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Implementation of response to intervention models and job satisfaction of school psychologists

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2010

ABSTRACT

Implementation of Response to Intervention Models and Job Satisfaction of School
Psychologists

by

Stephanie Lois Hill

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
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Education

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ABSTRACT

Previous research has indicated that school psychologists have greater job satisfaction when they engage in more intervention and consultation activities and fewer assessment activities. The use of response to intervention (RTI) as a way to identify specific learning disabilities is a recent development in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act that involves more intervention activities for school psychologists and provides earlier interventions for students. The way that RTI is implemented may affect job satisfaction of school psychologists. Grounded in the theory of work adjustment, this study used a causal comparative design to examine if there is a significant difference between 2 models of RTI and job satisfaction of school psychologists in a southwestern US state. Survey data were collected using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire from a convenience sample of school psychologists using a prescriptive model (leading to decisions of eligibility) of RTI ($n = 26$) and those using a flexible model (interventions and assessments to determine eligibility) of RTI ($n = 26$). ANOVA was conducted to determine if there were significant differences in school psychologists' job satisfaction, by group (flexible RTI vs. prescriptive RTI), years of experience (less than 6 years vs. 6 years or more), age (less than 40 years vs. 40 years and older), and gender (male vs. female). Results revealed similar levels of job satisfaction for school psychologists using both flexible and prescriptive models of RTI. Findings are important because they provide information about establishing and maintaining job satisfaction of school psychologists. This study may influence social change by assisting school districts in making decisions about RTI that directly impact educational outcomes for students.

Implementation of Response to Intervention Models and Job Satisfaction of School
Psychologists

by

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

In 2004 Congress passed amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that greatly altered the model of eligibility assessment and decision making for specific learning disabilities (SLD). Although the definition of SLD did not change, the amendments allow local education agencies to “use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention as part of the evaluation procedures” (Pub. L., No. 108-446 § 614, 118 Stat. 2706, 2004). As a result, school psychologists are no longer required to use the traditional IQ-achievement discrepancy model as the sole criteria when determining SLD eligibility. The previous model of eligibility was based upon a significant discrepancy between a student’s cognitive ability and academic achievement as measured by standardized test instruments. According to IDEA (2004), a response to intervention (RTI) model may now be implemented to aid in the identification of students with SLD. This paradigm shift has been met with mixed responses from the academic community (Barnes & Harlacher, 2008; Batsche, Kavale, & Kovalski, 2006; Dykeman, 2006).

RTI has been criticized as lacking clear guidelines and descriptions regarding its implementation (Kavale & Spaulding, 2008; Ofiesh, 2006). RTI is based on fixed principles, but its features are diverse and flexible (Barnes & Harlacher, 2008). This flexibility may lead to ambiguity in that the features of RTI may be applied by school districts differently (Shinn, 2007; Ysseldyke, 2005). These varying features may include the number of tiers of interventions (Marston, 2005; Moore-Brown, Montgomery,

Bielinski & Shubin, 2005), the roles of the teacher and psychologist (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2005), and type or selection of interventions (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006b; Noell & Gansle, 2006).

School districts vary in how they implement RTI as a means for determining special education eligibility. This is a problem because the way that RTI is implemented may affect the job satisfaction of school psychologists. Some school districts use RTI data combined with norm-referenced testing used in the discrepancy model (Flanagan et al., 2006; Fletcher et al., 2005; Holdnack & Weiss, 2006). For the purpose of this study, the combination of RTI data with norm-referenced testing was termed a flexible model of RTI because school psychologists using this model have greater flexibility in determining how to use RTI data. A flexible RTI model is sometimes referred to in the literature as a problem-solving model (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006a; Hale, Kaufman, Naglieri, & Kavale, 2006). Some school districts rely solely on RTI data in making decisions regarding special education eligibility. For the purpose of this study, the use of RTI data for determining eligibility was termed a prescriptive model of RTI because districts subscribing to this model of RTI generally have set procedures for its use (Hale et al., 2006). This model of RTI is sometimes referred to in the literature as standard protocol (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006a; Hale et al., 2006). To date, there has not yet been an investigation on whether these two models of RTI affect the job satisfaction of school psychologists.

Anderson, Hohenshil, and Brown (1984) were among the first researchers to conduct a national study investigating levels of job satisfaction among school

psychologists. They found that most psychologists were satisfied with most aspects of their jobs. However, dissatisfaction was expressed in the areas of advancement and school policies/practices. The authors noted with the addition of PL 94-142, many school psychologists were forced to spend more time conducting initial evaluations and triennial reevaluations. They believed that the expertise of school psychologists was not being used due to the changes in the law. Results of the Anderson et al. study revealed that 41% of the psychologists surveyed planned to leave their positions in the next 5 years and 15% noted that they planned to leave the profession.

Almost 15 years later, Brown, Hohenshil, and Brown (1998) replicated the study by Anderson et al. (1984) noting that many changes in regulations and services had occurred since the initial study. Results of the Brown et al. study revealed that 86% of school psychologists surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs. Areas of dissatisfaction reported by school psychologists were identical to the original study. School psychologists reported dissatisfaction with school system policies/procedures and opportunities for advancement. The authors noted that dissatisfaction with policies and procedures is thought to occur when there is a discrepancy between what psychologists would like to do (their ideal role) and how they actually function due to restraints of policies and procedures. However, unlike the Anderson et al. study, the authors found that most psychologists (91%) planned to remain in the profession of school psychology.

After the reauthorization of IDEA (2004), another replication study of job satisfaction was conducted by Worrell, Skaggs, and Brown (2006). Like the two previous studies, this study confirmed that the profession has consistently had high levels of job

satisfaction, with 90% of the participants indicating they were satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs. The authors found that school psychologists surveyed desired to perform fewer traditional psychoeducational evaluations and wanted to focus more time on direct intervention, problem-solving consultation, and applied research. These results supported an early study by Proctor and Steadman (2003) noting that school psychologists who have diverse roles are more satisfied with their jobs than those who spend the majority of their time engaged in assessment-related activities. Overall, school psychologists surveyed preferred to spend less time performing assessment-related activities and more time providing direct intervention and problem-solving consultation (Brown, Holcombe, Bolen, & Thomson, 2006; Hosp & Reschly, 2002). The implementation of RTI following IDEA (2004) allows psychologists the opportunity to perform these desired activities. However, to date, there is a gap in the literature regarding the effects of RTI on the perceived job satisfaction of school psychologists. This study investigated if a significant difference exists between two different models of RTI and job satisfaction among school psychologists in Arizona. The results of this study provide information regarding how best to implement RTI while retaining professionals in the field of school psychology. Chapter 2 contains a more detailed discussion about the implementation of RTI and factors influencing job satisfaction of school psychologists.

Statement of the Problem

The current body of literature does not address whether level of choice in varying models of RTI affects job satisfaction of school psychologists. While there is an abundance of literature pertaining to the implementation of RTI (Alonzo, Tindal, &

Robinson, 2008; Duhon, Mesmer, Gregerson, & Witt, 2009; Mesmer & Mesmer, 2008) and the use of RTI when conducting psychoeducational evaluations (Berninger, 2006; Dykeman, 2006; Flanagan, Ortiz, Alfonso, & Dynda, 2006), there has not yet been an investigation on whether various models of RTI affect job satisfaction of school psychologists.

The literature contains a number of possible factors influencing job satisfaction of school psychologists (Anderson et al., 1984; Guest, 2000; VanVoorhis & Levinson, 2006). Miller, Witt, and Finley (1981) found that flexibility and freedom were identified by school psychologists as areas of satisfaction. Wright and Thomas (1982) found that school psychologists with a high need for clarity tended to experience more dissatisfaction and job-related tension. RTI has been touted in the literature as providing increased flexibility in assessments conducted by school psychologists (Burns, Jacob, & Wagner, 2008; Feifer, 2008). However, it has also been criticized as being ambiguous and lacking clarity in guidelines for its implementation (Kavale & Spaulding, 2008; Ofiesh, 2006). This study investigated whether there is a significant difference between two models of RTI and job satisfaction of school psychologists.

Nature of the Study

This study is a causal comparative design using a survey method to examine if there is a significant difference between two models of RTI and job satisfaction of school psychologists in Arizona. A factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if there were differences in school psychologists' job satisfaction, by group (flexible RTI model vs. prescriptive RTI model), years of experience (less than 6 years

vs. 6 years or more), age (less than 40 years vs. 40 years and older), and gender (male vs. female). Survey data were collected using a convenience sample of 52 school psychologists from eight districts within the state of Arizona. School psychologists from two districts that use a prescriptive model of RTI and school psychologists from six districts using a flexible model of RTI were invited to participate in this study. For the purpose of this study, the combination of RTI data with norm-referenced testing was termed a flexible model of RTI. An RTI model where school districts rely solely on RTI data for the determination of special education eligibility was termed a prescriptive model of RTI. The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) was used to obtain data regarding levels of job satisfaction of school psychologists using both prescriptive and flexible models of RTI. The MSQ measures job satisfaction in 20 areas using a 5-item scale. The MSQ provides a total score that is a continuous/interval level variable. Data were analyzed using an ANOVA and associated F test. The F test allowed for an overall comparison on whether group means differ.

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: Is there a significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive)?

H1_o: There is no significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive).

H1_a: There is a significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive).

RQ2: Is there a significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and years of experience (less than 6 years vs. 6 years or more)?

H2_o: There is no significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and years of experience (less than 6 years vs. 6 years or more).

H2_a: There is a significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and years of experience (less than 6 years vs. 6 years or more).

RQ3: Is there a significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and age (less than 40 years vs. 40 years and older)?

H3_o: There is no significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and age (less than 40 years vs. 40 years and older).

H3_a: There is a significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and age (less than 40 years vs. 40 years and older).

RQ4: Is there a significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and gender (male vs. female)?

H4_o: There is no significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and gender (male vs. female).

H4_a: There is a significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and gender (male vs. female).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this causal comparative analysis was to determine whether there is a significant difference between the job satisfaction of school psychologists in Arizona who use a prescriptive model of RTI and those who use a flexible model of RTI. This study will aide school administration in determining how best to implement RTI in their districts. Results of this study may lead to more informed decisions about the implementation of RTI as it relates to the profession of school psychology. The results have implications for school district adminstration and school psychologists.

Theoretical Base

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in the theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1954), the theory of work adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984), and the range of affect theory (Locke, 1976). Maslow (1954) asserted that human behavior is determined by a combination of motivational and environmental forces. Individuals act in response to unfulfilled needs. Maslow espoused that these needs can be categorized into a hierarchy containing five levels: basic needs, safety needs, belongingness and love, esteem needs, and the need for self-actualization. According to the theory of human motivation, as lower level needs are met, higher level needs arise. Individuals are motivated to attain fulfillment of the needs just above their current positions on the motivational hierarchy (Maslow, 1971). Individuals who have reached self-actualization, the highest level, are motivated by a need for growth that Maslow (1971) termed *metaneeds*. These individuals identify with their work as part of themselves and their work is metamotivated rather than motivated by basic need

fulfillment. According to Maslow (1971) it is at this level that individuals seek jobs that embody their values and view their work as a calling.

The theory of work adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) defines work as a means for personal adjustment while encompassing the values of the individual and society. This theory shares features of Maslow's (1954) theory in that individuals engage in work as a means for satisfying needs. However, more emphasis is placed on the dynamic relationship between the individual and the work environment. The environment and the individual must continue to meet each others' needs in order to sustain the interaction. Dawis and Lofquist termed this reciprocal interaction *correspondence*, noting that work adjustment occurs when correspondence is achieved and maintained. Satisfaction results when the work environment fulfills the individual's needs, values, and expectations.

The MSQ, which was used as a data collection tool in this study, was created in response to research from the Work Adjustment Project at the University of Minnesota (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967). The MSQ measures an individual's satisfaction with 20 aspects of the work environment that correlate to 20 psychological needs. Job satisfaction on this scale takes into consideration the relationship between the person and environmental factors grounded in the theory of work adjustment.

Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction in his range of affect theory as a discrepancy between what individuals value in their jobs and what they actually have. Like Dawis and Lofquist (1984), Locke noted that satisfaction is an emotional response dependent upon an interaction between a person and the environment. However, unlike

Maslow's (1954) theory, the range of affect theory distinguishes between values and needs. Locke clarified job satisfaction as resulting from one's perception that the job allows the fulfillment of values to the degree that those values match one's needs. Locke claimed that values influence actions and thoughts rather than needs. A more extensive discussion of these theories will be provided in chapter 2.

Definition of Terms

Discrepancy model: A statistical model of determining the presence of a specific learning disability by comparing IQ and achievement using standardized measures (Fletcher, Francis, Morris, & Lyon, 2005). Before the reauthorization of IDEA (2004), public education agencies were required to determine if a significant discrepancy was present between IQ and achievement before identifying a student as having a learning disability (Feifer, 2008; Fletcher, Coulter, Reschly, & Vaughn, 2004).

Flexible model of RTI: A model of eligibility for specific learning disabilities that combines components of RTI with norm-referenced testing used in the discrepancy model (Flanagan, et al., 2006; Fletcher, et al., 2005; Holdnack & Weiss, 2006). A flexible model of RTI is sometimes referred to in the literature as a problem-solving model (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006a; Hale et al., 2006). For the purpose of this study, school districts using a flexible model of RTI include RTI data as part of the prereferral process, but make decisions regarding special education eligibility based upon standardized testing.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA): Federal special education law that specifies guidelines of eligibility for services. The law was initially enacted as PL 94-142 and later renamed Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

(IDEA). IDEA was reauthorized in 2004 and renamed IDEIA (Berninger, 2006). It is frequently cited in the literature as IDEA, 2004 (Burns et al., 2008; Kavale & Spaulding, 2008).

Job satisfaction: A pleasurable emotional response in relation to the appraisal of one's work (Anderson et al., 1984; Locke, 1976); an internal measure of how well the work environment fulfills the individual's requirements (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984).

Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ): The MSQ is a standardized survey instrument based on the theory of work adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). The MSQ measures job satisfaction in 20 areas of the work environment using a 5-item Likert scale ranging from *not satisfied* to *extremely satisfied*. The MSQ has published reliability and validity information that is adequate (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984).

Prescriptive model of RTI: A model of eligibility for specific learning disabilities that includes fixed tiers increasing in intensity of interventions at each level (Barnes & Harlacher, 2008; Marston, 2005). This model is sometimes referred to in the literature as standard protocol (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006a; Hale et al., 2006). For the purpose of this study, school districts using a prescriptive model of RTI allow teams to make decisions regarding special education eligibility based upon RTI data.

Public Law 94-142 (PL 94-142): Initial federal special education law for educational handicapping conditions enacted in 1975; later renamed Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Berninger, 2006).

Response to intervention (RTI): An alternative approach to educational service delivery in which all students are provided appropriate levels of evidence-based

instruction according to their specific academic needs (Barnes & Harlacher, 2008; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006a). A student's response to intervention is closely monitored and failure to respond, under IDEA (2004), can be used to determine eligibility for special education under the category of SLD (Batsche et al., 2006; Danielson, Doolittle, & Bradley, 2007).

Specific learning disability (SLD): According to IDEA (2004), SLD is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. § 300.8 [c] (10).

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations

Assumptions

There are several assumptions of this study involving the design. This study assumed that the MSQ, while designed for use in a corporate setting, was an appropriate measure for identifying levels of job satisfaction of school psychologists within the school setting. Another assumption was that the sample selected was appropriate for this study.

Other assumptions of this study involved the use and implementation of RTI. It was assumed that individual schools consistently employed the district's model of RTI. Another assumption was that RTI was sufficiently implemented to allow school personnel, including school psychologists, to have confidence that interventions were implemented with integrity. Finally, it was assumed that school psychologists were involved in the data collection process of RTI.

Limitations

Survey data were collected from a convenience sample of 52 school psychologists within the state of Arizona. This limited geographical sample may affect the ability to generalize the results of this study to larger populations. Additionally, school psychologists cannot be randomly assigned into groups because the groups already exist: school psychologists in districts using a prescriptive model of RTI and school psychologists in districts using a more flexible model of RTI. This study only examined the General Satisfaction scale of the MSQ. Other scales may reveal information pertaining to job satisfaction in specific areas. Additionally, only school psychologists employed in districts using RTI were invited to participate in this study. Results of this study cannot be generalized to school psychologists in districts not using RTI. Finally, there may be confounding variables that affect job satisfaction of school psychologists in both groups. These limitations will be addressed in detail in chapter 3.

Scope and Delimitations

Surveys were distributed to school psychologists in eight school districts in Arizona. Results of this study are limited to school psychologists within this geographical area. Other states may vary in the implementation of RTI and may also have other issues influencing job satisfaction.

This study included all school psychologists practicing in the eight public school districts chosen for participation within the state of Arizona. It did not include school psychologists working in private or charter schools. This study also did not include school psychologists not employed by a public school district implementing RTI. Surveys

were distributed during the 2009-2010 school year. Data collected may not represent perspectives held by school psychologists in the future or school psychologists in other states.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the current body of literature in that there had been no investigation of whether level of choice in the model of RTI affects job satisfaction among school psychologists. Levels of job satisfaction have been found to be related to retention of employees, attendance, and overall job performance (Huebner & Mills, 1994; Levinson, Fetchkan, & Hohenshil, 1988; Martin & Schinke, 1998). A study of factors influencing the job satisfaction of school psychologists is important to educational systems and school-aged populations because school psychologists are often relied upon to make critical decisions regarding services to children. The job satisfaction of school psychologists may have a direct impact on the quality and quantity of psychological services provided to children within the school system (VanVoorhis & Levinson, 2006).

There is currently a national shortage of school psychologists (Graves & Wright, 2007; VanVoorhis & Levinson, 2006). Studies prior to IDEA (2004) allowing the use of RTI indicate that approximately one third of school psychologists surveyed desired to leave the profession (Huebner, 1993; Huebner & Mills, 1994). It is important that school districts have current information pertaining to factors of RTI on the job satisfaction of school psychologists in order to make informed decisions regarding its implementation. This study promotes positive social change by providing critical information regarding

implications of various models of RTI on the job satisfaction of school psychologists to improve school systems and psychological services afforded to children.

Summary

This chapter introduced the nature and significance of the research study and provided an overview regarding the theoretical base and methodology of the study. School districts in Arizona vary in how they implement RTI as a means for determining SLD eligibility. This is a problem because the way that RTI is implemented may affect the job satisfaction of school psychologists. This study investigated whether there is a significant difference between the job satisfaction of school psychologists by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive). Chapter 1 included an introduction to the research questions and hypotheses as well as a brief overview of the assumptions, scope, limitations, and delimitations involved in this study.

Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review on RTI, factors influencing job satisfaction, and the role and function of the school psychologist. An overview of job satisfaction among the profession of school psychology is discussed. Chapter 3 describes the research design, methodology, data collection, and analysis procedures that were used for this study. Chapter 4 presents the results of the data analysis. Interpretations and further discussion of these results are presented in Chapter 5. Implications for positive social change are also presented.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter summarizes pertinent literature related to various models of RTI and factors influencing job satisfaction of school psychologists. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section includes an overview of the theories that provide the framework for this study. The second section presents a review of the literature pertaining to job satisfaction of school psychologists, including an historical background of job satisfaction research. The third section presents a literature review related to the implementation of RTI. Studies that have investigated various models of RTI, implications of RTI for school psychologists, and components of RTI are described in this section. Finally, a description of the research design and methodology is provided in the fourth section of this chapter, with a more comprehensive discussion included in chapter 3.

A literature review was conducted employing EBSCO Host, Sage, PsychINFO, ERIC, and Academic Search Premier databases. The following keywords were used: *job satisfaction, burnout, school psychology, school psychologist, response to intervention, RTI, SLD eligibility, interventions, and education*. This literature search yielded a number of current studies in the areas of RTI and SLD eligibility. Only seven studies were located pertaining to job satisfaction of school psychologists within the past 7 years. A Walden University librarian was able to find 11 studies within the past 7 years that were published in peer-reviewed journals. However, three of these studies were conducted in countries other than the United States and one study focused only on job satisfaction of

social workers. Results of this literature search indicated that there may be a need for more current research in the area of job satisfaction among school psychologists.

Job Satisfaction Defined

Job satisfaction can be defined as a pleasurable emotional response in relation to the appraisal of one's work (Anderson et al., 1984; Locke, 1976). It is an internal measure of how well the work environment fulfills the individual's requirements (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Locke noted that levels of job satisfaction are dependent upon the relationship between the individual and the work environment. Further, job satisfaction can also be determined by an individual's perceived job situation in relation to personal values (Locke, 1976). Evans (2001) supported this definition of job satisfaction, concluding that levels of job satisfaction are determined by proximity to what the individual considers the ideal job.

Job satisfaction occurs in response to various components of one's job (Vensel, 1981; Anderson et al., 1984). Vensel (1981) defined job satisfaction on a continuum, noting that job satisfaction increases or decreases in relation to the presence or absence of various components of the job (p. 188). Anderson et al. (1984) defined job satisfaction as an overall emotional response related to a number of subfactors of one's job. The authors concluded that job satisfaction can be attained through making individual changes to one's aspirations and needs or through making changes to the job itself. In a more recent study, Marston and Brunetti (2009) supported this definition of job satisfaction by measuring satisfaction of college professors among various facets of the participants' jobs in order to obtain information regarding overall levels of satisfaction.

Job satisfaction can also be defined as an internal measure of how well the work environment fulfills the individual's requirements (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Satisfaction serves as an indicator of the degree to which the individual has achieved and maintained correspondence with the environment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). When the relationship between the individual and the work environment is out of balance, individuals may try to change their work environments or change their abilities and values in order to achieve satisfaction (Anderson et al., 1984; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). This observation is supported by Anthony and Ord (2008), in which the authors investigated factors influencing an individual's decision to change careers in order to enter the teaching profession. They concluded that there are both internal and external factors leading individuals to change work environments or change their abilities in order to achieve job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction addresses components of occupational well-being while burnout is a sub domain of the analysis of job satisfaction (Mills & Huebner, 1998). Maslach and Leiter (2008) defined burnout in terms of the following components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Studies involving burnout of school psychologists are described in this chapter as they relate to job satisfaction among the profession. Theories of job satisfaction will next be reviewed to provide the context for the current study.

Theories of Job Satisfaction

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in the theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1954), the theory of work adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984),

and the range of affect theory (Locke, 1976). These theories share a common theme in that they explain human behavior and job satisfaction in terms of a relationship between the individual and external factors.

Maslow's Theory of Human Motivation

Maslow's (1954) theory of human motivation attributed behavior to a combination of motivational and environmental forces. Individuals act in response to unfulfilled needs. According to Maslow, as basic needs are met, higher level needs arise. Maslow categorized these needs into a hierarchy containing five levels. The first level contains basic needs. These are one's physiological needs for food, oxygen, water, sex, and sleep. Other needs and desires become secondary until basic needs are fulfilled. Maslow noted that one function of culture is to ensure that basic needs are met. The second level involves the need for safety. Safety needs include security, stability, structure, order, and freedom from fear or anxiety. The third level, belongingness and love, is the need for affection, community, and intimacy. This need involves both giving and receiving in order for fulfillment to occur. Esteem needs compose the fourth level of Maslow's hierarchy. Esteem needs include the need to hold a stable and high regard for oneself, self-respect, achievement, prestige, and recognition. When fulfilled, esteem needs lead to a sense of confidence and self-worth. The final level of need is self-actualization, which is the desire to achieve by being true to one's nature and results in self-fulfillment.

According to the theory of human motivation, individuals are motivated to attain fulfillment of the needs just above their current positions on the motivational hierarchy

(Maslow, 1971). However, Maslow (1954) posited that there are exceptions to this hierarchy. Needs are not always fulfilled in the sequential order presented. Additionally, lower needs must only be addressed and not necessarily satisfied completely before higher needs can emerge. Needs that are satisfied do not serve as motivators. As needs are gratified, they are forgotten and disappear from conscious thought. The gratification of needs leads to psychological health and character formation (Maslow, 1954). The idea of a hierarchy of needs is supported in a more recent study by Fatimah, Aziz, and Ibrahim (2007) that investigated consumer activities carried out by women to fulfill their needs. The authors found that women's maintenance of satisfaction with their roles related to the hierarchy of needs identified by Maslow.

Individuals who have reached self-actualization, the highest level, are motivated by a need for growth that Maslow (1971) termed *metaneeds*. These individuals identify with their work as part of themselves and their work is metamotivated rather than motivated by basic need fulfillment. Individuals who have attained self-actualization have a cause that they believe in and a vocation that they are devoted to (Maslow, 1971). It is at this level that individuals seek jobs that embody their values and view their work as a calling. Self-fulfillment involves being satisfied with one's job. Combining the definition of job satisfaction with Maslow's theory of human motivation leads to an emphasized role of job satisfaction on individual growth and psychological health.

One final contribution of Maslow's theory of human motivation on the study of job satisfaction pertains to the role of employee complaints. Maslow (1971) noted that humans are never fully content and have a tendency to complain. Management should not

expect complaints to cease as working conditions improve, but rather should expect that complaints reflect higher level needs as lower needs are fulfilled. For example, a complaint about the color of the carpeting indicates that the employee's basic needs and needs for safety have been fulfilled. This function of complaints is useful to the study of job satisfaction in that most studies of satisfaction involve some type of employee survey in order to identify components and perceptions of the working environment (Bell, 2005; Locke, 1976). The theory of work adjustment will next be reviewed in relation to motivation and job satisfaction.

Theory of Work Adjustment

The theory of work adjustment defined work as a means for personal adjustment while encompassing the values of the individual and society (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Dawis and Lofquist defined work as an activity engaged in for pay where individuals use their abilities and skills for social and economic benefit. The theory of work adjustment shares features of Maslow's (1954) theory of human motivation in that individuals engage in work as a means for satisfying needs. Needs refer to an individual's required reinforcement at varying levels of strength (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984, p. 17). This definition of a need is a key difference between the theory of human motivation and the theory of work adjustment. While Maslow's hierarchy of needs represents a relatively common set of needs, one's needs, as conceptualized in the theory of work adjustment, are individualistic.

Work adjustment can be predicted from the correspondence between the work personality and the work environment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Work personality is

defined as the abilities and values of the individual that have relevance for work. The work environment includes the requirements and reinforcement systems of the job (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). Satisfaction occurs when there is a good match between the work personality of the individual and the needs of the work environment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). These levels of satisfaction influence longevity of employment.

According to the theory of work adjustment, individuals who have achieved satisfaction tend to remain at their positions longer than those who are not satisfied (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). This was supported in a more recent study by Fried, Shirom, Gilboa, and Cooper (2008). The authors found that employees with higher levels of satisfaction tended to remain at their current positions longer than employees reporting lower levels of job satisfaction. Tenure can be predicted by the level of satisfaction that the individual has with the work environment combined with the degree to which the individual satisfies the needs of the work environment. An individual's propensity to leave a job is inversely related to levels of job satisfaction (Fried et al., 2008). The MSQ evolved as a means to measure job satisfaction as conceptualized by the theory of work adjustment.

The theory of work adjustment was formulated in response to research from the Work Adjustment Project at the University of Minnesota (Weiss et al., 1967). The MSQ is a survey instrument based on the theory of work adjustment that measures an individual's satisfaction with 20 aspects of the work environment. Table 1 illustrates the 20 needs of the work environment measured on the MSQ. These areas correlate to 20 psychological needs identified by the theory of work adjustment.

Table 1

Work Needs Assessed on the MSQ

1.	Ability utilization: The need to use one's abilities.
2.	Achievement: The need to succeed.
3.	Activity: The need to remain active.
4.	Advancement: The need to move forward.
5.	Authority: The need to supervise others.
6.	Company policies and practices: The way company policies are put into practice.
7.	Compensation: The need for adequate pay.
8.	Coworkers: The need for friendships.
9.	Creativity: The need to do new and original tasks.
10.	Independence: The need to work alone.
11.	Moral values: The need for work that does not violate one's morals.
12.	Recognition: The need for credit.
13.	Responsibility: The need to make decisions on one's own.
14.	Security: The need to feel secure.
15.	Social service: The need to be of service to others.
16.	Social status: The need for respect.
17.	Supervision: Human Relations- The need to have a positive relationship with one's supervisor.
18.	Supervision: Technical- The need for quality feedback.
19.	Variety: The need to do different things on the job.
20.	Working conditions: The need for a comfortable working environment.

The 20 aspects of the work environment identified on the MSQ were supported in a more recent study by Lyons and O'Brien (2006). The authors found that these 20 areas were factors associated with job satisfaction for African American employees. The researchers found that factors contributing to job satisfaction aligned with the 20 areas identified by the theory of work adjustment.

On the MSQ, respondents rate their level of satisfaction on 100 questions using a 5-point scale ranging from *not satisfied* to *extremely satisfied*. An overall satisfaction score (General Satisfaction) is obtained by combining responses to questions from each of the 20 areas. Locke's (1976) range of affect theory shares similarities to the theory of work adjustment in that job satisfaction is defined in terms of the relationship between the individual and factors of the work environment

Range of Affect Theory

The premise of the range of affect theory is that job satisfaction is determined by the relationship between an individual's values and the extent to which the job matches those values (Locke, 1976). Locke (1976) defined one's job in terms of performed tasks, responsibilities, interactions, and incentives (p. 1301). The range of affect theory posits that job satisfaction is partially determined by one's perception of the job situation in relation to the individual's values. This theory differs from Maslow's (1954) theory of human motivation in that Locke specified that it is the fulfillment of values, rather than needs that produces satisfaction. Locke's range of affect theory and the theory of work adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) share similarities in that they both address the values of the individual. Both theories also define job satisfaction in terms of the

relationship between the individual and factors of the work environment. However, the range of affect theory is not explicit in the individual's ability to meet the needs of the environment when describing job satisfaction. This definition of job satisfaction was supported more recently by Maslach and Leiter (2008). The authors found that discordance between the individual's values and the environment leads to burnout. Burnout will be addressed later as it relates to overall levels of job satisfaction.

Locke (1976) differentiated between values and needs noting that values are subjective and acquired while needs are objective and innate. Values were defined as what a person desires or wants (p. 1304). Conversely, needs exist regardless of what an individual wants. Values determine an individual's choices and emotional reactions. Values have two components: content- what is valued, and intensity- how much it is wanted or valued. In the range of affect theory, job satisfaction is higher for individuals who want their values more than for those who want them less. Additionally, job satisfaction results from the perception that one's job allows the fulfillment of values to the degree that the values match one's needs. This is supported by Wu (2008) who found that the discrepancy between what individuals have and what they want influences job satisfaction stronger for items of high individual intensity than for items perceived as less important.

Locke (1976) criticized Maslow's (1954) theory of human motivation arguing that there is no evidence that the needs listed on his hierarchy model are in fact needs. For example, the need for self-esteem may not elicit the same response from all individuals depending on whether self-esteem is valued. Additionally, Locke noted that Maslow's

hierarchy of needs combines multiple concepts into a single category. This can be evidenced in the need for safety. Maslow identifies safety as the need to be free from physical harm and the need for economic security. However, one could argue that these needs produce very different responses. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, an individual's job environment that produces satisfaction would correspond to one's position on the need hierarchy. Satisfied needs no longer serve as motivators. Locke countered this supposition noting that most needs must be repeatedly and continually fulfilled. These needs may differ between individuals and may or may not correspond to the individual's physiological needs. An individual's hierarchy of values may begin with physical needs, or it may not. The range of affect theory noted that needs may occur simultaneously. This idea differs from the theory of human motivation that postulated a hierarchy of needs occurring in a fixed sequence. Locke espoused that it is not what an individual needs, but what he values, that dominates his actions and thoughts.

The range of affect theory posited that job satisfaction occurs as a result of fulfilled values, not gratified needs. Table 2 illustrates the values, or conditions, that Locke (1976) identified as conducive to job satisfaction. These values have been supported in more recent literature by Brown, Holcombe et al. (2006), who found that school psychologists with more diverse roles tend to experience higher levels of job satisfaction. Role diversity is linked to Locke's values of work that is mentally challenging as well as work that is personally interesting. Huebner (1992) found that school psychologists' perceptions regarding caseload accounted for more variance in dissatisfaction than actual student to psychologist ratios. These findings support Locke's

assertion that individuals with jobs that align with their individual goals tend to experience higher levels of satisfaction. A study by Miller, Nickerson, Chafouleas, and Osborne (2008) found that people who are emotionally stable may experience higher levels of job satisfaction. This is linked to Locke's value of high self-esteem influencing job satisfaction. Finally, relationships between employees and supervisors were found to affect overall levels of job satisfaction (Huebner, 1994). These findings support Locke's assertion that supervisors play a role in job satisfaction.

Table 2

Values Influencing Job Satisfaction in the Range of Affect Theory

-
1. Work that is mentally challenging.
 2. Personal interest in the work.
 3. Work that is not too physically demanding.
 4. Conditions that reward performance aligning with the individual's goals.
 5. Working conditions that meet standards of physical needs.
 6. High employee self-esteem.
 7. Supervisors who assist workers in attaining job values while minimizing role conflict and ambiguity.
-

Job satisfaction can affect attitudes toward other areas of life, physical health, and overall mental health. Job satisfaction also plays a role in absenteeism and employee turnover

(Locke, 1976; Yang, Che, & Spector, 2008). Next, current literature pertaining to the impact of job satisfaction on the individual will be reviewed.

Importance of Job Satisfaction in the Literature

Job satisfaction has been attributed to a number of components that encompass a productive professional role. Overall job performance and professional attitudes have been linked to levels of job satisfaction (Caprara, Barbranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006; Fried et al., 2008). Caprara et al. (2006) found that individuals with higher levels of job satisfaction had increased levels of job performance. In the field of education, increased job performance has the potential to affect a number of individuals. Caprara et al. found that teachers' levels of job satisfaction were related to students' academic achievement. Teachers were more effective with students when they had higher levels of satisfaction. Levels of job satisfaction are also linked to positive working attitudes (Evans, 2001) and work enthusiasm (Weiqi, 2007). Weiqi found that individuals who are enthusiastic about their work were less likely to leave their jobs.

The literature provides a number of examples pertaining to the influence of job satisfaction on employee turnover rates (Currall, Towler, Judge, & Kohn, 2005; Fried et al., 2008; Yang et al., 2008). Levels of job satisfaction have been used to accurately predict the propensity to leave one's position (Fried et al., 2008; Yang et al., 2008). Job satisfaction not only influences levels of turnover, but also affects absenteeism (Hausknecht, Hiller, & Vance, 2008; Locke, 1976). Hausknecht et al. found that levels of job satisfaction could accurately predict absenteeism. The literature suggests that job satisfaction influences overall job performance, professional attitudes, turnover, and

absenteeism. Thus, it is critical that job satisfaction of school psychologists is addressed to ensure that elements affecting satisfaction are consistently evaluated and modified.

History of Job Satisfaction Among School Psychologists

One of the first studies of satisfaction in the profession of school psychology was conducted by Miller et al. (1981). The authors interviewed 40 school psychologists in Colorado to obtain their perceptions of satisfaction regarding aspects of their work. Areas of satisfaction most frequently reported were flexibility in planning their time and activities, helping others, working with competent colleagues, and the challenge and variety of their work tasks. Dissatisfactions were related to time pressures and stress in serving high numbers of children, conducting large numbers of evaluations, and high levels of clerical duties. School psychologists surveyed also expressed dissatisfaction with the eligibility process in the inability to follow through after placement meetings, ambiguous placement guidelines, delays between referrals and services, and the necessity to sometimes label children inappropriately so that they could receive services. Over 25 years later, many of these same concerns continue to remain issues within the field of school psychology (Batsche et al., 2006; Hosp & Reschly, 2002; VanDerHeyden, Witt, & Gilbertson, 2007). Hosp and Reschly (2002) found that school psychologists surveyed expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of time spent conducting assessments and high levels of clerical duties. Batsche et al. (2006) identified ambiguous placement guidelines and delays before services are received as areas of concern influencing the current role of the school psychologist.

The first national study using a standardized measure to investigate levels of job satisfaction among school psychologists was conducted by Anderson et al. (1984). Using the MSQ as a data collection tool and a random sample of school psychologists obtained from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), the researchers concluded that most school psychologists were satisfied with most aspects of their jobs. However, dissatisfaction was expressed in the areas of advancement and school policies/practices. With the addition of PL 94-142, many school psychologists were forced to spend more time conducting initial evaluations and triennial reevaluations (Anderson et al., 1984). Anderson et al. concluded that the expertise of school psychologists was not being fully utilized. Although approximately 85% of the participants reported that they were satisfied with their jobs, results of the Anderson et al. study revealed that 41% of the school psychologists surveyed planned to leave their positions in the next 5 years and 15% noted that they planned to leave the profession altogether.

The study by Anderson et al. (1984) was replicated several years later in Virginia by Levinson et al. (1988). The authors sought to determine whether results from a national study could be applied to an individual state and whether these results could be applied to school psychologists not affiliated with NASP. Like the Anderson et al. study, Levinson et al. found that advancement and school system policies/practices were areas of dissatisfaction. Eighty four percent of the participants in the Levinson et al. study reported that they were satisfied with their jobs. However, 33% planned to leave their current position and 12% planned to leave the profession of school psychology. Results

from this study were comparable to the Anderson et al. study. The strength of the correlation between job satisfaction and organizational affiliation was moderate, indicating that the study by Anderson et al. may have slightly overestimated job satisfaction of all school psychologists since they only surveyed members of NASP. School psychologists who are more satisfied with their positions may be more prone to join professional organizations (Levinson et al., 1988, p. 110).

Almost 15 years after the original study by Anderson et al. (1984), Brown et al. (1998) conducted a replication study. The authors identified many changes that had occurred since the initial study, such as regulations and services, assessment practices, more specialized work assignments, and a national shortage of school psychologists. Results of the study revealed similar levels of satisfaction (86%) with identical areas of dissatisfaction reported in the original study (advancement and school policies/practices). The authors clarified that dissatisfaction with policies and procedures may occur when there is a discrepancy between what psychologists would like to do (their ideal role) and how they actually function due to restraints of policies and procedures. The discrepancy between one's ideal job and actual work environment is specified in both the theory of work adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984) and the range of affect theory (Locke, 1976). These theories indicate that individuals are most satisfied when there is correspondence between the individual and the work environment.

After the reauthorization of IDEA (2004), another replication study of the original Anderson et al. (1984) study was conducted by Worrell et al. (2006). Like the three earlier studies, this study confirmed that the profession has consistently produced high

levels of job satisfaction, with 90% of the participants indicating they were satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs. Areas of satisfaction included social service, independence, and values. Dissatisfaction was again reported in the areas of advancement and school policies/practices. Worrell et al. reported that dissatisfaction with school system policies and procedures occurs when state and local policies are developed without input from school psychologists.

Another investigation of job satisfaction among school psychologists included a meta-analysis conducted by VanVoorhis and Levinson (2006). The authors conducted a meta-analysis of studies of job satisfaction between 1982 and 1999 that used the MSQ to survey school psychologists' perceptions. Results indicated that approximately 85% of school psychologists were satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs. Overall, participants were most satisfied with coworker relationships, opportunities to stay busy on the job, opportunities to work independently, and opportunities to be of service to others. Areas of dissatisfaction included compensation, school policies/practices, and advancement. As noted earlier by Levinson et al. (1988), members of professional organizations tended to report higher levels of job satisfaction. Additionally, school psychologists with expanded roles were more satisfied with their positions. The role of the school psychologist will next be explored to better understand factors influencing job satisfaction among this profession.

Role of the School Psychologist

The general characteristics and practices among the profession of school psychology vary a great deal between different regions of the country (Hosp & Reschly,

2002; Levinson et al., 1988). These differences include demographic variables such as age and gender, ratio of students to psychologists, and assessment practices. For instance, Hosp and Reschly (2002) found that 53% of school psychologists in the Mountain Region were female as compared to 78% in the West South Central region. School psychologists in East South Central and Pacific regions administered almost twice as many assessment measures as school psychologists in the Northeast, West North Central, and Mountain regions. However despite these differences, the role of the school psychologist has been relatively consistent (Hosp & Reschly, 2002; Huebner, 1993). School psychologists spend up to two thirds of their time involved in assessment-related activities (Hosp & Reschly, 2002; Brown, Holcombe, et al., 2006). This is significant because time spent conducting assessments have been negatively associated with levels of job satisfaction (Brown, Holcombe et al., 2006; Huebner, 1993; Huebner & Mills, 1994).

The role of the school psychologist is generally devoted to special education populations (Brown, Holcombe et al., 2006; Schmitt & Wodrich, 2008). However, school psychologists may better serve the general population rather than serving as specialists due to their training in a variety of areas (Brown, Holcombe et al., 2006; Vensel, 1981). This role expansion may serve to increase job satisfaction while also lessening the potential for burnout (Brown, Holcombe et al., 2006; Huberty & Huebner, 1988, p. 60). School psychologists have unique training to promote and assess the academic and social functioning of children (Kehle & Bray, 2005). Nevertheless, the concentration of this

practice is on special education populations. All students may benefit from the scientifically based problem-solving expertise of the school psychologist.

School psychologists are relied upon to make critical decisions regarding services to children (Schmitt & Wodrich, 2008). While these decisions are generally made by a team of professionals, school psychologists are often viewed as the expert on the team and thus their opinions frequently carry more weight (Schmitt & Wodrich, 2008). The role of the school psychologist often involves understanding, predicting, and improving student behavior. This role has been highly influenced by continual general education reforms such as RTI (Batsche et al., 2006; Kehle & Bray, 2005; Ysseldyke, 2005).

Although previous studies have indicated relatively high levels of job satisfaction among school psychologists (Anderson et al., 1984; Levinson et al., 1988; Brown et al., 1998; Worrell et al., 2006), there is currently a national shortage in the field (Graves & Wright, 2007; VanVoorhis & Levinson, 2006). A shortage of school psychologists may lead to higher student to psychologist ratios, more time spent conducting assessments, less time involved in intervention-related activities, and lower credentialing standards (Graves & Wright, 2007; Worrell et al., 2006). The profession has fought to obtain these advances and a shortage of school psychologists may compromise the progress that the field has made (Graves & Wright, 2007, p. 871). In light of this shortage and the possible consequences to the field, research pertaining to factors influencing job satisfaction of school psychologists is critical to the retention of current school psychologists and the attraction of new professionals.

Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction of School Psychologists

Factors influencing job satisfaction of school psychologists include occupational stress, burnout, role clarity, supervision and support, personality, opportunities for advancement, and school policies and procedures. This section will review literature in these areas to provide clarity regarding job satisfaction among the profession of school psychology.

Occupational Stress

Occupational stress occurs when components of the work environment or work tasks elicit negative emotional responses (Huebner & Mills, 1997). Utilizing the School Psychologists and Stress Inventory (SPSI), Huebner and Mills (1997) found that occupational stressors rated as most significant involved everyday tasks such as report writing, lack of time, organization, and lack of appropriate resources for children. Several occupational stressors were associated with age and number of years of experience. Older or more experienced school psychologists may have developed better coping strategies to handle stressors encountered on the job (Huebner & Mills, 1997). Wilczenski (1997) reported that the role of school psychologist is both an entry and exit level position with few opportunities for advancement. The author found that school psychologists with 6 to 10 years of experience were more likely to leave the profession. A study by Sodoma and Else (2009) found that school principals with less than 6 years experience reported lower levels of job satisfaction. The current study was aligned with 6 years as a cut-off between groups to compare and contrast with previous research. Mills and Huebner (1998) found

that school psychologists reported high levels of stress throughout the school year revealing that school psychologists may experience chronic job stress.

High caseloads have been identified as a source of occupational stress (Anderson et al., 1984; Proctor & Steadman, 2003). Anderson et al. (1984) found a negative relationship between psychologist to student ratios and overall levels of job satisfaction. However, Huebner (1992) concluded that the psychologist's perceptions regarding caseload accounted for more variance in dissatisfaction than actual student to psychologist ratios. This finding supports Locke's (1976) range of affect theory which specified that job satisfaction is determined by a discrepancy between what individuals want in a job and what they actually have. School psychologists who perceive their caseloads as too high have been found to be less satisfied with their jobs than those who perceive their caseloads as manageable, regardless of the actual number of students served.

Other occupational stressors include lack of time (Reiner & Hartshorne, 1982; Rosenthal, Teague, Retish, West, & Vessell, 1983), lack of support (Huebner, 1994; Martin & Schinke, 1998), and a high amount of clerical duties (Brown, Holcombe et al., 2006; Vensel, 1981). Rosenthal et al. (1983) suggested overall work stress may result from the balance of work demands (asked to do too much or asked to do tasks that are too difficult), supports (degree that the work environment provides resources to meet the demands), and constraints (degree that the environment constricts or prevents completion of the demands). The attention to occupational stressors of school psychologists is

important because these factors have been found to affect burnout among the profession (Huebner, 1992; Mills & Huebner, 1998).

Burnout

Burnout relates to job satisfaction and the desire to leave the profession (Huebner, 1992; Mills & Huebner, 1993). The concept of burnout was first explored by Freudenberger (1974). He defined burnout as excessive demands on energy, strength, or resources that leave the individual inoperative (Freudenberger, 1974; 1975). Burnout and job satisfaction are not synonymous, but they do overlap (Huberty & Huebner, 1988). Burnout is a psychological syndrome in response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job (Huebner, 1993; Jackson, Schwab, Schuler, 1986; Maslach & Goldberg, 1998). When there is an incongruity between the worker and the job, burnout is more likely to occur (Maslach, 2003, p. 189).

The most widely accepted construct of burnout was developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981). This model includes three separate components of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion is caused by excessive psychological and emotional work demands (Jackson et al., 1986). It is characterized by overwhelming feelings of emotional strain. Depersonalization refers to a tendency to become callous, impersonal, or cynical when relating to others (Jackson et al., 1986; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). In helping professions, difficulty feeling empathy for clients may result in burnout (Miller et al., 2008). The third component, reduced personal accomplishment, refers to feelings of

incompetence and a sense that one's efforts are not accomplishing desired outcomes (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Mills & Huebner, 1998).

Studies of burnout have focused mainly on human services because conditions leading to burnout are common among human service professionals. (Maslach, 2003) Maslach and Goldberg (1998) identified four conditions leading to burnout. The first, imbalance, occurs when there are high work demands with insufficient resources to meet these demands. Burnout also occurs when there are occupational stressors that are chronic in nature. Next, conflict leads to increased burnout. Maslach and Goldberg noted that conflict may occur among individuals within the work environment, between role demands, or between values. Finally, feelings of ineffectiveness were identified as another condition leading to burnout. Feelings of ineffectiveness occur when there is little control over one's work or when the individual is left out of important decisions. Maslach (2003) later conceptualized burnout in terms of six domains of a job: workload, control, rewards, community, fairness, and values. Burnout is likely to occur when there is a misalignment between the individual and any of these domains. The concept of discordance between the individual and the environment leading to burnout was supported by Maslach and Leiter (2008). The researchers found that reported incongruity in the area of fairness was a stable predictor of later employee burnout.

There are a number of studies that have investigated burnout among school psychologists (Huberty & Huebner, 1988; Huebner, 1992, 1993, 1994). Huebner (1993) reported that symptoms of burnout occur frequently in the field of school psychology.

Because burnout is related to levels of job satisfaction and turnover, these studies will next be reviewed in relation to factors influencing burnout among the profession.

Huberty and Huebner (1988) investigated correlates of burnout among a national sample of school psychologists. They found that as age increased, feelings of emotional exhaustion tended to be less prevalent. The researchers speculated that individuals may develop over time behavioral and attitudinal patterns that reduce the likelihood of burnout. A study by Lakin, Leon, and Miller (2008) also found that age was a factor in predicting burnout. The authors surveyed residential treatment center staff and found that younger staff reported higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. They noted that levels of emotional exhaustions directly relate to overall levels of job satisfaction. The age of 40 was determined to be the cut-off between groups for the current study in order to compare and contrast with previous research.

Huebner (1992) found that job stressors were related to levels of burnout. Job stressors included: lack of resources, interpersonal conflicts, perceptions of caseloads, and relationships with supervisors. More than one third of the participants in this study met the criterion for emotional exhaustion. Lack of resources was identified as the most important contributor to emotional exhaustion. Lack of resources encompassed the following areas: incompetent supervisors, unavailability of testing materials, inadequate clerical support, insufficient contact with colleagues, and feeling caught between students' needs and policy constraints. Decreased levels of supervisor support were related to increased levels of depersonalization (Huebner, 1994). This was supported in a

study by Gardner (2010) who found that the level of support received from supervisors was the best predictor of retention for music teachers working in public schools.

School psychologists who spend less time involved in assessment related activities have been found to have decreased levels of burnout (Huberty & Huebner, 1988; Huebner, 1993). School psychologists have consistently reported that the amount of time spent in consultation activities contributes positively to job satisfaction while the amount of time spent in assessment-related activities is negatively related to job satisfaction (Brown, Holcombe et al., 2006; Wright & Gutkin, 1981). Yet, school psychologists perceive themselves as most competent in the area of assessment (Fisher, Jenkins, & Crumbley, 1986; Huebner, 1993). Huebner (1993) concluded that school psychologists working in settings where assessment was perceived as highly valued had lower levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Nonetheless, increased assessment-related activities led to a decreased sense of personal accomplishment, thus increasing burnout. Reducing the consultation and counseling demands placed on school psychologists may result in reducing emotional exhaustion, but may also reduce feelings of personal accomplishment (Huebner, 1993). Huebner and Mills (1994) supported this assertion. Forty two percent of school psychologists surveyed indicated high levels of burnout. These results suggest that burnout may be a serious issue in the field. Burnout was associated with lower than desired roles in the areas of consultation, intervention, and counseling. School psychologists reported that they desired to spend more time providing intervention-related services. However, obstacles such as limited time and high caseloads may interfere with preferred activities (Huebner & Mills, 1994).

Increased training and support systems for school psychologists may help to prevent high levels of burnout in the profession (Last & Silberman, 1989; Mills & Huebner, 1998). Last and Silberman (1989) recommended that university school psychology programs allow students early in their training more opportunities to shadow professionals on the job. This may help to foster realistic job expectations. University programs may also consider addressing well-being issues and effective stress management techniques in school psychology training programs (Mills & Huebner, 1998). Additionally, employers should review health plan benefits to address burnout through reimbursing counseling and promoting attendance at stress reduction workshops (Martin & Schinke, 1998).

Many school psychologists engage in emotion-focused coping strategies rather than problem-focused strategies to manage stress (Huebner, 1992). Problem-focused strategies have been related to decreased burnout while coping strategies that are emotion-focused lead to increased burnout (Shinn, Mørch, Robinson, & Neuner, 1993). Training school psychology students and professionals in more effective strategies for stress management may lead to decreased levels of burnout and create a better fit between the individual and job. Additionally, one's personality may influence how the individual copes with the demands of the job as well as overall levels of job satisfaction (Miller et al., 2008).

Personality

Levels of job satisfaction and burnout have been linked to various personality characteristics. People who are emotionally stable may experience higher levels of job

satisfaction (Miller et al., 2008). Mills and Huebner (1998) sought to determine if personality variables related to the three burnout dimensions. They defined five major personality factors as (a) extroversion: affectionate, talkative, active; (b) neuroticism: worrying, self-conscious, emotional; (c) openness to experience: imaginative, creative, curious; (d) conscientiousness: hardworking, ambitious, well organized; and (e) agreeableness: trusting, generous, good-natured. The authors surveyed school psychologists and found that all three areas of burnout correlated significantly with the neuroticism factor. Emotional exhaustion correlated significantly with extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Finally, depersonalization was related to agreeableness and reduced personal accomplishment was related to extraversion. This study lends support to the idea that levels of burnout are related to characteristics of one's personality.

Another factor of personality is an individual's preference for the desired level of role clarity. Wright and Thomas (1982) surveyed school psychologists and found that job satisfaction and the propensity to leave the job were more highly correlated for those with a high need for role clarity than for those whose needs were low. When the need for clarity is fulfilled, school psychologists who place greater value on this need were less likely to experience high degrees of occupational stress and burnout (Wright & Thomas, 1982). Factors influencing role clarity in the literature will next be addressed as they relate to the job satisfaction of school psychologists.

Role Clarity

The role of the school psychologist is multifaceted and complex. School psychologists are in a unique position to serve as change agents in their work environments due to their training in assessment, development, behavior, learning, and interventions (Brown, Holcombe et al., 2006; Hosp & Reschly, 2002). School psychologists have consistently reported that they desire to spend less time in assessment-related activities and more time engaged in consultation and interventions (Brown, Holcombe et al., 2006; Proctor & Steadman, 2003; Huebner & Mills, 1994). However, there are differences among regions in the United States pertaining to actual and desired activities of school psychologists (Hosp & Reschly, 2002). According to a survey study by Hosp and Reschly (2002), school psychologists in the Mountain region (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NM, NV, UT, WY) tended to agree least strongly with the assertion that the profession should play a predominant role in designing, implementing, and monitoring interventions prior to consideration for special education eligibility. These results are significant because the current study evaluated the attitudes of school psychologists in Arizona regarding their involvement in these prereferral activities. Nonetheless, the study by Hosp and Reschly confirmed previous studies indicating that school psychologists desire to spend less time performing assessments and more time providing direct interventions and problem-solving consultation.

When school psychologists are not involved in defining their own roles, they have been found to be more likely to experience a discrepancy between actual and ideal job functions (Benson & Hughes, 1985). Individuals who experience this discrepancy are

more prone to experience job related tension, lower levels of job satisfaction, and a greater desire to leave the profession (Benson & Hughes, 1985; Brown et al., 1998). Last and Silberman (1989) found that many school psychologists leave the profession not because of attracting factors in other careers, but because of repelling factors in the practice of school psychology. Table 3 lists factors that negatively influence the retention of school psychologists (Last & Silberman, 1989). These factors include overload, role conflict, ambiguity, and opposition between training and actual job functions. The presence of these negative factors may increase the likelihood that school psychologists will experience a discrepancy between their actual and desired job functions (Last & Silberman, 1989).

School psychologists with diverse roles have been found to be more satisfied with their jobs (Brown, Holcombe et al., 2006; Proctor & Steadman, 2003). However, role ambiguity may influence levels of job satisfaction (Williams, Williams, & Ryer, 1990). Continual general education reforms highly influence psychological practice and may be partially responsible for role ambiguity in the field (Kehle & Bray, 2005). One solution is to involve supervisors of school psychologists in reducing role ambiguity and providing clarification regarding the role of the school psychologist (Huebner, 1994).

Table 3

Factors That Negatively Influence Retention of School Psychologists

1. Quantitative overload: too much work to complete at too rapid a pace.
 2. Qualitative overload: complex work requiring a high degree of flexibility and adaptation in order to handle unpredictability of job requirements.
 3. Contact overload: too frequent and too many encounters with other people in order to effectively carry out job functions.
 4. Psychological loneliness: practicing in isolation from colleagues.
 5. Role ambiguity: lack of clarity regarding professional responsibilities, methods, goals, and accountability.
 6. Role conflict: inconsistent or incomplete role demands.
 7. Loyalty conflict: lack of clarity regarding who the client is (the school, child, teachers, parents).
 8. Expert's dilemma: opposition between abilities/training and actual job requirements.
-

Supervision and Support

The relationships that school psychologists have with their supervisors and colleagues have been shown to influence their overall job satisfaction (Huebner, 1992). Huebner (1992; 1994) attributed incompetent supervisors and lack of contact with colleagues as factors contributing to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. This is

a problem in the area of school psychology because few school psychologists receive supervision from individuals with expertise in the field and formal supervision is not emphasized (Huebner, 1994; Williams et al., 1990). Supervisors have the potential to reduce levels of burnout by providing technical assistance, feedback, and support. However, many school psychologists do not receive this level of supervisory support (Huebner, 1992).

School psychologists with more support are less likely to experience burnout. Last and Silberman (1989) recommended creating mini task forces to support the individual psychologist. They proposed that a group of two to four psychologists rotate among schools so that school psychologists can practice as a member of a team, rather than in isolation. School psychologists with the support of a strong team have demonstrated higher levels of job satisfaction (Miller et al., 1981; Vensel, 1981). School psychologists consistently indicate a need for regular interaction with other professionals for collegial support (Guest, 2000; Miller et al., 1981).

Whether from a network of colleagues or from a direct supervisor, school psychologists also have a need for performance feedback (Martin & Schinke, 1998; Williams et al., 1990). The amount and type of feedback received by school psychologists has been related to job satisfaction and self-perceptions of competence (Williams et al., 1990). Feedback is a resource indicating how well one is meeting goals and how well performance is perceived by others. Performance feedback may be less accessible to school psychologists due to the fact that they frequently work in isolation from their colleagues and receive minimal, if any, supervision. Additionally, school

psychologists often work in more than one school which may limit levels of extrinsic feedback (Proctor & Steadman, 2003; Williams et al., 1990).

While positive feedback has been associated with high levels of job satisfaction, harsh criticism has been associated with burnout (Martin & Schinke, 1998). Martin and Schinke (1998) found that levels of praise by one's supervisor could highly predict overall levels of job satisfaction. Constructive job feedback has been shown to positively influence levels of job satisfaction. In addition to performance feedback, Martin and Schinke found that promotional opportunities were highly correlated with levels of job satisfaction.

Opportunities for Advancement

A number of studies have identified opportunities for advancement as an area of dissatisfaction among school psychologists (Anderson et al., 1984; Brown et al., 1998; Levinson et al., 1988; VanVoorhis & Levinson, 2006; Worrell et al., 2006). The role of school psychologist is both an entry and exit level position with few opportunities for advancement (Wilczenski, 1997). Because there are limited promotional opportunities in the field, school psychologists may move between various positions more often than other professions in order to create satisfaction by changing components of the job (Anderson et al., 1984).

Promotional opportunities have been found to have a strong correlation with job satisfaction (Martin & Schinke, 1998). Wilczenski (1997) reported that school psychologists with 6 to 10 years of experience were more likely to leave the profession for reasons of career advancement. In order to remedy job satisfaction with opportunities

for advancement, states may examine implementing a career ladder for school psychologists (Anderson et al., 1984). Additionally, employers should make a diligent effort to promote school psychologists from within the organization whenever possible (Martin & Schinke, 1998). It is important to retain experienced psychologists to ensure continued development of the field of school psychology. In addition to opportunities for advancement, school policies and procedures is another area that has been frequently reported in the literature as an area of dissatisfaction among school psychologists (Brown et al., 1998; VanVoorhis & Levinson, 2006).

School Policies and Procedures

School psychologists have been generally found to be dissatisfied with school policies and procedures (Anderson et al., 1984; Brown et al., 1998; Levinson et al., 1988; VanVoorhis & Levinson, 2006). This dissatisfaction may occur due to restraints of policies and procedures that prevent school psychologists from performing their ideal roles (Brown et al., 1998). For example, changes in policies and procedures have resulted in increased assessment activities and clerical responsibilities for school psychologists (Worrell et al., 2006). In a study by Benson and Hughes (1985) participants surveyed indicated that federal legislation had too much influence over the role of the school psychologist. Legislation continues to affect the practice of school psychology (Hosp & Reschly, 2002). New policies and procedures do not necessarily lead to improvements in the educational and psychological experiences afforded to children (Kehle & Bray, 2005). It is important to monitor the effects of these changes on school psychologists because new policies, such as IDEA (2004), have a tremendous potential to alter the job

satisfaction of school psychologists, thus impacting psychological services afforded to children (VanVoorhis & Levinson, 2006; Worrell et al., 2006).

Overview of IDEA (2004)

In 2004 Congress made amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that greatly altered the model of eligibility for specific learning disabilities (SLD). Although the definition of SLD did not change, the amendments allow local education agencies (LEA) to “use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention as part of the evaluation procedures” (Pub. L., No. 108-446 § 614, 118 Stat. 2706, 2004). School psychologists are no longer required to use the traditional IQ-achievement discrepancy model as the sole criteria when determining SLD eligibility. IDEA (2004) indicates that RTI may be included as part of the evaluation procedure, but does not specify that it is the only procedure used for eligibility determination (Willis & Dumont, 2006). The law now states LEAs:

shall not be required to take into consideration whether a child has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skill, reading comprehension, mathematical calculation, or mathematical reasoning. (Pub. L. No. 108-446 § 614 [b][6][A]).

This change allows for the implementation of a RTI model to aid in the identification of students with SLD, but does not specify criteria for implementation (Burns et al., 2008).

IDEA (2004) allows LEAs the ability to use RTI, but does not require its use. States have flexibility to create their own regulations pertaining to the implementation of RTI (Wiener & Soodak, 2008). IDEA (2004) allows up to 15% of special education funds to be used on prevention-intervention services (Moore-Brown et al., 2005). To ensure that

these funds are appropriated correctly, LEAs have a responsibility to establish clear criteria for the implementation of RTI.

RTI Defined

RTI is defined in the literature as a multitiered method of service delivery in which all students are provided appropriate levels of evidence-based instruction based upon their individualized needs (Barnes & Harlacher, 2008; Dykeman, 2006). The concept of RTI is not new (Feifer, 2008; Hale et al., 2006; Hawkins, Kroeger, Musti-Rao, Barnett, & Ward, 2008). What is new is the legal provision for its use and the idea of sequencing prevention into a tiered model of instruction and interventions using data as an evaluation tool (Hawkins et al., 2008). RTI allows teams the ability to make educational decisions based upon the premise that all students have received adequate research-based instruction. Results of this process can now be used to make eligibility decisions for SLD.

SLD is suspected when a student fails to respond to research-based interventions that have been implemented with integrity (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006a). RTI interventions serve two main functions (1) provide struggling students with early and effective interventions and (2) provide a valid means for assessing student learning needs (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006b; Gersten & Dimino, 2006; Lose, 2007). RTI research generally focuses on reading instruction (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006a). However, there are examples in the literature of the use of RTI in other areas, such as behavior (Harris-Murri, King, & Rostenbert, 2006; Shinn, 2007). For the purpose of this study, only research pertaining to the use of RTI with reading is reviewed because reading is the main area of RTI focus in Arizona.

Benefits of RTI

RTI has been promoted as a process to provide services to struggling students without delays or overidentification (Alonzo et al., 2008). It can alleviate the “wait to fail” approach often associated with the achievement-discrepancy model by providing early interventions to all students without the need for comprehensive and timely psychoeducational evaluations (Dykeman, 2006; Fletcher et al., 2004). RTI allows teams to focus on results and outcomes of interventions rather than on the process of determining eligibility (Fletcher et al., 2004). Fletcher et al. (2004) noted that the primary focus of RTI is on teaching the student, not on what the student has failed to learn.

Supporters of RTI indicate that it allows all students access to good instruction, thus increasing the probability of academic achievement and decreasing the likelihood of poor instruction as a determinant of low student performance (Barnes & Harlacher, 2008; Danielson et al., 2007). Some researchers believe that the number of students identified as having SLD could be reduced if students were provided with more effective instruction (Fletcher et al., 2004; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006a). Currently, many students placed into special education may not have received adequate reading instruction in the general education setting. RTI may provide for a reduction of inappropriate special education referrals by allowing for early interventions and establishing a model of prevention (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006a). Finally, RTI is not dependent on teacher referrals, which may be biased (Fletcher et al., 2004; Gersten & Dimino, 2006). Instead, RTI creates a system of care in which general and special educators work together to create

interventions for struggling students. While RTI has documented benefits for struggling students, the research also includes controversial issues with this model of eligibility.

Controversies With RTI

RTI requires the use of valid and reliable assessment measures that document day to day instruction and a high level of teacher training and support (Gersten & Dimino, 2006; Kovalski, 2007). The validity of RTI depends on the integrity and appropriateness of the interventions implemented and the reliability and validity of the tools used to measure the student's response to the intervention (Berninger, 2006). The use of RTI assumes that interventions are readily available and known and that staff are trained to deliver them with integrity (Duhon et al., 2009; Wodrich, Spencer, & Daley, 2006). Implementing research-based interventions with integrity not only involves training, but also requires collaborative support systems and a clear understanding of who is responsible for monitoring and facilitating interventions (Kovalski, 2007). Without a planned structure for treatment fidelity, RTI teams are not likely to maintain the integrity of the implemented interventions (Duhon et al., 2009; Noell & Gansle, 2006).

Other controversies that have been associated with RTI include (1) less than ideal interventions implemented by teachers (Gersten & Dimino, 2006), (2) use of screening instruments that have not been defined or specified to standardize the RTI process (Semrud-Clikeman, 2005), (3) lack of specific guidelines for implementation (Wiener & Soodak, 2008; Wodrich, et al., 2006), and (4) students' failure to respond to interventions for reasons other than SLD (Hale et al., 2006; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2005).

Opponents of RTI have identified this model, when used alone, as insufficient for identifying students as SLD (Berninger, 2006; Ofiesh, 2006; Wodrich, et al., 2006). A student's failure to respond to interventions does not provide information about why the student failed (Schmitt & Wodrich, 2008). Flanagan et al. (2006) argued that finding students eligible as SLD using only RTI is problematic because the student has supposedly received the best interventions available and did not respond. Without additional information, it is unlikely that special education will be able to develop new interventions that will meet the student's needs (Flanagan et al., 2006, p. 814).

RTI has been labeled by critics as another "wait to fail" model of eligibility in that at-risk students must still demonstrate a failure to respond to interventions for a period of time before special education services are put into place (Berninger, 2006; Semrud-Clikeman, 2005). The achievement-discrepancy model is generally criticized as a "wait to fail" model of eligibility because the school psychologist must wait until the student's academic achievement falls significantly below his or her cognitive ability before SLD can be identified (Batsche et al., 2006; Dykeman, 2006; Feifer, 2008). Similarly, using RTI, students at risk for SLD are not provided special education services until a series of failures has been documented.

RTI Versus Achievement-Discrepancy

The use of RTI in place of the traditional achievement-discrepancy model of SLD eligibility has been one of the most controversial changes to IDEA, 2004 (Batsche et al., 2006). In an achievement-discrepancy model, SLD is determined when there is a significant discrepancy between a student's cognitive ability and academic achievement

that cannot be explained by other factors such as poor attendance, limited English proficiency, lack of exposure to curriculum, or cognitive deficits (Flanagan et al, 2006; Kavale & Spaulding, 2008; Vellutino, Scanlon, Small, Fanuele, 2006). RTI was initiated to provide a solution to problems in the discrepancy model (Ofiesh, 2006). Some of these problems include a lack of information regarding the causes of underachievement (Holdnack & Weiss, 2006), a lack of rigor in its implementation (Kavale & Spaulding, 2008; Willis & Dumont, 2006), and a lack of adequate differentiation between poor readers with and without discrepancies (Vaughn & Fuchs, 2006). Fletcher et al. (2004) argued that a discrepancy still exists in the RTI model of eligibility. However this discrepancy is not between cognitive ability and academic achievement, but rather in relation to the expectations that most students can be taught to read, write, and do math (Fletcher et al., 2004).

While some researchers have concluded that little evidence exists to support the use of a discrepancy model when determining SLD eligibility (Feifer, 2008; Fletcher et al., 2004; Holdnack & Weiss, 2006), others have argued that the discrepancy model is psychometrically defensible (Batsche et al., 2006; Kavale & Spaulding, 2008). The literature is mixed regarding the merits of both methods to correctly identify students as SLD (Ofiesh, 2006; Shinn, 2007). Critics of RTI espouse that eligibility based on RTI without a psychoeducational evaluation may perpetuate the problem of misidentifying or over identifying learning disabilities and will lead to greater variability of incidence rates (Hallahan et al., 2007; Ofiesh, 2006). Supporters of RTI assert that the discrepancy model is flawed and identifies students as having learning disabilities when they may not have

received exposure to research-based curriculum (Fletcher et al., 2004; Gersten & Dimino, 2006). Advocates of RTI also claim that the discrepancy model allows for more variance in eligibility (Gersten & Dimino, 2006; Harris-Murri et al., 2006). However, this assertion is not supported in the literature (Hallahan et al., 2007).

A longitudinal comparison among prevalence rates for special education categories from 1984 through 2002 revealed that the category of SLD, presumed to be the most variable, was consistently the least variable among individual states (Hallahan et al., 2007). Hallahan et al. (2007) reported that using state-to-state variability of disability prevalence rates as a criticism of the discrepancy model is largely unfounded. The discrepancy model may have lent structure to SLD identification process that resulted in this category having the least variable prevalence rates when compared to other special education categories (Hallahan et al., 2007). Hallahan et al. dispelled the belief that SLD has the highest variability among states and supported the discrepancy model for identification based on prevalence rates. However, this longitudinal study did not evaluate the accuracy of the discrepancy model versus RTI in the identification of SLD.

Feifer (2008) asserted that the true problem with the discrepancy model of eligibility is not in the tests or structure of the model, but rather in how the model is applied. If data from either RTI or the discrepancy model are interpreted inaccurately, the model will fail. Willis and Dumont (2006) noted, “both models can be, and sometimes are, applied stupidly, but that is not the fault of the models,” (p. 902). While there is evidence to support the use of a discrepancy model, problems arise when this becomes the sole criterion used to identify SLD (Batsche et al., 2006). Likewise, RTI alone may be

insufficient in identifying students for special education services (Berninger, 2006; Flanagan et al., 2006). Overreliance on either model may distort the construct of SLD (Feifer, 2008; Ofiesh, 2006).

SLD Defined

SLD is defined by unexpected low achievement (Kavale & Spaulding, 2008).

IDEA (2004) defines SLD as:

A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. (IDEA, 2004 § 300.8 [c] (10))

The definition of SLD did not change with the reauthorization of IDEA. What changed is the way that SLD can be diagnosed (Hawkins et al., 2008). Common components that comprise an evaluation for SLD can now be conducted using RTI and the discrepancy model. These common components using the current definition of SLD are represented in Table 4 (Flanagan et al., 2006; Fletcher et al., 2005; Vaughn & Fuchs, 2006).

Table 4

Components of an Evaluation for SLD

-
1. A history of academic problems.
 2. Use of prereferral interventions.
 3. An identified academic deficit.
 4. An identified cognitive/processing deficit.
 5. Average or above average cognitive functioning.
 6. Underachievement.
 7. Rule-out of exclusionary factors.
 8. Suspected disability impacts learning/life skills.
-

Critics of RTI argue that components related to cognitive ability and underachievement cannot be satisfied using RTI alone because RTI does not distinguish between underachievement and low achievement (Kavale & Spaulding, 2008; Ofiesh, 2006; Schmitt & Wodrich, 2008). Instead, evaluations for SLD should include multiple sources of assessment data (Burns et al., 2008; Dykeman, 2006; Holdnack & Weiss, 2006).

Whether using RTI or the achievement-discrepancy model of eligibility, evaluations for special education should contain key components to ensure that decisions are made based upon accurate information (Burns et al., 2008). Evaluations should be multifaceted, comprehensive, fair, useful, and valid (Burns et al., 2008; Dykeman, 2006).

These components are typically associated with evaluations using the discrepancy model. However, RTI assessments that are carefully planned have the potential to encompass these five features (Burns et al., 2008). RTI assessments will next be examined in relation to various models of RTI.

Models of RTI

IDEA (2004) does not specify guidelines for the implementation of RTI. Instead, individual states are given the autonomy to create legal guidelines for RTI (Berninger, 2006). While RTI varies among states and individual districts, most models of RTI include similar components. RTI involves some form of general education screening to identify the learning needs of all students. Various models of RTI also include the implementation of scientifically-based curriculum paired with some form of assessment to identify the student's response to the intervention. Finally, RTI incorporates the use of data to modify the type, frequency, and intensity of interventions for students failing to respond (Berninger, 2006; Dykeman, 2006; Feifer, 2008; Kavale & Spaulding, 2008). These components may appear very different depending on the model of RTI (Barnes & Harlacher, 2008). Prescriptive and flexible models of RTI will next be explored in relation to the implementation of RTI.

Prescriptive Models of RTI

Prescriptive models of RTI include fixed tiers increasing in the intensity of interventions at each specific level (Barnes & Harlacher, 2008; Marston, 2005). Intensity refers to the strength, duration, and specificity of the intervention (Danielson et al., 2007). Prescriptive models of RTI are sometimes referred to in the literature as standard protocol

where interventions occur in a fixed sequence using a group design (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006a; Hale et al., 2006; Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007). Tiers are structured and measurement systems are standardized to determine responsiveness (Hale et al., 2006). Interventions occur in addition to the general curriculum and differences between tiers may include curriculum, time, or amount of interventions (Danielson et al., 2007).

In a prescriptive model of RTI, Tier 1 interventions generally involve classroom interventions and are delivered by the general education teacher to a group of students who have been identified by some type of universal screening process as performing below standards (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006a; Marston, 2005). Interventions at this level are implemented for a specified duration. At the conclusion of Tier 1, students who respond to the intervention return to the general curriculum for instruction and are considered remediated. Students not responsive at this level move to Tier 2, where more intensive interventions are implemented (Danielson et al., 2007). Teachers or other staff members monitor student progress in Tier 2. Students responding to Tier 2 interventions return to the general curriculum. Students failing to respond in Tier 2, move to Tier 3 where they receive intensive interventions that are often delivered by specialists who have more experience using interventions (Marston, 2005). It is at this level that students may be classified as SLD. General educators have the primary responsibility for aspects of instruction, progress monitoring, and moving students among Tiers 1 and 2. Special educators are often responsible for the most intensive interventions occurring in Tier 3 (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2005). Prescriptive models of RTI differ from flexible models of

RTI in the manner in which decisions are made and the role of the school psychologist throughout the process (Wodrich et al., 2006).

Flexible Models of RTI

Flexible models of RTI combine components of RTI with norm-referenced testing used in the discrepancy model (Flanagan, et al., 2006; Fletcher et al., 2005; Holdnack & Weiss, 2006). Some researchers believe that when used together, this model of eligibility may increase the reliability and validity of SLD identification (Berninger, 2006; Flanagan et al., 2006). A flexible model of RTI is sometimes referred to in the literature as a problem solving model (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006a; Hale et al., 2006). The focus of this model is on individualized interventions and measurement practices for nonresponsive students (Hale et al., 2006, p. 755; Shinn, 2007). In this model, practitioners determine the magnitude of the problem, analyze the causes, design interventions, monitor students' progress, and plan future assessments based upon data (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006a). A flexible model integrates RTI data and standardized test results to provide comprehensive information to multidisciplinary teams (Holdnack & Weiss, 2006).

Some researchers have proposed a flexible model of RTI that encompasses distinct steps (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2005; Moore-Brown et al., 2005). First, teams implement interventions within the general education setting early to provide research-based instruction (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2005; Moore-Brown et al., 2005). Students identified as having SLD must demonstrate low achievement in a significant area of school functioning using more than one type of data (i.e. teacher reports, classroom performance, standardized test scores). Exclusionary factors such as sensory, cognitive,

social-emotional, environmental, and cultural factors are ruled out (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2005; Batsche et al., 2006). Next, the traditional discrepancy between cognitive ability and academic achievement is established using standardized measures (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2005; Ofiesh, 2006; Semrud-Clikeman, 2005; Wodrich et al., 2006). Proponents of this model suggest that RTI be used to provide interventions to at-risk learners and to aid in the distinction between instructional deficits and SLD (Dykeman, 2006; Vellutino et al., 2006; Volker, Lopata, & Cook-Cottone, 2006). Psychometric testing is then used to validate information gained from RTI (Vellutino et al., 2006). School psychologists play a critical role in both models of RTI by their involvement in the intervention phase and their knowledge of standardized test measures.

Impact of RTI on School Psychologists

School psychologists are often involved in monitoring and assessing the treatment fidelity of the interventions (Burns et al., 2008). They must be knowledgeable about psychological processes and patterns inherent in the learning process in order to determine which interventions to implement and analyze why a particular intervention failed (Feifer, 2008; Schmitt & Wodrich, 2008). With the implementation of RTI, the role of the school psychologist changes from that of assessor to problem solver (Machek & Nelson, 2007). Because of their experience with data-based decision making, school psychologists may be involved in making decisions based upon RTI data. In order for RTI to succeed in affecting student achievement, school psychologists and other practitioners must have expertise in a variety of interventions and assessments (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006a).

RTI is most beneficial when school psychologists work together with special educators and classroom teachers with the common goal of designing and implementing effective interventions for all students (Hawkins et al., 2008; Machek & Nelson, 2007). Due to their expertise in assessment, learning, and interventions, school psychologists are in a unique position to assist in the design of treatments for struggling learners (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006b; Schmitt & Wodrich, 2008). As noted earlier, results of job satisfaction studies have indicated involvement in interventions as an area of preference for most school psychologists (Brown, Holcombe et al., 2006; Hosp & Reschly, 2002; Kehle & Bray, 2005; Proctor & Steadman, 2003). However, Kovaleski (2007) recommended that school principals, rather than psychologists, take on the responsibility for monitoring treatment fidelity of interventions. Principals hold the power of accountability to ensure that teachers follow through with classroom interventions. There may be an implied sense that interventions are optional when administration is not involved in monitoring the integrity of the implementation (Kovaleski, 2007, p. 642). Addressing attitudes and perceptions of staff members is critical in ensuring that interventions are implemented with fidelity (Machek & Nelson 2007, p. 148). RTI brings about a need for role expansion and role clarification for school psychologists so that they can collaborate with others involved in the RTI process (Machek & Nelson, 2007, p. 153; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2005). A brief review of the methodology for this study will next be presented.

Methodology

This quantitative study used a causal comparative research design in order to examine the difference between varying models of RTI and job satisfaction of school

psychologists. A quantitative study was chosen because the survey instrument (MSQ) provides quantitative data. A causal comparative design best fits the research questions of this study because I wanted to examine the differences in job satisfaction between two intact groups.

Causal comparative studies examine differences between groups, but do not attempt to infer causality (Bell, 2005; Schenker & Rumrill, 2004). Groups examined in causal comparative studies are preexisting based upon the independent variable (Schenker & Rumrill, 2004). For this study, school psychologists were chosen to participate based upon their employment in districts that utilized the specified models of RTI. Causal comparative studies involve independent variables that are nominal in nature and dependent variables that are generally continuous variables (Schenker & Rumrill, 2004). Continuous variables are measured in terms of amount or degree. Higher scores indicate higher levels of the variable in question (Schenker & Rumrill, 2004, p. 118). The variables in the current study match this description of the variables in a causal comparative research design. The independent variable (model of RTI) is nominal while the dependent variable (job satisfaction) is interval. Levels of job satisfaction were measured by a survey instrument that provided information regarding varying degrees of satisfaction.

The use of a survey method is common in investigations of job satisfaction. Ramere (2006) used surveys to assess job satisfaction of teachers in North Carolina. The analysis of data included a *t*-test and 2-tailed test to determine if a relationship existed between categories of job satisfaction and teacher turnover. Worrell et al. (2006) used the

MSQ to conduct a national study of job satisfaction among school psychologists.

Multiple regression was used to identify relationships between demographic variables and job satisfaction. Finally, Farava (2009) used a survey design to examine the relationship that followership styles have with job satisfaction and job performance.

Survey studies are often employed in investigations of job satisfaction because they are a relatively inexpensive and efficient way of obtaining information from a representative sample of the population (Bell, 2005).

The MSQ was used to assess job satisfaction of school psychologists in the present study. This survey instrument is the most common method used in measuring job satisfaction among the profession (Brown, Hardison, Bolen, & Walcott, 2006). There are a number of previous studies that used the MSQ due to its level of development and good reliability and validity data (Anderson et al., 1984; Brown et al., 1998; Levinson et al., 1988; Worrell et al., 2006). The MSQ was chosen because of its ties to previous research as well as its comprehensive nature. Chapter 3 provides more in-depth information regarding this survey instrument.

Summary

The theoretical framework that guided this study is grounded in the theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1954), the theory of work adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984), and the range of affect theory (Locke, 1976). In the theory of human motivation, human behavior is determined by a combination of motivational and environmental forces. Individuals act in response to unfulfilled needs. The theory of work adjustment emphasizes the dynamic relationship between the individual and the work environment.

This theory shares features of Maslow's (1954) theory in that individuals engage in work as a means for satisfying needs. Satisfaction results when the work environment fulfills the individual's needs, values, and expectations. The MSQ, used as a data collection tool for the present study, measures job satisfaction by taking into consideration the relationship between the person and environmental factors grounded in the theory of work adjustment. The range of affect theory defines job satisfaction as a discrepancy between what individuals value in their jobs and what they actually have. A distinction is made between values and needs.

Job satisfaction has been attributed to a number of components that encompass a productive professional role. The current study expands on limited research in the area of job satisfaction of school psychologists using specific models of RTI. A review of available literature revealed that the profession of school psychology has consistently produced high levels of job satisfaction. However, school psychologists in the research reviewed consistently reported dissatisfaction in the areas of advancement and school policies/practices. One of the most controversial areas related to school policies/practices is the implementation of RTI. With the reauthorization of IDEA (2004) school psychologists are no longer required to use the traditional IQ-achievement discrepancy model as the sole criteria when determining SLD eligibility. RTI may now be implemented to aid in the identification of students with SLD. This paradigm shift has been met with mixed responses from the academic community. While there is an abundance of literature pertaining to the implementation of RTI and the use of RTI when

conducting psychoeducational evaluations, there is a gap in the literature regarding the affects of RTI on the perceived job satisfaction of school psychologists.

The current study investigated levels of job satisfaction between school psychologists using a prescriptive model of RTI and psychologists using a flexible RTI model. Survey data were collected using the MSQ. Chapter 3 presents a more in-depth discussion of the research methodology used in this study. A detailed description of the survey instrument, data collection and analysis procedure, and ethical considerations are provided.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

Introduction

This chapter explains the research method used for the present study. An overview and rationale for the research design is presented that includes a summary of the research questions and hypotheses. Next, a description of the sample is offered followed by an explanation of the survey instrument. Reliability and validity information for the survey instrument are reviewed. A description of the data collection and analysis procedure used for this study are presented. Finally, the rights of the participants are examined.

Research Design

This quantitative study was conducted to determine if a significant difference exists in levels of job satisfaction between school psychologists in Arizona who use a prescriptive model of RTI and those who use a flexible model of RTI. A causal comparative design was implemented because I wanted to investigate levels of job satisfaction between two intact groups. Participants could not be randomly assigned into groups because they were already employed in districts that subscribed to specific models of RTI.

Causal comparative methods are used when researchers want to examine differences between preexisting groups. The independent variable is not manipulated and there is no attempt to infer causality (Bell, 2005; Schenker & Rumrill, 2004). Causal comparative studies examine differences between groups without manipulation. This

method was chosen because it best fit the research questions for this study. The following research questions and hypotheses framed this study:

Research Question 1

RQ1: Is there a significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive)?

H1_o: There is no significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive).

H1_a: There is a significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive).

Research Question 2

RQ2: Is there a significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and years of experience (less than 6 years vs. 6 years or more)?

H2_o: There is no significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and years of experience (less than 6 years vs. 6 years or more).

H2_a: There is a significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and years of experience (less than 6 years vs. 6 years or more).

Research Question 3

RQ3: Is there a significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and age (less than 40 vs. 40 and older)?

H3_o: There is no significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and age (less than 40 vs. 40 and older).

H3_a: There is a significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and age (less than 40 vs. 40 and older).

Research Question 4

RQ4: Is there a significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and gender (male vs. female)?

H4_o: There is no significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and gender (male vs. female).

H4_a: There is a significant difference on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and gender (male vs. female).

Setting and Sample

The population of interest included all practicing school psychologists within the eight school districts implementing RTI chosen for this study. Survey data were collected using a convenience sample of school psychologists from these eight districts. School psychologists from two districts that use a prescriptive model of RTI and six districts using a flexible model of RTI were invited to participate in this study. This study required the factorial Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with two groups (flexible vs. prescriptive). Twenty-six participants were needed for each group, summing to a total of 52 participants. Having an alpha value set at .05, the most commonly designated value in social science research, 52 participants yielded a power of .80 with a large effect size (Cohen, 1992; Lipsey, 1990). The power of a test is related to the sample size, with

greater power from a larger effect size. A large effect size was appropriate for this study (Cohen, 1992).

The following procedures were taken to locate the sample for this study. First, special education directors of school districts within the state of Arizona were contacted via telephone to obtain information regarding the models of RTI employed in their school districts. The research study was explained to the directors and permission was obtained through the district to invite school psychologists to participate in this study. Once permission was obtained from the districts, survey questionnaires and an accompanying cover letter were delivered to school psychologists within the districts with directions for completion. When possible, the researcher met with the psychologists in person to deliver the surveys and offered to present the findings after the research was completed.

Instrumentation

Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)

The MSQ is the most common instrument used in measuring job satisfaction of school psychologists (Brown, Hardison et al., 2006). It is a standardized survey instrument that measures job satisfaction in 20 areas using a 5-item scale. For the purpose of this study, the General Satisfaction score was used to measure overall levels of job satisfaction. This score provides an overall rating of job satisfaction using 20 items (one question from each of the 20 scales). Because I wanted to investigate specific models of RTI on the job satisfaction of school psychologists, it was determined that a general measure of satisfaction would allow for this analysis rather than breaking up the various components of job satisfaction. The General Satisfaction score ranges from 20 to 100.

Respondents complete the survey using the following five scales on the MSQ: 1 = *very dissatisfied*, 2 = *dissatisfied*, 3 = *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied* (N), 4 = *satisfied*, 5 = *very satisfied*. Written instructions provided on the MSQ clarify these responses. Table 5 illustrates these instructions.

Table 5

MSQ Instructions

Very Dissatisfied: you feel that your job gives you much less than you expected

Dissatisfied: you feel that your job gives you less than what you expected

N: you cannot make up your mind whether or not your job gives you what you expected

Satisfied: you feel that your job gives you what you expected

Very Satisfied: you feel that your job gives you more than you expected

The MSQ offers the option of a long form and a short form. The long form was chosen for this study because it provides more detailed information regarding factors influencing job satisfaction than the short form (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). It contains 100 items written at a fifth-grade reading level. According to the MSQ manual, administration of the long form takes approximately 15-20 minutes. Brown, Hardison et al. (2006) noted that shorter surveys may be more desirable because they may increase participation rates. However, the long form of the MSQ contains facets of job satisfaction that are not measured by other scales, such as satisfaction with school policies and procedures. As noted in Chapter 2, school policies and procedures have been identified in the literature

as an area of dissatisfaction for school psychologists (Anderson et al., 1984; Brown et al., 1998; VanVoorhis & Levinson, 2006; Worrell et al., 2006). Because models of RTI may be perceived by the participants in relation to school policies and procedures, I determined that this scale may provide critical information in this investigation.

The MSQ has published reliability and validity information. Test-retest data yielded a coefficient of .89 over a one year interval, which indicates adequate reliability. The questionnaire has Hoyt reliability coefficients ranging from .87 to .92. Construct validity was established through validation studies based upon expectations of satisfaction from the theory of work adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Weiss et al., 1967).

Data Collection

The MSQ protocols were obtained from Vocational Psychology Research (VPR), University of Minnesota. VPR requires that individuals using the MSQ are qualified and trained in accordance with the American Psychological Association's ethical standards of test administration and interpretation. I hold valid licensure as a school psychologist in the state of Arizona and submitted required documents to satisfy the requirements of VPR. Additionally, a summary of the proposed research was submitted to VPR.

After permission from Walden University IRB, VPR, and the individual districts was obtained, a letter describing this study was delivered with the survey protocol and self-addressed stamped envelope to school psychologists employed full-time in the eight districts identified for this study (see Appendix A). The letter informed participants of the purpose of this study and indicated that a returned survey protocol indicated consent to

participate. Participants were asked to return the completed surveys to the researcher in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided.

Data Analysis

The questionnaires were sent to VPR for computerized scoring. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science, 17.0 (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics of the satisfaction survey data showed that the distributions were approximately normal and the variances between groups were approximately equal. This research project involved several ANOVAs. The assumptions for ANOVA include normality and homogeneity of variance/covariance matrices. These were assessed prior to conducting the analysis. Normality assumes that the scores are normally distributed (bell shaped) and were assessed using the one sample Kolmogorov Smirnov test. This ensured the values were not skewed or kurtotic. Homogeneity of variance assumes that both groups have equal error variances and was assessed using Levene's test (Morgan, Leech, Gloekner & Barrett, 2007).

To test Hypothesis 1, an ANOVA was used. ANOVA is used to assess if a mean difference exists on one continuous dependent variable between two or more discrete groups. In this study the dependent variable, job satisfaction, was measured by the MSQ long form, providing a total score that is a continuous/interval level variable. The two discrete groups are based on RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive). The ANOVA uses the *F* test as a ratio allowing researchers to make an overall comparison on whether group means differ. The null hypothesis is rejected if the obtained *F*-value is larger than the critical *F*-value. Assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance/covariance were

assessed using the one sample Kolmogorov Smirnov test and Levene's test (Morgan et al., 2007).

To test Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 a factorial ANOVA was conducted to determine if there were significant differences on school psychologists' job satisfaction, as measured by the MSQ, by group (flexible RTI model vs. prescriptive RTI model), years of experience (less than 6 years vs. 6 years or more), age (less than 40 years vs. 40 years and older), and by gender (male vs. female). Factorial ANOVAs are used to analyze differences on a continuous dependant variable between two or more independent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Groups were separated by years of experience using less than 6 years and 6 years or more as the dividing point to align with previous research. Wilczenski (1997) found that school psychologists with 6 to 10 years of experience were more likely to leave the profession. Sodoma and Else (2009) found that school principals with less than 6 years experience reported lower levels of job satisfaction. The current study was aligned with 6 years as a cut-off between groups to compare and contrast with previous research. Groups were separated by age using less than 40 years and 40 years and older to align with previous research involving age as a predictor of overall levels of job satisfaction. Huberty and Huebner (1988) investigated correlates of burnout among a national sample of school psychologists and found that as age increased, feelings of emotional exhaustion tended to be less prevalent. Lakin et al. (2008) also found that age was a factor in predicting burnout. The authors found that younger staff reported higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. They noted that levels of emotional exhaustions directly relate to overall levels of job

satisfaction. Although this study did not separate groups by age, the authors made a distinction between staff who were 40 years and older and those less than 40. The current study used the age of 40 as a cut-off between groups to compare and contrast with previous research.

Participants' Rights

Participants were fully informed in writing that their consent was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time without consequence. They were informed about any potential risks and benefits of participation. Participants were informed that returning a completed survey indicated consent to participate in this study. Survey instruments were numbered to ensure the anonymity of the participants. Completed surveys will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my office for a period of 5 years to maintain confidentiality of the data. Survey instruments will be shredded and discarded after that time.

Summary

The purpose of this causal comparative analysis was to determine whether there is a significant difference between the job satisfaction of school psychologists in Arizona who use a prescriptive model of RTI and those who use a flexible model of RTI. A survey design was implemented utilizing the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) to assess the job satisfaction of 52 school psychologists from eight districts within the state of Arizona. Data were analyzed using ANOVA and associated *F* tests to determine if there were significant differences in school psychologists' job satisfaction, as measured by the MSQ, by group (flexible RTI model vs. prescriptive RTI model),

years of experience (less than 6 years vs. 6 years or more), age (less than 40 years vs. 40 years and older), and by gender (male vs. female).

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this causal comparative analysis was to determine whether there is a significant difference between the job satisfaction of school psychologists in Arizona who use a prescriptive model of RTI and those who use a flexible model of RTI. The independent variable for this study was the model of RTI (flexible vs. prescriptive) and the dependent variable was job satisfaction. Levels of job satisfaction were measured using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), a survey instrument that provided information regarding varying degrees of job satisfaction. The General Satisfaction Scale of the MSQ was used to interpret overall levels of satisfaction. A factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if there were differences in school psychologists' job satisfaction, by group (flexible RTI model vs. prescriptive RTI model), years of experience (less than 6 years vs. 6 years or more), age (less than 40 years vs. 40 years and older), and gender (male vs. female). ANOVA was used to assess if group means differed significantly between psychologists using flexible or prescriptive models of RTI. This study examined the following hypotheses:

H1_o: There is no significant difference in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive).

H1_a: There is a significant difference in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive).

H2_o: There is no significant difference in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and years of experience (less than 6 years vs. 6 years or more).

H2_a: There is a significant difference in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and years of experience (less than 6 years vs. 6 years or more).

H3_o: There is no significant difference in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and age (less than 40 vs. 40 and older).

H3_a: There is a significant difference in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and age (less than 40 vs. 40 and older).

H4_o: There is no significant difference in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and gender (male vs. female).

H4_a: There is a significant difference in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and gender (male vs. female).

This chapter reviews the analysis of data obtained from the MSQ. Results of the statistical testing for each hypothesis are displayed in Tables 6 through 14 with a final summary following the data analysis.

Sample Description

Fifty-two individuals participated in the study and of these 51 were included in the analysis of the research questions. A General Satisfaction score could not be calculated for one participant in the flexible RTI group because too many items were left blank on the survey protocol. Of the participants, 25 (49.0%) participants were in the

flexible RTI group and 26 (51.0%) were in the prescriptive RTI group. For those in the flexible model group, 16 (76%) were female and 6 (24%) were male; 17 (68%) were less than 40 years old and 8 (32%) were 40 years old or older; and 14 (56%) had less than 6 years of work experience while 11 (44%) had 6 or more years of work experience. For those in the prescriptive model group, 24 (92.3%) were female and 2 (7.7%) were male; 12 (46.2%) were less than 40 years old and 14 (53.8%) were 40 years old or older; and 10 (38.5%) had less than 6 years of work experience while 16 (61.5%) had 6 or more years of work experience. Frequencies and percentages for gender, age, work experience by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Characteristics of Participants by RTI Model (Flexible vs. Prescriptive)

Characteristic	Flexible		Prescriptive	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender				
Male	6	24.0	2	7.7
Female	19	76.0	24	92.3
Age				
Less than 40 years old	17	68.0	12	46.2
40 years or older	8	32.0	14	53.8
Experience				
Less than 6 years of experience	14	56.0	10	38.5
Six or more years	11	44.0	16	61.5

Means and standard deviations for school psychologists' job satisfaction were obtained from the General Satisfaction Scale of the MSQ and are presented in Table 7.

The General Satisfaction Scale provides an overall rating of job satisfaction using 20 items (one question from each of the 20 scales). The General Satisfaction Scale yields an overall score from 20 to 100. For the entire sample, job satisfaction scores ranged from 46.00 to 99.00 ($M = 74.45$, $SD = 9.15$). For participants using the flexible RTI model, the minimum job satisfaction score was 60.00 and the maximum score was 99.00 ($M = 75.04$, $SD = 9.15$). For participants using the prescriptive RTI model, the minimum job satisfaction score was 46.00 and the maximum score was 99.00 ($M = 73.88$, $SD = 9.30$).

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations for Psychologists' Job Satisfaction (MSQ) and Group (Flexible vs. Prescriptive)

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Job satisfaction score	51	74.45	9.15
Flexible RTI group job satisfaction score	25	75.04	9.15
Prescriptive RTI group job satisfaction score	26	73.88	9.30

Hypothesis 1

To test Hypothesis 1, ANOVA was conducted to assess whether there were significant differences in school psychologists' job satisfaction by group (flexible RTI model vs. prescriptive RTI model). In preliminary analysis the assumption of normality was assessed through the conduction of two Kolmogorov Smirnov (KS) tests. The results of the KS were not significant for job satisfaction for either group (flexible vs. prescriptive). The assumption of normality was met and the values were determined not to be skewed or kurtotic. The assumption of equality of variance was assessed using

Levene's test. This test for equality of variances was not significant and equal variances could be assumed.

The results of the ANOVA were not significant, $F(1, 49) = 0.20, p = .657$, suggesting there were no significant differences between the flexible RTI and the prescriptive RTI groups in job satisfaction scores. Null Hypothesis 1 was accepted; there is no significant difference in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive). Results of the ANOVA are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

ANOVA Summary for the Effects of RTI Model on Job Satisfaction

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>	η^2
Between-group	1	17.01	17.01	0.20	.657	.004
Within-group	49	4169.61	85.09			
Total	51	286877.00				

Hypothesis 2

To test Hypothesis 2, a factorial (2-way) ANOVA was conducted to assess if there were significant differences in school psychologists' job satisfaction by group (flexible RTI model vs. prescriptive RTI model) and by years of experience (less than 6 years vs. 6 years or more). Groups were separated by years of experience using less than 6 years and 6 years or more as the dividing point consistent with previous research. Wilczenski (1997) found that school psychologists with 6 to 10 years of experience were

more likely to leave the profession. Sodoma and Else (2009) found that school principals with less than 6 years experience reported lower levels of job satisfaction. The current study used 6 years as a cut-off between groups to compare and contrast with previous research. In preliminary analysis the assumption of normality was assessed through the conduction of four Kolmogorov Smirnov (KS) tests. The results of the KS were not significant for job satisfaction for group (flexible vs. prescriptive) or years of experience (less than 6 vs. 6 years or more); the assumption of normality was met and the values were determined not to be skewed or kurtotic. The assumption of equality of variance was assessed; Levene's test for equality of variances was not significant and equal variances could be assumed.

The results of the ANOVA show there was no significant main effect for RTI model, $F(1, 47) = 0.11, p = .737$, suggesting that differences do not exist in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model. There was no significant main effect for years of experience, $F(1, 47) = 0.61, p = .437$, suggesting that simultaneous differences do not exist in school psychologists' job satisfaction by years of experience. There was no significant interaction between the effects of RTI model and years of experience, $F(1, 47) = 0.51, p = .480$, suggesting that simultaneous differences do not exist in school psychologists' job satisfaction by group. Null Hypothesis 2 was accepted; there is no difference in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and years of experience (less than 6 years vs. 6 years or more). The two-way ANOVA is presented in Table 9. Means and standard deviations for school

psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model and years of experience are presented in Table 10.

Table 9

Two-Way (RTI model and experience) ANOVA for School Psychologists' Job Satisfaction

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
RTI Model	1	9.88	0.11	.737	.002
Experience	1	53.15	0.61	.437	.013
RTI model x experience	1	43.99	0.51	.480	.011
Error	47	86.65			

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations for School Psychologists' Job Satisfaction by RTI Model and Experience

RTI Model	Experience	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Flexible	Less than 6 years	76.79	10.00	14
	Six years or more	72.82	7.82	11
	Total	75.04	9.15	25
Prescriptive	Less than 6 years	74.00	5.64	10
	Six years or more	73.81	11.18	16
	Total	73.88	9.30	26
Total	Less than 6 years	75.63	8.42	24
	Six years or more	73.41	9.79	27
	Total	74.45	9.15	51

Hypothesis 3

To test Hypothesis 3, a factorial (2-way) ANOVA was conducted to assess if there were significant differences in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and age (less than 40 years vs. 40 years and older). Groups were separated by age using less than 40 years and 40 years and older consistent with previous research involving age as a predictor of overall levels of job satisfaction. Huberty and Huebner (1988) investigated correlates of burnout among a national sample of school psychologists and found that as age increased, feelings of emotional exhaustion tended to be less prevalent. Lakin et al. (2008) also found that age was a factor in predicting burnout. The authors found that younger staff reported higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. They noted that levels of emotional exhaustions directly relate to overall levels of job satisfaction. The authors made a distinction between staff who were 40 years and older and those less than 40. The current study used the age of 40 as a cut-off between groups to compare and contrast with previous research.

In preliminary analysis the assumption of normality was assessed through the conduction of four Kolmogorov Smirnov (KS) tests. The results of the KS were not significant for job satisfaction for group (flexible vs. prescriptive) or age (less than 40 years vs. 40 years and older). The assumption of normality was met and the values were determined not to be skewed or kurtotic. The assumption of equality of variance was assessed using Levene's test. This test for equality of variances was not significant and equal variances could be assumed.

The results of the ANOVA show there is no significant main effect for RTI model, $F(1, 47) = 0.12, p = .726$, suggesting that simultaneous differences do not exist in measures of school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model. There was no significant main effect for age, $F(1, 47) = 0.43, p = .513$, suggesting that simultaneous differences do not exist for school psychologists' job satisfaction by age. There was no significant interaction between the effects of RTI model and age, $F(1, 47) = 0.25, p = .618$, suggesting that simultaneous differences do not exist in school psychologists' job satisfaction by group. Null Hypothesis 3 was accepted; there is no difference in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and age (less than 40 years vs. 40 years and older). The two-way ANOVA is presented in Table 11. Means and standard deviations for school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model and age are presented in Table 12.

Table 11

Two-Way (RTI model and age) ANOVA for School Psychologists' Job Satisfaction

Source	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>	η^2
RTI Model	1	10.83	0.12	.726	.003
Age	1	37.88	0.43	.513	.009
RTI model x age	1	21.98	0.25	.618	.005
Error	47	87.33			

Table 12

Means and Standard Deviations for School Psychologists' Job Satisfaction by RTI Model and Age

RTI Model	Age	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Flexible	Less than 40 years	75.18	9.95	17
	40 years or more	74.75	7.80	8
	Total	75.04	9.15	25
Prescriptive	Less than 40 years	75.58	4.80	12
	40 years or more	72.43	11.91	14
	Total	73.88	9.30	26
Total	Less than 40 years	75.34	8.10	29
	40 years or more	73.27	10.46	22
	Total	74.45	9.15	51

Hypothesis 4

To test Hypothesis 4, a factorial (2-way) ANOVA was conducted to assess if there were significant differences in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and gender (male vs. female). In preliminary analysis the assumption of normality was assessed through the conduction of four Kolmogorov Smirnov (KS) tests. The results of the KS were not significant for job satisfaction for group (flexible vs. prescriptive) or gender (male vs. female); the assumption of normality was met and the values were determined not to be skewed or kurtotic. The assumption of equality of variance was assessed using Levene's test. This test for equality of variances was not significant and equal variances could be assumed.

The results of the ANOVA show there is no significant main effect for RTI model, $F(1, 47) = 0.40, p = .243$, suggesting that simultaneous differences do not exist for school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model. There was no significant main effect for gender, $F(1, 47) = 0.25, p = .620$, suggesting that simultaneous differences do not exist in school psychologists' job satisfaction by gender. There was no significant interaction between the effects of RTI model and gender, $F(1, 47) = 2.03, p = .161$, suggesting that simultaneous differences do not exist in school psychologists' job satisfaction by group. Null Hypothesis 4 was accepted; there is no difference in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and gender (male vs. female). The two-way ANOVA is presented in Table 13. Means and standard deviations for school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model and age are presented in Table 14.

Table 13

Two-Way (RTI model and gender) ANOVA for Psychologists' Job Satisfaction

Source	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>	η^2
RTI Model	1	115.55	1.40	.243	.029
Gender	1	20.57	0.25	.620	.005
RTI model x gender	1	167.49	2.03	.161	.041
Error	47	82.55			

Table 14

Means and Standard Deviations for Psychologists' Job Satisfaction by RTI Model and Gender

RTI Model	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Flexible	Male	80.83	6.37	6
	Female	73.21	9.25	19
	Total	75.04	9.15	25
Prescriptive	Male	70.50	12.02	2
	Female	74.17	9.30	24
	Total	73.88	9.30	26
Total	Male	78.25	8.51	8
	Female	73.74	9.18	43
	Total	74.45	9.15	51

Summary

To assess whether school psychologists' job satisfaction scores differ by RTI model, years of experience, age, or gender statistical analyses using ANOVA and factorial (2-way) ANOVA were conducted. Preliminary examination was conducted on the research variables. The independent or grouping variables included RTI model, years of experience, age, and gender. The majority of participants were female (84.3%), were less than 40 years old (55.8%), and had more than 6 years of work experience (52.9%). The dependent variable (job satisfaction) was obtained from the General Satisfaction Scale of the MSQ. The General Satisfaction Scale uses 20 items, one question from each of the 20 scales, and yields an overall score from 20 to 100. The mean score for the entire sample was 74.45 indicating high levels of job satisfaction.

To test Hypothesis 1, an AVOVA was conducted to assess if there were significant differences in school psychologists' job satisfaction by group (flexible RTI model vs. prescriptive RTI model). The ANOVA was not significant and there was not a significant difference for school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model. To test Hypothesis 2, a factorial (2-way) ANOVA was conducted to assess if there were significant differences in school psychologists' job satisfaction by group (flexible RTI model vs. prescriptive RTI model) and by years of experience (less than 6 years vs. 6 years or more). The 2-way ANOVA was not significant and there was no significant difference in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model and years of experience. To test Hypothesis 3, a factorial (2-way) ANOVA was conducted to assess if there were significant differences in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and age (less than 40 years vs. 40 years and older). The 2-way ANOVA was not significant and there was no significant difference in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model and age. To test Hypothesis 4, a factorial (2-way) ANOVA was conducted to assess if there were significant differences in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and gender. The 2-way ANOVA was not significant and there was no significant difference in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model and gender.

In summary, the null hypothesis was accepted for each of the four research questions. There was no significant difference in school psychologists' job satisfaction by group (RTI model) or for years of experience, age, or gender. Interpretations and further

discussion of these results are presented in Chapter 5. Implications for positive social change are also presented.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

This causal comparative analysis was conducted to determine whether there is a significant difference between the job satisfaction of school psychologists in Arizona who use a prescriptive model of RTI and those who use a flexible model of RTI. There is an abundance of literature pertaining to the implementation of RTI and the use of RTI when conducting psychoeducational evaluations. However, there had not yet been an investigation on whether various models of RTI affect job satisfaction of school psychologists. This is significant because there is currently a national shortage of school psychologists (Graves & Wright, 2007; VanVoorhis & Levinson, 2006). Levels of job satisfaction have been found to be related to retention of employees, attendance, and overall job performance (Huebner & Mills, 1994; Levinson, Fetchkan, & Hohenshil, 1988; Martin & Schinke, 1998). The results of this study provide information regarding the implementation of RTI combined with job satisfaction which may have implications for retaining professionals in the field of school psychology.

The theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1954), the theory of work adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984), and the range of affect theory (Locke, 1976) provided a framework for exploring job satisfaction in the current study. These theories share a common theme in that they explain human behavior and job satisfaction in terms of a relationship between the individual and external factors. The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), used as a data collection tool in this study, takes into consideration the relationship between the person and environmental factors grounded in the theory of

work adjustment (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967). Areas identified by the theory of work adjustment were supported in a study by Lyons and O'Brien (2006). The authors found that these areas correlated with factors associated with job satisfaction for African American employees. Locke's (1976) range of affect theory defined satisfaction as an emotional response dependent upon the interaction between the person and the environment. This definition of job satisfaction was supported by Wu (2008) who found that the discrepancy between what individuals have and what they want influences job satisfaction. The current study employed this definition of satisfaction to examine factors influencing the job satisfaction of school psychologists.

A quantitative research design was used to examine whether there is a significant difference between the job satisfaction of school psychologists in Arizona who use a prescriptive model of RTI and those who use a flexible model of RTI. This study also examined whether there are significant differences on school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model and years of experience (less than 6 years vs. 6 years or more), age (less than 40 years vs. 40 years and older), and gender (male vs. female). Results of this study did not reveal any significant difference on psychologists' job satisfaction by group (RTI model) or when combined with the other independent variables (years of experience, age, and gender).

IDEA (2004) indicates that RTI may be included as part of an evaluation for the identification of SLD. However, individual states are given autonomy to create legal guidelines for the implementation of RTI (Berninger, 2006). School districts in Arizona vary in their implementation and interpretation of RTI. Some districts in Arizona have

implemented a model of RTI that leads to eligibility determination (prescriptive RTI model). Other school districts in Arizona use RTI data as part of a prereferral process and continue to implement the traditional achievement-discrepancy model for determining eligibility (flexible RTI model). Literature reviewed for the current study revealed that school psychologists surveyed preferred to spend less time performing assessment related activities and more time providing direct intervention and problem-solving consultation (Brown, Holcombe, Bolen, & Thomson, 2006; Hosp & Reschly, 2002). The implementation of RTI allows school psychologists the opportunity to perform these desired activities. However, no information was available pertaining to the effects of the model of RTI on the perceived job satisfaction of school psychologists.

Interpretation of Findings

Results

The data were obtained from 51 school psychologists employed full-time in eight school districts within the state of Arizona. Twenty-six participants were employed in districts using a prescriptive model of RTI and 25 participants worked in districts subscribing to a flexible RTI model. Participants were fairly balanced in age with 29 (56.9%) being less than 40 years old and 22 participants (43.1%) being 40 years of age or older. Groups were also fairly balanced in years of work experience. Twenty-four participants (47.1%) had less than 6 years of experience while 27 participants (52.9%) had 6 or more years of work experience. Groups were not balanced in gender. Forty-three participants were female (84.3%), while only 8 participants were male (15.7%). However, these results are consistent with national data concerning gender in the field of

school psychology (Curtis, Grier, & Hunley, 2004). This study was conducted with 51 school psychologists practicing within 8 school districts in the Phoenix metropolitan area of Arizona. This sample may not be representative of job satisfaction for school psychologists in other regions of Arizona or in the rest of the country.

Descriptive Data

Preliminary analysis was conducted to determine if the data were appropriate for an analysis of variance (ANOVA). In preliminary analysis the assumption of normality was assessed for each data set through the conduction of Kolmogorov Smirnov (KS) tests. The results of the KS were not significant. The assumption of normality was met and the values were determined not to be skewed or kurtotic. The assumption of equality of variance was assessed using Levene's test. Tests for equality of variances were not significant and equal variances could be assumed. ANOVA was used to assess if group means differed between school psychologists using flexible or prescriptive models of RTI. A factorial ANOVA was conducted to determine if there were significant differences in school psychologists' job satisfaction, by group (flexible RTI model vs. prescriptive RTI model), years of experience (less than 6 years vs. 6 years or more), age (less than 40 years vs. 40 years and older), and gender (male vs. female).

Hypothesis 1

Questioning the test of Hypothesis 1, the prescriptive RTI group had a mean score of 73.88 compared to a mean score of 75.04 for the flexible RTI group. The p value was .657 which was significantly higher than the .05 level to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, Null Hypothesis 1 was accepted. The small F value (.20) indicated that there

are no differences in job satisfaction between models of RTI. Because no significant results were obtained, no post-hoc analyses were conducted.

In the literature reviewed for this study, school psychologists consistently reported that the amount of time spent in RTI-related activities (consultation, problem-solving, and intervention services) contributed positively to job satisfaction while the amount of time spent in assessment-related activities was negatively related to job satisfaction (Brown, Holcombe et al., 2006; Proctor & Steadman, 2003; Huebner & Mills, 1994). A difference in job satisfaction between models of RTI may not be present in the current study because school psychologists using both models have consultative and problem-solving components in their jobs. Curtis, Grier, and Hunley (2004) reported that school psychologists not only prefer to engage in intervention and problem-solving activities, but these services lead to positive educational outcomes for students. Traditionally, the role of the school psychologist has involved being a “gatekeeper” for special education. Both prescriptive and flexible models of RTI allow the school psychologist increased opportunities to consult with teacher and parents, design and implement interventions, and make data-based decisions.

It could be assumed that school psychologists using a prescriptive model of RTI spend less time involved in assessment-related activities for determining eligibility thus leading to higher levels of satisfaction. Similarly, school psychologists using a flexible model of RTI have consultative and problem-solving components to their jobs, but are also involved in assessment activities, an area of perceived competence for most school psychologists (Huebner, 1993). Perhaps the quantity of time spent in assessment-related

activities is not as critical to job satisfaction as the presence of problem-solving and consultative components to the role of the school psychologist. School psychologists with more diverse roles have been found to be more satisfied with their jobs (Brown, Holcombe et al., 2006; Proctor & Steadman, 2003). Curtis et al. (2004) defined an expanded role of the school psychologist as a facilitator coordinating resources in order to respond to needs of families, students, classrooms, schools, districts, and communities. The authors noted that the various levels of services involve school psychologists in problem-solving and data-based decision making. Brown, Holcombe et al. (2006) found that school psychologists who were involved in an expanded role allowing for more consultation and intervention services, experienced high levels of job satisfaction. The authors found that school psychologists desired to spend more time involved in direct and indirect interventions. However, they did not quantify this amount of time. The present study found that school psychologists involved in consultative and intervention-related activities to varying degrees reported similar levels of job satisfaction. These results support the Brown, Holcombe et al. (2006) findings that school psychologists involved in more diverse roles experience high levels of job satisfaction. Both prescriptive and flexible models of RTI allow school psychologists to have more opportunities to consult with teachers, design and implement interventions, and examine data related to student progress.

Hypothesis 2

Questioning the test of Hypothesis 2 a factorial (2-way) ANOVA was conducted to assess if there were significant differences on school psychologists' job satisfaction by

group and by years of experience. There was no significant main effect for years of experience or RTI model. Additionally, there was no significant interaction between the effects of RTI model and years of experience. School psychologists surveyed for this study experienced high levels of job satisfaction regardless of years of experience. This conflicts with an earlier study by Wilczenski (1997). Wilczenski reported that the role of school psychologist is both an entry and exit level position with few opportunities for advancement. Results of this study revealed that school psychologists with 6 to 10 years of experience were more likely to leave the profession. The present study revealed a job satisfaction mean score of 73.41 for the total group of participants with 6 or more years of experience and a mean score of 75.63 for school psychologists with less than 6 years of experience. The small F value (.51) indicated that there are no differences in job satisfaction between models of RTI and years of experience. No differences in satisfaction may have been observed in the current study because there may be other factors influencing job satisfaction of school psychologists that were not present at the time of the study conducted by Wilczenski. One such difference is the reauthorization of IDEA (2004) that has altered the role of the school psychologist to allow for an increase in problem-solving activities (Batsche et al., 2006; Machek & Nelson, 2007). This increased diversity in the role of the school psychologist may allow enough flexibility for individual psychologists to vary their working roles so that other factors, such as job advancement, become less critical for evaluating overall job satisfaction. Additionally, the present study conflicts with a study by Sodoma and Else (2009) who found that school principals with less than 6 years experience reported lower levels of job

satisfaction. School psychologists in the present study with less than 6 years work experience reported similar levels of job satisfaction as their colleagues with 6 or more years of experience. Perhaps part of the reason that no differences in satisfaction were observed in the current study is because school psychologists may have different factors influencing job satisfaction than school principals. This idea is evidenced in a study by Brown, Holcombe et al. (2006) who found that school psychologists desired to spend less time involved in administrative duties.

Hypothesis 3

To test Hypothesis 3, a factorial (2-way) ANOVA was conducted to assess if there were significant differences in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and age (less than 40 years vs. 40 years and older). There was no significant main effect for age or RTI model. Additionally, there was no significant interaction between the effects of RTI model and age. School psychologists surveyed who were less than 40 years old and school psychologists who were 40 years and older reported similar levels of job satisfaction. These results are contrary to an earlier study by Huberty and Huebner (1988). Huberty and Huebner investigated correlates of burnout among a national sample of school psychologists and found that burnout was less prevalent for older school psychologists. The researchers speculated that individuals may develop behavioral and attitudinal patterns that reduce the likelihood of burnout over time. More recently, a study by Lakin et al. (2008) also found that age was a factor in predicting burnout. The authors surveyed residential treatment center staff and found that younger staff reported higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. They

noted that levels of emotional exhaustion directly relate to overall levels of job satisfaction. According to these studies, older school psychologists should experience higher levels of job satisfaction than younger school psychologists. The present study revealed a job satisfaction mean score of 75.34 for the total group of participants who were younger than 40 years of age and a mean score of 73.27 for school psychologists who were 40 years or older. These scores indicate similar levels of satisfaction for both groups with no significant difference between groups.

The role of the school psychologist has changed with the implementation of IDEA (2004). The study by Huberty and Huebner was conducted prior to the reauthorization of IDEA when the role of the school psychologist was predominately tied to assessment-related activities (Hosp & Reschly, 2002). School psychologists with diverse roles have been found to be more satisfied with their jobs (Brown, Holcombe et al., 2006; Proctor & Steadman, 2003). The participants surveyed for the present study were involved, to varying degrees, in the RTI processes in their schools. Berninger (2006) found that RTI allows school psychologists greater flexibility to have increased consultation opportunities and more time to spend involved in intervention-related activities. These areas were identified by Worrell et al. (2006) as areas of preference for most school psychologists. Additionally, Machek and Nelson (2007) noted that RTI-related activities lead to greater role diversity. The present study revealed that younger and older school psychologists with greater role diversity reported similarly high levels of job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4

To test Hypothesis 4, a factorial (2-way) ANOVA was conducted to assess if there were significant differences in school psychologists' job satisfaction by RTI model (flexible vs. prescriptive) and gender. There was no significant main effect for gender or RTI model. Additionally, there was no significant interaction between the effects of RTI model and gender. The present study revealed a job satisfaction mean score of 73.74 for the total group of participants who were female and a mean score of 78.25 for school psychologists who were male. These scores indicate similar levels of satisfaction for both groups with no significant difference between groups. Both male and female school psychologists surveyed reported similar levels of job satisfaction.

There were significantly more female participants (84.3%) than male participants (15.7%) in the current study. A larger sample of male participants may have revealed differences in job satisfaction that could not be detected with a smaller sample. However, literature reviewed for this study indicated that nationally there are more female school psychologists in the profession (Curtis et al., 2004; Hosp & Reschly, 2002). Curtis et al. (2004) found that the representation of females in the field of school psychology increased at a rate of approximately 10% per decade from 1970 to 2000. The field was constituted of 70% females during the 1999-2000 school year. If the rate of female school psychologists continued on this trend, females would constitute roughly 80% of school psychologists currently practicing in the field. Hosp and Reschly (2002) compared demographic variables across regions of the United States and found that the percentage of female school psychologists ranged from one half to almost four fifths. Every region

included a majority of female school psychologists. The sample for the current study contained slightly more female school psychologists than the highest region indicated in the study by Hosp and Reschly. The Western South Central region had the highest percentage of female psychologists at 78.4%. It is possible that the participants for the present study were not a representative sample of the overall region. However, it is also possible that demographic information for the profession may have shifted from the time that Hosp and Reschly conducted their national investigation, as projected in the study by Curtis et al. More female school psychologists may have entered the profession in the Mountain region since the original study was published. No research investigating differences in job satisfaction of school psychologists involving gender was available in the current body of literature. This may be because no differences have previously been identified when comparing male and female school psychologists' experiences of job satisfaction.

Implications for Social Change

The present research study has several implications for social change. Even though data revealed there were no significant differences in job satisfaction between the two differing models of RTI, results from this study were consistent with previous research that found school psychologists with more diverse roles experience higher levels of job satisfaction. The implementation of any model of RTI affords school psychologists increased opportunities for consultative and intervention-related activities. Literature reviewed in Chapter 2 indicates that these areas lead to higher levels of job satisfaction for school psychologists (Brown, Holcombe et al., 2006; Machek & Nelson, 2007). This

is relevant to the profession of school psychology because levels of job satisfaction have been found to influence a number of factors affecting the efficacy of an individual's work, professional attitudes, and personal variables. Job satisfaction has also been found to be related to retention of employees, attendance, and overall job performance (Huebner & Mills, 1994; Levinson et al., 1988; Martin & Schinke, 1998). Because there is currently a national shortage of school psychologists, studies of job satisfaction relating to the retention of professionals are useful to the field. It is critical that policies and procedures that have a negative impact on job satisfaction of school psychologists are avoided to retain school psychologists. This study revealed that school districts may consider flexible and prescriptive models of RTI equally when considering the impact of these models on the job satisfaction of school psychologists.

School psychologists are in a unique position to affect social change by influencing educational decisions. They play a vital role in determining who is eligible for special education services and are involved in data-based decision making that results in interventions to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of students who are at-risk for negative educational outcomes. Therefore, the job satisfaction of school psychologists may have a direct impact on the quality and quantity of psychological services provided to children within the school system (Levinson et al., 1988; VanVoorhis & Levinson, 2006). According to a study by Curtis et al. (2004), lower ratios of school psychologists to students results in more time spent in intervention services that lead to positive outcomes for students. A shortage of school psychologists may increase these ratios resulting in fewer opportunities to engage in interventions and more time

involved in assessment-related activities. RTI has been identified in the literature as a process that allows all students access to research-based instruction, thus increasing the probability of academic achievement and decreasing the number of special education referrals (Barnes & Harlacher, 2008; Danielson et al., 2007; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006a). This reduction in the number of special education referrals may allow school psychologists involved in either a flexible or prescriptive model of RTI more time to be involved in intervention activities that lead to both higher levels of job satisfaction and improved educational outcomes for students.

As the debate about how best to implement RTI continues, there are many students in need of interventions and modifications in order to make educational progress within the school system. Literature reviewed in Chapter 2 revealed that the use of RTI has been identified as a process to provide interventions to struggling students without delays in services related to special education eligibility or overidentification of students who do not genuinely require special education services to be successful academically (Alonzo et al., 2008; Dykeman, 2006; Fletcher et al., 2004). Although not addressed in this study, another potential impact of these findings on social change is that it could provide additional information to help educational leaders come to a resolution on the implementation RTI. Time is critical for students in need of specially designed instruction. Information that helps to bring services to at-risk students without further delays has the potential to impact society in the future by improving the educational outcomes for this population. Students within the school system will eventually enter the

work force and must be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to become productive members of society.

Recommendations for Action

School Administration

School districts vary in their implementation of RTI. While RTI is currently not mandated by IDEA (2004), it is likely that school districts not using RTI will move in this direction as more emphasis is placed on accountability for meeting standards set forth in no child left behind (Barnes & Harlacher, 2008; Batsche et al., 2006).

Administrators in school districts in Arizona currently have control over the specific plans for the implementation of RTI. It is important that these individuals are provided with information regarding the affects of RTI on employees. The current study revealed no significant differences in job satisfaction between school psychologists using a flexible model of RTI and those using a prescriptive RTI model. These results allow school administration to consider both models of RTI equally without concern about the impact on school psychologists' job satisfaction. Both groups reported similarly high levels of satisfaction.

School Psychologists

The results of the current study have implications for school psychologists. Results from this study differed from literature reviewed in the area of burnout in the profession of school psychology. School psychologists surveyed in previous studies reported high levels of burnout (Huberty & Huebner, 1988; Huebner, 1992, 1993, 1994). These differences may be due to a shift in the role of the school psychologist to more

consultative and problem-solving tasks embedded in both prescriptive and flexible models of RTI. School psychologists in previous studies indicated a desire to spend less time in assessment-related activities and more time engaged in consultation and interventions (Brown, Holcombe et al., 2006; Proctor & Steadman, 2003; Huebner & Mills, 1994). Both flexible and prescriptive models of RTI provide opportunities for school psychologists to be involved in consultation and intervention-related activities. While the degrees of involvement in these desired activities vary between models of RTI, results from the current study did not reveal significant differences in job satisfaction between groups. It is perhaps the presence of these components included in the role of the school psychologist, rather than the quantity of these desired activities, that leads to increased levels of job satisfaction. School psychologists considering employment in districts using either prescriptive or flexible models of RTI should be aware that psychologists using both models of RTI reported similar levels of job satisfaction.

Recommendations for Future Research

In order to increase the ability to generalize these results to larger populations, it is recommended that this study be conducted with more participants over a larger geographical area. The present study was conducted with 51 school psychologists practicing in eight school districts within the Phoenix metropolitan area in Arizona. Results may not be representative of job satisfaction experienced by school psychologists in other regions of Arizona or nationally. Additionally, the number of female participants in the present study was significantly higher than male participants. A larger sample of

male participants may reveal differences in job satisfaction that were not detected in the current study.

The present study only used the General Satisfaction scale of the MSQ. The MSQ provides 20 different scales that are correlated with areas of psychological needs identified by the theory of work adjustment (Weiss et al., 1967). An examination of other scales may reveal differences in job satisfaction among groups based on a variety of psychological needs.

Job satisfaction of school psychologists in districts not using RTI should be compared to satisfaction levels of school psychologists using RTI. This data may provide further information regarding how problem-solving and consultative components found in both models of RTI contribute to overall levels of job satisfaction. Qualitative data should also be collected from both groups to explore how school psychologists are involved in problem-solving and intervention activities and their lived experiences of the impact of these activities on their overall levels of job satisfaction.

Conclusion

The reauthorization of IDEA (2004) has led to significant changes in how students may be identified for specific learning disabilities (SLD). A response to intervention (RTI) model may now be implemented to aid in the identification of students with SLD. However, the vague wording in IDEA (2004) leaves the interpretation of the use of RTI up to individual school systems. There is a lack of consensus about how best to implement RTI. School districts in Arizona vary in their implementation of RTI. Some districts use data from RTI to make decisions regarding special education eligibility

(prescriptive RTI model), while others combine RTI data with the traditional IQ-achievement discrepancy model for the purpose of evaluating SLD (flexible RTI model). While there is an abundance of literature involving the implementation of RTI and the use of RTI when conducting psychoeducational evaluations, there had not yet been an investigation on how these various models of RTI impact the job satisfaction of school psychologists. With the implementation of RTI, the role of the school psychologist in evaluations for SLD shifts from that of assessor, to that of problem-solver. Problem-solving and consultative activities have been consistently identified in the literature as areas of preference for most school psychologists.

This study examined levels of job satisfaction of school psychologists working in school districts using a flexible model of RTI and those using a prescriptive model of RTI. While results of this study revealed no significant differences in satisfaction between groups, this research reaffirmed findings from earlier studies. It demonstrated that involvement in consultative and intervention-related activities leads to similar levels of satisfaction. Brown, Holcombe et al. (2006) found that school psychologists with more diverse roles experience higher levels of job satisfaction. The involvement in RTI-related activities has been identified in the literature as leading to greater role diversity for the school psychologist (Machek & Nelson, 2007). This study revealed that school psychologists involved in RTI-related activities, regardless of the model of RTI, experience similar levels of job satisfaction.

The results of this study have several implications for social change even though data revealed no significant differences in job satisfaction between groups. School

psychologists play a vital role in the identification of students requiring special education services as well as helping to design interventions that meet their unique challenges. Both flexible and prescriptive models of RTI allow school psychologists to have increased opportunities for consultation and time spent involved in intervention-related activities. These activities have been identified in the literature as contributing to both increased job satisfaction for the profession of school psychology and increased educational outcomes for students. This study revealed that school psychologists using either prescriptive or flexible models of RTI experience similar levels of job satisfaction. School district administration considering the implementation of RTI can evaluate both models of RTI equally when considering the impact on school psychologists' job satisfaction. There is currently a national shortage of school psychologists in the field. It is thus paramount that factors impacting the job satisfaction of school psychologists are explored to ensure that professionals are retained and attracted to the field. School psychologists are involved in making decisions and providing services that directly impact educational outcomes for students. Improved job satisfaction of school psychologists not only has implications for the field of school psychology, but also has the potential to impact educational outcomes for students that will enable them to obtain the skills necessary to become productive members of society.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

You are invited to take part in a research study investigating the effects of various models of Response to Intervention (RTI) on the job satisfaction of school psychologists. You were chosen for the study because you are a school psychologist currently employed in a public school district that uses one of the models of RTI under investigation. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Stephanie Hill, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. Stephanie Hill has been a school psychologist for seven years.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is a significant difference between the job satisfaction of school psychologists using two different models of RTI.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to complete the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). The MSQ is a standardized survey instrument that takes approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you want to be in the study. No one at your school district will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during the study. If you feel stressed during the study you may stop at any time. You may skip any questions that you feel are too personal.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Risks: You will be asked to provide personal information regarding your levels of job satisfaction.

Benefits: It is anticipated that the information you provide will lead to a better understanding of how various models of RTI are impacting your satisfaction as a school psychologist. These results may help school administration in determining how best to implement RTI in their districts.

Compensation:

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality:

Any information you provide will be kept anonymous. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via phone (480) 980-2294 or email Stephanie.frank@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden

University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **02-04-10-0326810** and it expires on **February 3, 2011**.

Statement of Consent:

Returning a completed survey will be considered as consent to participate in this research project. You have the alternative to choose not to participate in this study. You should only return the survey if you want to participate in this research study.

APPENDIX B: MSQ GENERAL SATISFACTION RAW SCORES

Flexible RTI group		Prescriptive RTI group	
Participant	Gen raw score	Participant	Gen raw score
1	81	1	76
2	77	2	64
3	75	3	73
4	79	4	62
5	60	5	70
6	61	6	98
7	80	7	67
8	77	8	78
9	67	9	77
10	69	10	83
11	69	11	71
12	68	12	70
13	75	13	78
14	74	14	75
15	80	15	83
16	81	16	46
17	73	17	80
18	82	18	79
19	63	19	71
20	66	20	79
21	74	21	78
22	69	22	77
23	89	23	79
24	88	24	72
25	99	25	71
		26	64

CURRICULUM VITAE

Stephanie Lois Hill
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Gilbert, Arizona 85296
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Education:

Postmaster Certification in School Psychology
Eastern Washington University
Washington State University, Tacoma, Washington
May 2003

Master of Education
Special Education
University of Washington, Seattle, Washington
June 1999

Bachelor of Arts in Education
University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona
May 1995. Magna cum Laude

Certification:

Arizona Department of Education
School Psychologist

Education Staff Associate, Washington
Endorsement: School Psychologist

Leadership:

Presenter at Bethel School District's 2003 Summer Institute
Spanaway, Washington
Course title: How to Implement Social Skills Groups That Work!

Experience:

School Psychologist 2007-2010
Higley Unified School District; Gilbert, Arizona
Wrote psychological evaluation reports (preschool-Grade 12)
Assessed cognitive, emotional, adaptive, social, and academic
abilities
Conducted counseling groups for students with emotional
disabilities

Wrote Functional Behavior Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans
 Facilitated Manifestation Determination meetings
 Managed all out of district placements
 Conducted preschool evaluations for Kindergarten transitions

School Psychologist 2005-2007
 Gilbert Public Schools; Gilbert, Arizona
 Wrote psychological evaluation reports (Kindergarten-Grade 6)
 Assessed cognitive, emotional, adaptive, social, and academic abilities
 Served as a behavior coach providing behavioral support and recommendations to teams throughout the district
 Managed DIBELS reading data for grades K-6

School Psychologist 2002-2005
 Bethel School District; Spanaway, Washington
 Wrote psychological evaluation reports (Kindergarten-Grade 8)
 Assessed cognitive, emotional, adaptive, social, and academic abilities
 Led team meetings
 Facilitated social skills and behavior groups

Special Education Teacher 1999-2002
 Bethel School District; Spanaway, Washington
 Wrote Individual Education Plans Grades K-6
 Assessed academic skills
 Supervised sixteen para-educators
 Provided specially designed instruction

Extended School Year Teacher 2000-2002
 Bethel School District; Spanaway, Washington
 Designed summer curriculum Grades 3-5
 Provided individualized summer instruction
 Monitored and documented students' progress

Classroom Teacher: Grade 4 1997-1999
 Tacoma Baptist School; Tacoma, Washington
 Taught all subject areas
 Assessed and reported students' academic growth

Substitute Teacher: Grades K-8 1996-1997
 Bethel School District,

Franklin Pierce School District
Clover Park School District; Washington

Classroom Teacher: Grade 3
Sunnyside School District; Tucson, Arizona

1995-1996