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The Relationship Between Student Achievement and Other Selected Variables and Teacher Engagement

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

WILLIAMS, DERRICK L. B.A. UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, CHAMPAIGN, 1993
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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND OTHER
SELECTED VARIABLES AND TEACHER ENGAGEMENT

Committee Chair: Trevor Turner, Ph.D.

Dissertation dated May 2017

It was the goal of this study to determine the relationship between student achievement and other selected variable such as principal years of experience, student socioeconomic status, teachers’ perceptions of administrative support, students’ perceptions of teacher support, and teacher attendance to teacher engagement. The study also determined if the variables along with teacher engagement were predictors of attrition. Pearson correlations were used to analyze the data that had the greatest significant relationship to teacher engagement. Regression tests were used to determine if the variables were predictors of attrition. The researcher concluded that student achievement, teachers’ perceptions of principal support, and students’ perceptions of teachers had the most significant relationship to teacher engagement; student socioeconomic status had a negative relationship with teacher engagement. The researcher found that the selected variables were not significant predictors of teacher engagement.
attrition. Recommendations were suggested for central office leaders, building level leaders, teachers, and future researchers.
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND OTHER SELECTED VARIABLES AND TEACHER ENGAGEMENT

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

BY
DERRICK L. WILLIAMS

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ........................................................................................................ iii

LIST OF FIGURES .................................................................................................................. vii

LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................................... viii

CHAPTER
I. INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................. 1
   Statement of Problem ........................................................................................................... 3
   Localizing the Problem ....................................................................................................... 3
   Statement of the Purpose ................................................................................................... 5
   Research Questions .......................................................................................................... 6
   Rationale and Significance ................................................................................................. 7

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ......................................................................................... 9
   Teacher Engagement ......................................................................................................... 9
   Teacher Attendance ........................................................................................................ 14
   Students’ Socioeconomic Status ...................................................................................... 19
   Students’ Perceptions of Teachers ................................................................................... 24
   Teachers’ Perceptions of Administrative Support .......................................................... 27
   Principal’s Years of Experience ....................................................................................... 28
   Teacher Attrition ............................................................................................................ 30

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ......................................................................................... 35
   Definition of Variables ....................................................................................................... 45
   Relationship among the Variables ..................................................................................... 46
CHAPTER

Summary .................................................................................................................................................. 49

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ............................................................................................................. 50

Research Design ...................................................................................................................................... 50

Description of the Setting ....................................................................................................................... 51

Participants/Location of Research ......................................................................................................... 54

Instrumentation ...................................................................................................................................... 54

Data Collection Procedures .................................................................................................................. 59

Limitations of the Study .......................................................................................................................... 59

V. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA ................................................................................................................... 61

Overview of the Data Collection and Analysis ...................................................................................... 62

Survey Participants .................................................................................................................................. 62

Data in Response to the Research Questions .......................................................................................... 64

Summary .................................................................................................................................................. 74

VI. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS ........................................ 76

Purpose of the Study .................................................................................................................................. 76

Research Methods ................................................................................................................................... 76

Findings .................................................................................................................................................... 77

Significant Findings ................................................................................................................................. 79

Implications .............................................................................................................................................. 79

Limitations of the Study ........................................................................................................................... 82

Recommendations .................................................................................................................................... 83
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

1. Fredrick Herzberg’s Motivational Theory .......................................................... 37
2. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs ............................................................................. 40
3. Gallup engagement questions: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and
   Herzberg’s Two Factor Theory ........................................................................... 41
4. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs applied to employment engagement ............... 42
5. Relationship among the variables ..................................................................... 47
LIST OF TABLES

Table

1. Research District Facility Breakdown ........................................................................52
2. Student and Staff Demographics ...........................................................................52
3. Historical Demographic Information .......................................................................53
4. Variables and Collection Method .............................................................................57
5. Research District’s Demographic Information .........................................................61
6. Certification Level of Teachers .................................................................................63
7. Teachers’ Years of Experience ................................................................................63
8. Student Enrollment Data ..........................................................................................64
9. Student Demographic Data ......................................................................................64
10. Descriptive Statistics .............................................................................................65
11. Pearson Correlation: Teacher Attendance and Teacher Engagement.................66
12. Pearson Correlation: Teacher Engagement and Students’ Perceptions
    of Teacher Expectations ...........................................................................................67
13. Pearson Correlation: Teacher Engagement and Principal’s Experience.............68
14. Pearson Correlation: Teacher Engagement and Students’ Socioeconomic
    Status .......................................................................................................................69
15. Pearson Correlation: Teacher Engagement and Teachers’ Perceptions
    of Administrative Support .......................................................................................70
Table

16. Pearson Correlation: Teacher Engagement and Graduation Rate .......................71

17. Pearson Correlation: Teacher Engagement and Eighth-Grade Math Performance .................................................................72

18. Parson Correlation: Teacher Engagement and Eighth-Grade Language Arts Performance .........................................................72

19. Principal, Teacher, and Student Characteristics as Predictors of Teacher Attrition .................................................................74
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). There have been a number of studies conducted on engagement in the workplace and how it correlates with production. Kahn (1990) conceptualized engagement at work as the harnessing of organizational members’ selves to their work roles. In a study of engagement in the business context conducted by Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002), business performance was positively related to employee engagement. In another study conducted by May, Gilson, and Harter (2004), workplace engagement is conceptualized as being comprised of three elements: physical, emotional, and cognitive. These elements correspond to the three dimensions identified by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004). The physical element corresponds with Schaufeli and Bakker’s element of vigor; the emotional element corresponds with dedication, and the cognitive element is similar to the absorption dimension identified by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004).

The concept of work engagement emerged from burnout research as an attempt to cover the entire spectrum running from employee unwell-being to employee well-being (Starrat, 2007). From this research, a number of definitions have emerged, and most seem to include an emotional and intellectual commitment to the organization.
Maslach and Leiter (1997) characterized engaged employees as showing energy, involvement, and efficacy that are directly opposite of employees experiencing burnout.

Gorgievski, Bakker, and Schaufeli (2010) concluded that the relationship between work engagement and performance is not the same for all workers. In their study, they found that work engagement is positively related to in-role performance for both self-employed and salaried employees, but only for the salaried employees was a relationship with an extra-role performance found.

The goal of education is for students to engage in rich, authentic learning. This learning is a multidimensional, committed kind of learning that engages the curriculum at its depth and complexity (Starrat 2007). Further, authentic learning necessitates that teachers be authentic and fully engaged in the classroom so that students can learn how to engage authentically in learning as well (Starrat, 2007). There have been a number of studies over the past decade documenting the working conditions of teachers and their level of engagement or work satisfaction. In a weekly diary study conducted by Bakker and Bal (2006), of 54 starting teachers, they found that daily levels of work engagement were predictive of classroom performance. A study conducted by Hakanen, Bakker, and Schaufeli (2006) showed that work engagement has a predictive value for teachers’ organizational commitment. These studies and others have contributed to the research examining teacher engagement in the workplace and its effect on student achievement. There are two underlying premises in this literature: first, it is assumed that working conditions and career opportunities affect the degree to which teachers are actively engaged in teaching and strive to create exciting learning environments in their
classrooms (Louis & Smith, 1992). Second, it is assumed that the structure of the school and the profession can be altered, without a radical change in the existing system, to improve the attractiveness of the profession and the probability that teachers will remain engaged over a long-term career, thus reducing attrition (Louis & Smith, 1992).

**Statement of Problem**

Annually, tens of thousands of public school teachers leave the profession for other occupations, transfer to other schools, or depart for various other reasons (Kelly, 2004). In addition to teacher attrition, the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that between 2008 and 2018 the nation will need to hire nearly half a million additional teachers to account for student growth. Research has shown that teacher job satisfaction is related to positively to student achievement. Shann (1998) maintained that job satisfaction improves job performance and positively affects student outcomes. The Gallup Organization (2000) contended that engagement can lead to satisfaction with an organization, but is it unlikely that satisfaction will result in engagement. According to the Gallup Organization, engaged employees are loyal and psychologically committed to the organization. They are more productive and more likely to stay with the organization.

**Localizing the Problem**

Between the years of 2011 and 2013, the research district experienced growth in student enrollment that necessitated the hiring of more teachers. The Human Resources Division reported that in the 2011-2012 school year, the district hired 944 teachers. In the 2012-2013 school year, the district hired 1,116 teachers, and in 2013-2014 school year, the district hired 1,889 teachers. In comparing the enrollment data with the number
of teachers hired, it was determined that each year, the district hired more teacher than necessary to account for the increase in student enrollment. Every teacher hired, however, filled a legitimate vacant position. It was determined that the hires above what was required for the increased enrollment were due to separations. The district defines separation as an employee discontinuing their employment for any reason. Those reasons include retirement, part-year employment, termination, and resignation. For the purpose of this study, only those employees resigning their positions were included in the data analysis. A review of the separation data revealed significant attrition at the local schools. In the 2011-2012 school year, 475 employees separated from the district. In the 2012-2013 school year, 641 employees separated from the district and in the 2013-2014 school year, 868 employees separated from the district. This raised the question, why are teachers leaving?

In 2012, the research district partnered with the Gallup Organization to study employee engagement in hopes to determine the level of employee satisfaction and engagement. In previous years, the research district utilized perception surveys to measure employee satisfaction. The satisfaction results indicated that the majority of employees were satisfied with their job. These findings, however, did not answer the question why employees were resigning from the district.

Gallup developed the Q12 survey to measure the engagement of employees. According to the Gallup Organization (2000), overall satisfaction with one’s organization is one of the outcomes the Q12 Survey predicts. Overall satisfaction tends to be stable over time. It is the accumulation of daily events that creates a general impression of the
organization. An employee is satisfied or not satisfied with the organization and engaged or not engaged with the local work environment. Engagement and satisfaction overlap, but are unique concepts. According to Gallup, engagement can lead to satisfaction with an organization but is it unlikely that satisfaction will result in engagement. So, while satisfaction is important, understanding engagement will help explain performance and possible turnover for an organization.

Gallup identified three levels of engagement: engaged, not engaged, and actively disengaged. According to Gallup (2000), engaged employees are loyal and psychologically committed to the organization; they are more productive and more likely to stay with the organization for at least a year. This definition is similar to Schaufeli and Bakker’s (2004) definition of engagement as a positive, fulfilling, and work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Not engaged employees, according to Gallup, may be productive, but they are not psychologically connected to their organization. They are more likely to miss workdays and more likely to leave (Harter, 2006). Actively disengaged employees are physically present but psychologically absent (Harter, Schmidt, & Killham, 2003). They are unhappy with their situation and insist on sharing this unhappiness with their colleagues. According to a poll conducted by the Gallup Organization of the U.S. working population, only 30% of workers are engaged (Harter, Schmidt, Agrawal, & Plowman, 2013).

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this research was to determine the relationship between the dependent variables, teacher engagement (as measured by the Gallup Q12 Survey), and
the following independent variables: student achievement (as measured by the number of

eighth graders matriculating to nineth grade without summer school, for grades 6 through
8 and the high school graduation rates for grades 9 through 12); principal’s years of

experience (as determined by job location job data); teacher attendance rates (as

measured by teacher’s attendance in grades 6 through 12); student socioeconomic status

(as measured by the free and reduced lunch percentages); student perceptions of teachers

(as measured by the Student Engagement Instrument); and the perception of

administrative support (as measured by a perception survey of 6th through 12th grade
teachers). The researcher also intended to determine which variables are predictors of

teacher attrition (as defined by the number of teacher separating from the district)

Shann (1998) maintained that teacher job satisfaction and engagement improves

job performance and positively affects student outcomes. This researcher intended to
determine if a significant relationship existed between teacher engagement and the
previously mentioned independent variables. The researcher further intended to
determine if the independent variables, along with teacher engagement were predictors of

teacher attrition.

Research Questions

The following research questions were examined in this study:

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement

and teacher attendance?

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement

and students’ perceptions of teacher expectations?
RQ3: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and principal’s years of experience?

RQ4: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and student socioeconomic status?

RQ5: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and teachers’ perceptions of administrative support?

RQ6: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and student achievement.

RQ7: Are teacher engagement, student achievement, teacher attendance, students’ perceptions, principal’s years of experience, student socioeconomic status, and teachers’ perceptions of administrative support predictors of teacher attrition?

**Rationale and Significance**

This research provided insight into the impact that teacher engagement might have on student achievement and teacher attrition; it determined if there was a significant positive or negative relationship between teacher engagement and principal’s years of experience, teacher attendance, student socioeconomic status, student perceptions, and teacher’s perception of administrative support. The research also determined if teacher engagement, student achievement, principal’s years of experience, teacher attendance, student socioeconomic status, student perceptions and teacher’s perceptions of administrative support were predictors of attrition. These findings may provide useful data to school districts of similar demographics as it relates to teacher/administrative
selection, in-service training, and attrition. It is suggested that the best way to improve student engagement is to improve teacher engagement. Students benefit from the positive culture when employees have a great place to work. Simple and intentional action focused on driving engagement at the school level will lead to meaningful improvement in teacher retention, engagement, and achievement.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature considering the relationship between teacher engagement and student achievement is critical in providing a background for the study. Factors considered from the literature reviewed addressed: (a) teacher engagement, (b) teacher attendance, (c) student socioeconomic status, (d) students’ perceptions of teachers and school climate, (e) teachers’ perceptions of administrative support, (f) principal’s years of experience, and (g) teacher attrition. Relevant literature regarding the previously introduced topics offered a contextual framework for this study.

**Teacher Engagement**

Engagement in the workplace and its correlation to production has been the subject of a number of studies. Engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002) conducted a study of engagement in the business context and concluded that business performance was positively related to employee engagement. In another study conducted by May, Gilson, and Harter (2004), workplace engagement was conceptualized as being comprised of three elements: physical, emotional, and cognitive. These elements correspond to the three dimensions identified by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004). The
physical element corresponds with Schaufeli and Bakker’s element of vigor; the
emotional element corresponds with dedication, and the cognitive element is similar to
the absorption dimension identified by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004).

Workplace engagement was the foundation of the research studies conducted by
the Gallup Organization. Three decades of qualitative and quantitative studies examining
workplace environments revealed much about what stimulates and influences employee
engagement (Gordon, 2006). From this body of research, Gallup developed the Q12
Organizational Health Survey.

Using 263 research studies across 192 organizations in 49 industries and 34
countries, Gallup statistically calculated the business/work unit level relationship between
employee engagement and performance outcomes that the organization supplied (Harter,
2013). Gallup studied nine outcomes: customer loyalty/engagement, profitability,
productivity, turnover, safety incidents, shrinkage, absenteeism, patient safety incidents,
and quality (Harter, 2013). Gallup identified a standard set of commonly found
characteristics of engaged employees from an analysis of the most productive work
groups. These characteristics were narrowed to 12 items most indicative of engagement
at the workgroup level and most predictive of success, the Q12 Workplace Audit.

The Q12 measures engagement conditions, each of which is a casual contributor
to engagement through the measures of its causes (Harter, 2013). Gallup identified three
levels of engagement: engaged, not engaged, and actively disengaged. The Q12
statements are:
Q00. (Overall Satisfaction) On a 5-Point scale, where “5” is extremely satisfied and “1” is extremely dissatisfied, how satisfied are you with (your company) as a place to work?

Q01. I know what is expected of me at work.

Q02. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.

Q03. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

Q04. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.

Q05. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.

Q06. There is someone at work who encourages my development.

Q07. At work, my opinions seem to count.

Q08. The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.

Q09. My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.

Q10. I have a best friend at work.

Q11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.

Q12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

Using the Hunter-Schmidt meta-analysis method, Gallup found that employee engagement is related to all nine performance outcomes. The results indicated high generalizability, which means the correlations were consistent across different organizations (Harter, 2013).
A review of engagement literature conducted by Simpson (2009) revealed that employee engagement began to emerge with the organizational psychology and business literature some 15 years ago. She identified four lines of research that emerged in the review of the literature: personal engagement, burnout/engagement, work engagement, and employee engagement.

Personal engagement was identified as the earliest of the engagement at work constructs (Simpson, 2009). Kahn (1990) introduced the concepts of personal engagement and disengagement. This introduction was based on the premise that previously conceptualized concepts, such as job involvement, organizational commitment, and intrinsic motivation, exist at too far of a distance from employees’ day-to-day experiences within their work role (Kahn, 1990). Kahn defined personal engagement and personal disengagement as the behaviors by which people bring in or leave out their personal selves during the work role performances. Engagement, according to Kahn, is being physically involved, cognitively vigilant and emotionally connected.

The concepts identified by Kahn on personal engagement and disengagement are in direct correlation with Gallup’s identification of employee engagement. Gallup, however, added the concept of “not engaged” as a level of engagement.

The review of the literature revealed burnout/engagement as another line of research in engagement studies. Maslach and Leiter (1997) conceptualized burnout as the direct opposite of engagement. The two concepts exist on a continuum and employees are hypothesized to be somewhere along this continuum at any given point in
time. Burnout is defined as a psychological syndrome characterized by exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy, which is experienced in response to chronic job stressors (Maslach, 1997). Exhaustion (low energy), cynicism (low involvement), and inefficacy (low efficacy) are characteristic of burnout; whereas high energy, high involvement, and high efficacy are characteristic of engagement (Maslach, 1997).

Work engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, 2002). The researchers theorize that engagement is a persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular objective, event individual or behavior rather than a momentary and specific state. Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working the willingness to invest effort in one’s work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties (Schaufeli, 2002). Dedication refers to being strongly involved in one’s work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm inspiration, pride, and challenge (Schaufeli, 2002). Absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one’s work, whereby time passes quickly, and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from works (Schaufeli, 2002).

The final line of research that has considered engagement within the employee work role can be found in the work of Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002). This line of research centers around Gallup’s employee engagement model. While there is agreement with Kahn’s personal engagement definition, Harter et al. (2002) referred to employee engagement as occurring when individuals are emotionally connected to others and cognitively vigilant and is understood to be ‘the individual’s involvement and satisfaction
as well as enthusiasm for work. According to Harter et al. (2002), in order for engagement to occur within the workplace, four antecedent elements are necessary: clarity of expectations and basic materials and equipment provided; feelings of contribution to the organization; feeling a sense of belonging to something; and feeling as though there are opportunities to discuss progress and grow. The Q12 Workplace Audit discussed earlier explains a large portion of the variance in “overall job satisfaction” and antecedents of personal satisfaction and other affective constructs (Harter, 2006).

Of the 32 engagement-based articles, Maslach (1997) referenced in the review, a sample of 20 studies report on the examination of antecedents and/or consequences of engagement at work among varying employee types and work settings. Key findings suggest organizational factors versus individual contributors significantly impact engagement.

**Teacher Attendance**

Teacher attendance is directly related to student outcomes: the more teachers are absent, the more their students’ achievement suffers. When teachers are absent 10 days, the decrease in student achievement is equivalent to the difference between having a brand new teacher and one with two or three years more experience (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2004). A report from the National Council on Teacher Quality shows teacher attendance in 40 urban school systems. The report did not count long-term absences of more than ten consecutive days for maternity/paternity leave or serious illnesses. It broke short-term absences of 1-10 consecutive days into these categories:

- Excellent attendance – 3 or fewer days absent
• Moderate attendance – between 4 and ten days
• Frequently absent – between 11 and 17 days
• Chronically absent – 18 or more days

The average teacher attendance for all the districts was 94% (11 days absent). On average, 16% of teachers had excellent attendance, 40% moderate, 28% frequent, and 16% chronic (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2004). The report revealed that investing in a system that keeps effective and engaged teachers in the classroom should be a priority for school leaders and policymakers. A key part of that effort is creating a school climate in which consistent teacher attendance is the norm (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2004).

Persistent employee absenteeism is a pressing issue for the bulk of business and institutions in the United States (McNeil, 2011). The top cited causes for missing work include personal illness, family emergency, or an employee’s decision to take a mental health day (Camp, 2006). However, the majority of employee absences are used for reasons other than personal illness (Camp, 2006). For instance, approximately 36% to 50% of employee absences are a result of inevitable situations, family illness, mental health days or transportation problems (CareerBuilding & Harris Interactive, 2012). Although absences happen for many reasons, two of the most common kinds of absences are scheduled and unscheduled absences (Commerce Clearing House, [CCH], 2006). A scheduled absence occurs when an employee has requested time off in accordance with company policies and procedures for requesting absences (CCH, 2006). Employees may take a scheduled or absences with or without pay. Scheduled absences include family
medical leave, time off for jury duty, personal illness, and worker’s compensation (CCH, 2006).

One of the most commonly studied models observing employee absenteeism was developed by Steers and Rhodes (1978). The researchers conducted an empirical investigation in an attempt to identify the motivational determinants of employee absenteeism. More precisely, the researchers analyzed the determinants that impacted employees’ ability and motivation to be present at work on a consistent basis. The primary stage of the investigation included a review of 104 empirical studies on the subject of employee motivation. The exhaustive analysis of literature included 209 variables. Of those 209 variables, 40 were related to personal factors and 19 were related to work attitudes. The researchers identified two elements that directly influenced employee absences. The elements were attendance motivation and the employee’s perception of their work. Attendance motivation identified the impact of the organizational culture about the employee’s values, goals, and attitude toward the association. In contrast, employees perceived the ability to attend included attendance barriers such as family circumstances, employee illnesses, and transportation issues. Although the study was conducted over three decades ago, the assumptions apply to present factors regarding the factor relating to teacher absences (Steers & Rhodes, 1978). In fact, there has not been another comprehensive absenteeism study equivalent to Steers and Rhodes in the past three decades.

Various school districts conducted studies to identify solutions to curb the national matter of teacher absenteeism. These studies range from positive reinforcement
for improved attendance, requiring employees to call administrators when absent to buy back incentives (Duflo & Hanna, 2005; Podgursky, 2003; Miller, 2008; Keller, 2008a). Duflo and Hanna (2005) purport that financial incentives have proven to reduce teacher absenteeism for short periods of time. Duflo and Hanna conducted an analysis to determine if financial incentives reduced teacher absences in India. More specifically, the researchers aimed to determine whether direct monitoring, coupled with generous financial incentives, resulted in higher teacher attendance rates.

The population included 120 schools in rural India. The treatment group included teachers in over half of their schools. The treatment group received financial incentives for improved teacher attendance during the investigation. Using tamper-proof cameras equipped with a time and date stamp, students photographed teachers each day they were in attendance. In an additional effort to verify teacher attendance, the researcher scheduled unannounced visits to both the control and treatment schools. The study revealed that teacher attendance rates were 20% lower in the treatment locations; however, over the next few years, the rate of teacher absences had returned to the previous state. An additional finding from the study was that student achievement scores increased in the treatment group, yet the researchers were not able to ascertain causality between the increase in teacher attendance and the increase in student achievement. Taylor-Price (2012) conducted a quasi-experimental investigation to discover the relationship between the implementation a financial teacher incentive program on teacher absences and substitute cost in Center School District in Missouri. The researcher compared the 2008-2010 teacher absence data to the baseline data obtained, during the
2007-2008 school year to determine the effect of a teacher incentive program on teacher absences. The researcher discovered that the teacher incentive plan increased staff attendance rates and reduced the finances spent on substitute teachers. The data revealed a notable decline in teacher absences the first year of the implementation; however, teacher absences increased to the previous rates in the second year of the study.

A Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) study conducted by Hubbell (2008) aimed to examine revenue-neutral solutions to reducing teacher absences. Considering the academic and financial impact of teacher absences, the researcher analyzed previous recommendations to increase teacher attendance which encompassed the following: (a) reporting to a direct supervisor; (b) closely monitoring absence data; (c) open communication with staff regarding absences; (d) holding administrators accountable; (e) encouraging employee wellness; (f) sick leave carry-over days; (g) eliminating sick leave banks; (h) restriction of personal days; (g) district incentive programs; and (i) including teacher absences on teacher evaluations (Hubbell, 2008).

The conclusions of the analysis yielded two recommendations to assist the Wisconsin school district with improved teacher attendance. Hubbell (2008) recommended that districts consider a range of previously mentioned options to curb teacher absences. Hubbell also recommended that the state officials meet with union representatives before implementing any of the previous recommendations to ensure healthy relationships between the state officials and the union representatives. An extensive body of literature indicates that a high amount of job gratification at a workplace motivates faculty to display a stronger commitment to the school. Thus,
positive work climate has been cited as a factor to improve teacher attendance (Imants & Zoelen, 1995; Keller, 2008b; Miller, 2012; Owen, 2010). An earlier study conducted by Imants and Zoelen (1995) illustrated that positive working environments had were associated with lower teacher absence rates. The Netherlands-based study utilized the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ-RE) to examine the interaction between teacher absences, teacher efficacy, and school climate. The researchers found a positive correlation between directive leadership and lower percentages of teacher absence. The study also revealed that teacher perceptions of principals' supportiveness were assessed by the principal’s willingness to improve teaching conditions, set clearly defined student discipline rules and procedures, fairly evaluate teachers performance, offer fair procedures for filing grievances, and provide feedback regarding teacher performance (Imants & Zoelen, 1995).

**Students’ Socioeconomic Status**

A study conducted by Nicole Simon and Susan Moore Johnson of the Harvard Graduate School of Education concluded that teacher turnover in U.S. public schools had increased substantially over the past three decades, especially in schools serving low-income neighborhoods (Simon & Johnson 2015). Children of poverty are frequently taught by the least experienced and often the least effective teachers. They also attend schools without stable, trusting, productive adult-adult and adult-child relationships, because of this constant teacher and administrator churn.

To address the question, why do so many idealistic young educators leave inner-city schools for greener pastures – or the professional entirely, policymakers and
researchers have focused primarily on student and teacher characteristics. They suggest teachers seemingly prefer working with higher-achieving, more privileged students with higher salaries, professional status, and better geographic locations (Simon & Johnson, 2015).

Martin Haberman (1991), a University of Wisconsin/Milwaukee professor, described the standard practice that occurs in most urban classrooms as the Pedagogy of Poverty. Haberman identified the following rudimentary activities that occur in most urban schools:

- Giving information
- Asking questions
- Giving directions
- Making assignments
- Monitoring seatwork
- Reviewing assignments
- Giving tests
- Reviewing tests
- Assigning homework
- Reviewing homework
- Settling disputes
- Punishing noncompliance
- Marking papers
- Giving grades
Haberman reported that taken separately, there may be nothing wrong with the activities. He further reported that there are occasions when any one of the 14 acts might have a beneficial effect (Haberman, 1991). Taken together and performed to the systematic exclusion of other acts, they have become what teachers, students, parents and the community expect in classrooms (Haberman, 1991).

Haberman believed these practices are deeply embedded in inner-city schools because they appeal to key constituencies:

- **Those who did not do well in schools themselves** – People who have been brutalized are usually not rich sources of compassion. They find it easier to believe that they would have succeeded if only somebody had forced them to learn.

- **Those who rely on common sense rather than thoughtful analysis** – The conventional wisdom says that permissiveness is the cause of the nation’s educational problems, so it stands to reason that back to basics will solve those problems.

- **Those who fear people of color and the poor** – Bigots typically become obsessed with the need for control.

- **Those who have low expectations for people of color and the poor** – They believe that at-risk students are served best by a directive, controlling pedagogy.
Haberman goes on to describe four tenants that he believes undergirded the pedagogy of poverty:

- Teachers, teach, students learn, so students and teachers are engaged in different activities.
- Teachers are in charge, students need to develop appropriate behavior, so when students follow teachers’ directions, appropriate behavior is being taught and learned.
- There is a wide range of differences among students, including handicapping conditions and debilitating home lives, so it is inevitable that some students will end up at the bottom of the class and others will finish on top.
- Basic skills are essential, but students are not necessarily interested in basic skills, so directive pedagogy must be used to compel students to learn what they need to learn.

Haberman concludes that the pedagogy of poverty does not work. It is not supported by research, by theory, or by the best practices of superior urban teachers. Haberman contended that students achieve neither minimum levels of life skills nor do they reach their potential of what they are capable of learning. The classroom atmosphere created by constant teacher direction and student compliance is filled with passive resentment that sometimes bubbles into overt resistance. Teachers burn out because of the emotional
and physical energy that they must expend to maintain their authority every hour of every day (Haberman, 1991).

Perhaps the most ironic aspect of the pedagogy of poverty is that students come to expect it and punish teachers who try to deviate from it. Examples abound of inexperienced teachers who seek to involve students in genuine learning activities and are met with apathy or bedlam, while older hands who announce, “Take out your dictionaries and start to copy the words that begin with h,” are rewarded with compliance or silence (Haberman, 1991, p. 82). In this way, through operant conditioning, students “actually control, manage, and shape the behavior of their teachers,” says Haberman (p. 83). Teachers may believe they are responding to student needs when, in fact, “they are more like hostages responding to students’ overt or tacit threats of noncompliance and, ultimately, disruption,” reports Haberman (p. 83). It is this disruption that causes high teacher turnover and low engagement in schools in low socioeconomic areas.

Urban teachers are rarely disciplined or fired because their students are not learning. According to Haberman (1991), urban teachers are castigated because they cannot elicit compliance. Once schools made teacher competence synonymous with student control, it was inevitable that students would sense who was really in charge. The students’ stake in maintaining the pedagogy of poverty is of the strongest possible kind: it absolves them of responsibility for learning and puts the burden on the teachers, who must be accountable for making them learn.
Students’ Perceptions of Teachers

There is a growing belief in school districts and charter management organizations across the nation that student perception surveys can provide low-cost, valid, reliable, and helpful insights on teachers’ classroom performance, according to the Bellwether Education Partners—Jeff Schulz, Gunjan Sud, and Becky Crowe (2014). This assertion is bolstered by the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) study. According to the authors, incorporating student surveys into formal, high-stakes teacher evaluation and development systems has its challenges. The report raised the question of whether student surveys will join classroom observations and student achievement data as a third and permanent common measure in newly redesigned teacher-evaluation systems, or if adoption will remain limited to a small number of progressive districts and CMOs.

According to Ho and Kane (2013), any instrument, when stakes are attached, could distort behavior in unwanted ways, or produce a less accurate picture of typical practice. The authors note the critical importance of good survey questions, efficient administration, and student confidentiality. Schulz, Sud, and Crowe (2014) highlighted two challenges:

- Gaining teacher buy-in and support: Teachers are often skeptical and resistant to the idea of being evaluated by their students, especially if the results are part of their formal evaluation. There’s also the common belief that surveys are popularity contests and teachers who are rigorous and demanding will not get high ratings. Teacher push-back caused both Georgia and
Connecticut to scrap their initial plans to have student surveys count in teachers’ evaluations. Before piloting, administrators need to communicate clearly and regularly with teachers and students about what the surveys will ask (and why), how the questions were developed, and how the results will be used. There also needs to be evidence that students’ opinions are correlated with student achievement and other teacher-effectiveness measures. Once reassured on these points, teachers often embrace student surveys as helpful in understanding their performance and how it relates to student achievement (Schulz et al., 2014).

- **Using data to improve teaching practice**: This involves figuring out how to incorporate student survey data into professional development. Surveys can be used as a quick snapshot of student impressions mid-year, with immediate implications for coaching and changing classroom practices. Districts surveyed by Schulz et al. were in the early stages of learning how to use survey data for teacher improvement. They report that making connections between survey administration and improved teacher effectiveness is critical. Districts and states will need to commit to, and invest in, using the results for teacher development and support and devising clear action plans for integrating the data into their teacher learning communities, coaching cycles, and other professional development opportunities (Schulz et al., 2014).

Suzanne Bouffard reported, in a Harvard Education Letter, on the growing popularity of surveying students on their teachers’ performance. Research has shown
that students’ perceptions are more closely correlated with achievement than principals’
classroom evaluations (Bouffard, 2015). “Who knows my practice better than my
students,” asks Nashville teacher Amy Cate? (Bouffard, 2015, p. 1) “Students watch us
deliver lessons every day and can make observations that help expose blind spots in our
practice,” says Massachusetts Superintendent Greg Myers (Buffard, 2015, p.1).

Bouffard explored whether surveys are a popularity contest and if students
misunderstand the questions or take the surveys seriously. She contended that these
issues are minimized if teachers carefully explain the purpose of surveys and use well-
worded questions that get too specific classroom practices.

Some districts mandate that surveys make up a specific percentage of a teacher’s
evaluation (Bouffard, 2015). Other districts treat the data as additional information,
asking principals to explain discrepancies between students’ views and what they see in
classroom observations. Preliminary evidence suggests that surveys may go beyond
documenting teacher performance and improve it (Bouffard, 2015); 75% of Georgia
teachers who took part in a pilot project said they found students’ feedback helpful in
adopting better classroom practices (Bouffard, 2015).

Universities routinely survey students on how professors are performing, but until
recently, K-12 students have not been given a chance to evaluate their teachers. This is
because, although students spend hundreds of more hours in classrooms than any
administrator, people doubt that students can provide valid, reliable, and stable responses
about the quality of teaching (Ferguson, 2012).
The Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project has put those doubts to rest. Comparing value-added analysis of test scores, classroom observations, and student perception surveys, using Ferguson’s Tripod questions, researchers have found that students provide accurate, helpful information on their teachers’ performance (Ferguson, 2012). Ferguson contended that students know good instruction when they experience it as well as when they do not. The research design was careful to control for students’ family background and isolate each teacher’s characteristics and impact on learning. These robust findings, notwithstanding, offer two caveats about using student survey results to evaluate teachers: any method of assessing teacher effectiveness is prone to measurement error, and teachers may temporarily alter their behaviors to improve their survey results, especially if students’ opinions have high stakes (Ferguson, 2012).

**Teachers’ Perceptions of Administrative Support**

Principals affect the professional lives of teachers in a numerous way, according to Simon and Johnson. They are responsible for articulating a clear vision for the school, seeing the vision through and hiring skilled teachers and support staff who are committed to the vision. They assign teachers to appropriate subject and grades and put in place effective discipline, mentoring and common planning time. Principals should strive to set a positive, professional tone, facilitate differentiated roles for teachers and reward collaboration. Simon and Johnson (2015) suggested that principals are even more important in high-poverty schools than in more advantaged communities, and yet, perversely, the neediest schools are more likely to have a succession of inexperienced and less effective leaders. It is especially common for novice teachers in such schools to cope
with several aspects of mismanagement simultaneously, which bears heavily on their sense of efficacy and likely affects their students (Simon & Johnson, 2015).

According to Simon and Johnson, it is hard to disentangle the many ways in which principals affect teachers’ work and their decisions about whether to stay or go. However, teachers repeatedly cite a small number of factors that have a significant effect; the principal’s effectiveness as a school manager, instructional leadership, and inclusiveness in decision-making (Simon & Johnson, 2015).

School management includes scheduling, facilities, budget, classroom supplies, communication and simple decency and fairness. Instructional leadership includes hiring and retaining the right people, conducting thoughtful evaluations of teaching practice and making helpful suggestions for improvement, and orchestrating collegial support for new teachers. Decision-making includes listening to teachers’ views, giving them a measure of autonomy and discretion, and making them partners in the improvement process (Simon & Johnson, 2015).

**Principal’s Years of Experience**

As the central leader of a school, the principal has long been identified as having a strong role in the effectiveness of the instruction provided by a school (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Easton, & Lupperscu, 2010). According to research conducted by Robinson (2010), principals impact student achievement not only through leading the processes that result in high-quality instructional leadership but also through specific major factors, such as principal training and experience.
Reports detailing value-added model results from Florida, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina have shown varying results, from small effects to non-significant effects of principal experience and training variables on student achievement (Chaing, Lipscomb, & Gill, 2012; Dhuey & Smith, 2012; Grissom, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012). These reports do suggest interesting paths forward for researchers and policymakers interested in principal effects. First, the effects of new principals in their first three years on value-added student achievement were weak to non-significant (Chaing et al., 2012; Dhuey & Smith, 2012). Second, experience as a principal and principal’s certification and training through advanced degree programs were positive and significant in North Carolina (Dhuey & Smith, 2012). Moreover, third, principal and school background and demographic variables, as well as academic climate variables, were included in the models, but as control variables, so specific coefficients, and effect sizes were not reported (Dhuey & Smith, 2012; Grissom et al., 2012).

Recent research on the principal’s experience has focused on examining the complex nature of school leadership through mediated models (Heck & Hallinger, 2009; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Lithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010) and time-tested growth models. These models examined the influence of principals on the decline or growth of student achievement (Coelli & Green, 2012). These reports, despite being non-peer reviewed, have examined rich data sets that include multiple years of data across entire policy domain data sets, such as all schools in the state of Texas (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2009), schools across New York City (Cullen & Mazzeo, 2007), and all schools in the state of Illinois (Cullen & Mazzeo, 2007; White & Bowers, 2011). The reports
came to three major conclusions. First, principal’s effects appear to be stronger in high poverty schools (Branch et al., 2009). Second, principal’s education, experience, and training appear to be weakly to unrelated to student performance growth in both NYC and Illinois (Cullen & Mazzeo, 2007; White & Bowers, 2011). However, third, principals’ on-the-job experiences do appear to influence student achievement, replicating across the NYC and Illinois studies (Cullen & Mazzeo, 2007; White & Bowers, 2011). Specifically, principals in their first year and long-term principals (six or more years as a principal) experienced lower student achievement growth rates than principals on the job for two to five years (White & Bowers, 2011). This suggests that while principal training may be weakly related to student achievement growth, principal experiences are associated with growth in student achievement over time (White & Bowers, 2011).

The literature on principal professional experience suggests that the number of years of a principal’s experience on the job and in the school may be strongly related to school outcomes (Branch et al., 2009). In combination with the study conducted by Cullen and Mazzeo (2007) and White and Bowers (2011), these studies concluded that in some context principal in years two to five may have a positive effect, while veteran principals may have a weak to nonsignificant impact on achievement growth.

**Teacher Attrition**

According to Fuller, Waite, and Torres Irribarra (2016) in their article, “Explaining Teacher Turnover; School Cohesion and Intrinsic Motivation in Los Angeles,” lifting achievement in many schools depends on reducing the exit of effective
teachers. According to their research, the most important factor motivating teachers to remain at a school or leave was their sense of the school’s coherence. This was separate from and somewhat more important than teachers’ intrinsic rewards and their sense of classroom efficacy.

There was considerable variation in teachers’ perceptions of school coherence within the same school, as well as differences between elementary and high schools (Fuller et al., 2016). According to Fuller et al., a school’s coherence is perceived by teachers as they work with different students and colleagues and interact with different school leaders. Organizational cohesion may vary markedly year to year when leadership is unstable (Fuller et al., 2016). Teachers’ efforts to tighten social ties and distribute leadership across peers may take some time before a shared sense of purposes and trust and responsive students come to enrich social cohesion and reduce staff turnover.

The researchers report that rewarding individual teachers for raising test scores, and working to give teachers greater autonomy in their classrooms, are less-effective stay/leave factors than improvements in teachers’ sense of school coherence. Greater progress in reducing turnover may result from building resourceful leadership, nurturing stronger collaboration and trust, and ensuring that all teachers are pulling in the same direction, mutually confident that student achievement can be lifted. The authors conclude that teachers appear more loyal to their schools when they are meaningfully engaged with each other, not simply toiling alone inside their classrooms (Fuller et al., 2016).
Daniel Pink (2009), in his book, *Drive*, discussed how modern research is redefining what motivates people and how companies and managers are altering their practices to increase employee satisfaction and performance. He discussed that the old “carrot and stick” motivation has become less compatible with, and at times downright antagonistic to how we organize what we do; how we think about what we do; and how we do what we do (Pink, 2009). He suggested that there is a need for a new concept of motivation that relies on the theory that human beings have an innate inner drive to be autonomous, self-determined and connected to one another.

Coggins and Diffenbaugh (2013) in their article, “Teachers with Drive,” draws on the work of Daniel Pink. The authors cite the grim statistics on U.S. teacher attrition: half of all urban teachers leave the profession within their first 3-5 years, and half of the “irreplaceables” (the most successful 20% of all teachers) leave within five years (Coggins & Diffenbaugh, 2013). According to the authors, failure to retain effective teachers is not only costing our school systems billions of dollars but is also negatively affecting student achievement.

Coggins and Diffenbaugh (2013), utilizing Pink’s (2009) work, suggested that to increase the number of teachers who continue working effectively in classrooms for more than a few years, their motivation must be developed around the themes mastery, purpose, and autonomy. Establishing a profession focused on mastery means more thoughtfully matching the skills of teachers with the responsibilities of the job (Pink, 2009). People thrive when they feel good at their work. There are three factors in schools, however, that have a perverse impact on mastery. The first factor is that many
rookie teachers are thrown into the most difficult classrooms with inadequate support, leading them to quit. At the same time, veteran teacher plateau because they are not given appropriately challenging work, leading them to seek more challenging work outside education (Coggins & Diffenbaugh, 2013). The second factor that effects mastery is that the profession still has not functionally defined mastery in teaching and the idea of defining success in terms of test scores is controversial. The final factor that effects mastery is that most teachers are evaluated infrequently and often receive superficial feedback. A mastery-focused profession must provide frequent quality feedback to the practitioner (Coggins & Diffenbaugh, 2013).

Research has long documented that teachers pursue a career in education largely to influence the lives of students (Johnson, 2004). Most teachers are in the classroom because they want to improve the lives of students and leave the world a better place. Stage-two teachers, those with 3-10 years of experience, want opportunities to improve student outcomes on a broader scale (Coggins & Peske, 2011). According to Coggins and Diffenbaugh (2013), most stage-two teachers are not comfortable simply implementing other people's ideas; they want to have a say in school policies. Coggins and Diffenbaugh described how two Chicago teachers convened 2,500 educators for Saturday workshops on implementing Common Core. They also touted Teach Plus’s Turnaround Teacher Teams program, which sends a group of high-performing teachers into struggling schools to work in close collaboration with the faculty and administrators to improve the school (Coggins & Peske, 2011).
Some have argued that the profession offer teachers too much autonomy by allowing them to close the door and practice as they please. Seeking to increase Accountability, these reformers seek to decrease teacher autonomy (Pink, 2009). According to Coggins and Diffenbaugh (2013), teachers can join in pursuing common curriculum standards while maintaining significant choice in how to implement them. A teaching profession that values autonomy rejects both the notion that teachers should be left alone to do as they please and the belief that teachers are pawns who must be controlled (Coggins & Diffenbaugh, 2013).
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Student achievement, for the purpose of this study, was measured by graduation rate for high schools and the percent of students that met and exceeded on the eighth grade Math and Language Arts Milestones Assessments. Teacher engagement was defined as a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. For the purpose of this study, teacher engagement was measured by the results of the Gallup Q12 Survey. The goal of education is for students to engage in rich, authentic learning. This learning is a multidimensional, committed kind of learning that engages the curriculum at its depth and complexity (Starrat, 2007). Further, authentic learning necessitates that teachers be authentic and fully engaged in the classroom so that students can learn how to engage authentically in learning as well (Starrat, 2007). Daily levels of work engagement have been found to be predictive of classroom performance. (Baker & Bal, 2006). The variables studied were student’s perceptions of teacher expectations, principal’s years of experience, student socioeconomic status, teachers’ perceptions of administrative support, student achievement, and teacher attendance. The indicated variables were studied through the Herzberg’s Motivational Theory and Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.
The background for this study was based on two theories, Fredrick Herzberg’s Motivational Theory and Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. Herzberg (1968) constructed a two-dimensional paradigm of factors affecting people’s attitudes about work. His theory is based on the notion that the presence of one set of job characteristics or incentives leads to worker satisfaction at work while another and a separate set of job characteristics leads to dissatisfaction at work. Thus, satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not on a continuum with one increasing as the other diminishes, but are independent phenomena (Herzberg, 1968). According to Herzberg, the opposite of job satisfaction is not job dissatisfaction but, rather, no job satisfaction; and similarly, the opposite of job dissatisfaction is not job satisfaction, but no job dissatisfaction” (Herzberg, 1968). This theory suggests that to improve job attitudes and productivity, administrators must recognize and attend to both sets of characteristics and not assume that an increase in satisfaction leads to decrease in unpleasurable dissatisfaction.

Herzberg (1968) identified two sets of factors that affect engagement or satisfaction, Hygiene factors, and Motivators. The term “hygiene” is used in the sense that certain factors are maintenance factors. These, dissatisfaction-avoidance factors or de-motivators, are extrinsic to the job and generally out of the sphere of control of the employee. The dissatisfaction-avoidance factors included company policy and administration; supervision; interpersonal relationship; working conditions; status; security; and salary (see Figure 1).
According to Herzberg (1968), hygiene factors or de-motivators are what cause dissatisfaction among employees in a workplace. Herzberg contended that at best, they can create no dissatisfaction on the job; their absence or mishandling causes dissatisfaction. "The most common misconception about motivation is that managers just need to prod employees with incentives, a positive kick in the pants (Herzberg, 1968). These externally organized incentives have taken various forms over the years: reducing time spent at work; boosting wages; increasing fringe benefits; human relations training; sensitivity training; better top-down communication; better two-way communication; getting employees more involved in their jobs; and employee counseling (Herzberg, 1968).

The problem with all of these, says Herzberg, is that they rely on external stimulation, and when it wears off, more is required. The real motivation is when people
do not rely on outside agency – they generate motivation within themselves. The truly motivating factors in a job are intrinsic to the job (Herzberg, 1968). These factors include achievement, recognition for achievement and the work itself. The complete lists of motivators are listed in Figure 1.

A study of 1,685 employees (including teachers) in several different countries found the first list was most often the primary cause of satisfaction on the job (81% of the time) while the second was most often the cause of work unhappiness (69% of the time). Another study found marked improvements in job satisfaction, attendance, and productivity when the following factors were enhanced:

- Removing some controls while retaining accountability;
- Increasing the accountability of individuals for their work;
- Giving a person a complete, natural unit of work (e.g., module, division, area);
- Granting additional authority or job freedom to employees in their activity;
- Making periodic reports directly available to the workers themselves, rather than to supervisors;
- Introducing new and more difficult tasks not previously handled;
- Assigning individuals specific or specialized tasks, enabling them to become experts.

All these changes build in responsibility and personal achievement, recognition for a job well done (internal and external), growth, learning, and advancement. Herzberg contended that motivation is based on growth needs. It is an internal engine, and its benefits show up over a long period. Because the ultimate reward in motivation is
personal growth, people do not need to be rewarded incrementally. If I write a book that is a big accomplishment; then if I write an article, it is a lesser accomplishment, but nevertheless an addition to my personal growth (Herzberg, 1968).

Herzberg suggested that managers conduct a controlled experiment in which job-enrichment changes are introduced for some employees while a control group maintains the status quo, and dissatisfaction-avoidance factors (like salaries and working conditions) are kept the same for both groups. He cautioned manager to be prepared for a drop in performance in the experimental group the first few weeks. The change-over to a new job may lead to a temporary reduction in efficiency. Supervisors may also become anxious as parts of their jobs are taken over by their subordinates (Herzberg, 1968).

However, in a matter of weeks, job satisfaction, motivation, and happiness will increase in the experimental group, and productivity will soar. People will rise to their full potential, and the long-term benefits to the organization will be significant. Herzberg concluded that not all jobs can be enriched, nor do all jobs need to be enriched. However, for those that lend themselves to this treatment, the rewards are significant. Herzberg’s conclusion parallel Maslow’s lowest level in his motivational theory, safety and physiological needs.

In 1954, Maslow first published “Motivation and Personality,” which introduced his theory about how people satisfy various personal needs in the context of their work (Gawel, 1997). Based on his work as a humanistic psychologist, he proposed that there is a general pattern of needs recognition and satisfaction that people follow in generally the same sequence. He also theorized that a person could not recognize or pursue the next
higher need in the hierarchy until her or his currently recognized need substantially or completed satisfied, a concept called prepotency (Gawel, 1997). Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs is shown in Figure 2. It is illustrated as a pyramid with the survival need at the broad-base bottom and the self-actualization need at the narrow top (Gawel, 1997).

Figure 2. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

Maslow argued that individuals need to satisfy basic needs such as warmth, safety, and security before they can realize their personal growth and development. The same theory can be applied to how an organization treats and engages with their staff.

The Gallup Organization in their research recognized the importance of basic needs being met before individuals can move toward engagement. Using 263 research studies across 192 organizations in 49 industries and 34 countries, Gallup statistically calculated the business/work unit level relationship between employee engagement and
performance outcomes that the organization supplied (Harter, 2013). Gallup studied nine outcomes: customer loyalty/engagement, profitability, productivity, turnover, safety incidents, shrinkage, absenteeism, patient safety incidents, and quality (Harter, 2013). Gallup identified a standard set of commonly found characteristics of engaged employees from an analysis of the most productive work groups. These characteristics were narrowed to 12 items most indicative of engagement at the workgroup level and most predictive of success, the Q12 Workplace Audit (Harter, 2013).

The 12 engagement elements function like Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, with basic demands that must be fulfilled before employees can progress (Kamph, 2014). Figure 3 shows the Gallup Engagement Hierarchy.

Figure 3. Gallup engagement questions: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, and Herzberg’s Two Factor Theory.
Figure 3 shows the 12 engagement questions relate to the different levels of the engagement pyramid. The engagement pyramid begins, as with Maslow’s Hierarchy, with basic needs and progresses up toward growth, or self-actualization. The figure also shows the relationship between Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, Gallup Engagement Questions and Herzberg’s Two Factor Theory. This representation was adapted by the researcher for the purposes of this research.

Figure 4 shows the relationship between employment engagement and Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. It also shows the relationship between employment engagement and the motivating and demotivating factors in Herzberg’s Motivational Theory.

Figure 4. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs applied to employee engagement.
The lowest two levels of Maslow’s Hierarchy are equivalent to the hygiene factors in Herzberg’s motivational theory. The highest three levels of Maslow’s Hierarchy are equivalent to the motivating factors of Herzberg’s motivational theory.

In an article by Deborah Stipek of Stanford University, she contended that the theory of action behind America’s current accountability movement is that rewards and punishments will motivate teachers and administrators to do better work (Stipek 2004). Behaviorism is a well-accepted theory of human motivation, but decades of research have shown that for people to change, three elements must be present: a sense of autonomy, of respect, and of efficacy. “The promise of reward and the threat of punishment do not motivate people to perform effectively,” says Stipek, “and sometimes undermine their performance when those approaches make them feel coerced, disrespected, or incompetent” (Stipek, 2013, p. 32). Here are her suggestions for enhancing motivation and accomplishment in each area:

- **Autonomy** – People work most effectively when they have a sense of control and are working at least partly because they want to, not because somebody is making them. To increase this dimension, teachers should be involved in policy decisions and have a measure of choice in how policies and curriculum are implemented.

- **Respect** – People do their best work when they feel they belong to and are treated well in the social context in which they work. “The language used to discuss teacher accountability or evaluations matters” (p. 32), says Stipek. References to ‘getting rid of bad teachers’ in public discourse threatens rather
than motivate teachers. Policies that create competition among teachers within a district or school, such as merit pay for a predetermined percentage of teachers, weaken the sense of community. It is better to talk in terms of providing support for continuous improvement and building robust professional learning communities.

- Efficacy – People work best when they believe they can meet the demands of the job and their efforts will pay off. That means providing teachers with the tools they need to be successful – curriculum materials, technology, support for the psychological and physical challenges students face, and effective professional development. It also means understanding that intrinsic motivation is a powerful engine of improvement in schools. “Most teachers take great pleasure in a lesson that goes particularly well and in seeing students engaged and learning,” says Stipek. “Experiencing their skills and developing and seeing the effects of their more effective practices on student learning are powerful motivators for teachers” (p. 32).

At the dawn of this new millennium, Miner (2003) concluded that motivation continues to hold a significant position in the eyes of scholars. “If one wishes to create a highly valid theory, which is also constructed with the purpose of enhanced usefulness in practice in mind, it would be best to look to motivation theories for an appropriate model” (p. 29). Miner’s conclusion is based on a comparison with other middle range theories of organizational behavior. The question remains as to whether, on an absolute standard, motivation theory and research have fared well over the last quarter of a
century. Scholars (e.g., Pinder. 1998) have pointed to the power of context to moderate opportunities for, and constraints against, organizational behavior. Work motivation is a set of energetic forces that originate both within as well as beyond an individual’s being, to initiate work-related behavior and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration (Pinder 1998). Thus, motivation is a psychological process resulting from the interaction between the individual and the environment, as also theorized in Herzberg’s Motivational Theory.

**Definition of Variables**

The following operational definitions should provide assistance to the reader in understanding the terms used in this study.

**Dependent Variables**

**Teacher engagement** is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. The level of teacher engagement was measured by Gallup’s Q12 Survey.

**Teacher Attrition** is defined as the number of teachers resigning from their positions in the research district.

**Independent Variables**

**Student achievement** is defined as the percentage of sixth through eighth-grade students scoring at or above grade level on the Georgia Milestones Assessment, and the graduation rate for ninth through twelfth-grade students.
**Teacher attendance** is defined as 6th to 12th-grade teachers attending a full work day. Teacher attendance was measured by the attendance rate of all 6th to 12th-grade certified teachers.

**Student perception of teacher expectations** is defined as the perception that students have that their teachers care and create an environment conducive to learning. Student perceptions were measured by the Student Engagement Instrument issued to all 6th to 12th-grade students.

**Principals years of experience** is defined as the number of years an employee is assigned as the principal of a middle or high school.

**Student socioeconomic status** (SES) is defined as the percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch.

**Teacher’s perception of administrative support** is defined as the perceptions that teachers had regarding the level of support given by the administration and the perception of the administration’s ability to establish and maintain positive work environment. The perception of administrative support was measured by the school climate survey administered to all 6th to 12th-grade certified teachers.

**Relationship among the Variables**

The researcher hypothesized that there is a significant relationship between the independent variables and teacher engagement. The researcher further hypothesizes that teacher engagement, student achievement, teacher attendance, students' perceptions, principal’s years of experience, student socioeconomic status and teacher perception of administrative support, are predictors of teacher attrition in grades sixth through twelve in
a large urban school system in the Southeast Region of the United States (see Figure 5). The intended goal of this study is to determine which of the variable directly influence teacher engagement and teacher attrition. Herzberg’s Motivational Theory asserts real motivation is when people do not rely on external/de-motivators or hygiene factors – they generate motivation within themselves, the truly motivating factors in a job are intrinsic to the job (Herzberg, 1968). Mazlow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory asserts that only when individuals satisfy their basic needs can they move toward satisfaction.

The study contended that students would achieve in schools where teachers report high levels of teacher engagement. In addition, schools with high levels of teacher engagement will have lower teacher attrition. A weekly diary study conducted by Bakker and Bal (2006) of 54 starting teachers found that daily levels of work engagement were predictive of student classroom performance. Teachers are more inclined to be engaged
if they are in attendance, and students perceptions of their behaviors and ability are favorable. One of the most commonly studied models observing employee absenteeism was developed by Steers and Rhodes (1978). The researchers conducted an empirical investigation in an attempt to identify the motivational determinants of employee absenteeism. More precisely, the researchers analyzed the determinants that impacted employees’ ability and motivation to be present at work on a consistent basis. The researchers identified two elements that directly influenced employee absences. The elements were attendance motivation and the employee’s perception of their work (Steers & Rhodes, 1978). Research has shown that students’ perceptions are more closely correlated with achievement than principals’ classroom evaluations (Bouffard, 2015). “Who knows my practice better than my students?” asks Nashville teacher Amy Cate (p. 2). “Students watch us deliver lessons every day and can make observations that help expose blind spots in our practice” (p. 2), says Massachusetts superintendent Greg Myers.

Leadership is a significant factor in teacher engagement. Positive perceptions of the support given by administration and positive relationships fostered between teachers and principals should lead to increased student achievement. Principals affected the professional lives of teachers in numerous ways, according to Simon and Johnson (2015). Teachers repeatedly cite a small number of factors that have a significant effect; the principal’s effectiveness as a school manager, instructional leadership, and inclusiveness in decision-making (Simon & Johnson, 2015).

According to Haberman (1991), a University of Wisconsin Professor, schools in economically deprived areas frequently institute the Pedagogy of Poverty. This
pedagogy is responsible for low teacher engagement which is directly related to low student achievement.

According to Fuller, Waite, and Torres Irribarre (2016) in their article, “Explaining Teacher Turnover: School Cohesion and Intrinsic Motivation in Los Angeles,” lifting achievement in many schools depends on reducing the exit of effective teachers. It is the hope of the researcher that this study will support the idea that teacher attendance, positive student perceptions of teacher expectations, principal’s years of experience, positive teacher perceptions of administrative support will lead to engaged teachers. Differences in student socioeconomic status may cause variance in teacher engagement. Engaged teachers will result in lower teacher attrition as defined in this study.

Summary

This research provided insight into the relationship between teacher engagement, student achievement, principal’s years of experience, teacher attendance rates, student socioeconomic status, student’s perceptions of teachers, and the perception of administrative support. The research also determined if these variables were predictors of teacher attrition. These findings may provide useful data to school districts of similar demographics as it relates to teacher/administrative selection and retention. It is suggested that the best way to improve student engagement is to improve teacher engagement. Students benefit from the positive culture when employees have a great place to work. Simple and intentional action focused on driving engagement at the school level will lead to meaningful improvement and a decrease in teacher attrition.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter gives background information on the district used to explore the relationship between student achievement and teacher engagement, student socioeconomic status, teacher perceptions of administrative support, principal’s years of experience, students’ perceptions of teacher support, and teacher attendance. These relationships may affect student achievement in grades 6-12 in a large urban school system in the Southeast region of the United States. The survey instruments used in the study are also included.

Research Design

A quantitative approach was used to explain how teacher engagement is affected by student achievement and select variables for grades 6 through 12 in a large urban school district located in the Southeast region of the United States. This study used a correlational technique to determine if there was a statistical relationship between teacher engagement and student socioeconomic status, teacher expectation of administrative support, principal’s years of experience, student expectation of teacher support, teacher attendance, and student achievement. A correlational design was appropriate because the variables were measured but no means was used to control or manipulate the variables in the study (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2008). The correlational design directly aligned with the
purpose of this study—to investigate a possible relationship between teacher engagement and student achievement and other variables. Relationship studies require data collection on at least two variables that can be quantified (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2008). The statistical data on the independent variables were used to determine the relationship between the dependent variables based on correlational analysis using beta weights and multiple regressions. The Gallup Q12 Engagement Survey was used to determine levels of teacher engagement. The number of eighth-grade students meeting or exceeding the standard on the Math and Language Arts Milestones Assessment was used to determine student achievement in middle school. The high school graduation rate was used to measure student achievement in high schools. To capture the effect of student achievement and other variables on teacher engagement, vertical scale score gains were utilized as the outcome variables.

A multiple regression equation was used to predict the strength of relationships between two or more independent variables to two or more dependent or variables respectively (Warner, 2008). The analysis was regarded as a multiple linear regression given that the researcher intended to determine if the variables (teacher attendance, teachers’ perceptions of administrative support, student socioeconomic status, students’ perceptions of teachers, principal’s years of experience, student achievement, and teacher engagement are predictors of teacher attrition.

**Description of the Setting**

The research site is a large urban school district located in the Southeast Region of the United States. The research district has 176, 820 students in grades kindergarten
through 12. According to the superintendent’s fact sheet, the research district has 136 campuses, of which 49 campuses are middle and high school. For the purpose of this study, middle schools consist of grades 6 through 8, and high schools consist of grades 9 through 12 (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Research District Facility Breakdown*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilities: FY 2015</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Schools</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Schools</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Schools</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Entities</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student population of the research district is very diverse. For the purpose of this study, diversity was defined by, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. The research district’s teacher population, however, is not as diverse. According to the Georgia Department of Education Certified Personnel Data, the research district was 68% white and 32% minority (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Student and Staff Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students (11/20/15)</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff (11/15)</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is also a wide range between the number of male and female certified staff members in the research district. All teachers in this study have some level of certification issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

According to the Georgia Department of Education, 56% of the pupils in the research district were eligible for, free and reduced lunch. There wee 61 schools operating Title 1 School-wide programs in the research district. Of these, 41 were elementary schools, 11 were middle schools, 7 were high schools, and 2 were alternative schools. To add further context to this study, Table 3 provides historical enrollment demographics of the research district.

Table 3

*Historical Demographic Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Subgroups</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited English Proficient</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible for Free/Reduced Meals</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with Disability</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants/Location of Research

The sample selection for this study included public school teachers at the middle and high school levels. For the purpose of this study, middle and high school teachers were all certified teachers that provided classroom instruction to students from grades 6 through 12. The sample included support teachers that provided instruction through the inclusion model. Support teachers at the research location were identified as special education teachers and English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers.

Teacher surveys were conducted at all middle and high school sites in the research district. According to information from the research district’s Certified Personal Index Report, there were 5,898 certified teachers in middle and high school. There was a level of confidentiality amongst survey participants to maintain integrity. Teacher’s data from the survey instrument were collected by computer through an online portal from the Gallup Organization.

Student surveys were conducted at all middle and high schools in the research district. According to the research district’s superintendent’s fact sheet, there were 41,158 students in middle school and 54,773 students in high school. Students’ data from the survey instrument were collected by computer.

Instrumentation

The instrument that was used to measure student achievement for middle school students is the Georgia Milestones Assessment. The relationship between the variables was paralleled with data collected from the Milestones assessment for the 2015-2016 school year and the teacher engagement survey results. Graduation results from the
2015-2016 school year were used to measure student achievement for high schools. The relationship between the variables was paralleled with the 2016 graduation rates and the teacher engagement survey results.

Teacher engagement was determined using the Gallup Q12 Engagement Survey. The Q12 survey is a valid and reliable research-based organizational health survey developed by the Gallup Organization. In the 1930s, George Gallup began a worldwide study of human needs and satisfaction using a scientific sampling process to measure popular opinion. Dr. Gallup and his colleagues conducted numerous polls throughout the world, covering many aspects of people’s lives. His early world polls dealt with topics such as family, religion, politics, personal happiness, economics, health education, safety, and attitudes toward work (Harter, 2006).

Parallel to Dr. Gallup’s early polling work, Dr. Donald O Clifton, a psychologist, and professor at the University of Nebraska, began studying the cause of success in education and business (Harter, Schmidt, & Killham, 2003). Dr. Clifton founded Selection Research Incorporated (SRI) in 1969. Through SRI, Dr. Clifton and his colleagues focused their research on the science of strength-based psychology, the study of what makes people flourish. Dr. Clifton’s work merged with Dr. Gallup’s work in 1988, when Gallup and SRI combined, enabling the blending of progressive management science with top survey and polling science (Harter et al., 2003).

The Gallup Q12 was designed to measure employee engagement in the workplace environment. The initial development of the Q12 instrument is a combination of Dr. Clifton’s research of students, counselors, managers, teachers, and employees and
Gallup’s study of high-performing individuals and teams. Dr. Clifton studied work and learning environments to determine the factors that contributed positively to those environments and enabled people to capitalize on their unique talents (Harter, et al., 2003). The Gallup scientists used qualitative data from interviews and focus groups of top-performing individuals and teams describing their work environments and their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors related to success.

Through ongoing research using qualitative and quantitative statistical methods, and utilizing the iterative process, the initial Q12 instrument was introduced in the 1990s, called “The Gallup Workplace Audit” or GWA. Qualitative and quantitative analysis continued over the next decade with more than 1,000 focus groups conducted and hundreds of instruments developed. The scientist also continued to use exit interviews; these revealed the importance of the manager in retaining employees (Harter et al., 2002). Studies of the Q12 and other survey items were conducted in various countries throughout the world, including the United States, Canada, Mexico, Great Britain, Japan, and Germany which provided international cross-cultural feedback on Gallup’s core items and context on the applicability of the items across different cultures (Harter, 2006).

Quantitative analysis of the survey data included descriptive statistics, factor analysis, discriminate analysis, criterion-related validity analysis, discriminate analysis, criterion-related validity analysis, reliability analysis, regression analysis, and other correlational analysis (Gallup, 1997). In 1997, the criterion-related studies were combined into a meta-analysis to study the relationship between employee satisfaction
and engagement (as measured by the Q12) to business/work unit productivity, profitability, retention, and customer satisfaction/loyalty across 1,135 business/work units (Harter & Creglow, 1997). Meta–analysis also enabled researchers to study the generalizability of the relationship between engagement and outcomes. The results of this meta-analysis confirmed the criterion-related validity of each of the Q12 survey questions (see Table 4).

Table 4

Variables and Collection Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Collection Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Achievement</td>
<td>• Milestones Test for sixth through eighth grade students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High School Graduation Rates for ninth through 12th-grade students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Engagement</td>
<td>Gallup Q-12 Engagement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Attendance</td>
<td>RQ1: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and teacher attendance?</td>
<td>District attendance data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ Perceptions of teacher expectations</td>
<td>RQ2: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and students’ perceptions of teacher expectations?</td>
<td>RBES Student Perception Survey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Collection Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal’s years of experience</td>
<td>RQ3: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and principal’s years of experience?</td>
<td>District Principal Profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student socioeconomic status</td>
<td>RQ4: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and student socioeconomic status?</td>
<td>District Student Demographic Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ Perceptions of Administrative Support</td>
<td>RQ5: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and teachers’ perceptions of administrative support?</td>
<td>Teacher Perception Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RQ6: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and student achievement?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RQ7: Are teacher engagement, student achievement, teacher attendance, students’ perceptions, principal’s years of experience, student socioeconomic status, and teachers’ perceptions of administrative support predictors of teacher attrition?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection Procedures

The following procedures were taken in this study:

1. Obtained approval from the Instructional Review Board at Clark Atlanta University.
2. Obtained approval from the local school district to complete research.
3. Teachers completed Gallup Q12 Engagement Survey.
4. Students completed Student Engagement Instrument.
5. Collected teacher and administrator demographics from research district.
6. Collected middle school student achievement results from
7. Collected high school student achievement results from graduation rates indicated on school report cards.
8. Engagement survey results were used to assess the effects of student achievement and other variables on teacher engagement.

Limitations of the Study

In this quantitative study, there was no single source of data to determine student achievement. Student achievement for all students was determined from different data sources. Sixth through eighth-grade student achievement was measured by achievement data from the Georgia Milestones Assessment. Ninth through 12th-grade student achievement was measured by the number of 12th-grade students graduating without going to summer school. Results may be skewed with self-reported data from participants. Also, the study was done for only middle and high schools, so they may not be generalized for elementary school.
Another limitation of this study is separation data used to calculate the attrition rate. For the purpose of this study, only separations reported as voluntary were used to calculate attrition. This data were self-reported from the individuals separating from the research district.

The final limitation of this study is the confining of the analysis of engagement to extrinsic features. Intrinsic factors that could affect teacher engagement, such as the need for achievement and professional identity, are not included in the study. Similarly, student achievement could be affected by variables not included in the study such as family support, home language, and peer affiliation.
The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between student achievement and other selected variables and teacher engagement and to determine which variables are predictors of teacher attrition in middle and high schools located in a large urban school system in the Southeast region of the United States. The unit of analysis for the research was conducted at the school level. Table 5 provides an overview of the research district’s demographics at the school level.

Table 5  
*Research District’s Demographic Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Number of Teacher</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Number of Title 1 Schools*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3,296</td>
<td>35,788</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2,602</td>
<td>48,876</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Title 1 Schools have a free and reduced lung percentage greater than 50%.

The researcher used a quantitative approach to provide depth and understanding to the study of the impact of independent variables on the dependent variables and a multiple regression equation to determine the strength of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Archival teacher and student survey results and
achievement data were used to provide answers to the research questions and establish the impact and predictive strength of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

Overview of the Data Collection and Analysis

For the purpose of this study, the analysis of data was conducted at the school level. Individual student and teacher results were aggregated to calculate a mean for all responses at the school level. The following archival data were used: (a) standardized assessment results, (b) graduation results, (c) teacher and student perception surveys, (d) teacher attendance data, (e) Gallup Q12 survey results, (f) principal’s demographic data, and (g) school socioeconomic data.

Archival Gallup Q12 and the RBES Perception survey results were analyzed. The surveys were administered to all teachers in the research district. For the purpose of the study, only results from middle and high school teachers in the research district during the 2015-2016 school year were analyzed. Teachers were defined as all certified employees paid on the teacher salary scale in grades six through twelve.

Archival Student Engagement Instrument results were analyzed for student responses. The survey was administered to all students in grades 3 through 12. For the purpose of this study, only the 2015-2016 middle and high school Student Engagement Instrument results were used.

Survey Participants

According to district records, there were 5,898 total middle and high school teachers. Certification data reveal that all teachers surveyed had either a bachelor, masters, specialist or terminal degree. The experience level for the teachers ranged from
0 years to 44 years of experience. Tables 6 and 7 show certification and experience levels for all middle and high school teachers.

Table 6

_Certification Level of Teachers_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bachelor’s</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
<th>Specialist</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>1,513</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>3,296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>1,150</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>2,602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,745</td>
<td>2,663</td>
<td>1,228</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>5,898</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7

_Teachers’ Years of Experience_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years</th>
<th>0 – 3</th>
<th>4 – 7</th>
<th>8 – 10</th>
<th>11 – 15</th>
<th>16+</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>1,154</td>
<td>3,296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>2,602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>1,023</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>1,255</td>
<td>2,079</td>
<td>5,898</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the research district’s superintendent’s fact sheet, the research district had an enrollment of 176,823 students, of which 41,098 were middle school students and 55,017 were high school students. Table 8 shows the enrollment data for the research district. Table 9 shows the demographic data for the research district.
Table 8

_Student Enrollment Data_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Enrollment: 10/2015</th>
<th>Regular Education Students</th>
<th>Special Education Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Schools</td>
<td>70,986</td>
<td>9,722</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Schools</td>
<td>35,788</td>
<td>5,310</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Schools</td>
<td>48,876</td>
<td>6,141</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>155,650</td>
<td>21,173</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>176,823</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9

_Student Demographic Data_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>National Merit</th>
<th>LEP</th>
<th>Gifted</th>
<th>Special Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STUDENTS</td>
<td>Finalists</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>14.25%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEMOGRAPHICS</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students (10/2015)</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Data in Response to the Research Questions_

Table 10 shows the descriptive statistics of the independent and dependent variables aggregated at the school level.
Table 10

Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Attendance Rate</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Engagement Overall Mean</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Student Relationships</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Experience</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>14.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Perceptions of Leadership</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>63.14</td>
<td>93.22</td>
<td>83.39</td>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>71.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8 Milestone Math Proficient/Distinguished</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>58.00</td>
<td>30.57</td>
<td>14.34</td>
<td>205.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8 Milestone Language Arts Proficient/Distinguished</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31.00</td>
<td>82.00</td>
<td>54.57</td>
<td>14.91</td>
<td>222.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Attrition</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data are now presented to answer the research questions.

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and teacher attendance?

Research question one investigated the relationship between teacher engagement and teacher attendance. According to the correlation test, teacher attendance rates and teacher engagement have a correlation of .10 and a significance of .52. Based on the results of the analysis, there is no significant relationship between teacher attendance and teacher engagement (see Table 11).
Table 11

*Pearson Correlation: Teacher Attendance and Teacher Engagement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teacher Attendance</th>
<th>Teacher Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Overall Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and students’ perceptions of teacher expectations?

Research question two investigated the relationship between student perceptions of teacher expectations and teacher engagement as measured by Gallup Q12. According to the correlation test, students’ perceptions of teacher support and teacher engagement have a correlation of .69 with a significance of .00. Based on the results of the analysis, there is a significantly strong positive relationship between student perceptions of teacher support and teacher engagement (see Table 12).
Table 12

*Pearson Correlation: Teacher Engagement and Students’ Perceptions of Teacher Expectations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teacher Engagement Overall Mean</th>
<th>Teacher-Student Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.69**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. **p < .01.

RQ3: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and principal’s years of experience?

Research question three investigated the relationship between teacher engagement as measured by Gallup Q12 and principal’s years of experience. According to the correlation test, principal’s years of experience and teacher engagement have a correlation of .16 and a significance of .29. Based on upon the results of the analysis, there is not a significant relationship between principal’s years of experience and teacher engagement (see Table 13).
Table 13

*Pearson Correlation: Teacher Engagement and Principal’s Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teacher Engagement Overall Mean</th>
<th>Principal’s Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RQ4:** Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and student socioeconomic status?

Research question four investigated the relationship between teacher engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12 and student socioeconomic status. According to the correlation test, student socioeconomic status and teacher engagement have a correlation of -.52 and a significance of .00. Based on the results of the analysis, student socioeconomic status and teacher engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12 have a significantly negative relationship (see Table 14).
Table 14

**Pearson Correlation: Teacher Engagement and Student Socioeconomic Status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Engagement Overall Mean</th>
<th>Teacher Engagement Overall Mean</th>
<th>Student Socioeconomic Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.52**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Student Socioeconomic Status   | Pearson Correlation            | 1                            |
|                                | Sig. (2-tailed)                | .00                          |
|                                | N                               | 45                           |

*Note. **p < .01.*

RQ5: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and teachers’ perceptions of administrative support?

Research question five investigated the relationship between teacher engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12 and teachers’ perceptions of administrative support. According to the correlation test, teachers’ perceptions of administrative support and teacher engagement have a correlation of .56 and a significance of .00. Based on the results of the analysis there is significantly positive relationship between teachers’ perception of administrative support and teacher engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12 (see Table 15).
Table 15

Pearson Correlation: Teacher Engagement and Teachers’ Perceptions of Administrative Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Engagement Overall Mean</th>
<th>Teacher Engagement Overall Mean</th>
<th>Teachers’ Perceptions of Administrative Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.56**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher Perception of Administrative Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Engagement Overall Mean</th>
<th>Teacher Engagement Overall Mean</th>
<th>Teachers’ Perceptions of Administrative Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.56**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. **p < .01.

RQ6: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and student achievement.

Research question six investigated the relationship between teacher engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12 and student achievement. For the purpose of this research, student achievement for high school was defined by graduation rates. Student achievement for middle schools was defined by the percent of proficient and distinguished scores on the eighth-grade reading and math Milestones Assessment.

According to the correlation test, high school graduation rates and teacher engagement have a correlation of .60 and significance of .00 for 18 schools. Based on the results of the analysis, there is a significantly positive relationship between high
school graduation rates and teacher engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12 (see Table 16).

Table 16

**Pearson Correlation: Teacher Engagement and Graduation Rate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Engagement Overall Mean</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation Overall Mean</th>
<th>Graduation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Engagement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.60**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.60**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* **p < .01.

According to the correlation test, eighth-grade math performance and teacher engagement have a correlation of .54 and significance of .00 for 28 schools. Based on the results of the analysis, there is a strong significantly positive relationship between eighth-grade math performance on the Milestones Assessment and teacher engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12 (see Table 17).

According to the correlation test, eighth-grade Language Arts performance and teacher engagement have a correlation of .60 and significance of .00 for 28 schools. Based on the results of the analysis, there is a strong significantly positive relationship between eight-grade Language Arts performance on the Milestones Assessment and teacher engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12 (see Table 18).
Table 17

**Pearson Correlation: Teacher Engagement and Eighth-Grade Math Performance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Engagement Overall Mean</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Grade 8 Milestone Math: Proficient/Distinguished Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Mean</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* **p < .01.

Table 18

**Pearson Correlation: Teacher Engagement and Eighth-Grade Language Arts Performance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Engagement Overall Mean</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Grade 8 Milestone Language Arts Proficient/Distinguished Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Mean</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.60**</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* **p < .01.*
RQ7: Are teacher engagement, student achievement, teacher attendance, students' perceptions, principal’s years of experience, student socioeconomic status, and teachers’ perceptions of administrative support predictors of teacher attrition.

Based on the results from the multiple regression using teacher, student and principal characteristics to predict teacher attrition, the combined characteristics of teacher engagement, teacher attendance, principal’s years of experience, student socioeconomic status, students’ perceptions of teacher expectations, teacher’s perceptions of administrative support, and student achievement as measured by graduation rate were not significant predictors of teacher attrition. The combined seven demographics explained less than 20% of the variance ($R^2 = .20$, $F(7,10) = .35$, $p = .91$) associated with teacher attrition.

Based on the results from the multiple regression using teacher, student and principal characteristics to predict teacher attrition, the combined characteristics of teacher engagement, teacher attendance, principal’s years of experience, student socioeconomic status, students’ perceptions of teacher expectations, teachers’ perceptions of administrative support, and student achievement as measured by eighth-grade Milestones pass rate were not significant predictors of teacher attrition. The combined seven demographics explained more than 60% of the variance ($R^2 = .78$, $F(8,18) = 3.51$, $p = .01$) associated with teacher attrition. No variables were independently significant predictors of teacher attrition (see Table 19).
Table 19

*Principal, Teacher, and Student Characteristics as Predictors of Teacher Attrition*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Graduation Rate</th>
<th></th>
<th>Grade 8 Milestone Pass Rates</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE B</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Engagement Overall Mean</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Attendance</td>
<td>-2.47</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Perception of Leadership</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Socioeconomic Status</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Experience</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Student Relationships</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.42</td>
<td>-.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8 Milestone Math Proficient/Distinguished</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8 Milestone Language Arts</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.51*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *p < .05.

**Summary**

A large urban school system in the northeast region of the United States participated in this research study. The following historical data were analyzed: standardized assessment results, teacher survey results, student survey results, and district demographic data.

The analysis of the data revealed the following: (a) there is a significant strong positive relationship between students’ perceptions of teacher support and teacher engagement; (b) there is a significant negative relationship between student
socioeconomic status and teacher engagement; (c) there is a significant relationship between teacher perception of administrative support and teacher engagement; (d) there is a significantly positive relationship between high school graduation rates and teacher engagement; (e) there is a strong significantly positive relationship between eighth-grade math performance on the Milestones Assessment and teacher engagement; (f) there is a strong significantly positive relationship between eighth-grade Language Arts performance on the Milestones Assessment and teacher engagement; (g) the combined variables are not predictive of teacher attrition; however, student achievement in middle and high school account for over 80% of the variance in a regression analysis.
CHAPTER VI
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between student achievement and other selected variables and teacher engagement. Also to determine which variables were predictors of teacher attrition in a large urban school system in the Northeast region of the United States. Archival survey, demographic and achievement data was used and aggregated at the school level.

Research Methods
A quantitative method was used in this research study. The quantitative research focused on the impact that student achievement, principal’s years of experience, teachers’ perceptions of administrative support, students’ perceptions of teachers, student socioeconomic status, and teacher attendance have on teacher engagement. It also focused on which of the variable could predict teacher attrition. The research design required the use of the Pearson $r$ Correlation and Regression to test the research questions. Archival survey, demographic, and achievement data from the research district were used and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to answer the research questions.
Findings

As a result of the analysis from Chapter V, the researcher has concluded the following findings to the research questions guiding the study.

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and teacher attendance?

The analysis of the data revealed that at the research site, there is not a significant relationship between teacher attendance and teacher engagement.

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and students’ perceptions of teacher expectations?

The analysis of the data revealed that at the research site, there is a significantly strong positive relationship between student perceptions of teacher support and teacher engagement.

RQ3: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and principal’s years of experience?

The analysis of the data revealed that at the research site, there is not a significant relationship between principal’s years of experience and teacher engagement.

RQ4: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and student socioeconomic status?

The analysis of the data revealed that at the research district student socioeconomic status and teacher engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12 have a significantly negative relationship.
RQ5: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and teachers’ perceptions of administrative support?

The analysis of the data revealed that there is significantly positive relationship between teachers’ perception of administrative support and teacher engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12.

RQ6: Is there a statistically significant relationship between teacher engagement and student achievement.

The analysis of the data revealed that there is a significantly positive relationship between high school graduation rates and teacher engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12. The analysis of the data also revealed there is a strong significantly positive relationship between eighth-grade math performance and eighth-grade language arts performance on the Milestones Assessment and teacher engagement as measured by the Gallup Q12.

RQ7: Are teacher engagement, student achievement, teacher attendance, students’ perceptions, principal’s years of experience, student socioeconomic status, and teachers’ perceptions of administrative support predictors of teacher attrition?

The researcher discovered that the combined variables were not predictive of teacher attrition at the research site. The regression analysis revealed that student achievement in both middle and high school accounted for 80% of the variance in the analysis.
**Significant Findings**

At the research site, student achievement had most significant relationship with teacher engagement. Specifically, eighth-grade math performance on the Milestones Assessment had the strongest significance in middle school. High school graduation rates had the most significant relationship in high schools. Relationship perceptions between students and teachers and teachers and administrators had a significant relationship with teacher engagement; students’ perceptions of teacher support had a more significant relationship than the teacher’s perception of administrative support. Student socioeconomic status had a strong negative relationship with teacher engagement. Teacher attendance and principal’s years of experience had no relationship with teacher engagement. The researcher found that the combined variables were not significant predictors of teacher attrition although student achievement accounted for 80% of the variance in the results. As a result, the researcher concluded that for the population of this study, student achievement had the most significant relationship with teacher engagement.

**Implications**

This study was conducted to ascertain the relationship between student achievement, principal’s years of experience, students’ perceptions of administrative support, students’ perceptions of teacher support, student socioeconomic status, teacher attendance, and teacher engagement. The Gallup Q12 Survey was used to measure teacher engagement. The research district has utilized the Gallup Q12 survey since 2002. Annually, the results are delivered to the research district. The results are aggregated
both at the district level and the school level. The results are used to assist the district in determining areas of growth at the district level, and individual schools utilize the results to help build their local school improvement plans. Emphasis is placed on variance within the yearly results of each question the Q12 Survey. The findings indicated that student achievement had the most significant relationship with teacher engagement. The findings also revealed that students’ perceptions of teacher support and teachers’ perceptions of administrative support had a significant relationship with teacher engagement and student socioeconomic status had a negative relationship with teacher engagement. As a result of this study, three implications were revealed.

First, researchers such as the Gallup Organization (2000) and Hakanen, Bakker, and Schaufeli (2006) support the positive relationship between teacher engagement and student achievement. In their research of 54 starting teachers, the authors found that daily levels of work engagement were predictive of classroom performance. A study by Louis and Smith (1992) concluded that teachers actively engaged in teaching strive to create exciting learning environments in their classrooms. The study illustrated that in schools where students are achieving, the teachers are engaged. The implication is that for students to achieve, conditions must be optimized in schools so that teachers are actively engaged.

Secondly, the data revealed that students’ perceptions of teachers and teachers’ perceptions of administrative support had a significant relationship to teacher engagement. The data revealed that relationships between students and teachers and teachers and administers play a role in the engagement of teachers and ultimately the
academic achievement of students. Furguson (2012) found that students provide accurate, helpful information on their teacher's performance. Bouffard (2015) concluded that when surveying students, if teachers carefully explain the purpose of the survey and use well-worded questions that get to specific classroom practices, the results may go beyond documenting teacher performance and improve it. The implication that is evident from these findings is that when students report that their perceptions of their teachers are positive, the teacher is engaged. The study revealed that the relationship between the teacher and student is reciprocal in nature. If students feel supported by their teacher, the teacher becomes more engaged, and if the teacher is more engaged, the students will achieve. School level Q12 engagement results were consistent with the achievement levels.

It is well documented that principals affect the professional lives of teachers in numerous ways, according to Simon and Johnson (2015). According to their research, teachers sit a principal’s effectiveness as a school manager, instructional leadership, and inclusiveness in the decision-making process as major ways they affect their work environment. The administration must strive to provide an atmosphere where teachers feel supported and have a connection with the school. The implication that is evident from these finding is that when teachers feel supported by their administration, they are engaged. The study revealed that positive relationships between teacher and administration and inclusion in the decision-making will lead to teacher engagement. These results were consistent with the Q12 survey data measuring relationships with and belongingness.
Lastly, the findings of this study indicate that there is a significantly strong, negative relationship between student socioeconomic status and teacher engagement. Schools reporting a high number of students receiving free lunch also reported lower teacher engagement scores. A study by Simon and Johnson (2015) reported that teacher turnover is high in schools in low-income neighborhoods. They found that they are frequently taught by least experienced and often less effective teachers. The implication that is evident from these findings is that schools with high poverty have low teacher engagement. As reported earlier, low teacher engagement is associated with low student achievement. The study revealed that more emphasis on improving teacher engagement in high-poverty schools could lead to increased student achievement.

**Limitations of the Study**

In this quantitative study, there was no single source of data to determine student achievement. Student achievement for all students was determined from different data sources. Sixth through eighth-grade student achievement was measured by achievement data from the Georgia Milestones Assessment. Ninth through 12th-grade student achievement was measured by the number of 12th-grade students graduating without going to summer school. Results may be skewed with self-reported data from participants. Also, the study was done for only middle and high schools, so they may not be generalized for elementary school.

Another limitation of this study is separation data used to calculate the attrition rate. For the purpose of this study, only separations reported as voluntary were used in
The calculate attrition. This data were self-reported from the individual separating from the research district.

The final limitation of this study is the confining of the analysis of engagement to extrinsic features. Intrinsic factors that could affect teacher engagement, such as the need for achievement and professional identity, are not included in the study. Similarly, student achievement could be affected by variables not included in the study such as family support, home language, and peer affiliation.

**Recommendations**

Recommendations are provided for central office, building administrators, teachers, and future research.

**Recommendations for Central Office**

- Central Office should develop a recruitment strategy targeting teachers with experience working in academically and socially diverse environments.
- Central Office should create a process for identifying and disseminating best practices in employee retention and engagement from local schools.
- Central Office should develop a leadership training program designed to assist leaders in developing practices and techniques supervisors need to motivate employees, get performance through others, and retain employees.

**Recommendations for Building Administrators**

- Building administrators should develop building administrative team comprised of representatives from teaching staff to ensure that teachers have
input into the decisions that are made that affect them in a wide variety of areas, from teaching strategies to hiring team members.

- Building administrators must provide professional learning opportunities in differentiated instruction and teaching diverse populations.

- Building administrators must create and implement school level retention and recognition programs that are directly aligned to the district level retention and recognition program.

- Building administration should develop local teacher mentor programs. New teachers to the building and the profession should be provided with a local seasoned teacher for mentor support.

- Building administrators should administer the Gallup Q12 survey annually and utilize results to plan local improvement efforts.

**Recommendations for Teachers**

- Teachers should seek professional development opportunities to assist in effective classroom instruction.

- Teachers should use survey results to inform their instructional practices.

- Teachers should seek training to effectively differentiate instruction to all student populations inclusive of students with disabilities and English learners.

- Teachers should strive to improve work-life balance to decrease stress and improve the quality of life.
Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study reveal that student achievement, students’ perceptions of teachers, and teachers’ perceptions of administrative support have a significant impact on teacher engagement.

- It was revealed in this study that relationships between teachers and students and teachers and administration had a significant impact on teacher engagement. Future research must begin to study teacher tenure at a local unit and teacher engagement to see if the length of a teacher’s tenure at a local unit has an impact on teacher engagement.

- Student socioeconomic status and student achievement were the only student factors analyzed in this study. Future research should focus on a broader range of student factors including, English language learners, student population size, parental support, and student attendance.

- Although the principal’s years of experience did not have a significant relationship with teacher engagement, future research should study teacher’s years of experience and education level for a significant relationship.

- Future research should include qualitative data gathered from interviews with teacher on their reasons for separation and reasons for remaining.

- Additionally, a larger study should be conducted to include elementary schools to validate the findings of this study.
Summary

It was the goal of this study to determine the impact student achievement, principal’s years of experience, teachers’ perceptions of administrative support, students’ perceptions of teacher support, student socioeconomic status, and teacher attendance had on teacher engagement. This study revealed, through the use of the Pearson $r$ Correlation tests, what variables had the most significant impact on teacher engagement. The researcher concluded that student socioeconomic status had the most significant negative impact on teacher engagement. The researcher also concluded that student achievement, (defined by high school graduation results for sixth through 12th grade, eighth-grade performance on the Milestones Assessment), student perception of teacher support and teachers’ perceptions of administrative support, had the most significant positive impact on teacher engagement. It was determined through a regression analysis that teacher engagement, teacher achievement, student socioeconomic status, principal’s years of experience, teacher attendance, teachers’ perceptions of administrative support, and students’ perceptions of teachers are not predictors of attrition in the research district. Recommendations were suggested for district leaders, building leaders, teachers, and future researchers.
# APPENDIX A

## Student Engagement Instrument (SEI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Overall, adults at my school treat students fairly.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Adults at my school listen to the students.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. At my school, teachers care about students.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My teachers are there for me when I need them.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The school rules are fair.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Overall, my teachers are open and honest with me.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I enjoy talking to the teachers here.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I feel safe at school.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Most teachers at my school are interested in me as a person, not just as a student.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The tests in my classes do a good job of measuring what I’m able to do.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Most of what is important to know you learn in school.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The grades in my classes do a good job of measuring what I’m able to do.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. What I’m learning in my classes will be important in my future.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. After finishing my schoolwork, I check it over to see if it’s correct.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. When I do schoolwork, I check to see whether I understand what I’m doing.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Learning is fun because I get better at something.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. When I do well in school it’s because I work hard.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I feel like I have a say about what happens to me at school.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Other students at school care about me.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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APPENDIX B

Q12 Teacher Engagement Instrument

Instructions

Given below are 12 questions. Please read each question carefully and record your answers by a tick in the appropriate column. There are no right or wrong answers. This questionnaire merely seeks your opinion on your work environment. All of your responses will be kept confidential and will be used for academic purposes only.

Response Codes

SD = Strongly disagree   D = Disagree   N = Neither agree nor disagree   A = Agree   SA = Strongly Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q No</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do you know what is expected of you at work?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Do you have materials and equipment you need to do your work right?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Is there someone at work who encourages your development?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>At work, do your opinions seem to count?</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Do the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Do you have a best friend at work?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

89
**SD** = Strongly disagree  **D** = Disagree  **N** = Neither agree nor disagree  **A** = Agree  **SA** = Strongly Agree

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>In the last year, have you had opportunities at work to learn and grow?</td>
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REFERENCES


