1-1-2000

Elementary Teachers and School Psychologists
Actual and Ideal Role Perceptions of the School Psychologist

Blake E. Martin
Eastern Illinois University

This research is a product of the graduate program in School Psychology at Eastern Illinois University. Find out more about the program.

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Elementary Teachers and School Psychologists
Actual and Ideal Role Perceptions
Of the School Psychologist

BY
Blake E. Martin

1978 -

THESIS
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
SPECIALIST IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

2000

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I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Mike Havey, Dr. Kevin Jones, and Dr. Chris McCormick for their guidance and patience during this process. I would especially like to thank Dr. Havey for the support and guidance he has provided me both in this endeavor and throughout graduate school. Dr. Havey has always been able to make me feel at-ease even when the pressures seemed insurmountable.

I would also like to thank my wife, Kathy for her love, patience, and understanding. Kathy has always been there to talk to no matter how poorly my day may have went. I would have never made it this far without her love and support.

In addition, I would like to thank all of my classmates from Eastern Illinois University who helped to make graduate school some of the best and most memorable years of my life.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the teachers and psychologist who took the time to participate in this study. With their dedication to the children of Illinois, the future indeed looks bright.
Abstract

Survey materials included original questionnaires utilizing categories proposed by Rechsly and Wilson (1997) and a job satisfaction scale utilized by Rechsly and Wilson (1995), and a demographic data sheet. Psychologists in Illinois (n=87) and Illinois K-6 elementary teachers (n=100) were surveyed as to actual and ideal roles and functions of the school psychologist. In addition school psychologists were questioned about job satisfaction. Results indicated a great deal of discrepancy between actual and ideal role from both the viewpoints of psychologists and teachers. Teachers also demonstrated little understanding of the actual role and functions of psychologists in the schools. Job satisfaction results indicated positive attitudes towards colleagues and negative attitudes towards pay and promotion. Further research could help to close the gap between actual and ideal role and function for school psychologists.
Chapter I

Introduction

Nearly every school psychologist has been asked the question at some point, “What exactly is it that you do?” Often the question is posed by a parent, teacher, or administrator who is just not quite sure. Some may think of the psychologist as a counselor, some as a diagnostician, some as merely a test giver, but few people outside of the realm of school psychology fully understand what school psychologists do, or are capable of doing.

Teachers who often work closer to the school psychologist than anyone else, and yet still may not fully understand the role and function of the psychologist, may be the most perplexed. Teachers, especially at the elementary level are often the primary consumer of school psychological services. It is the teacher who contacts the school psychologist because Johnny will not stay in his seat, or because Crystal is having trouble reading, or because Ted is having problems making friends. While psychological services are directed at the child, teachers often share in the benefits of those services by being better able to teach a child, or have a more harmonious classroom.

Review of the Literature

A great deal of literature has investigated the roles and functions of the school psychologist from several viewpoints. Hughes (1979) found that school psychologists and administrators both agreed on what the actual and ideal roles for the school psychologist should be. For both groups, the ideal role would include less test administration and report writing, with increased time spent providing counseling.
Hartshorne and Johnson (1985) substantiated this when they investigated the administrator's view of what school psychology should be. Administrators felt that school psychologists were spending too much time in staffings, and not enough time in counseling. Hartshorne and Johnson also found that special education regulations were seen as the most important influence on amount of time spent in each role across nearly all the areas about which inquiries were made. In both studies, assessment was seen as the most important role for the school psychologist.

Hughes and Shofer (1977) surveyed special education directors and superintendents on the frequency that school psychologists performed a variety of tasks within their districts. Results showed that psychologists spent fifty percent of their time testing, and spent very little time in activities such as research, remediation, and instructional programming.

Teacher's perceptions of school psychologists have also been questioned. Medway (1977) investigated the amount of knowledge teachers have about the actual activities in which school psychologists were involved. Teachers' views of the role of the school psychologist were found to be inconsistent with what school psychologists' records showed they actually did. Teachers viewed school psychologists as doing more counseling, consultation, and interviewing, and less testing and report writing than the records showed.

Gilmore and Chandy (1973) studied what effect the amount of psychologist contact had on teacher's perceptions of the role and function of the psychologist. Results suggested that amount of contact had a more significant impact than did the amount of experience a teacher had on the view of the school psychologists' role.
On the other hand, Kahl and Fine (1978) found that as teaching experience increased, teachers were more likely to view the school psychologist in a varied role. Those teachers with more experience employed more consultation services and less assessment services than did teachers with less experience. This implies years of experience in dealing with school psychologists can have an effect on one's perceptions of what it is they do. Kahl & Fine’s study (1978) contradicts Gilmore and Chandy’s (1973) findings and leaves the question of experience vs. contact open to debate.

Nolan (1974) studied teachers’ misconceptions of the school psychologist’s role. Nolan found that lack of understanding could be traced to teacher training programs which seldom mentioned the subject of school psychology in either lectures or texts.

Landau and Gerken (1979) compared administrators’ and teachers’ views of the actual and ideal role for the school psychologist. As expected, administrators saw the assessment role as both the most engaged in activity, as well as the most desirable. Teachers also viewed assessment as the most prevalent activity school psychologists engaged in, but saw a need for more consultation than assessment in the ideal role, with counseling being ranked virtually the same as the assessment role.

Gargiulo, Fiscus, Moroney, & Fauver (1981) found similar results with regards to the actual role of the school psychologist. Principals utilized school psychologists primarily in an assessment role, while teachers utilized school psychologists most often for consultation and advice as well as assessment. The authors suggested that the role of the school psychologist was changing into more of an indirect service model based on consultation rather than formal assessment.
School psychologists also have been questioned about the roles and functions they play within the school. Roberts (1970) found psychologists and teachers differed greatly in estimates of how a psychologist's time was spent, suggesting that teachers held incorrect assumptions about the role of a school psychologist. Both groups saw a need to expand the role beyond that of a psychometrist, with the psychologists especially seeing that particular role as being overemphasized. Roberts (1970) controlled for amount of experience by including only those teachers with five or more years of experience.

Copeland and Miller (1985) found that school psychologists still saw assessment as the dominant need, but that the role of the psychologist had greatly expanded. Because of this, practitioners saw an increased need for training in such courses as consultation, legal issues, neuropsychological assessment, and infant and preschool assessment. Copeland and Miller suggested that with coursework and professional growth in these areas, the practitioner psychologist would be more comfortable with role expansion.

Recently the trend towards role expansion has gained even stronger support in the literature. Cheramie and Sutter (1993) identified several areas in which the school psychologists role was becoming more varied. Special education directors saw the school psychologist as effective in assessment, consultation, and crisis intervention. However, they desired a greater input from school psychologists in the areas of counseling and consultation. The authors suggested there was still much room for role expansion as the administrators failed to recognize service with at-risk and regular education students as a priority.

Roberts and Rust (1994) compared school psychologists working in Tennessee and in Iowa on the amount of time spent in five different roles. The results suggested that
psychologists in the traditional refer-test-place state of Tennessee spent most of their time in assessment as would be predicted; however, psychologists from Iowa, where role expansion has been encouraged (see Schendel, 1990 for a discussion), split their time more evenly among roles such as assessment, consultation, intervention, pre-referral, and curriculum-based assessment.

Huebner (1993) found that school psychologists were providing services in a variety of methods. Both assessment and consultation were key areas in which school psychologists delivered services. The need for role expansion was further substantiated by the finding that those school psychologists with the most diversified service delivery models reported the greatest job satisfaction.

Levinson (1990) also discussed job satisfaction as it relates to role expansion. Levinson indicated that the school psychologists with the highest degree of job satisfaction were those who had the least amount of discrepancy between actual role and desired role. Job satisfaction was directly related to the actual amount of time spent in certain activities versus the desired amount of time spent in those roles. Levinson made a strong argument for role expansion.

Role expansion among the typical roles of the school psychologist: counseling, consultation, intervention, etc. has been advocated on several occasions (e.g. Levinson, 1990; Benson & Hughes, 1985; Tidwell, 1980). Rechsly and Wilson (1995) studied job satisfaction as it related to level of training and found little difference between masters level, specialist level or doctoral level psychologists. Rechsly and Wilson utilized a twenty-five question survey divided into five areas of job satisfaction (pay, promotion, work conditions, supervision, and colleagues). They used this information to compare the
level of job satisfaction between practitioner and faculty psychologists, finding that in most areas, the level of job satisfaction was higher for practitioners than faculty. Rechsly and Wilson also queried as to the amount of time spent in actual and preferred hours of psychoeducational assessment, direct intervention, problem solving consultation, systems organization, and research. Again, Rechsly and Wilson compared the difference between practitioner and faculty and found both desired a decreased amount of psychoeducational assessment and an increase in the other roles. Rechsly and Wilson did not investigate how the extent to which one's actual role differs from preferred role impacts job satisfaction. One of the primary justifications for role expansion from the point of view of the school psychologist may be its relationship to job satisfaction, a relationship that has yet to be studied in detail.

Job satisfaction is an important factor in making an argument for role expansion, but it must not be the only argument. Tidwell (1980) offered several other key points in making an argument for role expansion. As was mentioned previously, classroom teachers are one of the primary consumers of school psychological services, but Tidwell argued that teachers do not see the information provided by psychologists as helpful. Tidwell stated that teachers view psychologists' activities as irrelevant to activities that typically take place in a regular classroom setting. According to Tidwell, school psychologists need to become more involved in the classroom consultation process. This would allow psychologists to offer services that teachers would view as directly relevant to the classroom.

Results from study after study indicate a desire by psychologists to expand their role. Psychologists desire to spend less time in assessment and more time in almost every
other role. Benson and Hughes (1985) found that it is possible for psychologists, at least to some extent, to have power over the role definition processes. Their results suggested that other influences including state rules and regulations and administration also held influence over role definitions, but that the practicing psychologist could in most cases actively participate in role expansion.

While the literature includes a large number of studies related to the actual and ideal role of the school psychologist, no recent study has investigated this from the point of view of both teachers and school psychologists. In addition, several of the studies mentioned previously have had difficulty controlling for such variables as amount of psychologist contact or amount of teaching experience (Gilmore & Chandy, 1973; Kahl & Fine, 1978). Other studies have contained methodological flaws, which may have skewed results. For instance, Medway (1977) included in the sample school psychology interns who were free to engage in a large variety of activities which may make results inapplicable to practicing psychologists whose activities may be determined by administration or the needs of the school districts they serve.

The current literature suggests several questions:

1) Are school psychologists still spending an inordinate amount of time in testing and assessment, or do they now have more balanced roles?

2) What is the congruence of actual versus desired role?

3) How closely do teachers understand the role and function of school psychologists?

4) What is the desired role for a school psychologist as defined by teachers?

5) What is the relationship between actual and ideal roles and job satisfaction?
Chapter II

Method

Participants

School psychologists were obtained by a mailing to randomly selected members of the Illinois School Psychologists Association. Only school psychologists practicing in the public school system were included in the final sample to eliminate interns and those school psychologists working in private settings who may have more freedom and variability in their roles.

Mailings containing the questionnaire were sent to randomly selected teachers. Names for the mailings were obtained through the Illinois State Board of Education. To control for amount of contact, only regular education teachers teaching in elementary grades kindergarten through grade six were included as most initial psychological services take place at this level.

Procedure

Each participant completed an original questionnaire, which utilized the categories used by Rechsly and Wilson with the exception that direct intervention was divided into categories of direct intervention with parents and teachers as well as direct intervention with students (1995), (see Appendix A). The questionnaire inquired about actual and desired amount of psychological services in the areas used in Rechsly and Wilson (1997): Psychoeducational Assessment, Direct Intervention, Problem Solving Consultation, Systems Organization, and Research/Evaluation. Examples were given under each category. The questionnaire had a completion time of ten to fifteen minutes. The format of the questionnaire was designed with ease of completion in mind. Response
rates have typically been low in studies of this type. One reason may be that teachers and psychologists are extremely busy and may not have time to complete a lengthy questionnaire. An addressed, stamped envelope was provided to encourage response rate.

In addition, school psychologists completed a measure of job satisfaction replicated from Rechsly and Wilson (1997) (see Appendix C). This was a twenty-five-item scale that added an additional five to ten minutes to total completion time. The items were answered on a five point Likert scale. The job satisfaction questionnaire was divided into the following sections: colleagues, work, supervision, pay, and promotion.

Demographic data was included on the first page of the questionnaire. The questionnaires were accompanied by a letter, which included an explanation of the purpose of the study and instructions on completing the questionnaire (see Appendix B). Participants' names were kept anonymous and identification numbers were assigned.
Chapter III

Results

Eighty-nine of the two hundred psychologists returned the questionnaire for a response rate of 44.5%. Of these, two reported being interns and were discarded for a final sample size of $n=87$. All respondents reported being primarily practitioners working in a public school setting.

One hundred twelve of the three hundred teachers returned the questionnaire for a response rate of 37%. Nine were unusable due to being incomplete or being completed incorrectly. Three were discarded because the respondent replied that teaching was not their primary position leaving a final sample size of $n=100$. Teachers reported a mean number of years of teaching experience of 16.66. All respondents worked in a public school setting and met the requirement of teaching grades kindergarten through six.

The psychologist respondents reported an approximate number of hours actually spent per week in various activities. The mean number of hours spent in psychological assessment was $20.78$ (SD=$8.48$). The mean number of hours spent in direct intervention with students was $3.92$ (SD=$3.93$). The mean number of hours spent in direct intervention with parents or teachers was $3.93$ (SD=$3.42$). The mean number of hours spent in problem solving consultation was $5.36$ (SD=$5.40$). The mean number of hours spent in systems organization was $1.93$ (SD=$2.48$). The mean number of hours spent in research and evaluation was $0.64$ (SD=$1.09$).

The psychologist respondents also reported an approximate number of hours they would ideally spend in the same activities. The mean number of hours ideally spent in psychological assessment was $12.84$ (SD=$6.87$). The mean number of hours ideally spent
in direct intervention with students was 8.55 (SD=4.29). The mean number of hours ideally spent in direct intervention with parents or teachers was 5.49 (SD=3.70). The mean number of hours ideally spent in problem solving consultation was 6.72 (SD=4.46). The mean number of hours ideally spent in systems organization was 2.71 (SD=2.30). The mean number of hours ideally spent in research and evaluation was 1.95 (SD=2.41).

Table 1 presents the results of the t-test between actual and ideal numbers of hours spent in these activities from the psychologists' perspective. As predicted, school psychologists spend a greater number of hours in psychological assessment than they would prefer, and a lesser number of hours in direct intervention with students, parents, and teachers, problem solving consultation, systems organization, and research and evaluation. Results were consistent with the previous literature.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychologist Mean Hours Actually and Ideally Spent in Various Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychoeducational assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving Consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research/Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teacher respondents reported an approximate number of hours they believed were actually spent per week in various activities. The mean number of hours spent in
psychological assessment was 15.79 (SD=10.90). The mean number of hours spent in
direct intervention with students was 6.61 (SD=7.97). The mean number of hours spent in
direct intervention with parents or teachers was 4.39 (SD=4.93). The mean number of
hours spent in problem solving consultation was 4.03 (SD=4.18). The mean number of
hours spent in systems organization was 2.36 (SD=3.35). The mean number of hours
spent in research and evaluation was 2.10 (SD=3.13).

The teacher respondents also defined the role and function they desire from the
school psychologist by reporting an approximate number of hours they would like
psychologists to ideally spend in the same activities. The mean number of hours ideally
spent in psychological assessment was 11.96 (SD=7.51). The mean number of hours
ideally spent in direct intervention with students was 12.49 (SD=7.17). The mean number
of hours ideally spent in direct intervention with parents or teachers was 7.56 (SD=5.06).
The mean number of hours ideally spent in problem solving consultation was 6.49
(SD=4.48). The mean number of hours ideally spent in systems organization was 3.29
(SD=4.91). The mean number of hours ideally spent in research and evaluation was 2.95
(SD=4.38).

Table 2 presents the results of the t-test between actual and ideal numbers of hours
spent in these activities from the teachers' perspective. Teachers also would like to see
psychologists spend their time differently than how they think psychologists actually
spend their time. Teachers would like to see psychologists spend less time in
psychological assessment, and a greater amount of time spent in direct intervention with
students, parents, and teachers, problem solving consultation, systems organization, and
research and evaluation.
A one way analysis of variance was completed in order to determine the congruence of understanding of the role and function of the school psychologist as defined by the teachers. Teachers' perceptions of actual hours spent were quite different than the mean number of hours actually spent as reported by psychologists. Teachers underestimated the actual number of hours spent in psychological assessment and in problem solving consultation. Teachers overestimated the amount of time spent in the areas of direct intervention, systems organization, and research and evaluation. Table 3 presents these results.

Table 2

**Teachers' Perspective Mean Hours Actually and Ideally Spent in Various Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Ideal</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Psychoeducational assessment</td>
<td>15.79</td>
<td>11.96</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Intervention Students</td>
<td>6.61</td>
<td>12.49</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/Teachers</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>7.56</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving Consultation</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>6.49</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems Organization</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research/Evaluation</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Teacher Estimated Actual Hours vs. Psychologist Estimated Actual Hours.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Actual hours of:</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>vs.</th>
<th>Psychologist</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychoeducational assessment</td>
<td>15.79</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.78</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>6.61</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/Teachers</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem Solving Consultation</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems Organization</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research/Evaluation</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Means and standard deviations were computed for each subscale of the job satisfaction survey. These calculations may be seen in Table 4. Analysis showed that psychologists rated the area of Colleagues as the most favorable aspect of job satisfaction. Work and Supervision were very close in rank, ranked fairly neutrally, with the least satisfying being the areas of Pay and Promotion which were both ranked in a negative direction. These results were very consistent with Rechsly and Wilson (1995), in which practitioner school psychologists rated the job satisfaction areas very similarly.
A discrepancy index was computed by subtracting actual hours spent in psychological assessment from ideal hours in assessment for each psychologist. Correlations were computed between job satisfaction subscales, actual hours of assessment, ideal hours of assessment, and this discrepancy index. Table 5 presents the results of these correlations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>COLL</th>
<th>WORK</th>
<th>SUP</th>
<th>PAY</th>
<th>PROM</th>
<th>DIFF</th>
<th>APA</th>
<th>IPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COLL</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>-.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>WORK</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.24*</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SUP</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>-.35**</td>
<td>-.27*</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAY</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.28**</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROM</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
<td>-.22*</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIFF</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.63**</td>
<td>-.28**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.57**</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPA</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:

COLL = Colleagues
SUP = Supervision
PROM = Promotion
DIFF = Discrepancy Index
APA = Actual hours of psychological assessment
IPA = Ideal hours of psychological assessment
*p<.05
**p<.01
Chapter IV

Discussion

The current study had several major goals. The first of which was to determine if school psychologists in Illinois still spend the bulk of their time in testing and assessment, or whether psychologists now have roles which are more balanced and presumably more desirable. Respondents indicated they still spend more time in testing and assessment than they do in all other roles combined. This would indicate that indeed school psychologists still function primarily as evaluators within the public school setting.

The second goal of the current research was to determine if the number of hours spent in each of the categories was similar or dissimilar to the number of hours psychologists would like to spend in each of the various activities. Responses indicated that the ideal role would differ significantly from the role and function that school psychologists currently perform. As was expected, school psychologists desire to spend more than seven hours less per week in psychological assessment, thus freeing them to perform a wide variety of other tasks. Not surprisingly, one of the greatest roles that school psychologists would like to increase is direct intervention. Psychologists expressed that they would like to perform more direct service with both students as well as with parents and teachers. In addition, psychologists indicated that they would like to spend more time working with teachers in the role of a consultant than they currently do. Also, psychologists would like to perform more duties in the role of systems organization, working towards system level changes including school policy issues, prevention programs, and general curriculum issues. Intuitively this would indicate that psychologists would like to be involved with both the special education population as
well as have more input into regular education issues. Finally, school psychologists indicated a desire to function in the role of researcher or evaluator of programs. Research has consistently been the lowest priority of psychologists in the previous literature. The current study indicates that while this is still the case in both actual and desired roles, psychologists would prefer to spend more time occupying this role than they traditionally have.

These findings were consistent with the previous literature (Roberts, 1970; Medway, 1977; Hughes, 1979; Copeland & Miller, 1985). Trends in role and function have changed very little over the past thirty years. Psychologists continue to seek more diversity in their ideal roles, while change in the actual role and function has come very slowly.

A third goal of the current research was to examine teachers' understanding of what their colleagues in the profession of school psychology actually do. Results were somewhat mixed. Teachers did indicate that they believed school psychologists spend far more time in psychological assessment than in any other area. However, teachers' estimations of the number of hours actually spent by psychologists in each of the five roles and functions differed significantly from what psychologists indicate they actually do. A possible explanation for the underestimation of hours spent in psychological assessment would be due to their lack of understanding of the time commitment to scoring and interpretation of results and to writing of psychological reports. Teachers often do not actually witness this part of assessment and possibly gave it little credence when making their estimation.
Teachers overestimated the amount of time spent in both systems organization and research. The lack of one profession's understanding of the role of another with whom they work so closely is puzzling. Further explanation of the reasons for the lack of understanding of the roles and functions of the school psychologist by teachers would be a goal for future research.

The fourth goal of this study was to investigate how the primary consumers of school psychological services, teachers, define the ideal role of school psychologists. A comparison of the mean number of hours that teachers reported for the ideal role indicates a much more varied and balanced role, more balanced than even psychologists indicated would be their preferred role. Analysis indicated that the teachers value direct intervention with students as the most desirable role, with assessment being a close second. Even psychologists still value assessment more than any other role. Perhaps psychologists should note the desire of teachers to have a more direct style of service delivery. Teachers also indicated they would like to see an increase in consultation, systems organization work, and research and evaluation performed by psychologists. Of great importance to note was that the third most valued role as indicated by teachers was direct service with teachers and parents. This was a role psychologists indicated that they actually spend very little time in with a mean of only 3.93 hours. Teachers indicated they would like to see over 7.5 hours a week of this type of service, or roughly one day a week spent on this type of activity.

The final goal of the current study was to investigate job satisfaction, and its relationship to role and function. Results were consistent with the previous literature in this area (Rechsly and Wilson, 1995). Psychologists continue to rate their colleagues as
the most satisfying portion of their job. Supervision and work conditions were both rated in a fairly neutral manner. The least satisfying portions of the job as rated by psychologists were pay and the possibilities for advancement. Participants rated both of these areas in a negative manner. Most school psychologists still feel undervalued with regards to monetary reimbursement for their services. This was certainly not a surprising finding. With regards to promotion opportunities, Rechsly and Wilson (1995) advanced two explanations for this dissatisfaction. Promotion opportunities are simply rare in the special education field, with relative few supervisory or administrative positions available. Their second explanation involved the fact that most practitioners held specialist degrees rather than doctoral degrees and opportunities for practice outside the school setting were extremely limited. This second explanation was not investigated in the current study.

The relationship between job satisfaction and hours spent in assessment was explored. Hours of assessment was chosen because it was the only area in which psychologists would like to spend less time rather than more, and presumably if less time is spent in assessment it would free the psychologist to engage in other activities.

Several relationships were significant. Satisfaction with work conditions was positively correlated with satisfaction with opportunities for promotion. Most psychologist know upon entering the field that opportunities for advancement are extremely limited, and despite the limited opportunities, they are still satisfied. Satisfaction with promotion was also positively correlated with satisfaction of supervision. When a psychologist is happy with supervisory conditions, the psychologist
is less likely to think about being promoted into those jobs, and they are not looking to get out of their current job.

In investigating the relationship between job satisfaction and role and function, the discrepancy index was negatively correlated with satisfaction with supervision and opportunities for promotion. The greater the difference between what one is doing and what one would like to be doing, the less satisfied one is with supervision and promotion opportunities. Perhaps psychologists who have a great deal of discrepancy between actual and ideal role feel that their supervisor is not doing enough to help them remedy the situation and that they feel they could do a better job if only there were the opportunities for promotion.

Actual hours spent in psychological assessment was negatively correlated with almost all aspects of job satisfaction (work conditions, supervision, pay, and promotion). Psychologists spend more time in assessment than in all other areas of their job combined. Psychologists also clearly would like to engage in less assessment. This has possibly created a "mad at the world" scenario in which the more hours a psychologist has to spend performing the function they would like to be spending less time in, the more the psychologist feels overworked, underpaid, underappreciated, upset with the supervisor not doing enough to protect them from being overworked, and upset that there are limited promotion opportunities to get them out of the situation.

Future research of this kind may wish to examine the relationships between doctoral and non-doctoral psychologists who practice in the public school setting. Rechsly and Wilson examined the relationship between faculty and practitioners,
however, and failed to make the distinction between degree holders among practitioners. This could prove difficult as relatively few practitioners hold doctoral degrees.

Another suggestion for a direction for future studies would be to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and type of job setting. For example, do psychologists who work for one district or school significantly differ in their job satisfaction from those who work for cooperatives or joint agreements? Further, the current job satisfaction questionnaire did not include a sense of efficacy measure. Job satisfaction as it relates to a sense of efficacy and its relationship to the discrepancy between actual and ideal role could be examined.

In closing, the current study reaffirms that the role and function of the school psychologist is still heavily based on psychological assessment, but without some of the methodological flaws present in some previous studies, in which there has been difficulty in controlling for amount of psychologist contact or years of teaching experience (Gilmore & Chandy, 1973; Kahl & Fine, 1978), and in which they have included interns (Medway, 1977). In addition, the current study is indicative of the desire for a more balanced role of service delivery style on the part of the psychologists who perform the services and the primary recipients of those services, teachers. Clearly, psychologists and teachers would like to see a less traditional model of school psychology and both desire a large increase in the amount of direct service performed by the school psychologist. A great deal remains to be learned about the lack of knowledge teachers seem to have about the current actual role and function of the school psychologist. Future studies could focus on examining where the lack of understanding stems from, and could investigate methods of bringing the actual roles performed by psychologists more into line with the more
balanced role that both psychologists and teachers have indicated they prefer. A possible area to examine in relationship to the difficulty of coordinating actual and ideal roles could be in the school administrators perceptions of the actual and ideal role since it is often the administrator who dictates how psychologists spend their time. Although this relationship has been investigated in the previous literature (Hughes & Shofer, 1977; Hughes, 1979; and Hartshorne & Johnson, 1985) it has been a decade and a half since this relationship was studied in detail.
References


Appendix A

Questionnaire

Demographic Data

1) Primary Job Description (circle one)

Practitioner school psychologist   Trainer of school psychologists

2) If you are a practitioner, please indicate if you work primarily in a public or private school setting.

Public   Private

3) Are you currently a school psychology intern?   Yes   No

Please complete the questionnaire beginning with page 1.
Demographic Data

1) Primary Job Description (circle one)

   Regular Education Teacher          Special Education Teacher

2) Please indicate if you work primarily in a public or private school setting.

   Public          Private

3) Please indicate number of years of teaching experience ________

4) Please indicate the grade or grades you primarily teach ________

Please complete the questionnaire beginning with page 1.
Please indicate the amount of time in hours per week you BELIEVE school psychologists ACTUALLY participate in the following activities:

Psychoeducational Assessment
(Evaluations for diagnosis of handicapping conditions, testing, scoring and interpretation, report writing, eligibility or placement conferences with teachers and parents, re-evaluations)

Direct Intervention with Students
(Direct work with students to improve competencies or to solve problems, counseling, social skills groups, crisis intervention)

Direct Intervention with Parents or Teachers
(Direct work with parents or teachers students to improve competencies or to solve problems, parent or teacher training, etc.)

Problem-Solving Consultation
(Working with consultees (teachers, or parents) with students as clients, problem identification, problem analysis, treatment design and implementation, treatment evaluation)

Systems Organization
(Working toward system level changes, improved organizational functioning, school policy, prevention of problems, general curriculum issues)

Research/Evaluation
(Program evaluation, grant writing, needs assessment, determining correlates of performance, evaluating effects of programs)
Please indicate the amount of time in hours per week you **WOULD LIKE** school psychologists to **IDEALLY** participate in the following activities:

**Psychoeducational Assessment**
(Evaluations for diagnosis of handicapping conditions, testing, scoring and interpretation, report writing, eligibility or placement conferences with teachers and parents, re-evaluations)

**Direct Intervention with Students**
(Direct work with students to improve competencies or to solve problems, counseling, social skills groups, crisis intervention)

**Direct Intervention with Parents or Teachers**
(Direct work with parents or teachers students to improve competencies or to solve problems, parent or teacher training, etc.)

**Problem-Solving Consultation**
(Working with consultees (teachers, or parents) with students as clients, problem identification, problem analysis, treatment design and implementation, treatment evaluation)

**Systems Organization**
(Working toward system level changes, improved organizational functioning, school policy, prevention of problems, general curriculum issues)

**Research/Evaluation**
(Program evaluation, grant writing, needs assessment, determining correlates of performance, evaluating effects of programs)

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Appendix B
Instructional Letter

To whom it may concern:

I am currently seeking a Specialist degree in School Psychology from Eastern Illinois University. As a part of the degree requirements I must complete a thesis. In order to complete my thesis, I need your help in data collection. If you choose to participate in this study, the information you provide will be used in conjunction with this purpose. Please complete the consent form on the reverse side of this letter, the demographic data sheet, and the enclosed questionnaire, which should only take a few minutes of your time and return them both in the stamped envelope provided. If you would like a copy of the results of this study once completed, please provide your address on the bottom of the consent form. All participants will remain anonymous, and this information will be used only for mailing purposes. Thank you for your participation in this important project.

Blake E. Martin
Specialist Candidate
Eastern Illinois University
Appendix C

Job Satisfaction Questionnaire

1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

1. I have a sense of accomplishment through my work. 1 2 3 4 5
2. My present income is not adequate for my needs. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Opportunities for advancement are limited in my job. 1 2 3 4 5
4. My supervisor is competent in my field. 1 2 3 4 5
5. My colleagues work well together. 1 2 3 4 5
6. On most days my work is not challenging. 1 2 3 4 5
7. I am satisfied with my salary. 1 2 3 4 5
8. Promotion decisions at my work place are often unfair. 1 2 3 4 5
9. The amount of supervision provided to me is about right. 1 2 3 4 5
10. I have good rapport with most of my colleagues. 1 2 3 4 5
11. My work is satisfying. 1 2 3 4 5
12. I am well paid for my level of education and kind of work. 1 2 3 4 5
13. Promotions are based on work quality and productivity. 1 2 3 4 5
14. My supervisor offers good suggestions and constructive criticism. 1 2 3 4 5
15. My colleagues are not very interesting. 1 2 3 4 5
16. My work is often routine. 1 2 3 4 5
17. The job benefits are poor (e.g. insurance, retirement plan). 1 2 3 4 5
18. My supervisor is not supportive of my work. 1 2 3 4 5
19. Working more effectively in my present job would lead to promotion. 1 2 3 4 5
20. My work does not fully utilize my capabilities. 1 2 3 4 5
21. My colleagues are supportive of my professional work and personal development. 1 2 3 4 5
22. I am well paid for the amount of effort I devote to my job. 1 2 3 4 5
23. Persons in my job are rarely promoted to positions with more responsibilities and higher pay. 1 2 3 4 5
24. My supervisor has poor interpersonal skills. 1 2 3 4 5
25. Most of my colleagues are not very capable. 1 2 3 4 5