

Why Are Assistant Superintendents Not Moving into Superintendent Positions: Is It A Matter of Age?

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine assistant superintendents' perceptions of motivators and barriers to career advancement as they relate to age.

N= 149 assistant superintendents, Suffolk, Nassau, and Westchester Counties, New York.

Instrument: Survey

One-Way Anova

Results: Age only played a role in various aspects of advancement as it related to barriers.

Introduction

- Why aren't assistant superintendents moving into superintendent positions? According to Wolverton (2004) the applicant pool for superintendents is dwindling. An examination of several qualified people in the five-state Pacific Northwest region of the United States, (Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington) who have secured the necessary certification to apply for superindentency indicated that they are not throwing their hats in the ring for the position (Wolverton, 2004). He indicates that many of them will not apply for superindentency without some type of intervention being initiated

Definitions

- “**Internal barriers**- are those that contribute to a person’s fear of failure, fear of litigation surrounding education, amount of paperwork and bureaucracy, isolation and alienation from campus setting, more time spent away from home, increased commitment, lack of tenure and lack of job security, and a small salary (Hunter, 2012).”
- “**External barriers**- are those that contribute to prevent someone’s advancement to the superintendency and that reside in external events over which the individual has little control or influence such as school board politics, childcare stress, gender power difference, community politics, and increased emphasis on standardized tests (Hunter, 2102).”
- **Internal Motivators**-motivators associated with becoming a superintendent (Glass et al., 2007). (2) Identifying factors that superintendents considered as important to remain in the job, which included the desire to make a difference, positively impact people, the professional challenge, the personal challenge, and the ability to initiate change (Harris, Lowery, Hopson, & Marshall, 2004).
- **External Motivators**- according to Hunter (2010) consist of but are not limited to increased status, power, and salary.

Theoretical Framework

- Aldwin, C.
Does age affect the stress and coping process? The implications of age differences in perceived locus of control.
- Aldwin, C. M., Sutton, K. J., Chiara, G., & Spiro, A. I., II.
Age differences in stress, coping, and appraisal: Findings from the normative aging study.
- Banicki, G., & Pacha, J.
Illinois Board of Education Closed Sessions: Does the Superintendent Make a Difference?.
- Specter Siu, Cooper and Donald
Age differences in coping and locus of control: A study of managerial stress in Hong Kong.

Research Design and Methods

- 149 Assistant Superintendents
- 68 item survey and one additional question
- Independent Variable:
Age
Groups
- Dependent Variables:
Internal and external, motivators and barriers
Items of measurement
- Likert-scale
- Two questions developed:
 1. Does the mean change in the external and internal motivators of assistant superintendents among the four age groups of 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s?
 2. Does the mean change in the external and internal barriers of asst. superintendents among the four age groups of 30s, 40s 50s and 60s?
- One Way ANOVA tested for relationship.

Results and Findings

- No relationship found between Age and Internal Motivators
- No Relationship found between Age and External Motivators
- Relationship was found between Age and Internal Barriers
- Relationship found between Age and External Barriers

Results and Findings

Table 3.
Age vs. Barriers and Motivators Descriptive

		N	M	M/Items	SD	Std. Error
Internal Barriers	30s	16	24.75		6.19	1.55
	40s	44	27.52		6.73	1.01
	50s	61	27.43		7.13	.91
	60s	28	22.00		6.67	1.26
	Total	149	26.15	2.61	7.10	.58
External Barriers	30s	16	19.56		4.57	1.14
	40s	44	19.14		5.37	.81
	50s	61	16.87		5.30	.68
	60s	28	15.82		5.66	1.07
	Total	149	17.63	2.93	5.45	.45
Internal Motivators	30s	16	30.06		2.41	.60
	40s	44	29.43		4.09	.62
	50s	59	29.15		4.28	.56
	60s	26	29.42		3.78	.74
	Total	145	29.39	4.19	3.94	.33
External Motivators	30s	16	10.19		4.18	1.05
	40s	44	9.41		2.82	.43
	50s	61	9.90		3.21	.41
	60s	28	9.54		3.44	.65
	Total	149	9.72	2.43	3.24	.27

Results and Findings

Table 4
Age vs. Barriers and Motivators ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Internal Barriers	Between Groups	695.86	3	231.95	4.97	.003
	Within Groups	6770.90	145	46.70		
	Total	7466.75	148			
External Barriers	Between Groups	286.52	3	95.50	3.37	.020
	Within Groups	4106.18	145	28.32		
	Total	4392.70	148			
Internal Motivators	Between Groups	10.67	3	3.56	.23	.879
	Within Groups	2223.72	141	15.77		
	Total	2234.37	144			
External Motivators	Between Groups	10.71	3	3.57	.34	.800
	Within Groups	1543.45	145	10.64		
	Total	1554.16	148			

Implications

- Expanding the scope of definitions for motivators
- Increased mentor support and programming is needed
- Assigning mentors to assistant superintendents
- Administrative training needs to be resurrected or restructured

Questions and Answers

