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The Influence of Charter School Elements of Organizational Leadership and Other Factors on Teachers' Perception of Self Efficacy in a Charter School Setting

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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THE INFLUENCE OF CHARTER SCHOOL ELEMENTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND OTHER FACTORS ON TEACHERS’ PERCEPTION OF SELF EFFICACY IN A CHARTER SCHOOL SETTING

Committee Chair: Sheila Gregory, Ph.D.

Dissertation dated May 2016

Since the mid-1960s, education reform has been a cyclical progression of renewed policy, innovative practices, and cutting edge research. In this current era, a plethora of school districts across the nation believe charters schools are the imminent transformation and improvement of public education.

This study dissected the perceived impressive aura of charter school elements as it relates to teacher efficacy. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the influence of charter school organizational leadership structure, student performance, professional autonomy, salary, internal parental involvement, educational resources, professional development, school partnerships, school culture, and charter school reputation on teacher efficacy.
To accomplish this case study, an urban charter school in the southeastern United States was explored. According to Creswell (2013), “[T]he investigator explores a real-life contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and reports a case description and themes” (p. 97). Three teachers were utilized. The researcher collected the data using teacher observations, document analyses from the school profile and face-to-face interviews. These methods support the triangulation and validity and reliability of the study. The researcher disaggregated the data into cohesive categories and themes. An analysis matrix organized the information to yield an in-depth understanding.

The findings of the study revealed that 7 of the 10 independent variables influenced teacher efficacy. It was determined that organizational structure, professional autonomy, professional development, school resources, school partnerships, school culture, and school reputation influence teacher efficacy. It was also determined that student achievement, salary, and internal parental involvement do not influence teacher efficacy. The researcher concluded that the seven independent variables that influenced teacher efficacy could be strategically applied by state, local, and school leaders in their quest for school improvement. It was also concluded that the three independent variables that do not influence teacher efficacy should not be at the forefront of school turnaround strategies. Although the level of influence is unknown, these findings serve as recommendations and feasible parameters for state, local, school leaders and stakeholders.
THE INFLUENCE OF CHARTER SCHOOL ELEMENTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND OTHER FACTORS ON TEACHERS’ PERCEPTION OF SELF EFFICACY IN A CHARTER SCHOOL SETTING

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

KERRY-ANN SPENCE HOLMES

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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I know it was not by my sight that brought me through. It was my faith in God and my family. To them, I owe my deepest gratitude.

To my husband Quinton, thank you for encouraging my dream with the fervor, intensity, and passion as if it were your own. Thank you for inspiring me with your own resilience and valor of being undefeated. You are truly my sunshine and my rock.

To my soon to be born son, Qane, you have reassured me of my purpose in life. I hope to provide you with all the inspiration and motivation you need to accomplish even greater feats than this.

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All that I am or hope to be, I owe to my darling mother.

-Abram Lincoln
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of public schools across the nation has been the forefront of American education for decades. Many policies and decision making, from national to local agencies, focus on improving schools. The first national conversations, although fueled by global competition, laid the foundation for American education reform. National efforts were initiated in the mid 1960s, to acutely enhance the American education system in conjunction with the War on Poverty. In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was passed by Lyndon B. Johnson, the 36th President of the United States of America. “The ESEA offered new grants to districts serving low-income students, federal grants for text and library books, it created special education centers, and created scholarships for low-income college students” (U.S. Department of Education 2015, p. 4). State agencies were also given grants to improve the overall quality of elementary and secondary education. The ESEA has been reauthorized every 5 years by the governing administration.

Interestingly, exactly 50 years later the missions and motive remain almost intact. The federal government continues to pump cash school districts to support reform. The essence of the ESEA is present in the Race to the Top Challenge with an availability of $3 billion in competitive grants. The Race to the Top Challenge is governed by 44th President Barack Obama’s administration. The fiscal support of education reform has not
been conclusive. Therefore the revolutionizing and globalizing of the education system has expanded to a much wider lens. It is no longer a battle of solidarity confined to politicians, school officials and concerned parents. A new partner has emerged: charter schools. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2015),

A public charter school is a publicly funded school that is typically governed by a group or organization under a legislative contract (or charter) with the state or jurisdiction. The charter exempts the school from certain state or local rules and regulations. In return for flexibility and autonomy, the charter school must meet the accountability standards stated in its charter. A school’s charter is reviewed periodically (typically every 3 to 5 years) by the group or jurisdiction that granted it and can be revoked if guidelines on curriculum and management are not followed or if the standards are not met. (p. 1)

These education agencies have been popping up across the country since 1991. Over 42 states and the District of Columbia have passed charter school legislation. California and Washington, DC are inundated with charter schools, many well established, and even more closing over time for underperforming and not meeting parent expectations. As a causality of the law of the market, this also reveals the possibility of a bad charter school in the unfamiliar path of charter schools (Center for Education Reform, 2015). States with new charter school legislation, such as Georgia, should be aware of this possibility. After the passing of charter school legislation in 2012, charter schools in Georgia increased by 43% (Georgia Department of Education [GaDOE], 2015). As charter schools increase, their accountability and effectiveness will be watched. Therefore, they
must be strategic in all aspects of the school, especially those that directly impact student achievement, like teacher efficacy.

**Statement of the Problem**

Charter schools have been developed as merely an alternative to traditional public schools, not necessarily a savior despite being perceived as so. This perception is heavy in urban districts where student achievement is low and achievement gaps high. Consequently, charter schools in conservative states and districts have less supporters and more controversy. There has been mixed perceptions to the charter school movement in Georgia. The issue was settled in the ballots with the passing of House Bill 797 and Amendment I in 2013. Although the effectiveness of charter schools has long been under scrutiny, Georgia charters seem to be making improvements to student achievement. These improvements are chronicled by the Georgia Department of Education. Waivered from the *No Child Left Behind* Act, George Bush administration’s version of ESEA, the Georgia Department of Education developed the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI). Moving away from Adequate Yearly Progress labels, the GaDOE created categories of Priority and Focus Schools. These schools would be provided concentrated state support for 3 consecutive years.

The Priority label focused on the overall performance of the school. These schools are defined as “the lowest 5% of the Title I schools (78 schools), SIG (School Improvement Grant) schools, or high schools with a graduation rate of less than 60% for two consecutive years” (GaDOE, 2015, p. 2). The Focus label was centered on achievement gaps between subgroups in the school. These schools were defined as “the
10% of Title I schools (156 schools) who have the largest within-school gap between subgroup performance on statewide assessments and graduation rate” (GaDOE, 2015, p. 2). The effectiveness of charter schools in Georgia is permissible. According to the Georgia Department of Education Charter Schools Annual Report (GaDOE, 2015), in the 2012-2013 school year, of its 310 charter schools, none were designated as a Priority School. Eighteen of the 156 Focus Schools or 11% are charter schools.

Effective schools are labeled as reward schools. These 234 schools are defined as either Highest Performing or High-Progress. The GaDOE’s (2015) definition of Highest Performing Schools is as follows:

Among the 5% of Title I schools in the state that have the highest absolute performance over three years for the ‘all students’ group on the statewide assessments that also made AYP for the “all students” group and all of its subgroups in 2011. (p. 2)

High Progress schools are defined as “among the 10% of Title I schools in the state that are making the most progress in improving the performance of the “all students” group over three years on the statewide assessments” (GaDOE, 2015, p. 2). A total of 28 charter schools (12%) received the Reward School distinction. Eleven charter schools or 5% have been labeled Highest Performing and 17 charter schools have been labeled High-Progress.

The statistics undoubtedly show the positive performance of charter schools. Only 6% of charter schools have been labeled as either a Priority or Focus School, while 10% of Georgia public schools have. Also, 9% of charter schools have been recognized
as Reward Schools, the same as public schools. In essence, with almost 2,000 more schools, public schools are not doing as well as charter schools which comprise of 8% of schools in Georgia. As Georgia embarks on its journey of charter schools as a legitimate education reform, it is unknown what characteristics of charter schools affect teacher efficacy and the subsequent achievement. This study examines the elements of charter schools and its impact of teacher perceived self-efficacy in an urban charter elementary school setting in Georgia.

**Purpose of the Study**

As a nation, there is an intense desire to improve student achievement. The current era of reform is overflowing with an increase of accountability measures, as well as funding. Each state and local district across the nation is vying for a foothold in student achievement and effectiveness. For some, the hope lies within charter schools despite their similarity to traditional public schools. This study dissects the impressive aura of charter school elements as it relates to teacher efficacy. The purpose of the study is to investigate the influence of charter school organizational leadership structure, student performance, professional autonomy, salary, internal parental involvement, educational resources, professional development, school partnerships, and school culture and charter school reputation on teacher efficacy. This study repositions the lens of school improvement not on teacher ineffectiveness, but more so spotlight teacher efficacy.

The study reveals how these elements influence teacher efficacy. It will take a holistic approach to teacher efficacy—investigating elements inside and outside of the
school. This study specifically purviews the structures that have the ability to influence teacher efficacy. There are numerous studies that focus on the existence of elements that influence teacher efficacy. Instead, this study explores the elements from the vantage point of teachers. The findings will yield the influence of these elements that can be utilized by traditional public schools or upcoming charter schools.

**Significance of the Study**

Currently, there are over 6,400 charter schools in the United States. For the 2013-2014 scholastic year, over 600 public charter schools were newly opened, ready to serve 288,000 students (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2015). That equates to a student enrollment of over 2.5 million. “The 7 percent growth in the number of operating charter schools and 13 percent growth in public charter school student enrollment are demonstrations of parents’ demand for high-quality educational options” (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2015, p. 1). This demand does not exclude the state of Georgia.

The State of Georgia has rendered belief in the power of charter schools and has taken legislative steps to increase their presence. The controversial *House Bill 797*, which revised funding for charter schools and streamlined charter petition, also allows the state legislature to provide special schools with the passing of Amendment I. In his inaugural speech, Governor Nathan Deal acknowledged the important role charter schools will pay in his education reform as well as prison reform efforts (Office of the Governor, 2015). Public schools in Georgia are on the brink of a major reform. In fact, two of the five largest school districts in the state have already made that transition. They
have been approved as charter school districts with others following suit. These changes are significant not just for student achievement and stakeholders, but for teachers as well. School districts inundated with charter schools can negatively affect student enrollment and subsequently teacher motivation and morale. However, this study provides insightful information valuable to all schools, traditional and charter. The relationship between certain charter school elements and teacher efficacy can serve as a guide for school officials at all levels for decision making as well as planning.

**Research Questions**

RQ1: How does the organizational leadership structure influence your teacher efficacy?

RQ2: How does the professional autonomy influence your teacher efficacy?

RQ3: How does your students’ achievement affect your teacher efficacy?

RQ4: How does salary influence your teacher efficacy?

RQ5: How does internal parental involvement influence your teacher efficacy?

RQ6: How do charter school resources influence your teacher efficacy?

RQ7: How do professional development opportunities influence your teacher efficacy?

RQ8: What types of school partnerships at your charter school influence your teacher efficacy?

RQ9: How does the school culture influence your teacher efficacy?

RQ10: How does the school’s perceived reputation influence your teacher efficacy?
Definition of Terms

Charter School Reputation is the perception of the school as a more effective and successful educational agency by the teacher.

Educational Resources are tangible items present such as books, manipulative and technology used to support student achievement.

Internal Parental Involvement is defined as parents’ involvement in regards to how many times they attend programs, conferences, PTA meetings, open houses, etc.

Organizational Leadership Structure is the composition of administrators, on or off site who manages and support the operation of the school with responsibility to the stakeholders.

Professional Autonomy is defined as the privilege, as a licensed professional, to make and execute decisions without direct supervision.

Professional Development is the number of continual learning opportunities for increased teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

Salary is defined as a fixed and regularly scheduled monetary annual compensation.

School Culture is defined as the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions.

School Partnerships are at least three agreements between business and organizations to provide donations and support at no cost.
**Student Achievement** is defined as the improved student achievement on Criterion Referenced Competency Test or state mandated test.

**Teacher Efficacy** is a teacher’s belief and confidence that they possess the capability to help students achieve. This can be on a general—that all students can learn or personal—that students can learn specifically under their instruction (Ashton 1984).

**Summary**

Charter schools have cemented their role in education reform. Their innovation and freshness have made them real possibilities for districts seeking improvement in student achievement. Their novelty creates an illusion of mystic and sometimes misguidance. An important component to student success, teacher efficacy, is examined; any relationship between teacher efficacy and the researcher’s perceived prominent elements of charter schools is revealed in this study.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the existing literature applicable to this study. It examines significant aspects of the study including a historical overview of teacher efficacy and providing research results for all variables. Any other pertinent information is explored. This abundance of literature provides insight and enriched understandings on this study. Most importantly, the literature illustrates the complexity of teacher efficacy that relies on teachers’ perceptions but also external factors.

**Dependent Variable—Teacher Efficacy**

**Historical Overview**

The foundation of teacher efficacy is deeply rooted in two other theories. They are Julian Rotter’s (1966) locus of control and Albert Bandura’s (1977) social cognitive theory. Each adult learning theory has created a dichotomy in the understanding of teacher efficacy. Throughout the years, additional research has been conducted on teacher efficacy that continues the evolution of the concept.

Initially, teacher efficacy was a direct extension of locus of control. According to Rotter (1966), locus of control implies that a person perceives the effects of rewards or reinforcement differently depending on whether the person explains the reward as dependent on is/her behavior or independent of it. This creates the idea of internal and external locus of control. In relation to teachers it focuses on the teacher versus the
environment. This concept was researched by the RAND Corporation, a non-profit research organization focused on solutions to public policy challenges. The RAND Corporation conducted a study on the effectiveness of reading instruction in 1977. The rand measure was utilized to discern the level of control a teacher believed she has on student motivation and learning (Dembo & Gibson, 1985). Their findings concluded that “teachers who believed that they could influence student achievement and motivation were seen as assuming that they could control the reinforcement of their actions and thus having a high level of efficacy” (Goddard, Wayne, & Hoy, 2000, p. 481).

The other approach, Bandura’s (1977), grew out of his work with social cognitive theory. “In social cognitive theory, people are agentive operators in their life course not just on looking hosts of internal mechanism orchestrated by environmental events” (Bandura, 1999, p. 4). Therefore, teacher efficacy was defined as a form of self-efficacy. Unlike locus of control, self-efficacy is a more internal process less reliant on the environment but more on the “cognitive process in which people construct beliefs about their capacity to perform at a given level of competence” (Goddard, Wayne, & Hoy, 2000, p. 481). Consequently, teachers’ beliefs determined crucial components of their performance such as effort, dedication and resilience.

Over the years, some educators have merged both concepts in their understanding of teacher efficacy. However, Bandura maintains a staunch difference. Simply, “beliefs about one’s capability to produce certain actions (perceived self-efficacy) are not the same as beliefs about whether actions affect outcomes (locus of control)” (Goddard, Wayne, & Hoy, 2000, p. 481).
Bandura’s (1999) perspective of teacher efficacy has been expanded by additional research. These studies also improved upon the RAND measure by including more items in their teacher efficacy scales. Ashton (1984) included teachers’ confidence in their capability to yield learning outcomes known as Ashton Vignettes. According to Ashton, no other teacher characteristic has demonstrated such a consistent relationship to student achievement. Furthermore, Ashton discovered two dimensions of teaching efficacy, general and personal. General teacher efficacy relates to how much a teacher believes students will learn the material. Personal teacher efficacy connects how much a teacher believes students can learn but specifically under their instruction. Ashton concluded that teachers’ confidence affects their ability to effectively meet their students’ needs. More so, their personal teaching efficacy was the better predictor of teaching behavior. Dembo and Gibson (1985) supplied more details based on their study using a 30 item Teacher Efficacy Scale. Their findings are based on two factors, supported Bandura’s (1999) perspective of teacher efficacy. The first factor proved that influence of (student) external factors associated with home and family limited a teacher's sense of teaching efficacy or belief that any teacher's ability to bring about change (Dembo & Gibson, 1985). The second factor highlighted a teacher's sense of personal teaching efficacy or belief that she or he has the skills and abilities to bring about student learning (Dembo & Gibson, 1985).

The confusion of the concept of teacher efficacy was becoming less of an issue as more research was conducted. Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk, Hoy, and Hoy, (1998) essentially halted the confusion with the development of their integrated model of teacher
efficacy. Their model coincided with social cognitive theory but also included the context of the situation. Therefore, their first point of clarity was the understanding that “teachers do not feel equally efficacious for all teaching situations” (Goddard, Wayne, & Hoy, 2000, p. 482). Therefore, analyzing teacher efficacy requires as an inspection of the teaching task and its context as well. In doing so, the response is not isolated to the teacher’s self-perceptions of teaching competence. Instead, it is an integrated conclusion that considers the “relative importance of factors that make teaching difficult or act as constraints [and] is weighed against an assessment of the resources available that facilitate learning” (Goddard, Wayne, & Hoy, 2000, p. 482).

In the era of teacher effectiveness and value adding, teacher efficacy will continue to expand. It has already expanded to the concept of collective teacher efficacy. It “is an emergent group-level attribute, the product of the interactive dynamics of group members” (Goddard, Wayne, & Hoy, 2000, p. 482). Collective efficacy is a required exploration as the collaboration of teachers is a priority. It was observed that because schools present teachers with a host of unique challenges involving public accountability, shared responsibility for student outcomes, and minimal control over work environments, the task of developing high levels of collective teacher efficacy is difficult but not impossible (Goddard, Wayne, & Hoy, 2000).

As candidates for the 2016 presidential election are declared, the topic of education will continue to garner attention as education reform in the United States is omnipresent. Politicians, policy makers and education administrators seek to find the ultimate answer to produce improved student outcomes. Desired solutions will only form
after greater understanding of teachers, especially those with an increased sense of efficacy. The research on the workings of efficacy beliefs reveal that they “exert an indirect influence on student achievement by virtue of the direct effect they have on teachers’ classroom behaviors and attitudes” (Jerald, 2007, p. 3). This is further explained by his research that displays the positive implications of a teacher with a strong sense of efficacy. According to Jerald (2007), these teachers tend to be superior in planning and organization and are more open to new ideas and experimenting to meet their students’ needs. Teachers also are more persistent and resilient in challenging situations, less critical of student errors, and less likely to refer difficult students to special education (Jerald, 2007). It can be implied that this relationship of teacher efficacy can positively impact student outcomes.

One of the most popular approaches to education reform is charter schools. Many have experienced astounding student achievement in comparison to their traditional public school counterparts. Others have not exhibited any improvement. In some cases a decrease in student achievement has occurred. As researchers uncover the reasons and explanations for either outcome, teacher self-efficacy is often overlooked. Instead, primarily student data is analyzed and fixed-effect estimation approaches are used to understand charter schools (Buddin & Zimmer, 2005). With this approach, teacher self-efficacy is overshadowed by what many attribute to the success of charter schools’ longer hours as well as additional school days, a “no excuses” philosophy with frequent testing, and even longer days for charter school teachers (Fisman, 2013).
In studies where teacher efficacy has been considered, their findings enlighten the discussion of educational responsibility and support the influence of teacher self-efficacy. According to Jerald (2007), a study on nearly 12,000 students and 10,000 teachers across 820 high schools, results revealed:

Achievement gains are significantly higher in schools where teachers take collective responsibility for students’ academic success or failure rather than blaming students for their own failure. Moreover, disadvantaged students were more likely to keep up with their peers in schools where teachers had strong collective responsibility for outcomes leading to smaller achievement gaps over time. (p. 2)

This is hopeful for urban schools struggling with student achievement as well as recruiting teachers. This silences the rhetoric of teachers who believe the achievement of inner city students is practically impossible. It quells the throwing of blame on students and their parents. Instead, it sounds the horns for dedicated teachers who have accepted the charge and responsibility for these students achievement.

The sense of responsibility further correlates with teachers’ expectations of students which affects their efficacy. Sharon Brittingham, a former elementary school principal, made exceptional gains on state mandated assessments in 2005. She reflected that teachers initially had low expectations for students and blamed their home and family life for low achievement. Through her leadership, she dispelled negativity and excuses. Brittingham poignantly points out that possessing high expectations is not
enough, its teachers’ belief in their ability to make students successful is the key (Jerald, 2007).

**Independent Variables**

**Organizational Leadership Structure**

Despite their perception as unique and innovative education agencies, charter schools and traditional schools have an important commonality. Both agencies have clearly defined leadership structures. Regardless of the form, organizational leadership structure is paramount to the existence of viable organization. Organizational leadership structure is in turn vital to school reform, a commitment many charter schools undertake from their inception. “Scholars have stressed that especially the supportive leadership function plays a key role in stimulating teachers’ organizational commitment” (Devos, Tuytens, & Hulpia, 2014, p. 207). This component is strongly related to the enhancement of the psychological factors of teaching.

Due to its power, organizational leadership can be strong in perception but ambiguous in reality. A strong perception of validity in the vantage point of stakeholders can ease the development of the new organization and overall acceptance. “Schools adapt to their environment by adopting accepted rules and structures” (Berends, Goldring, Stein, & Cravens, 2010, p. 308). Simply, education agencies of all types can emerge with a high level of respect. By adhering to the norms of their surroundings by implementing similar rules and structures, they are able to gracefully merge into the process of public education (Berends, Goldring, Stein, & Cravens, 2010). In regards to charter schools, their surroundings are filled with traditional public schools. Therefore,
they have very basic similarities in the organizational leadership structure between the two entities.

However, a distinctive difference in the organizational leadership can be the effect of environmental pressure. These pressures can coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism. Coercive isomorphism is the most crucial because it is the formal or informal pressures by organizations and groups the school depends such as federal and state mandates” (Berends, Goldring, Stein, & Cravens, 2010 p. 308). Traditional public schools are more dependent on outside sources. They rely on the federal, state and local government for a myriad of reasons. A primary reliance is in the area of funding. Another area is policy and decision making. Even though operating at similar levels of institutionalization, stark differences can exist between traditional public schools and charter schools even in their organizational structure.

The impact of organizational leadership of any school in terms of the principal is parallel with its level of duties and responsibilities. The principal serves as the poignant pivot between state and district leadership as well a public figure for stakeholders in addition to the role of leader to teachers. This adaptive position is crucial to success of traditional public schools or charter schools. “The lack of effective principal mentoring, appropriate professional development, and adequate use of human resources contributes to the challenges of leadership” (Cook, 2014. p. 1). Despite its dense nature in importance, that level of organizational leadership is possible by leadership that can sustain. This type of leadership has an element that mobilizes the motivation and commitment for any level of effectiveness or improvement. This “supports the
importance of developing a school culture of collaboration through shared beliefs, values and visions within the school community” (Cook, 2014, p. 2). These components dictate the outcome of any education agency. They are arguably the most important in the success or failure of schools based on assets and liability. Cook contends that:

In a school system this would indicate all school personnel share a common vision to work individually and collectively to not only accomplish the goals but contribute to the sustainability of the results. The leader who communicates and advances a widely understood school vision fosters and facilitates a positive school culture, encourages collaborations and shared-decision making and promotes and encourages faculty leadership sustainability within the learning community. (p. 3)

The impact of organizational leadership molds the actions of stakeholders and teachers. In turn, it either cultivates and nurtures positive results or incompetently stifles the success irreverent to being a traditional public school or charter school. Therefore, organizational leadership has deep roots in the success of any education agency.

**Professional Autonomy**

The concept of teachers’ professional autonomy benefits all partners in the public education arena in both traditional public schools and charter schools. The partnership is synonymous with an exchange of services. Teachers agree to provide their expert knowledge with a high level of expectancy to make their own decisions. This exchange “gives professionals legitimacy and a power within their jurisdiction to define what is
right and true to do” (Raaen, 2011, p. 628). This legitimacy separates them from the common citizen.

A conflicting view is the Foucauldian Perspective. This perspective argues the concept of professional autonomy as an illusion; its existence is instead an intangible result of industrialization (Raaen, 2011). This freedom promotes individual choices and decision making for professionals. The newly discovered autonomy can provide an artificial sense of independence. In the Foucauldian Perspective, teachers succumb to this perspective by submitting to the highly arranged and controlled daily operation at schools (Raaen, 2011). These actions are congruent with an indirect manipulation of power by the leader(s) of the education agency. As long as teachers’ decisions and actions align with the vision and mission of the school they are acceptable. This alignment is the process of normalization. Teachers’ may exercise professional autonomy as long as it is within bounds of normalcy as defined by the leader(s).

Unsatisfied stakeholders, the government and the media are staunch critics of teachers’ performance. Any indication of ineffectiveness often results in the assumption of fault by solely teachers. The questioning of teacher performance often overlooks the influence of external factors. The spotlight tags teachers with an unfair and negative illumination. The value of professional autonomy is inadequate. These outside sources fail to acknowledge “the role of teachers in administrating public education, establishing curricular objectives and instructional design is threatened by instrumental objectives, standardized testing, and evidence-based practice” (Margison & Sears, 2010, p. 2). By
increasing teacher accountability and decreasing professional autonomy, teaching as a profession is marginalized to a vocation.

However, these external influences are not legitimate scapegoats for teacher rationale of low teacher performance. Teachers must also accept the responsibility of their role. This is the essence of the relationship and contract between leaders and teachers. Ideally, leaders provide conducive conditions for success and teachers oblige. By accepting their responsibility, teachers essentially control their success or failure (Margison & Sears, 2010).

**Student Achievement**

The implications of student achievement are greater than the individual benefits of an education; it spans beyond school clusters, districts, and state lines. Student achievement has global relevance in a multitude of ways. A blue-ribbon report was commissioned by Joel Klein, the former chancellor of New York City public schools and former Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice to further understand these global implications. The study was conducted by the Council of Foreign Relations as a part of their 19th anniversary. The underlying purpose of the study was to bring awareness to the issues facing K-12 schools in America. The task force believed that by highlighting the connection between K-12 education and national security, they would be able to remobilize discussions, ignite new discussions while inspiring new activities to ultimately spawn national change (Klein & Rice, 2012).

The goal of the study was to explore the sources of strength and leadership for the United States. With education as an important component, the task force was cognizant
of the slow deterioration of student achievement and its negative impact on the country. “Without mastery of core academic subjects, students are not prepared to collaborate, compete, or interact locally or globally” (Klein & Rice, 2012, p. 4). This swells into a predicament that compromises the United States as a global leader. According to findings, education failure puts the United States’ future economic prosperity, global position and physical safety at risk (Klein & Rice, 2012). More specifically, this failure poses several threats to national security in these areas as well as intellectual property and unity and cohesion. National security no longer exclusively relies on the strength of the military. Instead, it is “closely linked with human capital, and human capital of a nation is as strong or as weak as its public schools” (Klein & Rice, 2012, p. 7). Addressing this issue will require more than acute adjustments to the status quo.

The task force’s policy based recommendations are based on a trifocal of considerations. The considerations are the nation’s current state of education, international comparisons and identifying core skills for students to learn (Klein & Rice, 2012). The three recommendations overlap to provide a comprehensive approach. According to Klein and Rice, the task force proposed the following:

Implement educational expectations and assessments in subjects vital to protecting national security, make structural changes to provide students with good choices and launch a ‘national security readiness audit’ to hold schools and policy makers accountable for results and to raise public awareness. (p. 5)

Kirp (2013) opposed the findings of the study. He believed student achievement was possible without the heavy handed policy approach recommended by Klein and Rice that
often results in closing schools, blaming teachers and supporting school choice. Kirp agreed there are no quick fixes but asserted, “running an exemplary school system doesn’t demand heroes or heroics, just hard and steady work” (p. 16). This belief was based on his study of Union City Schools in Union City, New Jersey, a low-income district with a majority Latino population and no charter schools. Threatened with state control 25 years ago, Union City has overcome obstacles and defied odds. The 2013 test results revealed that “from third grade through high school, Union City students’ scores on the state’s achievement tests approximate the New Jersey averages” (Kirp, 2013, p. 16). In addition to achievement on New Jersey’s achievement tests, graduation rates have been stellar. According to Kirp, more than 90% of students graduate, 15% higher than the national average, and over 75% of them enroll in college. Union City has been successful despite the pressures from the U.S. Department of Education and state mandates.

Salary

There has been much debate about teacher salary especially when associated with student performance. Teachers across the nation are being threatened with performance based salaries. Teacher unions and lobbyists across the country constant battle what they believe is an incredulous concept. Numerous studies venture to answer the question-if you pay peanuts do you get monkeys? This question also serves as the fitting title of a study conducted by Dolton and Marcenaro-Gutierrez (2011). This quantitative international study considers the disparities in teacher salaries across various countries. The study also explores the relationship between the level of remuneration and
performance of secondary school students. Data were collected from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Information for over 39 countries was utilized to investigate the relationship. The findings proved that if teachers with a higher ability were recruited with a faster salary advancement, it would have positive effects on student outcomes (Dolton & Marcenaro-Gutierrez, 2011). This study supports the importance of teacher salary.

The emphasis on standardized test scores skyrocketed after the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002. According to Cebula, Mixon, & Montez (2013), “schools, students, and parents have become almost hyper-vigilant about standardized tests scores, preparation for those standardized tests, and school performance ratings based on those scores” (p. 347). The researchers conducted a quantitative study in Los Angeles County high schools to further explore the relationship between school performance on standardized exams and teachers’ salary and their effectiveness. Student performance was measured by the Academic Performance Index. Results initially identified the positive impact teacher salary and quality have on student performance (Cebula, Mixon, & Montez, 2013). More specifically, data analysis concluded that teacher pay and quality produced student performance increases. Cebula, Mixon, and Montez (2013) provoked the following thought:

A school’s efforts to educate children are often unobservable parents and oversight officials, potentially giving schools or teachers an opportunity, if not an incentive, to provide less-than-desired efforts in educating students. Although this problem can plague both public and private schools, public schools often face the
added problems of limited competition and diminishing taxpayer support. (p. 347)

This implies that perhaps school leaders play a greater role in the perceived demise of teacher effectiveness. While salary is an important factor, it is clear there are many other heavy factors in the explanation of student performance.

Teacher salary is often under the radar during the transformation of K-12 schools. The multifaceted endeavor usually focuses policies on “equalizing per-pupil spending across schools; however, considerable differences in school resources and in teacher qualifications persist” (Bacolod, 2007). These differences can affect teacher distribution and especially urban districts teacher recruitment. This study used the nested logic framework to explore the teacher salary and its importance in regards to alternative wage opportunities and working conditions. Data were compiled from the National Center for Education Statistics Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (cited in Bacolod, 2007). The database provided a national sample of 11,000 bachelor’s degree recipients and cross sectional information one year they graduated. This study confirmed assumptions and revealed some very interesting perspectives in its findings. The findings reported “working conditions play a relatively more important role in determining where new teachers end up choosing to teach, especially among female teachers” (Bacolod, 2007, p. 156). This confirms the plight of staffing many urban schools experience. However, “on the other hand, relative teacher wages play a more important role than working conditions at the occupational entry decision, when male and female” (Bacolod, 2007, p. 156). The importance of salary seems to decrease after entry into a position.
These findings revealed the relationship of salary and work conditions. Consequently, more research is necessary to explore the level of importance of salaries and working conditions as determinants.

**Internal Parental Involvement**

Throughout the education arena leaders, teachers as well as stakeholders are in accord on the importance of parental involvement for student achievement. It is widely accepted that “parental involvement boosts a child's perceived level of competence and autonomy, offers a sense of security and connectedness, and helps to internalize the value of an education and performance” (Young, Austin, & Growe, 2014, p. 291). Nevertheless, increasing parental involvement is a continuous struggle for all schools. A first step in tackling parental involvement understands its essence. Defining the concept of parental involvement can be different for education providers and parents. The lack of a clear definition of parental involvement triggers other complexities and confusions. “Parents not knowing how to help a child academically; lack of encouragement from the teachers; parents are only contacted when something is wrong; and teacher treatment of parents” are other key issues related to the issue of lack of parental involvement (Young, Austin, & Growe, 2014, p. 92). A qualitative study was conducted with a diverse set of participants from a major conference and professional development at a local school. The two major themes and definitions that emerged from the study were parents being actively engaged and parents providing support. Active engagement is defined as parents participating in school-based activities and parental support which includes home-based activities (Young, Austin, & Growe, 2014). The study concluded that school leaders’
concept of parental involvement relates mostly to effective parenting. Therefore, they should work collaboratively with parents and other stakeholders to develop the definition that will be utilized at their school. The definition should also be communicated to all parents to garner understanding. “This strategy may be the first step to establishing and improving communications between parents and the school personnel and parents becoming more engaged and supportive” (Young, Austin, & Growe, 2014, p. 295).

Another basic concept of parental involvement is highlighted by Jeynes (2011). He believed that collaborating with low-income parents “is the best ways for schools to encourage parents to be involved with schools is for schools to be involved with helping families, not just helping students” (Jeyenes, 2011, p. 38). Based on his own experiences, Jeyenes insisted leaders and teachers are unaware of how they are perceived by low-income and minority parents. Parents are perceived as very demanding of parents but tight with return support/involvement. Therefore, according to Jeyenes, simply “show an interest in your students’ families before demanding that parents support your school” (p. 46).

**Education Resources**

Traditional public schools and charter schools utilize resources on a daily basis. School leaders are responsible for the acquisition and distribution of resources. This is a major responsibility that impacts student achievement. Many school leaders are often criticized for not executing this task effectively. “Researchers and policymakers have long wondered whether granting schools greater autonomy from district central administration to make resource allocation decisions would result in any real difference
in spending patterns” (Arsen & Ni, 2012, p. 2). This wonderment has created a niche for charter schools justification. This study yearned to investigate the patterns of resource allocation between traditional public school and charter schools in the state of Michigan. This study was especially plausible because traditional public schools and charter schools receive very similar funding, unlike in other states. To complete this study, funding sources and spending patterns were analyzed of all schools, as well a regression analysis (Arsen & Ni, 2012). The findings revealed that even if controlling for determinant factors, charter schools spend $774 more per pupil per year on administration than traditional public schools. Additionally, charter schools spent $1,141 less on instruction. “While Michigan districts overall devote less than 10 percent of their expenditures to administration, charter schools devote a striking 23 percent of the educational dollar to administration” (Arsen & Ni, 2012, p. 9). A concluding attribution is explained as charter schools have more administrative costs as a start up organization. Nevertheless, this study questions the effectiveness of charter schools based on their expenditures. Arsen and Ni concluded these increased administrative costs are to absorb the difference in personnel costs, specifically attrition. Future research should explore how the allocation of funds affects the availability of tangible education resources in charter schools and traditional public schools.

**Professional Development**

Throughout the country, traditional public schools are transforming into charter school districts by the masses. This transition is a new chapter in the education reform
movement. This revolution has garnered even more spotlight for charter schools and other independent schools. Murray (2012) stated the following:

> Although improving professional development practices in U.S. public schools has become a focus for policymakers, educators, and researchers, there has been no call from politicians and the public for improved professional learning opportunities for U.S. independent school teachers, and there has been no research on the professional learning opportunities available to independent school teachers. (p. 220)

Interestingly, the Independent School Teacher Development Inventory was crafted based on the need of continuously developing its teachers. The psychometric instrument was sent to over 3,400 independent school administrators. The instrument investigated the schools’ professional development according to five researched pillars: pedagogical content focus, coherence, duration, active learning, and collective participation. The purpose of the study was to reveal effective methods of teacher learning outside of isolated conferences and workshops. The Likert-type scale consisted of 39 questions spread over a five item scale. Although further research is necessary to analyze the transferability to traditional public schools, the Independent School Teacher Development Inventory (ISTDI) produced results indicative of a promising tool for assessing professional development practices in independent schools (Murray, 2012). The process of effective professional development is more complex than it appears. A crucial factor unseen by many stakeholders is the professional development and training of school principals. Sloan, Pereira-Leon, and Honeyford (2010) documented this
experience for six principals from five charter schools in a network with perspectives
charter schools and a subsequent partnership with New Leaders New Schools. These
principals were participants of professional development program that was designed to
promote self-study of leadership practice through responsive tailoring. The newly
formed program is a part of the Effective Practice Incentive Community (EPIC)
initiative. The initiative was developed by New Leaders in 2006. Its purpose was to
identify, reward, and share effective practices leading to dramatic achievement gains in
high-need urban schools (Sloan, Pereira-Leon, & Honeyford, 2010). This quantitative
study was to investigate the impact of the program. Principals engaged in many video
sessions focused on creating strong professional communities and to build the leadership
capacity of its teachers. The findings concluded that “overall, principals reported that the
sessions helped them further develop their leadership practices” (Sloan, Pereira-Leon, &
Honeyford, 2010, p. 4). The findings further revealed that the Knowledge System videos
facilitated an environment of structured conversations based on the valuable examples of
effective leadership practice. Themes emerged in the categories of exposure and
examination, critical reflection, planning for change and applying new knowledge. “The
evaluation’s results suggest that the EPIC leadership development model and the
Knowledge System video cases acted as a catalyst that gave principals a new lens through
which to view leadership” (Sloan, Pereira-Leon, & Honeyford, 2010, p. 7). This study
revealed the significance of this study and the possibility of those similarly structured.
School Partnerships

Epstein’s (2010) School-Family-Community Partnership lists collaborating with the community as the last type of parental involvement. Last but not least, this component highlights the benefits of the sharing and transferring of resources between schools and a myriad of organizations. The qualitative study of 11 states explored the benefits of partnering. According to Wohlstetter and Smith (2006), the beneficial partnerships are organizational, political, and financial partnerships that are focused on improving the core of schooling-teaching and learning. The results of the study proved that partnerships between charter schools and nonprofit, or for profit public organizations helped schools improve. The partnerships were beneficial because they helped charter school overcome obstacles and achieve their goals by enriching curriculum offerings, broadening teaching expertise and helping at risk students stay in school (Wohlstetter & Smith, 2006). The study also warned that not all partnership opportunities will be beneficial. Charter school leaders emphasized that partnerships were strong and sustaining if there was shared goals and philosophical approaches. The study concluded that partnerships are fluid and should be molded to meet specific needs. Simply, charter schools have been held up as testing grounds for new ideas that might be useful to all schools (Wohlstetter & Smith, 2006).

Although it is proven that philanthropic partnerships and support improve student achievement, further investigation signals to no assume all partnerships are beneficial. Instead, a cautious approach should be taken to avoid the confusion that an act of philanthropy automatically equates student improvement. Thinnes (2014) argued that
this confusion reinforces “the notion that independent schools have much to give but little to learn, and that public schools have much to want but little to offer” (p. 98). The article discussed a core benefit of some traditional public schools that is not always present in charter schools—the engagement with the larger community and restriction of cultural and socioeconomic diversity. Thinnes described this as relational learning that has immense value. Furthermore, partnerships that enhance cultural education or educational-relational thinking are vital in the development and sustenance of schools.

**School Culture**

School culture is an important dynamic for traditional public schools and charter schools. Under the shroud of education reform, charter schools require more research and studies to provide insight on these educational agencies. Consequently, a four-year study of Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) was developed. The purpose of the study was to analyze the effect of CMOs on student achievement, as well as ascertain which structures and practices are the most effective. The correlation study revealed that two practices, school-wide student behavior programs and teacher coaching, produce strong impacts” (Lake et al., 2012). These are indicators should be executed in conjunction with the CMOs actions, not in isolation. The study cautioned relying on these indicators as automatic determinants for student achievement.

**Charter School Reputation**

The issue of student achievement propels the discussion of school choice. Traditional public schools across the nation are constantly engaged in the search of student improvement. Something about charter schools, whether directly or indirectly,
charter schools are often marketed as the solution to challenges with overall student performance and the achievement gap. This reputation has significantly influenced black families’ choice of charter schools. “Nationally, black students are choosing charter schools nearly double the rate they are choosing traditional public schools” (Almond, 2012, p. 354). This qualitative study focused on the results of past empirical studies. The study was conducted to explore this phenomenon in regards to charter schools today based on national enrollment trends, the perception gap and performance. The analysis revealed that charter schools with a high black population have specific traits. “These schools tend to vary tremendously from the cultures and practices of traditional public schools and, in many cases, have achieved success” (Almond, 2012, p. 360). The five similar characteristics are a defined mission statement that emphasizes academic performance, culture of high expectations, a college going atmosphere, standardized test focus, regular use of internal evaluations, and longer school days as a result of extended academic years. The study also revealed that black students are essentially leaving segregated traditional public schools to attend charter schools with a greater concentration of blacks. In other terms, they have “shifted their allegiance from the age-old traditional public school system to a new system that offers innovation, choice, and the promise of academic mobility” (Almond, 2012, p. 363).

Summary

The existing literature supports the complexity of teacher efficacy and charter school elements. Teacher efficacy is a mature yet malleable concept that continues to evolve. The charter school elements of organizational leadership structure, student
performance, professional autonomy, salary, internal parental involvement, educational resources, professional development, school partnerships, and school culture and charter school reputation have been either supported or opposed. This provides a comprehensive foundation of the variables.
CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

Charter schools are rapidly increasing in the State of Georgia. According to the Georgia Charter School Association (2014), there has been a 7% increase in charter schools from 2013-2014. As many districts seek petitions to become charter districts, the number of charter schools in Georgia will continue to grow. This study explored the impact of various charter school elements on teacher self-efficacy. These characteristics served as the independent variables and self-efficacy as the dependent variable. For this qualitative study, Transformational Leadership, Modern Economic Theory, and Epstein’s (2010) Parental Involvement Framework collaboratively examined the relationship between variables. Together they provided connections to offer new insights and broaden understanding (Anfara & Mertz, 2014).

Transformational Leadership

First, Transformational Leadership is very fitting in the essence that many charter schools are portrayed as mystique settings of education reform. With an executive board and building leadership governing the school, with no intermediaries, this is a unique relationship. The original concept was developed by James MacGregor Burns (1978) based on his research on political leaders. Burns conceptualized transactional and
transformational leadership as polar opposites. Transactional leadership was founded in exchanges, rewards or the denial there of. “Transformational leaders, on the other hand, are those who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity” (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 3). Initially, transformational leadership was most prevalent in the military. However, it has proven effective in all sectors.

Bass further developed the concept with his research in 1985. With this leadership style, “transformational leaders motivate others to do more than they originally intended and even more than they thought possible” (Bass & Avolio, 1994, p. 3). By setting higher expectations, followers are able to achieve more. In this aspect there are traces of transactional leadership in transformational leadership. Even transformational leaders must have an exchange of requirements and expectations as well as rewards with followers. The distinction of the two leadership styles “involves inspiring followers to commit to a shared vision and goals for an organization or unit, challenging them to be innovative problem solvers and developing followers’ leadership capacity via coaching, mentoring and provision of challenge and support (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 3). As a result, “transformational leaders tend to have more committed and satisfied followers” (Bass & Riggio, 2008, p. 3).

This theory aligns with six independent variables of this study. The charter school elements of organizational leadership structure, professional autonomy, student achievement, professional development, school culture, and charter school reputation are intertwined with transformational leadership. A leader has influence over all these
elements based on four factors. They are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio 1994). These four factors allow them to accomplish performance beyond expectations. Aspiring transformational leaders can dissect these four factors to study and eventually display this form of leadership.

**Modern Economic Theory**

Despite its classification of charter schools as a form of public education, there are differences between them and traditional public schools. These differences may be in the form of funding, sponsors and donations and lead to varying actualizations. Neoclassical economics believes that neither institution nor distribution of income and wealth matters for efficiency (Hoff & Stiglitz, 2005). The evolution of Economic Theory to Modern Economic Theory was to explore the questions of differences across various countries, its implications, and which “interventions most likely to promote development” (Hoff & Stiglitz, 2005, p. 1). The differences across the country are mirrored by the differences among traditional public schools and charter schools, even in the same district. The changes and developments in these two arenas have been ongoing for years. Modern Economic Theory provides insight and understanding to these variations in all aspects.

Modern Economic Theory is simplest in the form of what it is not; an isolated theory with canvas explanations. Instead, it is a macroeconomic approach to items such as the role of demand, money supply and its effect on growth or monetarism, and free trade (Dewett, 2006). Charter schools are innately based in these factors primarily free
trade. Much of their rhetoric is a direct response to their demand based on the low supply of quality public schools. As they define their differences it is most prevalent in their sources of money supply. Consequently, some charter schools operate as for profit entities. Even more so, there are drastic differences in what charter schools can provide based on their money supply. All these factors garner support and understanding for the need and existence of charter schools.

Modern Economic Theory, as it relates to charter schools, should be considered as a source of knowledge. It should be perceived as “one of many systems of knowledge evolving in our efforts to know reality, or at least various facets of that reality as it is revealed to us through our senses and our mind” (Plantz, 1961, p. 408). The ownership of this reality is omnipresent for students, parents and especially teachers. This reality can impact their efficacy. Therefore, the four independent variables of salary, tangible educational resources, professional development, and school partnerships align with Modern Economic Theory. Although it explains the presence of these variables, it also ascertains some negative outcomes.

**Epstein’s Parental Involvement Model**

The remaining independent variable of this study is explained by Epstein’s (2010) Parental Involvement Model. This variable is internal parental involvement. “The framework of six types of involvement helps educators develop more comprehensive programs of school-family community partnerships: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community (National Network of Partnership Schools, 2015, p. 1). Based on this definition, the
independent variables of school partnerships and charter school reputation also align with this framework. Additionally organizational leadership is connected with this model.

This model is applicable because it addresses the “confusion and disagreement about which practices of involvement are important and how to obtain high participation from all families” (Epstein, 2010, p. 3). As vital stakeholders, students’ families are one constant in charter schools and traditional public schools. Regardless of their diversity in composition, ethnicity and socioeconomic status, all education agencies must cultivate a relationship with parents and essentially all entities that care about the students’ and their futures. What makes this framework so crucial is based on a harsh reality in schools across the nation—the unpreparedness of teachers and administrators “to work positively and productively with their students’ families” (Epstein, 2010, p. 3). This unpreparedness is in magnified in districts with majority minority demographics, low socioeconomic status and urban landscapes. These districts are also often inundated with charter schools. Therefore, this model can be attributed to any attempt by charter schools to foster these positive relationships.

The necessity for this model is evident in its approach with six different types of parental involvement. The myriad of types of involvement addresses the ambiguity of the relationship between schools and parents especially in the area of responsibilities. The lack of cohesion but also strong connectedness of separate, shared and sequential responsibilities of families and schools is addressed by Epstein’s (2010) Model. It gives clarity to the method for building family and school relations. Consequently, the framework was “adopted by the National PTA as its standards for all schools to inform
and involve parents and community partners in the schools and in children’s education” (Epstein, 2010, p. 47). It is important to note the following: “Although Epstein stresses that the six types of involvement may be initiated by anyone—including schools, family members, or a community organization—some scholars have criticized her categorization as limited by its ‘school-centered’ focus” (Boethel, 2003, p. 19). This somewhat undermines the beliefs of many districts. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship among the theories and variables.

**Figure 1.** Relationship among theories and variables.
Summary

The theories and models presented in this chapter revealed the phenomenon of the independent variables and teacher efficacy at elementary charter schools. Transformational leadership highlighted six independent variables: the charter school elements of organizational leadership structure, professional autonomy, student achievement, professional development, school culture, and charter school reputation. The Modern Economic Theory also explained six independent variables: the charter school elements of salary, student performance, tangible educational resources, professional development, school partnerships and charter school reputation. Epstein’s (2010) Model for Parental Involvement explained four independent variables of the charter school elements: organizational leadership, internal parental involvement, school partnerships, and school reputation.

The juxtaposition of these theories and model is notable in the overlap of various independent variables. This overlap revealed a plausible impact of these charter school elements on teacher efficacy.
CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to explore the influence of select charter school elements on teacher efficacy. The mysticism of charter schools has now captured school districts across the nation searching for a solution to improve student achievement. Their hope is heavily based in an ad hoc variety of reasons. This study focused on the concept of teacher efficacy, a constant for all teachers regardless of environment—traditional public school or charter school. As the intrigue fades and reality sets in based on the increase of charter schools and districts, prospective schools and districts can be more informed. A qualitative case study method was utilized to provide this insight. This study upheld the systems of triangulation reliability and validity. The results of this study will provide guidance to school leaders facing the imminent transformation of many traditional public schools.

Design of the Study

This study centered on the concept of teacher efficacy and certain charter school elements. This convergence was investigated at a metro urban elementary charter school in the southeastern United States. As these two variables came together, the influence of these elements on teachers’ efficacy was divulged. The concept of teacher efficacy was crucial to understanding teacher performance. It was especially important in an untraditional setting such as a charter school. Although similar elements exist in
traditional public schools and charter schools, it was the fascination and assumption that charter schools execute it better that fueled this study.

The charter school elements addressed in the study are organizational leadership structure, student performance, professional autonomy, salary, internal parental involvement, educational resources, professional development, school partnerships, and school culture and charter school reputation. For this study, a case study was the ideal methodology as it could be the focus of the study as well as the product (Creswell, 2013). To accomplish this study, the phenomenon of charter school and its perceived unique elements were explored. According to Creswell (2013), “[T]he investigator explores a real-life contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and reports a case description and themes” (p. 97). The data were gathered using observations, document analyses, and face-to-face interviews. These methods supported the triangulation, validity, and reliability of the study. According to Merriam (2009), internal validity is “the extent to which research finding are credible” (p. 234). While many only focus on reliability in terms of replication, Yin (2014) emphasized “that if a later researcher follows the same procedures and conducts the same case study over again, the later investigator should arrive at the same findings and conclusions” (p. 48). The success of the study will be based on providing an in-depth understanding select charter school elements and their influence on teacher efficacy.
Description of the Setting

A metro urban elementary charter school in the southeastern United States was the base of the study. It was the hub of the variables of charter school elements selected. Charter school A was one of the newest charter schools in the southeastern United States. It was a unique setting as it was a redesign conversion from a traditional charter. It served 662 students in grades K-7. It distinguished itself with a STEM-focused curriculum and operated on a year-round calendar that was modified. Its organizational structures consisted of a Board of Directors, also known as its Governing Board, and local administration. Its Board of Directors consisted of 10 members with one nonvoting. Board members were a mix of business, parent, and community representatives (see Figure 2). The Governing Board represented the exceptionality of the school; located across from a prominent college, it had solid partnerships with Fortune 500 companies. Local school administration was the Head of School and Principal. The conversion of Charter School A was founded in the revitalization of an impoverished neighborhood. With a focus on creating mixed-income neighborhood, the new school would be anchor of this desired diverse community.

Charter school A’s student demographics were a composition of 86% black, 5% white, 4% Multiracial, 3% Hispanic, and 2% Asian. Interestingly, 5% of students were classified as limited proficiency although only 4% received services from the English to Speakers of Other Languages program. The Early Intervention Program served 28% of students in grades K-5. Special education served 4.5% of students which was also the same percent of students with a disability.
According to the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (2015), on the 2013-2014 Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT), 74% of students scored “met or exceeds” requirements in reading, 52% and 42%, respectively; 6% scored “does not meet” requirements. In math, 71% of students scored “met or exceeds” requirements, 54% and 17%, respectively. Almost 30% scored “does not meet” requirements. Charter school A had a score of 69.5 on the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI).

**Sampling Procedures**

The sampling for this study was purposeful. All participants had stories to tell about their lived experience (Creswell, 2013, p. 155). Participants were selected from a metro urban elementary charter school in the southeastern United States. These sites
were chosen based on their similar organizational structures and demographics. They were also chosen based on being in an urban charter school. Furthermore, the school was chosen based on its effectiveness according to its CCRPI scores. Charter School A scored 60% on the index for three consecutive years (Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, 2015); it was also selected based on the achievement indicators. Charter School A received a total of 41 out of 50 points for content mastery on the CRCT. The school also collected 50 of 60 points for postelementary school readiness.

Participants of the study were chosen from certified grade K-5 teachers at Charter School A. Three participants were chosen from the school. However, maximum variation was used as the method of sampling. A qualifying questionnaire was completed by each prospective participant. The questionnaire collected the data necessary to ensure diversity among teachers. Maximum variation sampling also increased the transferability of the study (Merriam, 2009, p. 228). Although gender and ethnicity distinctions were on the questionnaire, these distinctions were not a determinant. Therefore, teachers were chosen to represent primary and upper grades, as well as teachers with varied years of teaching, including experience at a traditional public school. According to Creswell (2013), if the researcher maximizes the differences at the beginning of the study, this will increase the likelihood that the finding will reflect differences or different perspective.

**Working with Human Subjects**

To complete this study, permission was obtained from all approving entities. Permission was secured from Clark Atlanta University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), the school board, and board of directors. A letter of intent was shared with the
building principal or head of school. The collection of data was solely for this dissertation. Teacher participation was voluntary; teachers were assigned aliases to maintain and assure their confidentiality. Only the researcher knew identifying information about participants. The interview protocol discussed these items in more detail. It is important to note that this study “is not conducted so that the laws of human behavior can be isolated” (Merriam, 2009, p. 220). This statement was vital to understanding the reliability of the study. The fluidity of human behavior did not jeopardize the reliability of the study because it was assumed that human behavior is not static.

**Instrumentation**

The study consisted of three types of instrumentation: document analysis, observations, and interviews. All documents analyzed had relevance to teacher efficacy. Observations and interviews were conducted using a social constructivism approach. Specifically, in the interview, questions were broad and general to allow participants to construct meaning of the situation and interaction with the researcher (Creswell, 2013). This was essential in understanding the phenomena being explored. Interview questions were aligned with research questions. The interview protocol began with an overview of the study and review of confidentiality. A script was used at the beginning and end of the interviews to guide the process (Jacobs & Furgerson, 2012). Basic information about the interviewee was collected. Interview questions progressed from easy to potentially difficult or controversial. Participants were asked identical questions during their one-on-one interviews. Prompts were included to guide the flow of the interview. There was
flexibility for on-the-spot revisions. However, care was taken not to go too far down a tangential path that was not useful to the purpose of the study (Jacobs & Furgerson, 2012).

**Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher began the study with an analysis of official school documents made public. Desired vital documents from Charter school A were an organizational chart, published annual report, and a copy of the school’s mission, vision, and philosophy. Also, any other available documents pertaining to the remaining independent variables were included. Other documents included, but were not limited to, board of director meeting notes, budget plans, teacher salary scale, and recruitment information. The next step was observation of participants’ classrooms. No contact was made with students. Field notes were collected strictly as a nonparticipant observer. These notes were used to help describe comprehensively each participant in terms of teaching style, student engagement, and classroom management. Observations took place during the first 4 hours of the school day. The content area of either reading or math was observed for effective instruction. The observation lasted 20 minutes. Observations were based deeply on Marzano’s (2009), *The Art of Science of Teaching*. The study investigated the 10 design questions used by teachers to plan effective units and lessons within those units (Marzano, 2009). The long form was used to include a scale. The most crucial data collection was from structured, open-ended interviews. Interviews were conducted individually and at the convenience of the participant. One-on-one interviewing was chosen to ensure that all participants were engaged and because
the interaction of the interviewees was not important to the study. Recording procedures were comprised of three recording devices: a digital recorder, a video recorder, and a recording application on a Smart Phone. Copious notes were taken and then transcribed. This thorough approach allowed for an in-depth description of the data to promote validity and transferability. Simply, providing detailed descriptions “enables readers to transfer information to other settings and determine whether the findings can be transferred” (Creswell, 2013, p. 252). Also, readers had ample access to data to explore their own understanding of the data. An interview protocol was created with ample space between research questions to document interviewee responses (Creswell, 2013). There were 10 questions with possible follow-up questions that yielded findings to answer research questions. Interviews were conducted at the charter school site in a quiet location. Consent forms were reviewed with participants and good interview procedures followed to avoid asymmetry.

The use of three data sources represented triangulation. These multiple sources allowed for “corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective” (Creswell, 2013, p. 251). All three data sources were important components to the school’s dynamics. Data sources were used “to verify the data as well as to enhance understanding of the data” (Lyons & Doueck, 2009, p. 103). By combining the data from more than one source, the validity of the study was positively impacted. The internal validity of the study was also present in the audit trail which “describes in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were
made throughout the inquiry” (Merriam, 2009, p. 102). This detailed account was present in the form of a journal.

**Description of Data Analysis Methods**

The first step of data analysis was completing document analyses. This step was the only isolated phase. After the document analysis, a data analysis spiral was engaged. Simply starting with observations, there was a myriad of overlapping as all the data were described, classified, represented, and most importantly, interpreted. The data were interpreted beyond their themes to reveal understandings of the influence of charter school elements on teacher efficacy.

The analysis of data collected for this study was a very intricate process. The data were organized and a preliminary read conducted to ensure understanding. Next, the data were coded for themes present across all sources. The themes were organized and the data accurately represented. These methods increased the internal validity with pattern building, explanation building, and the use of logic models (Yin, 2014, p. 45). Rival explanations were also addressed. Finally, the data were interpreted and findings concluded. “These steps are interconnected and form a spiral of activities all related to the analysis and representation of the data” (Creswell, 2013, p. 179). Although the validity of the study was not guaranteed by this technique, it did improve the chances of finding a strong relationship of conclusions to reality (Maxwell, 2012).

**Summary**

The design of the study was fundamental to exploring the influence of select charter school elements on teacher efficacy. A qualitative case study with three sources/
instruments for triangulations was chosen to dissect the influence of the elements. “This strategy reduces the risk of change associations and of systematic biases due to a specific method, and allows a better assessment of the generality of the explanations that one develops” (Maxwell, 2012, p. 128). Document analysis, participant class observations, and interviews were utilized for triangulation. Collected data were represented in a clear and organized manner. The interpretation of data provided results to research questions and guidance for all interested school leaders.
CHAPTER V
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine which factors of a charter school impact teacher efficacy. There were three different data sources to ensure the triangulation of the data. One data source included document analyses of Charter School A’s vision and mission statement, values statement, and their pledge. The next data source included a 30-minute observation of the three teacher participants. The final data source included an interview with each of the three teacher participants. Data were collected over a span of two weeks from December 1, 2015 through December 17, 2015. A strict protocol was followed to prevent any ethical issues in the study. A formal proposal was given to the Head of School at Charter School A and written permission was soon granted. All possible participants received a recruitment letter describing the nature and purpose of the study. Exactly three teachers volunteered to participate, representing diverse demographics. Their information was collected using a qualifying questionnaire. To confirm their participation, a statement of consent was signed. Participants were able to discontinue participation at any time during the study. Anonymity of participants was a priority. Participants were given aliases for the duration of the study.

The three participants provided noteworthy differences in their profiles based on the qualifying questionnaire they completed. In regards to gender, there were two female
participants and one male. Two participants identified as black and one as non-Hispanic. The three participants taught grades ranging from K-2, 3-5, as well as one classified as other (grade 7). All participants were highly qualified based on their credentials/licensure. One teacher was a novice with 0-2 years teaching; the other two participants were veterans with 6-10 years. Two participants had 0-2 years teaching experience at the charter school and one participant 3-5 years. All three participants had experience in traditional public schools settings. It is important to note one participant clarified that experience was only student teaching. Another participant had 3-5 years’ experience and another had 6-10 years. None of the participants had experience in private school settings. Two participants had 3-5 teachers on their grade level while one had eight or more. These demographics yielded interesting connections and paradigms to the findings of this study (see Table 1).

Table 1

Demographics of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level Taught</th>
<th>K-2</th>
<th>3-5</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Qualified</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Teaching</td>
<td>0-2 Years</td>
<td>3-5 Years</td>
<td>6-10 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years at Charter School A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience in traditional public school setting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience in private school setting</th>
<th>K-2</th>
<th>3-5</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Teachers on Grade Level</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>5-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The collection of data was grounded in the research questions (Table 2). The various data sources were chosen based on ability to provide answers and insight for each question. The interview, due to its nature, was the strongest source chosen. The interviews were conducted to reveal to the researcher the influence any of the variables had on each teachers’ efficacy. The interview also served as the major source for identifying major themes. The document analyses investigated the vision, mission, values and school pledge. Finally, each teacher was observed for 30 minutes. Each data source assisted in the answering the research questions. The interviews answered all the research questions. The document analyses answered 7/10. The observations answered the least with 5/10.

Once collected, the data were organized into themes to classify the data. The aggregation of this data was to simply “form a common idea” (Creswell, 2013, p. 186). Thirteen themes emerged from the data based on coding. The data represented 10 sources: 3 interviews, 4 document analyses, and 3 observations. The sources were organized into five categories for ease understanding: organizational structure, human capital, student achievement, collaboration, and identity.
### Table 2

*Research Coding Matrix*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Analyses</th>
<th>Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How does the organizational leadership structure influence your teacher efficacy?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How does the professional autonomy influence your teacher efficacy?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How does your students’ achievement affect your teacher efficacy?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How does salary influence your teacher efficacy?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How does internal parental involvement influence your teacher efficacy?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How do charter school resources influence your teacher efficacy?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. How do professional development opportunities influence your teacher efficacy?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. What types of school partnerships at your charter school influence your teacher efficacy?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How does the school culture influence your teacher efficacy?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. How does the school’s perceived reputation influence your teacher efficacy?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within the five categories, there were 14 themes. In the category of Organizational Structure, Leadership Model and Coaching Model emerged as themes. Leadership Model is defined as an in house model for day to day operations of school. Coaching Model is defined as a teacher feedback system. In the category of Human Capital, Professional Autonomy, Guidelines, Salary and Professional Development emerged as themes. Professional Autonomy is defined as freedom given to teachers based on professional trust. Guidelines are clear expectation for teachers. Salary is defined as annual financial compensation. Professional Development is defined as opportunities on or off campus to learn more about teaching practices and strategies. The category Student Achievement has one theme, Student Performance. Student Performance is defined as student demonstration of understanding for standards taught or tasks assigned. In the category Collaboration, Parental Involvement, Resources, Technology, and Partnerships emerged as theme. Parental Involvement is described as parent presence in the school or via communication. Resources are defined as tangible items students use/need frequently. Partnerships are defined as collaboration with outside sources for the benefit of the school/students. The final category, Identity, had two emergent themes, School Culture and School Reputation. School culture is defined as the cohesive feel of the school. School Reputation is defined as the perception of the school by outsiders.

The interviews’ document analyses had all five categories present. However, observations only had four themes present. Interviews had the most themes present followed by document analyses then the observations (see Figure 3).
Interview Analysis

Interviews were conducted at times conducive to the availability of participants. The three teachers provided availability and ideal times for the researcher. Interviews were conducted in different spaces, yet still optimum for candid discussions and recording. The interview with Teacher 1 was conducted in the Instructional Coach Workroom. The interviews with Teachers 2 and 3 were conducted in their classroom while students were at lunch. Prior to each interview, the statement of consent was reviewed for understanding and signatures. Three recording devices were utilized for interviews: a digital recorder, voice recorder application via Smart Phone, and a compact video recorder. To protect the identity of the participants, the video recorder faced the researcher. As the interviews proceeded, copious notes were taken. Interviews declined in length with each participant. The interview with Teacher 1 lasted 28 minutes; the
interview with Teacher 2 lasted 23 minutes; the interview with Teacher 3 was 16 minutes. Teacher 1 was very engaged and enthusiastic about being involved in the study. These characteristics were evident in the immediate response to be a participant, as well as timely communication to schedule the interview and observation. Teacher 2 was also engaged but more difficult to contact/communicate with. Teacher 3 seemed less enthusiastic. Communication was sparse and scheduling was almost impossible. Throughout the interview, Teacher 3 was distracted by multitasking. With an upcoming test, the focus seemed to be cutting and pasting pieces of other documents to create the test. Regardless, all interviews displayed at least ten of the thirteen themes. The interviews with Teachers 1 and 2 revealed all 13 themes. The interview with Teacher 3 was the shortest and revealed only 10 themes (see Table 3).

Table 3

*Interview Analysis Matrix*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Teacher 1</th>
<th>Teacher 2</th>
<th>Teacher 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Structure</td>
<td>Leadership Model (LM)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coaching Model (CM)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Capital</td>
<td>Professional Autonomy (PA)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guidelines (G)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salary (S)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Development (PD)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 3 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Teacher 1</th>
<th>Teacher 2</th>
<th>Teacher 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Achievement</td>
<td>Student Performance (SP)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Parental Involvement (PI)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resources (R)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technology (T)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partnerships (P)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>School Culture (SC)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Reputation (SR)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Document Analysis**

The four document analyses were conducted to further understand the dynamics of Charter School A. These documents—the Vision and Mission Statement, Values Statement, and daily Pledge—describe the foundation of the school as well as its identity. The documents represent how the school communicates with student and stakeholders, as well as staff and faculty. These documents were not accessible on the school website. The Special Assistant of Communication provided all four documents upon request. She insisted the researcher not use any documents readily available because they may have been outdated. It was very interesting that all documents were on a single file. None of the document analyses revealed all five categories or 13 themes. Although the most succinct of all the documents, the Values had the most categories and themes present. The four categories present were Human Capital, Student Achievement, Collaboration,
and Identity. The six themes were Professional Development, Student Performance, Parental Involvement, Partnerships, School Culture, and School Reputation. The Vision statement had three categories present: Student Achievement, Collaboration and Identity.

There are four themes present were: Student Performance, Parental Involvement, Partnerships, and School Culture. There were four themes present in the Mission statement: Organizational Structure, Student Achievement, Collaboration, and Identity.

The themes present were Leadership Model, Student Performance, Partnerships, and School Culture. The Pledge only contained three categories: Student Achievement, Collaboration, and Identity. The themes present were Student Performance, Partnership, and School Culture (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Document Analysis Matrix*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Vision Statement</th>
<th>Mission Statement</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Pledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Structure</td>
<td>Leadership Model (LM)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coaching Model (CM)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Capital</td>
<td>Professional Autonomy (PA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guidelines (G)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salary (S)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Development (PD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Achievement</td>
<td>Student Performance (SP)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 4 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Vision Statement</th>
<th>Mission Statement</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Pledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Parental Involvement (PI)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resources (R)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technology (T)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partnerships (P)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>School Culture (SC)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Reputation (SR)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Observation Analysis**

The researcher conducted observations in each teacher’s classroom for 30 minutes. The researcher was given lead time on the date and time of the observations by the teacher participants. Marzano’s (2009) Teacher Observation Protocol for the 2014 Teacher Evaluation Model was used. The abbreviated Learning Map was used to take notes, while the extended protocol with a scale and reflective questions was completed immediately afterwards. Permission to use both documents was granted via subscription to the Marzano Center website (http://www.marzanoresearch.com/).

It is important to note that this protocol had some similarities with the state mandated evaluation rubric. The protocol distinguished performances with a 5 level scale, while the state rubric used a 4 level scale. The Teacher Evaluation Model focused on Domain 1, classroom strategies and behaviors. This domain greatly correlated with the state evaluation rubric. Overlapping items on both documents included instructional
delivery, differentiation, engaging students, developing critical thinking and establishing relationships with students. Domain 1 consisted of nine design questions (DQ) that aligned with the Marzano Art and Science of Teaching Framework. Within the domains, 41 total elements were represented. The learning map also grouped the design questions in lesson segments. Lesson segment one involved routines that included DQ one and six. Lesson segment two addressed content which included DQ two, three, and four. Lesson segment three was enacted on the spot and included DQ two, seven, eight, and nine. It is important to note that DQ 10 was included in Domain two: Planning and Preparing. Overall, all nine design questions were present with all three observations. The observation of Teacher 1 had the most design questions present, eight out of nine. The observation of Teacher 2 had five out of nine design questions present. The observation of Teacher 3 had six out of nine design questions present. The design question that had the most elements present overall with 15 was DQ4: Engaging Students. The design question that had the least number of elements present was DQ1: Communicating and Learning Goals and Feedback.

The classroom of Teacher 1 was a unique set up. It only had three walls-no door-just openness to the common walkway. The room was very colorful and inviting; it was print rich, with very few store bought items and very few anchor charts. Initially, students were seated on the carpet for whole group instruction. They were soon dismissed back to their seats to complete the task in their interactive journals. Seating was organized in table groups. As the students worked, the classroom hummed with productive, working noise. Teacher 1 circulated the room looking for specific strategies
as well as redirecting as needed. Students were then called back to the carpet to share their answers and strategies. Students were constantly met with affirmations from the Teacher 1, as well as each other. The learning environment in this class was safe and secure for all levels of learners. With the most design questions present, this observation also had the most elements present with an occurrence of 22 out of 41.

The classroom of Teacher 2 also only had three walls and openness to a common walkway. The room was filled with a red, white, and blue color scheme with an emphasis on social studies. Also, very few anchor charts were present. However, other content areas were photos of students surrounded by frames adorned with “We are family” statements. Inspirational quotes from leaders were spread throughout the room as well. The room had a very home-like vibe in its organization, presence of lounge areas (filled with books), and simple accessories like succulents and decorative jars. A guitar was hanging in one of the corners. Students transitioned into class and recited all expectations in unison before taking a seat. Seating was organized in rows. Song and raps were used for review at the beginning of the lesson. Students were then paired to use iPads in a Math game. Throughout the game, there was unedited excitement, laughter as well as disappointment. Students were addressed as Mr. and Ms. The environment was very welcoming. The observation of Teacher 2 displayed five DQs present and subsequently an occurrence of 13/41 elements.

The classroom of Teacher 3 was quite different. It was trailer in an area called the “Learning Lofts.” It was evident it was an upper grade classroom but still very colorful and print rich. Student seating was organized in groups. A data wall was present and lots
of anchor charts. Students worked with peers to complete an around the room scavenger hunt. The teacher constantly monitored and offered scaffold assistance. Students were encouraged to use their peers for assistance. The environment was very respectful and mature. This observation had 6 DQs present and an occurrence of 15/41 elements (see Table 5).

Table 5

*Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model: Domain 1 Matrix*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DQ1: Communicating Learning Goals and Feedback</th>
<th>Teacher 1</th>
<th>Teacher 2</th>
<th>Teacher 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DQ2: Helping Students Interact With New Knowledge</td>
<td>XXXX</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DQ3: Helping Students Practice and Deepen New Knowledge</td>
<td>XX XXXX</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DQ4: Helping Students Generate and Test Hypotheses</td>
<td>XXXX</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DQ5: Engaging Students</td>
<td>XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX 15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DQ6: Establishing Rules and Procedures</td>
<td>XX XX XX</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DQ7: Recognizing Adherences to Rules and Procedures</td>
<td>XX XX X</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DQ8: Establishing and Maintaining Effective Relationships with Students</td>
<td>X XX XX</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DQ9: Communicating High Expectations for All Students</td>
<td>XX XX</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Number of Element Occurrences</td>
<td>22 13 15 50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The observations also disclosed many of the themes that were present in the other data sources. Although they were not as prevalent, they were still present and insightful.
The observation of Teacher 1 displayed 5 themes: Professional Autonomy, Guidelines, Student Performance, Resources and School Culture. The observation of Teacher 2 displayed 5 themes: Professional Autonomy, Student Performance, Technology, School Culture and School Reputation. The observation of Teacher 3 displayed 5 themes: Professional Autonomy, Student Performance, Resources, School Culture and School Reputation. The themes that emerged the most in the observations were Professional Autonomy, Student Performance and School Culture (see Tables 6 and 7).

Table 6

Observation Analysis Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Teacher 1</th>
<th>Teacher 2</th>
<th>Teacher 3</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Structure</td>
<td>Leadership Model (LM)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coaching Model (CM)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Professional Autonomy (PA)</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guidelines (G)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salary (S)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Development (PD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Achievement</td>
<td>Student Performance (SP)</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Parental Involvement (PI)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resources (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technology (T)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Partnerships (P)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>School Culture (SC)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Reputation (SR)</td>
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</table>
Table 7

Data Source Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Analyses</th>
<th>Observations</th>
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<td>Coaching Model (CM)</td>
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<td>Human Capital</td>
<td>Professional Autonomy (PA)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Guidelines (G)</td>
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<td>Salary (S)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Professional Development (PD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Achievement</td>
<td>Student Performance (SP)</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Parental Involvement (PI)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Resources (R)</td>
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<td>Technology (T)</td>
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<td>Partnerships (P)</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>School Culture (SC)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Reputation (SR)</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Summary

All data collected for this study were analyzed with fidelity. The three teacher participants were made aware of their rights as well as the option to discontinue participation at any time. Participants’ consent was vital for the interviews and observations. Permission from the charter school enabled the collection of the various documents for analysis. All data sources were coded manually to ensure thoroughness
and yield deeper understanding for the researcher. The 13 themes that emerged are crucial to answering research questions to supply findings. The five categories helped organize the themes to show connections and continuity. Each data source contributed a plethora of information. Analysis of the interviews uncovered all five categories: Organizational Structure, Human Capital, Student Achievement, Collaboration, and Identity. All thirteen themes were present. The interviews were clearly the heaviest data source used by the researcher. The document analyses had seven themes present: Leadership Model, Professional Autonomy, Student Performance, Parental Involvement, Partnerships School Culture, and School Reputation, spread throughout all five categories. The observations had seven themes present in only four categories. The themes are Professional Autonomy, Guidelines, Student Performance, Resources, Technology, School Culture, and School Reputation. This data were further disaggregated to produce discerning findings.
CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All data collected have the sole function to fulfill the purpose of the study. The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of various elements of the charter school organizational leadership structure, student performance, professional autonomy, salary, internal parental involvement, educational resources, professional development, school partnerships, school culture, and charter school reputation on teacher efficacy. This qualitative study was to reposition the lens of school improvement not on teacher ineffectiveness, but more so spotlight teacher efficacy. The qualitative approach provided an in-depth understanding of the structures that have the ability to influence teacher efficacy.

Findings

After coding all three data sources, 13 themes emerged. The themes were easily grouped into 5 categories:

- Organizational Structure included two themes: Leadership Model and Coaching Model
- Human Capital included four themes: Professional Autonomy, Guidelines, Salary and Professional Development
- Student Achievement included one theme: Student Performance
• Collaboration included four themes: Parental Involvement, Resources, Technology, and Partnerships

• Identity included 2 themes: School Culture and School Reputation

The category of organizational structure aligned with:

RQ1. How does the organizational leadership structure influence your teacher efficacy?

This category was only present in the interviews and document analyses. Furthermore, the two themes in this category, Leadership Model and Coaching Model, were not present in all the interviews or document analyses. The Leadership Model was present in all three interviews; however, the Coaching Model was only discussed in 2 interviews. Only the mission statement addressed this category with the Leadership Model theme. It was very evident that the organizational structure has influence on the participants’ teacher efficacy. Each interviewee mentioned the separation of the Head of School, who handles the administrative tasks of the school and the Associate Head of School (the principal) who focused on administration. Interviewee 2 stated the following:

I think one benefit of that is the support is there more so, where last year there was a lot of autonomy but it was really just kind of like nobody was watching you, so you could do what you wanted. Whereas now, we still have it but they know, she’s more aware of what’s going on in the classrooms. (Personal Communication, December 16, 2014)
The mission statement addressed the leadership model as it explicitly states “we will create a culture of opportunity and discovery…” The creation of a culture begins and ends with the leadership of the school. This statement asserts responsibility and is communicated to students, teachers and all stakeholders.

Although only mentioned by two of the participants, the Coaching Model was determined to have an influence on teacher efficacy. The Coaching Model was a reoccurring weekly observation with feedback that was not tied to any formal evaluation system. Interviewee 1 stated the following:

Absolutely, especially the coaching model. I believe that is super effective. I am one that likes to receive feedback on my teaching so I can improve on it, so having my coach in there every single week can be, I’m working on something super little, but that’s going to change my whole entire lesson, instead of working on something big like giving back my [inaudible] and being like oh, I did terrible in this area and this area, but this is helping me grow in those areas, but like by building little pieces of the puzzle together. So definitely I think, and it makes me a more confident teacher, as well, and also more just kind of confident, just because I see my coach and my evaluator in the classroom a lot more than you traditionally do. (Personal Communication, December 16, 2015)

Interviewee 2 stated the following:

Especially with the coaching model I talked about earlier. That’s been really good because I felt like I was kind of getting to a place where not like I can’t learn anything else, but I didn’t know where else to go. Like with my own, where I can
grow. And so that’s been good because it’s been very specific, without it being like you’re getting beat up for the mistakes you made. But like OK, you’re doing this part well, here’s something you can work on. And so because it’s tailored to me, and I know what I’m trying to get better at every day. So that’s been good. (Personal Communication, December 16, 2015)

The category of Human Capital aligns with multiple research questions:

RQ2. How does the professional autonomy influence your teacher efficacy?

This category produced four themes: Professional Autonomy, Guidelines, Salary, and Professional Development. The interviews were the only data source that answered all three questions with all themes present. The document analyses answered only one (RQ7) as well as the observations (RQ2). It was revealed that the professional autonomy does influence teacher efficacy. Teacher 1 stated the following:

So last year we didn’t really have a curriculum, a specific curriculum for math or science or social studies, so we kind of just followed the frameworks and the standards. And so we were really given a lot of autonomy for that. However, it was a little too much for us, and we needed a little more guidance, so as a charter school we were actually able to kind of pilot, and as teachers help select it. So we created a curriculum committee, piloted a few different programs, and were able to select the math curriculum that we have today. Even though we have a curriculum, you still get the autonomy in it. You can kind of change the lessons as need be fit, but they’re more of a guideline. But otherwise, they really do trust us to make the lessons our own, and know that we are doing the best for the
students. But they have given us tools to be successful. So they’ve given us guidelines but they do expect us to individualize instruction as well. (Personal communication, December 16, 2015)

Teacher 2 stated the following:

Here, I have, because of the reputation that I had from the beginning, I think that I have probably more autonomy than most people feel like they have here. And so there’s usually little question about, like they know that I’m going to be working and teaching in the folk. So it’s never about, they don’t think that I’m going to be lazy. So because they know that whatever I’m doing is still tied to academics and all of that, I kind of get left alone to plan and do things the way I want to do it. (Personal communication, December 16, 2015)

Teacher 3 stated the following:

It gives me a chance to be more creative with my instruction in the classroom. I’m able to actually teach Common Core, because I can take my instruction outside of the classroom and bring in those real life experiences. So I’m not tied down to a strict scope and sequence. I am able to pretty much maneuver through the standard units and kind of put them in order of how I see best fit to fit my students’ needs. But in a traditional school, I wasn’t able to do that. It was set for us and we followed it exactly how it was, because in a traditional school your coaches or the district made all of your benchmarks for you. They made all of your assessments for you, and on those assessments those assessments were driven by the scope and sequence. But since I make my assessments, they’re
driven by my scope and sequence that I put together. (Personal communication, December 16, 2015)

The influence of professional autonomy was evident in all observations. The lessons displayed DQ5 engaging with students. This element cannot be choreographed for all classes; teachers must use their understanding of the class to execute. According to the Marzano Protocol Scale, all observations were “Innovating: Adapts and creates new strategies for unique student needs and situations” (Marzano, 2009). This correlates with the highest scale of IV, exemplary of the state evaluation rubric.

RQ4. How does salary influence your teacher efficacy?

This research question was only answered by the interviews. Although the salary is more than traditional public schools in the surrounding district, it was determined that salary does not influence teacher efficacy. Teacher 3 stated the following:

Honestly, salary doesn’t influence my decision to be anywhere, to be honest. Because I mean, math is my, math is my thing, and I love being a teacher. So even though I make more than I did at my traditional school, leaving, the salary wasn’t the reason why I left, and also the environment wasn’t either. It was honestly for my kid, to have more time with my son, and to also bring him with me as well. So salary wasn’t my decision. I do think salary does influence how some teachers perceive their teacher efficacy, but for me, no. (Personal communication, December 16, 2015)

Teacher 2 said, “It wasn’t actually a huge factor” (Personal communication, December 16, 2015).
RQ7. How do professional development opportunities influence your teacher efficacy?

This research question included answers from the interviews and document analyses. The theme of professional development was only present in all interviews and the values statement. Based on these sources, it was determined professional development does influence teacher efficacy. Teacher 1 stated the following:

Well, it makes me really excited first of all, because I love learning. It’s something that I’m very passionate about, and back in school getting my masters degree. But I love learning something and then going and trying it out in the classroom, so whether it’s watching a periscope from Whole Grain Teaching and learning a new engagement method or motivation thing, I go and try it and see how it works. So getting these professional developments makes me not get stuck in my ways, and I hopefully won’t be that teacher that’s still using like the curriculum from 30 years ago. Because I love learning what’s new and trying it out and seeing if it’s the best practice. (Personal Communication, December 16, 2015)

Teacher 3 stated the following:

Well I just recently went to a coding workshop, which was awesome. This helped me to be able to bring a different perspective of math, as well as computer science to the class, to the math classroom that kids may or may not have experienced before. And when we did the hour of coding last Thursday they absolutely loved it. So that has also made me think of other ways that I could maybe start a
computer science club or coding club specifically for females in the school.

(Personal Communication, December 16, 2015)

The document that addressed RQ7 was the “Our Values” statement of the charter school. It was asserted that, “Whole child education is at the core of what we do.” That concept is not a common practice in all educational settings. Therefore the charter school must be committed to providing the professional development necessary to execute and maintain this value.

The category of Student Achievement aligned with:

RQ3. How does your students’ achievement affect your teacher efficacy?

The answer to this question was present in interviews, document analyses as well as observations. The theme of student performance was present in all sources. According to these sources, student achievement does not influence teacher efficacy. There was no mention of their students’ performance on standardized tests or grades. Teacher 1 stated the following:

I mean, I really am proud of my students every single day, considering where some of the students come from, we really do have a hugely diverse population, as far as social, economic status goes. We have kids that are coming from shelters and transitional housing, to well off kids as well. However, being a STEM school and just being a charter school and the partnerships that we have had really lent just so many opportunities for the students and they really don’t take their opportunities for granted. So if we have iPads, they are so engaged. They want to learn with it. We have STEM nights where, STEM days where the
kids get to explore engineering and different sciences, and like we’ll bring in wildlife and they just flourish with it. And especially like today was a great example. We have been struggling with a subtraction problem doing that, like hearing a word problem and doing a subtraction problem with a multi-digit number. And today they just were like oh, it clicked. Let me try this new strategy. So I really am truly proud of them every single day. (Personal Communication, December 16, 2015)

Teacher 2 stated the following:

I think for me the proudest moments are usually have nothing to do with test scores or those things, but it’s like the real world application of what we’re doing. For example, today I had a student who on our pretest did not have a good grasp of telling time, let alone elapsed time, which is what we kind of just finished. And I had an analog clock up on the board, and they were taking the test and it was like OK, you have to be finished by 10:40. And that same student looked up and was like, oh, OK, 13 minutes. And he was right. But like he used it in a real-world situation. (Personal Communication, December 16, 2015)

The document analyses all mentioned the theme of student performance. However, none specifically mentioned student achievement in an absolute way. The focuses of these documents were the overall learning and development of students. The absence of student achievement confirms that is not the number one priority or expectation at the school. In fact, the daily pledge reminds students to “perform their best.” Student performing their best does not always equate to high student achievement.
The observations all addressed student achievement simply because students were observed performing various tasks/assignments. However, in the lesson segment of addressing content 18 elements are included. For all three observations, only 9 elements were present. DQ4: Helping Students Generate and Test Hypotheses was not present.

The category of Collaboration aligns with:

RQ5. How does internal parental involvement influence your teacher efficacy?

The interviews and document analyses address this research question. According to these sources, parental involvement does not influence teacher efficacy. Three of the four documents allude to parental involvement. The vision statement states a “learning community,” the mission statement states, “we create a culture of…” and values statement states “we value community.” While parental involvement is an assumption of these documents and statements, it is not an explicitly stated requirement or expectation. This is asserted by the interviews. Teacher 2 stated the following:

Our parental involvement, it’s a mixture. Because of where our school is located, we have, we’re zoned for like Midtown and the Atlantic Station area, so a lot of those students come from very affluent homes. And their parents could afford private school if they wanted to. So they are, and there’s a lot of stay at home moms, things like that on one end. But we also have three homeless shelters in our school zone. And so where those parents are typically not able to even leave the shelter, and they work there, so you generally don’t see them. And then kind of everything else in between. So you’ve got the whole spectrum. So you have those parents that can be up here every day and they want you to like give them a
job in the classroom and like it’s sometimes too much, and then you have the ones that you see them on the last day of school and you’re just introducing yourself. So as far as efficacy, I would say it depends on the parents. Like some parents really do make you, like the ones that show that great appreciation, it does make you feel like I’m doing a great job. And if the parents can see it, then that really means something. But it’s always different, and I’m learning that with parents you’re dealing with their like most precious commodity, and so they can be a little crazy. (Personal Communication, December 16, 2015)

RQ6. How do charter school resources influence your teacher efficacy?

The interviews and observations address this research question. It is clear that resources does influence teacher efficacy. Resources such as manipulative and technology (iPads) were evident in 2 observations. It was also asserted in their interview. In the observation that resources were not observed, the lack of, was reflected in the interview. Teacher 1 stated the following:

So we have, I mentioned before the instructional coaches. So if we do need anything, a lot of times that’s our first line of defense. Hey, I need glue sticks, hey, I need this. So we are able to get those. We are able to submit requests for supplies. Of course, we use donor’s choose, get grants, things like that. I’ve never had a real issue saying man, I don’t have a pencil for a kid. I’ve never had that situation, or man, I don’t have money to spend on paper, construction paper. I’ve always had the resources. (Personal Communication, December 16, 2015)
Teacher 2 stated the following:

We have one to one technology for third through fifth grade, and we also have Chromebook carts, or what is it, iPad carts and MacBook carts that can be checked out. We have pretty much what you need you can make a request for, and it’ll be granted for the most part. I mean, and then whatever we don’t have, we have a donor’s choose kind of approval form that we have to fill out, and then you can create donor’s choose projects. But we cannot do donor’s choose projects for like paper or pencils, like things that the school should be able to provide, then you ask them for those things. (Personal Communication, December 16, 2015)

To the contrary, Interviewee 3 stated the following:

We have manipulatives and we do have technology. As far as the math manipulatives, we don’t have certain things that we need for the middle grades instruction. They’re more for elementary instruction, which of course could be a problem for those lower achieving kids or even kids that need to see how things work, move it around, touch it, for those different learning styles. We don’t have a math textbook or even a workbook for students to have in their possession to refer back to or to work out of, which could also be a problem. (Personal Communication, December 16, 2015)

RQ8. What types of school partnerships at your charter school influence your teacher efficacy?
The interviews and document analyses provided an answer to this research question. It was very clear that partnerships have an influence on teacher efficacy. There are a plethora of partnerships at the school: Cocoa Cola, Georgia Aquarium, Georgia Technological University and the Children’s’ Museum. It was asserted by two interviewees that the partnership with Georgia Tech had the most influence on their efficacy. Teacher 1 stated the following:

And so one way, one area that these partnerships, one thing that they provide is a lot of opportunities for children to explore these companies and associations. So field trips, we get to go to the Georgia Aquarium. The first week of school for middle schoolers, they have like at the Aquarium and at Georgia Tech, instead of being on campus, so they to kind of experience that. Children’s Museum comes to kindergarten the first Friday of every month and does different lessons with them. And like my kids love when Mr. Daniel comes. They are like, it’s the first Friday of the month! Mr. Daniel’s coming! What is he going to teach us? And so they really love it, and it’s exciting because we do have all these partnerships, so if we ever did need something or we wanted to create a kind of kooky, outlandish lesson, we have these options available to us. Yes, I think some are more meaningful, but they’re all equally important. (Personal Communication, December 16, 2015)

Teacher 2 stated the following:

It’s good because I know that they can get that additional support. Sometimes it’s like extra planning you have to do, so sometimes he comes in and I have to
say sorry, I don’t have anything for you. But it definitely helps me to see that like there’s more to teaching than just me. Like it’s not all on me all the time. And how broad our classroom space can be. So like with the Aquarium, we can always go to the Aquarium for free, so whatever the lesson is, and it’s right around the corner so we can just walk there, and so it’s like trying to find ways to get to the Aquarium and make those connections. And so if we can make two, three trips there throughout the year, then that’s great. And they’re definitely there to support, and those like real live experiences are, it makes a big difference from just learning the same information in adaptations that we study. Instead of learning in the textbook, we actually go and we can see them in action doing those things. (Personal Communication, December 16, 2015)

Teacher 3 stated the following:

Georgia Tech, I would have to say helps really with my differentiation in the classroom. So I’m able to reach more kids and reach their learning styles and meet them where they are as far as their level of learning. (Personal Communication, December 16, 2015)

The document analyses reveal an influence of partnerships as well. All four documents explicitly state community, society, or environment. These features all represent the expansion of the school outside of the walls. This confirms that the vision, mission, values and pledge of the charter school are inclusive of outside sources that will be beneficial to the school.
The final category of Identity aligned with:

RQ 9. How does the school culture influence your teacher efficacy?

All data sources answered this research question. It was proven that school culture influences teacher efficacy. Teacher 1 shared the following:

So as far as the students go, the culture that we kind of cultivate for them is being a hero. We’re the heroes, and the hero for us stands for having your materials, engaging positively with others, respecting yourself and your environment, and then the O is offering a helping hand. So we really try and make sure the kids are aware of what it means to be a hero. And then we also look at the eight keys of Excellency. So there’s speaking with, what is it, speaking with purpose, good purpose, like making sure when you are talking you are meaning, like you are really thoughtful about what you’re saying. Grit; trying your hardest. Like it’s OK to make mistakes, you can grow from them. So we give them kind of these life skills in these eight keys of excellence. We’re not just saying be a good person, and not telling them how to be a good person. (Personal Communication, December 16, 2015)

The document analyses portray school culture the most. They all represent the culture, the leadership of the school desires. Although the vision and mission are standard at many schools, the charter school separates itself with the values and pledge. These are detailed artifacts that sculpt and mold the culture of the school—even on a daily basis. The observations supported school culture in a number of ways. An initial observation is all students were in uniform. In regards to lessons design question 8 was
evident in all lessons—establishing and maintaining effective relationships with students. Also important to culture and evident in all lessons was DQ5: Engaging Students. On the Marzano Protocol scale, both design questions would be scored at Innovating: Adapts and creates new strategies for unique student needs and situations” (Marzano, 2009). This correlated with the highest scale of IV, exemplary of the state evaluation rubric.

RQ 10. How does the school’s perceived reputation influence your teacher efficacy?

This research question was addressed by interviews and document analyses. Based on the interviews, it was concluded that the school’s perceived reputation does influence teacher efficacy. Teacher 1 shared the following:

Compared to like my friends that teach at different schools, they like tell me about their struggles, and I’m like that would never happen here. Like it’s kind of like wow, this school for these kids are extremely lucky. I’m extremely lucky to be a part of this great opportunity. When I was an undergrad, the charter school, I was kind of like uh, the people just want to make money. I’ve never felt working at this school that we’re a charter solely for the purpose to be a profit. We’re a charter for the right reasons, and I feel like that’s a big difference in why people, the verdict is out on charter schools, because there are so many charter schools that are just trying to turn a dime and not do it for the right reasons. (Personal Communication, December 16, 2015)
Teacher 2 stated the following:

And so as a public school, we had a very strong reputation of being one of the top schools that serves our population. It’s a more urban population. So we’ve always kind of had that strong reputation. Now as we’re expanding, we’re adding on middle school, I think we’re trying to figure out, that reputation is still being built as a charter school. This is only our second year. And so while we still definitely have a lot of respect within our community and within the district as being one of the schools that does a good job, and that is, it’s a big factor I would say in my teacher efficacy, because I have friends who do not wear any school, nothing related to school. If I’m not at work, I’m not wearing my school’s t-shirt, nothing. Whereas I like, I intentionally will wear [Charter School A] things on the weekend. (Personal Communication, December 16, 2015)

**Conclusions and Implications**

This qualitative study has definitely served its purpose in providing insight on what elements of a charter school affect teacher efficacy. Based on the thorough coding and disaggregation of the data, there are many conclusions directly related to the independent variables of the study. These variables do influence teacher efficacy: organizational leadership structure, professional autonomy, school resources, professional development, school culture, and school reputation. The variables that do not influence teacher efficacy are student achievement, salary, and parental involvement (see Figure 4). To enhance the conclusions of the study, connections must be made to the theories. The alignment of the findings with the theories strengthens their significance.
Transformational Leadership

It was evident, primarily in the interviews, that the leadership of the school was very influential of the participant’s efficacy. The participants were very committed to the shared vision and goals for their school. They were also inspired and motivated in their roles. They undoubtedly accepted the higher expectations of the charter school. Most importantly, they all seemed to be thriving in the challenge of making the impossibilities of their school model (conversion charter) excel. They whole heartedly appreciated the
coaching they received. They reveled in the trust and professional autonomy they felt from the leadership. They valued the available professional development. They promoted the school culture and respected the school’s reputation.

**Modern Economic Theory**

This theory was evident in the interviews, document analyses, and observations. The charter school’s role of demand, money supply and effect on free trade is an uneven role. The demand of the school is evident each participants desire to be a part of an alternative educational setting. But this desire was not solely founded in the purveyed salary—a huge component of the money supply of the school. However, they did appreciate the available school resources, professional developments, and partnerships. These factors did influence teacher efficacy.

**Epstein’s (2010) Parental Involvement Model**

This theory was present in the interviews and document analyses. Based on the six types of framework, only collaborating with the community could be directly connected to influencing teacher efficacy. The variables that aligned were school partnerships and school reputation. School partnerships were greatly valued by participants. Georgia Tech was highlighted as the most beneficial. The variable of organizational leadership also aligned with this model. Its role was evident in the vision, mission, values, and pledge of the school. This portrays the framework of communication with stakeholders, which included parents.
Limitations

This study has one limitation that cannot be overlooked—the limited ability to infer a canvas approach to findings since Charter School A is such an atypical charter school. A major limitation was that only one school was used as a source for data collection. The inclusion of at least another school would have increased the validity of the findings by providing more participants as well data sources. Another limitation was the time of the observations. The first issue with the time was related to the end of the semester. Administrative challenges with approval of study delayed its progress until the end of the semester. Therefore, the types of lessons to be observed were all a review of skills in preparation for upcoming assessments. Another limitation with the observations was the actual time of the observation. Only one lesson observation neatly fit where the beginning to the end of the lesson was all observed in the 30 minutes. In regards to the other two lessons, the beginning was missed based on the scheduled time. Missing portions of the lesson skewed what was observed via the Marzano (2009) Protocol. It is important to note that although some portions were missed, that does not indicate they were not present. Still, the observation was misleading as all observations should have included the same amount of time and lesson segments. They could have been covered before the researcher arrived. The protocol itself was also a limitation. Marzano’s (2009) work was not founded in urban schools; therefore, his theories may not accurately represent the students being observed in the study. Additional research is needed to close this gap. The protocol also represented another limitation in that teachers were not
previously exposed to the expectations of this instrument; although it was similar to the state evaluation rubric, participants were unaware of what was being observed.

**Recommendations**

The pressure on low-performing schools/districts continues to intensify as another year of CCRPI scores are available, and the first round of Georgia Milestones are complete. Another form of pressure is it is close to 2017, the year the Governor’s Opportunity District will be voted on. While there appears to be looming pressure, there is still time for improvement and changes. These changes must be in practice, policy and research. Many districts have already been approved as charter districts so they have the freedom to implement some of these recommendations.

**Policy Recommendations**

The recommended roles and responsibilities for the state education agency and local education agency, respectively, are:

- Promote option of conversion charter schools for specific schools as opposed to entire district
- Funding allocations-increased professional development and resources less focus on salary

**Practice Recommendations**

The recommended roles and responsibilities for the Principal and Assistant Principals are:
• Review organizational chart to distinguish administrative and instructional responsibilities amongst leadership team

• Diligent in practicing Transformational Leadership

• Cultivating meaningful partnerships with community businesses/institutions/parents

• Develop and articulate purposeful vision, mission and value statements to promote desired school culture

• Promote environment of professional autonomy and trust

• Provide clear guidelines and expectations for instruction

The recommended roles and responsibilities for the Instructional Coaches:

• Adopt Coaching Model

• Promote environment of professional autonomy and trust

• Provide clear guidelines and expectations for instruction

The recommended roles and responsibilities for Teachers:

• Provide students with engaging lessons

• Build and maintain effective relationships with students

• Request and utilize available tangible resources

• Capitalize on professional development opportunities

• Collaborate with school partners

The recommended roles and responsibilities for Parents:

• Support the vision and mission of the school

• Embrace culture of the school
• Be an advocate for authenticity of charter school

• Increased presence at school

The recommended roles and responsibilities of students:

• Support the vision and mission of the school

• Participate in daily activities like school pledge

• Embrace culture of the school

Research Recommendations

The possibilities of future research include:

• Replicate study with more than one charter school

• Comparative study with multiple schools

• Develop a scale to categorize the perceived efficacy of the teachers to measure the level of influence

Summary

This qualitative summary conveyed powerful findings. These findings yielded insightful implications and recommendations. The purpose of the study was fulfilled as it investigated the influence of various elements of the charter school organizational leadership structure, student performance, professional autonomy, salary, internal parental involvement, educational resources, professional development, school partnerships, school culture, and charter school reputation on teacher efficacy. All elements were present in the study from at least one data source. The five categories and 13 themes that emerged showed specifically what elements influence teacher efficacy. These variables do influence teacher efficacy: organizational leadership structure,
professional autonomy, school resources, professional development, school culture, and school reputation. The variables that do not influence teacher efficacy are student achievement, salary and parental involvement. The undocumented highlight of the study is the proactive approach on teacher performance. By focusing on their efficacy, this study steers the negative conations and blame away from teachers. Instead, it brings more attention to the elements that affect instruction that are responsibility of local and district leaders. This study will hopefully lessen the blame on teachers and reevaluate the leaders and their decision making.
APPENDIX A

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

RESEARCH TITLE
PERCEIVED TEACHER EFFICACY: A CASE STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF CHARTER SCHOOL ELEMENTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND OTHER FACTORS IN AN URBAN CHARTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SETTING.

PRINCIPAL RESERACHER
Kerry-Ann S. Holmes

PURPOSE
The purpose of the study is to investigate the influence of charter school organizational leadership structure, student performance, professional autonomy, salary, internal parental involvement, educational resources, professional development, school partnerships, and school culture and charter school reputation on teacher efficacy. You are invited to participate in this study because you are an employee at an urban elementary charter school. A total of 6 participants will be recruited for this study. Participation in the study will require a total of fifty minutes.

PROCEDURES
Upon agreement to participate in the study, you will be required to complete and submit a qualifying questionnaire to the principal researcher. You will also be required to allow access to your class for an observation. Finally, there will be a structured one-on-one interview. There will be no interaction with other participants. The research will take place at you charter school during the fall semester of 2014.

RISKS
Participation in this research study will not subject you to any risks.

BENEFITS
Participation in this research may benefit you personally. The investigative approach will allow you to explore your teacher efficacy while considering charter school elements. It will help you dissect the influence of these charter school elements on your teacher efficacy.
Your participation will assist the researcher with determining if, and which charter school elements influence teacher efficacy in urban elementary charter schools. Your participation will yield insight for school leaders and stakeholders.

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**
Participation in this case study is completely voluntary. Your participation in this study is not required. You have the right to remove yourself from the study at any time if you change your mind. Your decision to remove yourself will not negatively impact you. You will not face increased risk or lose any rights or benefits you were entitled to.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**
The utmost effort will be made to maintain the privacy of your personal information and any connection to observation notes and interview responses. The use of your name is not necessary for this study. All identifying information will be removed from all data collection instruments. Any information you provide for this case study will only be shared with a third party for the sole purpose of furthering the study and its publication. All information from the case study will be summarized and analyzed strictly using discretion.

**CONTACT PERSON**
For any questions concerning this research study and or your participation, please refer to:

Sheila Gregory, Ph.D., Professor  
Clark Atlanta University  
Department of Educational Leadership  
223 James P. Brawley Drive S.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30313  
Email: sgregory@cau.edu  
Phone: (404) 880-6642

**COPY OF STATEMENT OF CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPANT**
If you understand terms of the study, and this form and are willing to participate, please sign and date the form below. A copy of this form will be provided for your records.

_____________________________________________
Participant Name (Printed)

_____________________________________________
Participant Signature

_____________________________________________
Date
APPENDIX B

QUALIFYING QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you in advance for completing this questionnaire. Your time and efforts are greatly appreciated. Answer each question to the best of your ability.

Please fill in the blanks.

Initials ____________________________________________

Charter school ____________________________________________

Please select one of the following.

Gender: Male □ Female □

Race: American Indian/Native Alaskan □ Asian □ Black/African American □

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander □ White □

Please choose the answer that most accurately represents you.

What grade level do you teach?
   a. K-2 □
   b. 3-5 □

Are you highly qualified?
   c. Yes □
   d. No □

How many years have you been teaching?
   a. 0-2 □
   b. 3-5 □
   c. 6-10 □
   d. 11 or more □
How many years have you worked at this school?

a. 0-2 □
b. 3-5 □
c. 6-10 □
d. 11 or more □

Have you ever worked in a traditional public school setting?

a. Yes □
b. No □

If so, how many years?

a. 0-2 □
b. 3-5 □
c. 6-10 □
d. 11 or more □

Have you ever worked in a private school setting?

a. Yes □
b. No □

If so, how many years?

a. 0-2 □
b. 3-5 □
c. 6-10 □
d. 11 or more □

How many teachers are on your grade level including you?

a. 1-3 □
b. 3-5 □
c. 5-7 □
d. 8 or more □
APPENDIX C

OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Study: THE INFLUENCE OF CHARTER SCHOOL ELEMENTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND OTHER FACTORS ON THE TEACHER’S PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-EFFICACY IN AN URBAN CHARTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SETTING

Initials

Charter school A/B

Grade Level

Years of service

Highly Qualified? Yes/No

Date

Time began Time end

Subject

Physical location

Room number

Observed by
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Study: THE INFLUENCE OF CHARTER SCHOOL ELEMENTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND OTHER FACTORS ON THE TEACHER’S PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-EFFICACY IN AN URBAN CHARTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SETTING

Initials ____________________________
Charter school A/B ____________________________
Grade Level ____________________________
Years of service ____________________________
Highly Qualified? ____________________________
Date ____________________________
Time began ____________________________ Time end ____________________________
Physical location ____________________________
Room number ____________________________
Interviewed by ____________________________

Notes to interviewee:
Thank you for your participation. I believe your input will be valuable to this research and in understanding the influence of charter school elements on teacher efficacy. With the controversy of the passing of House Bill 797, and Amendment 1 that allows the state legislature to provide special schools, public schools in Georgia are on the brink of a major reform. In his inaugural speech, Governor Nathan Deal acknowledged the important role charter schools will pay in his education as well as prison reform efforts. As school districts across the state have become charter districts, these changes are significant not just for student achievement and stakeholders, but for teachers as well. Your participation can provide more insight to for current and future school leaders.

Be assured confidentiality of your responses is guaranteed.

Approximate length of interview: 30 minutes.

Purpose of research:
The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship of charter school organizational leadership structure, student performance, professional autonomy, salary, internal parental involvement, educational resources, professional development, school partnerships, and school culture and charter school reputation on teacher efficacy.
APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Can you please define the organizational leadership at your school?
   a. Do you believe this has any influence on how you perceive your teacher efficacy?
   b. If so, how?

2. In what way have you experienced professional autonomy at your school?
   a. If so, how?

3. Tell me a time you were most and least proud of your students’ achievement?
   a. Do you believe this has any influence on how you perceive your teacher efficacy?
   b. If so, how?

4. Is your salary 9 or 12 months?
   a. How important was the salary in your decision to be a teacher here?
   b. Do you believe this has any influence on how you perceive your teacher efficacy?
   c. If so, how?

5. How would you describe the internal parent involvement at your school?
   a. Could you give an example?
   b. Do you believe this has any influence on how you perceive your teacher efficacy?
   c. If so, how?
6. What tangible resources are available at your school?
   a. Do you believe this has any influence on how you perceive your teacher efficacy?
   b. If so, how?

7. Can you identify any professional development opportunities in the past year?
   a. Are there any you have received or taken advantage of?
   b. Do you believe this has any influence on how you perceive your teacher efficacy?
   c. If so, how?

8. Can you identify your schools partnerships?
   a. Can you tell me any involvement with any of the partnerships?
   b. Which partnerships do you think are more valuable?
   c. Do you believe this has any influence on how you perceive your teacher efficacy?
   d. If so, how?

9. How would you define the school culture at your school?
   a. Do you believe this has any influence on how you perceive your teacher efficacy?
   b. If so, how?

10. How would you characterize your school’s reputation?
    a. How does it compare to surrounding public and charter schools?
    d. Do you believe this has any influence on how you perceive your teacher efficacy?
    c. If so, how?
**Organizational Leadership Structure**
Charter schools have a very different organizational structure than traditional public schools…

1. Can you please define the organizational leadership at your school?
   a. Do you believe this has any influence on how you perceive your teacher efficacy?
   b. If so, how?
      *Leadership style
      * Communication

Response:

**Professional Autonomy**
Professional autonomy is important to many teachers…

2. In what was have you experienced professional autonomy at your school?
   a. If so, how?
      *Accountability
      *Instructional delivery

Response:

**Student Achievement**
Your school is not listed on the Governor’s Opportunity District and has outstanding student achievement based on 2014 CRCT results…

3. Tell me a time you were most and least proud of your students’?
   a. Do you believe this has any influence on how you perceive your teacher efficacy?
   b. If so, how?
      *Accountability
      * CRCT test results

Response:
Salary
Charter school salaries are not listed clearly listed as traditional public schools and are often assumed as less…

4. Is your salary 9 or 12 months?
   a. How important was the salary in your decision to be a teacher here?
   b. Do you believe this has any influence on how you perceive your teacher efficacy?
   c. If so, how?

*Determinant role
Response:

Internal Parental Involvement
Teachers often attribute many of their challenges to lack of parental involvement…

5. How would you describe the internal parent involvement at your school?
   a. Could you give an example?
   b. Do you believe this has any influence on how you perceive your teacher efficacy?
   c. If so, how?

*Parenting
*Communicating
*Volunteering
*Learning at Home
*Decision Making
*Collaboration with Community

Response:

Educational Resources

6. What tangible resources are available at your school?
   a. Do you believe this has any influence on how you perceive your teacher efficacy?
   b. If so, how?

Response:
Professional Development
Teachers continued growth is vital to their performance...

7. Can you identify any professional development opportunities in the past year?
   a. Are there any you have received or taken advantage of?
   b. Do you believe this has any influence on how you perceive your teacher efficacy?
   c. If so, how?

*Human capital
Response:

School Partnerships

8. Can you identify your schools partnerships?
   a. Can you tell me any involvement with any of the partnerships?
   b. Which partnerships do you think are more valuable?
   c. Do you believe this has any influence on how you perceive your teacher efficacy?
   d. If so, how?

Response:

School Culture
In any educational setting, tradition or charter, school culture is an important factor...

9. How would you define the school culture at your school?
   a. Do you believe this has any influence on how you perceive your teacher efficacy?
   b. If so, how?

*Mission
*Vision
*Philosophy/core values

Response:
School Reputation
The verdict on charter schools is still out based on the recent controversy of *House Bill 97*...

10. How would you characterize your school’s reputation?
   
a. How does it compare to surrounding public and charter schools?
   
b. Do you believe this has any influence on how you perceive your teacher efficacy?
   
c. If so, how?

Response:

Thank you for your participation. You have added a plethora of information to the research of the study.
REFERENCES


