

# Evaluating Teacher-Leaders for Careers as Administrators: Effects of Job Attributes, Teacher Leader Role, and Teaching Assignment Area

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**Abstract** Recruitment of public school administrators is an important issue due to the shortage of qualified job applicants nationwide. The shortage of applicants requires school districts to evaluate their internal pools of potential applicants for administrative vacancies. This evaluation research addressed the recruitment of teacher-leaders to serve as assistant principals (APs) using a recruitment simulation technique. The participants were secondary school teacher-leaders who were counselors, school council members, department chairs, or resource teachers. The evaluation technique used involved an innovative experimental design approach. Teacher-leaders, whose current or past primary teaching assignment was in the core content areas (e.g., English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies), rated the job of AP highest. Resource teachers rated the job significantly higher when the AP job emphasized instruction than when the job emphasized discipline. Implications for recruitment practice and future research are discussed.

**Keywords** recruitment · assistant principals · administrator recruitment · school staffing · public schools

The issue addressed by this study was the task of recruiting qualified administrators, such as assistant principals (APs) to provide adequate leadership for American public schools. The shortage of public school administrators is becoming a crisis

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nationwide due to massive retirements (Galluzzo, 1999; McAdams, 1998; National Association of Elementary and Secondary Principals, 1998; Winter et al., 2002) and the lack of sufficient numbers of qualified applicants (Bowles et al., 2000; Herbert, 2000; Whitaker, 2001).

A survey of district superintendents by the Educational Research Service (1998) revealed the following percentages of districts, by district location, reporting shortages of principal candidates: rural (52%), suburban (45%), and urban (47%). The shortages, reported by school level (Education Research Service, 1998), were: elementary school (47%), middle school (55%), and high school (55%). The projected need for qualified applicants has also been established. The U.S. Department of Labor (2000) estimates 40% of the nation's principals are nearing retirement while the number of principal positions is projected to increase 20% by the year 2008.

Researchers have identified possible reasons for this phenomenon, including the pending retirements of "baby boomers" and individuals leaving administrative positions for other types of employment in education or the more lucrative private sector (Yerkes & Guaglianone, 1998). These retirements are due to an aging administrator workforce and the challenges created by school reform efforts and high-stakes accountability (Arbor & Duarte, 2000; Fenwick, 2000; Portin et al., 1998).

Recruitment of public school administrators is an especially pressing issue at this time because the emerging nationwide shortage of qualified applicants to fill occurring vacancies (Fenwick, 2000). The position of AP is usually the first step into administration from the role of classroom teacher. Many of the current vacancies in school administration are due, in part, to an aging school administrative workforce and an increasing public pressure to reform public schools and increased pressure on school administrators to be accountable for improving student academic achievement (Duke, 1998; Golanda, 1991; Hess, 1985; Marshall, 1992; Murphy & Beck, 1994).

The pressure to reform schools has forced school districts to examine their own administrator recruitment efforts and, ultimately, their human resource departments to ensure that qualified principal candidates are available when an opening occurs (Principal Application and Screening Guidelines, 2002). Human resource administrators serve a vital role in any organization by designing and implementing staffing and recruitment efforts. Human resources administration is defined as "those processes that are planned and implemented in the organization to establish an effective system of human resources and to foster an organizational climate that enhances the accomplishment of educational goals" (Webb et al., 1994, p. 54).

Staffing schools presents an even greater challenge for human resource administrators due to limited resources and increasing expectations. Guthrie & Reed (1991) stated "Schools are labor intensive; they are people oriented. They are concerned with educating students through a process that relies almost exclusively on human resources consisting of administrators, teachers, counselors, librarians, support and service staff" (p. 325). Failure to recruit high-caliber job candidates to an organization can be costly. Regardless of the recruitment methods used, it is vitally important to generate an adequate pool of high-caliber applicants (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996).

Implementing steps to reform schools and improve student achievement requires the leadership of excellent principals and assistant principals (Greenfield, 1995; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Murphy, 1991; Murphy & Beck, 1994). Furthermore,

enhancing administrator recruitment is an urgent task given the declining numbers of individuals willing to pursue the job (McAdams, 1998) and the increased responsibilities school reform programs place on administrators (Murphy, 1991; Murphy & Beck, 1994).

## Theoretical Framework

Hiring a qualified school staff begins with the recruitment of qualified personnel to fill educational administrator positions (e.g., principals, assistant principals). Pounder and Young (1996) argued that effective recruitment and selection of school administrators continues to be a challenging human resource administration functions in educational organizations. This challenge is due, in part, to the inexact ‘science’ of attracting, screening, and identifying quality candidates to fit the complex leadership needs of schools.

A recent perspective describes recruitment as a dual decision-making process where decisions are made by both the organization and the applicant regarding employment with the organization. All decisions, by both the applicant and the organization, must be affirmative for the recruitment process to succeed (Barber, 1998; Rynes, 1991; Young & Heneman, 1986). Rynes (1991) called for more empirical studies about applicant decisions prior to the initial employment interview. Rynes stated that most recruitment research has been conducted subsequent to the first employment interview and, as a consequence, little is known about the determinants of job application behaviors. To respond to the above research call, this evaluation addressed applicant decisions made prior to the initial employment interview.

The independent variables used in this evaluation were either job vacancy characteristics (job attributes) or applicant characteristics (current or past primary teaching assignment, teacher-leader type). Because the evaluation focused on the job attributes that affect administrator attraction to a potential job, the Rynes and Barber (1990) applicant attraction model served as a theoretical framework for selecting independent and dependent variables addressed by the evaluation. The specific proposition of the Rynes and Barber (1990) model that guided this research was the manipulation of vacancy characteristics, such as job characteristics contained in the content of position announcements that influence the reactions of job applicants. Therefore, AP job attributes were manipulated by emphasizing either instructional leadership or discipline. A second theoretical framework that guided this evaluation was the Schwab et al. (1987) model of job search and evaluation. The Schwab et al. (1987) model postulates that personal characteristics influence applicant decisions in the employment process. Based on the above theoretical frameworks, job attributes, teacher-leader type, and primary current or past teaching assignment became the focus of this evaluation.

## Purpose

This evaluation had two scholarly purposes as well as several empirical research objectives. The first purpose is to respond to the call by Pounder and Young (1996)

for more empirical research about public school administrator recruitment. The second purpose is to respond to the call by Rynes (1991) for more empirical studies about applicant decisions (e.g., decision to apply for the job) that occur before the initial employment interview. Recruiting qualified individuals to serve as middle school and high school APs is important because of the leadership role APs play in managing school operations. The district needed an evaluation of its teacher-leaders as possible candidates for AP positions to overcome the emerging shortage of administrator job applicants. The AP position is also vital to principal recruitment because the AP position is typically the position an administrator holds immediately prior to pursuing the job of principal (Pounder & Young, 1996).

The issue addressed in this evaluation is whether teacher-leaders, as potential applicants for the job of AP, differ in their reactions to jobs described in formal position announcements. The term teacher-leader refers to practicing teachers who perform in the following leadership roles: (a) counselor, (b) site-based decision making (SBDM) teacher member, (c) department chair or team leader, or (d) resource teacher. The dependent variable for this evaluation consisted of job ratings of the role of AP given by teacher-leaders as potential job applicants for the job of AP. This issue, to date, has not been addressed in an empirical evaluation. Research shows that APs experience less job satisfaction than they did as teachers (Marshall & Greenfield, 1985). Research also shows that dissatisfaction occurs because the role of the AP is ambiguous; the AP deals with negative events; the AP has very few responsibilities; and the AP does not perform tasks that the principal performs (Marshall & Greenfield, 1985).

This evaluation addresses AP job attributes that teacher-leaders either find attractive or unattractive. The independent variables in this evaluation were: teacher-leader type (counselor, SBDM council member, department chair or team leader, resource teacher), current or past teaching assignment area (core content, non-core content, and job emphasis (discipline, instructional leadership)). The results of this evaluation will inform public school leaders about: (a) whether or not the job of AP could be restructured to improve the recruitment of potential AP candidates and (b) whether or not teacher-leaders are viable as potential applicants for AP vacancies.

## Research Questions

The research questions for this evaluation were as follows:

1. Does an individual's teacher-leader type (counselor, SBDM member, department chair or team leader, resource teacher) impact teacher attraction to the job of assistant principal?
2. Does an individual's current or past teaching assignment (core content, non-core content) impact teacher attraction to the job of assistant principal?
3. Does the AP job emphasis (instruction, discipline) impact teacher attraction to the job of assistant principal?
4. Do two-way or three-way interactions among teacher-leader type, current or past teaching assignment area, and job emphasis impact teacher attraction to the job of assistant principal?

## Evaluation Research Advancements

There is scant empirical evaluation research addressing the attractiveness of the assistant principalship (Pounder & Young, 1996). This evaluation was the second such study where participants role-played as potential job applicants reacting to descriptions of the assistant principal position manipulated experimentally. This evaluation was the first to examine the main and interactive effects of job attributes, teacher-leader type, and primary current or past teaching assignment. From a practical perspective, the district needed an evaluation of its teacher-leaders as possible applicants for AP positions to overcome the emerging shortage of administrator candidates.

In addition, this investigation represents one of the few efforts to use the experimental design as a personnel evaluation technique. Prior research emphasizes evaluation through the use of descriptive analyses, field survey research, and correlation studies. This study demonstrates that, when the research context warrants its use (e.g., recruitment simulations), the experimental design can be a powerful evaluation tool.

## Methods

This study was an assistant principal recruitment simulation based on past teacher and administrator recruitment studies (Pounder & Merrill, 2001; Rynes & Lawler, 1983; Winter, 1996a; Young et al., 1997). This study involved an experimental design (Campbell & Stanley, 1963) involving a  $4 \times 2 \times 2$  completely crossed fixed-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) as specified by Kirk (1995). This evaluation is one of the few in the educational personnel literature to employ the experimental design as an evaluation strategy.

The independent variables in the evaluation were: teacher-leader type (school counselor, SBDM member, department chair/team leader, resource teacher), current or past teaching assignment (core content, non-core content), and AP job attributes (instructional leadership, discipline). This evaluation attempted to identify how these factors influence the overall attractiveness of the position of assistant principal. The dependent variable was the participant's evaluation of an AP position described in a simulated job description emphasizing either instructional leadership or student discipline.

## Participants and Sampling Procedure

The population for this evaluation was all certified middle school and high school certified teacher-leaders working in the 27th largest school district in the US, located in Kentucky. The district is located in a large metropolitan area and has 150 schools serving approximately 96,000 students. The teacher-leaders were teachers who had moved into a teacher-leadership role by becoming a school counselor, a SBDM committee member, a department chair/team leader, or a resource teacher. Each study participant reacted to a job description for the position of AP that emphasized either student discipline or instructional leadership.

The sample for this evaluation study ( $N = 192$ ) was established to obtain a high level of power, the probability of detecting significant effects when the effects exist. The minimum required sample size ( $N = 192$ ) derived from a power analysis

conducted according to procedures developed by Cohen (1988) and had these specifications: a desired medium effect size ( $\omega^2 = 0.06$ ), a defined level of significance ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), and a specified power level ( $1 - \beta = 0.80$ ) (Cohen, 1988, p. 396). The evaluators selected the study participants at random from a large pool of volunteer teacher-leaders working at the research site. The participants role-played as applicants for an AP position at their current work level (middle school, high school) and rated an AP position described in a simulated job description.

### Independent Variables

This evaluation addressed the impact of three nominal-scaled independent variables on the ratings of middle or high school teacher-leaders relative to AP jobs described in simulated job descriptions. The independent variables were: (a) assistant principal job attributes (instructional leadership, discipline), (b) teacher-leader type (counselor, SBDM member, department chair/team leader, resource teacher), and (c) current or past teaching assignment (core content, non-core content).

For the teacher-leader type, the evaluators had the participants indicate a single teacher-leader role on the biographical data sheet that was their primary teacher-leader role. Teacher-leaders represented those teachers who had expanded their roles to include duties outside of the normal classroom teaching duties to include roles that encompass some form of leadership. The teacher-leader role was a variable of interest to determine if these individuals were attracted to the AP position and should become the focus of the school district's AP recruitment efforts. On the biographical data sheet, the evaluators asked the teacher-leaders to identify their teaching assignment (core content, non-core content).

The evaluators operationalized the job attributes (instructional leadership, discipline) on two separate job descriptions for an AP job. The simulated job descriptions were based on actual AP job descriptions used at the research site. Using content from actual job descriptions added realism to the simulation protocol. The AP position involves a variety job attributes including instructional leadership, building management, communication, and student discipline (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium—Standards for School Leaders (1996); Marshall, 1992; Marshall & Greenfield, 1985). The evaluators adopted an instructional leadership versus student discipline contrast for this research because instructional leadership was arguably the most important school leadership dimension in Kentucky because of this state's emphasis on improved instruction and student academic achievement on standardized tests (Petrosko, 2000).

National research about the AP position (Marshall, 1992; Marshall & Greenfield, 1985) strongly suggested APs frequently spend most of their time on student discipline and receive few opportunities to develop skills in instructional leadership. Undue emphasis on student discipline may make the AP position less attractive to teacher-leaders like the participants in this study and diminish APs' development as instructional leaders. This evaluation addressed this possible effect for the first time in the teacher-leader context.

### Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in the evaluation was an additive composite score for applicant job evaluation of an assistant principal position. The items, scales, and

scale anchors were: (a) “If offered, how likely would you be to accept an interview for the assistant principal position described?” (1 = *Very unlikely to accept*, 5 = *Very likely to accept*), and (b) “If offered, how likely would you be to accept a job offer for the assistant principal position described?” (1 = *Very unlikely to accept*, 5 = *Very likely to accept*). The above items derived from past educational studies about educational recruitment (Pounder & Merrill, 2001; Rynes & Lawler, 1983; Winter & Dunaway, 1997; Young et al., 1989, 1997).

### Pilot Study

The evaluators developed the biographical data sheet to measure these variables: age, gender, ethnicity, years teaching experience, current school level assignment, highest degree earned, administrator program status, teacher-leader role, and current or past teaching assignment. In the context of highest degree earned, the evaluators included Rank I; Rank I means the participant had a master’s degree plus 30 credit hours earned towards a doctoral degree. Next, the evaluators obtained middle and high school AP job descriptions from the district serving as the research site to provide a template for the simulated job descriptions. The evaluators modified the job descriptions to emphasize either instructional leadership or discipline and administered the instruments to a group of 46 teacher-leaders in the local school district.

After collecting the instruments, the evaluators had the participants open a sealed envelope containing a questionnaire designed to check manipulation of the job attributes variable. There were two versions of the job description one for participants who rated a student discipline-oriented job and one for participants who rated an instruction-oriented job.

An independent-sample *t*-test served to check manipulation of the job attributes variable. In this analysis, the score on the questionnaire rating scale was the dependent variable. The scale ranges from 1 = *more focused on student discipline* to 7 = *more focused on instruction*. The independent variable was type of job rated (student discipline, instructional leadership). The results of the *t*-test verified that the manipulation of the job attribute variables was perceived by the pilot participants as intended ( $t = 10.5, p < 0.001$ ). The next step in the pilot procedure was a reliability assessment for the dependent variable composite score. The results indicated the two-item composite score was internally consistent. Coefficient alpha for the composite score was 0.97, a level of reliability that greatly exceeded the minimum (0.60) recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) for use of a composite score in statistical analysis.

### Data Collection Procedures

The evaluators collected data from teacher-leaders both in person and through the mail. The methods to collect data through mailed instruments were those recommended by Dillman (1978). To achieve the desired 60% response rate, participants were given return envelopes with return address labels identifying respondents by name. After the third week of the initial mailing, non-respondents received a brief letter as a reminder to complete and return the initial research instruments. To further increase the response rate, after the fifth week, the evaluators sent a third mailing to non-respondents containing the instruments from the initial mailing. The teacher-leaders participated on a voluntary basis by completing four tasks: (a)

reading an advised consent form, (b) completing a biographical data sheet, (c) reading one of the two versions of an AP job description, and (d) completing an applicant job evaluation instrument. After collecting the data, the evaluators used a table of random numbers to select 192 individuals to be the study participants.

## Results

The statistical analysis for this evaluation consisted of three steps. The first step was to compute descriptive statistics and frequencies to create a demographic profile of the study participants. The second step was to conduct a reliability analysis for the composite scale serving as the dependent variable in the research. The third step was to compute a three-way ANOVA to analyze the impact of the three independent variables of interest on the dependent variable. The ANOVA served as the primary statistical analysis for the evaluation.

### Participants and Descriptive Statistics

The study participants were teacher-leaders from four groups (counselors, SBDM members, department chairs/team leaders, resource teachers). The evaluators

**Table 1** Descriptive statistics for counselors ( $N = 48$ )

Variable	<i>n</i>	%	Mean	SD	Range
Age (Years)			44.2	9.1	29–56
Gender					
Male	13	27.1			
Female	35	72.9			
Ethnicity					
African-American	16	33.3			
White American	31	64.6			
Hispanic American	1	2.1			
Years teaching			13.6	7.1	1–32
Years counseling			7.4	6.2	0–22
Certification					
No interest	20	41.6			
Some interest	7	14.6			
In program	4	8.3			
Certified	17	35.5			
School level					
Middle	18	37.5			
High	30	62.5			
Highest degree					
BS/BA	0	0.0			
MS/MA	6	12.5			
Rank I	40	83.3			
EdD/PhD	2	4.2			
Primary teaching resp.					
Core content	24	50.0			
Non-core content	24	50.0			



administered the instruments both in-person (counselors) and through the mail (SBDM members, department chairs/team leaders, resource teachers). A total of 561 teacher-leaders volunteered to be participants, yielding a 71% response rate. This response rate exceeded the 60% response rate considered to be “good” according to Babbie (1990). Using the sampling procedures described earlier, the evaluators randomly selected 192 teacher-leaders to be the study participants. Based on a power analysis (Cohen, 1988), each of the 16 cells contained 12 research participants.

Descriptive statistics for the group of counselors, SBDM teachers, department chairs/team leaders, and resource teachers are displayed on Tables 1–4 (respectively). In comparing the four groups, Tables 1–4 indicate the four groups were similar with respect to age. Most members of each group were females, although females were less dominant for the SBDM teacher group (males = 41.7%). Whites also dominated the Department Chair/Team Leader group (White = 91.7%). All groups, except the resource teachers (experience = 20.7 years) averaged about 13 years of teaching experience. About a third of the Counselors and SBDM teachers were principal certified, while very few of the Department Chairs/Team Leaders (8.3%) and Resource Teachers (14.6%) were principal certified (Table 5). A majority of all groups had progressed to either a master’s degree or Rank I as their highest degree earned. Coefficient alpha for the composite score (job rating) was 0.97, and exceeded the minimum (0.60) recommended by Nunnally & Bernstein (1994) for use of a composite score in statistical analysis.

**Table 2** Descriptive statistics for SBDM teachers (*N* = 48)

Variable	<i>n</i>	%	Mean	SD	Range
Age (Years)			42.1	9.9	23–57
Gender					
Male	20	41.7			
Female	28	58.3			
Ethnicity					
African-American	10	20.8			
White American	38	79.2			
Years teaching			13.3	8.5	2–29
Certification					
No interest	14	29.2			
Some interest	11	22.9			
In program	10	20.8			
Certified	13	27.1			
School level					
Middle	24	50.0			
High	24	50.0			
Highest degree					
BS/BA	3	6.3			
MS/MA	19	39.5			
Rank I	25	52.1			
EdD/PhD	1	2.1			
Primary teaching resp.					
Core content	24	50.0			
Non-core content	24	50.0			

**Table 3** Descriptive statistics for department chairs/team leaders ( $N = 48$ )

Variable	<i>n</i>	%	Mean	SD	Range
Age (Years)			41.4	9.66	25–60
Gender					
Male	9	18.8			
Female	39	81.3			
Ethnicity					
African-American	4	8.3			
White American	44	91.7			
Years teaching			12.67	8.8	3–33
Certification					
No interest	30	62.5			
Some interest	10	20.8			
In program	4	8.3			
Certified	4	8.3			
School level					
Middle	23	47.9			
High	25	52.1			
Highest degree					
BS/BA	4	8.3			
MS/MA	29	60.4			
Rank I	15	31.3			
EdD/PhD	0	0.0			
Primary teaching resp.					
Core content	24	50.0			
Non-core content	24	50.0			

### Inferential Statistics

The statistical procedure used to analyze the influence of the independent variables on rating of the AP job was a  $4 \times 2 \times 2$  factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) with 16 cells containing an equal number of participants ( $n = 12$ ). To analyze the group mean differences, the evaluators performed the ANOVA procedure. The results are in Table 6. Based on an alpha level of 0.05, there was a significant main effect for current or past teaching assignment (core content, non-core content) [ $F(1, 176) = 8.5, p < 0.05$ ]. Participants whose primary teaching responsibility was in core content subjects (i.e., math, science, social studies, English/language arts) rated the job significantly higher ( $M = 6.9$ ) than those participants whose primary teaching responsibility was in non-core content subjects (e.g., art, music, ECE, technical, other). ECE refers to exceptional child education as related to special education students.

To assess the practical significance of the significant main effect, the evaluators computed the omega-squared statistic (Keppel, 1991, pp. 222–223). Omega-squared represents the proportion of variance in a dependent variable accounted for by a significant main or interaction effect. From the computed omega-squared ( $\omega^2 = 0.035$ ) the evaluators determined that current or past teaching assignment explained 3.5% of the variance in job rating. The magnitude of this omega-squared fell between the levels described by Keppel (1991, p. 74) for a small effect size ( $\omega^2 = 0.01$ ) and a medium effect size ( $\omega^2 = 0.06$ ).

**Table 4** Descriptive statistics for resource teachers ( $N = 48$ )

Variable	<i>n</i>	%	Mean	SD	Range
Age (Years)			48.02	6.66	31–59
Gender					
Male	11	22.9			
Female	37	77.1			
Ethnicity					
African-American	11	22.9			
White American	34	70.8			
Native American	2	4.2			
Other	1	2.1			
Years teaching			20.7	7.66	6–35
Certification					
No interest	19	39.6			
Some interest	16	33.3			
In program	6	12.5			
Certified	7	14.6			
School level					
Middle	17	35.4			
High	31	64.6			
Highest degree					
BS/BA	0	0.0			
MS/MA	13	27.1			
Rank I	32	66.7			
EdD/PhD	3	6.3			
Primary teaching resp.					
Core content	24	50.0			
Non-core content	24	50.0			

**Table 5** Summary of cell means and standard deviations

Job attributes	Instruction		Discipline		
	CC	NCC	CC	NCC	
Teaching assignment					
Teacher leader					
Counselor	M	7.2	5.8	6.3	5.5
	SD	(2.5)	(3.2)	(2.9)	(2.6)
SBDM member	M	6.9	5.5	5.5	7.2
	SD	(3.0)	(2.8)	(3.1)	(2.7)
Dept. chair/Team leader	M	7.7	6.3	8.9	5.0
	SD	(2.8)	(2.6)	(2.1)	(2.7)
Resource Teacher	M	7.8	6.7	5.1	4.2
	SD	(2.8)	(3.2)	(2.9)	(2.4)

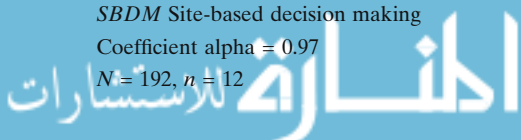
Independent variables: job attributes (instruction, discipline), teaching assignment (core content [CC], non-core content [NCC], teacher-leader type (counselor, SBDM member, department chair/team leader, resource teacher)

Means and standard deviations are based on additive composite scores.

SBDM Site-based decision making

Coefficient alpha = 0.97

$N = 192, n = 12$



**Table 6** Analysis of variance for applicant rating by participant job attributes, teacher-leader type, and teaching assignment

Source of variance	<i>df</i>	SS	MS	<i>F</i>
Job attributes (JA)	1	29.3	29.3	3.8
Teacher-leader type (TL)	3	28.4	9.5	1.2
Teaching assignment (TA)	1	66.5	66.5	8.5*
JA × TL	3	57.7	19.2	2.5
JA × TA	1	1.5	1.5	0.2
TL × TA	3	45.7	15.2	2.0
JA × TL × TA	3	48.6	16.2	2.1
Error	176	1,373.9	7.8	
Total	191	1,651.6		

$N = 192, n = 12$

\* $p < 0.01$

Another result of the ANOVA procedure revealed that the AP job description variable (instruction, discipline) was significant ( $p = 0.05$ ). Based on that finding, the evaluators analyzed the group mean scores for instruction and discipline for each of the teacher-leader groups. The analysis rendered another meaningful finding. The resource teachers rated AP jobs emphasizing instructional leadership ( $M = 7.3$ ) significantly higher than AP jobs emphasizing student discipline ( $M = 4.6$ ). The procedure used to conduct this analysis was the independent samples  $t$ -test ( $t = 3.2, p < 0.01$ ).

To analyze the effect size for the  $t$ -test, Cohen developed the  $d$  statistic (Cohen, 1988, p. 20). The  $d$  statistic expresses the difference in mean scores in standard deviation units. The group mean scores in this analysis differed by approximately six tenths of a standard deviation. Cohen (1988, pp. 25–27) described the  $d$  value for “small” ( $d = 0.2$ ), “medium” ( $d = 0.5$ ), and “large” ( $d = 0.8$ ) effect sizes. According to these criteria, the result in this evaluation (i.e.,  $d = 0.59$ ) was a medium effect size.

The significant  $t$ -test result represents an exploration of the data following inspection of the ANOVA results. It is tantamount to performing one part of a simple effects analysis of the job attributes by teacher-leader interaction effect. The result obtained should be viewed cautiously. It would be beneficial to replicate a portion of this evaluation with data from a replication sample. A discussion of the findings described above, and their implications for recruitment practice and future research, appear in the next section.

## Discussion

School administrator recruitment has become a problematic task for school districts nationwide. The task of recruiting qualified administrators is increasingly difficult due to shrinking applicant pools. This is a national phenomenon (McAdams, 1998). Yet, despite the growing shortage of qualified applicants, few empirical evaluations about school districts’ internal pools of potential applicants for administrator positions exist. Performing such internal personnel evaluations would seem to be urgent if school districts are to be staffed adequately with administrative personnel. The school district that served as research site needed an evaluation of its teacher-

leaders as possible applicants for AP positions to overcome the emerging shortage of administrator candidates.

Despite the need for school administrator recruitment research and evaluation, administrator recruitment has received little empirical attention (Pounder & Young, 1996). Pending retirements and increased accountability have made the job of assistant principal harder to fill (Duke, 1998; Golanda, 1991; Hess, 1985). The findings of this evaluation have implications for future recruitment practice and future research.

### Implications for Recruitment Practice

This evaluation is one of the first studies to examine, empirically, reactions of teacher-leaders to simulated recruitment advertisements for the job of assistant principal. An initial inspection of the demographic makeup of the sample of teacher-leaders would indicate that this group consists of more African-Americans and more females than the current teacher pool in the school district. Currently, the school district that served as the research site consists of 12.8% African-American certified teachers (Greer, 2002). The percentage of African-American teacher-leaders in this study (21.4%) exceeds the district average, which indicates that this pool of teacher-leaders may be a viable group from which to recruit African-Americans as well as females into administration.

The district's student body is 33% African-American (Rodosky, 2003). Currently, the district principal pool consists of 24% African-Americans (Ricciardi, 2003), which indicates that the district is addressing the need for more African-Americans in its administrative ranks to create a school climate that reflects racial diversity. This percentage far exceeds the national averages for minority principals, which currently is approximately 8% (Petzko et al., 2002). Therefore, the teacher-leader group in this study, and the current pool of principals in the school district examined, both contain higher percentages of African-Americans than the general teacher population. This may indicate that serving as a teacher-leader may be a precursor to entering school administration and therefore, the teacher-leader pool should be further explored as a source for potential administrators.

Winter and Morgenthal (2002) described the possible disincentive (i.e., bias against females) for minorities and women to apply for administrative positions due to past bias against those groups. To overcome this possible disincentive, school districts could consider creating mentor programs for teacher-leaders, particularly African-American and female teacher-leaders. While most women have not had mentors, many of those who have been successful in acquiring administrative positions have had mentors (Gardiner et al., 2000). Such mentoring programs might encourage teacher-leaders, who consist of more African-Americans and females than does the general certified teacher pool, to enter the administrative ranks.

If school districts, such as the one examined in this evaluation, can achieve better gender and ethnic balance within the administrative ranks, they would be addressing the recommendation of Pounder and Merrill (2001), who asserted that women were an untapped source of school administrators. Targeting women for administrative positions would also address what some researchers claim is systematic bias against women in the administrator hiring process (Glazer, 1991; Shakeshaft, 1989).

Using the framework of the Schwab et al. (1987) model, personal characteristics of the teacher-leaders revealed a significant main effect for current or past teaching

assignment. Teacher-leaders whose primary teaching responsibility was in the core content areas (math, science, social studies, English/language arts) found the job more attractive than those from the non-core content areas. A possible reason for the significant main effect for past teaching assignment is that core-content teachers may be more academic content driven. They may view the instruction in core content areas as the primary function of schooling. Further, if core-content teachers are more focused on academics and instruction, this may mean they are more aligned than other teachers with the reform movement (Kentucky Education Reform Act, 1990). At the research site, the demand for improved instruction and student achievement requires that APs be more focused on instructional leadership.

Core content teachers may believe their content areas (e.g., math, science) are more complicated than non-content areas (e.g., health/physical education) and, therefore, be more attracted to a complex task such as school administration. Non-core content teachers may have less confidence in their ability to understand the complexities inherent in reforming pedagogy and instructional practices, particularly in the core content areas. The above statement is speculation, but presents a rationale worthy of future investigation.

Using the framework of the Rynes and Barber (1990) applicant attraction model, manipulations of the assistant principal job attributes affected the number of teacher-leaders attracted to the assistant principalship. Statistical analysis revealed resource teachers were more interested in the AP job when it emphasized instructional leadership than when it emphasized student discipline. This is useful information for recruiting administrators in that it helps recruiters identify a group that may be viable for the AP position, and determine what type of information should be included in recruitment media (i.e., information about the instructional role of the AP position).

Some researchers (Golanda, 1991; Marshall, 1992; Marshall & Greenfield, 1985) have suggested that restructuring the AP position to emphasize duties other than student discipline would make the job more attractive to potential applicants. The implication for administrator recruitment and development appears to be that the AP job should be restructured to include more instructional duties and less disciplinary duties if the goal is to make the position more attractive to resource teachers or other groups of people who are motivated by instructional leadership.

This research also examined the two rating items forming the composite score: (a) "If offered, how likely would you be to accept an interview for the assistant principal position described?" (1 = *Very unlikely to accept*, 5 = *Very likely to accept*) and (b) "If offered, how likely would you be to accept a job offer for the assistant principal position described?" (1 = *Very unlikely to accept*, 5 = *Very likely to accept*). For the entire sample, the ratings were slightly above the mid-point on the five-point scales. This would seem to suggest that teacher-leaders had at least moderate interest in the AP position. Based on this result, the teacher-leader group may be a worthwhile group to target for administrative recruitment. Teacher-leaders exhibited a moderate amount of interest in the job, and had already moved into a leadership role, suggesting possible interest in a leadership role such as the AP position.

### Implications for Research

In terms of research methodology, this evaluation demonstrated the use of recruitment simulation techniques to evaluate potential applicants for AP positions.

As was the case in previous teacher recruitment studies (Young et al., 1993, 1989), the simulation technique appears to be effective for assessing administrative positions. This evaluation shows that the simulation technique can be used to examine the viability of a group of potential applicants (i.e., teacher-leaders) for AP positions not previously studied. The Rynes and Barber (1990) model postulates that job attributes affect the overall attractiveness of the job. The results of this evaluation supported that hypothesis in the case of resource teachers.

There are many variables, yet to be investigated, that may affect an individual's attraction to an AP vacancy. Future research on the AP position should include additional variables such as economic variables, demographic variables, school location, training opportunities, diversification of job duties, and potential restructuring of the job. Two variables that merit future investigation include school level (middle, high) and applicant gender. Future AP studies should also address recruitment techniques such as recruitment interviews, recruitment advertisements, recruitment videos, and supervisor sponsorship. Similar studies with respect to teacher recruitment already exist (Rynes & Lawler, 1983; Winter, 1996a,b; Young et al., 1989, 1997), but no such studies exist relative to the position of AP. Further, future research could examine job characteristics and personal characteristics for principals, superintendents, and central office administrators.

Future experimental research might also address inducements to determine which incentives are most effective for internal and external recruiting of AP. Incentive programs may be needed to attract individuals to the AP position, especially for jobs located at low achieving schools.

## Limitations

The results obtained from this research were subject to certain limitations. The study participants reacted to jobs as part of a simulation under experimental conditions. Individuals reacting under actual recruitment conditions might have reacted differently than did the participants in this study. The participants in this evaluation also were employed by a single school district in a single region of the country. Teacher-leaders from other regions of the country might have reacted differently than did the participants in this evaluation. In general, future researchers might conduct a follow up study on a sample of the participants to see if those who rated the AP job more attractive eventually did apply for the job. Adding a follow up study would strengthen the substance and methodology of this kind of research.

## Conclusion

There is a void in the research about administrator recruitment. This evaluation provides new knowledge about recruiting potential APs. Given that the AP position is the first step into administration, and with large numbers of pending retirements among school administrators, it is important for practitioners and researchers to pursue more empirical knowledge about the job.

Based on the findings of this evaluation, the district adopted new internal recruitment methods. The district formulated the objectives of recruiting exceptional teacher candidates into university principal preparation programs and

providing strong instructional leadership preparation taught by exemplary principals, including retired principals hired to provide mentorship and training. The district plan involves using a cadre of experienced principals to serve as adjunct instructors working closely with a university professor to design and deliver curriculum and mentoring to aspiring principals during the initial year of their preparation program. Further, the district established a policy to partially fund tuition costs of certification courses for a number of exemplary candidates.

Approaches, such as those described above, capitalize on two advantages of internal recruitment (Rebore, 2001, p. 96): (a) hiring individuals from within the organization improves morale among the unit's current employees and (b) recruiting internally allows the recruiter to have greater knowledge about the skills and abilities of the job candidate than would be possible when recruiting individuals from outside the organization.

Educational leaders have a responsibility to recruit the most qualified individuals for administrative positions and explore every possible pool of viable job candidates. Excellent school leadership has an important influence on such vital school outcomes as student achievement, which is especially important in reform states like Kentucky. State and district educational leaders must view administrator recruitment as an important component of school reform. This evaluation provides research approaches and tools to address this vital issue.

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