OTHER IDENTITIES AS ASSUMED:

JOB DESCRIPTIONS AMONG CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

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Kellersohn, Keith B. *Other Identities as Assumed: Job Descriptions among Classified Employees in a Public School System.* Master of Arts (Applied Anthropology), August 2015, 67 pp., references, 30 titles.

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the current status of job descriptions at a Public School System, in [City], [State], USA, and to make recommendations for improvement in terms of job description content, format, and the creation and updated processes. This work covers job descriptions among classified employees and does not cover job descriptions for instructional staff (teachers, principals, etc.) or Executive Administrative Staff.

The work begins by introducing the reader to the client and the current status of the client's job descriptions. The demographics of the subject population are discussed as well as the research methodologies. Findings are presented in light of research data and analyzed using Social Identity Theory, as well as business leadership principals. Finally deliverables are provided and recommendations are made.

The thesis argues that application of Social Identity Theory and business leadership principals will support the ongoing job description processes by engaging employees in the process with supervisors leading the process.
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Role Clarification of Client and Researcher

This work is a Master’s Thesis project for the Applied Anthropology Master’s Program at the University of North Texas where I am currently a student. I also work at The XXXX County Public School system administration department as an independent Policy Analyst consultant. For the purposes of this work, I am the researcher, and XXXX County Public School System is the client sponsor of this work.

1.2 Background of the Researcher and Client

The XXXX County Public Schools system (XXXX) "the client" is located in XXXX County, [US STATE] on [US STATE]'s [SPECIFIC REGION]. Currently I, the researcher, am employed as a Policy Analyst Contractor where I am responsible for coordinating the creation of new school policies, as well as the reformatting and updating of existing policies. These policies cover areas from personnel management to student conduct, and require strict adherence to the [US STATE] Educational Articles and other Annotated Code of [US STATE] regulations and guidelines. I started employment with XXXX in August of 2012, and by December of that same year, was adding to my responsibilities by assisting the Human Resource Department in evaluating their Criminal Background Check process using qualitative methods. Having started the Master's Degree program in Applied Anthropology at the University of North Texas in September of 2011, I had been seeking a client for my thesis starting in 2012. After an exhaustive search, I approached my immediate supervisor at XXXX and was offered the subject of "job descriptions" at XXXX as a project. I accepted the offer and begin my research in March of 2014.
XXXX is responsible for the education of over 14,000 students. As of September 2013, when the research was conducted, XXXX employed 2,183 full-time employees of which 1,216 were teachers and 967 were administrative staff (non-teaching positions). Of these 967 employees 881 were considered “Classified” employees and the remaining 86 were considered “Administrative and Supervisors”. Employees at XXXX enjoy representation by local labor associations in negotiation of their annual labor contracts. At the time of the study there were two labor associations that represented three XXXX labor negotiating units where each negotiating unit had its own contract. The three labor negotiating units were: a) the employees of Unit I (teachers and educational support personnel) whose contract was negotiated by the XXXX County Educational Association (XCEA), b) the employees of Units III and IV (classified employees, e.g.: accountants, technology professionals, administrative assistants, etc.) whose contract was also negotiated by XCEA, and c) the employees of Unit II (administrators, supervisors, school principals, assistant superintendents, and other high level positions whose contract was negotiated by the Association of Public School Administrators and Supervisors Association (APSAS). In two of the three contracts, that is Unit I, and Units III & IV, XXXX agrees to provide *job descriptions* to employees.

“A written job description that outlines the duties/expectation for high school Department Heads/Chairs will be provided as part of the teacher’s handbook.” – UNIT 1 Teachers Agreement, June 25, 2013

“DESCRIPTIONS OF DUTIES - Employees shall, at the time of hire, be given a description of the duties they will be expected to perform. Any changes to the existing descriptions will be communicated to the impacted employee” – UNIT III & IV Classified Employees Agreement, July 9, 2013”

1.3 Research Questions and Deliverables
To fulfill contractual obligations, Assistant Superintendent of Administration, Dr. XXXXX XXXXXXXX, in concert with the Director of Human Resources, XXXXX XXXXX requested the researcher to undertake this research and provide the following research and deliverables.

The Research Questions for this project are as follows:

1. What is the best format for job descriptions? (All job descriptions should be in a standard format)
2. What content is required for each job description (i.e. education, experience, etc.)?
3. Going forward, what is the best process to keep job descriptions current?

The researcher has been asked to provide the following deliverables:

1. Create standard format for job descriptions and produce a sample of updated job descriptions prior to reformating the entirety of job descriptions.
2. Develop criteria that each job description must contain (required skills/education). The criteria may vary by job classification, if so, a rubric or guide should be created that outlines the required criteria by classification.
3. Design process and propose policy by which job descriptions are to be kept updated going forward.

This content will be presented in:

1. A PowerPoint presentation. Present findings which justify the new job description update process.
2. A full written report of all findings.

1.4 Study Design
This project focuses exclusively on those employees within the Unit III & IV categories defined as “Classified Employees”. Per the HR director at XXXX, Department Heads/Chairs positions no longer exist, therefore, no study of this group, will be conducted. While Administrators and Supervisors have no contractual entitlement to job descriptions, it will be necessary to include them in the study, for executive and management perspectives. Currently, there are 118 job classifications within Unit III & IV, which make up 881 employees. This means that multiple individuals may share the same job description. Over the course of several years, however, job descriptions have fallen into various states of disarray. Some do not exist, some no longer define what the employee’s actual duties are, and some are outdated in terms of the technology and processes required to fulfill the position.

1.5 About this work

The remainder of this report is composed of the following: a review of the methods used to gather the data from interview and survey respondents, a report of findings with supporting data in both verbal and graphical format, a discussion of recommendations to the client, an analysis of the research based on anthropological theory and business leadership principles, and finally reflections on the project.
CHAPTER II. METHODS

2.1 Research Structure

In order to provide the deliverables, it was necessary to conduct interviews and surveys with employees. While some studies may focus primarily on one method, such as observations, surveys or interviews, the researcher felt that it was necessary to obtain qualitative and quantitative data as complementary sources. The complementary aspects of using two research methodologies is generally thought to lead to more valid results (Jick, 1979), (Denzin, 2005), (Schensul, et.al, 2012). This is known as "mixed methods" or "triangulation" (Jick, 1979), (Denzin, 2005), (Schensul, et.al, 2012). While survey data can be a very efficient method to gather data, and also very easily and efficiently analyzed, qualitative data from face-to-face interviews allows the respondent to add information which may be limited by choices and space on a survey. Data was also pulled from the client's internal payroll system known as X2, to use as a comparison to survey data involving the reporting of job titles. Client data was also pulled from the internal human resource database system to check for survey population proportionality in the areas of demographics, including employee years of service.

In this research, the data collection methods suited the study being conducted. Early in the research, the researcher considered doing observations of job processes in anticipation of being immersed within several job function areas. After conducting several interviews, it was found that this level of detail within the research was not necessary. Interview subjects also expressed no interest in being observed, nor did the client request any observations. The data collected from the face-to-face interviews, the electronic survey, and client internal systems, was sufficient for this research. Thus, the sum of all of the methods supplied the rich
complementary data necessary to create the new job description format as well as the requested process outline (deliverables).

This study consisted of face-to-face interviews with 20 respondents; 6 were Division Directors, 3 were Supervisors and 11 were non-supervisory employees. Interviews were conducted between March and May of 2014. Respondents were interviewed in private closed-door environments, where they were digitally recorded. Recordings were then transcribed verbatim into Microsoft Word, converted to Rich Text Format (.rtf) and uploaded into Atlas.ti version 7.1.8 for organization of interview quotes according to themes. Interviewees represented the areas of Food Service, Instructional Assistants, Administrative Associate, Information Technology, Maintenance, Nursing, Transportation, Accounting & Finance and Facilities. Each non-supervisory respondent was asked the same 21 questions while Supervisors and Division Directors were asked 23 questions. The difference between the two sets of questions were as follows: Supervisors and Division Directors were asked the following questions differently from non-supervisor interview respondents; "Do you have job descriptions for each member of your department?", "How do you use job descriptions in your department", "How do you think Job Descriptions should be managed?", and "What kind of soft-skills do you need for your position?". Non-supervisory interview respondents were asked, differently from supervisors, "What kind of professional skills do you need for your position?" in place of "What kind of soft-skills do you need for your position?". Results will be discussed later in this work.

A 23-question survey was also sent to all classified employees (supervisory or non-supervisory) excluding the 20 interview respondents, to prevent duplication or redundancy in
data. Originally, the survey received 214 responses, however, 22 responses were removed due to incompleteness, making a total of 192 respondents. While the previously discussed interview respondents signed paper Informed Consent forms, the survey was conducted electronically using "Survey Monkey®", and thus Informed Consent was agreed to before proceeding into the first question of the survey. The survey began on September 3, 2014 and ended on September 19, 2014. The 23 questions were based on the questions from the Interview Questions with only a few modifications, to allow the questions to fit into survey form and provide answer choices. Additions to the survey included asking whether the interview respondents have received any job changes or promotions, as well as the number of years and months of service. (Interview respondents were asked only when they started at XXXX).

Completed results from the survey were downloaded into Comma Separated Value format (.csv) from the Survey Monkey® website and then imported into Excel 2010. The data was then processed using pivot table and chart functionality within Excel 2010, as well as some manual methods when it came to grouping employee-reported job titles and departments. Data was also uploaded into IBM SPSS software version 23 to test for statistical significance of cross-tabbed variables. IBMS SPSS functionality is superior to Excel in those areas. The researcher used IBM SPSS to test for statistical significance between the frequency of employee review of job descriptions and whether they feel job descriptions are important. This was an important test to run to understand the importance of job descriptions, not only from the client perspective (which is safely assumed by the nature of this project), but also the employee perspective.
2.2 Subject Population Demographics

Gender Makeup:

Of the 192 Survey Respondents 80% were female and 20% were male.

Ethnic Makeup:
The Subject Population represented 5 major identified ethnic/racial groups including multi-racial (more than one race).

Age Groups:

Age groups of survey respondents are reported in the chart above. Instead of listing the number of each age, the ages have been grouped into 9 year segments (20-29, 30-39, etc.). It is interesting to note that the number of those from age 50-59 and 60-69 outnumber the previous four younger age groups combined. This information may be significant to HR and upper management as they manage the rate of retirement against the emerging workforce.
In comparing the three demographic charts above, we can see that white female survey respondents totaled 110 (57%) of the total survey respondent population, the largest portion of which were in the 50-59 age group.
In comparison to the overall population survey respondents' demographic makeup was proportional to the total population within 1-3%. However, 6% more of one particular group, White Females aged 50-59 answered the survey, which is the most populated group within the survey.

The researcher asked survey respondents for their job title and provided a free-form field for them to type their response. These titles were then grouped to create the above chart which shows how many respondents were from each job classification.
In this chart, the researcher grouped 21 of the titles into a collected category of "Other" out of concern for the anonymity of survey respondents. We can see from this chart that Instructional Assistants made up 38% of the total respondents, followed by Administrative Assistants/Office Assistants at 16%, and Maintenance Associates at 10%. This was compared to the total number within the subject population to check for proportionality.

In comparison to those that answered the survey, most of the job title areas are proportional between 1-4%. However, job title distribution is not proportional to the total subject population in 2 job title areas of Maintenance Associates (8%) and Food Service (Associates-8%). The reasons for lack of proportionality is due to the fact that many Maintenance and Food Service workers do not have email addresses at XXXX, and their job duties do not require them to have access to a computer. Therefore, they were not informed of the electronic survey. Attempts were made by the researcher to interview some individuals within those job descriptions during the face-to-face interview phase. As a result, 2 food service workers were interviewed. Unfortunately, no maintenance workers responded to the invitation to be interviewed.
Survey Respondents also had a wide variety of years of service with XXXX, the largest portion had been with the school system between 6-10 years of service.

This has been compared to the total subject population's years of service

The proportionality of respondents is within 1-4%, the highest disproportion (-4%) are within the most populated year of service group, "6-10 years" of service.
CHAPTER III. RESULTS

3.1 Analyzing the Findings

As described in Chapter II of this work, interviews were transcribed verbatim and uploaded into Atlas.ti software, and grouped according to themes. At the time of the grouping, it was unclear what theories may be at play or what the main findings of the research may be. Therefore, 51 groupings were made to create themes from interview respondent quotes. Once survey data was obtained, the information from the survey and the information from the interviews were compared to look for corresponding themes between the two. Therefore, the findings below are justified by both qualitative and quantitative data. One particular finding, Finding #3, however, relies solely on survey data in comparison to data from internal systems. This finding will be important to the client as standardization of job titles will affect internal systems.

3.2 Findings

The following findings result from both the qualitative interview data and the quantitative survey data.

Finding #1 - Employees feel that job descriptions are very important to their daily work.

When employees were asked "How important is your job description to you?", the highest response rate fell under "Very Important" which is the highest category of importance offered on the survey. Together, the answers "Very Important" and "Important" exceeded 50%
of the total responses.

As a test of statistical significance this data was cross-tabbed with the question "How often do you refer to your job description".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance of Job Description to You</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once a Year</th>
<th>Twice a Year</th>
<th>More than Twice a Year</th>
<th>Blank (Reported No Job Description)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Important</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Very Important</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all Important</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is clear from the responses that even those who reported not having a job description, or never referring to their job description feel that that job descriptions are important or "very important".

The test of statistical significance reported that while 56% of those cells contained values less than 5, the asymptotic significance was .000 meaning that this cross-tab is statistically significant. This is important to note as while this study has been done for the XXXX administration, job descriptions are important to employees as well as confirmed by the data and statistical significance.

Interview respondents supported this sentiment and gave reasons why the job description is important.

"Yes, because I think it gives a person, an applicant what they're looking for, what are the job requirements of the position that you're going to hopefully interview for, and I think it gives you something to study and prepare for, I guess I'm repeating myself, but it gives a good idea of what the basic job is like, or what they expect, and what they expect of you I guess." - Respondent 21

"I think they are important, I don't think they encompass everything that you do, but I think they are important so that you can at least see what their expectations are of what they requirements of your job entail because I think when you go somewhere new, this was new to me, you kind of want to know what kinds of things they expect you to be doing. It's changed since I started, we got a different job description, but um, a lot more detail, the one I got at the
"beginning was really very brief and then they changed it a few years ago, and it's much, it's pages long now." - Respondent 22

"I believe they are very important because you have to know what the job entails and be willing to know what you are applying for and what that job content is expecting of you, especially when you are dealing with education and you need to understand the focus of that job and how you can assist the students as well as the classroom teacher." - Respondent 17

Finding #2 - Employees feel that job descriptions do not give a clear picture of their daily jobs.

When survey respondents were asked "How accurate is your Current Job Description?", only 19, (10%) answered "Completely Accurate". Interview respondents echoed the theme of job descriptions being inaccurate, with 6 of the interview respondents mentioning the phrase "other duties as assigned" in reference to duties and tasks they perform that are not cited in their current job description. This finding warrants further discussions from XXXX executive management, the Human Resources Department, Supervisors and all other employees regarding the acceptable level of accuracy for job descriptions.
There are a lot of things that can be easily overlooked and not put into a job description that you would be expected to do probably”. - Interview Respondent 23

It’s somewhat (sigh), well, the job description led to a whole lot, because it also required that sometimes, if you are in a classified special education, what they call a conclusive classroom. In the beginning I was out there, you had to change the children’s who had diapers, you had hearing disabilities, and you know you have to prepare for that physical work, and it did go through a gamut of things, it just didn’t give me a finite, fine-tuned description, it just gave a whole rainbow, or a whole spectrum of duties. - Interview Respondent 17

It’s very broad and general, when I got hired it was pretty much, it didn’t say anything in particular about hardware and software, like anything specific like, you’re going to put together computers in a room, it had just broad descriptions, like you have to be able to lift 25lbs, and you have to have a willingness to learn technology, - Interview Respondent 14

"And if that means, you gotta do something, go beyond that job description today, because at the end of all job descriptions I think the last sentence is always 'other duties as assigned'. So that’s the catch-all that catches everything else that may not have been covered in the enumerated duties and responsibilities.” - Interview Respondent 22

Finding #3 - Job Titles in the Unit III & IV contract do not match the job titles reported in the Payroll X2 system, and neither match some titles reported by employees.
While this may appear to be strictly a systems issue, it is also an employee job
description issue, as one's job title is one of the first items to appear on any job description, and
serves as a primary identifier for the employee.

As an example, the list below is a comparison of the Contract title, the Payroll X2 title,
and the employee-reported titles for Instructional Assistants. While, inconsistent abbreviation
and letter casing exists in the Payroll X2 system and would be a fairly easy adjustment, the
survey respondent-reported titles would be more difficult. One can see that Instructional
Assistants, who work with special education students, identify themselves as such, in variance
with the Unit III & IV contract title. We also see Instructional Assistants refer to themselves as
"Paraprofessionals" (an older term for Instructional Assistant), "Resource Assistant", "Class
Helper", "Teacher Assistant", and "Education Assistant". This calls into question the authority
and validity of the official job title (presumed to be the one listed on the contract) when such
variances exist.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit III &amp; IV Contract Title</th>
<th>Payroll X2 Job Title</th>
<th>Survey Respondent-Reported Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Assistant I</td>
<td>INSTR. ASST. II - SPECIAL ED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Assistant II</td>
<td>INSTR. ASST. III - SPECIAL ED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Assistant III</td>
<td>INSTRUCT. ASST. I-SPECIAL ED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instructional Assistant III</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                              | assistant          |
|                              | assistant          |
|                              | Assistant teacher  |
|                              | asst               |
|                              | Class helper       |
|                              | Education Assistant|
|                              | I A Sped           |
|                              | Instructional Assistant |
|                              | Instructional Assistant 3 |
|                              | Instructional Assistant II |
|                              | Instructional Assistant III |
|                              | Instructional assistant III |
|                              | instruction asst   |
|                              | Instructional Asst.|
|                              | Instructional Assistant |
This finding leads us directly into our next finding.

**Finding #4 - Employees do not fully identify with their official job titles.**

The data provides insights into employee perceptions of their titles and their jobs. Some do not feel the job titles reflect the importance of their work. For example, two (2) survey respondents who were Administrative Assistants identified as "Principal's Secretary" even though there is no official titles as such. One interview respondent who identified as a "Principal's Secretary" stated the following:

"There’s Administrative Associate I, II, and III, and that just makes me feel like it’s a glorified receptionist and that’s not it at all. The Principal Secretary is an Office Manager to several ladies, we put out fires, and I just wish they’d call it Principal’s Secretary again, because when people tell me what my job is, I don’t tell them that, some people do say I’m an administrative associate or this or that, I like saying Principal’s Secretary, because I’ve worked hard to get where I’m at and I enjoy what I’m doing I’ve been here 16 years" - Interview Respondent 16
As mentioned earlier, Instructional Assistants reported varying titles, but most distinctive was the tendency for Instructional Assistants to designate "Special Education" as a part of their title.

"I use it [job description], that’s my background, the backbone, the skeleton that keeps me focused, what’s expected of me when I come in to work every day, I know that my students have needs, so I have to maintain that, so that we can help students because I work with special education students to help them meet their goals, so it keeps me focused on what needs to be done in the classroom with the student." - Interview Respondent 17

"You need to have patience, because the kids that I work with on a daily basis can definitely push your buttons. They really, and they know what they’re doing but they don’t necessarily have the impulse control so you have to have patience, I’ve seen people really blow up and it’s not helping anybody in the situation." - Interview Respondent 9

It is also worth noting that while some survey respondents identified their level designations as I, II, III, or IV, many more did not report them. 94% of Instructional Assistant survey respondents did not identify any level designations. Interview data suggests that Instructional Assistants do not find the level designations meaningful enough to mention.

Quotes from two interview respondents in different areas of the organization

In recalling what the Principal Secretary stated above, neither the title nor the level designation was satisfying:

"There’s Administrative Associate I, II, and III, and that just makes me feel like it’s a glorified receptionist and that’s not it at all. The Principal Secretary is an Office Manager..." - Interview Respondent 16 [The Principal Secretary discussed earlier]

Additionally, another Interview Respondent expressed an interesting insight into the difference between the level designations in his job title. The respondent appears to be dismissive of the idea that the difference is substantial.

"Being a Tech I is very interesting because I do the same as a Tech II, I do the same exact thing, the only difference is they’re at a bigger school, maybe they’re at an intermediate school or at the high schools like Bennett or Wi-High. Same exact work, if anything, it’s more work because
it’s more computers and more staff, so, you know, I guess, you know that answers that.”-
Respondent 14

Here, the employee's perception is that the difference in the job title's level designation is about workload and not about what tasks are performed on a daily basis.

Finding #4 - There is a lack of upward mobility (opportunities for advancement and promotion) at XXXX.

Survey respondent data shows a lack of advancement within the organization. When asked "Have you received any promotions since working at XXXX?", only 41% of employees surveyed indicated they had.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No - I have not received any promotions</td>
<td>13, 59%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes - 1 promotion</td>
<td></td>
<td>43, 22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes - 2 promotions</td>
<td></td>
<td>23, 12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes - 3 or more promotions</td>
<td>13, 7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to note that number of promotions does not necessarily coincide with the employee’s number of years of service.
Biddle, 2011 states that new external hires may be paid 18-20% more than their internal counterparts, but will be promoted faster after 2 years of employment. Using this baseline as a model, we can see that XXXX’s promotion practices does not coincide with this trend either.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of service with XXXX</th>
<th>No, I have not received any promotions</th>
<th>Yes - 1 promotion</th>
<th>Yes - 2 promotions</th>
<th>Yes - 3 or more promotions</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 years</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 31 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can see from the above chart, that the majority of those who have been with XXXX for more than 2 years have not been promoted. Those that have been promoted at some point after 2 years total 74, and those that haven not total 84, a difference of 12%.

Finding #5 - It is the perception of most employees that a High School Diploma or 2-year College Associates Degree is sufficient to do their jobs.

When asked, "What is the highest level of education that you need to perform your job duties?" employees answered accordingly:
In regard to your current position, what is the highest level of education you need to perform your job duties?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma/GED</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Year College Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Year College Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Year College Master’s Degree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Highest number of responses within the "High School Diploma/GED" category came from Instructional Assistants (31) of all levels (I, II, III), the second highest was from Administrative Assistant/Office Associates (21) also at all levels.

What is interesting about this response is that all job titles answered within all degree categories. For example, those survey respondents who identified themselves as Instructional Assistant IIs, the highest level for Instructional Assistants, answered in the "High School Diploma/GED" category, "2-Year College Bachelor's Degree" category and the "4-Year College Bachelor's Degree" category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>Instructional Assistant III Survey Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma/GED</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Year College Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Year College Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tempered against the actual job description for Instructional Assistants, the educational requirement for an Instructional Assistant III is a 4-year Bachelor's Degree. Below is a clip from the current job description for Instructional Assistants (I, II, III)

**EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE**

Experience working with children in structured situations preferred. If assigned to a Title I program or a comprehensive Title I school, must meet No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandated requirements by submitting a transcript showing 48 college credits or qualifying scores on the Parapro Assessment.

Instructional Assistant I – High school diploma or equivalent (GED).
Instructional Assistant II – A minimum of 48 college credits or qualifying scores on the Parapro Assessment.
Instructional Assistant III – Bachelor’s degree or higher level of education.

**Finding #6** - It is the perception of most employees that on-the-job training is the most important supplementary piece of education necessary to do their jobs.

When respondents were asked, "What other kinds of education do you need for your position (check all that apply)?” Respondents rated "On-The-Job Training" as the foremost type.
Interview Respondents had plenty to say about on-the-job experience, and some of them answered the question not so much in terms of previous experience, but in terms of on-the-job training currently at XXXX.

"Actually, I've taken people who have never worked food service and been able to train them, like I said with the buddy system and whatever I go over with them, and it works pretty well, it's not really hard work but you work hard if that makes any sense. So many little things you know to learn, you can't do that in a week or two, it takes time. So on-the-job experience is good." - Interview Respondent 23

"On the job, I think that’s important because there are a variety of changes especially with the state and educating the core curriculum and all these kinds of things going on..." - Interview Respondent 14

"There's a lot of that! I'm definitely all for that, and I don't think that's a negative as long as there's somebody there to support you, and say 'Hey, you know if you get into a problem, call me' you know that type thing, and I think I've done pretty good with that." - Interview Respondent 14

**Finding #7 - It is the employee perception that previous experience, similar to their current job, is necessary, which includes at least 1-2 years of experience.**

When survey respondents were asked "What kind of experience do you think is necessary for someone entering your position?" Respondents preferred experience that closely resembles the job they have now, secondly, respondents also felt that at least 1-2 years of experience was necessary for their job.
Interview Respondents also agreed that experience was necessary to do their jobs.
"Um, I think they should have a lot of experience, I don't think they should be someone who is just hired off, sometimes they do that ..hire somebody off the street who's just a custodian or worked at a restaurant sweeping the floor maybe doing some floor buffing or something like that. I think, somebody really needs to have some experience, not only with the job itself and what it entails, physically, but I think mentally a lot of interviewing should go into a person to find out what they are like, how they get along with other people." - Interview Respondent 14

"...obviously at least 1 or 2 years of some sort of experience dealing with putting the computer together, maybe not breaking it down to the most minute fraction but at least opening up a computer being able to look inside it, like the tower, putting things together like the desktop, set up for desks, like for an office area like putting the monitor where it needs to go, plugging in all of the peripherals, you have to have that kind of experience definitely and then knowing what operating systems is supposed to do when you turn it on, so at least 1-2, I'd say 3 years experience doing something in that capacity for tech 1, I don’t know if they ask more than that, I can’t remember, I think it was maybe 1 year experience." - Interview Respondent 9

"I guess some background, with um data analysis programming, some programming skills, uh, computer background..."- Interview Respondent 13

"I think you need at least a year experience in the classroom, I think you need to have that classroom setting, that educational environment, not just someone who’s looking for a job and is not interested in helping students." - Interview Respondent 17

Finding #8 - It is the employee perception that "Professionalism" is the #1 skill needed for their job.

When employees were asked, "In terms of your current position, what kind of professional skills do you need to perform your job (choose all that apply)", Professionalism was the number one choice.
Other skills such as Problem Solving and Time Management featured prominently as well. In a write-in field for other skills, survey respondents mentioned "Patience", "Human Relations/Customer Service", "Specials skills geared toward working with special needs children", and specific technical skills required for their specific job.

The importance of "Professionalism" will be discussed in a later section of this work.

**Finding #9 - Employees feel that it is their Supervisor, as well as HR, who is responsible for keeping job descriptions updated and current.**

When survey respondents were asked who should be responsible for keeping job descriptions updated or current, the number one answer was "My Supervisor". The Human
Resources department was second with a good amount of employees claiming responsibility for their job descriptions as well.

Interview respondents echoed the same sentiments, including Supervisors themselves.

"I think it would be as I said, technically, it should probably fall under the roles and responsibilities of HR directors, making sure we are consistent with agency policies and organizational values and all that, but I think it should be more, it’s better managed at the local level, departmental level because again, that department head knows best to utilize their employees" - Interview Respondent 5 (Supervisory Position)

"The Director and the Management reporting to them. So, in my case, my three discipline areas that have a manager of each of those disciplines, need to work with me to craft their job descriptions or at least have some say in them. I could come up with the first round draft, but they certainly need to. I think it’s my responsibility to give them some framework here’s some rough things we need to include, here’s some rough terminology, let them fill in the blanks and
add the detail and then we agree as a team that this is the format the framework and the content of the description" - Interview Respondent 8 (Supervisory)

"The manager of his. The department manager, in my case it would be generally overall but that would be delegated downstream so that [the]manager would be responsible for updating the technical skills and the pieces of his people. Operations manager, so on so forth as it goes through the organization. They’re closest to the actual people and skill sets that they need to make the updates, filter them back up through, and so there is approval on it, so that there is some kind of continuity maintained and then sent to HR." - Interview Respondent 10 (Supervisory)

Non-Supervisory employees also felt that the employees themselves should be involved as well.

"I think I should be involved and mainly because, I mean, with what I think it should be, and I also always appreciate the guidance of my immediate supervisor(s)" - Interview Respondent 5

"I think we should be included, I think what we should have to say again is very important because we are really doing the job, we are performing the duties." - Interview Respondent 17

"Uh, not necessarily write it but maybe if there's suggestions, maybe, make suggestions, because we are the ones who actually do the job so we know how to do it sometimes more efficiently than what is told how to do it." - Interview Respondent 24

Finding #10 - Process gaps exist that prevent employees from possessing a copy of their job description

Referring back to Finding #1, we see that currently 32 people do not have a copy of their job description. However, survey respondents were asked as to whether they received a copy of their job description at hire. Those that responded "No" were asked if they were given a copy of their job description at a later time. Lastly, those that responded "No" were asked if they have a copy of their job description now.

The results were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>No (count of respondents)</th>
<th>No (percent)</th>
<th>Yes (count of respondents)</th>
<th>Yes (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where you given a copy of your job description at hire? | 68 | 35% | 124 | 65%
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Were you given a copy of your job description at a later time? | 41 | 21% | 27 | 14%
Do you have a copy of your job description now? | 32 | 17% | 9 | 5%

We can tell by this table, that it is the perception of 68 (35%) of survey respondents that they were not given a copy of their job description at hire and 17% still do not have one.

The subject of providing job descriptions to classified employees is important to all of the research done here. It is the reason this research is being conducted and is a contractual obligation for the client.
CHAPTER IV. DISCUSSION

4.1 Social Identity Theory

What follows is an analysis of the ways in which theory on social identity, leadership and employee engagement deepen the understanding of the research results.

Social Identity Theory seeks to explain the specific meanings that individuals have for the multiple identities they claim, as well as how those identities influence their behavior, thoughts and feelings and tie them to the larger population (Burke & Stets, 2009). Social Identity theory has its origins in a 1979 article by Henri Tajfel and John Turner from the University of Bristol, England, entitled "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict". Tajfel & Turner attempt to explain conflict between groups in terms of social stratification, social change, and identity. Tajfel & Turner cite that individuals strive to maintain or enhance their self-esteem and maintain a positive social identity, in terms of the groups they identify with. If those groups have negative or positive associations, then individuals will strive to achieve a positive social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

In the case of survey and interview respondents, Social Identity Theory serves well to gain an understanding of why and how respondents feel the way they do about job descriptions. Michel Foucault’s work is relevant here, and is consistent with Tajfel & Turner’s view. Foucault states: “...it's my hypothesis that the individual is not a pre-given entity which is seized on by the exercise of power. The individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces.” (Crampton, 2007). Foucault views identity as fluid, not fixed, and subject to
environmental changes over time. Foucault also stated “I don’t feel that it is necessary to know exactly what I am. The main interest in life and work is to become someone else that you were not in the beginning.” (Martin, 1988). Foucault suggests that one of the very meanings of life itself is “change”. Foucault’s writings shed light on this research project regarding job descriptions. As we have seen, employees have identified themselves differently than assumed fixed titles, and have held on to past titles that have been superseded by new ones; some have appeared to ignore their level designations and some have stated them clearly. Some employees identify with their respective departments and some have identified with a school, location, or even their counterparts in other schools. Using Foucault’s perspective, we realize that these identifications can and will change as employee ambitions are realized and the work environment is continually adjusted to address changing social and cultural pressures. Such pressures can range from the impact of globalization on American public school systems to the enforcement of government regulations on public school systems. The association of one’s identity with their profession is not a new or alien concept. Upon meeting new people, one common question we may have is “What do you do?” (in reference to one’s profession). Such answers usually start with an “I am” statement rather than an “I do” statement. Our work, our profession, is intimately tied to our identity (Kate & Whittle, 2011). Swann, et.al, 2004 states that individuals seek and attain confirmation of their self-views. Such confirmation processes (feedback) achieved from other group members would seek to reinforce social identity within the work group. This process is also part of self-verification theory (Swann, 1983 as quoted in Swann et.al, 2004).
The relevance of identity in the workplace is also not new. The conversation about identity in the workplace has been ongoing since 1911 when F.W.Taylor’s “Scientific Management” model gained popularity. Scientific Management however viewed individual employee identity as an obstacle to management as opposed to a reality that should be accepted (Kate & Whittle, 2011). Taylor believed that identity was something that was to be left behind and employees should fit whatever mold is dictated to them by management. This model was even adopted by public institutions including hospitals and public schools (Guillén, 2011). It could be argued that the source of conflict with job titles at XXXX, rests with employees who, by their own admission, in the survey and interviews, are not accepting the titles (mold) applied to them by XXXX. But the opposite is also true, that XXXX fails to consider the assumed identity of the employee and expects them to put their identity aside and follow a Scientific Management work style.

Management, and workers resisted Taylor’s Scientific Management philosophy, even when it meant that their rate of pay would be increased by conforming to it (Kate & Whittle, 2011). By the 1930s, the “human relations movement” (the predecessor of our current “human resource management” discipline) garnered more favor as it incorporated social and psychological needs into employee motivation. The need to feel “special” motivated employees and was more acutely identified by the Hawthorne studies (conducted in the same time period) (Kate & Whittle, 2011) which found that worker production increased when they were observed. The Hawthorne researchers concluded that employees were more motivated as they felt “special” because others were taking an interest in them and had a sense of camaraderie within their working groups.
The Scientific Management model has long been discredited and is a central subject of criticism, along with the concept of “management” itself among those who subscribe to current thought in the field of Leadership.

We can draw the conclusion that the motivation and productivity of XXXX employees will increase as a result of the affirmation of their identities. This conclusion is further supported by the importance of the Hawthorne study which influenced Abraham Maslow to create his “Hierarchy of Needs’ and other similar social scientists who recognized that workers were not merely motivated by money or the physical work environment but also by social needs such as the need for belonging, esteem, and self-actualization (Kate & Whittle, 2011), (Ashland, et.al, 2008). This information can be invaluable to XXXX where the salary scale for teachers is one of the lowest in the State of [US STATE] ([US STATE] Public Schools, n.d., retrieved May 24, 2015). While there is no ranking information available in regards to classified employees, we can safely assume that classified salaries are even lower. Therefore XXXX can help keep employees motivated through honoring their professional identities.

When interview respondents were asked “In regards to your current position, what type of professional skills do you need to perform your job?”, 93% of respondents chose “Professionalism”, the highest ranking skill set of all choices. But what is “Professionalism”? Merriam-Webster defines it as “the skill, good judgment, and polite behavior that is expected from a person who is trained to do a job well” (Merriam-Webster.com, n.d, Retrieved May 24, 2015). Competing definitions, however, exist in the business world (US News, 2013, Retrieved 05/23/2015), (TechRepublic, 07/27/2010, Retrieved 05/23/2015) which would be too burdensome to discuss in this work. For the purposes of this work it would seem that that the
definition above encompasses and encapsulates the very ideas that we are trying to cover here: skill, training, behavior and the judgment necessary to do one’s job effectively. While we cannot know what it means to the survey respondents without further research, what we can say is that one’s work identity is intricately linked to what one determines to be “professionalism”. A study in the Healthcare sector revealed that while there was no universally consistent definition of professionalism, notions about professionalism revolved around the areas of status, attitudes, behaviors, organizational culture and identity (Burford, et.al, 2014). Professionalism is an aspect of the self or identity within the context of the organization, at least the self or identity that one assumes at work (Burford, et.al, 2014). Within Social Identity theory, when there is an adoption of in-group identity, a uniformity of perception, behavior, and attitudes occur (Burke & Stets, 2009). Descriptors such as “professionalism”, are based on culturally recognized (in-group norms) characteristics that individuals internalize as their own (Burke & Stets, 2009); thus respondents identify themselves with professionalism as a way to characterize themselves as an embodiment of the in-group prototype (Burke & Stets, 2009), and expect the same of potential newcomers to the group (job candidates). Individual identity becomes subordinate when individuals identity with a group, and thus become their own prototypes of that group (Ashforth et.al, 2008), (Swann et.al, 2004) thus they will conform to whatever definitions of professionalism are characteristic of that group. Prototypes are a mental model, sometimes stereotypical, of a group, that share common characteristics (Burke & Stets, 2009). Reflecting on Foucault’s view of identity as fluid, we can also assume that while professionalism is a part of identity, what constitutes professionalism, that is, the in-group assumed definition of professionalism must also be fluid.
This is important to note, as while the researcher included professionalism as an answer to a question, there was no assumed definition as to what professionalism actually means. Clearly, survey respondents have their own understanding of professionalism, (based on their cultural/organizational context) and strongly identified themselves with it.

While “professionalism” is a way to characterize the internalization of one’s occupational social identity, other interesting characteristics discovered in the research can also be added as part of this same experience. Survey respondents felt that “On-the-job training” was the foremost additional type of education needed to perform their job, and “experience that closely resembles the job I have now” was the primary type of experience needed to do the survey respondent’s job. Again, we must look at the concept of “prototypes” in Social Identity Theory. Whether one is of the in-group, or the out-group is determined by their ability to conform to the in-group prototype (Burke & Stets, 2009). Professionalism, as discussed earlier, would thus be a prototypical characteristic, as would also closely related experience, and on-the-job training. These allow the in-group to control who may enter from the out-group. On-the-job training and closely related experience ensure that members of the out-group, i.e.: potential job candidates have achieved some level of identification with the in-group already. This is similar to many initiate or protégé requirements and rite-of-passage/coming-of-age rituals studied by anthropologists cross-culturally, where one’s membership in a group is accomplished by pre-requisite preparation and testing.

This in mind, the question arises as to how organizations can “manage” identity. Whetten & Godfrey, 1998 find no conclusions on the answer to this question, but have found that organizational management of identity is taking place nonetheless. In previous discussion
of prototypes we must consider ethics surrounding the management of identities in the workplace so that approaches are inclusive and not oppressive of those individuals who may not necessarily represent the embodiment of the prototype (Whetten & Godfrey, 1998). This has far-reaching implications for hiring, disciplinary, and termination practices, as well as diversity management and employee engagement.

Steffens, et.al, 2014 advocate for a Leadership model of identity management, arguing that leadership is a “recursive, multidimensional process that centers on leaders’ capacities to represent, advance, and create and embed a shared sense of social identity of group members” (Steffens, et.al, 2014). The discipline of leadership seeks to develop a shared sense of identity and influence individuals toward a common goal. In this sense, managing identities can be best served through the “Transformative Leadership” model of leadership (Steffens, et.al, 2014). It is not surprising that the majority of survey respondents felt that their Supervisor should be mainly responsible for the currency and updating of job descriptions, not only is this a seemingly subconscious call for leadership, but also a sign that employees feel their Supervisor is the prototypical representative (Hogg & Terry, 2001) of their work group, and therefore the candidate most likely to posses the characteristics or knowledge necessary to manage job descriptions.

4.2 Leadership and Employee Engagement

Keeping job descriptions updated is an ongoing task, therefore, Supervisors and HR must provide leadership on this issue indefinitely. Supervisors must own the process, with HR providing the support, or HR must own the process and hold Supervisors accountable, either scenario rests with Supervisors taking the leadership role in managing job
descriptions. Leadership in this area means consistent and ongoing diligence, making this a yearly endeavor for all classified employees.

The type of leadership that is required for this particular organizational element (job descriptions) must include employee engagement as well as employee motivation. Kouzes & Posner, 2007 state that exemplary leaders do not impose their vision on others, but rather liberate the vision that is already within their constituents. This is known as Transformative Leadership as it get leaders to infuse their energy into strategies, and “raise the led to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns as quoted in Kouzes & Posner, 2007). While Supervisors and HR may lead the job description process, the employee’s voice must be heard, as it is critical to ongoing job motivation. Secondly, Division Directors, Assistant Superintendents, and the Superintendent of Schools must buy-in and endorse the process as a result of their acceptance of findings as stated in the Recommendations section of this work. They too must exercise leadership, also of a transformative nature to ensure the success of the project.

Lawler, 2003 states that “job design greatly influences employee motivation, satisfaction and performance and ultimately has a powerful influence on organizational effectiveness.” Clearly, the maintenance and currency of job descriptions, while it may benefit the individual employees, also benefits the organization as a whole, increasing its effectiveness. Lawler, 2003 and Hesselbein et al, 1997 discourage the standardization and simplification of jobs as a response to the Scientific Management philosophy, discussed earlier in this work,) which expects employees to behave like machines in a factory - and thus performing a dull, boring repetitive job where no value is added and no job enrichment
exists. Hesselbein, et.al, 1997, further discuss how such standardization has affected school systems, while mostly in an instructional context, the authors discuss the Newtonian worldview of a static, repetitive, predictable, linear, and clockwork universe. Kouzes & Posner, 2007 also discourage standardization of jobs and advocate for jobs that allow employees discretion and choice, in other words, latitude. Kouzes & Posner state that narrow job classifications limit employee options, and narrow options mean that people are limited in responding to customer needs.

When academic scholars started questioning Scientific Management philosophy, they looked for ways where levels of satisfaction, performance and motivation could be enhanced. These scholars realized that three elements were necessary to enrich the employee experience; Meaningfulness of the job, responsibility for job outcomes, and feedback or knowledge of job results (Lawler, 2003). Supervisors should guide employees to understand the importance or “meaningfulness” of their work, understanding how that job contributes to organizational success. Responsibility for job outcomes empowers the employee to determine their own work methods and operate without supervision (Lawler, 2003), in other words, employees must be given autonomy and ownership of their job. Lawler, 2003 sees feedback in two ways. First, Lawler offers that employees should be able to observe the results of their work as feedback, and secondly be provided with meaningful feedback from their managers or supervisors in the form of a formal review/evaluation process. If manager feedback can also show how the employee contributed to achieving company goals, this will further enhance the employee’s motivation (Lawler, 2003). Again, this in agreement with the Hesselbein, et.al, 1997 assessment of the educational system which should provide meaning along with the
learning. Jobs designed with these characteristics in mind, are “enriched jobs” as opposed to simplified standardized jobs which do not encourage motivation, enhanced performance, or organizational effectiveness (Lawler, 2003).

While 51% of respondents in this study did not indicate the need to be involved in the maintenance of their job description, we are left to speculate that perhaps these employees are unaware of the benefits of direct involvement and employee engagement. Employees also indicated that they wished to be involved in other areas such as candidate interviews, and job performance evaluations. As strong as respondents felt about the requirements of their positions, the job of a transformative leader in this area could help improve employee motivation and ensure employee engagement.

4.3 Recommendations

The value of recommendations based on the data and current supporting literature on social identity theory and leadership must be tempered against the established position of XXXX as to whether the current status (status quo) of job descriptions at XXXX is acceptable. This determination must be made by XXXX management and should answer the question of whether there is actually a need to improve job descriptions. Most likely, there has never been an assessment of job descriptions at XXXX so it is the hope of the researcher, that the data and conclusions are accepted. The tolerance for accuracy/inaccuracy in job descriptions ultimately lies within the organization’s own criteria, not any external organizational standard (Harvey R., and Wilson M., 2000).

Recommendation #1 - Standardize Job Titles between Employees, Payroll X2, and the Contract Association
To standardize job titles it is important to involve employees, since the largest variation of job titles exist within the employee population. Involving employees before standardizing job descriptions is important as the current literature on social identity theory and business leadership principals as stated in Lawler, 2003 and Hesselbein, et. al, 1997 support employee engagement as well as attesting that one's work or profession is intimately tied to identity (Kate & Whittle, 2011).

While employees are clearly differentiating themselves from what may appear to be standard titles, in the case of Instructional Assistants, employees are differentiating themselves by department or specialization area (Special Education). At the same time, some job titles on Payroll X2, and the UNIT III & IV contract already incorporate these more detailed designations ex: (-Schools, -SPECIAL ED, etc.) Such designations require varying skill sets that should be clearly listed on the job description itself.

While such designations will make job titles more varied, the ability to keep them current and relevant will be easier as there will be agreement between the employee, their supervisor, and the Human Resources department. Since the Supervisor will be ultimately responsible for Job Description Management, it is still within his/her discretion to agree or disagree with job title changes.

There are other schools whose job titles are designated to great detail, including Clark County, Nevada, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Antioch, Georgia, and Tulsa, Oklahoma. The job descriptions from these schools can be seen on their websites, and provide detailed designations including location, language, and areas of expertise.
Recommendation #2 - Clarify Job Designation Levels I, II, III, IV, etc.

While we saw, according to the current job description for Instructional Assistants, that the Level designations are separated by education level, from an employee perspective as reported from the survey and interview data, it does not appear to be clear. Ensuring that job descriptions contain defining information in regards to level designations, and reviewing these with the employee every year will aid in meeting this recommendation. Foucault said that the main interest in life and work is to become someone else that you were not in the beginning (Martin, 1988). Employees need clarity among level designations so they can understand not only the expectations of their current job, but of future opportunities, which will in turn enhance employee motivation.

Recommendation #3 - Refrain from Stating "No Experience Necessary" in Job Descriptions, or in Posting Available Positions.

Experience was extremely important in the minds of both survey respondents and interview respondents. Only a very small percentage (8%) of survey respondents felt that no experience was necessary for their jobs, and interview respondents agreed.

Below is a chart of that 8% of respondents by title.
As stated in theory section, one's professional identity is dependent on what they do (Kate & Whittle, 2011). Secondly, requiring experience is part of the "prototyping" process and assists in individual identification with the group (Burke & Stets, 2009).

XXXX has a Board-approved policy entitled "Critical Shortage of Positions Policy" which allows the organization some flexibility in the event that no suitable applicants are found for a posted position. Therefore the above recommendation can be supported without limiting or constraining the vacancy-to-hire process for XXXX, employees, or potential candidates.

**Recommendation #5 - Make Supervisors responsible for the updating and currency of job descriptions and hold them accountable.**

There is strong agreement from interview respondents and survey respondents that Supervisors should be responsible for job descriptions. Following the proposed processes will assist in accountability, not only for Supervisors but for HR and employees as well. Supervisors that were interviewed recalled that they had job descriptions for every member of their group,
however, as shown previously in this work, some non-supervisory interview respondents recalled that they did not have a job description.

Making Supervisors responsible and accountable for job descriptions fulfills the requirement of leadership for job descriptions. The leadership role is not only assigned to Supervisors but also to their superiors in holding them accountable. Supervisors fulfill the role of the ideal prototype of their respective group (Hogg & Terry, 2001) and are able to provide the feedback necessary to enhance employee motivation (Lawler, 2003).

One potential downside to Supervisors taking the lead role in guiding the job descriptions process is the introduction of potential bias (Harvey R., and Wilson M., 2000) in regards to the content which they may use to inflate jobs for personal or political reasons (Library Worklife, n.d., Retrieved May 23, 2015). This of course, can also be true in the case of the employee; however, the employee’s bias is tempered by the supervisor, and the supervisor’s biases are tempered by the Human Resources department, and other levels above in the organization’s hierarchy. The current literature suggests that job descriptions, while lead by supervisors (Rice University Human Resource, n.d, Retrieved May 23, 2015), (Library Worklife, n.d, Retrieved May 23, 2015; LinkedIn, World at Work Association, n.d. Retrieved May 23, 2015), are ultimately vetted by a team of stakeholders thus mitigating bias (Library Worklife, n.d., Retrieved May 23, 2015), (California Employer Daily, 2011,, retrieved May 23, 2015) This is consistent with the data findings that suggest that co-workers, school principals, and of course, the Human Resources department, and others can have input into job
descriptions, as well. With the findings and recommendations in mind, a process for job description creation and maintenance was developed along with a job description template.

4.4 Deliverables

4.4.1 Job Description Process

With the data provided in the previous sections, we can now have a basis for the proposed process not only a process for keeping job descriptions continually updated and current, but also a process for new employees or transferred employees to receive a copy of their job description.

The process includes the supervisor, the Human Resources department, and the employee, with the supervisor filling the leadership role. This is consistent with the findings from the survey and interview data as well as the business leadership literature. However, the employee has input into the process and great attention is given to agreement between the employee and the supervisor. This is consistent with the literature on social identity which encourages the employee input into their own professional destiny.

Below are the proposed processes for keeping job descriptions updated and current. These processes can also be found in full size in Appendix A.
Both proposed processes initiate with the Supervisor, with HR playing a verification and approval role. HR is also responsible for communicating with the Contract Association any additions or changes. The employee has input into their job description on a yearly basis and, thus, becomes more attuned to job expectations. The need for a “sign off” of employees receiving their job description, either at time of hire or transfer, is to ensure that XXXX is meeting their contractual obligations by providing job descriptions to their employees. Either process can be accomplished using electronic or paper communication methods, however, due to the electronic nature of the job application process, as well as XXXX’s annual review system, it is recommended that process functions be accomplished by electronic means.

4.4.2 Job Description Template

The Job Description Template and Instructions below, are also found in Appendix B so that they can be easily separated from the Thesis body for actual use. The template was based on a template found on samplewords.com, downloaded, and modified to fit the current needs at XXXX, informed by the data. The researcher has attached instructions to the template as well so that future users of the template can have clarity in knowing what to include. As discussed in the process section of this work, a sign off of the employee is required.

This template can be used for new positions, or for updating existing positions. Because the template is easily editable, employees as well as supervisors can modify the contents of the fields at review time. This template should not be used, or adapted to be used, as a form for periodic reporting or performance evaluations based on job duties; this template is strictly for job description use. Job postings can easily be based on this job description template as it is easy to
identify the necessary contents as their fields are easily outlined. Because of the use of well defined fields, this template may also be able to be integrated into database systems to track qualifications and requirements for each job type. This may serve very useful as job classifications change over time and tracking such changes may prove beneficial.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Description Form  (Rubric Version)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Title</strong> 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location 4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>part-time</strong> hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>full-time</strong> hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date Written 5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reports To (Name of Reporting Supervisor) 6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salary Grade 8</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum Requirements 11</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education:</strong> (GED/HS Diploma, MS Social Work, Certifications, etc.) 11a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience:</strong> (duration and type) 11b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills:</strong> Include Computer and Soft Skills (ex: MS Office, Customer Service, Problem Solving, etc.) 11c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duties &amp; Responsibilities 12</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I have reviewed this job description and have determined that it accurately reflects the position.

---

**Job Description Instructions**

1. **Job title.**

   This title should coincide with the job title designated on the most current Unit III & IV Contract Job Titles. **Job Titles MUST contain the level designation of I, II, III or higher if the position is so defined within the contract. If the job title of the individual is new, and is not found listed within the contact, the supervisor must contact HR to make arrangements for the new position.**

2. **Work Team Leader**

   While the employee's Job Title may not contain the word "Supervisor", "Manager" or other designation, it is important to identify those job descriptions that require supervision of others. Please check "Yes" or "No" if this employee fulfills supervisory duties.
3. Division/Department

For Classified Employees, the majority will have the Division of "Administrative Services". However, several positions, including Instructional Assistants and others will have the division of “Instruction & Student Services”. The department can be identified by the employee’s supervisor if not known.

4. Location

Location should be indicated by the name of the Facility in which the employee works. For example, “Central Office” and “West XXXX Elementary”. Designations such as “Board of Ed”, “XXXX”, “WiHi”, or “JMB” are not acceptable.

5. Date Written

The Date Written Field is the final date that both the supervisor and the employee have completely agreed on the content of this form. This aids in maintaining version control of the job description

6. Reports To

This field should contain the name of the reporting supervisor of the employee. This should be the same person who is completing the job description form with the employee.

7. Title of Reporting Supervisor

This title is the title of the supervisor of the employee. The title may not necessarily contain the designations of “Supervisor”, but is the official title of the employee’s immediate supervisor.

8. Salary Grade

The Salary Grade for the position can be found on the Unit III&IV contract

9. Salary Range

The Salary Range for this position can be found on the Unit III&IV contract

10. Shift

Please enter “Day”, “Evening”, or “Night”.

11. Minimum Requirements

It is important to note that these are MINIMUM requirements, however, it is important to be as specific as possible at the same time.

11a. Education
It may be necessary to list any specialty of the particular education level. For example, “Master’s Degree” may be a minimum requirement, however, listing the discipline of the Master’s Degree may also be important.

11b. Experience

It is important not only to list the type of experience, but the duration (number of months/years), as well as the specific type of experience. For example, “1-2 years experience in Institutional or Pediatric Nursing of Special Needs Children” is likely a better description than “2-3 years of Nursing” as this could attract those experienced in Elder Care, Hospice, or Intensive Care nursing. While such nursing types may not necessarily be disqualifying, specificity will attract candidates more suited to that area.

11c. Skills

It is important to list specific skills necessary for these positions. Computer skills, such as MS Office, and even particular functionality within those applications are necessary to list in order to perform the job. For Example, one may want to say “Microsoft Excel 2013 with knowledge of macros and pivot table creation”.

12. Duties & Responsibilities

It is important to be as inclusive as possible in this section as employees are evaluated based on their performance of these duties and responsibilities.

12a. Required Duties

These are the duties that are characteristic of the position itself. These are duties that are required for the employee to do their job.

12b Occasional Duties

This section should explain duties that may not necessarily be in their daily work, but is expected to be performed as part of the job.
4.4.3 Other Deliverables

The required PowerPoint presentation summary of findings will be provided to XXXX management separate from this work, as will the sample job descriptions based on the template.
5.1 Final Reflections and Conclusion

In this work, like many researchers, I have attempted to conduct significant research and temper that with interpretation of data that is meaningful and understandable to the reader. When I was first given the task of researching the status of job descriptions at a public school system, I had no idea that it would take me into discussions about social identity theory (or any theory for that matter) and had difficulty envisioning anything outside of a proposal for a new process with some recommendations for leadership to organize job descriptions at XXXX. While I have proposed a new process for keeping job descriptions updated and current, and discussed the importance of leadership, I am amazed at the natural congruence of social identity theory with the job description process. Leadership and Social Identity are inseparable parts of the same whole. To divide them as I did in this work, was for utilitarian purposes - considering the client, but in actuality the two sections could easily be combined. While “Leadership” appeals to those in business settings, the approach could easily be repackaged into an anthropological discussion about socio-cultural change, hierarchy ("studying up", Nader, L et.al), and symbolic theories of anthropology. What are job descriptions but a symbol of one’s identity within the context of workplace culture, and what is a Leader but the symbolic manifestation - the prototypical representative of the group? What is Leadership but the ability of an individual to influence and catalyze socio-cultural change? At the same time, Social Identity theory could be discussed in terms of job roles and job analysis and their relationship to internal working groups and company goals.
Regardless of the way in which one approaches research and theory into this subject, the conclusion for XXXX remains the same. XXXX must decide if the status quo is acceptable, and if not, a new process, and a new perspective which honors the professional identities of its employees, while holding those responsible accountable, is necessary for transformation to occur. For transformation to occur, the transformation process must be approached from a Leadership perspective which seeks to raise employees to a higher level of motivation, not only the 51% who don’t feel the need to be involved in the updating or currency of their job description, but the 100% of employees who have a vested interest in their professional identities.

5.2 About the Researcher

The researcher, Keith Kellersohn, is currently employed at XXXX as an independently contracted Policy Analyst. Thus, Mr. Kellersohn is not associated with the Unit III & IV contract association, or any other labor association. Mr. Kellersohn is pursuing his Master’s Degree in Applied Anthropology with focus in Business Anthropology at the University of North Texas. Mr. Kellersohn possess a previous Master’s Degree in Strategic Leadership and has acute interest in workplace research in the areas of business processes and organizational structure as it relates to social science concentrations in socio-cultural change, leadership and hierarchy, and social identity.
APPENDIX A

JOB DESCRIPTION UPDATE PROCESSES
APPENDIX B

JOB DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE AND INSTRUCTIONS
# Job Description Form (Rubric Version)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Work Team Leader?</th>
<th>Division/Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Part-time hrs.</th>
<th>Full-time hrs</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reports To (Name of Reporting Supervisor)</th>
<th>Title of Reporting Supervisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salary Grade</th>
<th>Salary Range</th>
<th>Shift</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## Minimum Requirements

**Education:** (GED/HS Diploma, MS Social Work, Certifications, etc.)

**Experience:** (duration and type)

**Skills:** Include Computer and Soft Skills (ex: MS Office, Customer Service, Problem Solving, etc.)

**Duties & Responsibilities**
### Required Duties: **12a**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Duties: <strong>12a</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Occasional Duties: **12b**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occasional Duties: <strong>12b</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

I have reviewed this job description and have determined that it accurately reflects the position.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisor signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Employee signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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REFERENCES


Review, 9-9.


