Examining Public School Educators' Perceptions of Variables Studied in Correlation to Teacher Attrition Issues within a Select Rural School District in the State of Mississippi: Implications for Teacher Retention

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

COLEMAN, SHAWONNA S. B.S. JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY, 2010
M.S. BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY, 2012

EXAMINING PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATORS’ PERCEPTIONS OF VARIABLES STUDIED IN CORRELATION TO TEACHER ATTRITION ISSUES WITHIN A SELECT RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER RETENTION

Committee Chair: Barbara Hill, Ed.D.

Dissertation dated May 2017

The purpose of this study was to examine public school educators’ perceptions of factors driving teacher attrition and the variables studied in correlation to attrition issues in a select rural school district in the state of Mississippi. The findings of this study will inform local and district level school leaders through providing an indifferent perception on teacher attrition in one school district in the state of Mississippi while giving insight on why teachers are exiting the field. It will further serve as a guide for national leaders to revisit recruitment and retention methods currently used while identifying new and innovative methods for decreasing attrition rates and at the same time building a sense of stability within low performing schools. Both qualitative and quantitative data were compiled and synthesized while considering descriptive and inferential statistics to recognize emergent themes for implications of teacher retention.
The findings of the study concluded that elementary teachers were more likely to be in greater agreement about teacher orientation programs than were high school teachers. Middle school teachers scored lower on teacher attrition than did teachers in elementary school, indicating that middle school teachers may be more inclined to think about leaving the teaching profession. Four of the attrition indicators (school culture, teacher evaluation accountability measures, academic learning outcomes, and instructional feedback) were statistically significant predictors of teacher attrition. The findings in this study also revealed that teachers with less experience are more inclined to leave the profession than those with more experience.
EXAMINING PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATORS’ PERCEPTIONS OF VARIABLES STUDIED IN CORRELATION TO TEACHER ATTRITION ISSUES WITHIN A SELECT RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER RETENTION

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

BY

SHAWONNA S. COLEMAN

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

MAY 2017
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I would like to thank my Lord and Savior for guiding me throughout life. It is with His strength that I know all things are possible. This dissertation completion is in memory of my grandmothers, Alice Stutts Jaynes and Estella Sanders, who were both impeccable women. I extend thanks to my dissertation committee for their support and guidance throughout this process: Dr. Barbara Hill, Chair, Dr. Darrell Groves and Dr. Trevor Turner. Special thanks go to my aunt, Renalda Jaynes, for introducing me to the field of education. I want to express my greatest gratitude to my family and friends who stood beside me throughout this endeavor and offered encouraging words, unwavering love, and support. Without Dorothy Coleman, Dwan Jaynes, Trevennis Coleman, Adolphus Jaynes, Dr. Curtis Armour, my mentor Jami Pettway, my “prayer circle,” my close friends and family, my “cousin sisters” and my CAU friends, this journey would have been much more daunting. To my nieces, nephews, and Godchildren, I hope that all I do inspires them to set goals and attain them knowing that they are destined for greatness and can do ALL things through Christ.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The education field is one of the largest occupations within the public sector of the United States (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014); however, the attrition rate of teachers remains high on the totem pole of discussions surrounding educators. In recent years of study, teacher attrition has become a relevant topic of research as a result of retiring veterans, “movers,” that seek teaching positions within other districts and “leavers,” who leave the field entirely whether their exit is permanent or temporary. The field of education has faced challenges with policies and accountability inclusive of the renowned No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which enforced high stake testing in an attempt to improve the quality of education. With much adversity and an incline in accountability, veteran teachers who are reaching retirement age are not prolonging their careers and college graduates are choosing careers other than the field of education (Henke, Chen, & Geis, 2000; Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson & Kardos, 2005). As a result, there has been a decline of invested educators with an increase in emergency licenses, long term substitutes and alternative licensure programs to assure the filling of classroom vacancies and increase of student achievement rates. According to the most recent statistics gathered by the National Center for Education Statistics, 8% of teachers with one to three years of classroom experience left teaching to pursue careers in another field.
and 13% moved to a different school after completion of the 2012-2013 school year (Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014). The education sector being one of the largest public sector occupations has one of the highest turnover rates in comparison to other occupations in the United States (Ingersoll, 2001) with attrition being classified as a factor of increased demand for teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 1995a). Attrition as related to a demand for teachers includes teachers changing fields or exiting the profession, both being a component of teacher turnover (Boe, Bobbi, & Cook, 1993).

Current educators within and entering the field are classified as Generation Y (born between 1980 and 2000). This generation is characterized as being well versed and educated and credits their success to taking advantage of educational opportunities (Wong & Wong, 2007a, 2007b). Generation Y workers who are also known as Millennials, have a strong need for inclusiveness and family connection while having strong moral values (Reeves, 2006; Wong & Wong, 2007a). The purpose of this study was to understand the Millennials’ reasons for leaving the profession. According to McLaughlin and Talbert (1993, 2001), Millennials are typically given less attractive teaching assignments with little professional support. This select group of employees, who are now the majority of the education workforce, has a need to be heard and appreciated through engagement in decision-making (NAS Recruitment Communications, 2006). Being the generation that revels in working in small groups and appreciate mentorships, this group of educators needs flexibility, which undergirds attrition issues (Wong & Wong, 2007b; Shaffer, 2008).
Statement of the Problem

Despite the education sector being one of the largest public sector occupations within the United States, the State of Mississippi continues to be faced with an incline of teacher attrition. Data from research collected in a 2008 survey suggesting that leavers revealed working conditions, dissatisfaction with administrative support and leadership, student behavior, school atmosphere, and a lack of autonomy as reasons that affected their decision to leave (Berry, Fuller, & Williams, 2008). The increase of educators exiting the field of education has steadily increased since the early 1980s with teachers in search of better career opportunities and a heightened level of fulfillment (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). Because of the aforementioned, there is need for research leading to plausible answers as to why teaching is not a sustainable career.

According to findings from a study by the Institute of Education Sciences (2015), 8% of the public school teachers teaching during the 2012-2013 school year left the profession and were working outside of the field. In addition to those findings, approximately 51% reported better manageability of workload and 53% reported better general work conditions. The U. S. Department of Education (2015) reported that during the 2012-2013 school year, every state reported having a shortage of teachers. The State of Georgia saw shortages in several districts with one of their school districts facing one of the largest teacher turnovers it has experienced as reported by Walker (2016) in the Atlanta Journal Constitution. The school district was faced with 915 teacher resignations during the 2015-2016 academic year, with 372 vacancies ahead of the start of the academic year. This turnover in teachers is 152% higher than a neighboring school district that employs double the amount of teachers as the district discussed in the article.
(Walker, 2016). The Superintendent accredits the turnovers to an increase in expectations and heightened accountability through changes in the teacher evaluation system (Walker, 2016). The district is combating the turnover by offering teachers a 3% pay raise and $500 retention incentive to be disbursed after the first quarter of the academic year.

The primary focus of this study is to garner educators’ perceptions of factors contributing to teacher attrition within the State of Mississippi, in which 48 of their 162 school districts were considered critical needs districts having 60 or more vacancies within a school year (Kieffer & Mader, 2013). These vacancies and categorizing of districts within the state remain consistent with vacancies being filled by emergency licensed teachers and long term substitutes. In an attempt to determine reasons behind the increasing teacher attrition in the State of Mississippi, there is a need to survey teachers within all schools but especially in low performing school districts to examine factors driving the teacher shortage increase through leveraging factors that may be affecting attrition by gaining perceptions to further implications for teacher retention.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine public school educators’ perceptions of factors driving teacher attrition and the variables studied correlation to attrition issues in a select rural school district in the state of Mississippi. This study also informs and guides school leaders purposefully through recruitment and training processes with implications for retention and minimizing teacher attrition.
The independent variables—accountability, teacher induction and support programs, administrative support and instructional feedback, and school climate—were selected to obtain overall perceptions of educators including their route to the field of education and level of experience. The data collected also gave implications for teacher retention through mixed methods research on teachers’ choice to remain in education and perceptions of driving forces behind the increasing attrition rates.

**Research Questions**

The questions that follow served as a framework to address factors driving teacher attrition in a low performing school district with implications for teacher retention in the state of Mississippi. These questions were designed to fully understand and interpret perceptions of factors that affect teacher attrition in an urban school district in the state of Mississippi with implications for teacher retention.

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between increased academic learning outcomes accountability and teacher attrition within a select rural school district in the state of Mississippi?

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between teacher evaluation accountability measures and teacher attrition within a select rural school district in the state of Mississippi?

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between teacher induction programs and teacher attrition within a select rural school district in the state of Mississippi?
RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between teacher orientation programs and teacher attrition within a select rural school district in the state of Mississippi?

RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between mentoring support and teacher attrition within a select rural school district in the state of Mississippi?

RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between school climate and teacher attrition within a select rural school district in the state of Mississippi?

RQ7: Is there a significant relationship between school culture and teacher attrition within a select rural school district in the state of Mississippi?

RQ8: Is there a significant relationship between instructional feedback and teacher attrition within a select rural school district in the state of Mississippi?

RQ9: Is there a significant relationship between administrative support from school administration and teacher attrition within a select rural school district within the state of Mississippi?

RQ10: Which of the select research variables have the greatest impact on teacher attrition within a select rural school district within the state of Mississippi?

**Significance of the Study**

During a time where there’s recognition of teacher retention issues and a rising demand for licensed educators in the wake of concerns with ensuring quality education for all students, there is a need for understanding and identifying the perceptions of teachers on factors leading to the increasing teacher attrition (Northeast Regional
Resource Center, 2004). This teacher attrition issue has led to district partnerships with universities to provide shorter alternative routes to education licensure for recruitment with little pedagogical preparation leaving room for questioning how to recruit and retain qualified teachers (National Partnership for Teaching in At-Risk Schools, 2005). With unlicensed personnel filling vacant positions as piecemeal solutions to teacher shortages, concerns arise around the quality of instruction leading to school officials needing to address staffing issues (National Partnership for Teaching in At-Risk Schools, 2005).

The turnover rate nationally has the potential to create inefficiencies leading to low student achievement and the allocation of funds to training and resources for new teachers (Carroll, Reichardt, & Guarino, 2000). Despite Mississippi establishing a state Teacher Center in 1994 to ensure the employment of highly qualified teacher, recruitment, and mentorship, the attrition rate is steadily growing (Mississippi Code, 1991; Mississippi Code, 1994). With little research available that focuses on the perceptions of teachers on factors that affect teacher attrition, this study will serve as a guide to identifying and understanding what factors influence teachers to leave the profession. Through honing in on issues educators are facing, garnering insight on the perceptions of teachers can provide implications for teacher retention.

This study informs local and district level school leaders through providing an indifferent perception on teacher attrition in one school district in the state of Mississippi while giving insight on why teachers are exiting the field. Additionally, it identifies implications for retention to sustain staff within low performing school districts nationwide. It further serves as a guide for national leaders to revisit recruitment and retention methods currently used while identifying new innovative methods for decreasing attrition.
rates. The findings of this study may also lead to implications for building stability within low performing schools. The investment in resources that address teacher attrition leads to an increase in effective highly qualified teachers who aide in increasing student achievement (New York State Education Department [NYSED], 2002). The findings of this study should better inform low performing school districts of reasons behind teacher attrition that can be used to increase teacher retention and school sustainability while working towards an increase in student achievement and significant gains within the instructional programs. The use of the findings and recommendations can help districts leverage variables affecting teacher attrition and lead them towards effective recruitment measures through modification of current practices while implementing retention strategies for current teachers.

**Summary**

The purpose of this study is to identify and examine teachers’ perceptions on factor that affect teacher attrition in select low performing urban schools within a select school district within the state of Mississippi. With increasing high rates of teacher turnover within the past three decades in U.S. public schools, districts have begun filling vacant positions with less experienced teachers (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2012). This significant increase in teacher turnover rates within schools has led to “less comprehensive and unified instructional programs” for students (Guin, 2004, p. 19). Although districts have recognized that there is a problem in which “teachers reject the dysfunctional contexts in which they work,” the issues within the schools need to be
identified and addressed to determine factors leading to increased attrition to aide in the turnaround process of teacher turnover (Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012, p. 4).

With teacher attrition being recognized as a national issue, directing focus on individual districts and speaking directly with teachers will allow the opportunity to receive first hand perceptions of factors driving attrition. Therefore, in an attempt to sustain certificated staff, this study will serve as a guide towards understanding factors leading to the incline of teacher attrition. Through examining the perceptions of teachers, implications for teacher retention will arise, affording leaders an idea of strategies for recruiting and retaining staff. Upon completion of the study, leaders in the state of Mississippi, within this particular school district will have a better understand of the forces behind their teacher turnover rates and can use this information to develop retention strategies.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review focuses on background and current trends pertaining to teacher attrition. With providing a background inclusive of historical trends and studies, the understanding of shifts in education and teacher attrition rates will be used as a parallel evaluation of present trends. Following the review of historical trends, current research and trends are evaluated to leverage its impact on rising attrition rates. The review is inclusive of analyzing topics aligned with teacher attrition issues such as accountability, administrative support, school culture and climate, and career burnout. In conclusion, the review gives an examination of teacher attrition and current research across the United States with implications for teacher retention.

Background and Trends

The rise of urban education institutions in the United States was a result of the reconfiguration of the 1800s education system (Holmes, Massey, & Warrington, 2014). With an influx of diverse populations leading to demographic changes, public school systems were unable to accommodate the increase in school aged youth, resulting in the reformation of school systems to industrialized efforts (Graham, 1974; Rury, 2005; Tyack, 1974). This industrialized model was employed to decentralize schools to afford them the opportunity to model the current trends and development. With this structure in place came “the opportunity for women to become employed, expenditures among upper
and lower class populations would be equalized, and efficient instruction would be offered to everyone” (Tyack, 1974, p. 42). The changes in school structure erected high schools that were funded through tax dollars funneled through lower class citizens for upper class citizens who chose to allow their children to complete school over working within factories. This practice lasted until the 1900s when secondary education was more accessible to the masses and eventually implemented as a component of the American educational structure (Tyack, 1974).

During the time of school restructuring, the purpose of school was being revisited, eventually leading to disagreements between parents and schoolmen on the basis of an attempt to “transmit the dominant” class and culture through the public education sector while dismembering the structure of separating cultures to maintain cultural differences and the outstanding cost of funding these endeavors (Tyack, 1974, p. 84). Hostility towards the shifting of the new “system” continued into the 1900s with an increase in the focus towards scientific teaching with students being placed according to their economic status in college preparatory or non college preparatory programs (Cuban, 1993). The instructional staff within schools shifted from memorization and reciting to efficiency through recall, comprehension, and critical thinking. As demographics continued to shift, the need for changes in the educational setting arose. This constant shift proposed a consistent need for new strategies to meet the needs of the ever-changing population of students.
Dynamics of Urban Education

The 1960s Civil Rights Era brought about shifts in the dynamics of urban education. With residential shifts, desegregation changed the cultural dynamics of urban school districts leaving an immeasurable population of minority students. The continuous growth of private schools led to a decrease in funding and limited accessibility to resources for urban schools (Tolbert & Theobald, 2006; Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012). However, negative images of urban schools have not always existed. Urban schools have been known to offer a variety of training opportunities and curriculum that wasn’t offered in rural and suburban schools (Rury, 2005). The shift of dynamics within the 21st century led to the shift in perspectives towards urban education, thus framing underperformance and images of negativity surrounding urban school districts.

In an attempt to shape the direction of instructional practices, measures of accountability have been implemented. New policies being enforced lead to inequities among schools and districts. These inequities arise when policies are formed based upon normalities that do not reflect urban school district populations, but the districts are expected to perform under the same level of accountability as their more economically stable counterparts who have access to more resources. Due to the focus on instructional quality, policy-makers created teacher evaluations to determine quality of instructional practices within school districts. With the implementation of President Obama’s Race to the Top (2009), “teacher effectiveness is measured through student achievement assessments” (Papay, 2011, p. 168). The weight of these evaluations fell heavily on principals who in return were expected to restructure schools through utilizing the
evaluations to remove ineffective teachers. With schools being governed in a more bureaucratic style of leadership, teacher’s lacked autonomy causing increased attrition rates (Futernick, 2007; Hunt & Carroll, 2002). Overall, it can be gathered that teacher satisfaction and effectiveness are directly correlated to their decision to grow within the profession or to take flight.

**Teacher Attrition**

Reports have shown that teaching is considered one of the most stressful occupations with dissatisfied employees (Dworkin, Haney, Dworkin, & Telschow, 1990; Johnson, Cooper, Cartwright, Donald, Taylor, et al., 2005). With the shift in focus of school districts to streamlining accountability towards teachers, attrition rates within urban districts have been on the rise. Data have shown a steady decline in educators, thus deeming the field unstable in recent years (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). The heightened emphasis on accountability focused heavily in urban school districts, low pay and less than ideal working conditions have in return forced educators to take flight to more affluent districts usually in suburban areas (Ng, 2006). However, this is not the only factor in the flight of teachers. Attrition rates have increased approximately 28% since the 1990s, with data showing that the shifts vary from complete turnover to movers who are seeking higher paying positions, wealthier districts with low minority populations (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2010). Data imply that there is a shortage of candidates in the content areas of mathematics, science and special education. New recruitment methods are in place to attract new teachers in these areas. Shortages occur because student populations increase, but districts are underprepared for this rapid growth
(Darling-Hammond, 1997). These fields have an attrition rate twice that of teachers in the field of social sciences which is near 20% yearly (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future [NCTAF], 2002). Although there is a shortage in United States schools, the U.S. annually produces an overage of teachers that its districts hire (American Association for Employment in Education [AAEE], 1997). To curb shortage issues, many districts are now offering signing bonus’ and incentives to attract new teachers in hard to staff schools and subjects. These incentives are offered to fill positions and improve academic achievement. The idea of offering signing incentives is to offset the current low pay of teachers.

The Teacher Follow-up Survey conducted by the U. S. Census Bureau every 3-5 years on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics through the U.S. Department of Education, yielded significant data collected about teachers who left their schools within the 2004-2005 school year (Wirt et al., 1998). This study found that 35.7% of teachers participating in the survey left the field completely citing a better work-life balance while another 25.7% moved to another school for more autonomy. The flight of highly qualified teachers to more sought after districts leaves underprepared teachers with less experience in urban school districts eventually leading to teacher turnovers when these novice teachers take flight. The lack of these veteran teachers who are capable of mentoring novice teachers leaves schools with less experienced teachers that have an adverse effect on academic achievement (Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005). Some of the cited reasons for teacher attrition include accountability, administrative support, school culture and climate, and burnout. Teachers within the field can increase their satisfaction and fulfillment through perceiving the career as one
that is of assistance in a vital manner to others (Bogler, 2001). By addressing teacher attrition from a tailored or personalized approach, administrators, school officials and researchers can begin to analyze teachers’ perceptions of the career and better serve the needs of staff to decrease teacher attrition on a broader scale.

**Teacher Attrition in the United States**

“The influx of more new teachers increased the speed of the revolving door into the teaching profession” (NCTAF, 2010, p. 9). Recent studies have found that the increase of teacher attrition has a nationwide average of expenditure that’s approximately $7.3 billion per year toward teacher recruitment and training (Forbes Education, 2011). Nationally, according to the Alliance for Excellent Education, approximately half a million teachers within the United States contribute to the rate of attrition (Haynes, 2014). In a recent study from the Albert Shanker Institute in partnership with the Teacher Follow-Up Survey, a supplement of the Schools and Staffing Survey conducted every four years, statistics show no significant changes in attrition rates over the past 10 years since its 15 years of steady increase since the 1988-89 school year (Di Carlo, 2015). Approximately 40% to 50% of teachers will leave the profession within their novice years with 9.5% leaving before the end of their first year and 40% of individuals with undergraduate degrees in education who never enter the classroom, making the turnover of educators 4% higher than other professions (Riggs, 2013). Although there is no one factor stronger than others as to why this profession has such a high attrition rate, it can be attributed to several factors across the United States.
Historical Background of Mississippi’s Public Education System

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (2001) outlined the Public Education System in Mississippi including background information on elementary and secondary education. Public education has been plagued with the challenge of poverty within school systems and the state of Mississippi has been faced with the issue of talent exiting the state for better opportunities. The population of Mississippi is comprised of high poverty rates and imbalanced opportunities leaving children within the state at a disadvantage when compared with other states. As a significant expense for Mississippi, the state spent approximately $1.478 billion on education within the 1995 fiscal year to fund 88.7% of k-12 students in public schools with an average of 73.8% completing high school in 1998 (Salter, 1995).

Quality of Education in Mississippi

According to companies that have previously sought to employ graduates within the state, individuals interviewed seemed to have been products of a failing educational system due to their lack of literacy and many do not meet minimum hiring requirements (Malkin, 1997). This insufficiency can be accredited to the lack of resources thus weighing heavily on the quality of education. Through a performance-based evaluation system, in 1995, 29% of Mississippi’s school districts were rated unsuccessful with some being under state oversight (Hayden, 1999). Following the Mississippi Adequate Education Program implementation, providing adequate education through assuring that each school district has sufficient funds. The program increased funding by an additional $130 million in increments over six years starting in 1998 (Southern Education
Foundation, 1998). Additionally, superintendents are elected which the practice has pointed to the idea of a lack of efficiency of administration that has been indicated as affecting school achievement. However, the state has explored ways to provide professional development to local administrators to provide a solid foundation for growth and an increase in academic achievement (Mullins, 1996).

Upon the enactment of The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Title I) in 1965, local school districts were provided federal funding for the enhancement of educational resources for low income children in school districts to supplement local budgets for school improvement (U.S. Code 1950). Mississippi schools received approximately $122 million in 1995 of Title I funding with 75% primarily used towards instruction (U.S. Department of Education, 1995b).

**Mississippi Educators**

Over the past two decades, the state of Mississippi has been identified as having one of the lowest average salaries for public school educators with the average being 31% below the national average in 1994 and 27% below the national average in 1998 (Hawkins, 1998). With the average salary of Mississippi educators being below the national average, pay increase has been a goal of the legislature in an attempt to recruit and retain educators (Thompson, 1999). With low salaries for educators and an increase of vacancies in the education workforce in Mississippi, there is an increase of long-term substitutes and awarding of emergency licenses. In 1997, the Mississippi Teaching Corps offered entry into the field as a full time teacher while pursuing an education degree in education. The program recruits students to teach within impoverished schools during
the week and complete their certification process and degree on the weekends. This program requires a two-year commitment and has only yielded a 20% retention rate. Recognizing that there is a teacher shortage, Mississippi education leaders have comprised a task force to identify factors and create programs to address the issue.

**Teacher Attrition in Mississippi**

The licensed educator shortage and attrition issue has affected urban school districts servicing underprivileged youth in low performing school districts throughout the State of Mississippi. The effects of teacher attrition are weighing heavily on districts searching for consistency within their schools with research linking the increase in teacher turnover correlating with student achievement rates ultimately leading to failing schools and decreasing teacher effectiveness in low performing schools. Drawing on the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF), research shows that teacher attrition has increased to 30% of novice teachers leaving the profession within a five-year period (NCTAF, 2010, p. 4).

With the increase in teacher attrition rates comes a search for answers to the factors affecting these rates. With the loss of veteran teachers, who make up half of the teacher workforce rapidly approaching retirement, taking years of experience, professional development and skills needed to support teacher induction programs, which could help stabilize and support their schools, there is a need for determining what’s driving out the potential next batch of veteran teachers (NCTAF, 2010). According to the Public Education Forum, 40% of teacher education graduates within the State of Mississippi do not enter classrooms after graduation or relocate to another state in
addition to findings that there were more teachers to exit the field than enter the field thus identifying 46 districts in 28 counties with critical teacher shortages (Public Education Forum of Mississippi, 1998; Institutions of Higher Learning, 2007; Mississippi Department of Education [MDE], 2009).

Districts have recognized that there is a problem with teacher recruitment and attrition, thus adding variables to assist with recruitment and retention. Measures such as mentorship programs, signing bonuses, merit pay, and leadership pathways have been created to appeal to prospective educators. Although attracting more educators to the field is a start to building the teacher capacity, identifying the factors leading to the attrition issue could give insight on implications for retention. In an attempt to understand this exiting trend, speaking directly with educators within the field and identifying their perceptions could lead to loss reduction through effectively addressing issues contributing to mass attrition.

**Accountability**

With the passage of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), school accountability based upon performance data became the focal point of the education system. Under this Act, schools were faced with performance standards and assessments mandated by their state or district in which there were expected ratings to be received. The idea of NCLB was to set high standards with measurable goals with the ultimate goal being to improve educational outcomes. These goals were also tied to receiving Title I funding from the federal government to attain resources needed to achieve goals and meet their adequate yearly progress (AYP) in test scores. Although this Act was intended for the greater
purpose of accountability of the education system, the development of assessments and standards varied by state, thus showing little alignment across the nation. As a requirement for receiving funding, states were tasked with conducting annual testing, releasing school report cards, and increasing required teacher qualifications amongst other stipulations. This system or Act pointed to high levels of accountability for student achievement such as identifying low-performing schools, providing merit pay for teachers based upon student performance on state mandated tests (Loeb & Cunha, 2007). This accountability increase in return is reflected within a teacher's final evaluation. Such practices as utilizing student achievement to determine a teacher's effectiveness has the potential to lead to a decrease in teacher morale and collaboration due to competitiveness. The adoption of these evaluation systems is discouraging to educators and in some cases induces unethical decisions.

The accountability pressure within school districts is increased if schools receive sanctions for low performance. These sanctions thus lead to teachers losing a sense of classroom autonomy while increasing accountability for student performance. With districts placing more value on the administration of mandated assessments, teachers have lost their pliability in instruction and are perused about their classrooms. Although this accountability issue may seem to plague low performing schools the most, the issue exists in high performing schools as well who are pressured with maintaining their high ratings and are held accountable for doing so (Goldhaber & Hannaway, 2004). The demands of this accountability system has the potential to overwhelm teachers, but a supportive work environment can aide in providing the encouragement and acknowledgement of efforts promoting academic achievement (Johnson & Birkeland,
21

2002; Luna & Turner 2001; Heneman, 1998). With the lack of support needed to understand mandates and high stakes testing, teachers in return take flight from the profession with fear of inadequacy and to escape scrutiny as an educator or are faced with unethical decisions such as cheating to prove themselves amongst the accountability pressure (Jacob & Levitt, 2003).

**Teacher Induction and Support Programs**

While a supportive overall environment is needed in schools, support from administration coupled with teacher support programs can play a great role in the teacher attrition rates. The implementation of induction programs for new teachers can prove to be effective if the right support and professional development is provided. Research supports two-year induction programs inclusive of mentoring, professional development and support to curb teacher attrition within schools for new teachers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004). These programs can increase building capacity, provide training, strengthen the community of teachers, acclimate new teachers to their school, and community and aide in keeping quality teachers within the school through a sense of ownership and commitment. Schools can implement this type of programming with little or no funding through soliciting veteran teachers and administrators to volunteer with the mentorship program who are interested in building the capacity of their staff. This will encourage collaboration and shared goals. Research has found that a lack of shared common goals amongst colleagues will make them less likely to have collaborative efforts (Rosenholtz, 1989).
The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers found that a lack of administrative support is amongst reasons cited for new teachers leaving the profession (Johnson, 2006). When entering into the field of education, the expectation of the experience is not the reality of what educators are faced with. Deficiency of support coupled with stress of an extensive workload makes the profession less appealing (McCann & Johannessen, 2004). Research conducted by Blasé and Blasé (2004) revealed that teachers’ decision to stay or take flight is sometimes influenced by principals. Garnering support from administration in areas such as interaction with parents and students while also having a voice in school wide decision-making allows teachers to feel that they are receiving adequate support (Blasé & Blasé, 2004). Principals can offer or provide more support through induction programs, which in return can reduce stress and burnout. Support can be offered through providing recognition and acknowledging success to encourage teachers and create better work dynamics. Principals have the responsibility of creating a supportive environment that is positive and encourages growth (Clement, 2000). The presence of support from administration, having a voice, receiving recognition, respect and access to resources are vital to teachers (Clement, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1997). The aforementioned are all inclusive in means of providing support to teachers in an attempt to curb teacher attrition. Providing a supportive work environment coupled with a democratic leadership style when feasible can offer a sense of belonging and autonomy to teachers.
Administrative Support and Instructional Feedback

“Emotionally taxing and potentially frustrating” have both been terms used to describe teaching (Lambert, O’Donnell, Kusherman, & McCarthy, 2006, p. 105). Teachers have an expectancy of achieving passing scores on assessments and assuring that their students have closed an achievement gap by year’s end. Dealing with hostility and lack of interest in learning leads teachers to searching for new methods to instruct while being faced with high demands of high stakes testing. The stress of teaching, accountability placed on teachers for student achievement and lackluster administrative support with minimal instructional feedback contributes to teacher attrition. These factors coupled with others have the projection of approximately 50% of teachers exiting the profession before their sixth year (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Attrition leading to stress and taking flight has been found to occur when teachers have a lack of support, heightened behavior referrals and a lack of project management skills (Geving, 2007; Blasé, Blasé, & Du, 2008; Lambert et al., 2006; Brown, 2005). This lack of project management skills can lead to attrition if overwhelmed with workloads and there is a lack of support from administration. Through analyzing prior research, it was found that some teachers feel the overwhelming amount of work holds greater reasoning for leaving a school versus the difficulty in tasks and cited that teachers early in their career need additional flexibility to adjust to their profession while in some cases, adjusting to a new subject area aside from their expertise (Buchanan, Prescott, Schuck, Aubusson, & Louviere, 2013). These areas can be addressed through providing effective support and timely instructional feedback. Research has found that teachers that show academic achievement through student assessment scores are more likely to remain
within the profession (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2007; Goldhaber, Gross, & Player, 2007; Hanushek, Kain, O’ Brien, & Rivkin, 2005).

A study conducted within Chicago Public Schools revealed that school working conditions inclusive of administrative support and feedback plays a role in a teacher’s decision to leave or stay (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009). School leadership is responsible for setting the climate, interacting with stakeholders, ensuring that teachers are equipped with resources for success and establishes daily norms and routines. Along with leading the school, it is imperative that administration provides instructional feedback. Receiving effective guidance, sufficient resources and feedback from lesson planning and instructional observations can assist teachers with perfecting their craft and aligning with administration expectations for instructional practices. Chenoweth (2009) discovered that some low performing schools who have successfully achieved an academic increase have done so by providing additional resources to teachers such as mock lesson plans as a skeletal guide to instruction. This practice can assist with the dismay of implementing instructional practices with fidelity. Having timely instructional feedback from administration is beneficial for teachers to know if they are effectively facilitating instruction. This feedback should include thorough review and feedback of lesson plans with time to revise. Dissatisfaction with the support provided by administrations that lack communication, do not encourage collaboration, or assist with understanding curriculum needs have all been cited as reasons for attrition.

While there is no sure way to stop attrition, collaboration and providing needed support can assist with curving the issue. The profession has the potential to be more manageable with direction from administration and support that is not demeaning but is
intended to grow educators professionally while making the work environment less stressful through collaborative efforts geared towards retention.

**School Climate**

School climate is multidimensional around the quality and character of a school and focuses on a school's environment and if personnel and students feel emotionally, physically and socially safe. The overall climate of a school coupled with conditions can either serve as support or disincentive for retention (Ingersoll, 2001). A school’s climate provides necessary conditions that allow instructional practices to thrive (Tableman & Herron, 2004). For the purpose of this study, the physical dimensions of school climate focuses on safety, comfort and student discipline. The goal of principals as it pertains to teacher attrition should be to develop a culture of collaboration and support to acclimate new teachers to their new environment. The likeliness of educators remaining in the field is increased if the school climate is supportive with collaboration amongst faculty (Berry, Hopkins-Thompson, & Hoke, 2002; Birkeland & Johnson, 2002; Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, & Liu, 2001). The concept of climate includes providing a safe environment with emphasis on school grounds and its physical context as well as social interactions. According to Vail (2005) and Weiss (2005), teachers expressed that comfortable working conditions are paramount to success more than leadership and is directly correlated with school climate.

According to Comer (1980), the individual experience of a person is impacted by the climate of a school. This idea is directly correlated to being connected which is characterized as a fundamental dimension of school climate. Schools that feel safe
cultivate quality student-teacher relationships ultimately decreasing the likelihood of violence. The climate is dependent upon individual perceptions and experiences in the school environment. The perception of the climate of a school is inclusive of student behavior. Data collected by Smith and Smith (2006) revealed that amongst reasons cited for teacher flight, fear of violence and stress from behavior management issues. Ingersoll (2001) found that student-discipline problems were a significant cause of teacher turnover. Such factors have a need of being addressed to create a better climate within schools that could potentially affect teacher attrition.

While the maintaining of a school's climate lies within the culture created and the upkeep through the staff, administration should be the tone setter for their building. The climate of a school ultimately sets precedence for its culture. Support from administration and the expectation of collaboration amongst staff should be implemented throughout the school in an attempt to create a culture and conducive to a positive working environment. According to research by Lunenburg (2010), “Culture is a conscious endeavor, and principals must be proactive as they go about creating a culture” (p. 129). Where there is a lack of a nurtured culture, one will be created to dominate. The presence of a strong school culture with a reinforcement of collaboration and trust is pertinent in the improvement of schools and decreasing teacher attrition (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Deal & Peterson, 2009). It is the principal’s role to develop a culture within the school to reinforce what is necessary for achievement. The aforementioned factors coupled with working conditions have all been identified in previous research as stressors and reasons for leaving the field or relocating to higher performing schools (Abel & Sewell, 1999).
Summary

As teacher attrition remains a topic of discussion amongst educational leaders, research has shown that an increase in accountability along with lack of administrative support has played a significant role in the increase of these rates. The field of education has been deemed as unstable and this can be attributed to the high rate of teacher turnover as well as the lack of interest in the field (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). The demand for teachers is increasing while the interest of potential educators is decreasing, leaving vacancies in school districts across the nation. Recent studies have found that teachers not only leave the profession completely, but can also be found taking their expertise to other schools in search of autonomy and less stressors (Wirt et al., 1998). The usage of student achievement data from state mandated tests as a reflection of effectiveness of instruction has also played a significant role in accountability stressors for educators (Loeb & Cunha, 2007). Such evaluation methods have proved to be discouraging and disarming when sanctioned for low performance of students. With increased demands of accountability, an increase in administrative support is necessary to acclimate new teachers in an attempt to relieve the overwhelming reality of education versus the expected experience.

Although every school possesses some type of culture and climate, it is proven that the culture must be created whether it is a nurtured creation or one will be created organically (Lunenburg, 2010). While it is the principal's role to create a climate conducive to a collaborative work environment, teachers also need support from faculty. Vail and Weiss found that teachers acclimate their success to comfortable work conditions more than the leadership component (Vail, 2005; Weiss, 2005). Having
comfortable working conditions includes teachers feeling adequate and safe in their environment while having opportunities for professional growth (Blasé et al., 2008). These conditions should be continuously nurtured with fidelity to alleviate teacher burnout. To curb burnout in teachers, administrators can assist through providing resources geared towards project management skills or lessen workloads of new teachers. There is no sure way to prevent burnout, but garnering a better understanding of factors leading to burnout can help with identifying and addressing stressors. The identification of stressors can lead to implications for retention.
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study analyzes educators’ perceptions of how accountability, teacher induction and support programs, administrative support and instructional feedback and school climate might have an effect on teacher attrition in a select rural school district in the state of Mississippi. Blumer’s (1969) Symbolic Interactionism states that human association is dependent upon one’s personal experiences of interaction with others. The importance of encounters decides the level of interaction and responses that are shown. The interactions, in return, determine an educator’s perception of their own existence and how they perceive their work environment.

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1954, cited in Huitt, 2007) insinuates human motivation derives from needs being met. Each level of need must be met, starting with the lower level deficiencies before moving to the next higher level to act upon growth (Huitt, 2007). This study is framed around Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs because it examines the unmet needs of teachers within a select school district and the effect these deficiencies have on teachers’ perceptions of factors affecting teacher attrition.

Herzberg’s Theory of Motivators and Hygiene Factors model (1959, cited in Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959) provides a direct correlation of hygiene elements closely related to work that does not create, but instead envisages job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The 13 factors that affect job attitudes are company policy,
supervision, relationship with boss, work conditions, salary, relationship with peers, achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement and growth. While these factors are implications for retention and attrition, they are external factors that are determined by motivation.

This theoretical framework commingles the aforementioned theories to examine perceptions of teacher attrition within a select school district. Participants in this study responded to survey questions that highlighted these theories. Reflecting upon their experiences, hygiene factors, and motivators, participants provided responses that implicated how the variables in this study affect teacher attrition. The overall goal of this study was to identify factors that motivate attrition through collecting quantitative and qualitative data to understand the perceptions of the selected variables’ impact on the decision to remain or leave the field of education.

**Research Design**

The process of this research study was driven by a mixed method research design in which both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed. According to Johnson and Christensen (2007), mixed methods research pragmatically disregards assumptions from a philosophical standpoint in an attempt to understand real-world situations. The quantitative aspect of this research was to receive a comprehensible understanding through preliminary social research by seeking perceptions and motivation through utilizing statistical measurements of data collected through a structured research instrument to produce a numerical representation of data (Burns & Grove, 2005). The qualitative research was collected through conducting interviews with administrators to
effectively garner their perceptions of the selected variables correlation with teacher attrition. By using both methods, research questions were fully addressed through gleaning insight from a leadership and classroom educator perspective that would not otherwise have been addressed through one research method (Creswell, 2008). The choice to use a mixed method approach for data collection was based upon the need to determine how teachers and administrators within a select school district in a southeastern state perceive select variables in relation to reasons for teacher attrition with implications of teacher retention. This design involved collecting data from teachers through surveys and conducting administrator focus group interviews to garner insight on factors affecting teacher attrition with implications for retention as well as data collection using a Likert-scaled survey and interviews, conducting a data analysis, and reporting data results.

The survey was used to develop a self-reporting analysis created by the researcher in collaboration with members of the researcher’s doctoral committee at Clark Atlanta University. The creation of survey items included the use of research gathered within the literature review. Research was not conducted until the researcher had obtained approval from Clark Atlanta University’s Institutional Review Board and modification of instruments in accordance with suggestions of dissertation research committee.

**Definition of Variables and Significant Terms**

A variable is defined as the item being measured. Dependent variables are directly affected during research and responds to the independent variables. An
independent variable is a variable that stands alone and affects the dependent variable. The following are terms that are significant to this study.

**Dependent Variable**

**Teacher Attrition** is defined as the reduction in the number of teachers that occurs when they leave due to resignation, retiring, and moving and are not replaced; downsizing to districts was taken into consideration.

**Independent Variables**

**Increased Learning Outcomes Accountability** is defined as the demands placed on teachers at the school and district level which are focused primarily on student achievement.

**Teacher Evaluation Accountability** is defined as the demands placed on teachers at the school and district level which are focused primarily on teacher evaluations.

**Teacher Induction Programs** is a collective term that refers to the acclimation of teachers to the school through providing ongoing staff development and mentoring support through their pre tenure period.

**Teacher Orientation** is defined as a program provided by the school or district to welcome and accclimate teachers to the school and district by providing routine information such as information about pay, health benefits, and other topics.

**Mentoring Support** is defined as internal support provided by veteran staff through on going support and mentorship to contribute to professional development.
Administrative Support is a term that refers to the interest and assistance of school administration in providing a structured learning environment.

Instructional Feedback is a term that refers to the interest and assistance of school administration in providing qualitative instructional feedback through observation follow up in a timely and thorough manner.

School Climate is a term that refers to the quality and character of the building and its occupants that make up the persona of the school reflecting upon its goals, teaching and learning practices and interpersonal relationships.

School Culture is a term that refers to the norms and values that make up the persona of the school.

Relationship among the Variables

Independent variables were projected to have an effect on the dependent variable (negative or positive). The outcome of the relationships was expected to be concluded through the execution of research. The findings offer conclusions of the independent variables’ relationship in correlation with the dependent variable with implications provided within the research methodology. Figure 1 shows the relationship among the variables.
**Independent Variables**

- Increased Academic Learning Outcomes Accountability
- Teacher Evaluation Accountability
- Teacher Induction Programs
- Teacher Orientation
- Mentoring Support
- School Climate
- School Culture
- Instructional Feedback
- Administrative Support

**Dependent Variable**

Teacher Attrition

*Figure 1. Relationship among the variables.*
Limitations of the Study

This study involves teachers and administrators from seven schools within a select school district. These limitations were acknowledged and considered during data analysis and recommendations.

- The responses collected were the perceptions of participants and may not reflect the perceptions of all teachers within this region, state, school district or those who are no longer employed within the district, state, or region.
- Participants consisted of a subgroup of teachers and administrators currently employed by the select school system.
- Participants may or may not have provided full disclosure while participating in this study.
- The data collected consisted of seven schools inclusive of elementary, middle and high school teachers and may not provide distinct data of perceptions on individual schools.
- Only two administrators, high school and elementary school administrators were interviewed, which limits inferences of the study.

Assumptions

While conducting this study, several assumptions were made:

1. The teachers who volunteered for this study were to serve as representatives for the faculty opinions within the select school district.
2. The questions used in the survey instrument properly addressed factors that could affect teacher attrition and were understood.
3. Participants responded without persuasion and with honesty.

**Summary**

The purpose of utilizing theory was to align studies with phenomena. This study was conducted to identify perceptions associated with teacher attrition. Frederick Herzberg’s (1959) Theory of Motivation and Maslow’s (1954) Hierarchy of Needs were two theories used to identify potential indicators of teacher attrition. The application of Blumer’s (1969) Symbolic Interactionism assisted in providing insight towards the development of an individual’s perception of the variables within this study on teacher attrition. The aforementioned theories provided insight on conditional impacts of satisfaction or dissatisfaction based upon needs and behaviors.

The selected theoretical framework examined experience and perceptions to provide an in-depth understanding of the independent variable. The correlation of theories and research allowed the researcher to analyze data collected to determine implications of factors attributing to teacher attrition within a select school district located in the Southeastern section of the United States.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Teacher turnover has steadily increased within public schools in the United States for the last three decades (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2012). The primary focus of addressing staffing issues is geared towards recruiting propitious teachers in hard to staff schools with minimum regard to providing retention efforts to perpetuate staff (Ingersoll & May, 2011; The New Teacher Project [TNTP], 2012). This quantitative research was done to gather and analyze perceptions among faculty to provide implications for teacher retention.

The purpose of this mixed method research was to determine the perceptions of educators in a select school district within a select rural school district in the state of Mississippi in relation to variables previously identified as indicators of teacher attrition. This study was intended to provide insight for leaders to explore solutions to teacher shortages and teacher attrition issues based upon the data collected from current educators. The results of this study should provide a deeper understanding of perceptions of educators in a select Southeastern state and the impact of variables correlated with teacher attrition while providing implications for retention. More importantly, this study sought to garner understanding of attrition issues affecting the United States education system.
Mixed Method Approach

The process of this research study was guided by a mixed method approach in which data were collected and analyzed. The basis of quantitative research was to receive a comprehensible understanding through preliminary social research by seeking perceptions and motivation through utilizing statistical measurements of data collected through a structured research instrument to produce a numerical representation of data (Burns & Grove, 2005). The choice to use quantitative data was based upon the need to determine how teachers within a select school district in a southeastern state perceive various variables in relation to reasons for teacher attrition with implications of teacher retention. The use of a mixed method approach is to collect data from educators through surveys and interviews to garner insight on factors affecting teacher attrition with implications for retention. The design involved the researcher collecting data using a Likert-scaled survey, conducting a data analysis, conducting interviews, and reporting data results.

The survey was used to develop a self-reporting analysis created by the researcher. Items were created using research gathered within the literature review. Research was not conducted until receiving approval from Clark Atlanta University’s Institutional Review Board and modification of instruments in accordance with suggestions of dissertation research committee.

Description of the Setting

The study was conducted in a rural school district in the Delta region of the state of Mississippi. The school system in this study was selected based upon the
demographics, size of population, and data reported by the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) in relation to teacher attrition statewide. An appropriate number of participants were selected to participate in the study, providing the researcher with sufficient information for data analysis. The district had a total of seven schools with a student population of 2,396 and teacher population of 168 with a 100% minority student body (majority African American) enrollment. The school district services students ranging from Pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade. The student-teacher ratio is lower than the average within the state. On an A-F grading scale determined by the state, the select school district received failing grades for consecutive years with data beginning in 2013. The select school district is currently under state control after violating over 70% of accreditation standards and has a 44% graduation rate, which is lower than the select state’s average of 64%. This information was researched and provided through the Mississippi Department of Education school report cards. The county in which this district is located has a population of 11,507 with 74% being African American and 23% Caucasian. The average household income is $41,069 with 45% of the population being high school graduates, 10% with bachelor’s degrees, and 3% with master’s degrees or higher. The county’s main attractions are its casinos which are also the largest employers, with the school district trailing behind it as the second largest employer in the county.

**Sampling Procedures/Participants**

The population for this study included educators’ consisting of teachers and administrators currently employed by the select school district. Selected teachers
included professionals that had prior experience as a Mississippi Department of Education certified classroom teacher of one year or more. The selection process included receiving approval from district level administrators and permission from school level administrators. All teachers and administrators who met the criteria sought in this purposive sampling within the select school district were asked to participate in this nonprobability sampling research. The reason for the utilization of this research method for this study was to narrow the focus on particular qualities of the chosen population and to help with intentional results of each research question.

This study focused on collecting data in regards to teacher attrition inside a select school district in a southeastern state. This territory was chosen principally because of the increased demand for teachers amid a period of high turnover and instability inside the field. With the popularity of positions to be filled, the need to comprehend educators’ perceptions of attrition was warranted to decide ramifications of maintenance. The researcher utilized the collected data to analyze teacher perceptions and correlated data with prior research related to teacher attrition.

This study involved data collected from electronic surveys. To assure quality and reliability of data collected in this study, verification strategies were completed. This study used methodologies that are actualized amid the research procedure that validate the reliability and utility of the study. To assure quality of data, the researcher utilized an early familiarity with the participating school district.
**Working with Human Subjects**

The school district and participants were granted anonymity for the purpose of this study. Prior to participation, each individual was provided a letter outlining the purpose and intentions of the study. To ensure confidentiality, letters of research acknowledgement and consent were signed. The participants provided their experiences voluntarily and were permitted to view the study’s implications.

Research that encompasses working with human subjects has the potential to face delays that could alter the projected time period for data collection or the number of participants. Errors that could be foreseen with this study were the representation of the sample, participants who elected to no longer participate, or participants with confidentiality agreement concerns. The aforementioned circumstances had the potential to alter research findings and future implications. The research team assured that participants were well versed in what was expected for the research, but also prepared for any circumstances that could alter the research process when dealing with human subjects.

**Location of Research, Data Collection Procedures, and Instrumentation**

To center the study and to segregate variables driving this research influencing teacher attrition, this study concentrated on the Fall 2016 academic year. The study was conducted amid a three-week window. The research and data collection took place within the selected school district and included participants depicted in the sampling of participants. Upon approval at the school district, a sum of seven school-based
Administrators were contacted for approval. Upon agreement by school administrators, the researcher provided letters of consent and access to the electronic instrument to be administered within a three-week window. At the conclusion of the data collection, a detailed analysis summary was available for review. Emerging themes were inferred based upon the results of data collected. Interview protocols and instruments are located in the Appendices.

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected in this study. Information on educators’ perceptions of selected variables correlation to teacher attrition was gathered through interviews and surveys. Data were disaggregated in Microsoft Excel and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. For interviews, letters were sent to principals requesting their participation in this study during the three-week time frame. Interview responses were audio recorded for transcription at a later date.

**Data Analysis**

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were considered when analyzing results of collected data. Data were compiled to recognize emergent themes for implications of teacher retention. In Vivo coding was used to construct a detailed coding process for analyses purposes. The collected data were compiled to use participants’ verbiage to capture authenticity of experiences and perceptions. Both qualitative and quantitative data were synthesized to determine perceptions of select variables in correlation to teacher attrition in a select rural school district within the state of Mississippi.

An electronic survey composed of 42 items using a Likert scale addressing the research questions was provided to participants. The Likert scale ranges from 4 =
strongly satisfied, 3 = satisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, and 1 = very dissatisfied. The research instrument (see Appendix A) was used to survey the selected population to determine if there were correlations of the variables to teacher attrition in the select school district. The instrument was designed to be administered as an electronic survey only. The Likert scale levels were selected based upon the theoretical framework centered around the theories of Maslow (1954) and Herzberg (1959). Participants were asked to self identify on the survey using the Likert scale. The demographic information was collected in an effort to draw conclusions regarding age, previous years of experience and education level, and background. Items were selected based upon correlation to the variables of this study. The instruments administered included questions specific to attrition, retention, and the perceptions of the staff in relation to the field of education and their experiences. Information collected during the five-question interview containing questions directly aligned to the research questions and variables were analyzed using Holistic and In Vivo coding while forming reflective conclusions through synthesizing information to provide implications for teacher retention.

**Validity and Reliability**

This mixed methods research design was driven by weakness minimization legitimation. The researcher identified weakness in one method and used the second method to offset those weaknesses with strengths providing a heightened quality of synthesis of the data collected (Onwuegbuzie, Johnson, & Collins, 2011). A weakness of the qualitative data that could be foreseen was administrators providing bias information during interviews. However, responses received from the quantitative data collection
could dispel biases in the interview process. Instruments used to collect data for the purpose of this study received the approval of a professor in the Educational Leadership Department at Clark Atlanta University for its reliability. The collected quantitative data were coded and analyzed using SPSS. Data collected for the purpose of this study were not altered, but were used as recorded. The collection of data from various participants allowed the researcher to identify emerging themes and ensure data credibility. To ensure the validity of the study, the researcher avoided persuasion the responses of participants.

**Statistical Applications**

The survey instrument selected was used to provide analysis and measurements of probability distribution (averages) to determine the effect of variables chosen for this study and their influence on teacher attrition (Appendix A). The analysis was conducted by garnering raw data and identification of frequency of participant responses. The emergence of general ideas was identified and categorized for analysis and implications of themes and findings for the purpose of this study.

**Summary**

This chapter presented information on methods and procedures used for data collection purposes of this research study. The mixed method research design used in this study examined eight independent factors: increased academic learning outcomes accountability, teacher evaluation accountability, teacher induction programs, teacher orientation, mentoring support, school climate, school culture, instructional feedback, and administrative support, which have an influence on the dependent variable, teacher
attrition. An electronic survey and administrator’s interview were data collection methods used in this study. Trustworthiness was practiced to assure anonymity and validity of the study.

Quantitative and qualitative data collected were utilized to numerically and analytically measure the impact of chosen variables on teachers’ perception of teacher attrition within a select rural school district located in the state of Mississippi. The data collected provided insight to shape future studies on teacher attrition with implications for teacher retention.
CHAPTER V
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of this mixed method research was to determine the perceptions of educators in a select school district in relation to variables previously identified as indicators of teacher attrition. Teachers in a rural Mississippi school district were invited to participate in an online survey. The quantitative data from the survey were used to answer 10 research questions. In addition, qualitative data were collected from interviews with the district’s principals were used to support data findings from surveys aligned with the 10 research questions. This chapter contains an analysis of all data collected.

Description of the Quantitative Data

A link to the online survey was provided to the 168 teachers in the district’s schools. According to SurveyMonkey, more than 100 teachers ($n = 104$) viewed the questionnaire. However, only 88 teachers responded to all the items on the teacher attrition questionnaire, for a completed response rate of 52.4%. More high school teachers (40%) than elementary (33%) or middle school (26%) teachers responded to the questionnaire (see Table 1). The teachers reported an average teaching experience of 10.5 years, ranging from 1 to 40 years.
Table 1

*Description of the Sample*

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<th>Descriptor</th>
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<td>26.4</td>
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<td>High school (9 – 12)</td>
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<td>5.7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Where earned undergraduate degree</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-state</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>77.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-state</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Some teachers did not respond

Forty-three percent of the teachers reported between 1 and 6 years of experience, while another 41% reported teaching experience between 7 and 15 years. The majority
of the teachers (83%) reported being between 21 and 42 years old and almost all of the teachers (77%) received their undergraduate degree in the state of Mississippi.

**Variables in the Study**

Teachers responded to 42 items using a Likert scale that ranged from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 4 (*strongly disagree*). One negatively worded item in the school culture scale was recoded. The five items in the teacher attrition scale were coded so that a low score (1) indicated their intention to possibly leave the teaching profession.

Table 2 contains the questionnaire items and Cronbach’s alpha coefficient associated with each scale. Two items, *I am responsible for my students’ academic success* and *My administrator’s disposition is intimidating during observations and evaluations*, were not correlated with the other items in their respective scales. The lack of correlation among the items in the scales produced low reliability values in the teacher evaluation accountability measures and administrative support scales. Removal of the items created valid Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the two scales in question.

### Table 2

*Teacher Attrition Indicators, Corresponding Questionnaire Items, and Reliability*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator/Items in scale</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic learning outcomes</strong></td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Faculty and staff take responsibility in implementing the school improvement plan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The staff plays a role in creation of the school’s annual learning outcomes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I understand and take responsibility for established expectations of my role as a teacher in my school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator/Items in scale</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher evaluation accountability measures</strong></td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I feel overwhelmed by the required documentation needed to track academic success.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I am concerned about job security as it is aligned with students’ academic performance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I feel stress due to job demands placed upon me as a teacher.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My job stability is contingent upon student academic growth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher induction programs</strong></td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A district/school induction program provided continuous instructional support during my first three years of teaching.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There was a hospitality support group for new teachers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher orientation programs</strong></td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Administrators provide support so that new teachers are not overwhelmed with their job responsibilities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A district/school induction program, held prior to the start of the school year, helped prepare me for a smooth school year classroom opening.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mentoring support</strong></td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I am/was assigned a teacher mentor to seek advice and observe teaching strategies as a component of my teacher induction program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My district or school provides targeted professional development as a way of increasing my skill levels.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The mentoring program in my district/school has been a useful program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I have/had opportunity to attend inservice training in my content field or on my grade level.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School climate</strong></td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My school has cultivated a positive environment to teach.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers in my school work collaboratively to assure student success.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I feel I have positive relationships with other teachers in my building.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator/Items in scale</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The school is a safe and secure environment for students to learn and teachers to teach.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The school is kept clean and repairs are done in a timely manner.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional feedback</strong></td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My administrator encourages and promotes creativity with instructional strategies to be</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>used with students in my class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My administrator provides lesson plan feedback.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I feel that I receive adequate administrator support and feedback.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My principal provides helpful suggestions/feedback for improvement of my teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School culture</strong></td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The food in the school cafeteria meets our nutritional needs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My administrator consistently implements school rules for student conduct.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My administrator provides supportive help to me when needed for student conduct.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School organizational expectations are implemented consistently as stated in the faculty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and student handbooks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff members are frequently recognized for their efforts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I am overall satisfied being a teacher at this school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The level of discipline issues in this school interferes with the effectiveness of my</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching.*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administrative support</strong></td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The administrative team is very supportive and encouraging when conducting observations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and providing feedback.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My principal is supportive when teachers experience behavior challenges with their</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students/parents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My administrator leads our team with data analysis for instructional improvement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator/Items in scale</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Administrators provide consistent support in implementing discipline guidelines in the school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher attrition†</strong></td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I often contemplate staying home to avoid coming to work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I seek other positions outside of teaching.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The stress associated with teaching is not worth it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Working at this school gives me a sense of self-satisfaction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I like the way this school is operated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Teacher attrition indicator scales range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree)

† Teacher attrition scale score ranges from 1 (possibly considering leaving teaching profession) to 4 (satisfied with teaching profession)

Mean scale scores were calculated for each teacher. The mean scores for the teacher attrition indicator scales range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The teacher attrition scale score ranges from 1 (possibly considering leaving teaching profession) to 4 (satisfied with teaching profession). Table 3 contains the descriptive statistics for each of the teacher attrition indicator scales and for the teacher attrition scale. Teachers tended to agree on academic learning outcomes ($M = 3.19$) and school climate ($M = 3.04$), indicating that they work collaboratively to create learning outcomes and take responsibility implementing the school improvement plan in a positive teaching environment. The teachers were also more likely to agree on teacher evaluation accountability measures ($M = 3.16$), indicating that they were overwhelmed by
paperwork and that they felt stress in their jobs. In addition, the teachers disagree that they were satisfied with the teaching profession ($M = 2.57$).

Table 3

*Description of Teacher Attrition Indicator Scales and Teacher Attrition Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>$M^*$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic learning outcomes</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>1.67 – 4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher evaluation accountability</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>1.50 – 4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>measures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher induction programs</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>1.00 – 4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher orientation programs</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>1.00 – 4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring support</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>1.25 – 4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School climate</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>1.00 – 4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School culture</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>1.14 – 4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional feedback</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1.00 – 4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative support</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>1.00 – 4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher attrition</td>
<td>2.57†</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>1.00 – 4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Teacher attrition indicator scale scores range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree)

† Teacher attrition scale score range from 1 (possibly considering leaving teaching profession) to 4 (satisfied with teaching profession)

The scale scores of the nine teacher attrition indicator scales (independent variables) and the teacher attrition scale (dependent variable) were examined for an absence of outliers, normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. No violations of the assumptions of the statistical procedures were found. In addition, the dependent and independent variables were examined for multivariate outliers and multicollinearity. No multivariate outliers were found; nor was multicollinearity present in the data.
Analyses were conducted to determine if the differences existed between the grade levels the teachers taught, their ages, and whether they earned their undergraduate degree in state or out of state. There were no significant differences found among the age groups. However, two statistically significant differences were found among the grade levels of the teachers (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Significant Differences among Grade Levels*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher orientation programs</td>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>5.054</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.527</td>
<td>3.801</td>
<td>.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>55.848</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>.665</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.902</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher attrition</td>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>5.036</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.518</td>
<td>3.977</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>53.193</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58.230</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post hoc analyses found that elementary teachers were more likely to be in greater agreement about teacher orientation programs ($M = 2.78$) than were high school teachers ($M = 2.24$). Additionally, middle school teachers scored lower on teacher attrition ($M = 2.21$) than did teachers in elementary school ($M = 2.83$), indicating that middle school teachers may be more inclined to leave the teaching profession (see Table 5).
Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations by Grade Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Elementary $(n = 29)$</th>
<th>Middle $(n = 23)$</th>
<th>High $(n = 35)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher orientation programs*</td>
<td>$M$ 2.78 $SD$ 0.74</td>
<td>$M$ 2.30 $SD$ 0.88</td>
<td>$M$ 2.24 $SD$ 0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher attrition†</td>
<td>$M$ 2.83 $SD$ 0.74</td>
<td>$M$ 2.21 $SD$ 0.84</td>
<td>$M$ 2.58 $SD$ 0.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Teacher attrition indicator scale scores range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree)
† Teacher attrition scale score ranges from 1 (possibly considering leaving teaching profession) to 4 (satisfied with teaching profession)

A series of $t$ tests was conducted to determine if differences existed between teachers who obtained their undergraduate degree in Mississippi or in another state. Statistically significant results are presented in Table 6. Those teachers who obtained their undergraduate degree in Mississippi were less inclined to agree about the teacher attrition indicators than were teachers who obtained their degree in other states.

Table 6

Correlations of Teachers Who Obtained Their Undergraduate Degree in Mississippi or Out of State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>In State $(n = 68)$</th>
<th>Out of state $(n = 20)$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Attrition Indicators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher induction programs</td>
<td>$M^*$ 2.18 $SD$ 0.72</td>
<td>$M^*$ 2.80 $SD$ 0.99</td>
<td>-2.59</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher orientation programs</td>
<td>$M^*$ 2.33 $SD$ 0.80</td>
<td>$M^*$ 2.80 $SD$ 0.86</td>
<td>-2.26</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Attrition Indicators</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M*</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M*</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In State (n = 68)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring support</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>-3.47</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School climate</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>-3.42</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional feedback</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>-2.78</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Teacher attrition indicator scale scores range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree)

Correlations were also obtained between years of teaching experience and the scales. Two teacher attrition indicators were found to have low, positive statistically significant correlations with years of experience (see Table 7). The finding indicated that as the number of years of experience increased, so did the teachers’ level of agreement with school culture and administrative support increase.

Table 7

*Correlations of Teacher Attrition Indicators with Years of Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher attrition indicators</th>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School culture</td>
<td>.238*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative support</td>
<td>.248*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05

Analysis of Research Questions

The first nine research questions were designed to determine if a significant relationship existed between teacher attrition and nine indicators of teacher attrition.
Table 8 contains the Pearson product moment correlation values obtained. All correlation values were significant \((p < .001)\) and eight of the nine indicators were moderately to highly correlated with teacher attrition.

Table 8

*Correlations of Teacher Attrition with Indicators of Teacher Attrition*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Attrition Indicators</th>
<th>Teacher Attrition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic learning outcomes</td>
<td>.527*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher evaluation accountability measures</td>
<td>-.446*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher induction programs</td>
<td>.352*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher orientation programs</td>
<td>.470*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring support</td>
<td>.505*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School climate</td>
<td>.590*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School culture</td>
<td>.644*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional feedback</td>
<td>.601*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative support</td>
<td>.557*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \(p < .001\)

As the teachers’ positive agreement with those eight teacher indicators increased, their perceptions surrounding attrition increased, indicating that they were less likely to quit. However, as teachers’ agreement increased that they were overwhelmed by paperwork and that they felt stress in their jobs (teacher evaluation accountability measures indicator), they indicated that they were more inclined to leave the teaching profession \((r = -.446)\).
The last research question was designed to determine which of the nine indicators of teacher attrition had the greatest effect on teacher attrition. A forward multiple regression procedure was used. Table 9 contains a summary of the results. As can be seen, four of the attrition indicators (culture, teacher evaluation accountability measures, academic learning outcomes, and instructional feedback) were statistically significant predictors of teacher attrition. Culture provided the largest amount of variance in teacher attrition ($R^2 = .414$). The other significant predictors provided less than 15% of the variance.

Table 9

*Teacher Attrition Indicators as Statistically Significant Predictors of Teacher Attrition*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.056</td>
<td>2.053</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>.317</td>
<td>.244</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>.414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher evaluation accountability measures</td>
<td>-.386</td>
<td>-.295</td>
<td>-3.182</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic learning outcomes</td>
<td>.304</td>
<td>.227</td>
<td>2.479</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional feedback</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td>.251</td>
<td>2.400</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = .559$

Adjusted $R^2 = .538$

Those teachers who indicated that their administrators encourage and promote creative instructional strategies, provide lesson plan feedback and helpful suggestions to improve their skills, and that they work collaboratively to create learning outcomes and take responsibility implementing the school improvement plan in a positive teaching environment tended to have higher scores on attrition, indicating that they were less
likely to quit. However, those who felt stress and were overwhelmed with the demands of their job scored negatively. The multiple regression model with all four predictors produced an adjusted $R^2 = .535$, $F(4, 83) = 26.29$, $p < .001$. No other hypothesized indicators of teacher attrition were statistically significant predictors.

**Results of the Qualitative Data Analysis**

**Public School Administrators’ Perceptions of Teacher Attrition Issues**

Five research questions were developed to examine public school administrator’s perceptions of increased learning outcomes accountability, teacher evaluation accountability, teacher induction programs, teacher orientation, mentoring support, administrative support, instructional feedback, school climate and school culture in correlation with teacher attrition. The results of the qualitative analysis in correlation with the studied variables are presented in this section.

RQ1: What impact does induction and mentoring programs have on teacher retention?

According to responses from administrators interviewed, they felt that induction and mentoring programs were an important component of acclimating teachers to a school, district and classroom. They felt that having prior preparation and introductions to the environment with a support system would help to make educators more comfortable in their environment, but was not a determining factor for staying within the profession. The repetitive theme from their answers alluded to the desire to see more hands on induction programs for acclimation to schools and providing a level of comfort.
within the new environment rather than introductory information on benefits and the
district. Administrator A stated the following:

Induction and mentoring programs have a huge impact on teacher retention. A
strong and robust induction program allows new teachers to be in a fail safe
environment in which they could learn and close the learning curve gap while
feeling supported in the process. (Administrator A, personal interview,
December 5, 2016)

Administrator B commented,

I feel that mentorship for teachers is imperative for novice teachers in a new
environment. Even after years of school, there is nothing that can prepare an
educator for the classroom other than hands on experience and a mentor to coach
them through the rough patches. Having a mentor to help maneuver in the
education arena is a pertinent piece to success as an educator. Everyone needs a
champion, especially teachers and a mentor can help get them to the finish line.

Being a teacher and having to deal with administration, parents, students and job
demands has proven to be a difficult task. Having a bond with someone in the
building can help nurture relationships that can potentially help to retain teachers.

School districts are in need of induction programs that go beyond the surface of
district housekeeping information. Schools need programs in place that pair new
teachers with a mentor that has mastered the classroom and can offer sound and
solid advice from personal experience. While I don’t feel that an induction or
mentorship program is a determining factor in attrition, I do feel that it can make
the transition easier. (Administrator B, personal interview, December 14, 2016)
Both administrators felt that the presence of an implemented induction and mentorship program for classroom educators is one factor that can have a positive impact on retaining educators, but may not play a significant role in retention. While both administrators felt that induction programs are needed, only one administrator has implemented a program within their respective school. Administrator A remarked,

Although an induction program could have a pretty good impact on retaining teachers, we don’t assign mentors at our school. We do encourage veteran teachers to take on a mentorship role at their own convenience. It is considered to be the role of department chairs to mentor new teachers. As administrators, we try not to bombard new teachers with multiple expectations that aren’t mandated because they already have a plethora of responsibilities inclusive of instructional planning and documentation. (Administrator A, personal interview, December 5, 2016)

RQ2: How does the working environment impact a district or schools’ ability to retain teachers?

According to responses from administrators interviewed, they felt that having a sense of belonging and ownership within their environment while also working under a supportive leader has an impact on whether teachers remain within a school and district or if they will leave. Administrator A noted,

It’s huge. The work environment is sometimes more important than induction programs and pay. When teachers accept a job because it is available and they have not researched the community, leader and school culture, they can find themselves in a miserable situation because it does not fit their personality, vision
or mission professionally. I think that when teachers take time and do research to select the environment, community, and leader they want to work with, the retention rates will reflect positively. (Administrator A, personal interview, December 5, 2016)

Administrator B stated,

The working environment is very important in more than one way. The professional relationship that administrators and teachers have plays an important role in retention. If a teacher is in a comfortable environment, they tend to do their best and work harder. However, if they are in an environment where administrators constantly ridicule them and the working relationships are broken and the environment is hostile, it can lead to them not wanting to do anything beyond what is required. (Administrator B, personal interview, December 14, 2016)

Although facility maintenance was not included within the study, it was a factor that arose during the interview. Administrator B continued by stating the following:

The building upkeep such as maintenance plays a role in retention as well. Having a building with issues that can be health hazards such as mold, mildew and plumbing issues that aren’t properly addressed are other things that can make teachers reconsider staying if only for potential health risks as well as the lack of a clean facility. If a teacher is comfortable with their working relationships and upkeep of the building, the battle of retaining them is half won. (Administrator B, personal interview, December 14, 2016)
RQ3: What impact does the demand of academic learning outcomes tied to teacher evaluations and job stability have on teacher retention?

According to responses from administrators interviewed, they felt that there is a correlation of the demand of academic learning outcomes tied to teacher evaluations and job stability to teacher retention. While Administrator A felt that the tie is needed to assure performance of teachers, Administrator B felt that it is unfair to link learning outcomes to evaluations and produces a fear factor in educators that could affect performance.

Both administrators agreed that tying the evaluations to job stability doesn’t necessarily reflect true mastery of teaching and facilitation skills, but can have an effect on teacher retention. Administrator A mentioned,

The evaluation systems should be used as a growth model to show a teachers’ skill level. Every teacher is expected to be at a bell curve, which is doing what is required of them. Of course we want teachers to perform above and beyond the base level, but everyone won’t come in at that level. Exhibiting superior facilitation skills daily and not just on announced evaluation days is a trait of a highly skilled teacher. There is an effect on teacher retention based upon this accountability. Teachers can no longer use the field of education as a fall back plan for a couple of years until something better comes along. They must be skilled, this includes making sure that students are showing some growth and being evaluated on that growth and if there aren’t any visible skills, it will be reflected within those evaluations which can potentially cost them their career in education. This kind of accountability will drive some out which gives
implications that there is correlation to retention as it is aligned with accountability. (Administrator A, personal interview, December 5, 2016)

The administrators felt that the tie of student academic outcomes to a teacher’s job stability doesn’t reflect a teacher’s competency or attempts at moving their students’ forward. Administrator B stated,

When you attach a teacher’s livelihood, which is their money and their pay to performance, it is kind of difficult to retain them. The learning outcomes of students are sometimes not based upon what the teacher knows or has taught. As a teacher, you are expected to teach several objectives within a time frame no matter what other factors are weighing in on the progress. The teacher may have covered all objectives but some students didn’t master them all, however their lack of mastery or documented progress is considered the teachers’ lack of competency and is reflected within their evaluation. This should not be considered a lack of competency for the teacher, but should instead reflect that the teacher is following state mandates for what should be taught rather than meeting those children on their level and “leaving no child behind.” Because of this, teachers sometimes go to work and feel that their job is threatened by them doing what they are asked when what is being asked isn’t enough to achieve the goals set forth within the compressed timeline set to implement what is needed to achieve those goals.” (Administrator B, personal interview, December 14, 2016)

Administrator B went on to say,

This also aligns to the evaluation piece where teachers are left with an evaluation reflecting them not increasing students’ academic achievement which is attached
to their job stability. Ultimately, a teachers’ job is tied to a students passing or failing despite that teachers’ job performance. In this line of work, it should be evident why teachers would consider a different career where they could sleep at night knowing that they will have a job the next day or the next year.

(Administrator B, personal interview, December 14, 2016)

RQ4: How has increased academic accountability goals affected teacher retention?

According to responses from administrators interviewed, they felt that there was some correlation of increased academic accountability goals to teacher retention.

Administrator A felt that goals are imperative to any organization and the correlation of those goals to teacher retention is contingent upon students’ academic success under the instruction of their teacher. Administrator A remarked,

In anything you do you have to have plans, goals and accountability. Academic accountability comes with a lot of pressure because data drives instruction and decision making. Data is also used to determine if a school is successful or failing. For some courses that are state tested, there is pressure upon teachers to perform well in hopes of increased academic achievement in their students. One major component of accountability academically is the student growth percentile where if a student does not perform academically, the students’ achievement is not based upon the score of a particular test. The growth percentile shows if a student has grown and the subject matter level of achievement. The student growth percentile goes beyond scores to disclose whether or not the student progressed and how they performed compared to their peers. Having this dynamic shift from total
accountability of all students making a passing score to ensuring that all students show some sort of growth takes a lot of pressure off of teachers to make sure that students perform. This shows if a student increased, maintained or regressed academically. This model takes the pressure off of meeting a certain goal which has some correlation or direct impact on teacher retention, but not a tremendous impact that’s enough to be the determining factor for retention. I don’t think student achievement goals will make a teacher stay or leave, but helps guide a teachers’ goal for their students. It doesn’t directly impact teacher attrition, but there is some correlation within those goals. The student growth percentile model has taken a lot of stress off of teachers to just perform and teach to the test. The focus is now if students are growing. The issue that may affect retention with this model of accountability is if there is a lack of growth and implications of regression then there may be an issue, but I don’t feel that academic accountability goals will determine if an educator will stay or leave unless they aren’t performing at all. (Administrator A, personal interview, December 5, 2016)

Although Administrator B had some alignment with the thoughts of Administrator A, Administrator B felt that the increase of goals, consistent changes and shifts in expectations has a direct correlation with teacher retention and their decision to seek other professions. Administrator B commented,

There are too many goals placed on teachers coupled with other demands. With there being so many demands on teachers, many of them think twice about staying in the profession. Having consistent change, increases in goals and high expectations does affect teacher retention. When compared to other careers that
can leave work at work and have a work-life balance, teaching is less appealing especially with all of the stressors that come with being an educator. Teachers must work overtime beyond school hours to meet goals and it’s never ending for an effective teacher who is passionate, which can lead to that burn out and career change. The increased accountability does make the job less desirable because nothing is ever enough and everything is ever changing, daily. (Administrator B, personal interview, December 14, 2016)

Both administrators agreed that there was a correlation between goals and accountability to teacher attrition, but their views were opposing as to what drives teachers to seeking other opportunities. Their statements highlighted showing some growth in students versus focusing on passing scores can relieve some pressure, but the demands of the workload aligned with goals and accountability can be viewed as a stressor.

RQ5: How does instructional feedback and administrative support affect teacher retention?

According to responses from administrators interviewed, they felt that receiving qualitative feedback to highlight strengths and weaknesses is imperative for documenting teachers’ growth. Both administrators felt that a lack of support and instructional feedback has a direct correlation with teacher retention and can be one of many determining factors in a teacher’s decision to leave the profession. Administrator A stated,

It’s very important that we inform teachers about their job performance. This aligns with the growth model that I previously discussed. Administrators should walk into a classroom as an observer and not with an iron fist looking for
inconsistencies. Feedback should reflect what was observed and offer words of encouragement. Teachers need to know when they do something well. Likewise, they need to know where there are opportunities for growth. It is an important component of evaluation to provide some type of feedback with an emphasis on it being qualitative. Feedback from evaluations in a timely manner is important for teacher retention, because otherwise teachers won’t know how to measure whether or not they’re on track. The feedback shouldn’t always be documented or punitive. This goes back to the administrator being consistent with monitoring instruction throughout the year to give teachers a level of comfort. With consistent classroom visits, teachers can receive feedback in a more positive way and not feel intimidated. Without having instructional feedback, teachers won’t know how they are performing or what skills need to be addressed. When they see a leader who is all about wanting them to be better and not trying to catch them doing wrong, it puts them in a good place of wanting to stay rather than a situation that can be perceived negatively. A lack of support and minimal instructional feedback can lead to higher attrition rates because teachers don’t feel comfortable in their working environment and may be receiving low ratings with no clear direction or instructional feedback to guide them towards improvement which can be discouraging. (Administrator A, personal interview, December 5, 2016)

Responses from both administrators supported the idea that teachers need feedback and support from administrators’ who genuinely care about their professional growth. Administrator B said,
There is an alignment to instructional feedback and administrative support and teachers’ decision to leave a district or school. Instructional feedback is great when it reflects the classroom observation. Teachers have a plethora of visitors throughout the year who are evaluating them and often the feedback isn’t similar or reflective of the observation and can vary by evaluator. There may be building administrators, instructional coaches and district administrators who visit and all give different feedback. With varying feedback, teachers may question their effectiveness especially if it is conflicting. This can be discouraging for teachers. However, instructional feedback is needed to assist with improving instruction, but should be qualitative and have substance and that’s where a lot of administrator’s lack in the support arena. Giving constructive criticism without suggestions or resources to assist is just as ineffective as not receiving feedback at all. A teacher not knowing where they stand or how to improve will more than likely seek other options to find an environment where they feel someone is willing to support them whether it’s a change in career or change in school or district. (Administrator B, personal interview, December 14, 2016)

Summary

Responses from 87 teachers were used to answer a series of research questions and to determine differences among the teachers on a number of demographic questions. Mean scale scores were calculated for each teacher on nine teacher attrition indicators and on teacher attrition. Elementary teachers were more likely to be in greater agreement about teacher orientation programs than were high school teachers. Middle school
teachers scored lower on teacher attrition than did teachers in elementary school, indicating that middle school teachers may be more inclined to think about leaving the teaching profession. Those teachers who obtained their undergraduate degree in Mississippi were less inclined to agree about teacher induction and orientation programs, mentoring support, school climate, and instructional feedback than were teachers who obtained their degree in other states. Two teacher attrition indicators were found to have low, positive statistically significant correlations with years of experience, indicating that as the number of years of experience increased, so did the teachers’ level of agreement with school culture and administrative support increase.

Eight of the nine teacher attrition indicators were moderately to highly correlated with teacher attrition. As the teachers’ positive agreement with those eight teacher indicators increased, their perceptions surrounding attrition also increased, indicating that they were less likely to quit. However, as teachers’ agreement increased that they were overwhelmed by paperwork and that they felt stress in their jobs (teacher evaluation accountability measures indicator), they indicated that they were more inclined to leave the teaching profession. Lastly, four of the attrition indicators (school culture, teacher evaluation accountability measures, academic learning outcomes, and instructional feedback) were statistically significant predictors of teacher attrition. School culture provided the largest amount of variance in teacher attrition.

Qualitative information was collected from two interviews with administrators in the select school district within the State of Mississippi. One administrator was on the high school level with the second serving as a middle school administrator. The intention of interviewing administrators was to gain further insight from administrators based upon
their perception of factors that correlate to teacher attrition issues. The outcomes are discussed after each related question is stated.

The researcher analyzed administrator interviews qualitatively to determine if variables studied in the Teacher Survey impacted the dependent variables as support to those factors from an administrative perception determined by the quantitative analysis. To collect qualitative data, the researcher recorded and transcribed administrator interviews. The researcher analyzed the qualitative data by identifying common themes as they appeared throughout interview transcripts.
The education field is one of the largest occupations within the public sector of the United States (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014); however, the field of education continues to be faced with an incline of teacher attrition. With the increase of educators exiting the field of education at a steadily increasing rate since the early 1980s in search of better career opportunities and a heightened level of fulfillment, there is a need for research leading to plausible answers as to why teaching is not a sustainable career (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). Prior research discussed factors such as work conditions and work loads, but lacked the perception of educators’ aligned with factors that are currently impacting school districts.

The purpose of this mixed method research was to determine the perceptions of educators in a select school district in relation to variables previously identified as indicators of teacher attrition. Teachers in a rural Mississippi school district were invited to participate in an online survey. The quantitative data from the survey were used to answer 10 research questions. In addition, qualitative data were collected from interviews with the district’s principals. The qualitative data from the interviews were used to support data findings from surveys aligned with the 10 research questions. This chapter contains an analysis of all data collected.
Quantitative Findings

The descriptive analysis of data for the Teacher Survey revealed the following:

- More than 100 teachers \( (n = 104) \) viewed the questionnaire with 87 teachers responding, for a response rate of 52.4%. The majority of respondents were high school teachers (40%) with the remaining respondents being elementary (33%) and middle school (26%) teachers.

- The average teaching experience of respondents was 10.5 years, ranging from 1 to 40 years; 43% of respondents reported between 1 and 6 years of experience, while another 41% reported experience ranging between 7 and 15 years.

- The majority of respondents ranged in age between 21 and 42 years of age.

- Of the respondents, 77% reported receiving their undergraduate degree in Mississippi.

Significant findings from the regression analysis of data for the Teacher Survey displayed the following:

- A statistically significant relationship between school culture and teacher attrition exists in over 60% of responses.

- A statistically significant relationship between teacher evaluation accountability and teacher attrition exists in over 70% of responses.

- A statistically significant relationship between increased learning outcomes accountability and teacher attrition exists in over 79% of responses.
• A statistically significant relationship between instructional feedback and teacher attrition exists in over 73% of responses.
• Among survey participants, there were no statistically significant differences among age groups to show a variance in responses.
• The teacher evaluation accountability indicator shows that those who were stressed with their position (83%) and were overwhelmed with paperwork (81%) were more likely to be inclined to leave the teaching profession.
• The teacher evaluation accountability indicator shows that those who were concerned about students’ academic performance aligned with job security and job stability (71%) were more likely to be inclined to leave the teaching profession.
• Teachers who felt that they received positive feedback (74%) and support (71%) are less likely to be inclined to leave the teaching profession.
• Middle school teachers are more likely to leave the teaching profession than elementary and high school teachers.
• As teachers’ agreement with school climate, school culture, administrative support, academic learning outcomes, teacher induction programs, teacher orientation programs, mentoring support and administrative feedback increase, they are less likely to indicate that they may leave the teaching profession.
Qualitative Findings

- The qualitative analysis of administration interviews provided evidence supporting the quantitative findings that mentorship and induction programs are both components of factors involved in retaining teachers, but are not statistically significant indicators.

- The qualitative findings also revealed that a school’s work environment identified as culture is a statistically significant indicator of teacher attrition.

- Findings within the qualitative analysis found a trend with the quantitative analysis that teachers are more inclined to remain within the profession if working in a supportive environment with adequate administrative feedback.

- Although there is a need for accountability, the correlation of academic learning outcomes accountability linked with teacher evaluations and job stability has a correlation to teacher attrition.

- The absence of administrative support and feedback are predictors for teacher attrition.

Conclusions and Implications

Based on findings of this mixed method research, some of the researcher’s hypothesis were supported, while others were not. This research study was conducted to determine if public school educators’ perceived that variables studied correlated to teacher attrition. The findings indicated that school culture, teacher evaluation accountability, instructional feedback and increased academic learning outcomes accountability have a statistically significant correlation with teacher attrition. As a
result, four implications have been revealed from the findings of this research in correlation with the population studied.

- Survey results collected in 2008 support the findings in this study that teachers in Mississippi are inclined to leave the profession due to the statistically significant indicators also found within this study inclusive of administrative support and school culture (MS Project CLEAR Voice Teacher Working Conditions Survey, 2008). Research from a study conducted by the Institute of Education Sciences (2015) supports that of the 8% of teachers who left the profession during the 2012-2013 school year, better manageability of workload and better working conditions were cited. The findings suggested that educators value a positive and supportive working environment. The implication is that teachers are less inclined to leave the profession if they are working in a positive environment with supportive administration that provides useful and effective feedback.

- The analysis of data revealed that prior research supports the idea that teacher’s lack in autonomy under a bureaucratic style of leadership and teacher evaluation accountability indicators show teachers who experience heightened levels of stress correlated with paperwork and being overwhelmed were more inclined to leave the profession (Futernick, 2007; Hunt & Carroll, 2002). The implication is that teachers can benefit from intentional professional development and support from administration that defines what accountability and student academic growth entails. This support can give teachers a level of comfort with the alignment of evaluations to student
achievement with the possibility of making them less inclined to leave the profession from fear of job stability.

- The findings in this study revealed that teachers with less experience are more inclined to leave the profession than those with more experience. This correlation of data is aligned with eight of the nine indicators for teacher attrition. The implication is that as teachers’ agreement with school climate, school culture, administrative support, academic learning outcomes, teacher induction programs, teacher orientation programs, mentoring support and administrative feedback increase, they are less likely to indicate that they may leave the teaching profession. With a positive and cultivating environment, teachers are less inclined to leave the profession, thus increasing their years of experience and decreasing attrition showing that teachers who are happier with their working environment are more inclined to stay in the profession.

**Recommendations**

It is the recommendation of the researcher that based upon the findings of this study, the following practices should be implemented for implications of retention.

**Recommendations for School Administrators**

- Work to cultivate a positive and supportive working environment to retain teachers.
- Take a closer look at teacher workloads in alignment with accountability measures.
• Implement building level mentorship programs providing assistance with transitioning into the field of education.

• Provide recognition for successes to give teachers a sense of fulfillment and self-satisfaction within the field of education and to build teacher morale.

• Provide qualitative instructional feedback in a timely manner with suggestions and resources.

• Encourage collaboration among educators to build positive working relationships in collaborative learning communities.

**Recommendations for School Districts**

• Increase focused professional development to further assist with stress factors and acclimation to the district.

• Implement multiple forms of evaluation to determine the effectiveness of teachers.

• Implement ongoing induction programs that provide acclimation to the school district to familiarize teachers with district policies and procedures.

• Increase content focused professional development to assist with professional growth.

• Provide training for mentor teachers to assist new teachers with transitioning into the field of education.

• Partner with local colleges to assist in recruitment and transition through acclimation into the district by providing student teaching opportunities.
• Provide training to administrators on teacher retention and maintaining a positive climate and culture within schools.

**Recommendations for Mentor Teachers**

• Provide assistance for new teachers by co-teaching, providing resources and being a consultant for issues or questions that may arise.
• Provide feedback and support through observations and lesson plan reviews before submission.
• Work collaboratively with new teachers throughout the year in collaborative learning communities.
• Provide opportunities for classroom observations and debriefing with new teachers.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The researcher recommends that further study be conducted to gain qualitative responses from teachers to have more insight on specific thoughts towards variables studied and what level of support is needed to cause them to extend their career in the field of education. The use of teacher interviews would provide educational leaders the information needed to implement intentional professional development and training for school-based leaders to effectively use the accountability measures and cultivate a positive learning and working environment to increase the retention rate of classroom educators.
Summary

The goal of this mixed methods study was to examine the perceptions of public school educators in correlation to increased academic learning outcomes accountability, teacher evaluation accountability measures, teacher induction programs, teacher orientation, mentoring support, school climate, school culture, instructional feedback and administrative support. Overall, the study revealed that teachers in this sample are on the fence with the field of education. With the increase in agreement about the items in an indicator, the likelihood of leaving decreases. Teachers with more experience are more likely to agree that the school culture and administrative support is positive. The researcher concluded that school culture, teacher evaluation accountability, increased learning outcomes accountability and instructional feedback have the greatest statistical significance on teacher attrition. Recommendations were suggested for district level administrators, building administrators, mentor teachers, and for future researcher.
APPENDIX A

Teacher Survey

The purpose of this survey is to examine public school educators’ perceptions of variables studies correlation to teacher attrition issues with implications for retention. Your contribution to this study will provide invaluable beneficial information to school leaders. Your identity as a participant will remain anonymous.

Directions: Answer the following questions by selecting the response that best answers the question.

**Increased Learning Outcomes Accountability**

1. Faculty and staff take responsibility in implementing the school improvement plan
   a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree

2. The staff plays a role in creation of the school’s annual learning outcomes
   a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree

3. I understand and take responsibility for established expectations of my role as a teacher in my school.
   a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree

**Teacher Evaluation Accountability**

4. I am responsible for my students’ academic success
   a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree

5. I feel overwhelmed by the required documentation that is needed to track academic success
   a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree

6. I am concerned about job security as it is aligned to students’ academic success
   a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree

7. I feel stressed due to job demands placed upon me as a teacher
   a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree
8. My job stability is contingent upon student academic growth
   a. Strongly Agree   b. Agree   c. Disagree   d. Strongly Disagree

Teacher Orientation

9. Administrators provide support so that new teachers are not overwhelmed with their job responsibilities
   a. Strongly Agree   b. Agree   c. Disagree   d. Strongly Disagree

10. A district/school induction, held prior to the start of the school year, helped prepare me for a smooth school year classroom opening
    a. Strongly Agree   b. Agree   c. Disagree   d. Strongly Disagree

Teacher Induction Program

11. A district/school induction program provided continuous instructional support during my first three years of teaching
    a. Strongly Agree   b. Agree   c. Disagree   d. Strongly Disagree

12. There was a hospitality support group for new teachers
    a. Strongly Agree   b. Agree   c. Disagree   d. Strongly Disagree

Mentoring Support

13. My district or school provides targeted professional development as a way of increasing my skill levels
    a. Strongly Agree   b. Agree   c. Disagree   d. Strongly Disagree

14. The mentoring program in my district/school has been a useful program
    a. Strongly Agree   b. Agree   c. Disagree   d. Strongly Disagree

15. I have/had the opportunity to attend in-service trainings in my content field or on my grade level.
    a. Strongly Agree   b. Agree   c. Disagree   d. Strongly Disagree

16. I am/was assigned a teacher mentor to seek advice and observe teaching strategies as a component of my teacher induction program
    a. Strongly Agree   b. Agree   c. Disagree   d. Strongly Disagree

Instructional Feedback

17. My administrator encourages and promotes creativity with instructional strategies to be used with students in my class
    a. Strongly Agree   b. Agree   c. Disagree   d. Strongly Disagree
18. My administrator provides lesson plan feedback  
   a. Strongly Agree  
   b. Agree  
   c. Disagree  
   d. Strongly Disagree

19. I feel that I receive adequate administrative support and feedback  
   a. Strongly Agree  
   b. Agree  
   c. Disagree  
   d. Strongly Disagree

20. My principal provides helpful suggestions and feedback for improvement of my teaching skills  
   a. Strongly Agree  
   b. Agree  
   c. Disagree  
   d. Strongly Disagree

**Administrative Support**

21. The administrative team is very supportive and encouraging when conducting observations and providing feedback  
   a. Strongly Agree  
   b. Agree  
   c. Disagree  
   d. Strongly Disagree

22. My principal is supportive when teachers experience behavior challenges with their students/parents  
   a. Strongly Agree  
   b. Agree  
   c. Disagree  
   d. Strongly Disagree

23. My administrator leads our team with data analysis for instructional improvement  
   a. Strongly Agree  
   b. Agree  
   c. Disagree  
   d. Strongly Disagree

24. Administrators provide consistent support in implementing discipline guidelines in the school  
   a. Strongly Agree  
   b. Agree  
   c. Disagree  
   d. Strongly Disagree

25. My administrators disposition is intimidating during observations and evaluations  
   a. Strongly Agree  
   b. Agree  
   c. Disagree  
   d. Strongly Disagree

**School Culture**

26. The food in the school cafeteria meets our nutritional needs  
   a. Strongly Agree  
   b. Agree  
   c. Disagree  
   d. Strongly Disagree

27. My administrator consistently implements school rules for student conduct  
   a. Strongly Agree  
   b. Agree  
   c. Disagree  
   d. Strongly Disagree

28. My administrator provides supportive help to me when needed for student conduct  
   a. Strongly Agree  
   b. Agree  
   c. Disagree  
   d. Strongly Disagree

29. School organizational expectations are implemented consistently as stated in the faculty and student handbooks  
   a. Strongly Agree  
   b. Agree  
   c. Disagree  
   d. Strongly Disagree
30. Staff members are frequently recognized for their efforts  
a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree

31. I am overall satisfied with being a teacher at this school  
a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree

32. The level of discipline issues in this school interferes with the effectiveness of my teaching  
a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree

School Climate

33. My school has cultivated a positive environment to teach  
a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree

34. Teachers in my school work collaboratively to assure student success  
a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree

35. I feel I have positive relationships with other teachers in my building  
a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree

36. The school is a safe and secure environment for students to learn and teachers to teach  
a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree

37. The school is kept clean and repairs are done in a timely manner  
a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree

Teacher Attrition

38. I often contemplate staying home to avoid coming to work  
a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree

39. I seek other positions outside of teaching  
a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree

40. The stress associated with teaching at this school is not worth it  
a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree

41. Working at this school gives me a sense of self satisfaction  
a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree

42. I like the way this school is operated  
a. Strongly Agree  b. Agree  c. Disagree  d. Strongly Disagree
Demographic Information

43. What level do you teach?
   a. Elementary (PK-5)   b. Middle (6-8)   c. High (9-12)

44. How many years of experience do you have as a classroom educator?
   a. 1-5 years   b. 6-10 years   c. 11+ years

45. Which age group best describes you?
   a. 21-30   b. 31-40   c. 41-60   d. 61+

46. Which choice best describes where you earned your undergraduate college degree?
   a. In-State   b. Out of State
Dear Principal:

I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership department at Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia, currently working on my doctoral dissertation entitled: Examining Public School Educators’ Perceptions of Variables Studied Correlation to Teacher Attrition Issues in a Select Rural School District in Mississippi: Implications for Teacher Retention. It is with great pleasure that I am inviting you and teachers within your school to participate in my research. I have received permission from your school district to include your school and staff in my study.

I have had the honor of working in the field of education for over six years. During this time, I have become extremely interested in learning more about teacher attrition and implications for retaining educators in the field of education. The purpose of my research is to capture, analyze and describe the perceptions of educators’ (school leadership and teachers) within a select school district in the State of Mississippi and how the identified variables, increased academic learning outcomes accountability, teacher evaluation accountability, teacher induction programs, teacher orientation, mentoring support, school climate, school culture, administrative support and instructional feedback correlate to teacher attrition.

This letter is to request your participation in a 30-minute interview with the researcher at a time and location that is most convenient for you. The anticipated benefit of this study is to provide insight as to why teachers are leaving the field of education with implications for teacher retention. It is hoped that the results of this research will lead to school and district level leadership gaining more insight on ways to retain educators.

All information is confidential and every effort will be made to protect your anonymity. Information you provide on the consent form and in the interview will be stored separately from data. The researcher’s dissertation chair may have access to all data collected for the duration of the research. Your individual information and data will not be reported. Only the results of all participants as a group will be documented. The final research report will not include any identifying information. All data and documentation collected will be destroyed upon completion of this study. If you have any questions, you may contact myself by email at shawonna.coleman@students.cau.edu or my Chair, Dr. Barbara Hill at bhill@cau.edu.

Your participation is greatly appreciated!

Warm regards,

Shawonna Coleman
Doctoral Student
Clark Atlanta University
APPENDIX C

Letter of Consent Email to Teachers

Dear Principal:

I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership department at Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia, currently working on my doctoral dissertation entitled: Examining Public School Educators’ Perceptions of Variables Studied Correlation to Teacher Attrition Issues in a Select Rural School District in Mississippi: Implications for Teacher Retention. It is with great pleasure that I am inviting you to participate in my research. I have received permission from your principal and school district to include your school in my study.

I have had the honor of working in the field of education for over six years. During this time, I have become extremely interested in learning more about teacher attrition and implications for retaining educators in the field of education. The purpose of my research is to capture, analyze and describe the perceptions of educators’ (school leadership and teachers) within a select school district in the State of Mississippi and the variables, correlates to accountability, teacher induction and support programs, administrative support and instructional feedback and school climate as it correlates to teacher attrition.

This letter is to request your participation in a short electronic survey. The anticipated benefit of this study is to provide insight as to why teachers are leaving the field of education with implications for teacher retention. It is hoped that the results of this research will lead to school and district level leadership gaining more insight on ways to retain educators.

All information is confidential and every effort will be made to protect your anonymity. Information you provide on the consent form and in the interview will be stored separately from data. The researcher’s dissertation chair may have access to all data collected for the duration of the research. Your individual information and data will not be reported. Only the results of all participants as a group will be documented. The final research report will not include any identifying information. All data and documentation collected will be destroyed upon completion of this study. If you have any questions, you may contact myself by email at shawonna.coleman@students.cau.edu or my Chair, Dr. Barbara Hill at bhill@cau.edu.

Your participation is greatly appreciated!

Warm regards,

Shawonna Coleman
Doctoral Student
Clark Atlanta University
APPENDIX D

Informed Consent Form

Thank you for your participation in the following research survey. This informed consent outlines the facts, implications, and consequences of the research study. Upon reading, understanding, and signing this documentation, you are consenting to participate in the research study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the researcher or the participating schools. You may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If you decline to participate or withdraw from the study, that information will not be disclosed.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

There are no risks associated with participating in this study and there are no short- or long-term benefits. In the event you experience stress or anxiety during your participation in the study, you may terminate your participation at any time. You may refuse to answer any questions you consider invasive or stressful.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private and all subjects will remain unidentified. The researcher will take every precaution to protect participant identity. If any part of this study is published, the researcher will not include information that will make it possible to identify schools and participants. The researcher will store all research documentation on a protected database on her personal computer used for educational and university purposes that requires a secure password to access.

Contacts and Questions

I understand that should I have any questions about this research and its conduct, I should contact any of the following:

**Researcher:** Shawonna Coleman shawonna.coleman@students.cau.edu  
**Dissertation Chair:** Dr. Barbara Hill bhill@cau.edu  
**University IRB Chair:** Dr. Paul Musey pmusey@cau.edu

Electronic Signature

By clicking *YES* below, I am indicating that I have read the information provided and give my consent to be a participant in the research. I understand that when I complete the electronic survey, I am indicating that I agreed to participate in this research project.
APPENDIX E
Administrator Interview Protocol

Research Questions

1. What impact does induction and mentoring programs have on teacher retention?

2. What impact does the working environment have on a district or school ability to retain teachers?

3. What impact does the demand of academic learning outcomes tied to teacher evaluations and job stability have on teacher retention?

4. How has increased academic accountability goals affected teacher retention?

5. How does instructional feedback and administrative support affect teacher retention?

Conclusion

6. Is there anything else that you would like to add?
APPENDIX F

Letters of Approval to Conduct Study

CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
Institutional Review Board
Office of Sponsored Programs

October 7, 2016

Ms. Shawonna Coleman <shawonna coleman@gmail.com>
Educational Leadership Dept.,
Clark Atlanta University
Atlanta, GA 30314

RE: Examining Public School Educators’ Perceptions of Variables Studied
Correlation to Teacher Attrition Issues in a Select Rural School District in
Mississippi: Implications for Teacher Retention.

Principal Investigator(s): Shawonna Coleman
Human Subjects Code Number: HR2016-9-675-1

Dear Ms. Coleman:

The Human Subjects Committee of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has
reviewed your protocol and approved it as exempt in accordance with 45 CFR
46.101(b)(2).

Your Protocol Extended Approval Code is HR2016-9-675-1/A
This permit will expire on October 7, 2017. Thereafter, continued approval is
contingent upon the annual submission of a renewal form to this office.
The CAU IRB acknowledges your timely completion of the CITI IRB Training in
Protection of Human Subjects—“Social and Behavioral Sciences Track”.
Your CITI certification expires on September 7, 2018.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office or Dr. Paul I. Musey, (404)
880-6829.

Sincerely:

[Signature]

Paul I. Musey, Ph.D.
Chair
IRB: Human Subjects Committee

223 James P. Brawley Drive, S.W. • ATLANTA, GA 30314-4391 • (404) 880-8000

Formed in 1868 by consolidation of Atlanta University, 1885 and Clark College, 1869
To: Shawonna Coleman

From: Dr. Margie Pulley

Date: November 28, 2016

Re: Approval to Conduct Research

I am writing to inform you that permission has been granted for you to collect data in the Tunica County School District for your research study. Please contact my office with your proposed dates for data collection, and I will inform principals. I look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. Margie Pulley,
Conservator
REFERENCES


Malkin, R. (1997). Testimony before the U.S. commission on civil rights hearing, Greenville, MS.


Salter, S. (1995, July 9). Education emerging as most defining issue in governor’s race. *The Scott County Times*, p. 3A.


