

Assignment #5: Developing Comparative Analysis

In previous assignments, you chose a “Target district” and developed a profile of using 2 descriptive indicators in 8 major data areas. You also chose an “Aspiration District”, which now serves as a goal-setting model for your “Target District”. You also were able to rank order and sum the ranks of those districts to get a fairly good idea of where your target district stands among districts. This was a very good way to get an overview of all of these data!

Some of you, however, probably surmised that two variables may not tell the whole story. Likewise, some of those districts might be quite different in size or wealth and may not share any of the basic descriptors of your target district. So, we need to narrow our focus on to essential indicators and search for those districts, which may share those basic “Target District” features.

Part 1

In Part 1 of Action Assignment #5, we will narrow our choices to 4 major area tables and develop a few more descriptive indicators you thought might be the most appropriate indicators for developing a plan for your “Target District”. If our desire is to develop a plan of action to help this district, these data lay the groundwork for our plan.

The first task is to fill in the “Target District” and “Aspiration District” information. To do this, we must now reduce the data from 8 areas to 4 areas and choose a couple of additional indicators. I have combined these areas for you, below.

As you did in Action Assignment #4, choose the indicators you see as most useful in these combined areas. Fill in ONLY the data for the “Target District” and your “Aspiration district”. It may look like something like this:

Table 1: Finance and Budget Area							
District		Per Pupil Expenditure	Total Expenditure	Income Per Pupil	Combined Wealth Ratio	Revenue Per Pupil	Instructional Expenses as Percent of Adjusted Expenses
Deer Park	Rank	29	24	48	39	34	60
	#, %	\$14,724	\$63,915,303	\$92,178	1.089	\$14,487	78.9%
District 1							
District 2							
District 3							
Hauppauge	Rank	22	26	28	25	28	36
	#, %	\$14,990	\$58,776,793	\$129,187	1.634	\$14,824	82.3%

Bringing the actual ranks for the target and aspiration districts is optional, but they may be helpful. DO NOT RANK ANY OTHER DATA IN THESE TABLES. Just provide the raw data you have found for the 6 indicators. (If you copy and paste from Assignment #4, Great!)

Ok now you do it! You may use any of the indicators you found in Action Assignment #4 or 6 completely new ones.

Table 1: Finance and Budget Area							
District		Indicator 1	Indicator 2	Indicator 3	Indicator 4	Indicator 5	Indicator 6
Aspiration	Rank						
	#, %						
District 1							
District 2							
District 3							
Target	Rank						
	#, %						

Table 2: Instruction and Personnel Area

District		Indicator 1	Indicator 2	Indicator 3	Indicator 4	Indicator 5	Indicator 6
Aspiration	Rank						
	#, %						
District 1							
District 2							
District 3							
Target	Rank						
	#, %						

Table 3: Student and Community Demographics Area

District		Indicator 1	Indicator 2	Indicator 3	Indicator 4	Indicator 5	Indicator 6
Aspiration	Rank						
	#, %						
District 1							
District 2							
District 3							
Target	Rank						
	#, %						

Table 4: Student Performance Area

District		Indicator 1	Indicator 2	Indicator 3	Indicator 4	Indicator 5	Indicator 6
Aspiration	Rank						
	#, %						
District 1							
District 2							

District 3							
Target	Rank						
	#, %						

Ok. You should now have four major areas with 6 indicators. (If you copied and pasted from Assignment #4, Great!

If need be, where you may want to change your “Aspiration District” choice. It is perfectly fine anywhere in this assignment to change you mind. Did you change your mind on either your initial choice of the target district or your aspiration district?

Part 2:

Look, you now know that making the leap from the target district to the aspiration district is virtually out of the question. What we need are several steppingstones LEADING to the Aspiration District.

So, choose a set of 5 more additional comparable districts (by size, wealth, geography etc.) or contiguous (neighboring) districts to begin to build a plan of action and finish filling Tables 1 to 4 above with those data.

- 1) How did you choose your comparable districts? Give a rationale for your choice. What do they have in common with each other? What is different?**
- 2) One of the great authors on “Organizational Behavior” is Edgar Schein. In his book, Schein discusses three ways to examine data and discover new information:**
 - a. Look for THEMES: Major trends or ideas similar across districts in ALL tables.**
 - b. Look for PATTERNS: Defining trends in that are specific to one or more tables, but not necessarily across all tables.**
 - c. Look for DISCREPANCIES: Differences or aberrations that seemingly counter the themes and patterns you saw.**
- 3) What Themes, Patterns, or Discrepancies do you see in your data tables? Make a list of each.**

THEMES: _____

PATTERNS: _____

DISCREPANCIES: _____

Extra Credit:

Root Cause Analysis

(see a brief definition and review of “Root Cause Basics” by Paul Preuss in Assignment #5 resources)

Root Cause Analysis is the process of examining critical characteristics of an organization to determine:

- 1) What adverse event(s) have already occurred?**
- 2) What proactive analysis and planning could we apply to this root cause to prevent its continued erosive impact and support the organization’s effort to improve?**

As you examine the data in each of the four tables and 7 districts, what might be some of the root cause(s) in EACH of the four major areas (Finance and Budget, Instruction and Personnel, Student and Community Demographics, and Student Achievement) behind your target district’s difficulty in raising its level of performance?

List these Root Causes for each table. NOTE: Since you are only tangentially familiar with your target district, use your own experience and expertise to surmise from the data some assumptions about these root causes.