Chapter 10

Motivational Factors for Pursuing Degrees in Educational Administration

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ABSTRACT

Graduate students were surveyed to analyze their motivations for pursuing a degree in educational administration. Researchers also examined whether there were differences in their motivations based on race. According to NCES (2003-2004) only 10.6% of all public school principals were African American while 16.8% of the students they served were of the same race. Understanding that African Americans are underrepresented in school leadership positions as compared to their Caucasian counterparts, the researchers sought to explore whether Caucasians were encouraged to pursue school leadership credentials more often than African Americans. Statistical analysis revealed no significance in the responses of the participants based on race. However, through analyzing motivating factors by age, it was determined that participants between the ages of 20-29, as compared to participants between the ages of 40-49, were far more likely to report that they were pursuing a degree in educational administration because they felt that they could do a better job than their current administrators.

INTRODUCTION

The findings presented in this chapter serve as a follow up to a study conducted by McNeese,, Roberson, DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-1968-3.ch010
Motivational Factors for Pursuing Degrees in Educational Administration

Haines, (2009) designed to assess the underlying motivations for students pursuing degrees in educational administration. The researches in this study sought to assess whether the motivations for students entering educational administration programs have evolved in recent years. Few today will argue that there is a lack of supply of willing and qualified administrators in many states (Archer, 2002; Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Smith, 2008). Pools of highly qualified applicants needed to replace retiring and departing administrators has become much smaller (Guterman, 2007) leading to severe shortages of willing and qualified applicants. Most shortages are especially acute in rural high minority areas (Forsyth & Smith, 2002; Pounder, Crow, & Shepherd, 2003). Cusick (2003) noted applicants for principal positions has steadily declined in Michigan by 50-67%, and Gewertz (2000) claims the looming job-vacancy problem is partly due to a large number of administrators retiring coupled with fewer teachers entering administration due to accountability pressures to produce higher academic achievement. Rayfield and Diamantes (2004) also asserted that fewer teachers are deciding to enter administration. Even though there are teachers holding administrative licenses, fewer of them are choosing to pursue careers as principals and assistant principals. Approximately half of those who graduate from principal preparation programs become administrators. The objective of this chapter is to provide information to school district officials regarding possible motivations for district employees pursuing degrees in educational administration.

BACKGROUND

Shifting Responsibilities of Vice Principals

As students enter educational administration programs in hopes of landing a vice principal position, it is important that they have a clear understanding of what their responsibilities will be. According to Glanz (2004), the competence and job satisfaction of vice principals is very critical, not only because they represent a very important part of the administration, but also because they could potentially be a candidate for the principal position within the school or district. There are two major themes examined in the literature. The first looks at the shift in responsibilities of vice principals as a result of education reform and accountability and how it has impacted job satisfaction among principals and vice principals, and the other theme examines the relationship between job satisfaction and desire to become a principal (Marshall & Hooley, 2006).

The position of vice-principal emerged as a result of tremendous booms in student enrollment as well as growing responsibilities of principals (Mertz, 2006). Traditionally, the roles of the vice-principal consisted primarily of student discipline and attendance and were not seen as being a critical part of impacting the school (Bates & Shank, 1983). Bates and Shank (1983) also contended that vice-principals were traditionally asked to take on responsibilities that the principal did not want to do, and were more involved with maintaining organizational stability rather than participating in school level initiatives to bring about change.

Additionally, with new education reform and accountability the responsibilities of principals have grown exponentially making delegation of certain responsibilities inevitable. The growing workload of the principal has led to the redefinition of the duties and responsibilities of the vice-principal (Armstrong, 2004). Mertz (2000) in her qualitative study which examined the roles and responsibilities of vice-principals noted that they should be involved in managerial duties such as supporting new teach-