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# School Principals' Job Satisfaction: The Effects of Work Intensification

Fei Wang

*University of British Columbia*

Katina E. Pollock

*the University of Western Ontario, kpolloc7@uwo.ca*

Cameron Hauseman

*University of Toronto*

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## **School Principals' Job Satisfaction: The Effects of Work Intensification**

Fei Wang, Katina Pollock, & Cameron Hauseman  
University of British Columbia, Western University, University of Toronto

### **Abstract**

This study examines principals' job satisfaction in relation to their work intensification. Frederick Herzberg's two-factor theory was used to shed light on how motivating and maintenance factors affect principals' job satisfaction. Logistic multiple regressions were used in the analysis of survey data that were collected from 2,701 elementary and secondary school principal members of the Ontario Principals' Council in Ontario, Canada. Approximately 1,423 valid cases were used in data analysis. Results show that principals' work intensification affects their job satisfaction. As a result of work intensification, motivating factors, such as workplace challenge, recognition from the employer, and work demand; and maintenance factors such as external policy influence, organizational support, principals' relationships with teachers, superintendents, and unions are having a significant impact on principals' job satisfaction. These factors affect the extent to which they are able to contribute effectively to improving student achievement and school performance.

*Keywords: Job satisfaction, work intensification, motivating and maintenance factors*

### **Introduction**

Recent Canadian and international studies identified a number of changes that have influenced the work and workload of principals, including: school regulation and policy changes; pedagogical, social, and demographic changes; budgetary cuts; the marketization of education; technological advancement; and changes in parental expectations (Alberta Teachers' Association [ATA], 2014; Alsaedi & Male, 2013; Cardno & Youngs, 2013; Leithwood & Azah, 2014; Pollock, Wang, & Hauseman, 2015; Reames, Kochan, & Zhu, 2014; Riley, 2016; US Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2016). These changes, coupled with the growing emphasis on accountability, academic standards, and high-stakes testing, have led to increasing demands on principals, a sharp increase in their job responsibilities, and added complexity of their work (Darmody & Smyth, 2016; Markow, Macia, & Lee, 2013). Although the additional roles and responsibilities can be exciting and challenging in positive ways—and may lead to personal and professional growth—principals frequently view change as a source of stress (Chaplain, 2001). These changes seem to have decreased job satisfaction among principals, which not only negatively impacts their work performance (Markow et al., 2013) but also affects the recruitment and retention of future principals (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012; Guterman, 2007; Kwan & Walker, 2008; Lin, 2013).

*Job satisfaction* is evidently an important contributing factor to work performance (Bakotic, 2016; Eckman, 2004). Knowing which factors increase principals' job satisfaction could help improve their well-being and support principals in their current work. Educational stakeholders must understand how principals' work intensification impacts their job satisfaction in order to provide better support and service to their work. Accordingly, this study investigated the various work-related factors that affect principals'

job satisfaction in Ontario, which has one of the largest number of principals in Canada. The following questions guided our inquiry:

- How do Ontario school principals perceive their job within the context of work intensification?
- Which factors influence or contribute most to principals' levels of job satisfaction, and what implications do those factors have?

## **Literature Review**

The literature on job satisfaction involves a wide variety of job settings and types. Given the broad scope of the existing research, our literature review focused on aspects most relevant to this study: how job satisfaction is defined, how it is related to principals' work intensification, and what factors have been identified as contributing to job dis/satisfaction among school administrators. Additionally, we did consider some pioneer studies on satisfaction in other job settings, as it is likely the factors that affect other professions may be applicable to the principalship.

### *Job Satisfaction*

Job satisfaction is one of the most important issues in organizational and leadership studies because it directly impacts individuals' senses of commitment to their jobs and belonging in the workplace. However, there is currently no general agreement in the educational research on what job satisfaction is and how it is defined. Over the years, scholars have generally approached job satisfaction from institutional, affective, and cognitive perspectives (Zhu, 2013). As an institutional concept, job satisfaction involves the features of the job and job-related environment, and refers to work-related conditions concerning supervisors, jobs, work colleagues, compensation, and promotion opportunities (Hulin & Judge, 2003; Smith & Shields, 2013). Institutional factors often influence people's organizational behaviours.

Scholars have also defined job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive affection state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or work experiences" (Locke, 1976, p. 1300). This definition describes job satisfaction as an affective or emotional reaction to the job, and has to do with individuals' evaluations of their work roles or experiences. In other words, it is a subjective construct that represents emotional feelings that individuals have about their jobs. Locke (1976) maintained that job satisfaction can be understood by looking at its common dimensions, such as "work, pay, promotions, recognition, benefits, working conditions, supervision, co-workers, company, and management" (p. 1302). Locke's definition is the most widely used, and has had far-reaching influence on studies of job satisfaction.

In the contemporary sense, however, job satisfaction is a multidimensional concept that involves psychological responses to one's position of employment. Such responses contain cognitive and affective components in addition to the behavioural factors described above (Hulin & Judge, 2003). From the cognitive perspective, job satisfaction is a psychological process of recognition that includes the consciousness, the perception, the reasoning, and the judgement of working conditions, opportunities, and output (Moorman, 1993). Certain scholars have argued that cognition-oriented job satisfaction contains a comparison process that does not depend on emotional or affective judgement. Instead, cognition-oriented job satisfaction is concerned with whether the nature of the job, the working conditions, and development opportunities satisfy individuals' needs (Zhu, 2013). Unlike affective job satisfaction, cognitive job satisfaction is an objective and logical evaluation of various aspects of a job (Lent & Brown, 2006). It may bring about affective job satisfaction, but it is not directly related to the affective system.

### *Work Intensification and Job Satisfaction*

School principals in Canada are experiencing work intensification (Armstrong, 2015; ATA, 2014; Leithwood, 2014; Pollock, Wang, & Hauseman, 2014, 2015). The increased expectations for Canadian school principals involve the number of short- and long-term tasks they are expected to complete, the amount of time they are given to complete those tasks, and the growing workload that prevents them from keeping up with their daily routine. Scholars have also observed the increasing intensity and complexity of the principalship in the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US), and other countries. In the UK, Cooper and Kelly identified work overload as principals' most severe stressor (as cited in Darmody & Smyth, 2016). In the US, the job demands of elementary and secondary school principals continue to

grow and escalate (Eckman & Kelber, 2010; Muse & Abrams, 2011). Recent studies have further explored principals' complex and demanding role and the multiple and competing responsibilities associated with the position in contemporary times (e.g., Bauer & Brazer, 2013; Darmody & Smyth, 2016; Earley & Bubb, 2013). The increasingly stressful working conditions of the principalship are further exacerbated by growing bureaucracy, excess paperwork, unplanned interruptions, severe budget cuts, and encroachment on their professional autonomy (Chang, Leach, & Anderman, 2015; Darmody & Smyth, 2016; Drago-Severson, 2012).

Rising job demands in both quantity (e.g., work overload and multitasking) and quality (e.g., changing work conditions and reduced autonomy) can significantly impact principals' health and well-being. Research has shown that principals' work intensification can lead to excessive work-related stress, burnout, and mental health issues (Darmody & Smyth, 2016; Drago-Severson, 2012; Federici & Skaalvik, 2012; Pollock, Wang, & Hauseman, 2014). Faced with increasing job expectations, contemporary principals are more likely to experience role ambiguity, overload, and conflict on a regular basis. In turn, these experiences generate occupational stress and negatively affect principals' job satisfaction, particularly among those who are new to the principalship (Bauer & Brazer, 2013).

Moreover, principals' work intensification can negatively affect their physical and mental health (such as weight gain, low energy, chronic fatigue, and depression), reduce their self-efficacy and sense of personal accomplishment, and lead them to develop negative feelings toward the profession (Bauer & Brazer, 2013; Drummond & Halsey, 2013; Federici & Skaalvik, 2012). If left unmitigated, these experiences could sufficiently motivate principals to resign and seek employment in a better school context or to quit the profession altogether. The job demands—and the time they consume—not only negatively impact principals' job satisfaction, but also prevent principal retention and recruitment (Darmody & Smyth, 2016; Guterman, 2007; Lin, 2013). Given that Canada is experiencing an educational leadership shortage (Darmody & Smyth, 2016; Drago-Severson, 2012), the topic of job satisfaction among school principals warrants academic attention, and is a pressing issue in relation to policy relevance and leadership sustainability.

### *Antecedents to Principals' Job Satisfaction*

Principals' job satisfaction is closely related to their personal and organizational well-being and work conditions. Thus far, research on principals' job satisfaction and contentment has tended to focus on principals' health and wellness (e.g., stress, burnout, etc.) (Chaplain, 2001; Darmody & Smyth, 2016; Federici & Skaalvik, 2012). Less attention has been given to possible factors affecting their job satisfaction.

The existing research has shown that principals are generally satisfied with some aspects of their job, such as challenging opportunities and work conditions (Chaplain, 2001). However, there is variation in levels of job satisfaction among school principals when demographic variables (e.g., gender, age, work experience, etc.) are taken into consideration. Research on the relationship between gender and job satisfaction has shown mixed results, as most research has indicated that there is no significant difference in the extent to which people of different genders experience job satisfaction. Where differences exist, the findings have been inconsistent or even contradictory, depending on the approaches in data analysis and the specific dimensions of job satisfaction under investigation (Darmody & Smyth, 2016; Oplatka & Mimon, 2008). In general, however, female principals seem to experience greater work–family conflict than male principals (Eckman, 2004).

The relationship between job satisfaction and age tends to change, following a U-curve with a decline in the levels of job satisfaction for mid-career workers (Herzberg, Maunser, & Snyderman, 1959). For school principals in particular, however, research has indicated that levels of job satisfaction vary by work experience, not age (Darmody & Smyth, 2016). Sodoma and Else's (2009) findings on the association between job satisfaction and years of work experience showed that less experienced principals have more problems leading their schools, and have lower senses of accomplishment. Bauer and Brazer (2013) have argued that this may be due to the fact that, unlike more experienced principals, they have not assembled effective social networks that can give them the support they need to mitigate the effects of role overload and ambiguity. However, Darmody and Smyth's (2016) study indicated that the level of job satisfaction is high among recently appointed principals, declines after three years, and then recovers thereafter as confidence and experience grow.

Scholars have found that school neighbourhood (urban vs. other) is significantly associated with job satisfaction. Principals in urban schools tend to report less job satisfaction, but autonomy support from superintendents can mitigate these negative effects (Chang et al., 2015). Similarly, Cooper and Kelly found that primary school principals experience higher levels of job dissatisfaction than their secondary counterparts (as cited in Chaplain, 2001), but little research in recent years has confirmed such correlation.

In addition to demographic variables, a variety of factors can influence principals' levels of contentment. Some are external, such as increasing legislative and government demands (Chaplain, 2001; Darmody & Smyth, 2016), policy confusion and inconsistency (Saiti & Fassoulis, 2012), social and performance pressures (Chang et al., 2015), and bureaucratic micro- and macro-management (Drago-Severson, 2012). Some are related to principals' professional status, work challenges, their own performance (Chaplain, 2001), their beliefs of advancement possibilities in their school system, their feelings of accomplishment (Chang et al., 2015), and lack of recognition (Hancock & Müller, 2014). These external and internal factors can preclude principals' sense of satisfaction and increase their work-related stress. For example, intellectually challenging opportunities seem to be a great motivator for school principals. However, spending too much time responding to these demands may lead to work overload, which could become a stressor rather than a motivator (Chaplain, 2001). Regression analysis has revealed that job satisfaction is related to "a complex set of personal characteristics, working conditions, school context, and teacher climate" (Darmody & Smyth, 2016, p. 115). These factors may affect principals' levels of job satisfaction and increase their occupational stress.

Sources of satisfaction can also change over time. As Chaplain (2001) argued, "What might be perceived as a resource at one point in time is perceived as stressful at another point in time and vice versa" (p. 212). It is therefore important to examine the changing conditions of principals' work in current times and explore the factors responsible for producing feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Lu et al., as cited in Federici & Skaalvik, 2012).

## Theoretical framework

This study used Herzberg's two-factor theory (Herzberg, 1966; Owens & Valesky, 2011) to examine elements within a principals' job and job environment that may lead to job satisfaction or lack of satisfaction. According to Herzberg's (1966) theory, the nature of the work one performs has the capacity to satisfy needs such as achievement, self-actualization, personal worth, and competency, thus making an individual feel happy and motivated. The factors that affect one's job satisfaction, however, are not from a single dimension. Job satisfaction is related to intrinsic factors such as achievement, recognition, advancement, the work itself, and responsibility; whereas job dissatisfaction is related to extrinsic factors such as working conditions, interpersonal relations with supervisors and subordinates, policy and administration, and factors in personal life (Owens & Valesky, 2011). Factors that arise from intrinsic conditions of the job itself, such as challenging work, recognition for one's achievement, responsibility, opportunities to do something meaningful, involvement in decision-making, and sense of importance are motivating factors, or motivators, that can provide positive job satisfaction because they satisfy people's need for self-actualization (Maslow, 1954).

Although the presence of motivators can potentially create job satisfaction, their absence does not necessarily lead to dissatisfaction (Owens & Valesky, 2011). On the other hand, factors such as status, job security, salary and fringe benefits, work conditions, interpersonal relations, district policies, and so on are hygiene factors. The term hygiene is used in the sense that these are maintenance factors that have a preventive quality (Owens & Valesky, 2011). They may not give positive satisfaction or lead to higher motivation, but their absence can result in dissatisfaction. According to Herzberg (1966), the opposite of satisfaction is no satisfaction, not dissatisfaction. Eliminating sources of dissatisfaction may reduce levels of dissatisfaction, but it does not necessarily motivate or lead to job satisfaction (Owens & Valesky, 2011).

The two-factor theory (Herzberg, 1966; Owens & Valesky, 2011) helped us explore the ways in which motivating and maintenance factors impact school principals' job dis/satisfaction. However, subsequent empirical studies designed to test the validity of the two-factor theory pointed to its theoretical inadequacies and questioned Herzberg's (1966) division of satisfaction and dissatisfaction on two separate scales (King, 1970). The goal of this study was not to test the two-factor theory, but rather to use the theory to shed light on the ways maintenance and motivating factors affect principals' job satisfaction in the context

of their work intensification.

## Research Methodology

The original research<sup>1</sup> employed a mixed-methods approach to provide a more complete picture of principals' work than a single approach would typically yield (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Specifically, our team used focus groups and an online survey to collect data from principals working in Ontario's public schools. During the first stage, we conducted two focus groups to develop and refine the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 12 sections with 60 questions focused on pertinent issues affecting school principals such as, use of time, accountability and external influences, challenges and possibilities, well-being, job satisfaction, and demographic data. The questions were mainly Likert scale questions (a five-point scale) that measured principals' opinions or attitudes toward a given subject. The questionnaire was distributed online to 2,701 Ontario Principals' Council members. There were a total of 1,821 responses and 1,423 valid cases after data cleaning.

## Data Analysis

This study focused solely on the online survey results. The data analysis consisted mainly of logistic multiple regressions that enabled us to predict and weigh the relationship between multiple explanatory variables and the dependent variable: principals' job dis/satisfaction (Cohen et al., 2011). The five-scale dependent variable (job dis/satisfaction<sup>2</sup>) was coded as a dichotomous variable. The binary logistic model was used to measure the relationship between the categorical dependent variable and multiple independent variables (motivating and maintenance factors). This article presents the preliminary analysis results from a number of separate but identical analyses for all independent variables. This allows us to capture how motivating and maintenance factors affect principals' perceptions of job satisfaction respectively in line with the theoretical framework. The results will be used to build a more comprehensive model for future study. Logistic coefficients represented change in principals' job dis/satisfaction associated with a category change in independent variables.

We also used exploratory factor analysis, specifically principal component analysis, to uncover the underlying structures of a relatively large set of items under each umbrella question. We did so in an attempt to reduce measured variables and identify latent constructs, which are used in logistic multiple regression analysis. Factor analysis defined dimensions underlying existing measurement on survey questions, such as organizational influence.

## Variables

Principals' work intensification is the result of a combination of factors presented in their work situations and professional practices. This study only focused on those that were identified as motivating and maintenance factors. The motivating factors identified in this study include work challenges, responsibility, recognition, and the work itself, whereas maintenance factors include how principals spend their time at work, external policy influence, organizational culture and support, change of political climate, and principals' relationships with school districts, superintendents, and teachers. These factors define principals' work and affect principals' job dis/satisfaction.

## Research Results

Although the volume and complexity of principals' work is increasing, Ontario principals generally seem to feel positively about their job. Approximately 78% of school principals feel satisfied with their job, whereas a small group of principals feel dissatisfied. The analysis showed that principals' perceptions of job dis/satisfaction is not associated with their gender, age, education background, or years of work experience. To further verify principals' perceptions of job dis/satisfaction, the survey presented alternative statements to principals, asking if they would remain as a teacher rather than a principal, and if they would work in an industry/sector other than education. Approximately 21% of school principals indicated that,

<sup>1</sup>Please refer to the following report for a detailed description of the research methodology: Pollock, Wang, & Hauseman (2014, 2015).

<sup>2</sup>Participants were asked in the survey if they strongly disagree, disagree, neither disagree nor agree, agree, or strongly agree that most of the time they feel satisfied with their job.

if they had the choice, they would have remained a teacher rather than become a principal. This view was significantly associated with principals' educational background and age (see Table 1). The table provides the regression coefficient ( $B$ ), standard error, the Wald statistic (testing the statistical significance), degree of freedom ( $df$ ), the odds ratio ( $Exp[B]$ ), and the confidence interval for the odds ratio for each variable category. The results on educational background

Table 1  
Demographics and Job Dis/satisfaction

Variables in the equation	$B$	$S.E.$	Wald	$df$	Sig	$Exp(B)$	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Gender	.225	.164	1.894	1	.169	1.253	.909	1.727
Educational Background	-.425	.135	9.911	1	.002	.654	.502	.852
Age	-.208	.069	9.164	1	.002	.812	.710	.929
School Type	-.363	.222	2.672	1	.102	.695	.450	1.075
Years of work Experience	.000	.020	.000	1	.994	1.000	.962	1.040
Constant	.024	.348	.005	1	.946	1.024		

a. Variable(s) entered on Step 1: gender binary, educational background, age, school type, years of work experience.

signify a significant effect (Wald = 9.91,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .0$ ). The  $B$  coefficient for educational background (coefficient = -.43) is significant and negative, indicating that principals' level of education negatively predicts if they would remain as a teacher rather than a principal. The  $Exp(B)$  column (the odds ratio) shows that principals with higher educational background are .65 times less likely to remain as a teacher. Similarly, principals who are at a younger age (coefficient = -.21) are more likely to hold this view, with a higher odds ratio at .81. Our research results also revealed that 21% of the surveyed principals would like to work in an industry/sector other than education. This view is even stronger among principals of a younger age (coefficient = -.19), which suggests that young principals experience greater difficulty at work.

The findings above suggest that principals' levels of job dis/satisfaction do not vary by gender, school type, and years of work experience, but can be influenced by their educational background and age. Young principals' perceptions of their career choice indicate that the education sector in Canada has changed rapidly in recent years. Much of this change can be attributed to factors such as increasing responsibilities and demands at work, changing political climate, labour unrest, and teacher–principal relationships (ATA, 2014; Leithwood & Azah, 2014; Pollock, Wang, & Hauseman, 2015). These factors, whether internal or external to schools, affect principals' levels of job dis/satisfaction both in Canada and abroad (Alberta Teachers' Association [ATA], 2014; Pollock, Wang, & Hauseman, 2015; Reames, Kochan, & Zhu, 2014; Riley, 2016; US Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2016). The following section explores the ways these different factors predict principals' job dis/satisfaction.

### *Motivators and Job Dis/satisfaction*

Motivators refer to factors intrinsic within the work itself; they are usually task-related, including work challenges, responsibilities, and recognition from the employer (Herzberg et al., 1959). Motivators can create job satisfaction and inspire principals to achieve desired organizational goals. Factors such as workplace challenges may have a significant impact on principals' job satisfaction. Principals' work challenges may come from teachers, districts, communities, and the work itself. We performed a similar regression analysis to explore how challenges concerning teachers predict principals' job satisfaction. The model was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(8) = 65.17$ ,  $p = 0$ , but the strength of the association between this type of challenge and principals' job satisfaction is relatively weak with Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .10$ . Table 2 summarizes the binary logistic regression coefficients, Wald statistics, and the estimated

Table 2  
Challenges in Relation to Teachers and Principals' Job Satisfaction

Variables in the equation	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	Wald	<i>df</i>	Sig.	<i>Exp(B)</i>	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Lack of teacher knowledge and skills	-.111	.128	.745	1	.388	.895	.696	1.151
lack of time for teacher planning & professional development (PD)	-.049	.115	.182	1	.670	.952	.760	1.193
Lack of time to evaluate teachers	-.245	.115	4.507	1	.034	.783	.625	.981
Difficulty recruiting and hiring the right teachers	-.239	.116	4.242	1	.039	.788	.628	.989
Teacher turnover	.000	.089	.000	1	.998	1.000	.839	1.191
Difficulty terminating underperforming teachers from the school	-.059	.092	.410	1	.522	.943	.787	1.129
Teacher and staff apathy and resistance to change	-.303	.123	6.090	1	.014	.739	.581	.940
Lack of trust between teachers and parents/guardians	-.220	.120	3.338	1	.068	.803	.634	1.016
Constant	5.232	.487	115.257	1	.000	187.075		
a. Variable(s) entered on Step 1: lack of skills; lack of time for PD; lack of time to evaluate, recruit and hire; turnover; terminating contracts; apathy; lack of trust.								

change in the odds of challenges concerning school teachers in relation to principals' job satisfaction along with a 95% CI. The results showed that a lack of time to evaluate teachers (coefficient = 1.25,  $p = .03$ ), difficulty recruiting and hiring the right teachers (coefficient = -.24,  $p = .04$ ), and teacher and staff apathy and resistance to change (coefficient = -.30,  $p = .01$ ) are significant predictors of the level of principals' job satisfaction and that these factors negatively affect principals' feelings toward their job. The greater the level of challenge that principals experience in these areas, the lower the likelihood of principals feeling satisfied with their job.

One of the most notable pressures on the principalship has been the growing number of government-directed initiatives: Principals are required to adopt an increasing number of new programs imposed by districts and the Ministry of Education. We conducted an analysis to examine the external challenges school principals face, and the effect these challenges have on principals' job satisfaction. Table 3 demonstrates that constant pressure to adopt new programs ( $p = .03$ ) is a statistically significant predictor for principals' job satisfaction. School principals feel less satisfied with their job when there is constant pressure to adopt new programs (coefficient = -.34) in their schools. Likewise, union issues ( $p = .01$ ) also significantly predict the level of principals' job satisfaction. The greater the union issues (coefficient = -.29), the lower the likelihood of principals reporting that they are satisfied with their job. This finding reaffirms the complex challenges school principals experience in Ontario as a result of the unique labour relations environment; the restructuring<sup>3</sup> (Sweeney, 2011) that took place in 1998 had, and continues to have, an impact on collegiality between school administrators and teachers. These changes not only impacted the role of school principals, but also affected their job satisfaction.

*Recognition* is an appreciation expressed through recognizing and valuing people's good work. However, 50.8% of the surveyed school principals reported that a lack of recognition

<sup>3</sup>In 1998, the Ontario Labour Relations Act replaced the Education Act as the default legislation governing teachers; school administrators in Ontario (including principals and vice-principals) were removed from the bargaining units of teachers' unions.



Table 3  
External Challenges and Principals' Job Satisfaction

Variables in the equation	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	Wald	<i>df</i>	Sig.	<i>Exp(B)</i>	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Low-er	Upper
Pressure to constantly adopt new programs	-.339	.158	4.588	1	.032	.712	.522	.972
Provincial mandates (SE, ELL, etc.)	-.171	.167	1.040	1	.308	.843	.607	1.170
Lack of SE support/resources	-.141	.115	1.518	1	.218	.868	.693	1.087
Union issues	-.288	.102	8.007	1	.005	.750	.614	.915
Student discipline (bullying, aggressive behaviour, etc.)	-.184	.131	1.991	1	.158	.832	.644	1.074
Mental health issues among student/parents	.020	.146	.019	1	.891	1.020	.767	1.357
Parents and guardians apathetic or irresponsible about their children	-.064	.126	.255	1	.613	.938	.732	1.202
Lack of support from the school's community	-.077	.122	.397	1	.529	.926	.729	1.176
Negative Stereotypes About this School's Community	-.034	.083	.170	1	.680	.966	.821	1.138
Constant	5.625	.566	98.922	1	.000	277.258		
a. Variable(s) entered on Step 1: pressure to adopt programs, provincial mandates, lack of SE, union issues, student discipline, mental health, parents and guardians, lack of community support, negative stereotypes.								

often/always affects their work. More than 41% of school principals expressed that their district school board fails to acknowledge their extra effort. Whether it is formal or informal acknowledgement of one's work and achievement, recognition is an essential part of motivating principals to maintain or improve the quality of their work. The logistic regression analysis (see Table 4) suggests that lack of recognition negatively predicts principals' levels of job satisfaction. Principals who reported lack of recognition (coefficient = -.51) at work are less likely to feel satisfied with their job, as are principals who reported that their district school board fails to acknowledge their extra effort (coefficient = -.37). This finding confirms previous studies that suggested recognition and acknowledgement of employees' work can keep principals' spirits high, boost their morale and work capacity, and positively impact performance and motivation (Bull, 2005; Hancock & Müller, 2014; Morris, 2004). On the other hand, lack of recognition can have a detrimental effect on principals' motivation, performance, and job satisfaction.

Table 4  
Recognition and Job Satisfaction

Variables in the equation	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	Wald	<i>df</i>	Sig.	<i>Exp(B)</i>	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Lack of recognition	-.511	.097	27.431	1	.000	.600	.496	.727
My district school board fails to acknowledge my extra effort	-.369	.096	14.834	1	.000	.691	.573	.834
Constant	4.348	.329	174.205	1	.000	77.308		
a. Variable(s) entered on Step 1: lack of recognition, school board fails to acknowledge.								

As mentioned previously, principals' work intensification is connected to the amount of time principals spend on various work-related activities; how principals spend their time at work informs how they evaluate their work situation (Weiss, 2002). The relationship between time use and job satisfaction is central to understanding the nature of principals' work and individual principals' experiences. Among principals' various work-related activities (see Table 5), time spent on student discipline/attendance (coefficient =  $-.06$ ,  $p = 0$ ) and District School Board (DSB) office committees (coefficient =  $-.08$ ,  $p = 0$ ) negatively predicts principals' job satisfaction. As the amount of time spent on student discipline/attendance and DSB office committees increases, principals' job satisfaction levels decrease. The trend is reversed for principals' professional development (coefficient =  $.15$ ;  $p = .02$ ), curriculum and instructional leadership (co-efficient =  $.10$ ,  $p = .01$ ), and classroom walkthroughs (coefficient =  $.10$ ,  $p = .04$ ). Principals feel more satisfied with their job when they spend more time doing these activities.

Principals' work has become increasingly complex and complicated (Pollock, Wang, & Hauseman, 2015). As a result, principals have to take on various roles and responsibilities, and cope with increasing demands at work. Very few studies have investigated work demands as predictors of principals' job satisfaction. Table 6 demonstrates the association between work demands and job satisfaction in terms of time demands, decision-making, and emotionally draining situations for school principals. The results show that principals' job satisfaction is negatively predicted by getting behind with their work (coefficient =  $-.44$ ,  $p = 0$ ) and emotional exhaustion (coefficient =  $-1.38$ ,  $p = 0$ ). Excessive workload, time pressure, and emotional exhaustion can reduce principals' job satisfaction, especially in the context of limited work resources (e.g., budget cuts, personnel issues). In fact, 72.9% of the surveyed principals reported that they often/always get behind with their work, and 80% indicated that their work often/always puts them in emotionally draining situations. The results also indicate that principals feel more satisfied if their work requires them to make difficult decisions (coefficient =  $.51$ ). Professional autonomy tends to be closely related to the desire for esteem and self-actualization (Owens & Valesky, 2011); it can become a strong motivator for school principals, resulting in higher levels of job satisfaction.

Table 5  
How Principals Spend Their Time and Their Job Satisfaction

Variables in the equation	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	Wald	<i>df</i>	Sig.	<i>Exp(B)</i>	95% C.I. for EX-P(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Student discipline and attendance	-.058	.016	13.687	1	.000	.944	.915	.973
Student-related activities	-.021	.022	.892	1	.345	.979	.937	1.023
Student transportation	-.031	.051	.361	1	.548	.970	.877	1.072
Working with parents	-.018	.023	.605	1	.437	.982	.939	1.028
Community	.025	.054	.209	1	.648	1.025	.921	1.140
DSB office committees	-.083	.019	19.160	1	.000	.920	.887	.955
Principal's PD	.152	.065	5.552	1	.018	1.165	1.026	1.322
Curriculum & instructional leadership	.103	.037	7.775	1	.005	1.109	1.031	1.192
Budget	.069	.075	.845	1	.358	1.071	.925	1.241
Personnel	-.013	.020	.419	1	.517	.987	.950	1.026
Internal school management	-.011	.016	.483	1	.487	.989	.958	1.020
Walking hallways, playground, lunchroom, etc.	.010	.028	.131	1	.718	1.010	.956	1.067
Classroom walkthroughs	.104	.051	4.120	1	.042	1.110	1.004	1.228
Building maintenance	-.072	.055	1.709	1	.191	.931	.836	1.037
Occupational health & safety	.034	.057	.357	1	.550	1.035	.925	1.157
Constant	2.305	.283	66.452	1	.000	10.022		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: timdisp, timact, timtrans, timprnt, timcommu, timdsb, timpd, timcurrlm, timbudget, timpsnl, timschm, timwlk, timclsrn, timblld, timhlth.

Table 6  
Demands at Work and Job Satisfaction

Variables in the equation	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	Wald	<i>df</i>	Sig.	<i>Exp(B)</i>	95% C.I. for EX-P(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Have time to complete work task	.247	.129	3.652	1	.056	1.280	.994	1.650
Get behind with your work	-.438	.150	8.454	1	.004	.646	.481	.867
Require extensive memory recall	.063	.148	.182	1	.669	1.065	.797	1.425
Required to make difficult decisions	.511	.206	6.138	1	.013	1.668	1.113	2.499
Put in emotionally draining situations	-1.376	.208	43.765	1	.000	.252	.168	.380
Constant	5.835	.774	56.785	1	.000	342.202		

a. Variable(s) entered on Step 1: Have time to complete work task, get behind with your work, require extensive memory recall, required to make difficult decisions, put in emotionally draining situations.

### Maintenance Factors and Job Dis/satisfaction

Maintenance factors are not directly related to a job itself, but to the conditions that surround doing the job (Herzberg et al., 1959; Smith & Shields, 2013)—for example: external policy influence; organizational support; and principals' relationships with teachers, superintendents, and unions.

One of a school principals' biggest challenges is the rapid change in education policy. Understanding how principals feel about policy changes is important, as various provincial and district policies impact the work of school principals and define their duties and responsibilities. Our analysis results (see Table 7) showed that the Aboriginal Education Strategy/First Nation, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) Policy Framework (coefficient = .25,  $p = .02$ ), the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (coefficient = .30,  $p = .04$ ), and Information and Communication

Table 7  
Impact of Policies and Job Satisfaction

Variables in the Equation	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Aboriginal Ed	.253	.103	5.967	1	.015	1.287	1.051	1.576
Bill 115	-.227	.168	1.835	1	.176	.797	.573	1.107
Bill 13	-.067	.194	.118	1	.731	.935	.639	1.369
Equity & inclusive	.300	.143	4.417	1	.036	1.350	1.020	1.786
Fluctuating enrolment	.029	.072	.161	1	.688	1.029	.894	1.185
Full day K	-.094	.062	2.312	1	.128	.910	.807	1.028
Growing success	-.064	.208	.094	1	.759	.938	.624	1.411
ICT	.197	.100	3.860	1	.049	1.218	1.000	1.484
OHSA	-.199	.130	2.335	1	.126	.819	.634	1.058
Parents in partnership	-.107	.132	.652	1	.419	.899	.693	1.165
Regulation 274	-.221	.175	1.584	1	.208	.802	.568	1.131
Bill 212	-.284	.199	2.044	1	.153	.753	.510	1.111
Urban Priority	-.109	.110	.987	1	.320	.896	.723	1.112
Constant	4.388	1.166	14.174	1	.000	80.479		

a. Variable(s) entered on Step 1: Aboriginal Ed, Bill 115, Bill 13, Equity & Inclusive, Fluctuating enrolment, Full Day K, Growing Success, ICT, OHSA, Parents in Partnership, Regulation 274, Bill 212, Urban Priority.

Technologies (ICT) in education and management (coefficient = .20,  $p < .05$ ) are statistically significant predictors of principals' job satisfaction. As the impact of these three policies increases, the level of principals' job satisfaction increases as well. The Aboriginal Education Strategy and FNMI Policy Framework (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007a, 2007b) represent the Ontario Ministry of Education's policy commitment to address the learning needs and achievement of Indigenous students in publicly funded schools across the province (Cherubini, 2010). The Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy is designed to help the education community identify and address the discriminatory biases and systemic barriers Indigenous students face, and support the achievement and well-being of all students (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009). By promoting justice and equity in schools, these policies help principals provide all students with the opportunity to reach their highest potential. The ICT policy also helps principals effectively use their time and complete their administrative duties. More importantly, principals' leadership in the area of technology helps build teachers' capacities to integrate ICT in their teaching and learning (Mwawasi, 2014), thus improving school performance.

Principals' duties and responsibilities involve different organizations, and each influences principals' work in a different way. We used a factor analysis to explore the types of organizations<sup>4</sup> and how they influence principals' job dis/satisfaction. The factor analysis (Pollock, Wang, & Hauseman, 2015) showed that the organizations affecting principals' work cluster around system organizations (36.0%), unions (18.7%), and organizations of school and community connection (10.3%). These three factors accounted for 65.0% of the total variance. The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat (LNS) (factor loading = .82) had the largest correlation with the factor system organizations, which reflects that student growth in reading, writing, and mathematics skills has become a priority in the public education system since the introduction of the LNS in 2004. When it comes to unions (i.e., teachers' union, other unions), the teachers' union (factor loading = .88) plays a significant role in principals' work. However, logistic regression analysis revealed that the three types of organizations are not significant predictors for principals' job satisfaction. No matter what level of influence these organizations have on principals' work, it appears that such influence in clusters of organizations does not affect principals' job satisfaction.

Recent survey research (Society for Human Resource Management, 2016) has indicated that respectful treatment at all levels is the most important factor contributing to job satisfaction. Respect is crucial when building effective working relationships and is the top driver of job satisfaction. As a maintenance factor, lack of respect from different stakeholders—such as teachers, students, parents, unions, superintendents, and others—can significantly affect principals' job satisfaction. Table 8 demonstrates that respect from teachers (coefficient = .42,  $p < .05$ ), superintendents (coefficient = .38,  $p < .05$ ), and unions (coefficient = .22,  $p = .01$ ) positively predicts principals' job satisfaction. When principals feel more respected by teachers, superintendents, and unions, they tend to be more satisfied with their work. However, approximately 31.7% of school principals in this study report they are either not at all or somewhat respected by unions.

A follow-up analysis of principals' relationships with their school superintendents showed that principals who indicated that they effectively secure their superintendent's approval for new programs or activities (coefficient = .49,  $p = .00$ ) are more likely to feel satisfied with their job. Similarly, principals who reported that they care about the personal welfare of their

Table 8  
Respect and Job Satisfaction

Variables in the equation	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	Wald	<i>df</i>	Sig.	<i>Exp(B)</i>	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Respected by teachers	.418	.135	9.601	1	.002	1.519	1.166	1.980
Respected by students	-.043	.192	.051	1	.822	.958	.657	1.396
Respected by parents	.313	.162	3.720	1	.054	1.367	.995	1.879
Respected by community leaders	-.010	.144	.005	1	.944	.990	.747	1.313
Respected by board staff	.164	.130	1.604	1	.205	1.178	.914	1.519
Respected by superintendent	.377	.119	10.043	1	.002	1.458	1.155	1.840
Respected by unions	.221	.089	6.125	1	.013	1.247	1.047	1.485
Constant	-1.878	.571	10.805	1	.001	.153		

a. Variable(s) entered on Step 1: respected by teachers, respected by students, respected by parents, respected by community leaders, respected by board staff, respected by superintendent, respected by unions.

teachers (coefficient = .45,  $p = .03$ ) also had higher levels of job satisfaction.

Further analysis (see Table 9) revealed that principals' perceptions of their district school board is significantly related to their job satisfaction. Principals' job satisfaction is not just about the work they do,

<sup>4</sup>The list of organizations and factor analysis results can be seen in Pollock, Wang, & Hauseman (2015).

but the district for whom they work. When principals positively view their district school board, our analysis suggests that there is a higher level of job satisfaction among school principals. Principals' level of comfort when questioning the changes their district school board has implemented (coefficient = .33) was also a significant predictor of their job satisfaction. It implies a stronger relationship between principals and their district school board: The openness of an organization culture within the district school board is likely to contribute to

Table 9  
Relationship with District School Board and Job Satisfaction

Variables in the equation	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	Wald	<i>df</i>	Sig.	<i>Exp(B)</i>	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
My DSB is a good org. to work for	.601	.145	17.090	1	.000	1.825	1.372	2.427
My DSB lacks a vision for the future	-.095	.104	.838	1	.360	.909	.742	1.115
I share the values of my DSB	.018	.150	.014	1	.904	1.018	.759	1.366
There are good relations between school-level & district leadership	-.198	.135	2.147	1	.143	.821	.630	1.069
I am consulted about changes in schools	-.002	.112	.000	1	.985	.998	.802	1.242
I am unclear about how changes implemented by the DSB affect me	-.229	.122	3.504	1	.061	.796	.626	1.011
I feel comfortable questioning the changes implemented by the DSB	.329	.103	10.147	1	.001	1.390	1.135	1.702
I understand how my work contributes to the DSB strategy plan	.109	.128	.734	1	.392	1.116	.868	1.433
I am unclear about what's expected of me at work	-.253	.120	4.475	1	.034	.777	.614	.982
There are few opportunities for me to learn and grow in this DSB	-.131	.100	1.697	1	.193	.877	.721	1.068
Constant	1.210	.686	3.112	1	.078	3.353		
a. Variable(s) entered on Step 1: district board, lacks a vision, values of the school board, good relations, changes in schools, unclear the change, comfortable to question, contribution to strategy plan, unclear about expectations, few opportunities.								

principals' job satisfaction. However, principals feel less satisfied when they are unclear about what's expected of them at work (coefficient = -.25).

## Discussion

Job satisfaction is a multidimensional concept; it contains a complex set of positive or negative feelings that individuals have toward their work (Locke, 1976). The multidimensional nature of job satisfaction is reflected in a variety of factors. These factors are associated with principals' work intensification and their job satisfaction in Ontario, Canada, and are both intrinsic and extrinsic to principals' work. According to Herzberg's (1966) two-factor theory, motivating and maintenance factors can lead to dis/satisfaction or lack of satisfaction at principals' workplace, which affects their physical and mental health and job performance.

Our study raises concerns about the number of factors that affect principals' job satisfaction as a result of work intensification. Not only is the work intensifying, but the very nature of school administration is changing—the position is becoming less desirable, especially to new principals. The increasing level of job dissatisfaction among new principals may hinder principal recruitment and retention, which is already

in decline (Guterman, 2007; Lin, 2013).

Ontario principals are constantly dealing—and in some cases, struggling—with considerable administrative tasks and increasing demands. The variables of principals' job intensity appear to be negatively associated with their job satisfaction (see Table 10). If dealt with properly<sup>5</sup>, certain variables—challenges with teachers, recognition for work performance, how principals spend their time, and work demands—can potentially contribute to job satisfaction, and make principals feel happy and gratified in their work. However, long hours, a contentious political environment, lack of recognition by the employers, increasing work

Table 10  
A Summary of Significant Factors

	Demographic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational background</li> <li>• Age</li> </ul>
Motivating factors	Challenges in relation to teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of time to evaluate teachers</li> <li>• Difficulty recruiting and hiring the right teachers</li> <li>• Teacher and staff apathy and resistance to change</li> </ul>
	External challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressure to constantly adopt new programs</li> <li>• Union issues</li> </ul>
	Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of recognition</li> <li>• My district school board fails to acknowledge my extra effort</li> </ul>
	How principals spend their time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student discipline and attendance</li> <li>• DSB office committees</li> <li>• Principals' PD</li> <li>• Curriculum &amp; instructional leadership</li> <li>• Classroom walkthroughs</li> </ul>
	Demands at work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get behind with your work</li> <li>• Required to make difficult decisions</li> <li>• Put in emotionally draining situations</li> </ul>
Maintenance factors	Impact of policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal education strategy</li> <li>• Equity &amp; inclusive education strategy</li> <li>• Information and communication technologies (ICT)</li> </ul>
	Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respected by teachers</li> <li>• Respected by superintendent</li> <li>• Respected by unions</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My DSB is a good organization to work for</li> </ul>
	Relationship with district school board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel comfortable questioning the changes implemented by the DSB</li> <li>• I am unclear about what's expected of me at work</li> </ul>

demands, lack of autonomy in hiring and firing, and imbalance between management and instructional leadership have significantly contributed to principals' low job satisfaction and become the surest signs of deteriorating work conditions. The absence of gratifying factors does not necessarily lead to unhappiness and dissatisfaction, but these factors arise from intrinsic conditions of the job and tend to represent principals' more emotional needs (Herzberg et al., 1959). These factors are related to principals' work performance and school effectiveness, which cannot be improved without taking into account the motivating components of their job satisfaction.

According to the two-factor theory (Herzberg et al., 1959), dissatisfaction results from an

<sup>5</sup> Please see Pollock, Wang, & Hauseman (2014) for detailed recommendations on support to school principals' work. This paper will only focus on recommendations that are relevant to the promotion of principals' job satisfaction based on the analysis results of the paper.

unfavourable assessment of factors such as external policy influence, work-related organizations, and principals' relationships with teachers, superintendents, other district officials and unions. These factors are not responsible for motivating principals, but may result in job dissatisfaction if they are not sufficiently present (Herzberg, 1966). Faced with a myriad of external forces and expectations, contemporary principals seem to be likely to experience job dissatisfaction. As they are entrusted to manage and implement policies at different levels, be involved with community and professional organizations, and build relationships with various stakeholders and interest groups, their role has become increasingly complex and demanding. The competing demands are affecting their job dissatisfaction and the day-to-day functioning of their schools.

Our findings suggest that, to increase job satisfaction among school principals, the Ministry and school boards should place greater emphasis on improving the quality of principals' work through: opportunities for principals to assume greater responsibility, with a stronger sense of control and autonomy; recognition for their work and achievement; a more powerful voice in decision-making at the district and school levels; and more time for instructional leadership. On the other hand, to reduce job dissatisfaction, the employers and professional organizations should direct more attention toward the job environment of school principals: policies and initiatives, organizational support, respect, and positive work relationships. In particular, our findings suggest that building trust and fostering positive working relationships with various stakeholders is an important part of principals' work—highlighting the importance of taking the time to build solid relationships with people both within and beyond the school site.

## Conclusion

Job satisfaction is critical to the positive attitudes and behaviours of principals and the well-being of their schools. To better support school principals, it is essential to identify the range of factors that may impact how they perceive their job. In this study, we investigated current principals' perceptions of their own job satisfaction, and identified the motivating and maintenance factors that significantly impact their attitudes toward—and commitment to—their jobs in Ontario, Canada. These factors become more salient when principals constantly find themselves juggling multiple responsibilities and working under increasingly stressful conditions. With recent role changes, added job responsibilities, and increasing demands, principals are more likely to experience lower levels of job satisfaction and commitment to their work. When principals' job satisfaction declines as a result of work intensification, turnover becomes more likely and school administrators become difficult to recruit and retain (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012; Guterman, 2007; Lin, 2013).

School principals' leadership is critical for school effectiveness and performance at many levels (Cheng, 1994). Therefore, it is imperative to develop strategies that can provide the motivation for appropriate policy changes, highlight health concerns, and generate knowledge that can be used to support principals' occupational health and well-being. This study generates critical knowledge for those who train, recruit, and provide professional development for school principals. It builds understanding from the education and labour fields to address issues in principals' work, and ties with professional associations and provincial government to positively impact principals' work, health, and wellness. To better support school principals and enhance their job performance, it is important to consider various factors that affect their job satisfaction as this may determine the extent to which they are able to contribute effectively to improving student achievement and school performance.

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