

2011

# The Motivating Factors of Secondary School Assistant Principals in Southeast Michigan and Their Impact on Job Mobility

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The Motivating Factors of Secondary School Assistant Principals in Southeast Michigan  
and Their Impact on Job Mobility

by

David M. Schmittou

Dissertation

Submitted to the Department of Leadership and Counseling

Eastern Michigan University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Ronald Williamson, Chair

Dr. Gary Marx

Dr. Nelson Maylone

Dr. Jaclynn Tracy

April 7, 2011

Ypsilanti, Michigan

## **Dedication**

Thank you to all of my family and friends, especially my wife, Rachel, and my children, who have allowed me the time and resources to complete this process.

## **Acknowledgments**

Thank you to the members of my committee, Dr. Tracy, Dr. Marx, Dr. Maylone, and my chair Dr. Williamson, for their contributions of time, energy, and expertise. Each member provided valuable insight that helped frame this research study. Thank you also to Dr. Norma Ross, who gave of her time and talents to edit this study and turn it into a finished product.

## **Abstract**

Recent research identified two broad categories of motivation, extrinsic and intrinsic. These two forms of personal motivation play a large role in determining individuals' level of job satisfaction. By affording a level of perceived empowerment, the environment of the workplace is a contributing factor toward encouraging or discouraging individual satisfaction.

This study demonstrates the relationships that exist between personal motivation needs, workplace empowerment, and the attempted job mobility or stability of assistant principals, a select group of public school administrators.

Prior studies have argued that when an individual possesses both high levels of personal intrinsic motivation needs and high levels of workplace empowerment, individuals are more likely to achieve a state of "flow" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and demonstrate greater job stability.

In the American public school setting, many districts employ assistant principals, who are often viewed as members of the building leadership and administration, but who also leave their position after a relatively short time period. This study shows that although there is no statistically significant relationship between personal motivation needs and the mobility of assistant principals, the intrinsic motivation needs for assistant principals are not being met by employers, resulting in high levels of job mobility, making it unlikely that expertise can be acquired in the role. Future studies should examine the relationships between motivation and job mobility in other geographic regions and pursue the topic from the perspective of building principals and district level leadership.

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## CHAPTER 1 -- INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Schools are dynamic environments. There is constant turnover as students move through the systems and when employees retire, are hired, or move on to other positions. This constant change impacts a school's culture and climate as each is achieved through sustained efforts (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). When change is present within the school leadership, the impact on school culture may be even more dramatic than the effects felt with the turnover of students and teachers.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There is both an explicit and implicit hierarchy within schools. Building administrators, principals, assistant principals, and deans are typically viewed as the leadership. Their style and direction drives the school. The priorities that they establish are taken as the priorities for the school (Lee, Smith, and Cioci, 1993). Their personality filters through the staff and students. Traditionally, however, individuals in these roles do not possess substantial job longevity.

An increase in job longevity can lead to an increase in time-on-tasks associated with the role and an increase in expertise (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Assistant principals, the administrators who tend to have the most direct student contact, are extremely prone to seeking new employment after only a short time of refining their skills and, as a result, may not achieve expert status (Marshall, 1993). When assistant principals leave to assume a new role, they may be enhancing their own perceived power and prestige but there is a cost associated, especially in the school left behind.

## **Purpose and Rationale of the Study**

This study provides data for principals and human resource directors in school districts to determine current motivating influences that impact assistant principals in southeast Michigan school districts. The results of this study may give employers a more detailed account of what drives currently employed assistant principals, how to retain them, and what characteristics employers may look for in future hires.

Researchers studying the effects of personal well-being have begun to examine the distinctions between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Individuals who are motivated intrinsically tend to have greater self-efficacy and self-reliance, whereas those with greater extrinsic motivations tend to be swayed more easily by tangible rewards and affirmations. Motivation is central to understanding the goals an individual creates and what might be done to attempt to achieve them (Deci, 1972).

## **Key Definitions**

Extrinsic motivation: a need for external rewards and/or punishments (wealth, fame, image) to achieve a specified behavior (Lepper, Greene, and Nisbett, 1973).

Intrinsic motivation: an internal drive (personal growth, community building, relationship building) towards completion of a task. Intrinsic motivation in people involves an “inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise their capacities, to explore, and to learn” (Deci, 1972, p. 119).

Mobility: the transition to a new employment position carrying with it different task responsibilities from previous positions in addition to a sense of more prestige,

power, and/or authority. Mobility may occur within a current building, district, or system, or it may involve relocation.

Perceived empowerment: the level at which an employee feels free to complete tasks of his/her own choosing in a manner reflective of his/her own level of expertise (Baard, Deci, and Ryan, 2000).

Stability: the maintenance of an employment role, which may include acceptance of new or changing task responsibilities but carry with it a static placement in an organization's hierarchy.

### **Prior Related studies**

At the root of this study are the two key elements of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Described by Deci and Ryan (1985 & 2000), Self-Determination Theory states that individuals who are driven by intrinsic aspirations or motivations tend to possess high levels of persistence. This characteristic allows for a greater tendency to display behaviors that would contribute to sustainability in the workplace. Individuals in this environment seek to accomplish a sense of personal growth, relationships with others, or a sense of community.

Conversely, this theory states that individuals who are predominantly motivated by extrinsic aspirations or motivations tend to experience low levels of well-being or satisfaction regardless of the type of work climate in which the individual is employed.

For this study, the work that has been done in this realm of humanist psychology is paired up with work describing and defining roles of public school administrators, specifically assistant principals. The preeminent expert on the topic of assistant principal

role definition is Catherine Marshall (1985, 1989, 1993, 2006) of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Marshall and Hooley (2006) identified a number of assistant principal types:

- the upwardly mobile assistant principal,
- plateaued assistant principal,
- shafted assistant principal,
- assistant principal who considers leaving,
- career assistant principal, and
- downwardly mobile administrator (p. 61-62).

For this study, current assistant principals are classified both by their past employment history and their current experience and job seeking behaviors. Although it may be difficult to place any individual into one of the specific categories identified, the descriptive data allow one to make a reasonable estimate.

Bridging the research done by Ryan and Deci (2000) with that of Marshall (1985, 1989, 1993, 2006) is the work of Csikszentmihalyi (1990). In his studies, he determined that both personal motivation and workplace empowerment play a collective role in determining job persistence. For purposes of this study, both perceived workplace empowerment and personal aspirations (motivations) are explored to determine the relationship that these factors have on the attempted mobility of secondary public school assistant principals.

In his early work, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) studied school teachers. Deci and Ryan (1985 & 2000) have conducted numerous studies in both clinical and field settings. Marshall (1985, 1989, 1993) has done much of her work in qualitative studies or in

conjunction with existing studies. To date, no study has combined all of these efforts to determine the impact that perceived workplace empowerment and personal aspirations may have on current assistant principals and their job mobility or stability.

This study does not argue for the necessity of the assistant principal role nor that the tasks performed by assistant principals are critical for success of a school environment. The belief is that the existence of the position and the development of common tasks for those in the position speak to the degree to which districts and communities rely upon the position to supervise and control those charged with the daily task of preparing children for the future (Bolman and Deal, 1997).

In most communities, a position of leadership requires high-achieving individuals. The ultimate performance of assistant principals can be achieved only when personal motivations match the motivating principles of the environment (Ryan and Deci, 2000). The results of this study identify the relationships that exist between personal motivation needs, the perceived level of empowerment provided by the workplace, and the attempted career mobility or stability of the secondary public school's first level of administrator, the assistant principal.

### **Conceptual Framework Overview**

Intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation motivate everyone at various levels. Intrinsic motivation in people involves an "inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise their capacities, to explore, and to learn" (Deci, 1972, p. 119). Three intrinsic motivations are explored in this study – personal growth,

relationships, and community – or as Deci and Ryan (2000) stated, motivations that are based on the satisfaction of behaving for their own sake.

External motivations are those rewards and/or punishments that drive behavior, specifically “behavior that is instrumental – that aims toward outcomes extrinsic to the behavior itself” (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p.72) such as wealth, fame, and image.

These motivators largely determine the career path chosen by individuals, specifically those entitled *Secondary School Assistant Principal*. For some, this role is viewed as a stepping stone, a hoop to jump through on the way to positions that offer perceived higher levels of power and prestige. It is a training ground where leadership and managerial skills can be enhanced. For others, this role is viewed as a career that carries with it a long tenure and sustainability.

Assistant principals do not live and work in a world of isolation, however. There are a number of variables that are simultaneously pushing and pulling them toward their respective career futures. Assistant principals (APs) are a part of a larger culture. Each serves a building and, as a result, also serves a district and community.

Districts carry characteristics that are either appealing or disconcerting to APs. A district may serve a community that is rural, suburban, urban, or some combination. Because each school district serves a specified community, the norms and values of surrounding areas often permeate into the district. This simple demographic distinction may play a part in helping a current AP decide whether his or her current role is sustainable.

The level of empowerment afforded to an assistant principal is another school descriptor that impacts job sustainability or mobility. For some individuals, feeling



empowered is not related to their motivation type; for others, it may be critical. Assistant principals enter into their roles for a variety of reasons. Once employed, they carry a level of authority simply because of the position they fill, yet assistant principals, personally, do not always feel as though they possess the same level of authority and power that others may perceive the position to have. This perceived level of workplace empowerment can impact the job-seeking behaviors displayed by assistant principals.

Formed in childhood and either perpetuated or dismissed as the individuals continue through a career, biases and opinions related to age, race, and gender may play a part in whether persons feel that they are marketable (Marshall, 2006). If persons feel that there are factors that may inhibit their ability to gain access to higher levels of employment, they may not search as actively as those who do not perceive the same obstacles. As a result, some may demonstrate a career history filled with past sustainability, whereas others may display evidence of continuous mobility.

Each of these factors may impact whether an individual's motivational needs are being met. Robert Frost (1916, p. 3) wrote about "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood." Motivation also involves a diversion. Intrinsic motivation leads to one career outcome and outlook, extrinsic motivation to another (Kohn, 1986). A more complete understanding of this phenomenon will enable districts and individual schools to better meet the needs of assistant principals, to gain a better insight on the AP's role and influence upon students and staff, and, more importantly, to help school leaders make better decisions when hiring assistant principals.

Individuals often select a position simply because they were given an opportunity (Scott, 2008), and districts often offer an opportunity simply because an individual

possesses leadership potential. It may be ironic when individuals are selected for a position because they actively pursued a new opportunity and are then expected to remain with an organization indefinitely or abandon thoughts of moving to another position. Likewise, it is ironic when individuals are selected for one position and, while undertaking the role, are simultaneously being groomed for another school leadership role.

This conflict often results in limited longevity. Some districts expect loyalty and maintenance, whereas others expect initiative and aspiration. The same dynamics exist among individuals and conflict develops when there is not a fit. Districts should select assistant principals who have the same motivations and aspirations as the district (Marshall and Hooley, 2006). A match will enable greater harmony, trust, and job satisfaction. If expertise is generated from experience and time on task, districts may want all staff members to gain as much expertise as possible. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework that grounds this study.

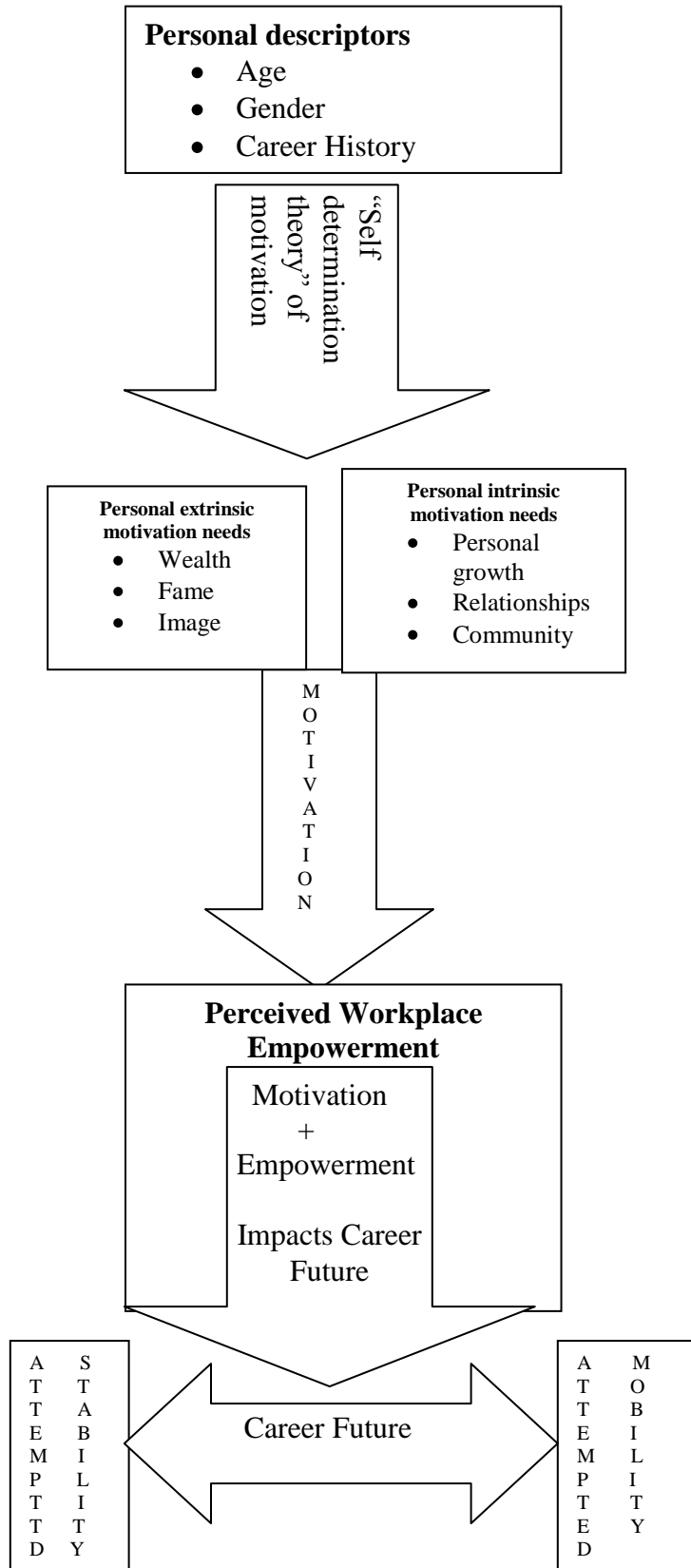


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

## Research Questions

The following questions and null hypotheses are addressed in this study:

**Q 1.** What is the relationship between various styles of motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and attempted career mobility or stability for secondary school assistant principals?

**Null Hypothesis--** There is no statistically significant relationship between assistant principals who are identified as intrinsically motivated and their attempted career mobility or stability.

**Null Hypothesis--** There is no statistically significant relationship between assistant principals identified as extrinsically motivated and their attempted career mobility or stability.

**Q 2.** What relationship exists between workplace empowerment and secondary school assistant principal mobility or stability?

**Null Hypothesis--** There is no statistically significant relationship between perceived workplace empowerment and an assistant principal's attempted career mobility or stability.

**Q 3.** Is there a relationship between motivational styles and workplace empowerment that correlates with increases in career mobility or stability of secondary school assistant principals?

**Null Hypothesis--** There is no statistically significant relationship between motivational difference score, perceived workplace empowerment, and assistant principal attempted career mobility or stability.

## **Discussion of Researcher Beliefs**

The researcher began this study with the following beliefs, which were not necessarily substantiated by the data collected.

1. Individuals possessing high intrinsic motivation scores will tend to have longer job tenure than those with extrinsic motivation scores. Stemming from the research relating to Self Determination Theory, when individuals possess a high need for intrinsic motivation and are placed in a highly empowered environment, there is a greater tendency towards persistence (Deci, 1972; Kasser and Ryan, 1996).
2. Individuals who possess high extrinsic motivation scores will tend to have greater historical career mobility than those who possess high intrinsic motivation scores due to a high correlation between those who display extrinsic motivation needs and job satisfaction described in previous studies (Ryan, 1982).
3. Individuals who work in environments that they see as supportive and full of choice (empowerment) show very little career mobility behaviors, if coupled with a personal intrinsic drive.

As a current assistant principal, the researcher brought mental models and inherent bias. Further, being employed in a school district within the boundaries of this study, it is possible that some of the subjects studied may have been known to the researcher. The anonymity of the survey process, however, limits the impact this has on the results and their accompanying analyses.

## **Delimitations**

Researchers often put boundaries on their studies (Charles, 1995). This study does not argue for the inherent usefulness of the position of secondary school assistant principal. Instead, for the purposes of this study, it is assumed that school districts have already determined that this is a position and role that is vital to organizational success.

This study is limited to a single moment in time. Responses to the survey instruments were all collected during December 2010, and all respondents were limited to their perceptions at that moment in time.

Data have been collected from individuals employed within a relatively small geographic area, southeast Michigan, when compared to the geographic area representing the population of all assistant principals in the United States of America.

Because this is a study of participant motivation, there were no tangible rewards offered to participants for completing and returning the survey. In addition, participants received notice of the potential risks associated with participation in this study and were asked to sign the Informed Consent Letter (See Appendix A). Individuals who wished to complete an electronic copy of the survey using e-mail or *Survey Monkey* indicated their consent to participate by completing and submitting the survey. All signed Informed Consent letters were stored in a locked and secure file along with all completed surveys to limit liability of the researcher and to maintain anonymity of participants.

The lack of tangible reward for completing the survey and the required signed Informed Consent may have impacted the number of surveys completed by those motivated primarily by extrinsic rewards. Likewise the lack of any tangible reward may have skewed the results towards more intrinsically motivated respondents.

Permission to use the questionnaires entitled *Section 2- Work Climate Questionnaire* and *Section 3- Aspirations Index* to gather data relevant to this research study was granted by Dr. R. Ryan, author of the questionnaires, via e-mail. He may be reached at the University of Rochester via e-mail at: [richard.ryan@ur.rochester.edu](mailto:richard.ryan@ur.rochester.edu). A copy of this permission is attached in Appendix B.

### **Limitations**

Certain aspects of research, factors that occur outside of the researcher's control, have the potential to affect data collection (Charles, 1995). The researcher acknowledges that there may be numerous factors that influence individuals to seek advancement within their professions. The limited scope of this study, however, does not allow for every factor to be analyzed. The purpose of this study is limited to extrinsic and intrinsic motivation factors and perceived levels of workplace empowerment that may drive secondary assistant principals' decisions to seek career stability or mobility.

The analyses conducted during this study were based on the individual responses of self-selected participants. As Levine, Brietkopf, Sierles, and Camp (2003) indicated, it is difficult for a researcher to ever assume all responses are completely honest and accurate, especially when requesting information tied to respondents' psychological well-being or impressions. It is the assumption of the researcher that the anonymity of the data collection process provided participants with the confidence to complete the survey for verifiable and reliable results.

## **Summary**

Everybody is motivated by something. Recent research has categorized all types of motivation as either extrinsic or intrinsic. The type of motivation that an individual requires is not always in harmony with the type of motivation provided by the workplace. This study explored the impact that workplace empowerment and personal motivation have on attempted career mobility or stability for current assistant principals in southeast Michigan.

This chapter outlines the purpose of the research study, the conceptual framework utilized, and describes the research questions that have been explored. Subsequent chapters will provide a review of the literature relevant to the research study, a discussion of the methodology utilized, an analysis of the research results, and a discussion of the implications and conclusions of the research study.



## CHAPTER 2 -- REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Assistant Principal Role Definition

Thompson and Hawkes (1962) stated, “In American public education...the tendency has been to insist that competence related to the organization’s technical core be an essential ingredient for the administrator” (p. 15). Typically, at the elementary level (k-5), this task is done by one building-level administrator, a principal. At the secondary level (6-12), it is becoming rare to find one individual who is solely responsible for administration of all school functions. Commonly, the principal at the secondary level is accompanied by one or more assistant principals to help manage and lead the school.

Typically, at all levels, an administrator will be expected to possess knowledge of the core work of educating children, but the work of an assistant principal is often more complex. The position grew out of a need for expediency rather than to serve a specific purpose (Mertz, 1999). To highlight this point, Gorton, Schneider, and Fisher (1988) failed to even mention the assistant principal role in *The Encyclopedia of School Administration and Supervision* (Marshall & Hooley, 2006).

Although the role of the assistant principal was not designed with a real purpose in mind, it is often described as a “do-as-you-are-told” policy (Austin & Brown, 1970). A more recent study described the duties of assistant principals in more detail, as shown in Table 1 (Armstrong, 2004).

Table 1

*Duties of Secondary Assistant Principals in Texas Reported in Order of Frequency*

---

Discipline

Campus/Building Safety

Student Activities

Building Maintenance

Teacher Evaluations

Attend ARD, 504 Meetings

Textbooks

Duty Schedule

Tutorial Programs/At-risk programs

New teacher/mentor programs

Assessment Data/TAKS

Staff development

Community activities

Attendance

PEIMS

Graduation

Campus Decision making team

Lockers

Master schedule

Curriculum development

Transportation

Keys

Parking

---

(p. 66)

At least at the secondary level in the State of Texas, it appears that assistant principals see their role as more of a manager than a leader. “Assistants are seldom expected to assert leadership by creating new projects or initiatives. Risk-taking must be limited; assistants must confine themselves to supportive tasks, leaving visible leadership to the principal [hierarchical upper-level]” (Marshall and Hooley, 2006, p. 7). Assistant principals are not expected to enhance their own individual agendas but to “make decisions...as the organization would like him to decide” (March and Simon, 1958, p. 62). Scott (2008) wrote, “Institutions constrain and regularize behavior...regulatory processes involve the capacity to establish rules, inspect others’ conformity to them, and, as necessary, manipulate sanctions” (p. 52).

Assistant principals often become administrators after spending time as a classroom teacher. Upon receiving their initial appointment, they “have already gone through anticipatory socialization, a period in which they think about administration; watch administrators’ activities, behaviors, and attitudes; and start to transform themselves into administrators” (Marshall and Hooley, 2006, p. 35). It is fascinating that despite a study by Winter and Partenheimer in 2002 that identified that “the general pool of teachers view[s] the job of assistant principal as unattractive” (p. 12), there are countless numbers of educators who seek this role. Those who actively seek the role may do so with unrealistic expectations, believing that they will be more involved with instructional supervision. Gross (1987) found that when administrators entered their role with this predisposition, it helped them transition into their initial administrative role from the classroom, but it did not help them when attempting to move into higher positions. As Hartzell, Williams, and Nelson (1995) reported, assistant principals rarely

enter their position with the knowledge of what their job entails. Yet as Merton (1964) explained, when teachers begin to think about a career shift toward administration, they begin experimenting with tasks they believe to be administrative in nature.

Marshall and Hooley (2006) argued that achieving sustainability is crucial toward maintaining the integrity of the assistant principal role, that constant turnover and mobility among assistant principals does not allow individuals to gain expertise in this role. The high rate of turnover and mobility also helps to make the case against the importance of the role, as the appearance is that somebody new is capable of succeeding in the position every couple of years.

Typically, the process of becoming an assistant principal (base-level administrator) in the State of Michigan is simple. According to Marshall (1993), assistant principal certification has been consistently tied to state standards. Only recently, in December 2009, the State of Michigan reinstated mandatory certification for school assistant principals based on university training and professional organizations. However, according to Act number 205 of the Public Acts of 2009, even with this new legislation, an individual may be employed as a school administrator for up to three years without certification.

### **Organizations (school descriptors)**

The design and structure of organizations has been a widely studied phenomenon (Thompson, 1962; Scott & Meyer, 1983). All organizations must establish their “domain” (Levine, 1961, p. 585). The organization must determine the range of services rendered, the population served, and the range of products produced. Organizations are highly complex yet are part of the wider social system and are shaped by the society in which

they reside (Parsons, 1960). Because of this, it is difficult to study any organization in isolation; it is essential to study it in the context of society as a whole. Thompson and Hawkes (1962) stated, “The public school, for example, which is constrained to accept virtually all students of a specified age, under conditions of population growth has urgent need for power with respect to those in the task environment...” (p.36). Public schools have very little control over their clientele, as they serve any child who resides within its attendance area. The control that schools are able to exert, however, comes from how these products (the children) will be served and how their futures will be shaped. Thompson (2008) stated, “The technology of education rests on abstract systems of belief about relationships among teachers, teaching materials, and pupils...” (p. 19).

Districts have little control about which students they serve, but have complete control over who is hired as staff. Staff members are individuals with the ability to act independently but are often shaped by norms present in the organization (Parsons, 1960). Districts hire individuals not to be renegades and change what is done, but to enhance and perpetuate what is already being done. The routines and practices, that are in place become a “system of rules” that are expected to be followed by those within the organization whether newly employed or a veteran (Hanks, 1991, p. 3).

Schools are highly rational and are the work place for a variety of professionals. Scott and Meyer (1983) defined rationalization as “the creation of cultural schemes defining means-ends relationships and standardizing systems of control over activities and actors” (p. 74). DiMaggio and Powell (1991) said professionalization is “the collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work” (p. 70). Schools are very different than they were even 20 years ago, yet

much is still the same. There is much routine and repetition in the way things are done. Lave and Wagner (1991) described this as “legitimate peripheral participation,” where newcomers to an organization begin to take on characteristics of the organization, “By this we mean to draw attention to the point that learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners, and the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community” (p. 29). Staff members begin to conform to the expectations of their employer.

Thompson (1962), writing about organizations as a whole, stated, “... The central function of administration is to keep the organization at the nexus of several necessary streams of action...” (p.148). This is done in a number of different ways. There is no agreed upon method for successfully manipulating the actors into one common focus. Administrating involves more than simply holding a position and occupying an office. Often, it is a team effort created by the establishment of a hierarchy of power. This is a process whereby each level on the hierarchy establishes the role definition for the level beneath it (Simon, 1957).

At the upper levels of the hierarchy, the primary goals are to diminish the amount of role uncertainty and to resolve the conflicts for the lower levels (Boulding, 1964). The task designed for all administrators is to attempt to gain clarity on foggy issues and to mesh multiple personalities and agendas into one common purpose. It is rare that this function is done by one individual; instead, power is often decentralized. This, in turn, leads to more opportunities for “power positions” to be established (Thompson, 2008, p. 129). The assistant principal is one such position that is created to fill a low-level role in the district administrative hierarchy.

## **Personal Descriptors and Their Impact on Administrative Selection**

Marshall (1989) made a persuasive argument indicating that women and minorities have been overlooked too often in filling school administrative positions. She argued that women, especially, have demonstrated competencies that would enable them to serve as successful leaders of schools, particularly in schools that follow the national trend of being staffed by a majority of females.

Because it is extremely difficult to acquire reliable information on assistant principals, the following statistics on public school principals are offered by Marshall and Hooley (2006).

- In the year 2000, there were 83,790 public school principals.
- 56% of public school principals are male (47,130).
- 82% of public school principals are white, non Hispanic.
  - The next closest subgroup is black, non Hispanic at 11%.
- There was a remarkable increase in the number of principals younger than age 40 during the 1990s.

As a low-level administrator, it is reasonable to assume that the number of assistant principals, nationwide, younger than age 40 has risen as well. Because of the relatively young age of many of the new administrators, it is likely that individuals who are currently being hired to fill the leadership roles possess needs that vary substantially from those of previous generations. A recent study of the private sector found that younger employees tend to place importance on relationships with co-workers and supervisors, desire professional growth experiences, and enjoy challenging assignments (NAS

Recruitment Communications, 2006). Thus, a value on intrinsic motivation seems to be prevalent among young workers in the private sector. Whether this is true in the public sector, specifically within the educational leadership community, is yet to be seen, but recent research examining young teachers, the starting point for most school leaders, shows similarities (Behrstock and Clifford, 2009). As a result, many young educators find themselves extremely mobile in search of a position that meets their motivational needs. A 2008 study by the Alliance for Excellent Education reported that each year 157,000 young teachers leave the profession and another 232,000 move to new positions within education. Although these figures represent teachers, it has been previously reported that teaching is the primary career starting point for most assistant principals and, therefore, a large number of assistant principals begin their careers in education as highly mobile employees.

### **Motivation Theory (extrinsic and intrinsic)**

All people are motivated by something. The complexity of possibilities can be simplified by reducing personal motivations into extrinsic and intrinsic motivators. Deci and Ryan (1985 and 2000) are leading researchers of motivational factors and their impact on social settings. Together, the authors have developed a *Self Determination Theory* (SDT), which attempts to explain how social and cultural factors facilitate or undermine people's sense of volition and initiative in addition to their well-being and the quality of their performance. Johnson and Johnson (1985) described extrinsic motivation as the driving force behind completion. Extrinsically motivated people are intent on receiving something that is outside of them: a tangible reward, a feeling of power, a



declaration of being the winner, or simply praise and adoration. Conversely, intrinsic motivation concerns needs and wants within an individual. Clifford (1972), a clear proponent for this motivational style, wrote, "Performance is dependent upon learning, which, in turn, is primarily dependent upon intrinsic motivation" (p. 134).

Deci (1972) pioneered research in this area of humanistic psychology. In the early 1970s, he conducted a series of studies that demonstrated the distinctions between extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. Extrinsic motivations involve a system of rewards and punishments for specified behaviors. Intrinsic motivation in people involves an "inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise their capacities, to explore, and to learn" (p.119). Herzberg, (1966) was one of the earliest researchers who argued for the importance of studying intrinsic motivation, stating that what is rewarding gets done, not that which is rewarded.

In their 1996 study, Kasser and Ryan developed seven distinct categories of motivation. Intrinsic motivators include personal growth, relationships, community, and health. Health was later removed from their list as subsequent studies demonstrated a low correlation to any identifiable social phenomenon, and health could not be easily identified as either intrinsic or extrinsic. Extrinsic motivators include wealth, fame, and image.

In spite of the work done by Herzberg (1966), Clifford (1972), Deci (1972), Ryan (1982) and others, extrinsic motivation is still seen by many in American society as the only true form of motivation, especially at the work place. Daily, in virtually every organization, employees are given tangible gifts and rewards for their services (Bolman and Deal, 1997), the thought being the greater the reward, the harder people will work.

Those who create the structure have designed what they believe is an incentive-driven climate where those who work the hardest will get the most rewards. Yet as Deci (1972) wrote, “When money is used as an external reward for some activity, the subjects lose intrinsic interest for the activity” (p. 120).

For those who are currently employed as assistant principals, a number of factors may drive the search for mobility for those so inclined, beyond a quest for money. Perhaps the tangible rewards some are given in their current employment setting are actually pushing them away. In another study from the 1970s, it was reported that some extrinsic motivators actually decrease productivity and job satisfaction (Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett, 1973). As people begin to work towards obtaining goals established by others, to receive rewards from others, they lose their autonomy.

### **Assistant Principal –Mobility and Stability**

Once chosen, assistant principals tend to spend their early years learning the procedures of their school and their later years maneuvering to receive a higher level position. Little time is spent acquiring expertise in the task functions associated with the assistant principal’s role (Marshall and Hooley, 2006).

Gaertner (1980) discovered that the assistant principalship is a good stepping stone role for men. In 1994, more than half (54 %) of principals surveyed had previously held the position of assistant principal (Fiore, 1997). Specifically, Marshall (1985) studied the roles of 20 assistant principals to discover what tasks were performed to make them more attractive for higher level positions in the future. Seven such tasks were identified:

- Initially deciding to leave teaching,
- analyzing the selection process for their initial entry into the profession and upward mobility,
- maintaining calm in crisis,
- defining professional relationships,
- becoming a *street-level* bureaucrat,
- identifying and defending one's work territory, and
- discipline management (p. 39).

The more successful an assistant principal was in each of these task functions, the more socialized he or she became to being an administrator, and was marked for either a long-term assistant principalship or future promotion.

For those who decide to seek promotion or *upward mobility*, sponsorship appears to be the most critical component to successfully earning a new career (Ortiz, 1982). Much effort is put into working on tasks that might make an individual marketable, yet the single most important component appears to be earning the support of others in the profession. "People in almost any culture are reluctant to offend superiors" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 23). In fact, those who are hopeful of earning a promotion are cautious not to stand out but to act in a way that conforms to those already at higher levels. Strang and Soule (1998), who wrote about the need for connectedness within organizations, stated, "Strong ties lead actors to take the perspective of the other and to exert powerful pressures for conformity" (p. 272). This is in harmony to what is needed to enter the profession.

Assistant principals begin their roles by distancing themselves from those in lower level positions and adapting to what is expected by other administrators. This behavior continues throughout their career, a constant game of adaptation and conformity. The motivating factors behind such behaviors are complex and plentiful. There is no single explanation to describe the behaviors of all, but there is an abundance of literature that explores the topic. Marshall and Hooley (2006) wrote, “It is important to examine whether the salary and status of assistant principals are sufficient for maintaining the integrity of the position” (p.130). Beyond this, they reported “Many people chafe under the restrictions of being an *assistant* in hierarchical organizations...” (p. 127).

In 1993 Marshall listed many of the workplace incentives that encouraged assistant principals to remain in their roles.

- Collaborative site team leadership
- Being valued by the principal
- Having the flexibility and time to develop pet projects for the school
- Consistency in policies from above
- Noninterference in their jobs
- Policies supporting professional associations
- Salary, benefit, and awards
- Being recognized as special.

Not all assistant principals, however, decide to make that position their life-long career; in fact; very few do (Marshall and Hooley, 2006). Assistant principals are, after

all, individuals first, and, as such, have distinct personalities and motivations. These distinctions, in turn, carry distinct goals and ambitions.

### **Career Future (the dependent variable)**

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact that both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators have on attempted career mobility or stability of secondary school assistant principals. Over time, organizational actors are assimilated into the culture of the organizations. As time and experiences progress, actors begin to acquire organizational expertise. It is imperative to determine how districts and schools can better motivate those people in leadership roles to endure to gain knowledge and expertise to better impact the school and community. Perhaps with this knowledge, districts will be better equipped to make hiring decisions that meet their community norms. By having a basis for determining when or if the newly hired is prone to begin searching for a new position, the district can be better equipped to give the individual the training and tools needed to successfully seek or it can give him or her the motivation necessary to remain as an employee.

In 1967, Sergioanni developed the *Motivation Hygiene Theory*. He suggested that when people are placed in environments where there are intrinsic motivators present, there is a greater sense of work commitment and persistence. Although this theory was developed by examining the workplace of teachers and not school leaders, it moved the discussion of motivation to a new level. The motivation hygiene theory attempts to account for the motivations that are supplied by the workplace, not just the motivational needs of individuals.

In 1990, Csikszentmihalyi looked at individual motivation, that which was supplied by the workplace, and the interaction between the two. His theory, which he called *Flow Theory*, was developed from more than 20 years of studying motivation and its impact on social behaviors. Csikszentmihalyi suggested that when individuals are able to achieve “the state in which [they] are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter,” they have achieved *flow* (p. 4). When an individual reaches this state, performance is at its peak and expertise can be obtained. He believes flow is derived from a combining of forces from both the individual and the environment. Only when a person is able to experience true ownership or empowerment, coupled with a sense of personal fulfillment (intrinsic motivation), can flow ever truly be obtained.

From flow theory comes the belief that when an individual is given the opportunity to experience flow, there is no need for extrinsic rewards or to seek greater challenges through mobility. When flow is obtained, nothing else matters except what is being accomplished at the moment. An increase in flow brings an increase in stability. A decrease in flow, or a lack thereof, brings about an increase in mobility or a quest for greater satisfaction through either new challenges or extrinsic aspirations.

## **Summary**

Extrinsic motivation is a need for external rewards or punishments to achieve a specified behavior. Intrinsic motivation is an internal drive towards completion of a task. The type of motivation that drives an individual, along with the perceived level of empowerment provided by the workplace, can be a factor impacting the length of job tenure for secondary school assistant principals. Limited job tenure does not allow for the

acquisition of task expertise by the individual and may cause others to devalue the role and its importance to the organization.

## CHAPTER 3--METHODOLOGY

Previous chapters have outlined the importance of this study and the conceptual framework and literature grounding this research study which examines the relationships between personal motivation needs, perceived workplace empowerment, and attempted career mobility. This chapter describes the methodology that was utilized to elicit participants and to analyze the survey responses of the participants.

### **Research Design Overview**

This study is quantitative in nature, using elements of both descriptive and inferential statistics. “The purpose of descriptive statistics is to organize and to summarize data so that the data are more readily comprehended” (Minium, Clarke, & Coladarci, 1999, p. 2). Using survey instruments designed and previously field tested by Kasser and Ryan (1996) and Deci and Ryan (2000), the personal motivations and perceived workplace empowerment levels of current secondary assistant principals from a variety of southeast Michigan districts are analyzed using inferential methods. Because the goal of inferential research is to attempt to draw conclusions about the population as a whole, a large sample is required (Minium et al., 1999). “For any given effect size (other than zero), the larger the sample size, the greater the power of the test” (Minium et al., 1999, p. 314). A table developed by Cohen (1988) was used to determine the appropriate sample size (See Appendix C). A sample size consisting of 75 completed surveys are needed to guarantee a power of .95 and an effect size of .40 utilizing an  $\alpha$  of .05. As a result, 78 returned surveys was the goal for this study. Eighty-seven surveys were returned, with 82 of those fully completed.



The greater the number of participants, the greater the reliability of the results and the easier it may be to generalize to the larger population (Minium et al.,1999). This study utilizes a convenient sample, however, making it difficult to generalize to the population at large. Although the data available for the participants demonstrates similarities between the sample and the population at large, the limits placed upon the participants make it difficult to draw inferences beyond the limited scope of this study. To assist with establishing inferences based on the data, each participant was asked to answer questions characterized as *personal descriptors* in section one of the survey instrument.

Participants were asked to complete one survey which included three sections (Appendix D). The first section is Personal Descriptors, which consists of eight questions that collect information regarding the age, gender, work history, and *attempted mobility or stability* of each respondent. These descriptive statistics provide greater clarity about the make-up of the sample and four factors for measuring the career stability or mobility of participants. Participants were asked to describe the length of employment in their current role as assistant principal, to describe their current job-seeking behaviors, and to detail the number of buildings and districts where they have been employed throughout their career. These four variables were analyzed as the dependent variables throughout the study in relation to the various measures of personal motivation and perceived workplace empowerment levels.

High reliability and validity are characteristics of the two questionnaires used in sections two and three of the survey in this study. These questionnaires have been used frequently in recent social and psychiatric research studies to help researchers gain

clearer understandings of individuals and their motivational orientations. Permission to use the questionnaires titled *Section 2- Work Climate Questionnaire* and *Section 3- Aspirations Index* to gather data relevant to this research study was granted via e-mail by Dr. R. Ryan, author of the questionnaires. He may be reached at the University of Rochester via e-mail at: [richard.ryan@ur.rochester.edu](mailto:richard.ryan@ur.rochester.edu). A copy of this permission is attached in Appendix B.

Section 2 is the generalized Work Climate Questionnaire (Baard, Deci, and Ryan 2000) that allowed each respondent to describe the perceived support and understanding (empowerment) that is provided by his or her immediate supervisor, in this case the building level principal. To complete Section 2, respondents were asked to respond to six statements focused on the concept of workplace empowerment, using a seven-point ordinal scale, where 1 represented *strongly disagree* and 7 represented *strongly agree* as to whether or not the respondent believed there was a sense of empowerment provided by the building principal in the described domain. A mean score was calculated for each participant to develop an aggregate *perceived workplace empowerment level*. A score of 7 indicated a perceived highly empowering workplace environment, and, conversely, a score of 1 indicates a lack of perceived empowerment.

Section 3 of the survey instrument is *The Aspirations Index* (Kasser and Ryan, 1996). This measurement tool is used to determine the life goals or priorities of the subjects being studied and attempts to categorize subjects as having either extrinsic or intrinsic aspirations. These aspirations are commonly referred to as motivations and fall into six subgroups. Those relating to extrinsic motivations are wealth, fame, and image,

and those categorized as intrinsic motivations are personal growth, relationships, and community.

Thirty statements relating to aspirations (motivations) were included in section three of the survey, including five statements for each of the six established motivators (wealth, fame, image, personal growth, relationships, and community). Respondents determined the importance of each statement using an ordinal ranking of 1 to 7, where 1 represented *not at all important* and 7 represented *very important*.

Aggregate scores for each of the motivation categories were calculated to determine if an individual is primarily extrinsically or intrinsically motivated. This *motivation category score* is calculated by totaling the sum of scores given to each of the 15 questions associated with each category of motivation and dividing by 15 to get a mean score ranging from lowest (1) to highest (7). A total motivation score, referred to as a *Motivational Difference Score* (Ryan and Deci, 2000), was also determined by subtracting a participant's intrinsic motivation score from his or her extrinsic motivation score. A difference of greater than zero indicates a primarily intrinsically motivated individual; a difference of less than zero indicates a primarily extrinsically motivated individual (See Appendix E).

For this study, the four main scores calculated from sections two and three – perceived workplace empowerment level, extrinsic motivation score, intrinsic motivation score, and difference score – served as independent variables.

## **Research Questions**

Data collected using the three sections of the survey instrument questions explored the motivations that drive the career decisions of current assistant principals in secondary schools located in southeast Michigan. The following questions and null hypotheses guided this study and the statistical analysis of the data gathered:

**Q 1.** What is the relationship between various styles of motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and attempted career mobility or stability for secondary school assistant principals?

**Null Hypothesis--**There is no statistically significant relationship between assistant principals who are identified as intrinsically motivated and their attempted career mobility or stability.

**Null Hypothesis--** There is no statistically significant relationship between assistant principals identified as extrinsically motivated and their attempted career mobility or stability.

**Q 2.** What relationship exists between workplace empowerment and secondary school assistant principal mobility or stability?

**Null Hypothesis--** There is no statistically significant relationship between perceived workplace empowerment and an assistant principal's attempted career mobility or stability.

**Q 3.** Is there a relationship between motivational styles and workplace empowerment that correlates with increases in career mobility or stability of secondary school assistant principals?

**Null Hypothesis**-- There is no statistically significant relationship between motivational difference score, perceived workplace empowerment, and assistant principal attempted career mobility or stability.

### **Participant Selection**

Surveys for this study were sent to a limited number of individuals. The convenient sample of participants was selected based on two primary identifiers.

First, participants in this sample were chosen from school districts located within one of four south east Michigan Intermediate School Districts (ISDs)/ Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs): Wayne, Washtenaw, Macomb, and Oakland.

These four Intermediate School Districts are part of a statewide system of 57 total ISDs. Combined, Wayne RESA, Oakland ISD, Macomb ISD, and Washtenaw ISD serve 93 total public school districts. Thirty-four districts are within the jurisdiction of Wayne RESA, 28 districts report to the Oakland ISD, 21 districts report to Macomb ISD, and 10 school districts are a part of the Washtenaw ISD.

These four large groups, when studied as a part of one large sample, serve a large concentration of students from the State of Michigan covering a geographic area ranging from the Ann Arbor metropolitan area to the Detroit metropolitan area. This sample includes districts serving a variety of communities – urban, rural, and suburban.

Although each ISD also oversees the services of public school academies (charter schools), for the purpose of this study, only those assistant principals serving in a building as a part of a traditional public school district are included. In addition, assistant principals serving in Detroit Public Schools, the single largest district from this

geographic area, are excluded due to the difficulty of receiving timely responses from a representative sample of such a large district.

Secondly, participants for this study currently (December 2010) possess the job title of *Assistant Principal* within a public secondary school that comprises a range of grades 6 through 12.

Of the 93 districts located within the four ISDs and RESAs selected for the sample, not every district is represented in the final analysis. Not all districts employ an individual with the specific title of assistant principal. A position of similar but different title often includes different task responsibilities. Eliminating individuals with non-conforming titles reduces variability and increases reliability. Further, there was no guarantee that surveys were completed and returned from individuals representing every building, district, or ISD.

In spite of high turnover rates and vacancies, the response rate of 87 returned surveys of the 195 distributed (44%) allowed for a high confidence interval and reliable inferences. Descriptive data identifying the ISDs represented are available in Chapter 4.

### **Data Collection**

The sample population was identified by using district websites and school publications. In December of 2010, each of the 195 identified secondary school assistant principals in southeast Michigan were sent an e-mail that included multiple attachments – a copy of the informed consent letter included in Appendix A; a copy of the survey instrument included in Appendix D; a link to the website <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WP3HF75> , which allowed participants to respond to

the survey anonymously; other options for survey completion, including mailing instructions and researcher contact information; and a brief explanation of the study and its importance.

A 40% return rate, or 78 returned surveys, was the initial goal. Within ten days of the request for completion, 44.6%, or 87 surveys were returned. To avoid confounding results, surveys returned after December 2010 were eliminated. Reasons for this decision included possible change in public school job mobility correlated to calendar dates, the variety of events associated with changing semesters, and the changes in personal motivations that may be associated with new calendar year. Multiple analyses of the data were completed to determine if any correlations exist between the independent variables of motivation scores and workplace empowerment scores with the dependent variables of the various measures of career stability and mobility.

For convenience, surveys were sent electronically via e-mail to all secondary assistant principals in the four identified ISDs. Participants could respond to the survey in a variety of formats depending on the comfort level and familiarity each had with the research process.

Survey responses were submitted anonymously. Those received via *Survey Monkey* were stored in the database of the software provider with only aggregate scores available to the researcher. All hard copies of completed surveys returned were stored in a locked file in the researcher's office with any/all participant identifiers removed.

This research process and data collection method was approved by the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee prior to formal participant selection and data collection (Appendix F).

## Data Analysis

Researchers who conduct quantitative studies believe that data can be assigned numerical value and measured to explain a phenomenon as well as to predict potential outcomes. Some quantitative research designs seek to establish relationships between variables (McMillan, 1996). This quantitative study focuses on the measurement device known as the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, as it allows an individual to “determine the strength of any relationship that may exist between variables” (Minium et al., 1999, p. 103-104). Assisted by the software tool SPSS for Windows, version 16.0 by Prentice Hall, the researcher conducted both bi-variate correlation analyses and multiple regression analyses to determine whether relationships do indeed exist between the independent variables categorized as extrinsic motivation score, intrinsic motivation score, motivational difference score, and perceived workplace empowerment score and the dependent variable of attempted career mobility or stability measured in multiple ways.

As is pointed out by Minium et al. (1999), however, “Correlation does not imply causation” (p. 119). Any correlations identified, whether positive or negative, do not necessarily illustrate cause and effect. This study explored whether relationships exist between variables; it does not establish causation. Appendix G provides an illustration of the data that have been sorted and analyzed. This analysis, coupled with prior research studies, allows for individuals to gain greater understanding of the phenomenon referred to as *flow* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and its implications for both assistant principals and their workplaces.



## **Summary**

Surveys were sent out to every secondary school assistant principal in four southeast Michigan counties to collect data relative to each individual's motivation styles and perceived levels of workplace empowerment. Utilizing SPSS version 16.0 to determine whether correlations exist among the variables, the researcher examined whether any of the independent variables have a statistically significant relationship with the dependent variable of career mobility or stability.

This chapter provides a description of the methodology utilized in this research study. Chapter 4 will present the results of the study, and Chapter 5 will describe the analysis of the results.

## **CHAPTER 4 -- RESULTS**

This study examines the relationships between personal motivation needs, perceived workplace empowerment, and attempted career mobility of assistant principals employed in secondary public schools in southeast Michigan. The results stemming from multiple analyses conducted after participants responded to a three-section survey are discussed in this chapter.

### **Study Participants**

Southeast Michigan is a populous geographic area, generally described as the area from Ann Arbor east to the Detroit River and from the northern border of Monroe County north to Oakland and Macomb Counties. Approximately 4.3 million people lived in this region in 2010. Over the last two decades, both Washtenaw County and Oakland County have seen populations increase, while Wayne County and Macomb County continue to shrink in population (SEMCOG, 2001).

Serving the population of this region are hundreds of public, private, and charter schools, each composed of service staff, teaching staff, and administrative staff. In December 2010, a survey was sent to one hundred ninety-five secondary school assistant principals, who were identified by district websites and through personal contact between the researcher and district human resource directors. Assistant principals serving in Detroit Public Schools were excluded due to the difficulty often experienced in maneuvering through that system.

Of the 195 surveys sent, 87 surveys were returned and 83 showed completion of all sections. Eighty-five returned surveys were needed to achieve a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of eight (Cohen, 1988). The high response rate from participants contributed to a high level of reliability and validity.

Of the 87 total surveys returned, 85 utilized the online survey instrument *Survey Monkey*, and two additional surveys were returned via US Mail. Those returned via Survey Monkey have been stored in an online secure database. The two surveys returned via US Mail have been stored in a locked file in the researcher's office to allow for continued anonymity to all participants.

By the use of a convenience sample, the results of this study may not necessarily be able to be generalized to the population of all assistant principals in the United States. Exploring select demographic data of the sample, however, allows inferences to be made and raises the possibilities for future studies.

The researcher collected survey responses from participants who resemble the population of school administrators described by Marshall and Hooley (2006), who identified a population consisting of 56% males and 44% females. Their study was limited to exploring principals because, at the time, it was extremely difficult to acquire an accurate account of assistant principals due to high levels of job turnover and transition by those occupying the role. In the same text Marshall and Hooley stated that the number of young administrators, those under the age of 40, was on the rise.

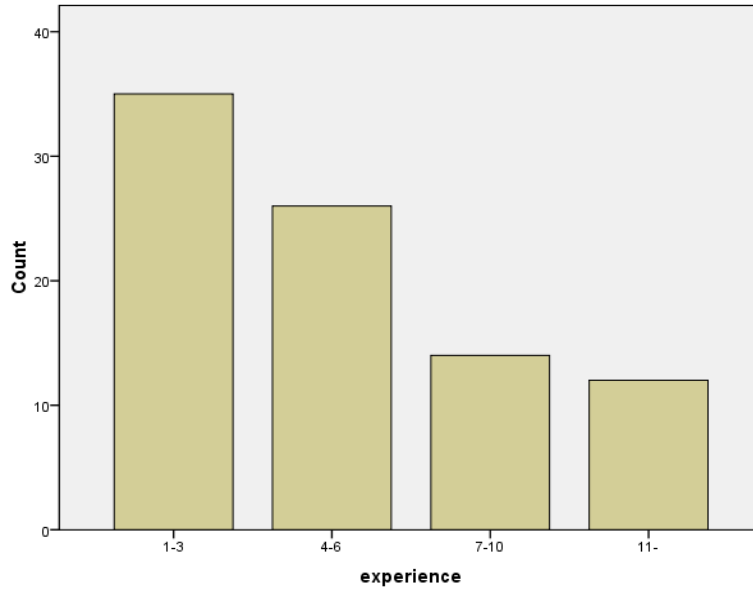
Shown in Table 2, findings in the present study were consistent with the Marshall and Hooley (2006) study, showing a majority of participants were male and under the age of

45. Nearly half of all participants identified themselves as 40 years old or younger, and 71% were 45 years old or younger.

Table 2  
*Descriptive Statistics of the Sample*

<i>Descriptive category</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Male	56	64.4%
Female	31	35.6%
Total	87	100%
Age 26-30	3	3.4%
Age 31-35	17	19.5%
Age 36-40	21	24.1%
Age 41-45	21	24.1%
Age 46-50	6	6.9%
Age 51-55	9	10.3%
Age 56+	10	11.5%
Total	87	100%

Described by many as an entry level administrative position (Lee and Cioci, 1993; Marshall, 1985 and 1993; McCarty and Zent, 1982), the assistant principals participating in this study are not only young but relatively inexperienced (Figure 2). Sixty-one of the 87 participants (70.1%) have been in their current role for six years or less. Only 12 of the 87, or 13.8%, have had their current role for eleven or more years.



*Figure 2* Assistant principal role experience (in years)

Participants were selected because each was identified as a secondary school assistant principal in one of four Intermediate School Districts (ISDs) in southeast Michigan: Wayne Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA), Washtenaw ISD, Oakland ISD, or Macomb ISD. The vast majority of respondents (86.2%) were employed in the jurisdictions of either Wayne RESA or Oakland ISD, with limited representation (13.8%) from Macomb ISD and Washtenaw ISD, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

*Intermediate School Districts Represented*

<i>ISD</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Macomb	9	10.3%
Oakland	40	46%
Washtenaw	3	3.5%
Wayne	35	40.2%
Total	87	100%

The four intermediate school districts were selected, in part, because of the convenience of location and their large populations, but also because of their diversity. As Table 4 illustrates, the overwhelming majority (83.7%) of respondents identified their employment in a suburban community; however, participants from urban and rural districts were also represented in the results of this study. In addition, two participants labeled their districts as *other* and described their districts as *inner-ring suburban*.

Table 4

*District Types*

<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Rural	3	3.5%
Suburban	72	83.7%
Urban	9	10.5%
Other	2	2.3%
Total	86	100%

The survey instrument used for this study enabled the researcher to calculate career mobility for the assistant principals in four different ways. Participants identified the number of years they have occupied their current role as assistant principal. Each described their current job-seeking behaviors in one of four ways: casually scan postings, actively searching for a new job, in a current job transition, or never look at postings. Participants identified the number of buildings in which they have worked as an educator, and each identified the number of school districts in which they have worked as an educator.

Although currently employed as assistant principals, 77% of the participants described behaviors associated with seeking new employment. As shown in Table 5, these behaviors included casually scanning job postings, actively searching for a new job, or being in a current job transition.

Table 5

*Job-seeking Behaviors*

<i>Behavior</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Casually scan job postings	57	65.5%	65.5%
Actively searching for a new job	7	8%	73.5%
In a current job transition	3	3.4%	77%
Never look at job postings	20	20	23%

Ninety-two percent of all participants in this study have shown evidence of job-seeking behaviors in the past by working in more than one building as an educator; including experiences as an administrator and as a teacher, nearly half have been employed in four or more buildings, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6

*Number of Buildings Where Employed*

<i>Number of buildings</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1	7	8%
2-3	38	43.7%
4-5	23	26.4%
6-7	14	16.1%
8+	5	5.7%
Total	87	100%



Further, as shown in Table 7, nearly three-fourths of participants have been employed by multiple school districts as administrators and/or teachers.

Table 7

*Number of Districts Where Employed*

<i>Number of districts</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1	22	25.3%
2-3	47	54%
6-7	11	12.6%
8+	7	8%
Total	87	100%

The assistant principals who participated in this study were relatively young, inexperienced, and mobile. This is consistent with those administrators studied by Marshall and Hooley (2006). However, the purpose of this study was not to explore every factor that may impact the decisions made by assistant principals (APs) to remain stable in their jobs or to attempt mobility, but to analyze the relationships that may exist between attempted mobility and stability of APs and personal motivation needs and perceived levels of workplace empowerment.

**Participant Motivation Scores**

The four identifiers of motivation explored in this study stemmed from work done by Ryan and Deci (2000) and Baard, Deci, and Ryan (2000). An extrinsic motivation

score was calculated for each participant based upon their responses to part three of the survey instrument. Scores ranged from one to seven, with one describing low extrinsic motivation needs and seven representing high extrinsic motivation needs.

An intrinsic motivation score was calculated for each participant, also determined from their responses to part three of the survey. Intrinsic motivation scores could also fall within the range of one to seven, with one indicating low intrinsic motivation needs and seven high intrinsic needs.

A score of *Motivational Difference* (Ryan and Deci, 2000) was calculated for each participant by subtracting an individual's extrinsic motivation score from the individual's intrinsic motivation score. A score greater than zero was indicative of an individual with higher intrinsic motivation, whereas a score less than zero was indicative of an individual with higher extrinsic motivation needs.

In addition to responding to questions relating to personal motivational needs, a fourth motivational score was calculated for each participant, which described the perceived level of empowerment provided by the individual's workplace. A score of seven described a perceived highly-empowering environment. A score of one was the lowest possible level of perceived workplace empowerment .

To determine extrinsic motivation scores, participants were asked to respond to 15 questions on a scale of one through seven to describe the importance they placed on the three components of extrinsic motivation as described in this study: wealth, fame, and image (Lepper, Greene, and Nisbett, 1973). A score of one indicated that there was no importance while a score of seven was representative of great importance. The mean extrinsic motivation score for all participants was 2.95.

The assistant principals who participated in this study had a mean intrinsic motivation score of 6.08. This score was calculated based on the responses participants provided on 15 questions ranking the importance on the three descriptors of intrinsic motivation: personal growth, community-building, and relationship-building (Deci, 1972). A score of one indicates no importance, whereas a score of seven indicates very important.

Participants for this study were not identified as either wholly extrinsically motivated or wholly intrinsically motivated. Each participant indicated needs associated with both motivation categories. To assist in quantifying the degree to which an individual associated with either being primarily extrinsically motivated or primarily intrinsically motivated, a motivational difference score was calculated for each participating AP (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Of the 87 assistant principals who participated in the study, 86 had motivational difference scores greater than zero, indicating higher intrinsic motivation needs than extrinsic motivation needs. The mean motivational difference score was 3.15, meaning that the average participant had an intrinsic motivation score 3.15 points higher than his/her extrinsic motivation score.

Participants also perceived their workplaces to be relatively empowering environments, especially in respect to the empowerment provided by their immediate supervisors. Participants were asked to answer six questions relating to their perception of the level of empowerment provided by their building principals. Participants ranked the empowerment provided by their building principals one through seven on each question, where one indicated low perceived empowerment and seven a highly empowered environment. The mean score for the six questions was 5.55.

Table 8 and Appendix H provide information regarding the variation in means of all motivation and job-seeking variables calculated for participants.

Table 8  
*Mean Scores for Various Motivation and Mobility Measures*

<i>Measurement</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>Number</i>
Intrinsic motivation	6.08	.68	82
Extrinsic motivation	2.95	1.04	82
Motivation difference	3.15	1.25	82
Workplace empowerment	5.55	1.82	87
Current role experience	2.03	1.06	87
Current seeking behavior	1.92	.67	87
Number of past buildings	2.67	1.03	87
Number of past districts	2.05	.87	87

### **Research Questions and Null Hypotheses**

The descriptive statistics provide a context in which to view the results of this study, but they are not the focus of the study. They simply provide the lens through which the quantitative results should be viewed. A discussion of findings as they are related to the research questions and accompanying null hypotheses follows.

**Q 1.** What is the relationship between various styles of motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and attempted career mobility or stability for secondary school assistant principals?

**Null Hypothesis 1** –There is no statistically significant relationship between assistant principals who are identified as intrinsically motivated and their attempted career mobility or stability.

### **Discussion**

For purposes of this study, the three measurable categories of personal intrinsic motivation were personal growth, community-building, and establishing relationships (Deci, 1972). Together, the level at which an individual perceives these three domains as important determines his or her level of intrinsic motivation. After conducting statistical tests such as bi-variate correlations and multiple regression analyses on the data collected, there was no statistically significant relationship identified between the intrinsic motivation score achieved by the participating assistant principals and their attempted career stability or mobility identified by any of the various mobility measures, including past building experience, past district experience, the amount of experience each participant has in his or her current role, and current job-seeking behaviors (See Table 9). As a result, this null hypothesis is not rejected.

Table 9

*Intrinsic Motivation Correlations*

<i>Mobility measure</i>	<i>Correlation Value</i>	<i>Level of Significance @ <math>\leq .05</math></i>
Current role experience	-.08	.431
Current job seeking	.137	.291
Building history	.089	.427
District history	.065	.561

As measured by a Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis there was only a small negative correlation, (-.08) between current role experience and personal intrinsic motivation. This correlation, however, is not at a significant level when measured against a p value of  $<.05$  on a two tailed test. There was a lack of noticeable variation among participants in intrinsic motivation score. With a mean intrinsic motivation score of 6.08 for all participants, the negative linear relationship is somewhat misleading as there was not a statistically significant relationship.

Similar results were evident when exploring any relationships that may exist between intrinsic motivation scores and all other identified measures of job stability and mobility. When intrinsic motivation was analyzed in conjunction with current job-seeking behaviors of assistant principals, there was a positive correlation coefficient of .137, but again, this was not a significant relationship measured against a two tailed test  $p<.05$ .

Using the mobility measure of the number of buildings current assistant principals have worked in as an educator, there was a .089 correlation coefficient with scores

associated with intrinsic motivation, but this correlation was not statistically significant with a value of .427 measured on a two-tailed test where  $p < .05$ . The relationship between intrinsic motivation and the number of districts worked in is even less evident. The lack of variability in intrinsic motivation scores of participants resulted in Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficients that were statistically insignificant in all analyses conducted between intrinsic motivation scores and job mobility of current assistant principals in southeast Michigan. As a result of the low levels of significance in each of the bi-variate correlation analyses and the lack of relationship discovered between intrinsic motivation and all of the available measures of job mobility and stability, this null hypothesis is not rejected.

#### **Q. 1**

**Null Hypothesis 2** – There is no statistically significant relationship between assistant principals identified as extrinsically motivated and their attempted career mobility or stability.

The results of this hypothesis are complex, as different measures of mobility resulted in correlations of different significance. For purposes of this study, the three components of personal extrinsic motivation involve placing importance on the acquisition of wealth, personal fame, and/or enhanced image perception (Lepper, Greene, and Nisbett, 1973). Together, the level at which individuals perceive these three domains as important determines their level of extrinsic motivation. After conducting multiple Pearson Product Moment correlations, a statistically significant correlation was found between the participant's extrinsic motivation score and current role experience, but no

statistically significant correlations were found between extrinsic motivation and the other three measures of job stability or mobility including current job-seeking behaviors, past building history, and past district history (See Table 10).

Table 10

*Extrinsic Motivation Correlations*

<i>Mobility measure</i>	<i>Correlation value</i>	<i>Level of significance</i>
Current role experience	-.221	.046*
Current job seeking	-.002	.985
Building history	.089	.427
District history	.065	.561

\*statistically significant on a two tailed test  $p < .05$

The Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient between extrinsic motivation score and current role experience as determined by SPSS version 16.0 was a statistically significant value (.046) when assessed using a two-tailed test where  $p < .05$ . The negative correlation illustrates the effect that, generally, those with greater extrinsic motivation tend to have less experience in their current assistant principal role.

There is no significant correlation between extrinsic motivation scores of participants and the other three measures of career mobility. The correlation coefficient calculated between job-pursuing behaviors of assistant principals and extrinsic motivation score shows a very low negative correlation, which is statistically insignificant.

Similar results were discovered when seeking a relationship between the number of buildings and the number of districts assistant principals have worked in and their



extrinsic motivations scores. For each of these mobility measures there were no significant relationships found.

The Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis conducted seeking a relationship between the number of buildings worked in as an educator and extrinsic motivation yielded a correlation coefficient of  $-.125$  with a statistically insignificant value of  $.263$  when measured on a two-tailed test where  $p < .05$ .

There was a similar result when seeking a relationship between extrinsic motivation score of assistant principals and the number of school districts worked in as an educator. A Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of these variables yielded a correlation coefficient of  $-.074$  with a statistically insignificant value of  $.508$  measured on a two-tailed test where  $p < .05$ .

As a result of the variety in results of the four bi-variate analyses conducted seeking relationships between the extrinsic motivation scores of assistant principals and the attempted career mobility of participants, this null hypothesis is not fully rejected.

Participant responses to the survey instrument allowed for an additional measurement of personal motivation to be calculated. For this study, this measurement, known as the Motivational Difference Score (Ryan and Deci, 2000), was calculated by determining the difference between intrinsic motivation score and extrinsic motivation score of each participant. A positive score is associated with a participant with stronger need for intrinsic motivation. A negative score is associated with a participant with a stronger need for extrinsic motivation.

Pearson Product Moment correlation analyses resulted in no significant statistical relationships based on a two-tailed test where  $p < .05$  between the motivational difference

scores of the assistant principals studied and all four career mobility measures. Table 11 details the correlation coefficients resulting from the analyses conducted between motivational difference scores and attempted career mobility and the levels of significance resulting from each statistical test.

Table 11

*Motivational Difference Correlations*

<i>Mobility measure</i>	<i>Correlation</i>	<i>Level of significance</i>
Current role experience	.117	.294
Seeking behavior	.081	.469
Number of buildings worked in	.122	.276
Number of districts worked in	.076	.498

**Q 2.** What relationship exists between workplace empowerment and secondary school assistant principal mobility or stability?

**Null Hypothesis 3** – There is no statistically significant relationship between perceived workplace empowerment and assistant principals’ attempted career mobility or stability.

**Discussion**

Assistant principals do not work in isolation. The analysis conducted exploring the third null hypothesis attempted to determine if there is a relationship between the perceived level of workplace empowerment for participants and the four identified mobility measures. The analyses conducted resulted in no statistically significant

relationships between perceived workplace empowerment scores and the four measures of career mobility. Table 12 details the correlation coefficients and levels of significance between perceived workplace empowerment and each career mobility measure.

Table 12

*Workplace Empowerment Correlations*

<i>Mobility measure</i>	<i>Correlation</i>	<i>Level of significance</i>
Current role experience	-.157	.147
Job-Seeking behavior	-.135	.213
Number of buildings worked in	-.078	.471
Number of districts worked in	.018	.866

A Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis exploring the relationship between the current role experience of assistant principals and the level of empowerment perceived at the workplace resulted a statistically insignificant value of .147 measured on a two-tailed test where  $p < .05$ .

A similar result was obtained by conducting a bi-variate correlation analysis between participants' job-seeking behaviors and their perceived level of workplace empowerment. This analysis also yielded a negative correlation measured on a two-tailed test where  $p < .05$ .

There was no statistically significant relationship found between perceived workplace empowerment and the number of buildings an assistant principal has worked in as an educator. The bi-variate analysis conducted between the level of perceived

workplace empowerment of assistant principals and the number of districts employed in as an educator yielded similar unremarkable results. As a result of the analyses conducted, this null hypothesis is not rejected. There was no statistically significant relationship discovered between the perceived level of workplace empowerment afforded to the participating assistant principals and their attempted career mobility or stability.

**Q 3.** Is there a relationship between motivational styles and workplace empowerment that correlates with increases in career mobility or stability of secondary school assistant principals?

**Null Hypothesis 4** – There is no statistically significant relationship between motivational difference score, perceived workplace empowerment, and assistant principal attempted career mobility or stability.

### **Discussion**

Multiple regression analyses were conducted grouping motivational difference score and perceived workplace empowerment score as independent variables and the various career mobility measures as dependent variables. These analyses resulted in similar results as shown in Table 13, which provides an overview of the impact these variables have on all four mobility measures.

The independent variables of motivational difference score and perceived workplace empowerment level account for only a small variation in current role experience as calculated by a multiple regression analysis. This variation is at a statistically insignificant level (.137).

Using the mobility measure of job-seeking behavior, the two independent variables of motivational difference score and perceived workplace empowerment score

are also statistically insignificant at a level of .317. The variation in the number of buildings worked in is only accounted for by .024 by the same independent variables of motivational difference score and perceived workplace empowerment level at a statistically insignificant level. The dependent variable of districts worked in impacted at an even lower level of .006 by the independent variables of motivational difference score and perceived workplace empowerment.

Table 13

*Multiple Regression Analyses*

<i>Mobility measure</i>	<i>R squared value (amount independent variables impact mobility measure)</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Current role experience	.049	.137
Seeking behavior	.029	.317
Number of buildings worked in	.024	.388
Number of districts worked in	.006	.796

The independent variables of motivational difference and perceived level of workplace empowerment for participating assistant principals have no statistically significant impact on the attempted career mobility of participants. As a result, this null hypothesis is not rejected.

## **Summary**

Results of the research study were discussed in this chapter. With the exception of one finding that indicated an inverse relationship between extrinsic motivation scores and assistant principals' experience in their current position, the null hypotheses set forth in this study were not rejected. An analysis of the results and a discussion about future research studies that should be conducted to support this study will be presented in Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 5 -- STUDY CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study explored the relationships that exist between personal motivation needs, perceived workplace empowerment, and the career mobility of current assistant principals in southeast Michigan. A summary of the findings, discussion of the importance of the findings, conclusions, recommendations for further research, and the implications of the results are presented in this chapter.

### **Analysis of Findings**

Assistant principals play a critical role in secondary public schools. The longer individuals are able to remain in their current roles, the greater the level of expertise they are able to obtain (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). The assistant principals who participated in this study, however, possessed an average of between four and six years of experience in their current role. The majority (77%) of participants also described behaviors that are associated with currently seeking new employment. Of the assistant principals who participated in this study, 92% have worked in more than one building as an educator, and 74.7% have been employed in more than one school district.

In addition to examining the career mobility of assistant principals, the motivational needs and perceived workplace empowerment afforded to them was explored. All but one of the 87 assistant principals who participated were identified as having greater intrinsic motivation needs than extrinsic motivation needs. For purposes of this study, intrinsic motivation has been described as placing high value on personal growth, community-building, and relationship-building (Deci, 1972), whereas extrinsic

motivation has been described as placing a high value on wealth, fame, and image (Lepper, Greene, and Nisbett, 1973).

The perceived level of workplace empowerment afforded to each participant was examined. Using a scale of one through seven, where one was indicative of low perceived workplace empowerment and seven was high perceived workplace empowerment, the mean score recorded for participants was 5.55. The survey instrument designated a rating of four as a neutral score. A value of greater than four is indicative of a perception of empowerment being provided by building principals who serve as the immediate supervisors of the APs studied. The APs perceived that their principals trust them and give them freedom to utilize their own skills and abilities (Baard, Deci, and Ryan, 2000).

Analyzing the various measures of personal motivation and the measures of job-seeking behaviors of the participants resulted in only one statistically significant correlation. All others were deemed statistically insignificant. A Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis of the variable extrinsic motivation score and current role experience produced a correlation coefficient of  $-.221$  with a significance of  $.046$  measured on a two tailed test where  $p < .05$ .

The results of this study indicated that there are no statistically significant relationships between extrinsic motivation needs, intrinsic motivation needs, perceived workplace empowerment, and the attempted career mobility or stability of current assistant principals, with the exception of one identified relationship between extrinsic motivation score and current role experience. This inverse relationship, although statistically small, suggests that APs with limited experience in their roles may have higher extrinsic motivational needs than colleagues with more experience in the role. It



may take more time on the job for the value of intrinsic motivations, such as personal growth, community-building, and relationship-building, to become apparent.

### **Importance of Findings**

Although the study resulted in the conclusion that there is no statistically significant relationship between the identified motivational needs of assistant principals and their attempted career mobility or stability, this does not indicate that the motivational needs of assistant principals and the empowerment they receive from their workplace has no impact on their decisions to become mobile.

The results of the study indicated that there are characteristics of the sample of participants that are similar to characteristics of school administrators targeted in other research studies (Marshall and Hooley, 2006). Young workers, in almost every job role today, tend to be intrinsically motivated (NAS Recruitment Communications, 2006). This was also true of the sample of assistant principals included in this study, as 98.8% were determined to have higher intrinsic motivation needs than extrinsic motivation needs.

Marshall and Hooley (2006, p. 96) determined that more than half (56%) of all school administrators were male and that the number of administrators under the age of 40 was on the rise. The descriptive statistics of this sample are consistent with those reported by Marshall and Hooley. Greater than 64% of participants in this study were male, and 47% were 40 years-old or younger.

In addition, a 2008 study by the Alliance for Excellence in Education found that 232,000 educators move to new positions within education each year. The assistant principals in this study displayed evidence of career mobility as well. Each of the

mobility measures analyzed yielded results that showed at least 74% of participants displaying attempted career mobility. The lack of variability in descriptive statistics allows one to make a reasonable description of assistant principals in southeast Michigan.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) stated that when individuals both possess high intrinsic motivation needs and are given a high level of personal empowerment, there is a high degree of perseverance. The APs who participated in this study not only displayed evidence of high intrinsic motivation needs (3.15 mean motivational difference score), but also perceived a high level of workplace empowerment (5.55 mean workplace empowerment score). However, unlike the characteristics of flow described by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), the APs in this study revealed a lack of job persistence and a large amount of attempted career mobility.

The mobility of assistant principals has a negative impact on their ability to gain expertise in their role (Marshall, 1993). The lack of AP expertise impacts the leadership and direction provided for the building at large, as each is a part of the building administration, and the priorities that the administration establishes are taken as the priorities for the school (Lee, Smith, and Cioci, 1993).

The role of school assistant principals needs greater clarity and definition as the responsibilities associated with the role vary by building, location, and individual (Mertz, 1999). Marshall and Hooley (2006) stated, “Assistants are seldom expected to assert leadership by creating new projects or initiatives. Risk-taking must be limited; assistants must confine themselves to supportive tasks, leaving visible leadership to the principal [hierarchical upper level]” (p. 7). Lacking the opportunity to demonstrate true leadership,

and having to focus on supportive tasks may contribute to attempted career mobility, as APs feel that they are capable of more.

Feelings of support are evident in the high perceived workplace empowerment scores indicated by participants in this study, but that empowerment to work on tasks of relatively little importance may be a factor causing assistant principals to seek new employment opportunities. The APs who participated in this study indicated a high level of importance on personal growth, relationships, and community-building (Deci, 1972). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) found that this, along with high empowerment, typically results in high persistence. For APs, however, high intrinsic motivation coupled with high perceived workplace empowerment results in high levels of attempted career mobility. Although there is not a statistically significant correlation between these variables evident in this study, future studies may explore these variables in unique ways to examine any impact they may have on each other.

There does appear to be a mismatch in needs between districts and buildings and the assistant principals that they employ (Marshall and Hooley, 2006). As Hartzell, Williams, and Nelson (1995) reported, assistant principals rarely enter their positions with the knowledge of what their job entails. Yet as Merton explained (1964), when teachers begin to think about a career shift towards administration they begin experimenting with tasks they believe to be administrative in nature.

Marshall and Hooley (2006) argued that achieving sustainability is crucial towards maintaining the integrity of the assistant principal role. They said that constant turnover and mobility among assistant principals does not allow individuals to gain expertise in this role. The high rate of turnover and mobility also help make the case

against the importance of the role, as the appearance is that somebody new is capable of succeeding in the position every couple of years. In order to retain the assistant principals currently employed, districts must make an effort to meet the AP's needs for personal growth, relationships, and community-building. Districts should also place an increased emphasis on hiring APs who possess motivational needs that match those provided by the district and allow for a more realistic job preview to attract more assistant principal candidates who are interested in the role of AP, not in simply using the position as a catalyst for another job.

## **Conclusions**

This study did not attempt to identify the characteristics associated with the selection of current assistant principals. It was limited to analyzing the impact personal motivation needs have on the attempted career mobility or stability of current assistant principals. It is possible that those currently employed in this role were previously selected because of their stated drive and initiative, their stated desire to continue to seek new levels of challenge or movement in the organizational hierarchy. Perhaps assistant principals are selected because of their ability to articulate the importance of having a personal intrinsic motivational need. The characteristics associated with a belief in the importance of personal growth, relationships, and community-building are typically viewed as admirable, at least more so than a candidate's stated importance on wealth, fame, and image (Lepper, Greene, and Nisbett, 1973). Perhaps APs are initially selected because of their ability to articulate a sense of loyalty, which may translate into a high level of perceived empowerment and support from their building principal. These

characteristics and needs, however, may be mismatched with the realities of the position and those provided by school districts.

It is the specific position of assistant principal that may need to be explored as opposed to the individuals who fill the role. Perhaps the nature of tasks, the title of the position, the history of prior individuals in the role, or some other yet to be identified characteristic(s) will help those who currently possess the role of assistant principal feel as though it is their responsibility to attempt mobility.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

This research study yielded results that may drive additional studies. The following questions lead to studies that should be explored:

1. Do the perceptions of workplace empowerment of building principals match the perceptions of the assistant principals they supervise?
2. Do the incentives provided by school districts to recruit and retain assistant principals match the motivational needs of the assistant principals they employ?
3. What jobs are assistant principals attempting to acquire with their desire to be mobile?
4. Do the task responsibilities that assistant principals expect to have associated with their role when beginning their employment match the actual task responsibilities with which they are charged during their employment?

5. Are the results of this research study exploring the motivational needs of assistant principals in southeast Michigan consistent with the results that may be obtained in other geographic areas?
6. What impact do descriptive characteristics such as age, gender, district type, and career experience have on the motivational needs and perceptions of workplace empowerment of assistant principals? A longitudinal study should be conducted to examine this question.

### **Implications**

This study has demonstrated how complex the decision-making process is for assistant principals when they are contemplating their career futures. This study has not identified any singular variable that may account for the high mobility of assistant principals in their career histories and as they look towards their future. The majority of assistant principals studied possess common characteristics including a young age, an intrinsic motivational need, a high level of perceived workplace empowerment in their current role, a mobile career history, and the majority indicated that they are currently seeking new employment. This study explored the impact that individual motivational needs and perceived workplace empowerment have on the attempted mobility of current assistant principals. No statistically significant relationship between any of these variables was discovered from the data collected.

Perhaps assistant principals are predetermined to be mobile. It may be that the type of individual selected for this role is one who displays characteristics associated with future mobility. What groups responsible for making hiring decisions may perceive as

varied experience may, in reality, be a desire for change and mobility. Perhaps responses to interview questions that demonstrate characteristics associated with trust and loyalty later on are revealed by individuals when they describe their workplaces as empowering. Perhaps this feeling of empowerment encourages current assistant principals to gain confidence in their abilities and a belief that they are capable of performing the tasks associated with their supervisors. It is possible that individuals who identify themselves as intrinsically motivated, and therefore have high levels of persistence, quickly gain mastery of their roles. Perhaps the tasks assigned to assistant principals do not carry the levels of challenge required to bring about sustainability, and, therefore, these individuals begin to seek out new challenges after a relatively short amount of time.

Marshall and Hooley (2006) described the tasks assigned to assistant principals as managerial duties as opposed to leadership tasks, management meaning completing low level tasks with a perceived level of authority. Leadership, on the other hand, involves more delegation and training of subordinates. Hartzell, Williams, and Nelson (1995) indicated that assistant principals rarely enter their roles with a realistic job preview. They tend to enter their position believing they will be introduced to leadership responsibilities, and are, in reality, asked to perform managerial tasks. This feeling of *this is not what I signed up for* may be a catalyst for current APs to begin displaying job-seeking behaviors as they try to find other roles better suited for their own perceived skill set.

Simon (1957) stated that one of the responsibilities of a supervisor within an organization is to define the roles of subordinates. Principals, therefore, should perform the task of defining the responsibilities of assistant principals. Boulding (1964) believed

that upper levels of an organization's hierarchy are responsible for diminishing role ambiguity and uncertainty. Armstrong's (2004) outline of the multitude of tasks that assistant principals believe they are responsible for detailed the varied degree of ambiguity in the role (See Table 1). This list does not include the responsibility of filling in as principal when the building principal is away, a task that often falls to APs. This, however, is not a daily responsibility. The high level of empowerment that current APs believe they receive from their workplaces allows them to feel valued and respected. This feeling, coupled with the ambiguity of their daily responsibilities and their ability to perform principal duties as required, may be a factor impacting assistant principals to attempt to become mobile.

It may be that the assistant principal role is designed to be a training ground for future principals. Maybe districts use this position to develop and cultivate their future building leaders and have designed these roles to be unattractive to inspire mobility. This is difficult to believe, however. In an age where many school districts, especially in the State of Michigan, are at critical moments and must exercise extreme fiscal responsibility, using a career position simply to train individuals for future employment seems financially irresponsible. Having a position available in which new individuals are able to successfully fill vacancies every couple of years makes the position appear to some to be relatively basic. Marshall and Hooley (2006) argued that sustainability is crucial in maintaining the integrity of the position of assistant principals. Individuals must be allowed to reach expert status and demonstrate an ability to successfully maneuver complex problems to demonstrate the need for individuals to be employed in this capacity at virtually every secondary school in the United States.



**Summary:**

Assistant principals play a critical role in secondary schools. This study explored the relationships between personal motivation needs, workplace empowerment, and the attempted job mobility of those who occupy the role of assistant principal in Southeast Michigan schools. Although the results of this study indicated limited statistically significant relationships between these variables, participants demonstrated evidence of high job mobility. It is important to identify and ameliorate factors that lead to the high mobility rates of assistant principals in order to extend the experience and increase expertise levels of those in the role.

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## Appendices

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## Appendix A

### Informed Consent Letter

To: Public School Assistant Principals

Investigator: David M. Schmittou  
Assistant Principal- Boyd Arthurs Middle School (Trenton, MI)  
Eastern Michigan University Doctoral Student

Project Title: The motivating factors of secondary school assistant principals in south-east Michigan and their impact on job mobility

-----

I am a doctoral student at Eastern Michigan University. To complete my degree program I have chosen to conduct a study that I believe has great relevance and importance. The current literature lacks information regarding the role of assistant principals, how they are chosen, and what motivates them to move to new careers. The purpose of this study is to attempt to provide greater clarity to these subjects and to hopefully provide better guidance in the selection and training of assistant principals.

This survey is divided into three sections and I would appreciate your completing all three sections so that a thorough analysis can be conducted. Completion of the entire survey should take between 5-10 minutes.

Only a code number will identify your questionnaire response. At no time will your name be associated with your responses to the questionnaire. All information will be kept in locked file cabinets of the investigator.

There are no foreseeable risks to you by completing this survey, as all results will be kept completely confidential. The expected benefits to this study will be that the research will provide information regarding better selection and training of school administrators.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Once the completed questionnaire is returned to me, your participation will have been completed. You may choose not to participate. If you do decide to participate, you can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study without negative consequences.

Results will be presented in aggregate form only. No names or individually identifying information will be revealed. Results may be presented at research meetings and conferences, in scientific publications, and as part of a doctoral thesis being conducted by the principal investigator.

This research protocol and informed consent document has been reviewed and approved by the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee for use from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. If you have questions about the approval process, please contact Dr. Deb de Laski-Smith (734-487-0042, Interim Dean of the Graduate School and Administrative Co-chair of UHSRC, [human.subjects@emich.edu](mailto:human.subjects@emich.edu)).

If you have any questions concerning your participation now or in the future, you can contact the principal investigator, David Schmittou, at 734-377-3457 or by email at [davidschmittou@sbcglobal.net](mailto:davidschmittou@sbcglobal.net)

Sincerely,

David M. Schmittou  
734-377-3457  
davidschmittou@sbcglobal.net

**Consent to Participate:**

I have read or had read to me all of the above information about this research study, including the research procedures, possible risks, side effects, and the likelihood of any benefit to me. The consent and meaning of this information has been explained and I have an understanding of it. All of my questions, at this time, have been answered. I hereby consent and do voluntarily offer to follow the study requirements and take part in the study.

\*\*If completing an electronic version of the survey (e-mail or *Survey Monkey*) your completion and returning of the survey constitutes a consent to participate and no further signature is needed.

\*\* If completing a paper copy of the survey please print and sign your name below.

PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### Permission To Use Survey Instruments

Below is a brief statement from Dr. Richard Ryan, author of the survey instruments “Work Climate Questionnaire” and “Aspirations Index”, via email giving permission to use both questionnaires with this study. Permission was granted on July 29, 2010.

survey instruments

Thursday, July 29, 2010 4:24 AM

**From:**

"Ryan, Richard" <richard.ryan@ur.rochester.edu>

[Add sender to Contacts](#)

**To:**

"David Schmittou" <davidschmittou@sbcglobal.net>

David

You have permission to use these and other instruments on our website for academic research purposes. Good luck with the research

richard

**Appendix C**  
**Sample Size Chart**

Sample sizes for a two-tailed test ( $\alpha = .05$ )

---

Power	.1	.2	.3	.4	.5	.6	.7	.8	.9
.25	167	42	20	12	8	6	5	4	3
.5	385	96	42	24	15	19	7	6	4
.60	490	122	53	29	18	12	9	6	5
.70	616	153	67	37	23	15	10	7	5
.75	692	172	75	41	25	17	11	8	6
.80	783	194	85	46	28	18	12	9	6
.85	895	221	97	52	32	21	14	19	6
.90	1047	259	113	62	37	24	16	11	7
.95	1294	319	139	75	46	30	19	13	8
.99	1828	450	195	105	64	40	27	18	11

---

Source: (Cohen, 1998, p. 101)

## Appendix D

### Survey

#### Aspirations and Empowerment Survey

Thank you for your participation in this survey. All results will be coded anonymously so that identities of respondents will not be known by those that read the results and analysis.

This survey is broken down into three sections. The first section is simply demographic data while the second and third sections ask for respondent answers based on work climate and motivational tendencies and aspirations. Please complete the entire survey (all 44 questions), however, if at any time you feel the need to skip a question for any reason, please do so.

Please read each statement carefully and attempt to respond as accurately as possible. Results will be published in future articles including dissertation research.

**Once completed you may return the survey in one of four ways:**

- 1) **E-mail- you may type on this Word Document and send it back to David Schmittou as an e-mail attachment at:**  
[davidschmittou@sbcglobal.net](mailto:davidschmittou@sbcglobal.net)
- 2) **You may respond to the survey electronically using the software *Survey Monkey*. A link to this survey is included below.**
- 3) **You may fax the survey to David Schmittou at: 734-484-0929**
- 4) **You may mail the survey back to David Schmittou at:**  
**8307 N. Warwick Ct.**  
**Ypsilanti MI 48198**

**\*\*Please remember do NOT put you name on the survey\*\***  
**Surveys will be kept locked in a file and each survey will be coded for analyzing but no names will be attached.**

---

*Survey Monkey link:*

*<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WP3HF75>*









Response Scale

not at all                      moderately                      very  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

**(IC1): Aspiration/ Life-goal:** To work for the betterment of society.

How important is this to you?

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

**(EW2): Aspiration/Life-goal:** To have many expensive possessions.

How important is this to you?

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

**(IP2): Aspiration/ Life-goal:** At the end of my life, to be able to look back on my life as meaningful and complete.

How important is this to you?

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

**(EF2): Aspiration/Life-goal:** To be admired by many people.

How important is this to you?

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

**(IR2): Aspiration/Life-goal:** To share my life with someone I love.

How important is this to you?

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

**(EI2): Aspiration/ Life-goal:** To have people comment often about how attractive I look.

How important is this to you?

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

Response Scale

not at all                      moderately                      very  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

**(IC2): Aspiration/Life-goal:** To assist people who need it, asking nothing in return.

How important is this to you?

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

**(EW3): Aspiration/Life-goal:** To be financially successful.

How important is this to you?

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

**(IP3): Aspiration/Life-goal:** To choose what I do, instead of being pushed along by life.

How important is this to you?

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

**(EF3): Aspiration/Life-goal:** To be famous.

How important is this to you?

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

**(IR3): Aspiration/Life-goal:** To have committed, intimate relationships.

How important is this to you?

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

**(EI3): Life-goal:** To keep up with fashions in hair and clothing.

How important is this to you?

1            2            3            4            5            6            7





## Appendix E

### Scales used by respondents in survey instrument

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<i>Measure</i>	<i>Scale</i>
All motivation measures	1-7 (1 is not very important; 7 is very important)
Current role experience	1=1-3 yrs 2=4-6 yrs 3=7-10 yrs 4=11+ yrs
Number of past buildings/districts	1=1 2=2-3 3=4-5 4=6-7 5=8+
Current seeking behavior	1=never look at postings 2=casually scan postings 3=actively searching 4=in current job transition

---

## Appendix F

### University Human Subjects Approval

**E**ASTERN  
MICHIGAN  
UNIVERSITY

www.ord.emich.edu (see Federal Compliance)

Education First

December 1, 2010

To: David Schmittou  
Educational Leadership

The EMU UHSRC complies with the Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations part  
46 (45 CFR 46) under FWA00000050.

**UHSRC Initial  
Application Determination  
EXPEDITED APPROVAL**

Re: UHSRC # 101109  
Approval Date:

Category: Approved Expedited Research Project  
December 2, 2010

Title: "The Motivating Factors of Secondary School Assistant Principals in Southeast Michigan and their Impact on Job Mobility"

The Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee (UHSRC) has completed their review of your project. I am pleased to advise you that your expedited research has been approved in accordance with federal regulations.

Renewals: Expedited protocols need to be renewed annually. If the project is continuing, please submit the Human Subjects Continuation Form prior to the approval expiration. If the project is completed, please submit the Human Subjects Study Completion Form (both forms are found on the UHSRC website).

Revisions: Expedited protocols do require revisions. If changes are made to a protocol, please submit a Human Subjects Minor Modification Form or new Human Subjects Approval Request Form (if major changes) for review (see UHSRC website for forms).

Problems: If issues should arise during the conduct of the research, such as unanticipated problems, adverse events, or any problem that may increase the risk to human subjects and change the category of review, notify the UHSRC office within 24 hours. Any complaints from participants regarding the risk and benefits of the project must be reported to the UHSRC.

Follow-up: If your expedited research project is not completed and closed after three years, the UHSRC office will require a new Human Subjects Approval Request Form prior to approving a continuation beyond three years.

Please use the UHSRC number listed above on any forms submitted that relate to this project, or on any correspondence with the UHSRC office.

Good luck in your research. If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at 734-487-0042 or via e-mail at [human.subjects@emich.edu](mailto:human.subjects@emich.edu). Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Deb de Laski-Smith, Ph.D.  
Interim Dean  
Graduate School  
Administrative Co-Chair  
University Human Subjects Review Committee

University Human Subjects Review Committee ⊕ Eastern Michigan University ⊕ 200 Boone Hall  
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197  
Phone: 734.487.0042 Fax: 734.487.0050  
E-mail: [human.subjects@emich.edu](mailto:human.subjects@emich.edu)

## Appendix G

### Illustrative Table of Collected Data for Analysis

Variable type	Category	Sub-section	Survey location	Score range
Independent Variables				
		Extrinsic sub-scores (means)	Section 3	
		Wealth	EW1,EW2,EW3,EW4,EW5	1-7
		Fame	EF1,EF2,EF3,EF4,EF5	1-7
		Image	EI1,EI2,WI3,EI4,EI5	1-7
	Total extrinsic motivation score			3-21
		Intrinsic sub-scores (means)	Section 3	
		Personal growth	IP1,IP2,IP3,IP4,IP5	1-7
		Relationships	IR1,IR2,IR3,IR4,IR5	1-7
		Community	IC1,IC2,IC3,IC4,IC5	1-7
	Total intrinsic motivation score			3-21
	Perceived workplace empowerment level (mean)		Section 2	1-7
Dependent Variable				
	Individual attempted mobility/stability		Section 1-Question 5	Ordinal ranking
Descriptive Statistics			Section 1	
	Gender		Question 1	Nominal scale
	Age		Question 2	Ordinal scale
	ISD		Question 3	Nominal scale
	Current job longevity		Question 4	Ordinal scale
	District type		Question 6	nominal scale
	Building work history		Question 7	Ordinal scale
	District work history		Question 8	Ordinal scale



## Appendix H

### Summary Chart of Correlations

#### Correlations between various measures of motivation and job seeking

	Intrinsic motivation score	Extrinsic Motivation score	Motivational Difference Score	Perceived Empowerment score
Current role experience	-.08	-.221**	.117	-.157
Seeking behavior	.137	-.002	.081	-.135
Building history	.089	-.125	.122	-.078
District history	.065	-.074	.076	.018

\*\*significant on a two tailed test at a level  $p < .05$

## Appendix I

### SPSS Output Charts

#### Correlations

		experience	pursuing jobs	num. of buildings	num. of districts	empowerment	extrinsic	intrinsic	difference
experience	Pearson Correlation	1	-.062	.064	-.027	-.157	-.221*	-.088	.117
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.571	.559	.806	.147	.046	.431	.294
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	96.897	-3.759	5.966	-2.138	-26.078	-19.698	-5.138	12.554
	Covariance	1.127	-.044	.069	-.025	-.303	-.243	-.063	.155
	N	87	87	87	87	87	82	82	82
pursuing jobs	Pearson Correlation	-.062	1	-.089	.026	-.135	-.002	.137	.081
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.571		.413	.809	.213	.985	.219	.469
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-3.759	38.437	-5.253	1.322	-14.114	-.123	5.130	5.586
	Covariance	-.044	.447	-.061	.015	-.164	-.002	.063	.069
	N	87	87	87	87	87	82	82	82
num. of buildings	Pearson Correlation	.064	-.089	1	.663**	-.078	-.125	.089	.122
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.559	.413		.000	.471	.263	.427	.276
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	5.966	-5.253	90.989	51.287	-12.616	-10.980	5.096	12.839

	Covariance	.069	-.061	1.058	.596	-.147	-.136	.063	.159
	N	87	87	87	87	87	82	82	82
num. of districts	Pearson Correlation	-.027	.026	.663**	1	.018	-.074	.065	.076
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.806	.809	.000		.866	.508	.561	.498
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-2.138	1.322	51.287	65.816	2.522	-5.538	3.173	6.802
	Covariance	-.025	.015	.596	.765	.029	-.068	.039	.084
	N	87	87	87	87	87	82	82	82
empowerment	Pearson Correlation	-.157	-.135	-.078	.018	1	-.067	.042	.090
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.147	.213	.471	.866		.551	.709	.420
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-26.078	-14.114	-12.616	2.522	285.440	-10.480	4.280	16.971
	Covariance	-.303	-.164	-.147	.029	3.319	-.129	.053	.210
	N	87	87	87	87	87	82	82	82
extrinsic	Pearson Correlation	-.221*	-.002	-.125	-.074	-.067	1	-.020	-.807**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.046	.985	.263	.508	.551		.858	.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-19.698	-.123	-10.980	-5.538	-10.480	87.643	-1.146	-84.841
	Covariance	-.243	-.002	-.136	-.068	-.129	1.082	-.014	-1.047
	N	82	82	82	82	82	82	82	82
intrinsic	Pearson Correlation	-.088	.137	.089	.065	.042	-.020	1	.581**

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.431	.219	.427	.561	.709	.858		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-5.138	5.130	5.096	3.173	4.280	-1.146	37.272	39.861
	Covariance	-.063	.063	.063	.039	.053	-.014	.460	.492
	N	82	82	82	82	82	82	82	82
difference	Pearson Correlation	.117	.081	.122	.076	.090	-.807**	.581**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.294	.469	.276	.498	.420	.000	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	12.554	5.586	12.839	6.802	16.971	-84.841	39.861	126.175
	Covariance	.155	.069	.159	.084	.210	-1.047	.492	1.558
	N	82	82	82	82	82	82	82	82

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

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

#### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
-------	---	----------	-------------------	----------------------------

1	.306 <sup>a</sup>	.094	.047	1.03473
---	-------------------	------	------	---------

a. Predictors: (Constant), difference, empowerment, intrinsic, extrinsic

**ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.547	4	2.137	1.996	.104 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	82.441	77	1.071		
	Total	90.988	81			

a. Predictors: (Constant), difference, empowerment, intrinsic, extrinsic

b. Dependent Variable: experience

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.202 <sup>a</sup>	.041	-.009	.68402

a. Predictors: (Constant), difference, empowerment, intrinsic, extrinsic

**ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.534	4	.383	.820	.517 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	36.027	77	.468		
	Total	37.561	81			

a. Predictors: (Constant), difference, empowerment, intrinsic, extrinsic

b. Dependent Variable: pursuing jobs

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.237 <sup>a</sup>	.056	.007	1.03925

a. Predictors: (Constant), difference, empowerment, intrinsic, extrinsic

#### ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.947	4	1.237	1.145	.342 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	83.163	77	1.080		
	Total	88.110	81			

a. Predictors: (Constant), difference, empowerment, intrinsic, extrinsic

b. Dependent Variable: num. of buildings

#### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.152 <sup>a</sup>	.023	-.028	.89978

a. Predictors: (Constant), difference, empowerment, intrinsic, extrinsic

#### ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.465	4	.366	.452	.770 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	62.340	77	.810		
	Total	63.805	81			

a. Predictors: (Constant), difference, empowerment, intrinsic, extrinsic

b. Dependent Variable: num. of districts