THE RELATION BETWEEN PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN WISCONSIN

by

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ABSTRACT

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This research project includes a review and analysis of the literature regarding the roles and job satisfaction of school psychologists. The results of past research suggest that a primary activity for school psychologists is psychoeducational assessment, with this role accounting for approximately 50-55% of their time. However, according to the research, school psychologists would prefer to spend less time in psychoeducational assessment activities. According to previous research, school psychologists in Wisconsin spend significantly more time in psychoeducational assessment activities (73.6%).

The purpose of this study was to evaluate whether or not school psychologists in Wisconsin continue to spend a significant percentage of time in psychoeducational assessment and if this impacts their level of job satisfaction. Data gathered from this study revealed that respondents reported spending the majority of their time in paperwork and assessment, while they preferred to spend the majority of their time in consultation, assessment, and counseling. There was significant correlation between the actual amount of time spent in consultation and general job satisfaction, and preferred time spent in

counseling was inversely related to general job satisfaction. Apparently, the more time respondents preferred to spend in counseling, the lower their general job satisfaction. According to data gathered from the stepwise regression, preferred time spent in counseling and actual time spent in counseling combined to significantly predict general satisfaction. Time spent on assessment activities was not significantly correlated with the general job satisfaction of the respondents.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Job satisfaction is very important in determining an individual's intent to stay or leave a job. Lambert, Hogan, and Barton (2001) noted that job satisfaction has the largest direct effect on turnover intent. Turnover intent influences an individual's voluntary decision to leave a job position. Additionally, it has been determined that workers seem more satisfied with jobs that allow variety and do not involve repetitious acts (Johnson & Johnson, 2000; Lambert et al., 2001). Given that previous research has indicated that job satisfaction is important in an individual's decision to stay at their job, one could speculate that a school psychologist's job satisfaction would be important in their decision to stay at their job. Additionally, it could be hypothesized that variables such as role, function, or repetitive activities would have a great impact on the job satisfaction of school psychologists.

Fagan (2000; 2002b) identified four primary roles performed by school psychologists in the schools. The first and most primary role is the sorter, which consists of performing psychoeducational assessments to determine the placement of children in special education. The second role is the repairer, which includes time spent in individual and group interventions, academic remediation, and individual and group counseling. Traditionally, most of the school psychologist's time has been spent in these two roles. The third role is consultation, which is meeting with professionals to focus on work-related problems. The fourth role is that of the engineer, which involves school psychologists using their skills at a systems level.

Nastasi, Varjas, Berstein, and Pluymert (1998) report that, in the field of school psychology, practitioners spend the majority of their time conducting psychoeducational assessments. Reports vary as to the amount of time that school psychologists spend in psychoeducational assessment activities. Reschly and Wilson (1995) stated that school psychologists spend approximately 50% to 55% of their time in psychoeducational assessments, dividing the remainder of their time in direct interventions (20%), problem-solving consultation (16%), and organizational-systems consultation and research evaluation (5%). School psychologists reported they would prefer spending less time in psychoeducational assessments so they could have more time to spend in the other activities. A study by Wilson and Reschly (1995) found a discrepancy between the amount of time that school psychologists spend in psychoeducational assessments and the amount of time that they would prefer to spend conducting psychoeducational assessments.

Research has also been conducted on the current role of school psychologists in Wisconsin. Hartnett (1989) found that school psychologists in Wisconsin spent an average of 29.2% of their time in testing, 14.1% involved in multi-disciplinary team activities, 13.6% in the preparation of psychological reports, 13.2% in counseling, 9.1% in administrative duties, 8.8% in teacher consultation, 4% in observations, 3.9% in family contact, and 1% in giving inservices. When adding together the percentages of activities that make up psychoeducational assessment, it appears that school psychologists in Wisconsin spend approximately 73.6% of their time in psychoeducational assessment activities. Ring (1989) also researched the roles of school psychologists in Wisconsin and found that school psychologists in Wisconsin spent most of their time administering

tests (42.8%), followed by other activities such as participating in multi-disciplinary teams, report writing, staff meetings, and administration duties (32.41%). The remainder of time was spent in counseling (26.69%) and teaching (4.07%) (Ring, 1989). Comparing this data with the definition of psychoeducational assessment in this study, it can be estimated that school psychologists in Wisconsin spend between 42.8% and 75.21% of their time in psychoeducational assessment activities. When comparing these percentages to national percentages, it appears that school psychologists in Wisconsin spend more time in psychoeducational assessment than the average school psychologist.

Current research indicates that school psychologists are generally satisfied with school psychology as a career choice and the majority intends to stay in the school psychology profession (Reschly, 2000; Reschly & Connolly, 1990; Wilson & Reschly, 1995). However, limited data has been collected concerning the job satisfaction of school psychologists in Wisconsin. A few studies (Reschly & Connolly, 1990; Wilson & Reschly, 1995) have examined the job satisfaction of school psychologists with various other variables, such as gender and an urban or rural setting; however, none have specifically looked at a possible relation between the amount of time that a school psychologist spends in a particular role or activity and their job satisfaction. Given the fact that there is a discrepancy between the amount of time that school psychologists spend in psychoeducational assessment and their preferred amount of time to spend in psychoeducational assessment, it leads one to believe that there may be a correlation between the amount of time that school psychologists spend in psychoeducational assessment and their level of job satisfaction.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine the amount of time spent in psychoeducational assessment by school psychologists in Wisconsin, their level of job satisfaction, and the relation between the time spent in psychoeducational assessment and the level of job satisfaction.

Research Questions

This research addressed four questions. They were:

1. What is the percentage of time Wisconsin school psychologists spend in psychoeducational assessment?
2. How satisfied are school psychologists in Wisconsin with their jobs?
3. What roles do school psychologists in Wisconsin spend most of their time in, and how do these roles contribute to their job satisfaction?
4. Is there a correlation between the amount of time that school psychologists in Wisconsin spend in assessment and their level of job satisfaction?

Definition of Terms

For clarity of understanding, the following terms need to be defined.

Job satisfaction – the level an individual is satisfied with their job. For the purposes of this study, respondents answered on a 5-point Likert scale with one being very dissatisfied, two being dissatisfied, three being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, four being satisfied, and five being very satisfied. If a respondent answered with a score of 3 or higher, they were defined as being satisfied with their job. If they answered with a score below 3, they were defined as being dissatisfied with their job.

Psychoeducational assessment – refers to an evaluation for the diagnosis of disabilities, and includes the activities of testing, observations, examining school records, interviews with parents and teachers, and participation in multi-disciplinary teams. For the purposes of this report, school psychologists who spend 50% or more of their time in psychoeducational assessment were defined as spending high amounts of time in psychoeducational assessment, and school psychologists who report spending less than 50% of their time in psychoeducational assessment were defined as spending low amounts of time in psychoeducational assessment.

Assumptions

Based on previous research, it was assumed that school psychologists in Wisconsin spend more time than average in psychoeducational assessment activities. Additionally, it was assumed that the more time a school psychologist spent in psychoeducational assessment, their job satisfaction would be lower.

CHAPTER II

Review of Relevant Literature

The following chapter will address many important themes, including the history of the role of the school psychologist, the current role of the school psychologist, the preferred role of the school psychologist, and the perceived future role of the school psychologist. Next, the importance of job satisfaction in work situations will be reviewed, followed by an examination of the relation between the roles of the school psychologist and job satisfaction. Finally, the rationale for this study will be discussed and critically analyzed in relation to the current literature.

The History of the Role of the School Psychologist

The beginnings of school psychological services can be traced back to the social reform era in the late 1800's and early 1900's, which included the passage of compulsory schooling and child labor laws, the development of juvenile courts, mental health systems and vocational guidance, and the growth of institutions serving children (Fagan & Wise, 2000). When federal compulsory education laws were passed in 1852, the need for psychologists in the schools was created to assist with diagnosing and evaluating children for the determination of special education services (Pfeiffer & Reddy, 1998). Another event that occurred around this time that may have influenced the beginning role of school psychologists was the use of the Army Alpha and Beta tests during World War I to screen large numbers of army inductees (Fagan & Wise, 2000). This may have influenced the role of school psychologists because it exposed the public to the idea of using standardized tests as a screening device. Early school psychologists served students from external agencies, until the 1920's when school psychologists began

working in the schools themselves (Fagan, 2002b). In 1925, the role of a school psychologist was described as having six functions: selecting and interpreting tests in schools, diagnosing problem cases, developing therapeutic programs and conducting therapy, conducting research, contributing to the understanding of learning problems, and consulting with teachers (Jenkins, 2001).

In 1950, there was a rapid growth in the number of practicing school psychologists. In part, this occurred because of the post-World War II baby boom, which caused a growth in school attendance, and also because of the enactment of comprehensive special education laws which included mandatory psychological services (Fagan, 2002b). From 1940 to 1970, the number of practicing school psychologists grew from about 500 to 5000 (Fagan & Wise, 2000). These numbers kept rising with approximately 9, 550 school psychologists employed in public schools in 1977-78, and 23, 806 school psychologists employed in public school settings in 1996-97 (Reschly, 2000).

School psychology has been greatly influenced by legislation that guarantees children with disabilities access to appropriate educational services (Reschly, 2000). The enormous and continual growth of the field of school psychology since 1975 is highly correlated with mandatory special education legislation such as the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (1975), which was reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997 (Reschly, 2000). This law mandated every school district to implement special education programs, including psychological services for all children with disabilities (Fagan & Wise, 2000). Prior to the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (1975), training programs in school

psychology encouraged their students to move beyond individual testing and into broader roles, including consultation, parent training, and systematic intervention (Anderson, Hohenshil, & Brown, 1984). Subsequent to the passage of the Act and its various revisions, the role of the school psychologist became more assessment driven because of the need to identify students categorically for special education. Recently, there has again been a push for school psychologists to move into broader roles, as is discussed in the section on the perceived future role of the school psychologist.

The Current Role of the School Psychologist

School psychologists perform many different roles in the schools. Fagan (2002b) identified four primary roles held by school psychologists. The first and most primary role is the sorter, which is using psychoeducational assessments to determine the placement of children in special education. The second role is the repairer, which includes time spent in individual and group interventions. This repairer role includes academic remediation and individual and group counseling. Traditionally, most of the school psychologists' time has been spent in these two roles. The third role is consultation, which is meeting with professionals, often teachers, to focus on work-related problems (Fagan, 2000). The types of consultation that school psychologists engage in include mental health consultation, behavioral consultation, crisis consultation, and organizational consultation (Fagan, 2000). The fourth role is that of the engineer, which is the extension of the consultation role to systems analysis, using their skills at a systems level, to effect changes rather than at the individual level with students, parents, or educators (Fagan, 2002b).

The most time-consuming of these roles is the sorter role, which is conducting psychoeducational assessments, which is primarily used to determine eligibility for special education services. Research by Hosp and Reschly (2002) suggests that school psychologists currently spend anywhere from one-half to two-thirds of their time involved in special education eligibility determination. Psychoeducational assessment is fundamental to the role of the school psychologist because IDEA and state laws define most eligibility criteria for special education services in ways that mandate the use of individually administered tests of intellectual functioning (Wilson & Reschly, 1996). Other roles that do not include psychoeducational assessment for disability eligibility determination are secondary to the sorter role of the school psychologist in the United States today (Reschly, 2000).

Several variables impact the amount of psychoeducational assessment conducted by a school psychologist. Hutton and Dubes (1992) reported that school psychologists with doctoral level training spend less time in psychoeducational assessment than school psychologists with either a master's or specialist's degree. This may be because many school psychologists with doctoral level degrees work in universities training school psychology students. Also, research suggests that in schools where there is a greater student to practitioner ratio, school psychologists are more likely to do more yearly evaluations than in schools where there is a smaller student to practitioner ratio (Reschly, 2000; Jenkins, 2001). The assumption here is that the greater the number of students a school psychologist serves, more psychoeducational assessments would be required.

Reports vary as to the amount of time that school psychologists spend in psychoeducational assessment. According to a paper presented to the American

Psychological Association in 1998, Reschly stated that in 1986, the amount of time spent in special education eligibility evaluations was 68% (Reschly, 2000). In 1992, Hutton and Dubes reported that school psychologists spent an average of 62.7% of their time conducting psychoeducational assessments or participating in assessment related activities. Huebner (1993) found that school psychologists in secondary schools (grades 7-12) spent 36% of their time in psychoeducational assessment functions, 15% of their time in consultation, 13% in staffings, 12% in individual counseling, 2% in family counseling, and 0.5% in research. In 1995, Reschly and Wilson reported that school psychologists spent approximately 50% to 55% of their time in psychoeducational assessments. Fagan (2000) analyzed several studies and found that overall school psychologists spend approximately 52-55% of their time in psychoeducational assessment, 21-26% of their time in interventions (including counseling and remediation), 19-22% of their time in consultation, and 1-2% of their time in research and evaluation.

Research has also been conducted on the current role of school psychologists in Wisconsin. Hartnett (1989) found that school psychologists in Wisconsin spent an average of 29.2% of their time in testing, 14.1% in multi-disciplinary teams, 13.6% in the preparation of psychological reports, 13.2% in counseling, 9.1% in administrative duties, 8.8% in teacher consultation, 4% in observations, 3.9% in family contact, and 1% in giving inservices. For the purposes of this study, psychoeducational assessment was defined as including testing, report writing, observations, examining school records, interviews with parents and teachers, and participation in multi-disciplinary teams. This

means that in the context of this definition approximately 73.6% of school psychologists' in Wisconsin time is spent in psychoeducational assessment.

Ring (1989) also researched the current roles of school psychologists in Wisconsin. He found that school psychologists in Wisconsin spent the majority of their time administering tests (42.8%), followed by other activities (32.41%), which included multi-disciplinary teams, report writing, staff meetings, and administration duties. The remainder of time for school psychologists in Wisconsin was spent in counseling (26.69%) and teaching (4.07%) (Ring, 1989). Comparing this data with the definition of psychoeducational assessment in this study, it can be estimated that school psychologists in Wisconsin spend between 42.8% and 75.21% of their time in psychoeducational assessment.

The Preferred Role of the School Psychologist

Levinson (1990) reported that almost 60% of their respondents spent more than 40% of their time in psychoeducational assessment; however, only 30% indicated that they desired to spend this much time in psychoeducational assessment. Only 5% indicated that they spent more than 40% of their time in consultation, but 15% indicated that they preferred to spend this much time in consultation. Also, only 5% of respondents spent more than 20% of their time in counseling; however, 28% of respondents indicated that they would prefer to spend this amount of time in counseling activities. In the area of research, only 4% stated that they spent more than 5% of their time in research, yet 40% of respondents stated that they would prefer to spend more than 5% of their time devoted to research (Levinson, 1990).

Reschly and Wilson (1995) found that while school psychologists spend over half their time in psychoeducational assessments, the remainder of their time is divided among various other activities, such as direct interventions (20%), problem-solving consultation (16%), and organizational-systems consultation and research evaluation (5%). However, Reschly and Wilson (1995) reported that school psychologists would prefer to spend 32% of their time in psychoeducational assessments, 28% in direct interventions, 23% in problem-solving consultation, 10% in organizational-systems consultation, and 7% in research evaluation.

According to another survey conducted by Wilson and Reschly (1995), male and female school psychologists spent an average of 21.55 hours a week on psychoeducational assessment, compared to spending 12.82 hours per week on psychoeducational assessment that they would prefer to do. Roberts and Rust (1994) reported that school psychologists in Tennessee spent an average of 66% of their time in psychoeducational assessment, compared to 50% of their time that they would prefer to spend in psychoeducational assessment. Research in Iowa suggests that school psychologists there spend an average of 51% of their time in psychoeducational assessment, compared to the 46% of their time that they would prefer to spend in psychoeducational assessment (Roberts & Rust, 1994). Hosp and Reschly (2002) found that in every region of the United States, school psychologists reported that they would prefer to spend less time than they currently spend conducting psychoeducational assessments, with spending nearly equal parts of time in psychoeducational assessment, intervention, and consultation (12.8, 11.4, and 13.3 hours, respectively). However, in regions where more time was spent in psychoeducational assessment, school

psychologists reported higher preferences for conducting psychoeducational assessments (Hosp & Reschly, 2002). These studies suggest that there is a discrepancy between school psychologists' amount of time spent in these roles and their job-related preferences.

Research has also been conducted on the preferred roles of school psychologists in Wisconsin. Hartnett (1989) surveyed school psychologists in Wisconsin by having them rank the roles that held the most personal importance to them on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being "not of importance" to 5 being "extremely important." Teacher consultation was ranked the highest at 4.1, followed by counseling (4.0), family contact (3.9), observation (3.5), testing (3.5), involvement in M-teams (3.4), report preparation (3.1), inservices (2.8), and administrative duties (2.3). Ring (1989) found that school psychologists in Wisconsin would prefer to spend 33.08% of their time administering tests, 26.94% of their time in other activities (multi-disciplinary teams, report writing, staff meetings, and administration), 30.68% of their time in counseling, and 9.27% of their time in teaching. In a more recent study by Peterson (1999), school psychologists in Wisconsin were surveyed to assess the importance of three specific roles pertaining to school psychologists: consultation, counseling, and play therapy. It was found that school psychologists in Wisconsin reported that providing consultative services and possessing well-developed counseling skills were, and will continue to be, of significant importance; however, school psychologists in Wisconsin seldom utilized play therapy and did not see themselves as needing to use play therapy in the future.

The Perceived Future Role of the School Psychologist

It is hard to predict what the role of school psychologists will be in the future, however there are many ideas as to how the role of the school psychologist may change. A survey of special education administrators indicated a desire on their part for school psychologists to spend more time in counseling and consultation (Cheramie & Sutter, 1993). Pfeiffer and Reddy (1998) see the future key roles and functions for school psychologists as including resource development, indirect services, the use and coordination of community resources, applied research and program evaluation, and direct service. Bradley-Johnson and Dean (2000) see the future role of the school psychologist as including more indirect services because they feel that there are too many children in need of services for school psychologists to work with them on a one-on-one basis. Instead, they assert that school psychologists should attempt to change the behavior of individuals that work with these children daily by spending more time in consultation, research, and program development. Swerdlik and French (2000) see the role of the school psychologist as changing in the future with a greater emphasis in training programs linking psychoeducational assessment and intervention, in an attempt to make psychoeducational assessment more applicable. Reschly (2000) stated that school psychologists will continue to spend more than half of their time in psychoeducational assessment, but that psychoeducational assessment will change toward less standardized testing of intellectual abilities and more toward intervention-oriented assessment, greater involvement with direct interventions, and problem-solving consultation. Some examples of these types of psychoeducational assessment include putting more emphasis on behaviorally defined target behaviors, determining current

status on relevant behaviors, using data to assess intervention progress, as well as evaluating program effectiveness and the appropriateness of program placements (Reschly, 2000). Fagan (2002a) indicated that certain states are redefining psychoeducational assessment functions; however, the amount of time spent in psychoeducational assessments may not change.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is important in shaping an individual's intent to stay or leave a job, and job satisfaction has the largest direct effect on turnover intent (Lambert, Hogan, & Barton, 2001). The more dissatisfied employees are within their current position, the more likely they are to leave their job (Hellman, 1997). It has also been found that the work environment is essential in shaping job satisfaction (Lambert et al., 2001). An individual's work environment includes many variables, one being task variety, which is the lack of repetition in a job or the amount of variety that a person believes they have with their job. Most workers appear more satisfied with jobs that allow them variety rather than repetition in their job (Johnson & Johnson, 2000; Lambert et al., 2001). Another variable that influences job satisfaction is role conflict, which is when inconsistent behaviors are expected from an individual; the higher an employee's role conflict the lower their job satisfaction (Billinglsey & Cross, 1992).

The Relation Between the Role of the School Psychologist and Job Satisfaction

Research suggests that school psychologists are generally positive in terms of overall satisfaction with school psychology as a career and their intent to continue in school psychology as a career (Anderson, Hohenshil, & Brown, 1984; Levinson, Fetchkan, & Hohenshil, 1988; Reschly, 2000; Reschly & Connolly, 1990; Wilson &

Reschly, 1995). Anderson et al. (1984) found that 81% of their respondents reported being satisfied in their jobs as school psychologists, 58% reported that they planned to remain in their current position, and 85% stated that they planned to remain in the profession of school psychology. Levinson et al. (1988) reported that 82% of school psychologists in Virginia reported being satisfied with their job, 67% planned to remain in their current position, and 88% reported that they planned to remain in the profession of school psychology.

There have been some studies that have examined the job satisfaction of school psychologists with various other variables. Levinson et al. (1988) found a slight positive association between affiliation with an organization, such as the National Association for School Psychologists (NASP) and the job satisfaction of school psychologists. In a study that examined the job satisfaction of school psychologists in rural and urban settings, Reschly and Connolly (1990) found that school psychologists in both settings were equally and generally satisfied with their current positions, and the vast majority intended to continue in a school psychology career. Williams and Williams (1990) found that positive appraisals of their work performance from colleagues, administrators, and clients resulted in school psychologists having higher levels of job satisfaction and self-perceived competence. In a study that surveyed school psychologists in secondary schools, Huebner (1993) found that their job satisfaction increased as the amount of time school psychologists spent in individual and family counseling increased and the amount of time that they spent in psychoeducational assessment decreased. Another study found no gender differences in job satisfaction, and both genders planned to remain in the profession for at least another seven years (Wilson & Reschly, 1995). Hosp and Reschly

(2002) compared many different variables with job satisfaction of school psychologists. Even though school psychologists in all regions of the country had previously reported that they would like to spend less time in psychoeducational assessment, they reported being satisfied with their work duties (all regions greater than 3.5 on a 5-point scale) (Hosp & Reschly, 2002). One area of concern with job satisfaction for school psychologists is the perception that there are few opportunities for promotion or career advancement in the schools (Hosp & Reschly, 2002; Reschly, 2000).

Dalhoff (1990) studied the job satisfaction of school psychologists in Wisconsin, looking for a difference in job satisfaction by those school psychologists employed in a single district or by a Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA). The results of this study showed that school psychologists employed by a single district experienced a greater degree of job satisfaction than school psychologists employed by a CESA; however, these results did not find a significant difference between the levels of job satisfaction.

Although there have been numerous studies examining the job satisfaction of school psychologists, the relation between the amount of time spent in psychoeducational assessment and their level of job satisfaction has not been examined. This study looked at the relation between job satisfaction and the amount of time spent in psychoeducational assessment for school psychologists in Wisconsin.

Prior Research Conducted on the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)

The author of this study used the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), as there have been numerous studies evaluating the job satisfaction of school psychologists with the MSQ or a revised form of the MSQ. The MSQ measures 20 specific aspects of

work: ability utilization, achievement, activity, advancement, authority, company policies and practices, compensation, co-workers, creativity, independence, moral values, recognition, responsibility, security, social service, social status, supervision – human relations, supervision – technical, variety and working conditions. Respondents are able to answer questions on a 5-point Likert scale as very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, neutral, satisfied, and very satisfied. The MSQ measures overall levels of job satisfaction, levels of satisfaction with specific aspects of work, and predictors of job satisfaction.

Anderson, Hohenshil, and Brown (1984) used an adapted form of the MSQ, which consisted of 100 items, and they eliminated the category of neutral, having respondents answer questions on a 4-point scale. They found that 12.29% of respondents were in the dissatisfied range, 80.67% were in the satisfied range, and 5.94% were in the very satisfied range. Of the 20 categories of the MSQ, only school system policies and practices and advancement opportunities were correlated with dissatisfaction. Levinson, Fetchkan, and Hohenshil (1988) also used a modified version of the MSQ. They modified 21 items in order to increase the face validity for school psychologists and also used a 4-point scale, omitting the neutral category. The results of this study showed that 0.37% of school psychologists were very dissatisfied, 15.36% were dissatisfied, 82.40% were satisfied, and 1.87% were very satisfied. Again, only two categories were in the dissatisfied range: school system policies/practices, and advancement. Levinson (1990) suggests that school psychologists' dissatisfaction with school system policies and practices may reflect a limited ability to control, define, and diversify their role.

Levinson (1990) used the same modified version of the MSQ as used by Levinson et al. (1988). Significant relations were found between job satisfaction and the actual

time spent in consultation, research, clerical activities, and administrative activities. Significant relations were also found between job satisfaction and the preferred time spent in psychoeducational assessment, counseling, and research. Dalhoff (1990) also used the MSQ in his study to determine if there was a difference in job satisfaction between school psychologists in Wisconsin employed by a single district or employed by a CESA. Dalhoff (1990) used the short form of the MSQ, which consists of 20 items and takes approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. The short form of the MSQ measures intrinsic satisfaction, extrinsic satisfaction, and general satisfaction. Dalhoff's (1990) results indicated that although the job satisfaction for school psychologists in Wisconsin employed by a CESA was lower than those employed in a single district, the results were not statistically significant. Because of the success of the MSQ in various other studies to measure the job satisfaction of school psychologists, the author chose to use this instrument in this study.

Conclusion

After reviewing the literature surrounding the roles of school psychologists, it is obvious that a significant amount of research has been done in this area. Many authors have written about the history of the role of school psychologists, the current role of school psychologists, the preferred role of school psychologists, and even the perceived future role of school psychologists. However, there is a problem in how the roles of school psychologists are defined in both the literature and various research studies. Different studies define the activities of school psychologists differently. For example, previous studies have used different activities included in the definition of psychoeducational assessment, broken up many of these into separate categories, or

grouped several activities into one category. Also, several different studies have described the amount of time spent by school psychologists differently. Some have described time spent in terms of percentage of time, some in hours per week, and even others by explaining that a certain percentage of school psychologists spend a certain percentage of time in each category. Because the definitions of the roles and the amount of time spent in these roles are not uniformly defined, it is very hard to compare the data from all these studies. Additionally, many authors have written about job satisfaction; and, in particular, the job satisfaction of school psychologists. However, there has been no research that has been done on the specific relation of the amount of time spent in psychoeducational assessment and the job satisfaction of school psychologists in Wisconsin. This data could be used to explain what factors influence the job satisfaction of school psychologists in Wisconsin. That is what this study addressed.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

This chapter will examine the implications of past research as it applies to the purpose and significance of this study. Then the chapter will outline the methodology of the research study, including how subjects were selected and a description of the instrument that was used. Finally, the research questions for the study will be reiterated, and information relating to the data collection and data analysis will be discussed.

Implications of Previous Research and Literature for Current Research

There have been numerous studies conducted on the roles and levels of job satisfaction experienced by school psychologists. It has been stated in many of these previous studies that school psychologists would prefer to spend less time in psychoeducational assessment activities (Hosp & Reschly, 2002; Levinson, 1990; Reschly & Wilson, 1995; Roberts & Rust, 1994). Given the fact that there is a discrepancy between the amount of time spent in psychoeducational assessment activities and the preferred amount to time to spend in such activities, it is possible that there is a correlation between the amount of time spent in psychoeducational assessment and job satisfaction. According to the research (Fagan, 2000; Hartnett, 1989), school psychologists in Wisconsin spend a large majority of their time in psychoeducational assessment activities (73.6%) relative to national samples (52-55%). The purpose of this study was to examine the amount of time spent by Wisconsin school psychologists in psychoeducational assessment, their level of job satisfaction, and whether or not there is relation between the two variables.

Based upon the preceding discussion, the following research objectives were proposed:

1. What is the percentage of time Wisconsin school psychologists spend in psychoeducational assessment?
2. How satisfied are school psychologists in Wisconsin with their jobs?
3. What roles do school psychologists in Wisconsin spend most of their time in, and how do these roles contribute to their job satisfaction?
4. Is there a correlation between the amount of time that school psychologists in Wisconsin spend in assessment and their level of job satisfaction?

The Research Study

Participants

A list of school psychologists was obtained from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, which maintains records on all certified school psychologists. After obtaining this list, 200 subjects were randomly selected. Of the 200 surveys sent, 96 were completed and returned, yielding a return rate of 48%.

Survey Instrument

The instrument used was the short form of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). The MSQ measures 20 specific aspects of work: ability utilization, achievement, activity, advancement, authority, company policies and practices, compensation, co-workers, creativity, independence, moral values, recognition, responsibility, security, social service, social status, supervision – human relations, supervision – technical, variety, and working conditions. The short form of the MSQ only measures extrinsic satisfaction, intrinsic satisfaction and overall satisfaction.

Respondents are able to answer questions on a 5-point Likert scale as very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, neutral, satisfied, and very satisfied. Albright (1972) suggested that the MSQ has satisfactory reliability (internal reliability coefficients of .80 and higher) and also offered evidence of its construct, concurrent, and content validity. Additionally, Bolton (1986) concluded that the MSQ has satisfactory reliability and validity. Bolton noted that all 21 scales of the MSQ have reliability coefficients ranging from .78 to .93.

In addition to the MSQ data, demographic data on all respondents was collected. Information such as age, sex, ethnicity, number of years as a school psychologist, number of years in current position, employment status, psychologist-to-student ratio, number of schools served, and current degree status was obtained. Respondents were also asked how many evaluations they conducted the previous year, if they were required to attend most IEP meetings, the type of district they worked in, how many schools they served, if they worked for a CESA, and the location of their office. At the end of the demographic questionnaire, respondents were asked to list the actual amount of time they spent in different activities and the preferred amount of time they would choose to spend in different job-related activities.

Data Collection

Data was collected by mailing a packet to selected participants. Each packet included a cover letter describing the study, a brief demographic questionnaire, the survey, and a self-addressed stamped envelope. The self-addressed stamped envelope was enclosed to facilitate a higher return rate of the survey.

Confidentiality of respondents was maintained by coding envelopes. When respondents returned the survey, they were crossed off the list. Once all data was collected, all identifying information was destroyed.

Data Analysis

The data was initially examined using descriptive statistics. For example, frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to describe the subjects' responses to the items in the survey. Regression analyses were used to examine contributing factors to job satisfaction. Correlation analyses were used to evaluate the relations between the demographic statistics, roles, and job satisfaction of school psychologists in Wisconsin was explored. Finally, a *t*-test was conducted to look at the relation between levels of satisfaction among school psychologists in Wisconsin.

Significance of the Research

This study was significant because there is a lack of current research dealing with the roles of school psychologists in Wisconsin. Also, in the studies that have been conducted on the roles of school psychologists in Wisconsin, there are no uniform definitions concerning how the role of the school psychologist is broken into categories, or how the time of the school psychologist is quantified. In addition there is currently no research done comparing the specific relation between the amount of time school psychologists in Wisconsin spend in the role of psychoeducational assessment and their job satisfaction. The factors that influence the job satisfaction of school psychologists would not only be useful to school psychologists, but also their employers.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The purpose of this study was to determine the amount of time school psychologists in Wisconsin spend in psychoeducational assessment, their current level of job satisfaction, and to then determine if there is a relation between these two factors. This chapter will review descriptive statistics, regression analyses, and correlational analyses.

Descriptive Statistics

Demographic data was collected from the study participants. Of the 200 surveys sent, 97 were completed and returned, yielding a return rate of 48.5%. As seen in Table 1, 61 of the respondents were female (64.2%) and 34 were male (35.8%). Also seen in Table 1, a majority of the respondents (97.9%) were White/Caucasian. Respondents ranged in age from 25 to 64 years old, with the mean age being 41.1. (See Table 2).

Table 1.

Frequency and Percentage of Participants by Gender and Ethnic Background

Gender/Ethnicity	*n*	Percent
Male	34	35.8
Female	61	64.2
White/Caucasian	95	97.9
Black/African American	1	1.0

Note. Missing data existed for gender (2.1%) and ethnicity (1.0%).

Table 2.

Frequency and Percentage of Participants by Age

Age	*n*	Percent
25-29 years old	16	16.6
30-39 years old	29	29.8
40-49 years old	22	22.6
50-59 years old	24	24.8
60-64 years old	3	3.1

Note. Missing data existed for this item (3.1%).

As seen in Table 3, the majority of the respondents (88.7%) reported being employed full-time. The educational or degree status of participants was obtained and can be seen in Table 4; 73.2% had a Master's degree, 13.4% had an Education Specialist degree (Ed.S.), and 10.3% reported having a doctoral level degree. Sixty-one respondents (62.9%) reported having less than 15 years experience as a school psychologist (Table 5), and 61 respondents (62.9%) also reported being in their current job for less than 10 years (Table 6). The majority of respondents have been in their current job for 4 years or less (n = 38, 39.2%).

Table 3.

Employment Status of Participants

Employment Status	*n*	Percent
Full-time	86	88.7
Part-time	9	9.3

Note. Missing data existed for this item (2.1%).

Table 4.

Highest Educational Level Attained by Participants

Educational Degree Held	*n*	Percent
M.S.	2	2.1
M.S. + 12	3	3.1
M.S. +32	66	68.0
Ed.S.	13	13.4
Ph.D. or Ed.D.	10	10.3
Other	2	2.1

Note. Missing data existed for this item (1.0%).

Table 5.

Number of Years Participants Have Worked as a School Psychologist

Years	*n*	Percent
1-4 years	20	20.6
5-9 years	29	30.0
10-14 years	12	12.3
15-19 years	13	13.5
20-24 years	4	4.1
25-29 years	12	12.4
30-35 years	6	6.1

Note. Missing data existed for this item (1.0%).

Table 6.

Number of Years in Current Position

Number of Years	*n*	Percent
1-4 years	38	39.2
5-9 years	23	23.7
10-14 years	11	11.3
15-19 years	15	15.5
20 + years	7	7.2

Note. Missing data existed for this item (3.1%).

Fifty-five (56.7%) of the participants reported that they work in one or two schools. (See Table 7). The majority of respondents (61.8%) reported working in a school setting where the ratio of school psychologists to students was 501-1500 respectively (See Table 8). As seen in Table 9, 34% of school psychologists report working in a rural district, 26.8% reported working in a suburban district, and 37.1% reported working in an urban district. Respondents reported completing an average of 60 evaluations the previous year (Table 10), and majority of respondents are not required to attend most annual Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings (Table 11).

Table 7.

Number of School Served

Number of Schools	*n*	Percent
0 Schools	1	1.0
1 School	23	23.7
2 Schools	32	33.0
2.5 Schools	1	1.0
3 Schools	18	18.7
4 Schools	10	10.3
5 or more Schools	9	9.2

Note. Missing data existed for this item (3.1%).

Table 8.

Frequency and Percentage of School Psychologist to Student Ratio

School Psychologist to Student Ratio	*n*	Percent
1: 1-500	14	14.4
1: 501-1000	36	37.1
1: 1001-1500	24	24.7
1:1501-2000	15	15.5
1: 2001-2500	2	2.1
1: 2500+	3	3.1

Note. Missing data existed for this item (3.1%).

Table 9.

Type of School District

Type of District	*n*	Percent
Rural	33	34.0
Suburban	26	26.8
Urban	36	37.1

Note. Missing data existed for this item (2.1%).

Table 10.

Number of Evaluations Completed Last Year

Number of Evaluations	*n*	Percent
0-20 evaluations	13	13.5
21-40 evaluations	15	15.5
41-60 evaluations	22	22.6
61-80 evaluations	23	23.7
81-100 evaluations	11	11.3
101 + evaluations	8	8.2

Note. Missing data existed for this item (5.2%).

Table 11.

Required to Attend Most Annual IEP Meetings

Attend Meetings	*n*	Percent
Yes	33	34.0
No	60	61.9

Note. Missing data existed for this item (4.1%).

The Actual and Preferred Roles of School Psychologists

Table 12 describes the average number of hours in a 40 hour week that respondents actually spend in certain school psychology roles and the average amount of hours per 40 hour week that respondents prefer to spend in these roles. Assessment and paperwork appear to take up the majority of actual time spent by school psychologists (17.8 hours of a 40 hour week); however, assessment, consultation, and counseling appear to take up majority of the preferred time for school psychologists (21.6 hours of a 40 hour week).

Table 12.

Average Amount of Hours Spent in the Actual and Preferred Roles of School Psychologists

Role	Actual Time Spent	Preferred Time Spent
Team Meetings	6.4	4.9
Consultation	3.9	7.0
Paperwork	8.7	3.8
Assessment	9.1	7.2
Counseling	3.9	7.4
Interventions	2.3	5.3
Driving	0.9	0.4
Telephone	2.6	2.0
Other	1.6	0.9

Note. Missing data existed for these items (8.2%).

According to data gathered from the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), a majority of respondents have low to average levels of intrinsic satisfaction, and average levels of extrinsic and general satisfaction. (See Table 13).

Table 13.

Levels of Intrinsic, Extrinsic, and General Job Satisfaction

Level of Satisfaction	*n*	Percent
Intrinsic Satisfaction ($n = 94$)		
Low	43	45.7%
Average	45	47.9%
High	6	6.4%
Extrinsic Satisfaction ($n = 94$)		
Low	26	27.7%
Average	48	51.1%
High	20	21.3%
General Satisfaction ($n = 91$)		
Low	29	31.9%
Average	39	42.9%
High	23	25.3%

Multiple correlation and stepwise regression analyses were used to determine the relations between work-related roles or duties and general job satisfaction. The data were analyzed by multiple correlations to determine what school psychology variables were related to job satisfaction. Multiple stepwise regression analyses were computed to

determine what work-related roles and work-related job preferences in combination contributed to the prediction of general job satisfaction.

From the data gathered, multiple correlation analyses identified two statistically significant relations between general job satisfaction and work-related roles or work-related preferences. Results (Tables 14 and 15) indicated that actual time spent engaged in consultation ($r = .22, p < .05$) was positively correlated with general job satisfaction, and preferred time spent engaged in counseling was inversely related to general job satisfaction ($r = -.26, p < .05$). Actual time spent in assessment was not found to be significantly related to general job satisfaction ($r = -.12, p > .05$).

Table 14.

Correlation of Actual Hours and General Job Satisfaction

Role	*n*	Pearson Correlation
Actual Hours in Team Meetings	85	-.038
Actual Hours in Consultation	84	.221*
Actual Hours in Paperwork	85	-.081
Actual Hours in Assessment	85	-.120
Actual Hours in Counseling	85	.040
Actual Hours in Interventions	85	.081
Actual Hours in Driving	84	-.017
Actual Hours in Telephone	84	-.055
Actual Hours in Other	84	-.038

*$p < .05$

Table 15.

Correlation of Preferred Hours and General Job Satisfaction

Role	*n*	Pearson Correlation
Preferred Hours in Team Meetings	84	.008
Preferred Hours in Consultation	84	-.007
Preferred Hours in Paperwork	84	.189
Preferred Hours in Assessment	84	-.024
Preferred Hours in Counseling	84	-.264*
Preferred Hours in Interventions	84	-.039
Preferred Hours in Driving	84	.070
Preferred Hours in Telephone	84	.130
Preferred Hours in Other	84	-.038

*$p < .05$

Stepwise regression analysis computed two significant variables predicting general job satisfaction. These included preferred time spent in counseling and actual time spent in counseling. After step one, preferred time spent in counseling accounted for 7% (6% adjusted) of the variability in general job satisfaction ($R^2 = .07$, $F(1, 81) = 6.09$, $p < .05$). After step two, preferred time spent in counseling and actual time spent engaged in counseling accounted for 14% (11% adjusted) of the variance in predicting general job satisfaction ($R^2 = .14$, $F(2, 80) = 6.23$). Although the correlation between actual time spent in consultation and general job satisfaction was statistically significant, the relation between this variable and general job satisfaction apparently was mediated by the

relations between actual time spent in counseling, preferred time spent in counseling, and actual time spent engaged in consultation.

After considering all the data collected, it is necessary to examine it in comparison to the questions of this study. The research questions are:

1. What is the percentage of time Wisconsin school psychologists spend in psychoeducational assessment?
2. How satisfied are school psychologists in Wisconsin with their jobs?
3. What roles do school psychologists in Wisconsin spend most of their time in, and how do these roles contribute to their job satisfaction?
4. Is there a correlation between the amount of time that school psychologists in Wisconsin spend in assessment and their level of job satisfaction?

In regards to question 1, it appears that school psychologists in Wisconsin spend approximately 22.8% of their time in psychoeducational assessment. In answering question 2, it appears that of school psychologists in Wisconsin, 31.9% have a low level of satisfaction, 42.9% have average levels of satisfaction, and 25.3% have high levels of satisfaction. When answering question 3, it is necessary to look at the stepwise regression procedure in which variables are entered one at a time and variables are removed when they do not contribute to the prediction. According to data gathered from the stepwise regression, preferred time to spend in counseling and the actual time spent in counseling were the only roles that were statistically significant when compared with general satisfaction. In regards to question 4, when looking at the correlational data, it appears that the actual time spent in psychoeducational assessment does not correlate, positively or negatively, with general job satisfaction.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

This chapter will briefly review the purpose, methodological processes, and the findings of the study. The results will then be compared with the findings of previous research. Finally, the limitations of the study will be discussed and suggestions for future research will be delineated.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the roles of school psychologists in Wisconsin and how this correlates with their job satisfaction. Currently, there is a lack of research evaluating job satisfaction among school psychologists in Wisconsin. Specifically, there is no research that compares the specific relation between school psychologists' roles and their job satisfaction. Research suggests that school psychologists spend much of their time spent in psychoeducational assessment (Fagan 2000; Hosp & Reschly, 2002; Huebner 1993; Reschly, 2000; Reschly & Wilson, 1995). Hartnett (1989) and Ring (1989) studied the roles of school psychologists in Wisconsin, and when comparing these percentages to national percentages, it appears that school psychologists in Wisconsin spend more time in psychoeducational assessment than the average school psychologist. Past research also suggests school psychologists spend more time in psychoeducational assessment than they would prefer to (Hosp & Reschly, 2002; Levinson, 1990; Reschly & Wilson, 1995; Roberts & Rust, 1994; Wilson & Reschly, 1995). Although there have been numerous studies examining the job satisfaction of school psychologists, the relation between the amount of time spent in psychoeducational assessment and their level of job satisfaction has not been examined.

This study evaluated the amount of time school psychologists in Wisconsin spend in the role of psychoeducational assessment and their levels of job satisfaction.

Methodological Procedures

Data for this study was collected through a survey that was sent to 200 school psychologists in Wisconsin. The participating sample consisted of 97 school psychologists, 34 male and 61 female. Descriptive statistics including frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze the data. Regression analyses and correlation analyses were also explored.

Major Findings

Data gathered from this study revealed that school psychologists in Wisconsin are more likely to be women, are employed full-time, and completed an average of 60 evaluations during the previous year. Respondents reported spending the majority of their time in paperwork and assessment, while they would prefer to spend the majority of their time in consultation, assessment, and counseling. When considering the correlational data, there appears to be a significant positive correlation between the actual amount of time spent in consultation and general job satisfaction. Actual time spent in counseling and preferred time spent in counseling also were related to general job satisfaction. According to data gathered from the stepwise regression, preferred time spent in counseling and actual time spent in counseling were the only roles that statistically predicted general satisfaction. Apparently, the more time respondents preferred to spend in counseling, the lower their general job satisfaction. Also, pairing this finding with the actual time spent in counseling contributed to an even stronger prediction of general job satisfaction.

Critical Analysis

Findings from past studies (Levison, 1990; Roberts & Rust, 1994; Wilson & Reschly, 1995; Hosp & Reschly 2002) suggest that there is a discrepancy between the amount of time that school psychologists spend in psychoeducational assessments and the amount of time that they would prefer to spend in psychoeducational assessments. Data collected in this study was consistent with this previous finding. There have also been numerous studies examining the job satisfaction of school psychologists, but the relation between the amount of time spent in psychoeducational assessment and their level of job satisfaction has not been examined. Therefore, the hypothesis of this study was that the amount of time that school psychologists spent in psychoeducational assessment would have a direct relation with job satisfaction. However, data gathered for this study did not support this assumption. In fact, only three variables did have a relation with job satisfaction. These were: a) the preferred amount of time to spend in counseling, b) these actual time spent in consultation, and c) the actual time spent providing counseling services.

The findings of this study suggest that all of the roles school psychologists spend their time in should be considered when considering how it affects their job satisfaction. Previous research suggests that school psychologists are positive in terms of overall satisfaction with school psychology as a career and their intent to continue in school psychology as a career (Anderson, Hohenshil, & Brown, 1984; Levinson, Fetchkan, & Hohenshil, 1988; Reschly, 2000; Reschly & Connolly, 1990; Wilson & Reschly, 1995). The results of this study are somewhat supportive of this finding. Most of Wisconsin respondents reported average levels of general job satisfaction. Hosp and Reschly (2002)

also found that even though school psychologists in all regions of the country had previously reported that they would like to spend less time in psychoeducational assessment, they reported being satisfied with their work duties, similar to findings in this study. However, findings in this study did not show a statistical relation between the amount of time spent in psychoeducational assessment and job satisfaction. A significant negative relation was found between preferred time spent in counseling, along with a positive relation between actual time spent in counseling and consultation with job satisfaction. Huebner (1993) found that job satisfaction increased as the amount of time school psychologists spent in individual and family counseling increased, which also substantiates the amount of time spent in counseling is important to school psychologists. Unfortunately, school psychologists in Wisconsin reported that they only spend 3.9 hours per week engaged in counseling services.

Limitations of the Study

A major limitation of this research study was the limited sample. Since only school psychologists in Wisconsin were sampled, the findings are not representative or generalizable to other states. A second limitation of the study is related to the survey instrument chosen to measure job satisfaction. Because the short form of the MSQ was used, the 20 subcategories found in the long form could not be explored. Also, the MSQ was not specifically designed for school psychologists, but was adapted for use with this population. Previous research suggests it is valid, but it cannot be assumed that measures job satisfaction of school psychologists fully or accurately.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study poses many questions that may be answered in future research. It would be beneficial to conduct a similar study that targets school psychologists in all areas of the country, not just in the state of Wisconsin in order to generalize the findings to school psychologists throughout the nation.

Conclusion

This study has examined the amount of time that school psychologists in Wisconsin spent in different roles, their preferred time to spend in these roles, and how these factors correlated with their levels of job satisfaction. Results indicate that there is no significant relation between the amount of time spent in psychoeducational assessment and job satisfaction, as hypothesized by the researcher. In fact, the preferred time to spend in counseling and the actual time spent in consultation were the only roles that were statistically significant when compared with general job satisfaction. It seems Wisconsin school psychologists are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs if they do not prefer to spend a lot of time providing counseling services and do spend time engaged in counseling and consultative services.

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