Factors influencing Jordanian and Saudi Arabian teacher decisions to pursue the principalship: a comparative study

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Factors influencing Jordanian and Saudi Arabian teacher decisions to pursue the principalship: a comparative study

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The present study was carried out to gain a better understanding of how teachers in Jordan and Saudi Arabia view the principalship and identify factors that influence teachers’ candidacy to pursue a position as principal. Study participants comprised 800 teachers who worked in public schools in Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Participants rated 2 out of 10 factors that were identified as being motivators for pursuing the principalship as ‘high level’: ‘personal and professional challenges’, and ‘desire to be a leader’. Four of 10 factors that were identified as being deterrents for teachers to avoid a position as principal were rated with ‘high level’: ‘highly stressful’, ‘large time commitment’, ‘accountable for achievement’ and ‘amount of paperwork’. There were no significant differences among participants according to their country of origin. The researchers recommend that future research should be conducted on different variables.

Keywords: leadership; management; school effectiveness; principalship

Introduction

Schools are under constant pressures to meet parents’ expectations, develop skilled workers, adapt to changes in technology and compete with the growing popularity for private education. No longer can the principal simply serve as the building manager. Even though school leaders must still address personnel issues, balance budgets, maintain school discipline, and see that transportation and food services are operating correctly, they must now also serve as educational leaders that help teachers strengthen skills, rally students towards higher academic achievement, analyse test data and meet a multitude of other new challenges for the twenty-first century.

Research on entering the principalship position has identified factors that influence educators to pursue a career in administration. A common factor identified is the desire to make a difference for others. The desire to have a positive influence on students and teachers and be a leader are motivating factors for gaining administrative licensure (Kossack 2006; Schutte 2003). Harris et al. (2000) suggested that potential candidates are most favourably attracted to the principalship due to a desire to have a positive impact, make a difference, and the personal and professional challenges associated with the job. These aspiring administrators are
motivated by intrinsic aspects that will allow them to contribute to education in a
positive manner, according to Harris et al. (2000). Other studies have identified the
desire to influence education and improve student achievement as reasons for
entering the principalship (Cranston 2007; Hancock, Black, and Bird 2006; Pounder
and Merrill 2001). Even though studies indicate that individuals most often seek the
position to make a positive impact on education, the importance of increased
compensation cannot be overlooked. The position’s salary and benefits have also
been indicated as motivators (Hancock, Black, and Bird 2006; Harris et al. 2000;
Pounder and Merrill 2001).

Moore (1999) discussed factors that would motivate educators to seek a principal-
ship position in addition to factors that would deter them from applying for principal
positions. Commonly reported factors serving as motivators are the ‘internal or
psychic satisfaction one receives from one’s work, such as the desire to make a
difference, the personal and professional challenge, the ability to initiate change, and
to have a positive impact on students, staff and the community’ (4). Similarly, the
National Education Association (1997) indicated that individuals frequently pursue
careers in administration due to many of the same motivating factors that caused
them to choose teaching as a career.

Hancock, Black, and Bird (2006) attempted to identify factors that motivate
teachers in seeking principal positions by surveying 329 students enrolled in an
administration degree programme in North Carolina. Based on responses from
participants in the study it was suggested that factors such as the desire to experience
professional and personal challenges and the ability to have a positive impact on
others were very influential factors.

Pounder and Merrill (2001) surveyed 170 middle-school principals and assistant
high school principals from one western state. Findings from the study revealed that
potential candidates were attracted to the principalship due to the need to achieve and
influence education and the increase in salary and benefits. Likewise, in Cranston’s
(2007) Australian study, involving both city/urban and rural assistant principals,
results suggested that people choose to enter the principalship because of a desire to
influence the lives and learning of young people, have more strategic influence on
education and a wish to work with diverse individuals and groups.

A 2000 study by Malone, Sharp, and Thompson (2000) examined the perceptions
of elementary, middle and high school principals in Indiana to gather information
about the positive features associated with their jobs. Survey results indicated that
75.2% of the responding principals stated they like the contact with the students.
The opportunity to impact students received the second highest rating, 72.8%, from
the responding principals. The chance to make a difference in teaching and having
positive input in the direction of the school were also noted as favourable aspects of
the job.

Findings by Harris et al. (2000) indicated several influencing factors that motivate
educators to become school leaders. Data acquired by surveying 151 students
enrolled in four university principal preparation programmes signified that the most
important motivating factors were having a positive impact, making a difference, and
the personal and professional challenges involved in school administration.

In an analysis of entering principalship positions, key factors surfaced as the
most common deterrents for applying for principal positions. The most frequent
The most common reason identified by educators for not applying for the principalship is the lack of sufficient compensation: many principal candidates believe it just does not pay enough (Cranston 2006, 2007; Cushing, Kerrins, and Johnstone 2003; Cusick 2003; Ferrandino 2001; Gilman and Lanham-Givens 2001; Hancock, Black, and Bird 2006; Hargadine 2002; Howley, Andrianaivo, and Perry 2005; Malone, Sharp, and Thompson 2000; McCreight 2001; Olson 1999; Shen, Cooley, and Wegenke 2004). Research by Pijanowski, Hewitt, and Brady (2009) suggests that money is not enough to compensate for the stress and working conditions for the job.

The second most common factor identified was the overwhelming number of tasks involved with the principalship; there are too many demands and responsibilities to justify accepting a job as principal. Even though the principal’s primary task is serving as the school’s instructional leader, the multitude of managerial tasks often makes it very difficult, if not impossible (Cranston 2006; Cushing, Kerrins, and Johnstone 2003; Cusick 2003; Ferrandino 2001; Gilman and Lanham-Givens 2001; Hancock, Black, and Bird 2006; Howley, Andrianaivo, and Perry 2005; Malone, Sharp, and Thompson 2000; Moore 1999; Shen, Cooley, and Wegenke 2004). Lieberman and Miller (2005) discussed that schools are asked to do more with less and principals are struggling to serve as the instructional leaders at the same time as they face overwhelming management issues. Principals are trying to lead schools where there is a common feeling of anxiety, stress and confusion.

The third most common reason for not pursuing the principalship is the amount of time required. The long hours are scaring potential applicants away. Principals on average work over 50 hours per week. In addition to working a full day, principals must be present for evening and weekend activities (Cushing, Kerrins, and Johnstone 2003; Hargadine 2002; Howley, Andrianaivo, and Perry 2005; Malone, Sharp, and Thompson 2000; McCreight 2001; Moore 1999; Newton 2001; Olson 1999; Shen, Cooley, and Wegenke 2004). Demands of the job in terms of stress and time make the move to the principalship undesirable according to Arthur, Mallory, and Tekleselassie (2009). Being the principal means being on call at all times. In addition to regularly scheduled evening and weekend activities, principals may be called day or night. The principal is called when the school’s alarm goes off or the school is vandalised. Being the principal means meeting the emotional and physical demands of students, teachers and parents and still not neglecting the needs of your own family at home (Ruder 2006).

Another factor as reason for a lack of interest in the position of principal was: the job is too stressful. This factor comes from a vast array of areas and can manifest itself in health problems if the principal is not careful (Cushing, Kerrins, and Johnstone 2003; Ferrandino 2001; Hargadine 2002; Howley, Andrianaivo, and Perry 2005; Malone, Sharp, and Thompson 2000; Newton 2001; Olson 1999). Examining the dimensions of job stress among principals, Olayiwola (2008) surveyed 100 principals from all 937 public secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. In regard to demographic differences, the findings indicated that principals are experiencing stress regardless of gender, experience, school type or location. Whitaker (1996) surveyed 107 principals from one western state to examine which elements of administration most contribute to burnout. In-depth interviews were conducted with 13 principals who scored high in both emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation. Respondents in the study indicated that emotional exhaustion was a significant problem, resulting
from daily work pressure, or emotional overload. Fragmented time, increased paperwork, budget cuts and greater expectations from the public and central administration were common problems identified in the study. Principals who were surveyed complained of heart problems, difficulty sleeping, high blood pressure and marital problems as being common consequences of the job. According to studies by NAESP, 1 out of every 10 principals surveyed had been involved in a civil lawsuit due to playground accidents, disciplinary action or other work-related activities (Ferrandino 2001).

There is too much accountability. This factor can be in the form of increased responsibility for student achievement or pressure from the media or other outside interest groups (Barty et al. 2005; Cranston 2006; Cusick 2003; Gilman and Lanham-Givens 2001; Hargadine 2002; McCreight 2001). Harris et al. (2000) found in a study of 151 students enrolled in principal preparation programmes at four universities that a large number of the reported deterrents to entering the principalship are directly related to the current era of accountability, such as paperwork and bureaucracy, increased time commitments, potential litigation and pressures from standardised testing. Increasing litigation and the continued national move towards high-stakes testing of students have clearly increased the burden of accountability. Unfortunately, the majority of this burden falls directly on the principal.

There is too much pressure from parents (Barty et al. 2005; Cusick 2003; Hargadine 2002; Malone, Sharp, and Thompson 2000; Moore 1999). Family life suffers from the long hours and time away from home (Cranston 2006; Cusick 2003; Howley, Andrianaivo, and Perry 2005; Kolek 2002). Hancock, Black, and Bird (2006) attempted to identify the motivators and inhibitors that impact teachers’ decisions to pursue the principalship by surveying 357 students enrolled in a Master of School Administration degree programme in North Carolina. Respondents indicated that they had been discouraged by family members when considering the principalship. According to research by Schutte (2003), both male and female principal candidates indicate that the principalship’s perceived negative impact on their families is a major barrier to pursuing the principalship.

There is a lack of support from the central office (Howley, Andrianaivo, and Perry 2005; Kolek 2002; McCreight 2001). Over 81% of the respondents indicated that the amount of support from the district office was the most important factor to consider when entering the principalship (Cooley and Shen 1999). According to Cusick (2003), principals in the Michigan study repeatedly stated that their district office does not support them in disputes with parents.

The literature points towards a dominance of extrinsic factors, such as the work environment, workload or impact on personal life as being deterrents to application for the principalship (Harris et al. 2000; Shen, Cooley, and Wegenke 2004). Therefore, it has been suggested that the position be restructured to make the job more appealing to those intrinsic and service-oriented educators who seek the principalship (Harris et al. 2000; Shen, Cooley, and Wegenke 2004). Recommendations have been made to school boards, such as increasing salaries, reducing paperwork, shrinking bureaucracy and providing greater support (Harris et al. 2000; Shen, Cooley, and Wegenke 2004).

Placing more emphasis on curriculum and less on managerial duties, increasing the support services and increasing the principal’s authority are additional suggestions found in the literature (Moore 1999). Other evidence suggests that
some school districts are considering assigning co-principals to schools which would share responsibilities both during the regular day and after school. In essence, one person would not be required to provide direct oversight for all aspects of the school (Houston 2000; Pounder and Merrill 2001).

**Problem statement**

Unless educators and leaders gain a better understanding of how teachers view the principalship and develop ways to make the position more attractive, education districts will continue to have trouble filling vacancies with highly qualified principals. Therefore, it is important to determine what factors influence a qualified teacher candidate to enter the principalship. Therefore, the following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the motivating factors that influence teachers to pursue a position as principal?
2. What are the deterrent factors that influence teachers to avoid a position as principal?
3. Are there any statistically significant differences in motivating factors among teachers according to their country?
4. Are there any statistically significant differences in deterrent factors among teachers according to their country?

**Significance of the study**

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of how educators view the principalship and identify factors that influence a principal candidate to pursue a position as principal. Findings from this study can be used by educational district superintendents, principal preparation programme directors, educational leaders and other individuals responsible for making decisions about training, staff development and recruitment of school principals. This information can help identify ways to magnify the attractants to the profession and better restructure the job to encourage more qualified educators to pursue the principalship.

**Methodology**

This study was quantitative and conducted through utilising a research instrument that has been shown to assess how teachers view the principalship and identifies factors that affect their decision to apply for principal vacancies in Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

**Participants**

Participants for this study comprised 800 educators who were currently serving as teachers for public schools but were not currently in an administrative position, in Zarqa education district, Jordan (400), and Makkah education district, Saudi Arabia (400) for the first semester of the academic year 2011–2012. The Survey was sent to teachers in Zarqa education district, Jordan, and Makkah education district, Saudi
Arabia. With 758 questionnaires returned, the response rate was 94.8%. An analysis of the quantitative data involved using SPSS.

**Instrumentation**

The *Survey of motivating and deterring principalship* was used to collect data for this study. Items for the survey were mainly developed from literature related to the subject (e.g. Pijanowski, Hewitt, and Brady 2009; Cranston 2006, 2007; Hancock, Black, and Bird 2006; Howley, Andrianaivo, and Perry 2005; Shen, Cooley, and Wegenke 2004; Cushing, Kerrins, and Johnstone 2003; Cusick 2003; Hargadine 2002; Ferrandino 2001; Gilman and Lanham-Givens 2001; McCreight 2001; Harris et al. 2000; Malone, Sharp, and Thompson 2000; Olson 1999). The survey consisted of two parts: motivating factors and deterring factors. Part one identified 10 items that motivate teachers to principalship (e.g. personal and professional challenges; desire to be a leader; self-actualisation or desire to reach potential); and part two of the survey was 10 items that were designed to gather information about specific factors that serve as deterrents to the principalship (e.g. highly stressful; requires a large time commitment; is highly accountable for student achievement). The responses were collected using a five-point Likert-type scale. The scale includes: Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Undecided = 3, Disagree = 2 and Strongly Disagree = 1.

For indication of validity, the face and content validity of the survey was established through testing it with eight scholars with expertise in educational administration, and research and evaluation (four from Jordan and four from Saudi Arabia); they were consulted in a content validity analysis of experts to select and modify items to form the pretest survey.

Regarding the reliability of the survey, an internal consistency procedure (to estimate the consistency across the items) was used. A pilot study of 30 participants had been conducted. Those participants did not participate in the final study. The instructions were clear and all of the items of the instrument functioned in an appropriate manner. The values of alpha (the internal consistency coefficient) for the two factors of the survey were as follows: motivating factors was 0.85, and 0.85 for deterring factors. The previous values can be considered reasonably satisfactory to achieve the objectives of the current study. Changes recommended by the validation panel and those identified as needed during the pilot test were incorporated into the instrument. These changes occurred in the wording of few items, indicating that the *Survey of motivating and deterring principalship* has good reliability and validity.

**Data analysis**

The data were analysed using the SPSS software package for educational studies. Statistical treatments involved frequencies; means and standard deviation were employed to answer the first and second questions. *T*-test was employed to answer the third and fourth questions in order to examine whether there are statistically significant differences in means between participants regarding country of origin.

In order to understand the results of the current study, it was important to set specific cut points to interpret the participants’ total scores related to their motivating and deterring factors. Regarding the cut points, it should be noted that the researchers used the response scale of each item that ranged from 1 to 5 to
determine these cut points according to the following manner: 1–2.33 = low, from 2.34 to 3.67 = moderate, and 3.68–5.00 = high levels.

Results of the study

Research Question 1: What are the motivating factors that influence teachers to pursue a position as principal?

Means were computed for each of 10 factors that were identified as being motivators for the principalship. The responses indicated that the most important motivating factor towards the principalship was for the personal professional challenges ($M = 4.28$) of the job, closely followed by the desire to be a leader ($M = 4.11$). The desire to reach potential or self-actualisation was the third most cited motivating factor ($M = 3.49$), the desire to have a strategic influence on education ($M = 3.48$) was fourth, and the desire to broaden career options ($M = 3.41$) was fifth. Increased salary ($M = 3.38$) was sixth, stepping stone for a higher job ($M = 3.35$) was seventh and being encouraged by colleagues ($M = 3.24$) was the eighth highest rated factor. The two factors that respondents least agreed with as motivators were the desire to work with diverse groups ($M = 3.16$) and status and prestige ($M = 2.75$). Responses are shown in Table 1.

Research Question 2: What are the deterrent factors that influence teachers to avoid a position as principal?

Means were computed for 10 factors that were identified as being deterrents for pursuing the principalship. Table 2 displays descriptive statistics for factors that deter candidates from applying for principal positions. The highest reported factor was related to the job being highly stressful ($M = 4.09$). The second highest reported factor was the large time commitment ($M = 3.86$), closely followed by accountability for student achievement ($M = 3.84$). The amount of paperwork ($M = 3.76$) was fourth and insufficient compensation ($M = 3.46$) was the fifth highest rated deterrent. Too much responsibility ($M = 3.38$) was rated sixth, societal problems ($M = 3.04$) was seventh, and negatively affects family life was rated eighth with a mean of 2.94. The deterring factor that received the lowest rating by respondents was lack of district support with a mean rating of 2.46.

Table 1. Means and standard deviation of motivating factors that influence teachers to pursue a position as principal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Personal and professional challenges</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Desire to be a leader</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>0.956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Self-actualisation or desire to reach potential</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>0.512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Desire to have a strategic influence on education</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Desire to broaden career options</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Increased salary and benefits</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Stepping stone for a higher position</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>0.651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Encouraged by a principal or colleagues</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Desire to work with diverse individuals and groups</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Status and prestige of administration</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 3: Are there any statistically significant differences in motivating factors among teachers according to their country?

Table 3 shows no significant differences in the motivating factors among teachers according to their country (Jordan, Saudi Arabia).

Research Question 4: Are there any statistically significant differences in deterrent factors among teachers according to their country?

Table 4 shows no significant differences in the deterrent factors among teachers according to their country (Jordan, Saudi Arabia).

Table 3. $T$-test for equality of means of teachers in motivating factors by country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>$t$-Value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Personal and professional challenges</td>
<td>JO</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>0.827</td>
<td>0.409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Desire to be a leader</td>
<td>JO</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>0.964</td>
<td>-1.553</td>
<td>0.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>0.946</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Self-actualisation or desire to reach potential</td>
<td>JO</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.524</td>
<td>-0.483</td>
<td>0.630</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.501</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Desire to have a strategic influence on education</td>
<td>JO</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>-1.237</td>
<td>0.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Desire to broaden career options</td>
<td>JO</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.998</td>
<td>2.551</td>
<td>0.111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Increased salary and benefits</td>
<td>JO</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.848</td>
<td>-2.901</td>
<td>0.054</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>0.731</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Stepping stone for a higher position</td>
<td>JO</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>0.665</td>
<td>-0.651</td>
<td>0.515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>0.638</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Encouraged by a principal or colleagues</td>
<td>JO</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>0.714</td>
<td>0.878</td>
<td>0.380</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.735</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Desire to work with diverse individuals and groups</td>
<td>JO</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.746</td>
<td>1.525</td>
<td>0.128</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>SA</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.782</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Status and prestige of administration</td>
<td>JO</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>-2.949</td>
<td>0.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: JO, Jordan; SA, Saudi Arabia.
Discussion and conclusions

Participants were asked to rate 10 factors that were identified as being motivators for pursuing the principalship. Two of these factors, personal and professional challenges, and the desire to be a leader were strong motivating factors scoring with ‘high levels’. Eight of these factors, self-actualisation, strategic influence on education, desire to broaden career options, increased salary, stepping stone for higher job, encouraged by colleagues, desire to work with diverse groups, and status and prestige had a ‘moderate level’ as motivating factors.

Participants were asked to rate 10 factors that were identified as being deterrents for pursuing the principalship. Four of these factors /C1 highly stressful, large time commitment, accountable for achievement, and amount of paperwork /C1 were rated as ‘high level’. Six factors /C1 insufficient compensation, too much responsibility, societal problems, negatively affects family life, negative parents and community, and lack of district support /C1 were rated as ‘moderate level’.

Behind any effective school lies quality school leadership. Research has identified sustained quality school leadership as the primary component of successful schools. There has been increasing attention as to who will lead our schools in the twenty-first century, and what are the factors that motivate and discourage educators in pursuing the principalship (Pijanowski, Hewitt, and Brady 2009). Better understanding of what motivates and deters educators to pursue the principalship is vital for making decisions about recruitment and retention of educational leaders in the future.

Jordanian and Saudi Arabian teachers who participated in this study reported that the personal and professional challenges associated with school leadership were the

| Table 4. T-test for equality of means of teachers in deterring factors by country. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. | Practice | Country | Mean | SD | t-Value | Significance |
| 1 | Highly stressful | JO | 3.97 | 1.42 | -2.670 | 0.081 |
| 2 | Requires a large time commitment | JO | 3.85 | 1.00 | -0.140 | 0.889 |
| 3 | Is highly accountable for student achievement | JO | 3.52 | 1.20 | -2.768 | 0.321 |
| 4 | Involves an enormous amount of paperwork | JO | 3.78 | 1.04 | 0.402 | 0.688 |
| 5 | Insufficient compensation | JO | 3.44 | 1.18 | -0.445 | 0.656 |
| 6 | Too much responsibility | JO | 3.64 | 1.19 | 2.819 | 0.542 |
| 7 | Societal problems make it difficult to focus on instruction | JO | 3.16 | 1.21 | 2.660 | 0.076 |
| 8 | Negatively affects administrator’s family life | JO | 2.88 | 0.354 | -2.764 | 0.363 |
| 9 | Negative influences by parent and community groups | JO | 2.81 | 0.452 | -2.086 | 0.213 |
| 10 | Lack of support from the educational district | JO | 2.44 | 0.558 | -1.387 | 0.166 |

Note: JO, Jordan; SA, Saudi Arabia.
number one reason for pursuing a school leadership position. This motivating factor was closely followed by the desire to be a leader and self-actualisation. This finding is supported by Moore (1999) who indicated that those aspiring to the principalship identified factors associated with internal satisfaction from one’s work, such as personal professional challenges, as high-priority motivators.

The number one factor that participants chose for not becoming a school principal was high stress. The second and third most reported deterrents were time commitment and accountability. All of the top three could be viewed as interrelated. It can be concluded that educators view the principalship as extremely stressful with unrealistic time and accountability expectations. These findings are supported by Pijanowski, Hewitt, and Brady’s (2009) study that also identified testing/accountability pressures, job stress and time commitment as the top three reasons for not becoming a school administrator. The highly stressful nature of the job is mentioned frequently in the literature as a deterrent to entering the principalship (Cushing, Kerrins, and Johnstone 2003; Ferrandino, 2001; Hargadine 2002; Howley, Andrianaivo, and Perry 2005).

Salary was found to be only the fifth highest reported deterring factor in this study. This finding is in contrast to Cooley and Shen (1999) and Cusick (2003) who found that salary was one of the top factors that aspiring principal candidates consider when applying for an administrative position.

In addition to that, the explanation of no significant differences in the motivating and deterrent factors among teachers according to their country (Jordan, Saudi Arabia) can be related to the similar habits and traditions as Arabian societies. Also, both countries have approximately similar educational systems.

Implications

Many school districts are heeding the need to restructure or redefine current leadership roles in order to attract more qualified applicants to the principalship. Distributed leadership has gained in popularity. This concept of multiple leaders could develop into the new model of leadership for the twenty-first century in which multiple individuals lead the school (Arthur, Mallory, and Tekleselassie 2009). This model of collaborative leadership or ‘split model of school governance’ in which two principals at the same school assume different roles could increase the pool of potential applicants.

A shift from the traditional assistant principal/principal model to a model of managers and instructional leaders may be needed (Cushing, Kerrin, and Johnstone 2003).

Principal preparation programmes must better prepare aspiring principals to deal with the increase in stress, time commitment, accountability and other overwhelming tasks that they will undergo on a daily basis. University preparation programmes may accomplish this task by ensuring that sufficient training opportunities are available through internships or other real-life opportunities.

Principals must be given realistic job descriptions that do not lead to diminished health and family life. Next, adequate time must be available to place emphasis on curriculum and less on managerial tasks. Also, school leaders must offer monetary incentives that attract talented candidates. To assist with recruitment and retention, school districts must work to identify and recruit quality aspiring educators and then allow for ongoing professional development focused on student learning.

Additional solutions for attracting quality principals, as suggested by Ferrandino (2001), involve providing adequate staffing to meet school needs and eliminating the link
between principal tenure and student performance on standardised tests. Ferrandino (2001) also suggested that, after teachers with leadership ability are identified and actively recruited, districts need to create an equitable compensation formula based on preparation, experience and responsibility that will encourage teachers to apply.

Arthur, Mallory, and Tekleselassie (2009) suggested more adequate staffing such as additional clerks or classified employees could be hired to reduce the management duties of the principal and allow for more leadership opportunities. Reducing many of the routine tasks and duties that engulf principals could allow them more capacity to make a difference.

In order to attract and retain bright and talented principal candidates, school leaders must offer salaries and benefits that better match the responsibilities of the principalship. Additional incentives for excellent performance and other rewards such as time off or other advanced training would also be helpful.

There is no simple solution to this problem. In order for significant changes to occur in schools, there must be a major change in society and the way the public sees the role of the principal. Only when the principal has adequate time and expertise to serve as the instructional leader will we see real school reform take place.

Recommendations

- Conduct a qualitative study of a similar nature in Jordan and Saudi Arabia to determine whether the factors discovered in this study are consistent with this quantitative study.
- Perform a national study in Jordan and Saudi Arabia, to examine the perceived success of alternative leadership models, such as using co-principals, in the recruitment and retention of principals.
- Perform a study examining the perceived stress of principals and the success of their schools in making adequate yearly progress.
- Explore other variables that could motivate educators to pursue the principalship in Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

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