, and interpersonal relations as defining factors in their level of job satisfaction. Because hygiene factors were so important in their setting, the motivation factors were viewed as secondary. These teachers mentioned many times that the hygiene-type qualities had to be in existence for the motivation factors to even matter. This supports Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s Theory (1959). Therefore, this study does substantiate Frederick Herzberg, Bernard Mausner, and Barbara Snyderman’s Two-Factor Theory (1959) on job satisfaction to be accurate and to relate to teaching contexts.

This research should be of significant importance to administrators. This study showed the consequences of having unsatisfied teachers in the building who attribute that dissatisfaction completely to the principal. Administrators should actively work on and try to improve the administrator/teacher relationship. Teachers should appreciate the time and energy that administrators put into the relationship and reciprocate that effort. The better that relationship, the more satisfied teachers will be with their jobs.

Future Research

Future research should be done on specific ways to promote the administrator/teacher relationship to improve overall teacher job satisfaction. This knowledge would be beneficial to both experienced administrators and administrators in training and help them appreciate the importance of working on this type of relationship. The teachers in this study all perceived that their levels of job satisfaction had an impact on students. Additional studies to further explore
that perception would be advantageous in showing whether that connection is in fact there and to 
what degree. In addition, a study on teacher job satisfaction using Herzberg, Mausner, and 
Snyderman’s Two-Factor Theory (1959) could explore the factors of dissatisfaction and 
satisfaction in regards to education to compare results with this study. If similar results were 
obtained, that would allow reason for these teachers’ perceptions to be generalized to a larger 
population of educators.
References


Appendix A

University of Cincinnati
Consent to Participate in a Research Study
College of Education/Curriculum and Instruction
Christen M. Davis
513-624-9849/christenjody@aol.com

Title of Study:
Elementary Teachers’ Perceptions of their Administrators and Job Satisfaction

Introduction:
Before agreeing to participate in this study, it is important that the following explanation of the proposed procedures be read and understood. It describes the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of the study. It also describes the right to withdraw from the study at any time. It is important to understand that no guarantee or assurance can be made as to the results of the study.

Purpose:
The purpose of this research study is to discover elementary teachers’ perceptions of their administrators and how they feel those perceptions relate to their job satisfaction.

You will be one of approximately 32 participants taking part in this study.

Duration:
Your participation in this study will last for approximately four months.

Procedures:
During the course of this study, the following will occur:

- There will be approximately two open-ended interview sessions with participants. Each session will last about 30 minutes in length. The interview sessions will occur within the months of February to May.
- At the conclusion of the study, the results will be shared with the participants.

Risks/Discomforts:

There are no foreseeable risks associated with this particular study. You may have a discomfort of sharing information about the administration with the investigator, who also works within the school system. You can be assured that no information will be shared with anyone at any time. The investigator will do everything possible to make you feel comfortable.
Benefits:

You will receive no direct benefit from your participation in this study, but your participation may help educators better understand the connection between the perceptions teachers have regarding their administrators and how they feel that affects their job satisfaction.

Alternatives:

There is no alternative procedure or intervention available to you if you choose not to participate in this study.

Confidentiality:

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your study records. Agents of the University of Cincinnati will be allowed to inspect sections of the research records related to this study. The data from the study may be published; however, you will not be identified by name. Your identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law, such as mandatory reporting of child abuse, elder abuse, or immediate danger to self or others. Confidentiality will be kept by keeping all names out of the data collection. You will be identified by a letter and number combination that will be chosen by you. The investigator will also keep all research data at her home residence to eliminate the risk of access by others.

Right to refuse or withdraw:

Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate, or may discontinue participation AT ANY TIME, without difficulty or penalty, undue embarrassment, negative consequences, or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The investigator has the right to withdraw you from the study AT ANY TIME. Your withdrawal from the study may be for reason related solely to you (for example, not following study-related directions from the investigator, etc.) or because the entire study has been terminated.

Offer to answer questions:

If you have any other questions about this study, you may call Christen M. Davis at 513-624-9849 or Dr. Keith Barton at 513-556-3384. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call Dr. Margaret Miller, Chair of the Institutional Review Board – Social and Behavioral Sciences, at 513-558-5784.

LEGAL RIGHTS:

Nothing in this consent form waives any legal right you may have nor does it release the investigator, the sponsor, the institution, or its agents from liability for negligence.
I HAVE READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE. I VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. I WILL RECEIVE A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM FOR MY INFORMATION.

________________________________________  __________
Participant Signature  Date

________________________________________  __________
Signature and Title of Person Obtaining Consent  Date

Identification of Role in the Study
Appendix B

Interview Guides

INTERVIEW GUIDE #1

1. What are your perceptions of your administrators?
2. Why do you feel you have these perceptions towards your administrators?
3. How do you feel those perceptions relate to how satisfied you are with your job?
4. What do you feel your administrators could do to help ensure or improve job satisfaction?
5. How do you feel having a positive perception of your administrators affects or would affect you?
6. How do you feel having a negative perception of your administrators affects or would affect you?
7. How important is it to be satisfied with your job? Why?

INTERVIEW GUIDE #2

1. What types of actions and/or behaviors should administrators demonstrate?
2. What are the outcomes when administrators do not show those types of actions and/or behaviors?
3. What are the outcomes when administrators do show those types of actions and/or behaviors?
4. How does this affect your level of job satisfaction?

INTERVIEW GUIDE #3

1. What is important to you in your job?
2. What can administrators do so that teachers receive what is important to them?
3. How can administrators hinder teachers receiving what is important to them?

4. What are the outcomes when these are received?

5. What are the outcomes when these are not received?

6. How would you classify your level of job satisfaction? Why?
Appendix C

Tables

Table 1

*Frederick Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s Two-Factor Theory*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hygiene Factors (Dissatisfiers)</th>
<th>Motivation Factors (Satisfiers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Company policies and administration</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working conditions</td>
<td>Interest in work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal relations</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary, status, and security</td>
<td>Growth and advancement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 2

*Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s Two-Factor Theory and Findings*

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<th>Study Findings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>Integrity, Leadership, Communication</td>
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<td>Interpersonal relations</td>
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Table 3
Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman’s Two-Factor Theory and Findings

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