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Job Satisfaction Among Illinois School Psychologists

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

JOB SATISFACTION AMONG ILLINOIS SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

A DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

PROGRAM IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

BY

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RHONDA RUTHERFORD

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | iii |
| ABSTRACT..... | x |
| CHAPTER | |
| I. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Purpose..... | 4 |
| II. LITERATURE REVIEW | 5 |
| III. METHODOLOGY | 15 |
| Participants..... | 15 |
| Survey Discussion..... | 15 |
| Procedures..... | 17 |
| Analytical Techniques | 18 |
| Sampling Analysis | 18 |
| Quantitative Data Analysis | 19 |
| Qualitative Descriptive Analysis | 19 |
| IV. RESULTS | 21 |
| V. DISCUSSION | 25 |
| Overall Job Satisfaction | 25 |
| Indicators Defining Job Satisfaction..... | 27 |
| Job Satisfaction and the Number of Schools Assigned | 27 |
| Job Satisfaction and Selected Demographic Variables..... | 28 |
| Job Satisfaction in Urban and Suburban School Psychologists..... | 29 |
| Administrative Support and Job Satisfaction..... | 30 |
| Future Implications | 31 |
| APPENDIX | |
| A. EMAIL PRELUDE TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST SURVEY..... | 37 |
| B. INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPANTS..... | 39 |
| C. SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST SURVEY..... | 42 |
| D. TABLES AND GRAPHS | 48 |
| REFERENCE LIST | 57 |

VITAE..... 60

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine and compare related factors that impact job satisfaction among school psychologists working in Illinois. To achieve this goal, participants were surveyed online utilizing a snowball sampling method. Of those surveyed, 101 school psychologists completed the survey and were included in the analysis. According to findings, 46.5% of school psychologists reported being satisfied while 26.7% reported being very satisfied. Satisfied school psychologists indicated multiple factors: helping and advocating for children, the work schedule, working with underserved populations and variety/flexibility of the job, which contributed to their ability to maintain job satisfaction. Results revealed several indicators defining overall job satisfaction consisting of various job responsibilities, environmental factors, and professional affiliations. In terms of the level of job satisfaction and number of schools assigned to school psychologists, there was no relationship. When investigating demographic variables such as gender, age, ethnicity, level of education, and years of experience, findings indicated small correlations in relation to job satisfaction. Although the percentage of school psychologists who reported overall satisfaction was higher than those working urban settings, as a whole, both still reported being satisfied in their current position. In this study, administrative support was one of several important factors associated with the level of satisfaction experienced by school psychologists.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chicago Public Schools, Office of Diverse Learners Supports System, Department of Clinical and Related Services (CPS, ODLSS, & CRS) is responsible for the allocation process. There are approximately 220 school psychologists who work in both public and private schools. According to the CPS website there are 681 schools, of which 472 are elementary schools, 106 are high schools, 96 are charter campuses and 7 are contract schools (http://www.cps.edu/AboutCPS/At_a_glance/Pages/Stats_and_facts.aspx). School psychologists are also responsible for working with private and charter schools that are within the geographic boundaries of a community public school. School allocation is based on many factors including a school's student population, the number of students with disabilities and the number of students receiving direct and indirect therapeutic services.

School psychologists within the department strive to provide services that promote positive academic and socio-emotional outcomes as well as optimal mental health to all students enrolled. The expectation is that school psychologists fully explore students' issues and/or needs, as a means of strengthening their academic, intellectual, social, and emotional states of well-being. To ensure that all students benefit and are in great psychological health, school psychologists are expected to consult/ collaborate with various internal/external stakeholders using a problem-solving

framework. In sum, the intended overall mission of the department is to provide exemplary clinical and related services to all students in Chicago.

School psychologists are highly trained in both psychology and education and are required to have advanced degree(s) (e.g., Master's, Specialist's and/or Doctoral Degree) from an accredited college or university. Training obtained emphasizes preparation in mental health and educational interventions, child development, learning, behavior, motivation, curriculum and instruction, assessment, consultation, collaboration, school law, and systems. School psychologists must also hold a state license and may be nationally certified. Given school psychologists' training/background, program activities entail, but are not limited to: Response to Intervention/Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (RtI/MTSS), consultation/collaboration, providing therapeutic counselling interventions to students with emotional disabilities, using various measurements to assess students with cognitive impairments and other disabilities, the development of positive academic supports/intervention strategies, and the coordination of culture specific services.

Although school psychologists are considered citywide employees and can be redeployed at any given notice, school psychologists are typically assigned to one, two, three or more schools. The number of schools assigned to a school psychologist is based on several factors including schools' special education enrollment and need, the number of students receiving therapeutic and consultative services, school schedule changes, vacancies and medical leaves. Based upon this calculation, one psychologist might be responsible for up to 2,000 students or more; this is conflicting given the standard ratio of 1,000 to 1 recommended by the National Association for School Psychologists (NASP)

(Curtis, Castillo & Gelley, 2012). Furthermore, NASP has suggested smaller ratios of 500 to 700 when thinking about prevention and providing services to students with more intensive needs (Curtis et al., 2012). When these ratios exceed the recommended guidelines, school psychologists may be unable to participate in the full range of services that they are trained and expected to provide, particularly when required to partake in consultations/collaborations with various internal/external stakeholders on the RtI/MTSS team. This is extremely problematic because, according to NASP, school psychologists are key members of the team, ensuring quality and genuinely accessible education for all students (NASP, 2010). Furthermore, if school psychologists continue to solely engage in traditional practices, instead of fully utilizing other areas of expertise (e.g., collaboration, consultation, problem-solving, program evaluation, etc.), which promote a more all-encompassing approach to service delivery, this might result in less favourable student outcomes when assessing academic and socio-emotional functioning (Little, 2013).

Granted school psychologists have a wealth of education/training in various areas, often times their skills are not deployed because of multiple encountered obstacles including issues related to limited resources, time, adequate space, having several school assignments, large student ratios, hefty psychological assessment caseloads, excess paperwork, a lack of support from district/department/building administrators, and/or political agendas, etc. It is possible that the previously mentioned challenges, which have the potential to minimize involvement in other relevant domains, could have a negative impact on job satisfaction among school psychologists.

Purpose

The goal of this dissertation research project is to examine and compare related factors that impact job satisfaction among school psychologists working in Illinois. To achieve this goal, the following six research questions were formulated:

1. What is the overall level of job satisfaction reported by the survey sample of school psychologists?
2. What indicators define job satisfaction among school psychologists?
3. Does the number of schools assigned impact job satisfaction among school psychologists?
4. What relationship, if any, does job satisfaction and the selected demographic variables share?
5. Is there a difference between school psychologists who work in urban and suburban school districts?
6. What is the relationship between having administrative support and job satisfaction among school psychologists?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of existing literature revealed studies of school psychologists' performance have been measured by examining school psychologists' job satisfaction and professional burnout. Proctor and Steadman (2003) surveyed 63 school psychologists in 64 school districts across the state of Florida. They compared psychologists who were assigned to one school (in-house) to psychologists who serviced two or more schools (a traditional model). The authors also examined levels of job burnout and self-effectiveness. The impact on the number of schools allocated had not been previously studied. The authors concluded school psychologists who reported an assignment of only one school had higher levels of job satisfaction due to their ability to provide a variety of services beyond assessment (p. 237). While this study was limited by a small sample size and psychologists were only chosen from one state, Proctor and Steadman indicated school psychologists assigned "in-house" reported a higher level of job effectiveness and lower levels of burnout. However, the authors warned burnout is an unacknowledged problem in the field of school psychology and may worsen as the shortage of school psychologists increases. They also noted this issue should be considered when determining how to improve job retention.

In 2006 Van Voorhis and Levinson conducted a meta-analysis of job satisfaction among school psychologists. The authors reviewed eight studies (two national and six

states) that used the Modified Minnesota Questionnaire, a paper-and-pencil inventory. Two thousand, one hundred and sixteen respondents answered questions that examined 20 aspects of work (e.g., absenteeism, turnover, task success, professional attitude, and social and personal variables). Data was aggregated using responses from school psychologists working full time in public schools. The authors stated 84% of school psychologists reported overall job satisfaction with similar results when comparing state and national outcomes. The authors also examined similar studies conducted from 1982 through 1999 and determined job satisfaction remained the same. Issues that were noted for further investigation included job advancement and school policies as these two topics were reported to areas where school psychologists expressed job dissatisfaction. Study limitations reported were state demographics limited to the eastern United States. There were also other limitations. Over 70% of school psychologists were NASP members and 100% worked in public schools. This study suggests further investigation expanding the study to include non-NASP school psychologists, psychologists working in other states, and different geographic areas.

In another study regional differences were examined to determine if there was a difference in job satisfaction, role and assessment practices, beliefs on system reform and a direct correlation between assigned caseloads and number of administered assessments (Hosp & Reschly, 2002). One thousand, four hundred and twenty three school psychologists were randomly chosen from the NASP membership and organized according to census regions. The psychologists completed a survey based upon previous NASP job surveys from 1986 and 1991. The survey focused on three areas: job

satisfaction, assessment practices, and beliefs about system reform. School psychologists reported satisfaction with their jobs. Those who received the highest salaries or lowest student caseload were the most satisfied while psychologists were the least satisfied with supervisors. Psychologists also reported they preferred spending time participating in activities other than assessments, such as problem solving, consultation and direct services. Survey results also revealed a focus on problem solving in the northeast United States. In the southeastern region, psychologists focused on psychometrics and assessment. In general school psychologists' roles remained consistent, spending one-half to two-thirds of the time in eligibility and IEP conferences and assessing students. Demographic information revealed a decrease in the ratio of students to psychologists. In addition, despite variations in demographics and job requirements, psychologists held similar attitudes and beliefs regarding job satisfaction, system reform and assessment practices. However, the average is still two times that of the NASP recommended ratio, i.e., one school psychologist for every 500 to 700 general education students (Curtis et al., 2012). As in the previous study non-NASP psychologists were not surveyed. The authors recommended future surveys examine these topics state-by-state rather than region.

In 2004 Curtis, Hunley and Grier conducted a meta-analysis using studies that surveyed NASP members about job satisfaction. They reported approximately 70% of school psychologists in the United States are NASP members. Prior to the 1970s the majority of school psychologists were male and Caucasian. Data now shows school psychologists are primarily female and Caucasian. Racial and ethnic minorities continue

to be underrepresented. From 1999 to 2000, 93% of school psychologists were European American with fewer than 2% identifying as African American. The number of Hispanic psychologists doubled, from 1.5% to 3.1%. Gender composition also changed. In the 1980s, 54% of school psychologists were male but by 2000, 70% of psychologists were female. Employment is primarily in the public school system with 77.5% of all school psychologists working in public schools.

While there are 30,000 school psychologists in the United States, the population of school psychologists has become older with the average age ranging from 38.8 to 45.2 years old. The authors propose that more than 50% of school psychologists could retire within the next 12 years. This could lead to a major shortage with higher student to psychologist ratios. The authors conclude the roles and values of school psychologists should change from one of assessment to prevention, problem solving and intervention.

Other researchers have examined job satisfaction as it relates to implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI). Little (2013) studied school psychologists' self-perceptions of their roles as school psychologists and whether they felt prepared to successfully implement RtI. The author surveyed 61 certified school psychologists working in the Pacific Northwest United States. The surveyed psychologists overwhelmingly reported they believed RtI would eliminate the need for school psychologists. However, the author points out that RtI has allowed school psychologists to demonstrate their professional strengths in data interpretation, consultation, problem solving, and counseling.

Murphy-Price (2012) studied the roles and beliefs of three school psychologists who implemented RtI in their assigned schools and the impact RtI would have on their ability to deliver services. Though researchers have advocated having school psychologists expand their professional roles, over 50% of their time continues to be spent in conducting assessments. The author reported all three school psychologists were concerned with psychological assessments not being required for the identification of a specific learning disability (SLD). The psychologists' perceptions of implementing RtI depended upon the amount of collaboration with school staff, the willingness of teachers to participate in the process and school staff's perceptions of school psychologists' roles. One psychologist reported difficulty implementing RtI because she was not present in the school five days per week. Additionally, she indicated that RtI requires daily intervention implementation. Two of the school psychologists reported they initially participated on the problem solving teams but by the end of the school year, limited support was provided. They indicated their lack of participation was due to school staff not taking the lead in RtI implementation, as it is a general education initiative. The role of administration in supporting the RtI problem solving process and the involvement of teaching staff were cited as the two main areas that directly affected school psychologists' involvement on school RtI teams.

Murphy-Price (2012) reported principals have little knowledge regarding what school psychologists do in schools beyond assessing students. She recommended principals learn about the services school psychologists are trained to implement and work more closely in planning an effective RtI program at their schools. Continued

professional development was also recommended for both school psychologists and teachers.

In examining the issue of job effectiveness another area that has been examined is workload compared to caseload (Feinberg, Nuijens, & Canter, 2005). The authors reported the role of the school psychologist has expanded, resulting in greater difficulty in documenting services. Previously the client had solely been the student. This has significantly changed to include students, their families, and teachers. The authors propose devising a new way to track services, as *caseload* is an ineffective and simplistic way of determining how school psychologists spend their time at work. Caseload analysis does not indicate how effectively services are delivered and high caseloads may result in greater levels of burnout among school psychologists. The authors recommend *workload* analysis as a better approach when considering school assignments.

The changing role of the school psychologist has resulted in studies that have examined job burnout and stress prevention. In their article Huebner, Gilligan and Cobb (2002) discussed causes of occupational stress. The authors pointed out there have been extensive research conducted in occupational psychology but limited investigation of job stress in the field of school psychology. The impact of stress on job performance and personal well-being could significantly impact delivery of services. They reviewed the study conducted by Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001), who studied job burnout among crisis workers in three areas: emotional exhaustion (job demands cause overwhelming feelings of exhaustion); depersonalization (detached responses to clients and staff); and reduced personal accomplishment (decreased professional accomplishment). Using these

three areas to study job burnout among school psychologists, Huebner initially conducted a national survey in 1993 that revealed 25% of school psychologists reported emotional exhaustion, 3% reported feelings of depersonalization, and 12% reported reduced professional accomplishment. Huebner concluded school psychologists were at a higher risk for burnout than other school service providers. Building upon the previous survey, Huebner et al. (2002) re-conceptualized job burnout. This entailed an inappropriate match between the person and the job. The authors examined factors that could impact risk and resilience to job burnout, such as demographic factors and personality. They also examined organizational risk factors: interpersonal conflicts, crisis situations, obstacles to job performance, time management, legal mandates, insufficient recognition, and professional enrichment. The last category examined factors related to school psychologists' roles: role conflict (competing job demands), role ambiguity (loss of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities and role overload (e.g., too many job demands and task complexity), and "fit" between the person and job.

In 2010, Curtis, Castillo and Gelley conducted a national study of school psychologists as mandated by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) every five years. This study examined demographics and professional practices among 2,885 full-time school psychologists employed in public schools, private schools, universities, private practice, and hospitals. All school psychologists surveyed were NASP members (Curtis et al., 2012). A number of demographic trends were reported. First, there has been a significant shift in the number of women who have entered the field. The study reported approximately 76.6% of full time school psychologists are

female with the change in gender occurring between 1980 and 1981. Another trend is the change in the average age of school psychologists. Overall, the mean age of school psychologists is 47.4 years. The authors hypothesize this could lead to a possible shortage of school psychologists in the near future. However, the racial makeup of school psychologists has remained relatively the same over the last 30 years with nine out of every ten school psychologists identified as Caucasian. The racial make-up of school psychologists sharply contrasts with the racial and cultural identities of the students they provide services to. The student to school psychologist ratio is another trend that was indicated to have changed. The ratio of students to school psychologists declined from a mean ratio of 1,482:1 to 1,383:1 during the 2009-2010 school year. Only 43.6% of the school psychologists surveyed are employed in school districts where the ratio is equal to or less than the NASP recommendation.

The study examined professional practices (e.g., consultation and collaboration, individual and group counseling, intervention development and delivery, systems-wide level services, in-services for school staff and parents, data decision making, psycho-educational evaluations, and 504 plan development). While NASP policies endorse a shift to a public health and service delivery model, survey results revealed individual and group counseling is not taking place among the majority of the psychologists surveyed. According to the report 80% to 90% of school psychologists reported they did not engage in group counseling. School psychologists reported only spending 5.8% of their work time engaged in individual counseling (Curtis et al., 2012). As with counseling, school psychologists only spent approximate 8% of their work time participating in intervention

development. While school psychologists spent 33% of their time involved in systems-level service development, they spent less than 4% of the time actually engaged in delivering these services to students. In addition, school psychologists spent up to 20% of their time involved in the promotion of school-wide, research-based academic and social emotional interventions while 16% of their time was spent involved in consultation. The average amount of time spent in providing in-services to school staff was 2.8% while presentations to parents were only 0.8%.

Survey results indicate that school psychologists still continue to spend the majority of their time involved in special education evaluations (47%) even though the number of evaluations conducted has declined over the last ten years. The authors reported school psychologists continued to spend more than half of their work time engaged in special education activities. Though federal and state laws have mandated changes in the role of school psychologists from evaluation to intervention-based delivery, the authors stated the study did not reveal reasons for why there has been no significant change in school psychologists' roles. The authors recommend further investigation and research into this area. One area the authors recommend research is in the area of context and professional practices. They cite Curtis, Hunley and Grier's (2004) research that revealed the lower the student-to-psychologist ratio, the more likely the school psychologist will engage in intervention, and counseling-based practices. This is reported to be an important factor as the projected number of school psychologists due to retire or leave the field due to the "aging" of the field is likely to occur within the next

ten years. The authors state the trends that were revealed in their study should be more closely examined, especially as it relates to professional practices.

While this study presents important data on demographic and professional practices, there are limitations due the number of school psychologists who participated in the study. As with other studies, the number of school psychologists who are NASP members only makes up a small percentage of school psychologists who practice in the United States. The percentage of school psychologists who participated in the study only equaled 20% of the total NASP membership.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants in this study are full-time school psychologists in the State of Illinois. A total of 100 school psychologists will be contacted using an on-line survey platform. Initially, school psychologists who participate in the school psychology doctoral program at Loyola University and who work full time in an Illinois school district will be recruited to participate. A letter explaining the purpose of the survey will be distributed. Using the snowball sampling method these school psychologists will be asked to contact five more psychologists. In turn, these psychologists ask other psychologists to participate. The on-line survey will be available on www.surveymonkey.com and will be anonymous. This means respondent's IP addresses will not be saved. An explanation of the survey and its purpose will be posted as part of the survey. An incentive will be offered to respondents who complete the survey. They will have an opportunity to win gift cards per survey rules.

Survey Discussion

The purpose of this survey is to determine how school psychologists define overall job satisfaction. The survey is comprised of 18 questions that were developed as a result of the literature review on job satisfaction. Questions 6 and 10-18 are demographic questions that cover gender, age, ethnicity, level of education, years of experience,

number of assigned schools, ratio of students to psychologist, and membership in professional organizations. The responses to these questions will address research question number 4, which addresses the relationship between demographic variables and job satisfaction. Demographic question 16 will also address research question number 5, which asks if there is a difference between working in urban or suburban school districts. Demographic question 17, which asks how many schools a psychologist is assigned, addresses research question 3, which asks if there is a relationship between the numbers of schools assigned and job satisfaction. Survey question 1 asks respondents to choose reasons for wanting to become a school psychologist. On question 3 psychologists are asked to indicate which environmental factors may impact satisfaction with work, such as adequate work space, school climate, and availability of resources. These questions are related to research question 2 which asks which indicators are related to job satisfaction. Survey question 2 asks respondents to list the percentage of time spent on a list of activities at their assigned schools (e.g., eligibility and IEP conferences, assessments, consultation and collaboration, direct service, problem solving teams, crisis intervention, behavioral and academic interventions, progress monitoring, data collection and analysis, report writing). This will provide answers to research question number 2, which asks about reported indicators that define job satisfaction among school psychologists. Survey question 4 asks if respondents receive ongoing professional support. This question addresses research question 2. Research question 2 is also addressed by examining responses to questions 6 and 7. Survey question 6 asks school psychologists to provide positive points about working in their profession while question 7 asks school

psychologists to provide challenges. Survey question 8 asks respondents to rate their overall job satisfaction in their current positions. Research question 1 will be addressed by these responses.

Procedures

In the state of Illinois there are approximately 2,006 licensed school psychologists. Of this number, 1,555 school psychologists work in public schools (NASP, 2004). School psychologists travel between schools and do not have the opportunity to meet regularly with other colleagues unless they attend association conferences and professional developments where they may come in contact with other psychologists. Since school psychologists provide a small research sample that is not easily available, a methodology that provides the greatest possible number of respondents was considered.

Snowball sampling is a methodology for selecting hard-to-reach and other hidden populations. Salganik (2006) described snowball sampling as the selection of individuals from the target population who comprise the “seeds” that initiate contact with other members of the target group. Subsequent contacts with other group members results in “waves” of participants. While this approach is useful for special populations that are not easily accessible and is low in cost, there are limitations, such as sample bias. Researchers who employ this method are limited in their ability to control how the initial respondents choose members of the targeted group.

Atkinson and Flint (2001) discuss the advantages and disadvantages of snowball sampling. Like Salganik, the authors consider snowball sampling as an efficient, effective

and low-cost approach that produces results in a short period of time. Sample results can be used to examine changes over time while collecting in-depth data on a specific research question. These advantages are off-set by problems of the sample representativeness (e.g., the sample representing the target population), initiation of the chain referral, and involving respondents in the research process as informal research assistants. Despite these limitations, snowball sampling is a sampling method that has been determined to be most effective in contacting hard-to-reach populations. This sampling method will be used to contact potential research participants.

Some school districts do not allow release of information by their employees. This prevents the use of school district email addresses and the means to contact school psychologists. Therefore, in order for school psychologists to participate in this survey, contact will take place in a manner that will not violate school districts' policies while maintaining anonymity of the respondents.

Analytical Techniques

Sampling Analysis

A sampling analysis of approximately 100 licensed school psychologists will be conducted in the state of Illinois. Job satisfaction is the dependent variable that will be studied. Demographic variables to be studied as they relate to job satisfaction are age, gender, ethnicity, educational degree, years of experience, annual salary, work setting, number of assigned schools, ratio of students to psychologist, and percent of culturally and ethnically diverse students who receive direct and indirect services. Other variables that will be studied are reasons for becoming a school psychologist, percent of time spent

on job duties (e.g., assessments, report writing, problem solving meetings, conferences, direct interventions, therapeutic service, consultation/collaboration), environmental factors, and job support (e.g., mentoring, peer collaboration, supervision, professional membership).

Quantitative Data Analysis

Since the evaluation team will be comparing nominal data to determine correlation among data, a chi-square analysis will be conducted to determine if there are relationships among the data. For example, the analysis will assume that there is no relationship between allocation of school psychologists to one, two or three or more schools and participation on assigned school Response to Intervention (RtI) committees. Using chi-square analysis the evaluation team will determine if there is a statistical frequency that indicates a correlation among these variables.

An independent sample T-test will be used to compare two variables. Since we do not have the mean average of the entire population of school psychologists working in Illinois, variables such as gender, will be compared from the survey sample. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) will be conducted to determine whether the variables in the study have an effect on job satisfaction. The MANOVA will be utilized to determine if there are relationships among these multiple variables.

Qualitative Descriptive Analysis

A descriptive analysis will be conducted to determine whether what non-data sources impact job satisfaction among school psychologists in Illinois school districts. The survey provides respondents alternative responses for item 1; why one became a

school psychologist, item 2, other areas school psychologists spend time beside those listed; item 3, environmental factors that contribute to overall job satisfaction; item 4, other sources of support; item 6, positive attributes of the school psychology profession; and item 7, challenges within the school psychology profession.

Initially before survey data was gathered, the evaluation team indicated that a Chi-Square, T-test, and MANOVA would be conducted to analyze data. However, after analyzing data it was determined that the Spearman Correlation method would be more appropriate. This method was selected because it questions if there is a statistically significant relationship between survey participants' responses to two variables in the distribution. For the purpose of this project, the evaluation team studied the monotonic relationship between variables in the correlation which means that one variable increasing decreases the other.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

One hundred and one psychologists working in the state of Illinois responded to the survey. The survey was comprised of 18 questions that included demographic information, education, work setting and work conditions, percentage of time spent conducting various defined job duties, environmental factors, supervisory support and reasons for becoming a school psychologist.

The snowball sampling technique was used to gather respondents. Snowball sampling is a method of recruiting potential participants to a study or survey by acquiring subjects who, in turn, use their social network to acquire other participants. This approach is used with potential participants whom may be reluctant to participate or are not easy to access.

Survey Monkey was used to post the survey. Respondents were identified by number so that anonymity could be maintained. Names of respondents were automatically entered into a raffle for two 50 dollar gift certificates. A deadline was set for respondents to answer the survey. A total of 104 psychologists responded to the survey. Three of the surveys were not included in the responses. These surveys were not completed by the respondents.

Survey results revealed 74 of 101 respondents (73%) rated their level of job satisfaction as satisfactory to very satisfactory. Forty-seven psychologists (46.5%) rated

their job satisfaction as falling in the satisfied category. Twenty-seven respondents (26.7%) rated their jobs as falling in the very satisfied category. For all survey participants who responded as satisfied, 52 respondents (70%) were assigned one to two schools while 22 respondents (30%) were assigned three or more schools. Further breakdown of the data reveals 29 respondents (39%) were assigned one school, 23 respondents (31%) were assigned two schools, 10 respondents (14%) were assigned three schools, and only 12 respondents (16%) were assigned four or more schools.

Gender demographic information revealed 61 respondents (82%) were female and 13 respondents (18%) were male. Of the 74 school psychologists who reported overall job satisfaction, 41 psychologists (55%) worked in schools located in a suburban area, 17 psychologists (23%) worked in schools located in a rural area and 16 school psychologists (22%) worked in schools located in an urban area. Ethnicity of respondents fell into the following categories: 10-African American (14%); 5-Hispanic/Latino (7%); 1-Black and Hispanic (1%); 1-Asian/Pacific Islander (1%); 55-White/Caucasian (74%); 2-N/A (3%).

Ages of respondents varied. Fourteen respondents (20%) were less than 29 years, 26 respondents (35%) ranged in age from 30 through 39 years; 18 respondents (23%) ranged in age from 40 through 49 years; 10 respondents (14%) ranged in age from 50 through 69 years; and six respondents (8%) ranged in age from 60 through 69 years.

Among psychologists who reported overall satisfaction the following salaries were reported: 1-\$40,000 or less (1%); 24-\$40,000-\$60,000 (32%); 33-\$60,000-\$80,000 (45%); 16-\$80,000 or more (22%). Psychologists in the satisfied group reported the

following ratios of psychologist to students: 34 psychologists (46%) reported a ratio of less than 1:1000, 31 psychologists (42%) reported a ratio of 1:1000 to 1: 3000; four psychologists (5%) reported a ratio of 1:3000 to 1:5000; four psychologists (5%) reported a ratio of 1:5000 or more; and one psychologist (2%) reported “no response.” Twenty-six psychologists (35%) reported having less than five years of work experience; 11 psychologists (15%) reported 6 to 10 years of experience; 10 psychologists (14%) reported 11 to 15 years of experience; 12 psychologists (16%) reported 16 to 20 years of experience; nine psychologists (12%) reported 21 to 25 years of experience; five psychologists (7%) reported more than 25 years of experience and one psychologist (1%) provided no response. Of the psychologists who reported overall job satisfaction 54 respondents (73%) reported receiving administrative support while 20 respondents (27%) reported receiving no administrative support.

Education of satisfied respondents fell into the following categories: 42 respondents (57%) had an Ed.S.; 12 respondents (16%) had a M.A.; 7 respondents (9.5%) had a M.S., and 7 respondents (9.5 %) had a Ph.D.; 5 respondents (7 %) had an Ed.D.; and 1 respondent (1 %) had a Psy.D.

Most satisfied school psychologists reported being members of a professional organization. Fifty-one of 74 respondents (69%) reported being members of a professional school psychology organization.

School psychologists also indicated the racial and ethnic diversity of the student population they serve in their assigned schools. Three school psychologists (15%) reported their schools’ student population to be comprised of 90% to 100% racial and

ethnic minorities. Ten school psychologists (14%) reported 75% to 90% racial and ethnic minorities. Eighteen school psychologists (24%) reported 60% to 75% racially and ethnically diverse students. Six school psychologists (8%) reported their student body to be 45% to 60% racially and ethnically diverse and six school psychologists (8%) reported their student body to be 30% to 45% racially and ethnically diverse. Fifteen school psychologists (20%) reported the student body at their schools to be 15% to 30% racially and ethnically diverse. Finally, 22 school psychologists (30%) reported their schools to have no students of other racial/ethnic groups.

Correlations were obtained using the Spearman method of analysis. Salary produced a correlation of 0.08877604; gender produced a correlation of -0.23161100. The correlation of age and job satisfaction was 0.00279132. Schools assigned and job satisfaction produced a correlation of -0.28319701. Ethnicity and school satisfaction was a correlation of -0.04.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Overall Job Satisfaction

Of the 101 Illinois school psychologists who completed the survey 74 school psychologists reported being satisfied with their current jobs. Forty-seven school psychologists reported being satisfied while 27 school psychologists reported being very satisfied. Satisfied school psychologists reported a number of factors that contributed to maintaining satisfaction in their jobs. Overall, satisfied school psychologists reported helping and advocating for children, the work schedule, helping an underserved population and variety/flexibility of the job were the top four reasons for feeling satisfied. A further breakdown between satisfied (47 psychologists) and very satisfied (27 psychologists) was conducted. Reasons given by very satisfied psychologists were feeling they were making a difference at their school(s); pay is good; enjoy working with students; receive administrative support; positive collaborative relationship among psychologist, educators and school administration; resources; enjoys working in high school; strong assessment team; team members are culturally sensitive, innovative and put students first; flexibility to initiate programs; having the opportunity to take a leadership role in MTSS; receiving recognition for work; having an impact on children; and enjoying working in an urban environment (one psychologist).

Satisfied psychologists reported reasons such as having time to complete work tasks; being able to advocate for students and educators; positive interactions with students, family and colleagues; currently working at two schools but will be working at one school next year; allowed to pursue educational interests (assessment/interventions); flexibility and abundance of resources; supportive educators and assessment team members; and support from teachers and case managers.

There have been multiple studies including this one which explore job satisfaction among school psychologists and have found that majority of school psychologists are overall satisfied with their current position. Although this finding continues to hold true, it is important to examine factors among school psychologists in the dissatisfied category. In this particular study, 23% of school psychologists were dissatisfied, while 4% were very dissatisfied. Participants surveyed were asked to provide feedback to support their level of satisfaction. For those who provided responses in the dissatisfied and very dissatisfied group, lack of respect/not feeling supported and limited resources/more time to provide direct services were the top indicators for their level of dissatisfaction with their current position. Additionally, participants were asked about the challenges they encounter within the school psychology profession. The most frequent responses identified in the dissatisfied and very dissatisfied group included limited time/resources, large workload/caseload, and having a narrow understanding of the field by others. It is possible that these feelings of job dissatisfaction can be mitigated if participants within this group were able to increase the amount of time engaged in aspects of the job they

viewed to be attractive; this entailed three top responses: being able to advocate for children, consulting with staff and observing students' progress.

Indicators Defining Job Satisfaction

A review of the survey results revealed several indicators that contributed to overall job satisfaction among school psychologists. Satisfied school psychologists reported that they spend most of their time completing psycho-educational assessment, attending meetings, writing reports, and participating in consultations/collaborations. Respondents also stated that a combination of adequate work space, availability of resources, school climate, and administrative support are important environmental factors to their satisfaction. Most of the satisfied school psychologists are affiliated with a professional organization (e.g., ISPA or NASP) which could indicate that they are receiving continuing professional development; and are aware of the latest trends in the field. Only a small percentage of very satisfied school psychologists indicated working with culturally and ethnically diverse students. Furthermore, respondents reported their student ratio as being 1:3,000 or less, and typically work in rural and suburban settings. Salary varied among the group and ranged from \$40,000-\$80,000 a year.

Job Satisfaction and the Number of Schools Assigned

Throughout Illinois, school psychologists are assigned to one or more schools to provide service. Based on the results of the survey, there was a very small negative correlation (-.28) between the number of schools assigned to each practitioner and their level of job satisfaction. This suggests that there is no relationship between the two variables. However, because the coefficient is negative, there is an inverse correlation

indicating that as the level of job satisfaction increases, the number of schools assigned decreases. This was presumed by the study, but since the correlation is so small, a convincing relationship cannot be implied. Some of the variance may be due to the location of the respondents. The majority of participants (53%) practice in suburban school districts. There was only a small percentage (28%) of urban practitioners who participated in the study. Therefore, there was not as much variability in the data as anticipated.

Overall, most school psychologists reported being satisfied and 70% of those satisfied are assigned to one or two schools. Challenges listed by practitioners assigned to multiple schools were: lack of time per school, excessive meetings, difficulty in establishing relationships, heavy caseload, and being spread too thin. Attractive things about the field of school psychology were similar for those assigned to one school or multiple schools. In addition, the activities listed for practitioners were also very similar regardless of the number of schools assigned. Almost all school psychologists reported spending most of their time participating in eligibility/IEP meetings and conducting psycho-educational assessment.

Job Satisfaction and Selected Demographic Variables

For the purposes of this study, the following demographic variables were investigated: gender, age, ethnicity, level of education, and years of experience. Overall, the results indicated small correlations in relation to job satisfaction. Most of the respondents who completed the study were female which could indicate a shift in the field of school psychology. In the past, the field of school psychology was dominated by

males. Only a small percentage of males completed the survey which contributed to the negative correlation between job satisfaction and gender. The majority of survey respondents was between the ages of 30 to 39 and indicated a negative correlation as well. This could be due to not having a substantial amount of school psychologists complete the survey that vary in age.

Regarding ethnicity, predominately all of the survey participants were White/Caucasians which also yielded a negative correlation between the two variables. Only a small percentage of school psychologists from other ethnic backgrounds completed the survey. It could be predicted that there is lack of diversity within the school psychologists' community in Illinois. If this survey was distributed nationally among school psychologists, maybe the results would have indicated differently. In Illinois, all school psychologists are required to have a Master's degree to practice. Therefore, all respondents met this requirement. A small percentage of respondents have a doctoral degree. The level of years of experience as a school psychologist varied among the group and ranged from 6 to 25 years. There does not appear to be a correlation between years of experience and overall job satisfaction. Therefore, it is assumed that a school psychologist's overall job satisfaction is not dependent upon their years of experience.

Job Satisfaction in Urban and Suburban School Psychologists

School Psychologists work in diverse school settings which may include suburban, urban, and/or rural districts. For this study, 53% of participants work in suburban districts, 28% in urban districts, and 19% in rural districts. The majority of suburban practitioners (54%) reported being assigned to one school as opposed to 31% of

those in urban districts. Also, there were a higher percentage of those in urban districts who are assigned to three or four schools (44%) as compared to those in suburban districts assigned to three or four schools (17%). Even with the small percentage of respondents, the data suggests that more urban school psychologists are assigned to three or more schools. There was no difference in the variety of tasks completed by urban versus suburban practitioners.

As far as overall satisfaction, a higher percentage was reported by suburban school psychologists (76%) as opposed to those in urban districts (57%). However, the majority of both still reported being satisfied in their current position. There were not as many challenges identified by those in suburban districts who were assigned to one school. The main challenge reported from suburban school psychologists was not having many colleagues to consult with. Suburban practitioners enjoyed having more variety in their daily tasks and establishing good relationships with staff. Challenges listed by urban school psychologists were primarily focused on being assigned to multiple schools. Urban practitioners valued working with at-risk and underserved children, as well as advocating for families.

Administrative Support and Job Satisfaction

When exploring the relationship between having administrative support and job satisfaction among school psychologists, majority of the participants in this study who were satisfied also indicated receiving administrative support. To answer the above research question, those surveyed were required to either respond “yes” or “no” to whether he/she received administrative support (e.g., building principal) within their

school building(s). Responses to this question were calculated into percentages for the satisfied and dissatisfied group. Fifty-four percent responded “yes” and 20% responded “no” for the satisfied group and twenty-one percent responded “yes” and 6% responded “no” for the dissatisfied group. These findings appear to be consistent with previous studies, which indicate administrative support as being one of several important factors associated with the level of satisfaction experienced by school psychologists. However, having administrative support in general does not automatically equate with job satisfaction, especially since majority of the participants in the dissatisfied group indicated having received administrative support.

Future Implications

Overall, the survey results indicate school psychologists continue to express satisfaction with their career choice. When comparing results to the NASP national survey conducted ten years ago, overall job satisfaction has remained steady in the field. This suggests school psychology continues to provide a viable and satisfying career choice. However, since the majority of respondents worked in a suburban or rural settings (e.g., 41 (55%) suburban setting; 17 (23%) rural setting), additional research should be conducted in urban settings to determine if there are similar results in job satisfaction.

Although there was a difference in the level of job satisfaction experienced by participants, there were some similarities noted when exploring the attractive and challenging aspects of the school psychology profession. Both groups agreed that advocating for children was an attractive role related to the job, while limited time and resources was viewed as a challenging component. Given this likeness, why is one group

more satisfied than the other? To answer this question, school psychologists in the satisfied group might value advocating for children over the lack of time and resources available to do their job. In other words, it is possible that they do not allow this challenge to become a hindrance from doing the work they enjoy the most or it leads to their fulfillment in the profession. Conversely, participants who were dissatisfied with their current position may consider time and resources as being more valuable than advocating for children. Another interpretation is that school psychologists in this category perhaps feel more respected if they had adequate time and resources, which will allow them to perform the aspect of their job that attracted them to the profession. Irrespective of the differences and similarities found among the overall group, it is unrealistic for all school psychologists to experience the same level of job satisfaction. However, it might be meaningful to further explore indicators and investigate strategies that will help increase feelings of job satisfaction among those identified in the dissatisfied group.

The demographic make-up of school psychologists in Illinois appears to be shifting. According to the research data, the field of school psychology is changing in regards to sex. Historically, this profession was dominated by men; however, more women are entering the field of school psychology. Furthermore, based on the data, the field of school psychology is attracting younger individuals into the field; whereas in the past, school psychologists were generally older. Lastly, a significant amount of school psychologists reported being affiliated with a professional organization (e.g., ISPA or NASP). This is relative because it can be assumed that more school psychologists are

receiving continuing professional development and staying conversant with the latest trends in the profession.

Survey results revealed the majority of respondents identified as Caucasian (55 school psychologists = 74%). Data indicates that the field of school psychology is practiced mostly by Caucasian females in the state of Illinois. Results suggest African Americans, Hispanics, and other ethnic groups are not applying to and participating in university school psychology programs. Recruitment of racial and ethnic minorities to the field of school psychology needs to be examined as ethnic and racial minorities continue to make up a small portion of practicing school psychologists. Due to the diverse population of students that school psychologists serve, there should be more minorities reflected in the profession. Students in public middle and high schools may not be exposed to career options such as psychology and its related fields. In order to recruit minorities to school psychology, schools need to consider presenting the school psychology field as a viable option. For example, holding a school career fair where school psychologists can speak about the field is one way to expose students to educational psychology as a career choice.

Previous studies concluded that the school psychologist to student ratio was improving. Although most districts exceed the NASP recommendation of 1000:1, some districts appear to be hiring more school psychologists to accommodate the student population. Based on this study, urban districts appear to be behind this trend. There were a higher percentage of school psychologists in urban districts that reported being assigned to three or more schools. This implies that there would also be a higher student to

practitioner ratio. There are more challenges that arise by being at multiple schools. Respondents reported difficulty establishing rapport and relationships due to limited time. As school psychologists, building relationships is an important piece of an effective practice. It is also crucial that school psychologists are visible within a school to be available to consult with staff and serve the entire student body. In addition, practitioners are limited to the tasks that they are able to complete when there is limited time. School psychologists are highly trained individuals who are able to offer a variety of skills to school districts. In the field, there has been a push to provide more Tier 1/Universal supports to the entire school body. This is very difficult to do when you are assigned multiple schools and/or you serve a large student body. It is imperative that all school districts acknowledge the need hire more practitioners in order to fully meet the needs of the student population.

As the findings revealed, majority of the participants who were satisfied with their current position also reported that they received administrative support. However, of the participants who were dissatisfied with their current position, majority indicated having received administrative support as well. If having administrative support is considered to be a vital component linked to job satisfaction, one might assume that all school psychologists in this study who acknowledged to receiving administrative support should be satisfied with their current position. A possible explanation for this variance in job satisfaction between the satisfied and dissatisfied group could be the type of administrator who provided the support. Did participants in this study who responded “yes” to receiving administrative support receive support from a school psychologist with an

administrative background or a higher degree, an assistant principal, a principal, or department chair? It is possible that participants were satisfied with their current position because they received administrative support from a qualified individual. While those in the dissatisfied group received administrative support from an administrator who lacked formal training or knowledge about the school psychology profession, resulting in feelings of frustration. An additional reason for the difference in job satisfaction experienced between these two groups is the level of administrative support that was provided. How extensive was the support delivered by administrators or what did it entail? Through the administrative support offered, did school psychologists feel valued, connected, and empowered? Harvey and Struzziero (2008) identified some ways in which administrators can foster job satisfaction among school psychologists. One variable in promoting job satisfaction is the amount of emotional support provided by administrators; this includes aiding school psychologists in establishing a positive social environment, providing encouragement to develop peer networks within their schools, promoting their involvement in professional organizations, and showing appreciation/respect. Another significant factor that should be considered when examining job satisfaction is the physical environment. Administrators should ensure that working conditions for school psychologists are suitable. The last variable in facilitating job satisfaction is through job enrichment; to increase greater satisfaction, administrators might consider giving school psychologists more autonomy and/or higher level responsibilities (Harvey & Struzziero, 2008). Given these previously mentioned influential factors, future studies might want to further explore the nature of

administrative support provided to school psychologists as well as what that level of support actually entails.

APPENDIX A

EMAIL PRELUDE TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST SURVEY

Dear School Psychologist,

For our dissertation study, we are searching for full-time school psychologists in the state of Illinois to complete an online survey regarding job satisfaction. The goal of this dissertation research project is to examine and compare related factors that impact job satisfaction among school psychologists working in Illinois.

An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subject research at Loyola University Chicago reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete, and it can be completed from any mobile device with Internet connection (phone, tablet, laptop/computer). **Please note the survey will close on Wednesday, April 28, 2015.**

To thank you for your participation, following completion of the survey please email schoolpsych.project@gmail.com with your contact information for an opportunity to win one of two \$50 gift cards to Target!

If you are willing to complete the survey, please click on the following link to the survey: **<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VKQ9GRR>**

Please forward this email to practicing full-time school psychologists you know currently working in Illinois schools. Thank you for your time and consideration.

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPANTS

Purpose of the Study: School psychologists have a wealth of education and training in various areas. Often times their skills are not deployed because of multiple encountered obstacles including issues related to limited resources, time, and space, having several school assignments, large student ratios, hefty psychological assessment caseloads, excess paperwork, a lack of support from district/department/building administrators, political agendas, etc. It is possible that the previously mentioned challenges, which have the potential to minimize involvement in other relevant domains, could have a negative impact on job satisfaction among school psychologists. The goal of this dissertation research project is to examine and compare related factors that impact job satisfaction among school psychologists working in Illinois.

What will be done: You will complete an anonymous survey, which will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. The survey includes questions related to your practice as a school psychologist.

Benefits of this Study: You will be contributing to knowledge about your practice in relation to job satisfaction among school psychologists. As a result, there could be positive results for the profession.

Risks or discomforts: There are no foreseeable risks beyond what is experienced in everyday use of the internet. If you currently have a relationship with the researcher(s) or are receiving services from Loyola University Chicago, your decision to participate or not will have no effect on your current relationship or current services. If you feel uncomfortable with any questions, you can withdraw from the study. If you decide to quit at any time before you have finished the questionnaire, your answers will NOT be recorded.

Compensation: To thank you for your participation, following completion of the survey you will have the opportunity to enter a drawing to win one of two \$50 gift cards to Target! If you choose to enter the drawing, then the researchers will have knowledge that you participated in the study (but no knowledge of your responses). After data collection is finished, the drawing will be conducted. Winners will receive the gift certificate via e-mail.

Confidentiality: Your responses will be kept completely confidential. We will NOT know your IP address when you respond to the online survey. Upon completion of the survey, there will be an email address provided for you to enter yourself in the drawing for the gift certificate. Only the researchers will see your individual survey responses.

Decision to quit at any time: Your participation is voluntary; you are free to withdraw your participation from this study at anytime. If you do not want to continue, you can simply leave this website. If you do not click on the "submit" button at the end of the survey, your answers and participation will not be recorded. The number of questions you answer will not affect your chances of winning the gift certificate.

How the findings will be used: The results of the study will be used for scholarly purposes only. Because we will ask you about a number of different aspects of your profession, it is likely that we will use your data to address multiple questions regarding school psychologists and job satisfaction.

Contact information: If you have concerns or questions about this study, please contact Nicole Billings (nbillings@luc.edu), Noni Coleman (ncoleman2@luc.edu), Marian Gandy (mgandy@luc.edu), or Rhonda Rutherford (rrutherford@luc.edu).

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

By beginning the survey, you acknowledge that you have read this information and agree to participate in this research with the knowledge that you are free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

APPENDIX C
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST SURVEY

1. What inspired you to become a school psychologist? (Please select all that apply.)

- Advocating on behalf of all students
 - Help/work with under-served populations
 - Follow in the footsteps of a family member
 - To promote academic, career, personal, and/or social development
 - Research/implement learning programs
 - Work schedule/time off
 - Salary/benefits/pension
- Other (please specify)

2. On a weekly basis, how much time do you spend doing? (Cannot exceed 100%)

| | 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Psychological Assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Psychological Assessment 10 | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Psychological Assessment 20 | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Psychological Assessment 30 | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Psychological Assessment 40 | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Psychological Assessment 50 | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Psychological Assessment 60 | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Psychological Assessment 70 | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Psychological Assessment 80 | | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Psychological Assessment 90 | | | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Psychological Assessment 100 | | | | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report Writing 10 | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report Writing 20 | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report Writing 30 | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report Writing 40 | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report Writing 50 | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report Writing 60 | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report Writing 70 | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report Writing 80 | | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report Writing 90 | | | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report Writing 100 | | | | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Progress Monitoring | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Progress Monitoring 10 | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Progress Monitoring 20 | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Progress Monitoring 30 | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Progress Monitoring 40 | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Progress Monitoring 50 | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Progress Monitoring 60 | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Progress Monitoring 70 | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Progress Monitoring 80 | | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Progress Monitoring 90 | | | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Progress Monitoring 100 | | | | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Problem Solving Meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Problem Solving Meetings 10 | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Problem Solving Meetings 50 | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Problem Solving Meetings 80 | | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Problem Solving Meetings 90 | | | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Problem Solving Meetings 100 | | | | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Conferences (Assessment Planning, Eligibility, Annual, 504, and Three Year Reevaluations) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Conferences (Assessment Planning, Eligibility, Annual, 504, and Three Year Reevaluations) 10 | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Conferences (Assessment Planning, Eligibility, Annual, 504, and Three Year Reevaluations) 20 | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Conferences (Assessment Planning, Eligibility, Annual, 504, and Three Year Reevaluations) 30 | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Conferences (Assessment Planning, Eligibility, Annual, 504, and Three Year Reevaluations) 40 | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Conferences (Assessment Planning, Eligibility, Annual, 504, and Three Year Reevaluations) 50 | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| Conferences (Assessment Planning, Eligibility, Annual, 504, and Three Year Reevaluations) 100 | | | | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intervention | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intervention 10 | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intervention 20 | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intervention 30 | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intervention 40 | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intervention 50 | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intervention 60 | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intervention 70 | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intervention 80 | | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intervention 90 | | | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intervention 100 | | | | | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Therapeutic Service (individual and group therapy) 0 | Therapeutic Service (individual and group therapy) 10 | Therapeutic Service (individual and group therapy) 20 | Therapeutic Service (individual and group therapy) 30 | Therapeutic Service (individual and group therapy) 40 | Therapeutic Service (individual and group therapy) 50 | Therapeutic Service (individual and group therapy) 60 | Therapeutic Service (individual and group therapy) 70 | Therapeutic Service (individual and group therapy) 80 | Therapeutic Service (individual and group therapy) 90 | Therapeutic Service (individual and group therapy) 100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Consultation and Collaboration 0 | Consultation and Collaboration 10 | Consultation and Collaboration 20 | Consultation and Collaboration 30 | Consultation and Collaboration 40 | Consultation and Collaboration 50 | Consultation and Collaboration 60 | Consultation and Collaboration 70 | Consultation and Collaboration 80 | Consultation and Collaboration 90 | Consultation and Collaboration 100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tier 1 Activities 0 | Tier 1 Activities 10 | Tier 1 Activities 20 | Tier 1 Activities 30 | Tier 1 Activities 40 | Tier 1 Activities 50 | Tier 1 Activities 60 | Tier 1 Activities 70 | Tier 1 Activities 80 | Tier 1 Activities 90 | Tier 1 Activities 100 |

Other (please specify) _____

3. What environmental factors, if any, contribute to your overall job satisfaction? (Please select all that apply.)

- Adequate work space/work conditions
- Availability of Resources (i.e., office supplies and testing materials)
- School Climate

Other (please specify) _____

4. Have you or are you currently receiving support in any capacity from the following? (Please select all that apply.)

- Professional Membership (e.g., ISPA or NASP)
- Peer Collaboration
- Mentoring Opportunities
- Supervision from an experienced psychologist and/or administrator

Other (please specify) _____

5. Do you receive administrative support (e.g., building principal) within your school building(s)?

- Yes
 No

6. What is the percentage of culturally and ethnically diverse students who are receiving services?

- none
 1-15
 15-30
 30-45
 45-60
 60-75
 75-90
 90-100

7. What are the attractive things about the school psychology profession?

8. What are the challenging things about the school psychology profession?

***9. Overall, how satisfied are you with your present position?**

- Very Dissatisfied
 Dissatisfied
 Satisfied
 Very Satisfied

Please indicate the reason(s) for your response

10. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

11. What is your age?

- 29 or younger
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-69
- 60-69
- 69 or older

12. What is your ethnicity? (Please select all that apply.)

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- White / Caucasian
- Prefer not to answer

13. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Ph.D.
- Psy.D
- Ed.D
- M.A.
- M.S.
- Ed.S

14. What are your years of experience as a school psychologist?

- <5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21-25

>25

15. What is your annual salary?

40,000 or less

40,000 to 60,000

60,000 to 80,000

80,000 or more

16. What is your primary work setting?

Rural

Suburban

Urban

17. How many school are you assigned?

1

2

3

4 or >

18. What is your approximate school psychologist to student ratio?

Less than 1:1000

1:1000 - 1:3000

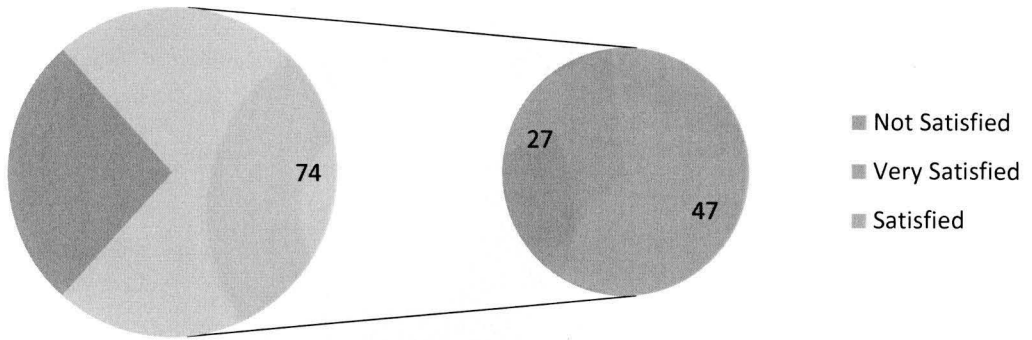
1:3000 - 1:5000

1:5000 or more

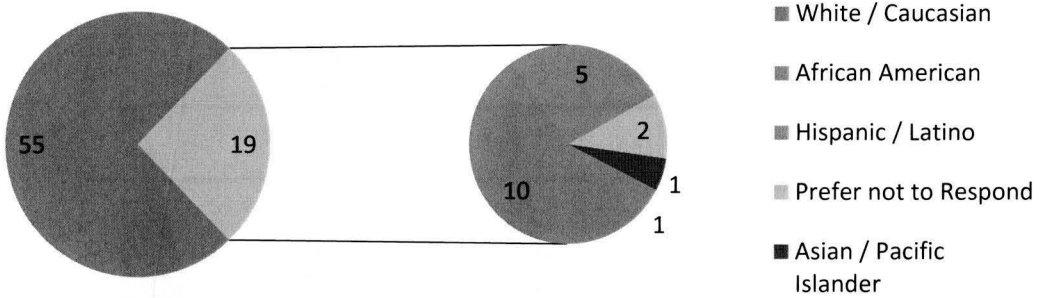
APPENDIX D

TABLES AND GRAPHS

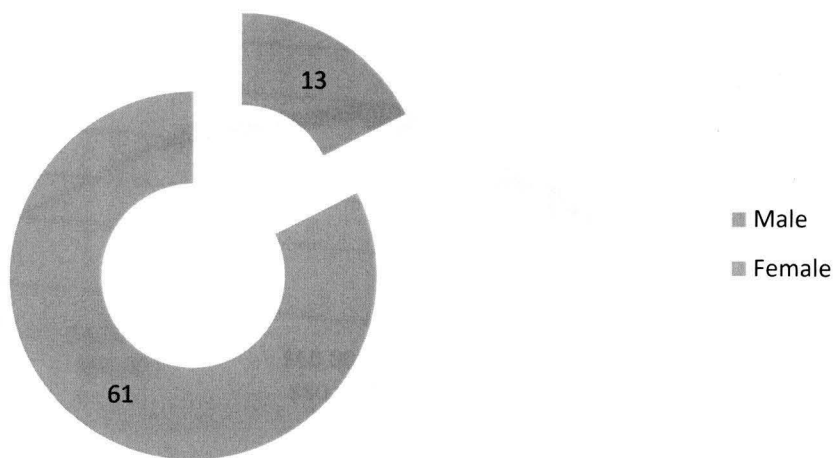
Overall Job Satisfaction



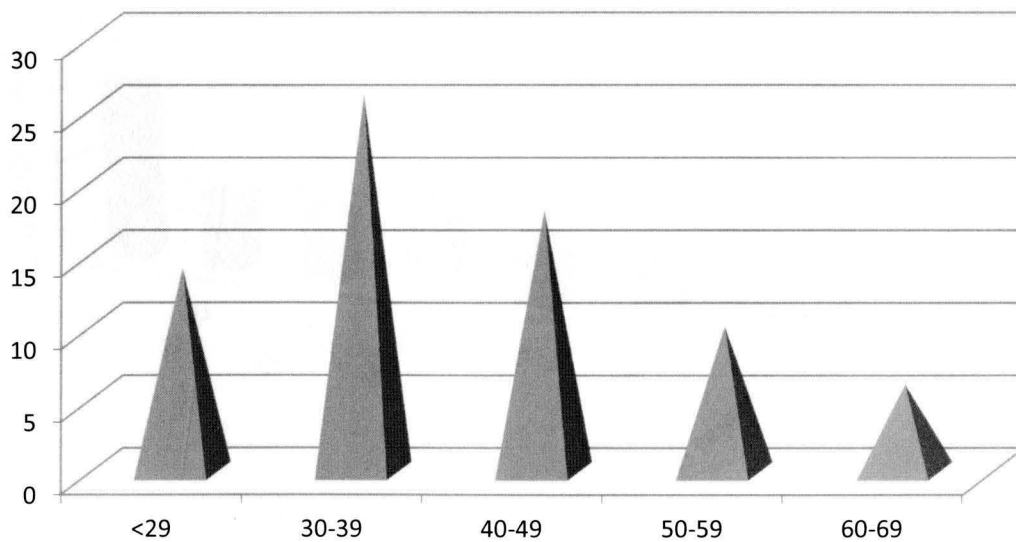
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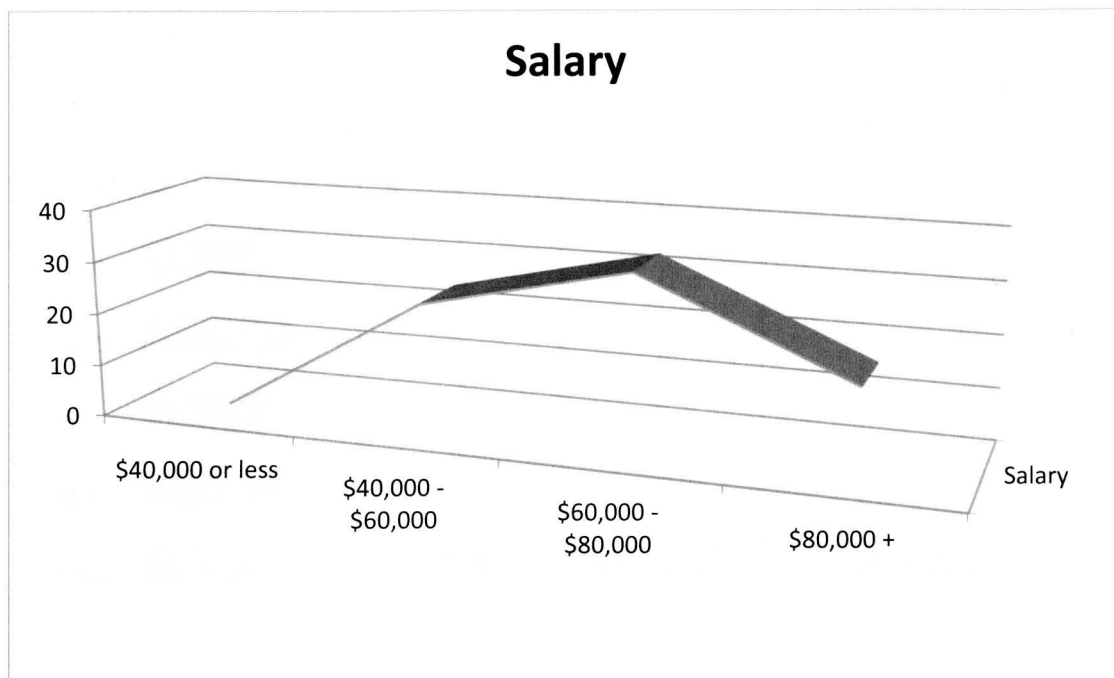


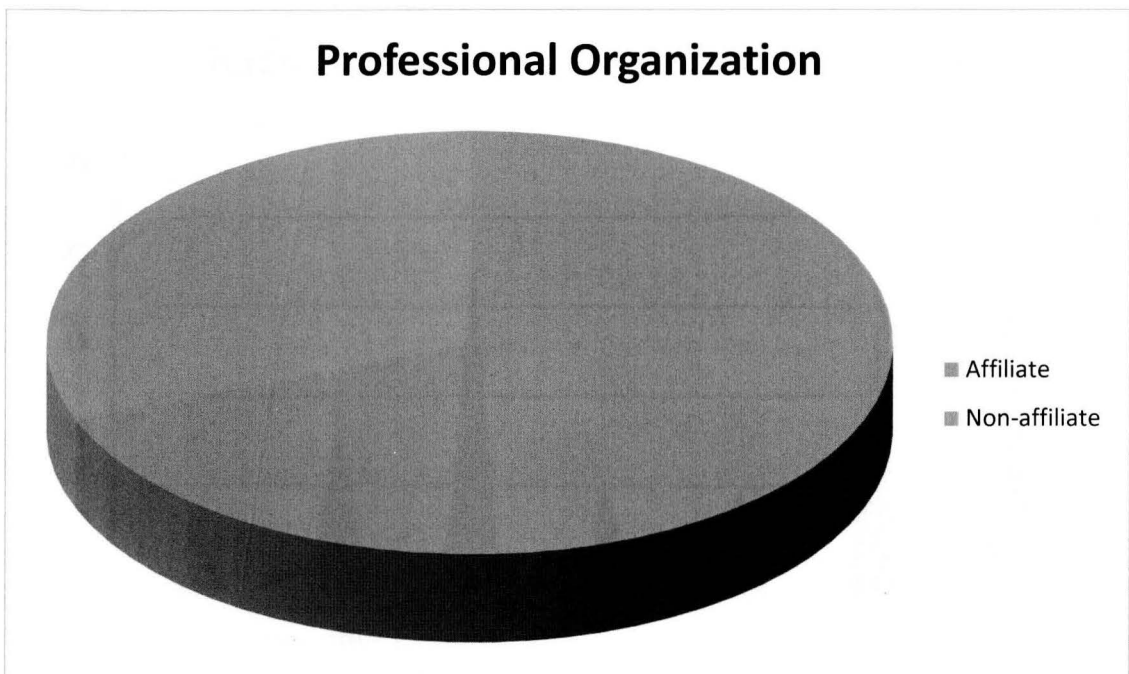
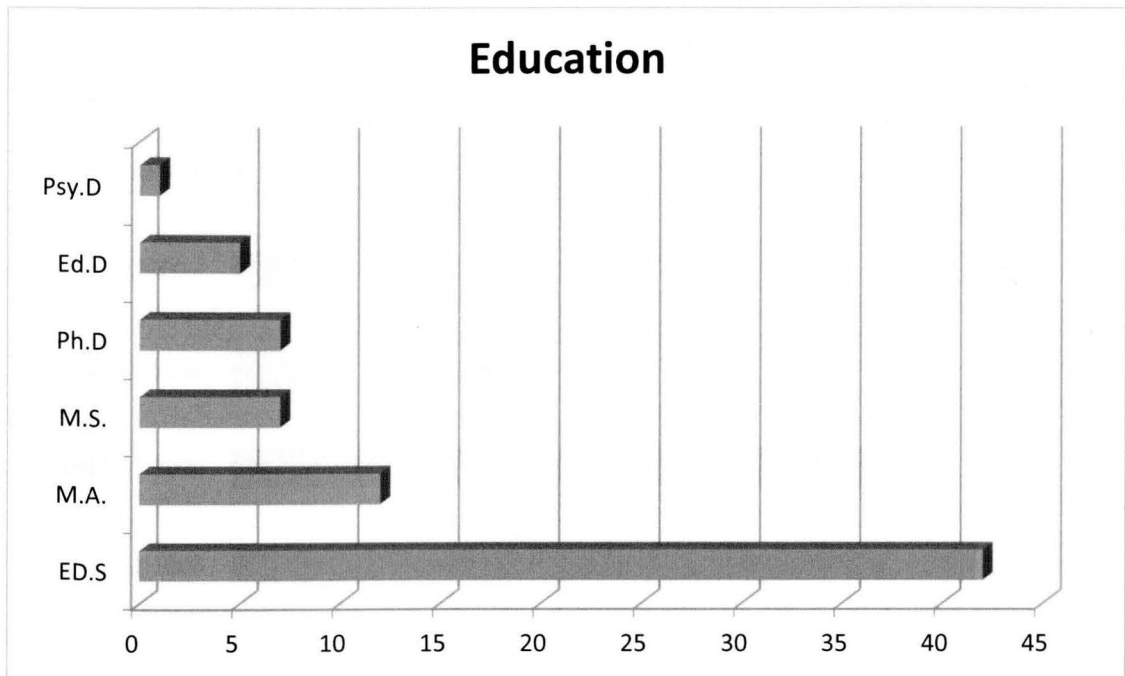
Gender

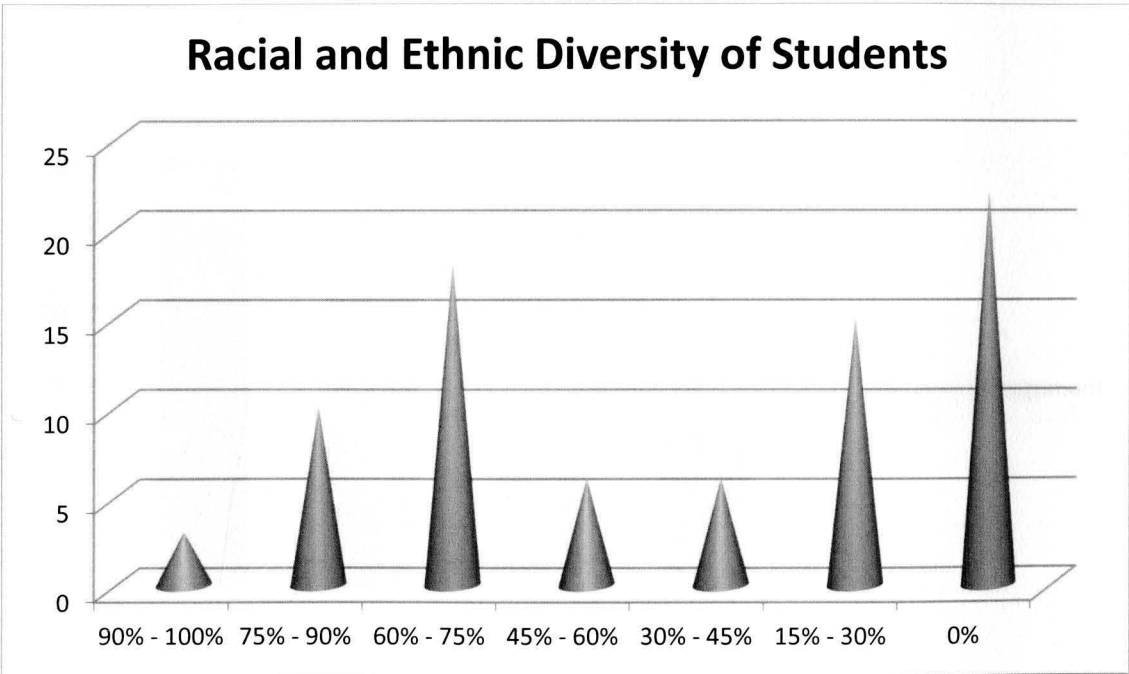
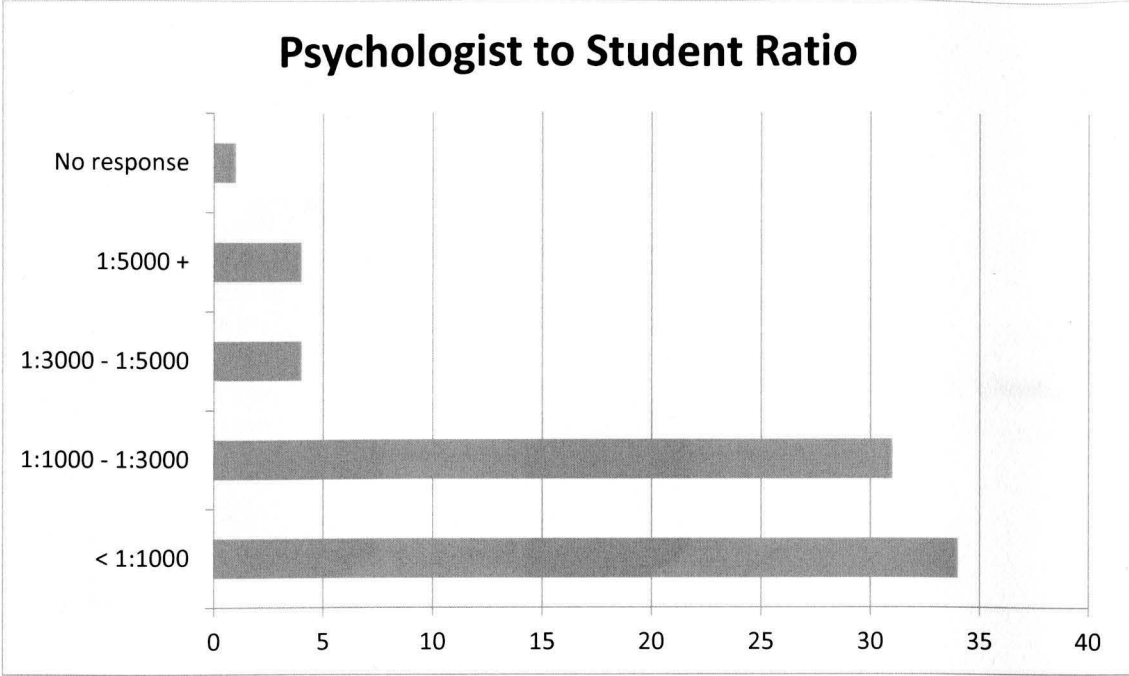


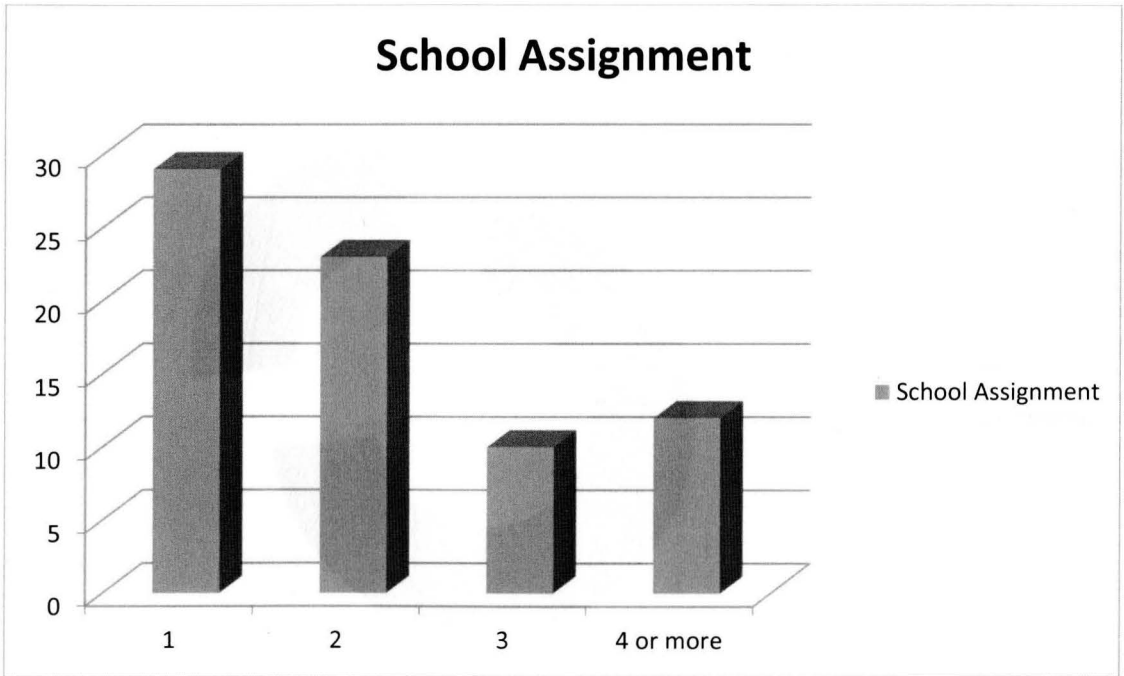
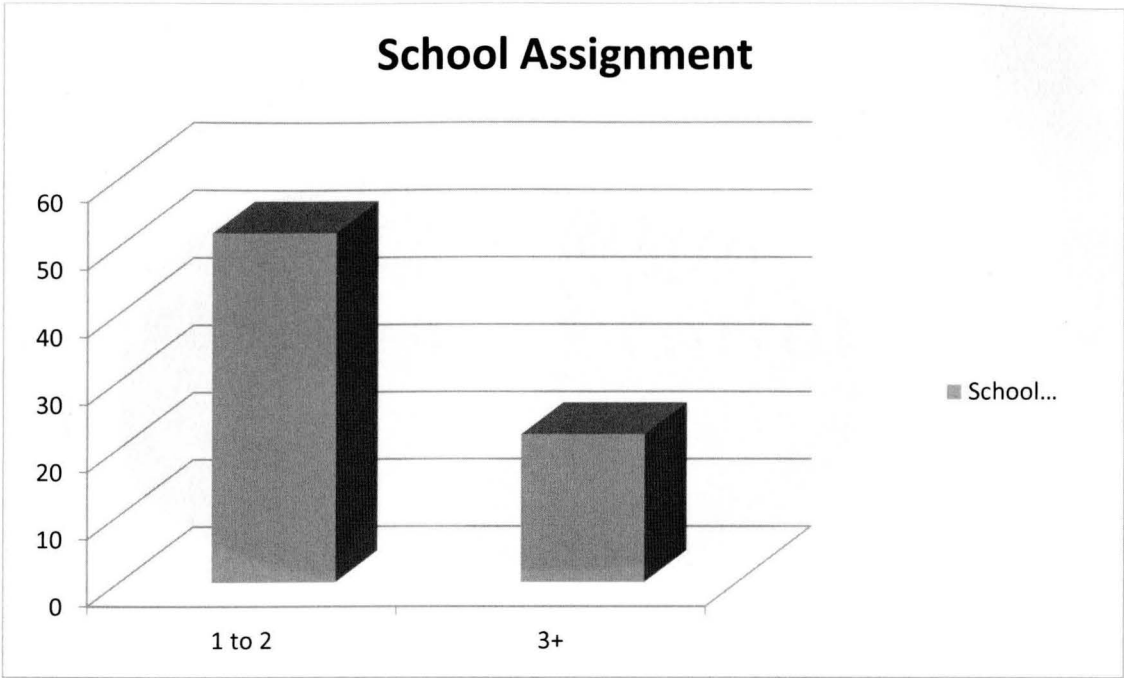
Age



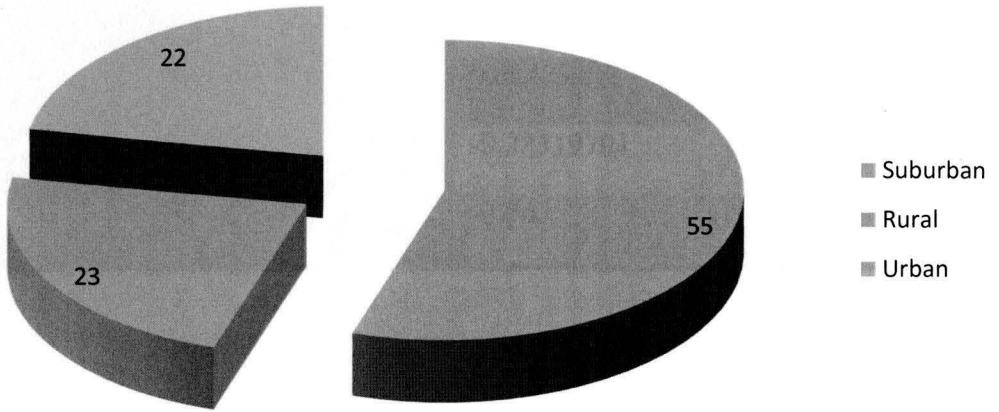








Primary Work Setting



Administrative Support



Correlations with Job Satisfaction

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Salary | 0.08877604 |
| Gender | -0.23161100 |
| Age | 0.00279132 |
| Schools Assigned | -0.28319701 |
| Ethnicity | -0.04 |

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VITAE

Nicole Billings

Nicole Billings was born in Chicago, Illinois on April 13, 1982. She is the third born child of Elmore Billings III and Linda Billings. She attended Holy Angels Catholic School for her elementary years in Chicago. Nicole graduated from Maria High School in 2000. She then attended National Louis University for six years, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology in 2004 and a Masters of Arts in Psychology in 2006. In 2008, Nicole enrolled at the Chicago School For Professional Psychology where she received an Ed.S. Degree in School Psychology. After working as a school psychologist for two years, Nicole decided to further her educational development as a school psychologist and enrolled at Loyola University of Chicago to pursue her Ed.D.

Nicole completed her school psychologist internship in District 89 which serves the following cities in Illinois: Maywood, Melrose Park, and Broadview. It was during her internship, where Nicole became interested in the Response to Intervention process and she played a vital role in the development of their program. Upon completion of her internship, Nicole became employed by Chicago Public Schools as a full-time school psychologist. She has worked at Chicago Public Schools for four years in this position. Currently, Nicole is assigned to three schools which included two elementary schools and a high school. While working at the high school (Ray Graham Training Center High School), Nicole's interest peaked for working with students diagnosed with low incidence

disabilities. Being a school psychologist is very rewarding to Nicole because she is able to advocate for students' academic and social-emotional development especially minority children.

Noni Coleman

Noni Jamila Coleman, an only child and the daughter of Nathaniel Julius Coleman (deceased) and Nancy Bodrick Coleman, was born on February 24, 1976 in Chicago, Illinois.

Upon completing her primary and secondary education with the Chicago Public School and parochial school system, Noni attended Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1998, she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology. Following her undergraduate studies, Noni obtained a master's level social work degree from the University of Chicago in 2002. Subsequently, Noni attended the Chicago School of Professional Psychology where she earned an Education Specialist degree in School Psychology.

Aside from serving in the social service field in various arenas including residential facilities, mental health agencies, and the juvenile justice system, Noni completed a social work internship with Thornton Township District 205. In 2002, Chicago Public Schools District 299 hired Noni as a school social worker. She functioned in this role for nine years before making her transition as a school psychologist in 2010. After completing her internship with the same district, Noni finished her tenure with the Chicago Public School system as a school psychologist in 2014. Currently employed with

Thornwood High School District 205, Noni continues to serve in the capacity of a school psychologist.

Noni's value of education coupled with her passion for children has fueled her journey in this line work. Her goal has always been and continues to center around utilizing her acquired formal learning experiences to provide all students with the necessary skills sets in order that they may be successful academically and in life in general. A contributing factor in achieving this overarching goal is the training provided to her by Loyola University Chicago, for which she will always be grateful.

Marian Gandy

Marian Gandy was born on April 26, 1982 in Chicago, Illinois; the third and youngest child to Ellis and Jerry Gandy. She currently resides in Evergreen Park, Illinois with her four year old son. Marian attended and graduated from St Benedict Elementary School in 1996 and Maria High School in 2000. She completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology in 2004. In 2008, Marian earned a Master in Arts from National-Louis University. While attending Loyola University of Chicago, Marian earned a Master of Education in 2009 and an Educational Specialist degree in 2011.

After spending a year at home with her son, Marian began her professional career as a school psychologist in 2012, working for Chicago Public Schools. Throughout her career, she has remained within CPS and has worked in early childhood Centers, as well as elementary and high schools. Currently, Marian is assigned to four elementary schools: Cassell, Keller, Lavizzo, and Caldwell. At each school, there is an established

professional relationship with staff and students. Consultation and collaboration are essential daily components to Marian's practice, cooperatively with assessment and direct service. In addition, MTSS Tier I and Tier II individual and group services are provided by Marian at Cassell.

After some discussion with her previous school program director and further consideration, Marian entered Loyola University's new Ed.D. in 2013. This program combined Marian's aspiration of having a doctorate with her passion for advancing her career and learning more about the field of school psychology. Marian's professional interests include early intervention (MTSS), early childhood assessment, as well as developing social skills and positive self-image in young minority girls.

Rhonda Rutherford

Rhonda Rutherford was born on January 7, 1954 in Manhattan, New York City, New York to Marilyn Joyce Tevens and Ernest Rutherford, Jr. Rhonda attended and graduated from the Philadelphia High School for Girls in 1972. She attended undergraduate school at Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from 1972-1975. Rhonda moved to Chicago, Illinois in 1990 and completed her bachelor's degree in 1994-1995 in International Studies. Rhonda began working as a special education teacher in 1997 for Chicago Public Schools. She attended Dominican University, River Forest, Illinois from 1997 through 2000 where she received a Masters' of Science in Special Education.

Rhonda began working as a special education teacher in instructional and resource settings for the Chicago Public School system. In 2008, Rhonda completed an

endorsement in math at University of Chicago. Rhonda worked with students in the inclusion setting. In 2009 Rhonda was appointed to be the case manager at Gale Academy. Rhonda coordinated all staffings, eligibility, IEP and 504 conferences, and maintained records. During this period, Rhonda entered the school psychology program at the Chicago School for Professional Psychology. She completed the program in June, 2011 and began working as a school psychologist in November, 2011.

Rhonda currently works as a school psychologist at Nicholas Senn High School and Joyce Kilmer Elementary School. She participates on the MTSS/BHT committee at Kilmer Elementary School. Rhonda works with the MTSS coordinators in conducting data reviews and recommending academic and behavioral interventions to teachers working with students in Tier II and Tier III. Rhonda is co-facilitating a trauma group pilot project (Bounce Back) with the Kilmer school social worker. She is working with the special education department chair to establish MTSS at Senn High School. In addition to providing direct services to students, Rhonda has been active in promoting restorative practices at her schools.

Rhonda became interested in participating in the Ed.D. program at Loyola University as a way to expand her knowledge base and practice of school psychology. While her special interest is multi-tiered services and supports, Rhonda is also interested in how school psychologists view the field. This research study was initiated as part of her desire to improve working conditions for school psychologists so they may improve students' academic and behavioral outcomes.

DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROJECT APPROVAL SHEET

The Doctoral Research Project submitted by Nicole Billings, Noni Coleman, Marian Gandy, and Rhonda Rutherford has been read and approved by the following committee:

Lynne Golomb, Ed.D., Director
Clinical Assistant Professor, School of Education
Loyola University Chicago

Michael Boyle, Ph.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor and Director at the Andrew M. Greeley Center for Catholic Education, School of Education
Loyola University Chicago

Diane Morrison, Ed.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor, School of Education
Loyola University Chicago

The final copy has been examined by the director of the Doctoral Research Project and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the Doctoral Research Project is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The Doctoral Research Project is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

March 16, 2016

Date

Lynne R. Golomb

Director's Signature