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An Analysis of Factors That Impact Teacher Morale Within The Learning Setting of Two Independent Public Charter Schools

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ABSTRACT

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AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS THAT IMPACT TEACHER MORALE WITHIN
THE LEARNING SETTING OF TWO INDEPENDENT
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

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Dissertation dated May 2019

The purpose of this study was to analyze select factors that impact teacher morale within the learning setting of two independent public charter schools by focusing on teacher autonomy, teacher evaluation, teacher resource support, teacher collegiality, and teachers' perception of administrative leadership styles. The findings of this study will inform both local and national leaders in regards to variables that affect teacher morale; and thus, teacher shortage. Furthermore, this will provide guidance for current trending methods of teacher retention, which will improve the performance of advantage and disadvantage schools alike. Quantitative data points were the primarily source used to synthesize and compile data to identify emergent themes. The findings of this study concluded that there were moderate positive significant relationships between teacher morale and teacher evaluation; teacher morale and teacher autonomy; teacher morale and

teachers' perception of administrative leadership style within an independent public charter school setting.

AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS THAT IMPACT TEACHER MORALE WITHIN
THE LEARNING SETTING OF TWO INDEPENDENT
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

A DISSERTATION

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

BY

BRONVIA L. RIVES

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

MAY 2019

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I would like to thank the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Without supernatural guidance, this moment would not be possible. To my family, friends, and love ones: I thank you for your unwavering support, encouragement, and endless efforts to see me through this tiresome time. I am forever humbled. To my committee members, Dr. Barbara Hill, Dr. Trevor Turner, and Dr. Daniel Teodorescu, I extend my deepest gratitude. This dissertation completion is in the loving memory of my grandmother “Nat” and to my living loving memory of my mother, father, and grandmother Geraldine Abrams—we did it. To my niece, nephews, cousins, sisters, and only brother, I pray this accomplish will add to their beliefs of the greatness within yourselves. A special thank you goes to my parents for giving me life and something to hope for and stand on during turbulent times. To my prayer partner, sister, friend, and spiritual mother, Tammie Anderson, know that this is a proud moment for her and the family as well. I now truly know that I can do *all* things through Christ who strengthens me. Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not (Galatians 6:9).

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Within the last decade, school settings have embarked upon a radical transformation, and while these efforts have closed student achievement gaps across the nation; these alterations have impacted the quality of education and the educational experience of students and teachers alike. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was legalized in 1965 by President Lyndon Baines Johnson who offered incentives and allowances to districts serving both improvised K-12 students and college students. Money was also provided for library, textbooks and special education centers. Grassroots groups across the country noticed that the law needed to be restructured and inclusive to all teachers, parents, principals, students and schools across the nation in order for our education system to be strong (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). In 2002, this legislation was amended and revamped with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which increased teacher accountability as a means to improve education, recruit teachers, and retain educators. However, over time the NCLB's prescriptive requirements became increasingly unworkable for schools and educators. While recognizing this fact, in 2010, the Obama administration joined a call from educators and families to create a new law that focused on the clear goal of fully preparing all students for success in college and careers.

With the promise of grants following the NCLB Act and the ESEA Act, the traditional public-school setting began to make fundamental changes to settings, regulations, processes, and procedures with the new development of public charter schools. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2016),

Between the academic school years of 2000–01 and 2015–16, the percentage of all public schools that were public charter schools enlarged from 2 to 7 percent, and the total number of charter schools increased radically from 2,000 to 6,900. In addition to this raising number, public charter schools have increased in the number of admission size over this same time period: from 2000–01 to 2015–16, the percentages of public charter schools with 300–499, 500–999, and 1,000 or more students each increased, [and] while the percentage of charter schools with fewer than 300 students decreased, the percentage of all public-school students who attended public charter schools still increased from 1 to 6 percent between fall 2000 and fall 2015. During this period, public charter school enrollment increased steadily, from 0.4 million students in fall 2000 to 2.8 million students in fall 2015, an overall increase of 2.4 million students. In contrast, the number of students attending traditional public schools increased by 1.3 million between fall 2000 and fall 2005, and then decreased by 0.6 million between fall 2005 and fall 2015. (para. 2-3)

As this transition from public traditional school settings to public charter school settings became more prevalent, teacher morale became a rampant discussion as the byproduct of former teacher shortage discussions. The conversation of teacher recruitment and retention focused on schools and schools' processes and procedures as

possible resolutions to teacher shortages. As the article “Teacher Shortages: What We Know” points out, initiatives to counteract teacher shortages only addresses secondary measures by

Filling unoccupied and vacant teaching positions [where] many states and districts have decided to loosen hiring standards by, for instance, allotting alternative teaching certificates and allowing teachers to teach in classrooms for which they are not qualified to teach [and] while these responses counteract vacancies, they might [have] also contributed to staffing inadequacies, where students are receiving learning and instruction from the least knowledgeable, practiced, and/or least qualified teachers. [As such, these] efforts that [are] solely focused on recruitment and filling vacancies have failed to address the longstanding issue of morale and retention, and as a result, contributed to a ‘revolving door of in-and-out recruits.’ (Aragon, 2016, p. 7)

Teacher retention and teacher recruitment processes and approaches has been revised, revamped, and amended continuously throughout the teacher shortage movement with implementations of new processes and procedures as they filter in from across the nation with inadequate attention given to factors that impact teacher morale and how these factors are impacted differently within different types of school settings.

In 2016, a national data analyses suggested potential problems with teacher recruitment and retention. According to recent data from ACT and the U.S. Department of Education, fewer high school graduates are interested in pursuing education majors and fewer college students are pursuing teaching careers and of those who do enter the profession, go on to report overall job dissatisfaction, a loss of autonomy, and limitations

in feedback, recognition, advancement and reward. Though their effects vary, these conditions can and do contribute to the teacher retention rate (Aragon, 2016). This national issue of recruitment and retention remains a pressing topic long after initial recruitment.

Statement of the Problem

This research study was conducted to analyze select factors that impact teacher morale within the learning setting of two independent public charter schools by focusing on teacher autonomy, teacher evaluation, teacher resource support, collegiality among teachers, and the perception of administrative leadership styles. As the phenomenon of teacher recruitment, teacher retention, and teacher shortage continues to surface; the now emergent conversations of teacher morale has forced Georgia to face the incomparable realities and factors that impact teacher morale within all school settings, including schools that are both public charter school through district and public independent charter through the state. Nonetheless, the issue of morale within the charter sector became more evident with the movement of charter school take-overs and the degree to which charter school developments remains a prevalent location for Georgia students and teachers alike. It is here (both locally and internationally) that charter school developments are holding a paramount impact on teacher morale; and thus, teacher retention rates.

Public charter schools, whether independently operated or district aligned, are growing in population. More specifically, according to (Burdette, 2016), the Georgia Charter Schools and Charter System, in its annual report, stated the following:

For the 2015-2016 school year, 325,806 (or 18% of) Georgia public school students are enrolled in a start-up or conversion charter school or a charter system school. This is 18.5% higher than in 2014-15. Student enrollment in conversion and start-up charter schools (excluding charter system students) is 5.1% of the student population, up 21% since 2014-15 and up 32% since 2013-14 [with] the charter school lottery growing from 12,045 students for the 2014-2015 school year to 14,922 students for the 2015-2016 school year [where] 12 schools were without a waitlist at the opening of the 2015-2016 school year, up 7 from last year [with] 51 schools with a waitlist at the opening of the 2015-2016 school year, up 3 from last year [and] 46 schools without a lottery at the opening of the 2015-2016 school year, up 2 from last year, leaving the charter school sector as a permanent place of occupation for educators. (pp. 5-6)

Although measures for recruitment have been implemented across the nation, Georgia still suffers from low retention and morale rates. An article by Rickman and Kokenes (2016) stated,

Approximately 70 percent of teacher hiring statewide is done to replace teachers who have left the workforce. Since 2010, 13 percent of Georgia's newly hired teachers left after their first year. After five years, 44 percent of those newly hired in 2010 were no longer teaching. Most troubling was when asked if they would encourage one of their own students to consider teaching as a profession, over 66 percent of respondents said it was unlikely or highly unlikely. Despite the high attrition rate among new teachers, the likelihood of recommending teaching decreased with the amount of time a teacher had been in the classroom. (pp. 8-9)

Furthermore, teachers leave the profession each year, with nearly two-thirds leaving for reasons other than retirement. “In analyzing why teachers were leaving the profession, researchers found answers that mirrored those provided to GaDOE by Georgia educators” (Rickman & Kokenes, 2016, pp. 8-9).

This study examined factors that impact teacher morale within one to two select independent charter school settings. The research was conducted in an effort to minimize bias such as curriculum autonomy within a public charter school setting; this provided a more in-depth focus given to factors that impact teacher morale such as teacher resource support, teacher autonomy, teacher evaluations, collegiality, and teachers’ perception of administrative leadership style. Teacher morale was defined as the mental, physical, and emotional satisfaction within the work environment.

To increase teacher morale there should be an examination of the current trends for not only teacher recruitment but teacher retention through the consistency and fidelity of teacher evaluations; increased autonomy; consistent teacher resource support; and a more positive perception of effective administrative leadership styles; where leaders can effectively begin the process of reforming and improving the education system for all students alike.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative mixed methods study was to examine factors that impacted teacher morale within two select independent public charter school settings. This study purposefully guides and informs leaders through recruitment processes with implications for increasing teacher morale and teacher retention rate. The independent

variables—teacher support, teacher autonomy, teacher evaluations, collegiality, and teachers’ perception of administrative leadership style— were selected to garner overall perceptions of educators within a select public charter school setting. The data composed also provided implications for teacher morale through a mixed method research on teachers’ morale within this specific school setting.

Research Questions

- RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between teacher resource support and teacher morale?
- RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between teacher collegiality and teacher morale?
- RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between teacher evaluation and teacher morale?
- RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between teacher autonomy and teacher morale?
- RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between the perception of administrative leadership style and teacher morale?

Significance of the Study

The importance of this study is evident when teacher retention is capitalized and leaders are able to proficiently develop, implement, and monitor successful school settings through an increase of teacher morale. The discussion of varying factors that impact teacher morale within an independent public charter school settings still remains a dormant discussion for everyone involved including politicians, teachers, education

reformers, policy makers, and even grass roots groups such as communities, businesses, advocate groups, teachers and parents alike; and while teacher shortage and classroom vacancies continue to persist across the nation with the foreknowledge of possible solutions such as alternative teacher certification routes, increased compensation incentives, and the development of teacher leadership roles and certificates, there is a need to study and survey educators' morale with implications for teacher retention.

According to one Georgia county school district's website, there were over 200 job vacancies for teachers. Even though this county has attempted recruitment initiatives such as signing bonuses for new hire and rehires and has promoted a substantial number of bonuses for critical teaching areas such as mathematics, science, and special education concentrations, the discussion of teacher morale still remains at the forefront of teacher recruitment and teacher retention.

Lumsden (1998) explained that low levels of satisfaction and morale can lead to decreased teacher productivity and burnout rates, which is associated with "a loss of concern for and detachment from the people with whom one works, and a decreased quality of teaching, depression, greater use of sick leave, efforts to leave the profession, and a cynical and dehumanized perception of students" (p. 4). In essence, the morale of teachers has far-reaching implications for student learning, health of the organization, and the health of the teacher. Lumsden stated,

People who feel empowered tend to have higher morale and are more personally invested in their work with an organization when (1) they have a voice in what happens to them, and (2) their work has meaning and significance in contributing to a higher purpose or goal. When teachers' sense of self-determination and

purpose are supported, teachers relate to students in a qualitatively different manner. (p. 4).

As such, the relationship between teacher morale and the development of public charter school settings, can serve as guide to leverage variables that impact teacher morale with implications for effective retention and recruitment methods.

Summary

Within the last few decades, a series of education reforms has allowed school settings to shift from traditional public-school settings to public charter school settings, respectively. In addition, although teacher morale has been a fiery and intense discussion, there remains a need to examine factors that impact teacher morale within an independent public charter school setting. With an attempt to not only recruit but retain effective teachers, this study will serve as a guide to understanding factors that impact teacher morale within two select independent public charter school setting. Upon the completion of this study, leaders and education reformers in the state of Georgia will have a more coherent understanding of the factors that impact teacher morale, and thus teacher retention.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the existing literature and historical overview of the current trends and backgrounds of this study. The abundance of literature also provides an enriched understanding and insight with the intricacy and complexity of factors that impact teacher morale aligned with teacher resource support, teacher collegiality, teacher evaluation, teacher autonomy, and teachers' perception of administrative leadership. As teacher morale serves one of the cornerstones to the development, implementation, and monitoring of successful school settings, this review will provide an in-depth examination of teacher morale with the implications of teacher retention within an independent public charter school setting.

Background and Trends

During the 1800s, the U.S. education system underwent major changes and alternations. In the 1820s and 1830s, immigrant populations and diverse racial, ethnic, religious groups flooded American cities. Both urban areas and rural villages struggled to accommodate an influx of children in a time of drastic demographic shifts and industrial development. Yet, while the 1940s and 1950s were filled with concerns regarding lack of funding followed by international and domestic fears accompanying the Cold War, by the 1960s education was seen as “one of the prime weapons in the war

on poverty and a major concern not only of policymakers, but also of the dispossessed, especially the people of color struggling for a greater share of power in cities” (Massey, 2014, p. 270).

As Massey (2014) explained, *A Nation at Risk* (1983) and federal strategies such as No Child Left Behind and the Common Core Standards were implemented to,

Target multiple levels, from curriculum and teacher certification, to administration and school culture, to the *charter* movement and broader educational policy reforms. What many agreed upon is that reform movements could not be approached in isolation, as all of the aforesaid areas are intricately intertwined. Fueled by competition through privatization of education, additional trends have spread nationwide but have frequently targeted urban areas—charter schools, privatization, and school choice. (p. 178)

Teacher Morale

The importance of teacher morale and its impacting factors are ever-present in both public traditional school settings and public charter school settings. As a recent study indicates, almost every president since Eisenhower at one point or another has given a speech on the math-science teacher shortage and all kinds of initiatives designed to bring more math-science degrees and people into teaching. However, according to Schaffhauser (2014), “the data indicate that there are ‘more than enough’ qualified math-science teachers. Rather what we have is a retention problem” (para. 6).

The improvement of teachers' morale is important to empower the positiveness of their professional attitudes. Teachers' morale is an assisting factor to enhance students' positive behaviors as well as their learning. If teachers have higher morale, they form better learning environment to promote students' success. For teachers, higher morale can also increase their job satisfaction as an essential organizational requirement to obtain better educational results in schools.

Teachers job satisfaction help teachers to become efficient, zealous, high-performing, problem-solver, high-perceiver, effective communicator people and to provide their maximum contribution to the society. The morale level of teachers matters due to its inclusion of many factors that influence job satisfaction. The success level expected from teachers is high in the cases with higher morale level for teachers. Higher morale level for teachers (as professionals carry out educational activities) is important for their perceptions of job satisfaction and to do their job with enthusiasm, aspiration and love. When the importance of education for the country's future is taken into consideration, higher morale level of teachers leads to increase teachers' job satisfaction and to better functioning of teaching process; good education is impossible without good teaching and good teaching largely depends on teachers' job satisfaction (Luleci & Çoruk, 2018).

An article by Bosso (2017) entitled "Teacher Morale, Motivation and Professional Identity: Insight for Educational Policymakers from State Teachers of the Year," found that, "for many teachers, their sense of efficacy is strongly connected to their professional identity, and the resilience they possess is correlated with their overall morale,

motivation, and sense of moral purpose toward their work” (p. 24). Given the possible deleterious effects of role conflict, role ambiguity and stress during times of educational change, validation and recognition of teachers’ work and efforts, whether in a formal or informal manner, may augment teacher efficacy, motivation and morale. Seeking out and valuing teacher input, building teacher capacity and supporting teacher growth require trust in teachers’ expertise and perspectives (Bosso, 2017).

As there is minimum research for teacher morale, Senechal, Sober, and Hope (2016) explained that,

Although morale is conceptually aligned with the other popular concepts that are used to understand teachers’ work experience, such as burnout and job satisfaction, it is distinct and that the potential of morale research will contribute to our understanding of teachers’ work lives. One strength in this regard is that it moves beyond overly simplistic explanations of job-related attitudes that often equate job satisfaction with conditions of service, such as compensation. Second, morale is connected to the idea of job fit and the decision to stay or leave a position. Low morale teachers that are not hopeful about their future in the classroom are more likely to leave. In this regard it is useful for understanding the factors and processes that support teacher retention. Third, morale is a neutral rather than negative construct. Morale can be either high or low. While there is significant interest in the scholarly literature on teacher burnout,¹⁶ the term does not suggest an alternative. Are we striving for a non-burned out teaching workforce? (p. 14)

Finally, Evans' model suggests that morale is malleable. While the model rests on the premise that the most influential determinants of job satisfaction and morale are individuals' need fulfillment, expectation fulfillment or value congruence, it also builds on an understanding that job satisfaction and morale are strongly influenced by school-level factors (Senechal et al., 2016).

Teacher Autonomy

Tores (2014) examined the issue of teacher autonomy within a public charter school setting and traditional public-school setting. This study showed the autonomy in a traditional public-school sector where the population consisted of 20 teachers who taught in a New York charter school-based system. The study reinforced, extended, and challenged existing research on charter school teachers' perceptions of autonomy. Previous research shows that autonomy is more likely to matter to charter school teachers in their job search, and that they perceive a greater degree of school autonomy compared to Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) teachers. Autonomy was indeed important to charter school teachers in their job search—those who joined new charter management organization (CMO) schools with the explicit expectation to help found a school cited this opportunity as a key reason for choosing to teach there. While earlier case studies documented the ways in which charter school teachers were both energized and challenged in their efforts to create standalone charter schools (Torres, 2014), and while there were findings of greater autonomy over curricula, there was not greater shared decision-making processes throughout the school. There was a consensus feeling of becoming construction workers and not architects.

In a recent study entitled “Teacher Perceptions of Influence, Autonomy, and Satisfaction in the Early Race to the Top Era” by Wright (2018), a more concise correlation between the possible discrepancies of autonomy within charter school settings and traditional public-school settings found that at the teacher-level, teachers with 10-14 and more than 15 years of experience had higher perceptions of pedagogical autonomy, on average, than teachers with less than five years of experience. Teachers with 10-14 of teaching experience had a pedagogical autonomy score that was 0.01 points higher on average, while teachers with 15 or more years of experience had a pedagogical autonomy score that is 0.03 points higher on average.

Middle school teachers had a pedagogical autonomy score that was 0.10 points higher on average, while high school teachers’ perceptions of their pedagogical autonomy were 0.12 points higher on average. There were no other significant teacher-level differences in perceptions of pedagogical autonomy, and in addition to the differences in the outcomes of interest, teachers’ perceived levels of job satisfaction, autonomy, and school-level influence appear to also be impacted by years of teaching experience. Specifically, teachers with five to nine years of experience had lower curricular autonomy and job satisfaction than teachers with less than five years of experience (Wright, 2018).

Conversely, however, teachers with 10–14 years of experience had higher school influence and pedagogical autonomy scores than teachers with less than 5 years of experience, on average. Teachers with 15 or more years of teaching experience also had higher than average scores for school-level influence, pedagogical autonomy, and job

satisfaction. The difference in teachers with 5–9 years of experience is similar to recent study findings that many mid-career teachers tend to have more negative views of teaching than peers with more or less experience due to what some have called a mid-career slump resulting from a lack of opportunities for professional growth and stagnant salaries relative to new teachers (Wright, 2018). Autonomy differs based on years of experience and level of overall school influence. These findings, while analyzing the autonomy of teachers within the public charter setting and traditional public-school settings, will provide measures that are essential teacher job satisfaction and teacher empowerment.

Participation in the decision-making process enhances subordinates' motivation, which positively affects performance. Subordinates' participation in the decision-making process fosters their psychological ownership, self-efficacy and sense of control, so their autonomy and level of intrinsic motivation increase. Studies on this subject stated that supporting autonomy and low control perceptions increase motivation (Sagnak, 2016).

Teacher Evaluation

The Teacher Key Effectiveness System (TKES) is a system that is utilized to help measure teacher success and effectiveness with 50% student test scores and 50% classroom instruction delivery. Although teacher-evaluation reform is a major success story for Race to the Top (RTTT) with the implementation of TKES, it is important to note that these changes were enacted only in a minority of states, and the ultimate impact there remains uncertain. In some states, promised changes have yet to be enacted, whereas in others many of the crucial details concerning new evaluation systems were

left to be worked out later by commissions. Many of the policies related to teacher accountability remain embedded in local collective-bargaining contracts—which have proved notoriously hard to change in practice, even in the face of political pressure and changes in state statutes. Teacher evaluation thus demonstrates both the potential and the limitations of using a competitive grant program to drive state reform (McGuinn, 2016).

In Bolyard's (2015) article, "Test-Based Teacher Evaluation: Accountability vs. Responsibility," the understanding of teacher responsibility versus accountability were used as indicators to determine effective usage of teacher evaluations. The population consisted of educators in Ohio State within various districts where accountability policies also act as a form of disciplinary power through the use of surveillance. In Ohio, evaluations are required to be entered into an online database, the electronic Teacher and Principal Evaluation System (eTPES). The stated purpose of eTPES is to calculate student growth measures, calculate the summative rating, and generate a record for the state of Ohio and the U.S. Department of Education. The system is an example of how accountability policies exercise control through surveillance. A metaphor with the panopticon was created for the purpose of monitoring inmates from a centralized guard station which causes inmates to discipline themselves by knowing a guard could be watching them at any moment. By considering this panopticon, one can see how surveillance via data entry (i.e., eTPES) would cause teachers to discipline themselves to produce student growth consistent with the norm (i.e., expected gains). Self-discipline becomes problematic when it removes the freedom to choose between alternative possibilities of action.

Again, teaching becomes routinized and pedagogy becomes regimented. Further examinations of the responsibility for students' test-taking skills were subjective and heavily relied on the concept of teacher responsibility over the concept of teacher accountability, especially when other parties are deemed more overtly responsible such as parents and the students themselves. However, the alignment of student achievement often has been discussed with implications for teacher compensation.

This research further provided an examination of the unfairness, inconsistency, and lack of fidelity concerning teacher evaluations. The subconscious concept of merging accountability versus responsibility can be detrimental to the motivation, morale, and engagement of educators alike.

Warring (2015) in the *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, examined inconsistency and unfairness in regards to teacher evaluation systems and policies. The population consisted of school districts across the nation such as Dallas, Houston, Cincinnati, Denver, New York, Washington, DC, Ohio, Tennessee, and Minnesota. The author discussed the process of evaluation and how it stands to be singular and rigid as oppose to operating as a multitiered evaluation system that considers all aspects. The research study found that many teachers have few students linked to them for whom data is available for both prior-year and current-year achievement. Other students who are mobile may have spent only a short time in a given teacher's classroom. Both of these are sources of considerable error.

Year-to-year instability in teacher rankings is also very high because most student assessment is conducted on less than 50 students. These evaluations include students who

may not have been in a class with the teacher for very long and typically including less than three years of data is used in estimating a value-added score. It is also important to recognize that multiple years of data may mask the year-to-year instability of scores, but do not eliminate the causes of such instability. The causes of instability often result from students who are in living in poverty, are homeless, or highly mobile, and often include the composition of classes that teachers teach (Warring, 2015). The act of evaluators utilizing student growth on standardized testing as measures for proficient teacher ratings leaves room for a biases approach. Furthermore, this study elaborates on the concept of subjectivity within walk-throughs, formative evaluations, and summative evaluations; and the skewed aspect of connecting student growth to teacher evaluation ratings.

Administrative Leadership Style

Sagnak (2016) explained the relationship between participative leadership and how change-oriented strategies would allow intrinsic motivations to surface within teachers (followers). The population consisted of 850 teachers from 68 schools within the Turkey and Nigde school districts. The findings were that participative leadership is accepted as a source of intrinsic motivation. It is asserted within the motivational model that participation in the decision-making process enhances subordinates' motivation, which positively affects performance. Subordinates' participation in the decision-making process fosters their psychological ownership, self-efficacy and sense of control, so their autonomy and level of intrinsic motivation increase. It has been found that there is a significance relationship between participative leadership and intrinsic motivation

(Sagnak, 2016). Participative leadership styles act as the foundation for intrinsic motivation, morale, and teacher engagement.

In the *European Journal of Contemporary Education*, a study was conducted of 395 primary school teachers (165 male and 230 female) in central districts of Mersin, Turkey (Peker, Inandi, & Gilic, 2018). The participants were surveyed and observed using the Mobbing Scale to determine to what extent teachers suffered from mobbing, while Leadership Style Scale was used to measure leadership style of school administrators. Mobbing was defined as harassment, intimidation, pressure, force and psychological violence. The victim constantly and systematically suffers from aggressive, insulting, hostile and unethical behaviors, thus becomes helpless and defenseless (Peker et al. 2018).

As one can see, the frequency and duration of the mobbing behavior is important as well as its nature. For such behavior to be accepted as mobbing, it must continue for at least six months and once a week. It is aimed through mobbing that the victim will be isolated, eliminated and excluded from the group or organization. It is stated that the people in management positions are the most frequent mobbing practitioners. Teachers stated that they suffered mobbing more as their school administrators show autocratic behaviors but they experienced mobbing less under democratic leadership.

The positive relationship between autocratic leadership and mobbing is particularly supported by the researches in the area. It is a fact that administrators who adopt an autocratic leadership style try to maintain strict, hierarchal structure of the organization, make decisions alone, and prioritize the work rather than workers.

Therefore, it is quite likely that he creates barriers for workers, threatens and harasses them to finish the work, have negative effect on relations between colleagues and interfere in their private life. Autocratic leadership causes mobbing and other problems within the organization while democratic leadership contributes to equality and balance within the organization (Peker et al., 2018).

Teacher Resource Support

The incorporation of Macro-Scaffolding between the learner teacher and the expert teacher works as a means to alleviate stress and decreased job satisfaction. In this study, the population consisted of English cohorts from a university in the large city of Turkey. The population also consisted of the cohorts who were enrolled in bachelor and masters programs. The study also found that scaffolding operates at a level of educational and cultural context, as well as an interactional level. The micro-scaffolding and macro-scaffolding are mutually beneficial and symbiotic (Engin, 2014).

The data suggest that both levels are necessary to support the construction of teaching knowledge, and without the contextual macro-scaffolding “interactional support may become simply a hit and miss affair that may contribute little to the learning goals of specific lessons or units of work” (Engin, 2014, p. 20). In essence, contextual support as macro-level scaffolding lays the foundations for effective micro-scaffolding. In the context of preservice teacher training, it is clear that trainees’ construction of teaching knowledge is influenced by their understanding of the conventions of feedback, as well as an awareness of the norms and accepted practices they are operating in.

The idea of good and bad practices which inevitably permeate all training contexts can act as a support for learning as long as the accepted practices are made explicit, and the trainee is exposed to a variety of effective teaching practice. The aim of scaffolding is to reduce the difficulty of the task, in this case, learning to teach. Trainers and trainees need to recognize the role that the context plays in this learning process and be cognizant of the supportive structures which underpin good scaffolding. This calls for trainers and trainees to be openly explicit about their expectations, and the conventions of the training activities. It also calls for trainees to be critical of the context in which they are operating. The major findings showed a clear and concise relationship between the beginner teacher and the expert teacher as a means to alleviate mishaps and stresses of learning how to teach the right way (Engin, 2014). The analysis of the utilization of a macro-scaffolded model will aid in the support for teachers.

Engin (2014) found that the need to support beginning teachers beyond the current school-based approach was recognized with the observation that many teachers are being left unsupported. Greater collegiality in the profession has been identified as a key goal for supporting beginning teachers. The continuation of the university community from preservice into service has been acknowledged as a potential source of collegiality for beginning teachers. Beginning teachers also reported that greater connection with experienced teachers is desired. Teachers are falling through the gaps and receiving very little, if any, support from their school; 18.95% of teachers made an unprompted negative comment referencing a lack of support when asked about the most important support they had received. The staff in the Australia's Schools Survey gave

further evidence to support this finding by surveying a large sample of early career teachers. The survey found that 20.8% of primary teachers and 23% of secondary teachers had no designated mentor. Furthermore, 27.2% of primary and 16.4% of secondary teachers were provided with no induction program. Oftentimes, this support is manifested in resource help such as providing proper clerical support, instructional support, update classroom equipment, and on-going professional development (Engin, 2014).

Teacher Collegiality

Collegiality among teachers promotes the idea of teamwork, collaboration, professional support for veteran teachers and new teachers alike. A study documented in *The Australian Journal* found that teacher professional development has also been considered as a vehicle for support of early career teachers; however, these programs are often one-size fits all and may not meet the needs of pre-service teachers (Kelly, 2015). There has been increasing recognition that informal learning has great value, the kind of learning that is integrated into day-to-day work as opposed to separate induction or professional development opportunities. This marks a shift in beginning teacher development away from traditional metaphors of acquisition and transfer towards participation, construction and becoming. These ways of thinking about teacher support maintains a broad perspective of the potential ways that support might be provided. In order to synthesize such approaches and deepen the research into supporting beginning teachers there is a need for studies that build upon existing evidence, expand the base of

evidence, draw from other disciplines and undertake design-based research into addressing issues in support.

Collegiality promotes a sense of empathy, trust, and respect within a learning environment, which yields to higher levels of teacher morale. Kelly (2015) found that teachers experience of teaching had been one of solitary practice carried out in isolation in their classrooms. The PLC initiative provided a novel opportunity to connect with colleagues to share their private practices with the aim of improving all of their teaching. What they realized was that this collaborative experience helped them to open up their teaching for feedback on how to improve, but also how to celebrate what they were doing well; that part of creating a PLC culture in schools is providing enough opportunities for teachers to meet together and establish a learning climate that values and welcomes honesty; and courage to share teaching practices as an on-going inquiry, as well as a level of vulnerability that serves to strengthen the emotional bonds of the group as they work from a place of empathy and care rather than defensiveness and judgment (Kelly, 2015). Nonetheless, teachers cannot freely engage in collaborative inquiry and professional knowledge building if they are feeling criticized or put down for not being competent within their profession. Similarly, teachers often work in isolation for much of the day and so they are missing the evaluative process or positive feedback that can calm anxiety and stress related to work performance. For the teachers in this study, a solid level of trust among the PLC members was an essential aspect of the learning climate created by the group (Kelly, 2015).

School Climate and Culture

School climate and culture has been perceived as one of the founding foundations of teacher retention and even teacher recruitment. Studies have been conducted on this topic for many decades with implications to help increase teacher retention rates. In the National Education Association's article entitled "Importance of School Climate," O'Bennan and Bradshaw (2013) stated that,

Positive school climate is recognized as an important target for school reform and improving behavioral, academic, and mental health outcomes for students.

Specifically, schools with positive climates tend to have less student discipline problems and aggressive and violent behavior, and fewer high school suspensions.

Research has also shown associations between school climate and lower levels of alcohol and drug use, bullying, and harassment. (p. 1)

While school culture focuses on the relationship between administration and staff, there lies an extensive amount of research and study on this phenomenon and how it relates to teacher retention and teacher morale. In an article by Peterson (2018), the author explained that,

In a toxic school environment, 'teacher relations are often conflictual, the staff doesn't believe in the ability of the students to succeed, and a generally negative attitude' prevails, notes Peterson; [however], staff and administrators in a positive school culture believe they have the ability to achieve their ambitions. Their counterparts operating in a negative school environment lack faith in the possibility of realizing their visions. School culture has a profound effect on staff

development. 'It affects attitudes toward spending time to improve instruction, motivation to attend workshops, and the [activities] people choose to participate in,' Peterson says. (para. 5-7)

Summary

Noticeably, each independent variable is acutely attached to the dependent variable of teacher morale. While each manages their own weight, they are undeniably connected and intertwined to the concept of teacher morale. Each variable will continue to provide the necessary foundation needed to support a mixed quantitative case study of factors that impact teacher morale within a public charter school setting and the public traditional school setting.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study analyzes educators' perception of teacher resource support, teacher autonomy, teacher evaluation, collegiality, and teachers' perception of administrative leadership styles that impact teacher morale within two select independent public charter school settings. Hooper and Bernhardt (2016) stated that leadership is composed of three approaches—adaptive, instructional, and transformational—to engage schools through data informed decision making, effective instructional leadership, and to provide a vision for equity and learning. The authors explain that an adaptive approach provides an unremitting movement of school improvement through data-driven decision making processes, while instructional leaders are set to safeguard the quality of teaching and learning within the school building alongside operating as a transformational leader whom seeks to transform the school, teachers, student body, and parents. More specifically, James McGregor Burns (1978) stated that transformational leadership is “a process in which leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation” (p. 1).

Burns (1978) related to the difficulty in differentiation between management and leadership and claimed that the differences are in characteristics and behaviors. He established two concepts: “transforming leadership and transactional leadership” (p. 1).

According to Burns, the transforming approach creates significant change in the life of people and organizations. It redesigns perceptions and values, and changes expectations and aspirations of employees. Unlike in the transactional approach, it is not based on a give and take relationship, but on the leader's personality, traits and ability to make a change through example, articulation of an energizing vision and challenging goals. Transforming leaders are idealized in the sense that they are a moral exemplar of working towards the benefit of the team, organization and/or community.

Burns theorized that transforming and transactional leadership are mutually exclusive styles. Transactional leaders usually do not strive for cultural change in the organization but they work in the existing culture while transformational leaders can try to change organizational culture. The importance of leadership within a working environment establishes the climate and culture of shared decision-making processes, teacher resource support, teacher autonomy, teacher collegiality, teacher evaluations, and teachers' perception of administrative leadership styles. As such, Figure 1 displays an accurate depiction of the three administrative leadership styles.

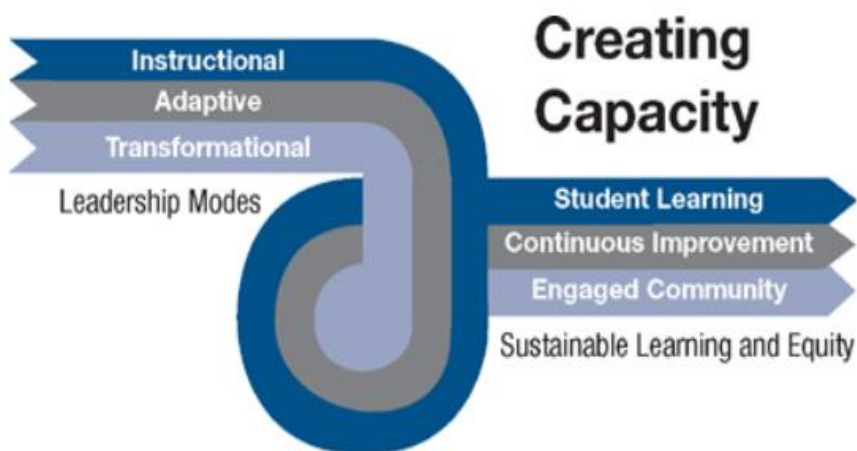


Figure 1. Leadership tri-modal approach.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs (McLeod, 2018) noted that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others. A person's most basic need is for physical survival, and this will be the first thing that motivates one's behavior. Once that level is fulfilled, the next level up is what motivates us, and so on. Furthermore, the stages can be divided into deficiency needs and growth needs. The first four levels are often referred to as deficiency needs (D-needs), and the top level is known as growth or being needs (B-needs). Deficiency needs arise due to deprivation and are said to motivate people when they are unmet. Also, the motivation to fulfill such needs will become stronger the longer the duration they are denied. For example, the longer a person goes without food, the hungrier they will become. Individuals must satisfy lower level deficit needs before progressing on to meet higher level growth needs. However, he later clarified that satisfaction of a needs is not an all-or-none phenomenon, admitting that his earlier statements may have given "the false impression that a need must be satisfied 100 percent before the next need emerges" (Maslow, 1987, p. 69). When a deficit need has been 'more or less' satisfied it will go away, and our activities become habitually directed towards meeting the next set of needs that we have yet to satisfy. These then become our salient needs. However, growth needs continue to be felt and may even become stronger once they have been engaged. Growth needs do not stem from a lack of something, but rather from a desire to grow as a person. Once these growth needs have been reasonably satisfied, one may be able to reach the highest level called self-actualization (McLeod, 2018). This theory correlates with this study as it examines the impact of unmet needs and how these unmet needs holds the potential to decrease or

increase motivation, which is a vital component to morale. Figure 2 displays the primary motivation for each set of need.

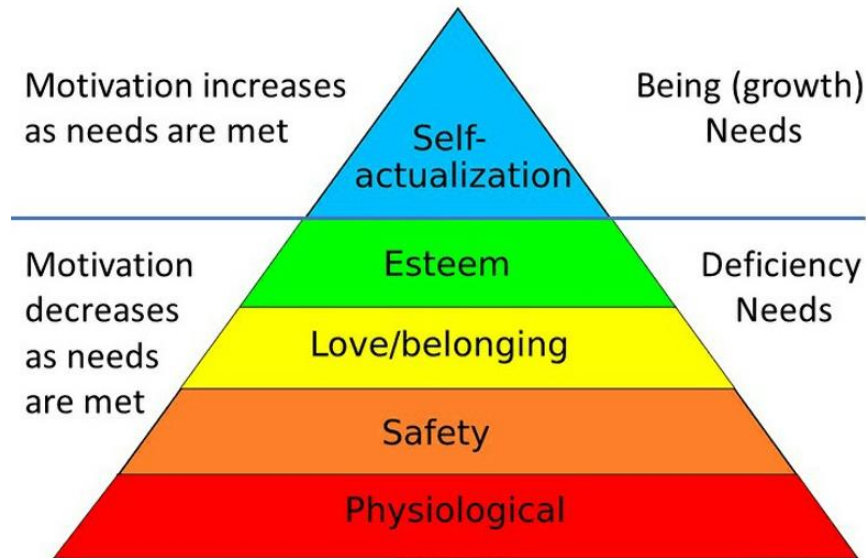


Figure 2. Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Definition of the Variables

Teacher Morale is the level of professional interest and enthusiasm a person shows in work related tasks.

Teacher Autonomy is the teacher's level of freedom to engage in the decision – making process for the school's instructional delivery and organizational procedures.

Teacher Evaluation is the consistency and fidelity of monitoring and observation of instructional time and instructional strategies utilized within a classroom setting. The Teacher Keys Evaluation system is utilized.

Teacher Resource Support is the act of providing leadership support for technology support, professional development, and to effectively aid in the development and implementation of instruction.

Administrative Leadership Style is the perception of which an administrative (i.e., principal, assistant principal) implements and/or monitors the processes and procedures within the teaching and learning environment.

Teacher Collegiality is the act of cooperative collaboration, support, and motivation within the teaching and learning environment.

Independent Public Charter School Setting is a tax supported educational entity that develops an instructional plan and receives partial or full funds as a public educational institution, while possessing the ability to reject public school regulations and policies from any particular school district.

Traditional Public-School Setting is a tax supported educational entity that develops an instructional plan and receives full funds without possessing the ability to reject federal and state regulations and policies.

Relationship among the Variables

Independent variables were predicted to have an impact on the dependent variable in this study. The output of the relationships was expected to be executed through the implementation of the research design. The findings offered conclusions of the correlations between variables with implications provided within the research methodology. Figure 3 shows the relationship among the variables.

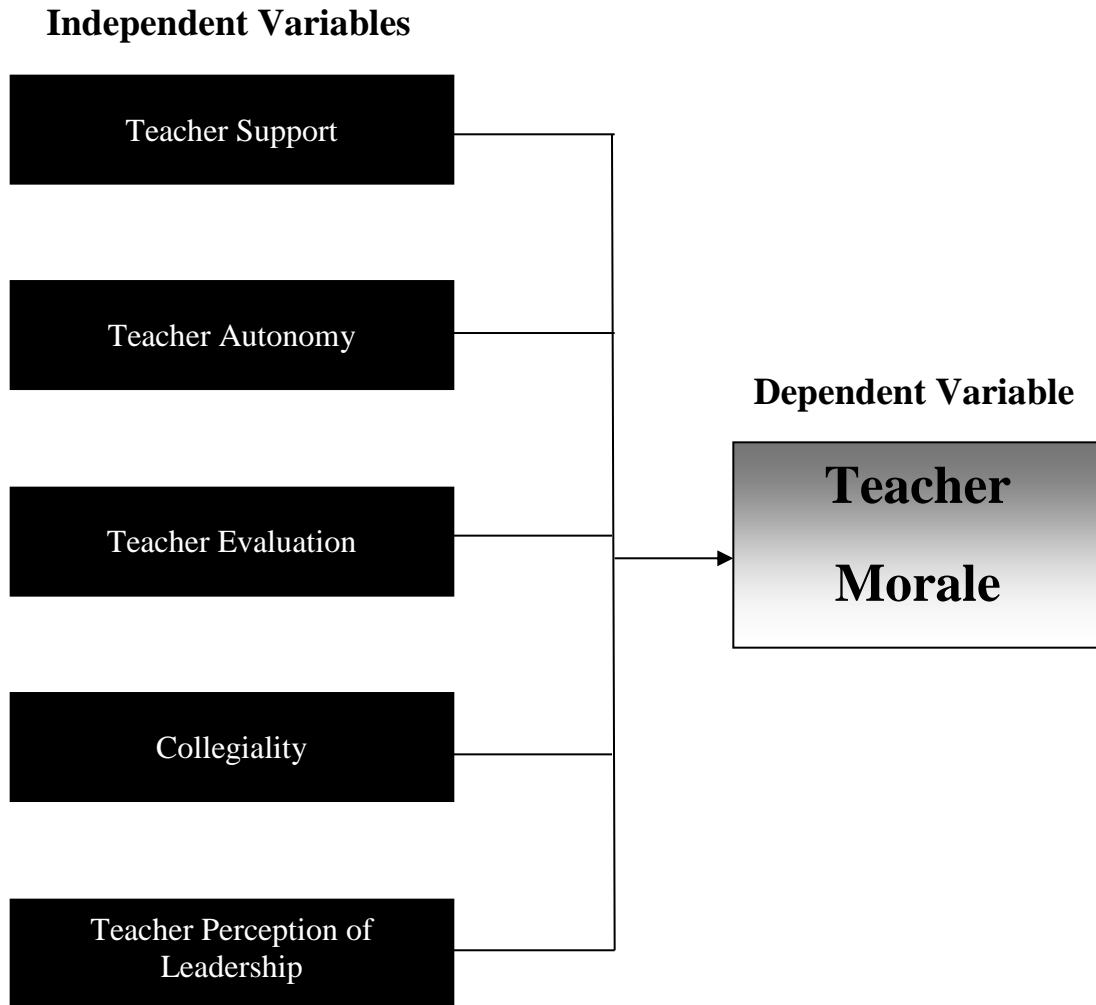


Figure 3. Relationship among the variables.

Limitations of the Study

This study involved teachers from two independent state public charter school settings. These limitations were considered and acknowledged during the analysis of data and recommendations.

- The time of the school year that the study was conducted came during a time period when teachers were more inclined to higher levels of morale (at the beginning of the academic school year).

- The responses collected were reported as the perception of the select research participants and may not reflect the perception of all teachers within this district, region, and specialized school settings.
- The select participants may or may not have delivered full disclosure in their responses during this research study.
- The researcher experienced an emotional setback in the previous school related to factors affecting teacher moral.
- Independent charter schools are relatively smaller than traditional public-school settings; thus, making the sample population of teachers relatively smaller than a traditional public-school setting: two independent charter settings were chosen to counteract this issue.

Assumptions

While conducting this study, several assumptions were made:

- Teachers who volunteered as participants were to represent a select population and perform instructional duties as a sample from a select public independent charter school and a select public traditional school.
- The 5 research questions were used to develop survey items in the instruments to measure the impact of each variable on teacher morale.
- Participations responded with honesty and without persuasion.

Summary

The models and theories presented in this chapter aided in the phenomenon of the alignment of independent variables and teacher morale within two select independent

public charter school settings. Hooper and Bernhardt's (2016) tri-modal leadership style—adaptive, instructional, and transformational—all emphasized and impacted the five independent variables: teacher resource support, teacher autonomy, teacher evaluation, teacher collegiality, and teachers' perception of administrative leadership style. Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs correlated with the five independent variables as well with teacher resource support, teacher resource autonomy, teacher evaluations, teacher collegiality, and teachers' perception of administrative leadership styles.

The association of these models and variables were notable in a series of intersections and connections with the dependent variable. This concept created a plausible understanding of these factors that impact teacher morale within two select independent public charter school settings.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Although morale is conceptually aligned with the other popular concepts that are used to understand teachers' work experience, such as burnout rates and job satisfaction, it is distinctly a different issue. As such, this suggests the potential of morale research to contribute to an understanding of teachers' work lives. One strength in this regard is that teacher morale moves beyond overly simplistic explanations of job-related attitudes that often equate to job satisfaction and conditions of service, such as compensation. Secondly, morale is connected to the idea of job fit and the decision to stay or leave a position. Furthermore, teachers with low morale are not hopeful about their future in the classroom and are more likely to leave the profession. In this regard, it is useful for understanding the factors and processes that support teacher retention and thus, teacher morale (Senechal et al., 2016).

This quantitative study was conducted to analyze and gather teachers' perception of administrative leadership styles, teacher support, teacher autonomy, teacher evaluations, and collegiality with implications for better teacher morale and higher teacher retention rates.

Mixed Method Approach

The process of this research was guided by a mixed method approach in which data was gathered and analyzed. The basis of a quantitative research is to receive a comprehensible understanding through the 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 decision to use quantitative data was chosen based upon the need to determine how teachers working within two select independent public charter school setting perceived factors that impact teacher morale with implications for teacher retention. The use of a mixed method approach is to collect data from educator surveys as a means to gain insight on factors impact teacher morale in a predetermined teaching environment. The design involved the researcher collecting data utilizing a Likert-scaled survey, conducting data analysis, document analysis of the curriculum (GSE), and reporting data results.

Research Design

This ex post facto research was centered on the concept of teacher morale within two select independent public charter school settings within the southeastern region of the United States. As identified variables were assessed the impact of these factors became more evident to the relationship to teacher retention rates. The basis of a quantitative correlational research attempted to determine the extent of a relationship between two or more variables using statistical data. In this type design, relationships between and among a number of facts are sought and interpreted. Additionally, this type of study identifies

and distinguishes between patterns and trends in data, but does not analyze to prove causes for these detected patterns. Cause and effect are not the basis of this type observational research. Only the distribution, data, and relationships of factors are studied. Variables are not altered; they are studied and identified as they occur (key elements of research proposal, quantitative design). The success of the study was based on providing an in-depth understanding of the teacher morale phenomenon and the impacting factors within an independent public charter school setting.

Description of the Setting

Two independent public charter school settings in the southeastern region of Georgia were selected for the study. The first setting, Independent Public Charter School A, was a K-8 independent charter school located in an urban area and posted a College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) score of 85.1 for the 2016-2017 academic school year and a school climate rating of 3 Stars, out of possible 5 Stars high, with a student mobility rate of 15.5%. There was a 16: 1 student to teacher ratio and 392:1 student to counselor ratio. The student demographic was composed of 98% black or African American students and 2% Hispanic or Latino students; 47% of students were identified as economically disadvantage (ED), while 53% were not identified as ED. The Independent Public Charter School A setting also posted a total student population of 392 single-gendered students and performed 35% higher than the state in overall performance with 37.2% third graders reading at or above grade level target and 79.1% eighth graders reading at or above grade level target. Independent Charter School A's three-year petition was recently voted for renewal in July 2018 with the new lease scheduled to begin in Fall

of 2019 throughout the 2018 - 2021 school year. The school's community median household income was \$55,876 with 17.3 living at or below the poverty line.

The second school setting, Independent Charter School B, was a K-8 school that posted a CCRPI score of a 78.9 for the 2016 -2017 academic school year and a school climate rating of 5 Stars out of a possible 5 Star high, with a student mobility rate of 14.3 percent. There is a 24: 1 student to teacher ratio and 415:1 student to counselor ratio. The student demographic was composed of 27% black or African American students, 7% Hispanic or Latino student, 3% of two or more races, and 61% white students with 12% identified as economically disadvantage (ED) and 88% identified as not economically disadvantage. School setting B held a total population of 415 students and performed 33% higher than the state with 59.1% third graders reading at or above target level and 76.6% eighth graders reading at or above target level. The charter petition renewal for Independent Charter School B was voted affirmatively in November 2018 with the new lease beginning in Fall 2019 throughout the 2023-2024 school year. The school's community median household income is \$76,875 with 7.34% living at or below the poverty line.

Although, both school settings offered gifted/talent programs and operated as an independent public charter schools; both schools were required to keep an open enrollment period in order to provide available student spaces in all grade levels. Additionally, both schools were required to maintain a comprehensive performance academic framework to ensure student success (i.e., the Georgia Standards of Excellence). Moreover, both schools were selected based on similar demographics to

eliminate potential advantages and disadvantages and to ensure an accurate depiction of data. Also, to further disaggregate data properly and to continue to demonstrate minimum biases, the study consisted of a document analysis of the Georgia Standard Curriculum (state requirement document). The documentation analysis of the curriculum standards and curriculum maps were relevant to the impact of teacher morale by way of classroom instruction feedback, teacher resource support, teacher autonomy, and teachers' perception of administrative leadership style.

Sampling Procedures (Participants)

The teacher participants were selected based on the exposure of an independent public charter school working environment, and thus embarked upon a stratified random sampling method. Further, the participants were chosen from only one particular type of independent charter school group setting. The criteria for selection was based on teachers' professional experiences and exposure to teaching and learning within an independent charter school academic setting.

All participating teachers were deemed to be traditional school teachers (22 participants) whose careers had a duration of working within an independent public charter school setting. The researcher did not eliminate teachers who had experiences within both school settings (traditional and independent charter) to eliminate any perceived biases.

A questionnaire based on the five research questions composed for this study was designed for participants' feedback. Curriculum guides, curriculum standards, CCRPI scores, and star rating climates were analyzed for document analysis.

Working with Human Subjects

The researcher sought permission to complete this study from two independent charter schools and was granted approval from both entities. Permission was secured from Clark Atlanta University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the approved public charter school setting(s). A series of research questions and release of proposed questionnaire was released as a means to receive approval from the schools in question. Teacher participants were secured through a convenient sample; teachers were reassured of confidentiality measures. The variability of human behavior did not alter the reliability of the study. A detailed examination summary is available for review. Protocols are located in the appendices.

Quantitative data were collected for this study. Information on educators' perceptions of selected variables correlation to teacher morale was gathered through surveys as a means to analyze data and find common trends or emerging themes. Data was disaggregated in a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. For surveys, permission was granted from the residing school of the researcher's choice.

Instrumentation, Location of Research, and Data

Collection Procedures

A questionnaire was developed on the variables: teacher resource support, teacher autonomy, teacher evaluations, teacher collegiality, and teachers' perception of administrative leadership style. The questionnaire items were measured on a Likert Scale utilizing two subportions of the Perdue Teacher Opinionnaire Survey: (a) Rapport among teachers and (b) Satisfaction with teaching. The research was conducted during the fall

2018 school year. The research and data collection took place within the select public charter school(s) and included participants from two select independent public charter schools within the southeastern region in the state of Georgia. The participants were selected based on teacher employment with the select school setting(s). The researcher gained access by way of approval obtained from select boards serving these schools to conduct the research study.

Statistical Applications

The survey utilized provided measurements and analysis of probability distribution (averages) to govern the impact of the variables chosen for the study and their influence on teacher morale (Appendix A). The analysis was conducted by garnering identification of frequency and raw data of participant responses. The emergence of general ideas was analyzed, categorized, and identified for implications of findings and themes for the purpose of this study. Table 1 outlines the survey items and research question correlations, respectively.

Table 1

Literature Matrix

Research Question	DV	IV	Survey Items	Data Analysis
RQ1	Teacher Morale	Teacher Resource Support	Q6-Q9 for Teacher Support Q1-Q5 for Teacher Morale	Spearman's Correlation Coefficient

(continued)

Research				
Question	DV	IV	Survey Items	Data Analysis
RQ2	Teacher Morale	Teacher Collegiality	Q10-Q14 for Teacher Collegiality Q1-Q5 for Teacher Morale	Spearman's Correlation Coefficient
RQ3	Teacher Morale	Teacher Evaluation	Q15 - Q18 for Teacher Evaluations Q1-Q5 for Teacher Morale	Spearman's Correlation Coefficient
RQ4	Teacher Morale	Teacher Autonomy	Q19 - Q23 for Teacher Autonomy Q1-Q5 for Teacher Morale	Spearman's Correlation Coefficient
RQ5	Teacher Morale	Administrative Leadership Style	Q24-Q28 for Leadership Style Q1-Q5 for Teacher Morale	Spearman's Correlation Coefficient

Summary

This chapter presented data on procedures and methods used for data collection purposes of this research study. The mixed method research design was used in this study to examine five independent factors: teacher resource support, teacher autonomy, teacher evaluation, collegiality, and teachers' perception of leadership styles. An electronic

survey was used as a data collection procedure in this study. Trustworthiness was practiced to guarantee concealment and validity of the study.

Quantitative data collected were applied to analytically and numerically measure the impact of chosen factors on teachers' perception of teacher morale within a two select independent public charter school settings. The data collected provided implications and recommendations for future studies on teacher morale with implications for teacher retention with an independent public charter school setting.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of this mixed methods approach is to discover factors that impact teacher morale within two independent public charter school settings. In this study, two school settings were selected with similar demographics to ensure an accurate data description and to eliminate potential advantages and disadvantages of both schools. In essence, the researcher reviewed, assessed, and examined the questionnaire responses from 25 independent public charter school teacher participants to discover factors that impact teacher morale: teacher evaluations, teacher resource support, teacher collegiality, teacher autonomy, and teachers' perception of administrative leadership style. The quantitative data from the questionnaire was utilized to answer five research questions addressing the select variables of this research. In addition, qualitative data of Georgia's curriculum was analyzed through a document analysis to eliminate any findings of curriculum biases that could have an effect on teachers' perception of teacher autonomy, teacher resource support, teacher evaluation, and administrative leadership style throughout the study. This chapter contains an analysis of all collected data.

Description of Quantitative Data

An electronic link was provided to over 25 teacher participants within two independent public charter schools that shared similar demographics. Thirteen teacher

participants from school A and nine teacher participants from school B completed and finalized the electronic copy of the questionnaire used in this study. According to Google Forms, 22 ($n = 22$) teachers viewed the survey, for a completed response rate of 73.3%. More than half of the participants (72.7%) received their teaching certification through the traditional route of a college preparatory program, while 18.2 % acquired their certification through a *Georgia Teacher Academy for Preparation and Pedagogy (TAPP) Program* leaving only 9.1% to gain their teaching certification through an alternative provider: *Teach for America Program*. Table 2 provides the data for the demographic description for each school setting.

Table 2

Demographic Description

Descriptor	n	School A %	School B %
Gender			
Male	2	9.1%	22.0%
Female	20	22.0%	78.0%
Years of Teaching Experience			
1-5	9	40.9%	67.0%
6 - 10	7	31.8%	0%
11+	6	27.3 %	33.0%
Certification Route			
Traditional	16	72.7 %	78.0%
Alternative	4	18.2%	0%
1> <i>Georgia TAPP</i>	2	9.1%	22.0%
2> <i>Teach for America</i>			

(continued)

Descriptor	n	School A %	School B %
Subjects Taught			
Math	3	13.6%	22.0%
Science	1	4.5%	11.0%
Social Studies	3	13.6%	22.0%
English	4	18.2%	22.0%
All the above (Elementary)	11	50.0%	22.0%

Overall, roughly 43% of teacher participants indicated they had 1 to 5 years of teaching experience, while 27% reported 6 to 10 years of teaching experience with about 32% stating 11+ years of professional teaching experience. Half of the teacher participants (50%) indicated teaching at the elementary level, while 18% specified their teaching subject as English and about 14% of teachers indicating math and social studies leaving the other 7% for teachers who taught science.

Variables in the Study

Participating teachers in this research responded to 28 items using a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from 5 (*strongly agree*) to 1 (*strongly disagree*). There were no negatively worded items recorded in the study questionnaire. The five items in the teacher morale scale were coded with the understanding that a low score (1) indicated low levels of morale within the teaching profession.

Table 3 contains the questionnaire items for each variable. Teacher Morale scale was calculated by averaging the ratings for each of the five research questions.

Table 3

Corresponding Questionnaire Items for Each Scale

Indicator / Items in scale
<p>Teacher Morale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have a high level of professional interest in work related duties. • I have a high level of enthusiasm for work related tasks. • Teaching gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction. • If I could plan my career again, I would choose teaching. • I feel successful and competent in my present position.
<p>Teacher Resource Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am supported with adequate technology for instructional purposes. • I am provided with ample opportunities for professional development. • My school provides me with adequate classroom supplies and equipment. • My school supplies adequate clerical services for the teachers.
<p>Teacher Collegiality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is assistance from colleagues in developing student assessments. • There is assistance from colleagues in modifying teaching strategies to meet individual student needs. • The teachers in our school work well together. • Experienced faculty members accept new and younger members as colleagues. • Our teaching staff is congenial to work with.
<p>Teacher Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I believe evaluation score ratings are fair, consistent, and unbiased.

(continued)

Indicator / Items in scale

Teacher Evaluation (continued)

- I am supported with constructive positive feedback following formative and informative evaluations.
- My school provides me with the necessary tools to receive a score rating of 3 or higher on the Teacher Keys Evaluation System (TKES).
- My school provides me with time and opportunities to develop the necessary skills/knowledge that are noted in feedback on evaluations.

Teacher Autonomy

- I am encouraged to engage in innovative and creative practices while delivering instruction.
- The scheduling of use of time is under my control.
- My job allows for much discretion on my part.
- The choice of classroom assessments is under my control.
- The choice of course materials other than textbooks is under my control.

Administrative Leadership Style

- The leaders at my school engage in collaborative decision-making process.
- The leaders at my school establish clear responsibilities for the teachers.
- The leaders at my school provide teachers with a sense of empowerment.
- The leadership challenges and stimulates our professional growth during faculty meetings.
- The lines and methods of communication between teachers and the principal in our school are well developed and maintained.

*Teacher Morale indicator scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*)

*Teacher Morale scale score from 1 (*low morale*) to 5 (*high morale*)

As Table 4 indicates, the highest area of agreement includes:

- Teaching gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction. ($M = 4.50$) ($SD = 0.91$)
- I feel successful and competent in my present position. ($M = 4.23$) ($SD = 0.87$)
- I have a high level of professional interest in work related duties. ($M = 4.23$) ($SD = 0.92$)

Table 4 also indicates the lowest area of agreement:

- If I could plan my career again, I would choose teaching. ($M = 3.59$) ($SD = 1.37$)
- I have a high level of enthusiasm for work related tasks. ($M = 3.95$) ($SD = 1.00$)

Table 4

Distributive Statistics for Teacher Morale

Item	M^*	SD	N
I have a high level of professional interest in work related duties.	4.23	0.92	22
I have a high level of enthusiasm for work related tasks.	3.95	1.00	22
Teaching gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction.	4.50	0.91	22
If I could plan my career again, I would choose teaching.	3.59	1.37	22
I feel successful and competent in my present position.	4.23	0.87	22

*Teacher morale indicator scale scores range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

*Teacher morale scale score range from 1 (low morale) to 5 (high morale)

Mean scores were generated for each independent variable. The mean scores for the teacher morale indicator varied from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Table 4 shows the scale indicator for each teacher morale item.

Table 5 presents the percentages of participating teachers by various level of agreement for each factor; 94.5% of participating teachers *agreed* that teaching gives them a great deal of personal satisfaction and that they have a high level of professional interest in work related duties (86.4%), reflecting their belief that the art of teaching, in the purest form, provides true gratification and satisfaction. However, the questionnaire reported *less* levels of agreement on the desire to choose teaching as a career path again (54.6%) and demonstrations of enthusiasm for work related duties (77.3%).

Table 5

Distribution of Responses for Teacher Morale

Item	Strongly			
	Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
I have a high level of professional interest in work related duties.	45.5%	40.9%	4.5%	9.1%
I have a high level of enthusiasm for work related tasks.	31.8%	45.5%	9.1%	13.6%
Teaching gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction.	63.6%	31.8%	0%	0%
If I could plan my career again, I would choose teaching.	36.4%	18.2%	22.7%	13.6%
I feel successful and competent in my present position.	45.5%	36.4%	13.6%	4.5%

(continued)

Item	Strongly Disagree	Strongly	Strongly	N = 22
		Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Disagree	
I have a high level of professional interest in work related duties.	0%	86.4%	9.1%	
I have a high level of enthusiasm for work related tasks.	0%	77.3%	13.6%	
Teaching gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction.	4.5%	95.4%	4.5%	
If I could plan my career again, I would choose teaching.	9.1%	54.6%	22.7%	
I feel successful and competent in my present position.	0%	81.9%	4.5%	

Analysis of Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between teacher support and teacher morale?

As Table 6 indicates, the highest area of agreement includes:

- I am provided with ample opportunities for professional development. ($M = 3.95$) ($SD = 1.09$)
- I am supported with adequate technology for instructional purposes. ($M = 3.55$) ($SD = 1.30$)

As Table 6 also indicates, the lowest area of agreement includes:

- My school provides me with adequate classroom supplies and equipment. ($M = 3.00$) ($SD = 1.23$)
- My school supplies adequate clerical services for the teachers. ($M = 3.14$) ($SD = 1.13$)

Table 6

Distributive Statistics for Teacher Resource Support

Item	<i>M</i> *	<i>SD</i>	N
I am supported with adequate technology for instructional purposes.	3.55	1.30	22
I am provided with ample opportunities for professional development.	3.95	1.09	22
My school provides me with adequate classroom supplies and equipment.	3.00	1.23	22
My school supplies adequate clerical services for the teachers.	3.14	1.13	22

*Teacher support indicator scale scores range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

Mean scores were generated for each independent variable. The mean scores for the teacher support indicator varied from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Table 6 outlines the scale indicator for each teacher support item.

Table 7 presents the percentages of teachers by level of agreement for each factor. The research data revealed that participating teachers indicated the highest *agreement* on being provided with ample opportunities for professional development (77.3%) and being supported with adequate technology for instructional purposes (54.5%), reflecting their belief that they are supported through professional development opportunities and adequate technology to carry out instructional materials to students, respectively. Nonetheless, teachers reported a lower *agreement* on adequate classroom supplies provision and proper clerical support (36.3%), indicating the belief that teachers support is given through professional developments and technology, but not assistance in things such as student report analysis and materials needed to deliver instruction with fidelity such as up to date books and materials.

Table 7

Distribution of Responses for Teacher Resource Support

Item	Strongly		Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly/		N = 22
	Agree	Agree			Disagree	Agree/	
I am supported with adequate technology for instructional purposes.	31.8%	22.7%	18.2%	22.7%	4.5%	54.5%	
I am provided with ample opportunities for professional development.	36.4%	40.9%	4.5%	18.2%	0%	77.3%	
My school provides me with adequate classroom supplies and equipment.	13.6%	22.7%	22.7%	31.8%	9.1%	36.3%	
My school supplies adequate clerical services for the teachers.	13.6%	22.7%	31.8%	27.3%	4.5%	36.3%	

The Spearman's correlation coefficient measuring the association between the teacher support scale and the teacher morale was $r_s = .289$, $p = .192$, indicating that there was no significant relationship between Teacher Morale and Teacher Support. More specifically, teachers showed the highest *agreement* on being provided with ample opportunities for professional development (77.3%) and being supported with adequate

technology for instructional purposes (54.5%), reflecting their belief that they are supported through professional development opportunities and adequate technology to carry out instructional materials to students, respectively (see Table 8).

Table 8

Bivariate Correlation between Teacher Morale (TM) and Teacher Resource Support (TS)

			TM	TS
Spearman's rho	TM	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.289
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.192
		N	22	22
	TS	Correlation Coefficient	.289	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.192	.
		N	22	22

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between teacher collegiality and teacher morale?

As Table 9 indicates, the highest area of agreement includes:

- Our teaching staff is congenial to work with. ($M = 4.23$) ($SD = 0.69$)
- Experienced faculty members accept new and younger members as colleagues. ($M = 4.14$) ($SD = 0.83$)
- The teachers in our school work well together. ($M = 4.05$) ($SD = 0.79$)

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for Teacher Collegiality

Item	<i>M</i> *	<i>SD</i>	N
There is assistance from colleagues in developing student assessments.	3.91	0.81	22
There is assistance from colleagues in modifying teaching strategies to meet individual student needs.	3.55	1.01	22
The teachers in our school work well together.	4.05	0.79	22
Experienced faculty members accept new and younger members as colleagues.	4.14	0.83	22
Our teaching staff is congenial to work with.	4.23	0.69	22

As Table 9 also indicates, the lowest area of agreement includes:

- There is assistance from colleagues in modifying teaching strategies to meet individual student needs. ($M = 3.55$) ($SD = 1.01$)
- There is assistance from colleagues in developing student assessments. ($M = 3.91$) ($SD = 0.81$)

Mean scores were generated for each independent variable. The mean scores for the teacher collegiality indicator varied from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 9 also outlines the scale indicator for each teacher collegiality item.

Table 10 presents the percentages of participating teachers by level of agreement for the various factors; 86.4% of the teachers *agreed* that their colleagues are congenial to work with and that their experienced faculty members' were accepting of new and younger members as co-workers (81.9%), reflecting their belief that teachers are congenial and accepting of younger colleagues.

Table 10

Distribution of Responses for Teacher Collegiality

Item	Strongly		Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly/		N = 22
	Agree	Agree			Disagree	Agree/	
There is assistance from colleagues in developing student assessments.	18.2%	59.1%	9.1%	13.6%	0%	77.3%	
There is assistance from colleagues in modifying teaching strategies to meet individual student needs.	18.2%	54.5%	9.1%	18.2%	0%	72.7%	
The teachers in our school work well together.	27.3%	54.5%	13.6%	4.5%	0%	81.8%	
Experienced faculty members accept new and younger members as colleagues.	36.4%	45.5%	13.6%	4.5%	0%	81.9%	
Our teaching staff is congenial to work with.	36.4%	50%	13.6%	0%	0%	86.4%	

Teachers in the study, however, were less likely to *agree* that assistance is given from colleagues in developing student assessment (77.3%) and assistance in modifying strategies to meet individual needs (72.7%). This indicates that teachers believe that

colleagues are less likely to aid in the development of student assessment and teaching modification strategies as a means to meet student needs.

The Spearman's correlation coefficient measuring the association between the teacher collegiality scale and the teacher morale was $r_s = .246, p = .271$, suggesting that there was no significant relationship between Teacher Morale and Teacher Collegiality. More specifically, 86.4% of the teachers participating in this study *agreed* that their teaching staff was congenial to work with and that experienced faculty members' acceptance of new and younger members as colleagues was also positive (81.9%), reflecting their belief that teachers are congenial and accepting of younger colleagues within this particular setting (see Table 11).

Table 11

Bivariate Correlation between Teacher Morale (TM) and Teacher Collegiality (TC)

			TM	TC
Spearman's rho	TM	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.246
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.271
		N	22	22
	TC	Correlation Coefficient	.246	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.271	.
		N	22	22

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between teacher evaluation and teacher morale?

As Table 12 indicates, the highest area of agreement includes:

- My school provides me with the necessary tools to receive a score rating of 3 or higher on the Teacher Keys Evaluation System (TKES). ($M = 3.91$) ($SD = 0.92$)
- I am supported with constructive positive feedback following formative and informative evaluations. ($M = 3.86$) ($SD = 1.25$)

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for Teacher Evaluation

Item	M^*	SD	N
I believe evaluation score ratings are fair, consistent, and unbiased.	3.50	1.19	22
I am supported with constructive positive feedback following formative and informative evaluations.	3.86	1.25	22
My school provides me with the necessary tools to receive a score rating of 3 or higher on the Teacher Keys Evaluation System (TKES).	3.91	0.92	22
My school provides me with time and opportunities to develop the necessary skills/knowledge that are noted in feedback on evaluations.	3.64	1.05	22

As Table 12 indicates, the lowest area of agreement includes:

- I believe evaluation score ratings are fair, consistent, and unbiased. ($M = 3.50$) ($SD = 1.19$)
- I am supported with constructive positive feedback following formative and informative evaluations. ($M = 3.86$) ($SD = 1.25$)

Mean scores were generated for each independent variable. The mean scores for the teacher evaluation indicator varied from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 12 also outlines the scale indicator for each teacher evaluation item.

Table 13 presents the percentages of participating teachers by level of agreement for each research factor; 72.8% of participating teachers *agreed* that support provided on their formal evaluations coupled with constructive positive feedback following formative and informative evaluations were helpful in their professional development.

Table 13

Distribution of Responses for Teacher Evaluation

Item	Strongly		Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly/		N = 22
	Agree	Agree			Disagree	Agree/	
I believe evaluation score ratings are fair, consistent, and unbiased.	18.2%	36.4%	22.7%	18.2%	18.2%	54.6%	
I am supported with constructive positive feedback following formative and informative evaluations.	36.4%	36.4%	13.6%	4.5%	9.1%	72.8%	

(continued)

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly/ Agree/ Agree	N = 22
My school provides me with the necessary tools to receive a score rating of 3 or higher on the Teacher Keys Evaluation System (TKES).	27.3%	45.5%	18.2%	9.1%	0%	72.8%	
My school provides me with time and opportunities to develop the necessary skills/knowledge that are noted in feedback on evaluations.	18.2%	45.5%	22.7%	9.1%	4.5%	63.7%	

Further, the participants felt that they were provided with the necessary tools to receive a score rating of 3 or higher on the Teacher Keys Evaluation System (TKES), reflecting their belief that evaluations were followed with feedback and provision for success. Nonetheless, teachers were less likely to *agree* that evaluations scores were fair, consistent, and unbiased (54.6%), indicating the belief that the evaluation process is not carried out with fidelity.

The Spearman's correlation coefficient measuring the association between the teacher evaluation scale and the teacher morale was $r_s = .585$, $p < .01$, indicating that

there was a moderate positive significant relationship between Teacher Morale and Teacher Evaluation. This relationship indicates the more satisfied teachers were with their evaluation system, the more likely they were to have a higher morale in their work setting. More precisely, a little over half (54.6%) of teachers *agreed* that evaluations were carried out with fidelity (see Table 14).

Table 14

Bivariate Correlation between Teacher Morale (TM) and Teacher Evaluation (TE)

			TM	TE
Spearman's rho	TM	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.585**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.004
		N	22	22
	TE	Correlation Coefficient	.585**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.
		N	22	22

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between teacher autonomy and teacher morale?

As Table 15 indicates, the highest area of agreement includes:

- The choice of course materials other than textbooks is under my control. ($M = 3.86$) ($SD = 0.99$)

Table 15

Descriptive Statistic for Teacher Autonomy

Item	<i>M</i> *	<i>SD</i>	N
I am encouraged to engage in innovative and creative practices while delivering instruction.	3.64	1.22	22
The scheduling of use of time is under my control.	2.73	1.24	22
My job allows for much discretion on my part.	3.32	0.99	22
The choice of classroom assessments is under my control.	3.32	1.17	22
The choice of course materials other than textbooks is under my control.	3.86	0.99	22

- I am encouraged to engage in innovative and creative practices while delivering instruction. ($M = 3.64$) ($SD = 1.22$)

The lowest area of agreement includes:

- The scheduling of use of time is under my control. ($M = 2.73$) ($SD = 1.24$)
- The choice of classroom assessments is under my control. ($M = 3.32$) ($SD = 1.17$)

Mean scores were generated for each independent variable. The mean scores for the teacher autonomy indicator varied from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 15 outlines the scale indicator for each teacher autonomy item.

Table 16 presents the percentages of teachers by level of agreement for each factor; 72.8% of teachers *agreed* that they were able to choose their course materials, indicating a belief of autonomy. However, participating teachers were less likely to *agree* that scheduling the use of time was under their control (31.8%), signifying their belief of a lack of schedule flexibility and use of time within the teaching profession.

Table 16

Distribution of Responses for Teacher Autonomy

Item	Strongly		Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly/		N = 22
	Agree	Agree			Disagree	Agree/	
I am encouraged to engage in innovative and creative practices while delivering instruction.	27.3%	36.4%	13.6%	18.2%	4.5%	63.7%	
The scheduling of use of time is under my control.	9.1%	22.7%	13.6%	40.9%	13.6%	31.8%	
My job allows for much discretion on my part.	9.1%	36.4%	36.4%	13.6%	4.5%	45.5%	
The choice of classroom assessments is under my control.	18.2	27.3	27.3	22.7	4.5%	45.5%	
The choice of course materials other than textbooks is under my control.	27.3%	45.5%	13.6%	13.65	0%	72.8%	

The Spearman's correlation coefficient measuring the association between the teacher autonomy scale and teacher morale was $r_s = .531$, $p < .05$, showing that there was a moderate positive significant relationship between Teacher Morale and Teacher

Autonomy. The data indicated that, on average, the more satisfied teachers were with their level of autonomy, the higher their morale would be. As such, 31.8% of teachers were less likely to *agree* that scheduling autonomy and use of time were under their control; thus, indicating their belief that they were less likely to control schedule flexibility and use of time within the teaching profession (see Table 17).

Table 17

Bivariate Correlation between Teacher Morale (TM) and Teacher Autonomy (TA)

			TM	TA
Spearman's rho	TM	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.531*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.011
		N	22	22
	TA	Correlation Coefficient	.531*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.
		N	22	22

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between the perception of administrative leadership style and teacher morale?

As Table 18 indicates, the highest area of agreement includes:

- The leaders at my school establish clear responsibilities for the teachers. ($M = 3.82$) ($SD = 1.22$)
- The leadership challenges and stimulates our professional growth during faculty meetings. ($M = 3.77$) ($SD = 1.11$)

Table 18

Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' Perception of Administrative Leadership Style

Item	<i>M</i> *	<i>SD</i>	N
The leaders at my school engage in collaborative decision-making process.	3.55	1.34	22
The leaders at my school establish clear responsibilities for the teachers.	3.82	1.22	22
The leaders at my school provide teachers with a sense of empowerment.	3.36	1.18	22
The leadership challenges and stimulates our professional growth during faculty meetings.	3.77	1.11	22
The lines and methods of communication between teachers and the principal in our school are well developed and maintained.	3.64	1.09	22

- The lines and methods of communication between teachers and the principal in our school are well developed and maintained. ($M = 3.64$) ($SD = 1.09$)

As Table 18 indicates, the lowest area of agreement includes:

- The leaders at my school provide teachers with a sense of empowerment. ($M = 3.36$) ($SD = 1.18$)
- The leaders at my school engage in collaborative decision-making process. ($M = 3.55$) ($SD = 1.34$)

Mean scores were generated for each independent variable. The mean scores for the participating teachers' perception of leadership style indicator varied from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Table 18 outlines the scale indicator for each teacher's perception of leadership style item.

Table 19 presents the percentages of teachers by level of agreement for each factor. The data collected from participating teachers in this research study indicated higher levels of *agreement* with the statement that leadership challenges stimulates our professional growth during faculty meetings (68.2%) and that administrative leaders established clear responsibilities for teachers (63.6%), reinforcing their belief that administrative leadership provided minimum professional growth during faculty meeting and professional responsibilities were vague. Nonetheless, participating teachers were less likely to *agree* on leaders providing a sense of empowerment (45.5%) and leaders engaging in the collaborative decision-making process (54.5%), signifying their belief that administrative leaders provided minimum moments of empowerment and little opportunities for teachers to collaborate in the decision making process.

Table 19

Distribution of Responses for Teachers' Perception of Administrative Leadership Style

Item	Strongly		Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly/		N = 22
	Agree	Agree			Disagree	Agree/	
The leaders at my school engage in collaborative decision-making process.	31.8%	22.7%	22.7%	13.6%	9.1%	54.5%	

(continued)

Item	Strongly		Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly/		N = 22
	Agree	Agree			Disagree	Agree/	
The leaders at my school establish clear responsibilities for the teachers.	31.8%	31.8%	13.6%	13.6%	9.1%	63.6	
The leaders at my school provide teachers with a sense of empowerment.	18.2%	27.3%	36.4%	9.1%	9.1%	45.5%	
The leadership challenges and stimulates our professional growth during faculty meetings.	27.3%	40.9%	18.2%	9.1%	4.5%	68.2%	
The lines and methods of communication between teachers and the principal in our school are well developed and maintained.	22.7%	36.4%	27.3%	9.1%	4.5%	59.1%	

The Spearman's correlation coefficient measuring the association between satisfaction with Leadership Style scale and Teacher Morale was $r_s = .470, p < .05$, indicated that there was a moderate positive significant relationship between Teacher Morale and Leadership Style. This meant that the more satisfied teachers were with the

leadership style of their principals, the higher their morale would be within the particular Independent Charter School setting. Moreover, teachers were less likely to *agree* on leaders providing a sense of empowerment (45.5%) and that leaders engaged teachers in the collaborative decision-making process (54.5%), signifying their belief that leaders provided minimum opportunities of teacher empowerment and fewer opportunities to collaborate in the decision making process with their school leaders (see Table 20).

Table 20

Bivariate Correlation between Teacher Morale (TM) and Administrative Leadership Style (LS)

			TM	LS
Spearman's rho	TM	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.470*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.027
		N	22	22
	LS	Correlation Coefficient	.470*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.027	.
		N	22	22

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Description of Qualitative Data

A document analysis of the Georgia's curriculum was conducted to eliminate any biases of instruction delivery within the two Independent Public Charter Schools in this research study. As Bowen (2009) explained, "document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic

(computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material. Like other analytical methods in [a] qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge.

Documents should contain text, words, and images that have been recorded without a researcher's intervention (Bowen, 2009). As such, upon the completion of the Georgia Standards of Excellence curriculum analysis, there revealed no biases nor any distinctions of the curriculum used within the two public charter school settings as oppose to any other school setting; in an essence, the curriculum did not adversely affect any experience of the classroom teachers. No special privileges were found in this regard.

Summary

Responses from 22 participating teachers were investigated to answer a succession of research questions. The survey was utilized to analyze and disaggregate data from a series of teacher demographic questions. A descriptive statistics chart, distribution of responses chart, and a Spearman's correlation chart was created and calculated for each independent variable. There was moderate positive significance found for 3 out of the five variable correlations—teacher evaluations, teacher autonomy, and teachers' perception of leadership styles. A document analysis was conducted to eliminate biases of the curriculum set forth in each setting, since an independent public charter school is unique and particular to the various types of school settings.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teaching is generally characterized and regarded as a vocation [where] one tends to feel a sense of moral purpose connected to his or her work. Educators usually regard teaching as a calling, and often feel a difference is being made in the lives of their students and in society as a whole. Teachers' professional identities are influenced by the larger educational environment, among other factors, teacher morale, motivation, and performance, are often a reflection of the many dynamics within a particular setting (Bosso, 2017).

The purpose of this mixed method research was to explore factors that impacted teacher morale within two Independent Public Charter School settings. Teachers within two select charter school settings were invited to participate in an online questionnaire aligned to five researched questions used to find correlations between teacher morale and teacher support, teacher autonomy, teacher evaluation, and teachers' perception of leadership styles. The quantitative data from the questionnaire was utilized for the research questions, while the qualitative data of Georgia's curriculum was analyzed through a document analysis to eliminate any findings of curriculum biases that could have a potential effect on teachers' perception of autonomy, support, evaluation, and teachers' perception of administrative leadership style throughout the study.

This study aimed to inform and guide leaders with implications to increase teacher morale within the public charter school setting. This chapter is composed of all collected and analyzed data.

Findings

The findings of this research study included more than 20 ($n = 22$) teachers who viewed the survey, for a completion response rate of 73.3%. The demographic data for this study indicated that of the participating teachers, 72.7% received their certificate through the traditional route of a college preparatory program, half of the participants (50%) indicated they taught at the elementary level; 18% specified their teaching subject as English. About 14% of teachers indicated math as their teaching subject and 7% taught social studies and science. Finally, approximately 43% of participating teachers indicated they had 1-5 years of teaching experience, while 27% reported 6-10 years of experience; 32% had 11+ years of experience.

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between teacher resource support and teacher morale?

The Spearman's correlation coefficient measuring the association between the teacher support scale and the teacher morale was $r_s = .289$, $p = .192$, indicating that there was no significant relationship between Teacher Morale and Teacher Support within the two particular Independent Public Charter School settings.

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between teacher collegiality and teacher morale?

The Spearman's correlation coefficient measuring the association between the teacher collegiality scale and the teacher morale was $r_s = .246$, $p = .271$, suggesting that there was no significant relationship between Teacher Morale and Teacher Collegiality within this particular school setting.

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between teacher evaluation and teacher morale?

The Spearman's correlation coefficient measuring the association between the teacher evaluation scale and the teacher morale was $r_s = .585$, $p < .01$, indicating that there was a moderate positive significant relationship between Teacher Morale and Teacher Evaluation within this particular school setting. This finding correlates with the literature found in *The University Journal of Education Resources* article that the process of evaluation and how it stands to be singular and rigid as oppose to operating as a multi-tiered evaluation system that considers all aspects. The research study found that many participating teachers have few students linked to their professional performance for whom data is available for both prior-year and current-year achievement. The teachers in this study also indicated that other students who were enrolled were categorized as highly mobile may have spent only a short time in a given teacher's classroom. Both of these are sources of considerable error, thus possessing the ability to impact teacher morale.

In the state in which the research was conducted one of the major components of all schools is the state required teacher evaluation; thus, it is mandated teachers have little input into the overall process where student data is collected and considered as one

element of the assessment and teacher are instructed to implement a prescribed instructional program.

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between teacher autonomy and teacher morale?

The Spearman's correlation coefficient measuring the association between the teacher autonomy scale and teacher morale was $r_s = .531, p < .05$, indicating that there was a moderate positive significant relationship between Teacher Morale and Teacher Autonomy within these two Independent Public Charter Schools settings. This critical find correlates with the research literature findings by Torres (2014) that autonomy is more likely to matter to charter school teachers in their job search, and that they perceive a greater degree of school autonomy compared to traditional public school teachers.

RQ5: Is there a significant relationship between the perception of administrative leadership style and teacher morale?

The Spearman's correlation coefficient measuring the association between satisfaction with Leadership Style scale and Teacher Morale was $r_s = .470, p < .05$, indicating that there was a moderate positive significant relationship between Teacher Morale and Leadership Style within these two Independent Public Charter Schools settings. This finding correlates with the literature found in Sagnak (2016) that teacher participation in the decision-making process enhances subordinates' motivation, which positively affects performance; subordinates' participation in the decision-making process fosters their psychological ownership, self-efficacy and sense of control, so their autonomy and level of intrinsic motivation increase.

This finding also supports the tri-modal approach of administrative leadership style (Hooper & Bernhardt, 2016). A leadership style that encompasses all three approaches to leading: adaptive, transformational, and instructional. The school leader must be able to demonstrate that each of these tri-modal approaches are critical in leading a positive school environment with a successful academic program aimed at meeting the needs of all students.

Finally, upon analysis of the curriculum, it was found to serve as a solid foundation and consistent document for both public charter schools. This could have potentially impacted teacher evaluation, teacher autonomy, and teachers' perception of leadership styles.

Conclusions and Implications

In an era of teacher shortage, low teacher morale, and a raise of charter school take-overs one would deem it necessary to study and investigate factors that impact teacher morale within a public charter school setting. According Burdette (2016),

Georgia now has 441 charter schools, including 97 start-up charter schools (three of which are statewide virtual schools), 18 conversion charter schools, and 326 charter system schools in 32 charter systems. [Still on the rise,] Georgia's charter schools on average have consistently outperformed non-charter schools on the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) [and] EOG (End-Of-Grade) and EOC (End-Of-Course). (p. 3)

As one can see, it is vital to examine the morale level of teachers within public charter school settings with an implication to increase teacher retention rates. The findings of this

study indicated that teacher morale have a statistically moderate significance correlation with teacher evaluation, teacher autonomy, and teachers' perception of leadership style. As such, school administrator should remain intentional with providing opportunities for teacher engagement and teachers' sense of empowerment.

Recommendations

Public charter school executives are individuals who execute and handle affairs directly related to public charter schools and oftentimes operate as the independent charter school's central office and district. These individuals are required to handle every aspect of the development of the charter's operation, compliance, financial, and external relations in order to meet mandated requirement for the Georgia State Commission. The recommendations of the researcher are based on the findings of this study, the following should be implemented based on implications of both teacher morale and teacher retention.

Recommendations for Public Charter School Executives

- Ensure faculty meeting agendas are developed with the idea of student achievement and teacher growth with emphasis on faculty engagement.
- Positive school climate is recognized as an important target for school reform and improving behavioral, academic, and mental health outcomes for students

It is important to ensure teacher morale and teacher retention strategies are implemented effectively and continuously throughout the school year by promoting the belief of student success, positive attitudes with staff

recognitions, and by allowing time to improve instruction through collaboration and effective targeted professional development.

- Provide administrative support framed on the Hooper and Bernhardt (2016) tri-modal leadership approach to ensure that all aspects of the school setting are addressed in order to achieve positive student learning outcomes.

Recommendations for Public Charter School Leaders

- Allow teachers the opportunity to engage in the shared decision-making process through the development and implementation of roles such as department chair personnel, grade level chair personnel, and mentor/mentee programs. Sagnak (2016) supports this recommendation with findings that participative leadership is accepted as a source of intrinsic motivation.
- Offer continuous meaningful professional growth *during* faculty meetings in order to meet specific instructional needs of all faculty.
- As Torres (2014) points out since autonomy was indeed important to charter school teachers in their job search, encourage instructional creativity and innovation within the work place.
- Provide and maintain various methods of open lines of communication to teachers.
- Establish clear responsibilities and expectations of teachers to facilitate a sense of cohesiveness and tangible measures of success.
- Ensure classrooms are provided with adequate support materials needed for instructional delivery.

- Since teacher evaluation demonstrates both the potential and the limitations of using a competitive grant program to drive state reform (McGuinn, 2012). Be prompt and intentional about teacher evaluation feedback and ensure evaluations are carried out with fidelity.
- Allow teachers to demonstrate measures of autonomy with schedule flexibility such as classroom swops, co-teaching, restroom times, recess time etc.
- As the article *The Incorporation of Macro-Scaffolding* states the relationship between the learner teacher and the expert teacher works as a means to alleviate stress and decreased job dissatisfaction; therefore, one should seek to implement an on-going continuous mentor/mentee programs for new teachers and teachers who are new to the charter sector.

Recommendations for Future Research

As the researcher conducted and concluded the study, it was noticed that this study could lead to the exploration of teacher morale within a public charter school setting *and* a public traditional school setting. Furthermore, this study could lead to the investigation of policies that affect teacher morale within a public charter school setting, effective leadership styles within a public charter school setting, and teacher attrition within the public charter school setting. Also, the use of a qualitative research will provide education leaders with the type of professional growth topics teachers would benefit from at faculty meetings.

Summary

The purpose of this mixed method study was to examine factors such as teacher support, teacher collegiality, teacher evaluation, teacher autonomy, and leadership style in correlation to the impact of teacher morale levels within a public charter school setting. The conclusion of this study found that teacher evaluation, teacher autonomy, and leadership styles are statistically correlated to teacher morale. Unfortunately, the study revealed that teachers would not choose this career path again if given the opportunity and faculty meetings are not perceived as meetings for growth. Overall, it is found that teacher evaluation, autonomy, and leadership styles have an impact on teacher morale within this particular type of school setting.

APPENDIX A

Teacher Morale Questionnaire

This questionnaire contains statements about teacher morale, support, collegiality, evaluation, autonomy, and perceived leadership style. Next to each question, circle the number that represents how strongly you feel about the statement by using the following scoring system:

- 5 - Strongly Agree
- 4 - Agree
- 3 - Uncertain
- 2 - Disagree
- 1 - Strong Disagree

Section I: *Teacher Morale*

1. I have a high level of professional interest in work related duties.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
2. I have a high level of enthusiasm for work related tasks.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
3. Teaching gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
4. If I could plan my career again, I would choose teaching.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
5. I feel successful and competent in my present position.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree

Section II: *Teacher Support*

6. I am supported with adequate technology for instructional purposes.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
7. I am provided with ample opportunities for professional development.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
8. My school provides me with adequate classroom supplies and equipment.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
9. My school supplies adequate clerical services for the teachers.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree

Section III: *Teacher Collegiality*

10. There is assistance from colleagues in developing student assessments.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
11. There is assistance from colleagues in modifying teaching strategies to meet individual student needs.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
12. The teachers in our school work well together.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
13. Experienced faculty members accept new and younger members as colleagues.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
14. Our teaching staff is congenial to work with.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree

Section IV: *Teacher Evaluation*

15. I believe evaluation score ratings are fair, consistent, and unbiased.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
16. I am supported with constructive positive feedback following formative and informative evaluations.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
17. My school provides me with the necessary tools to receive a score rating of 3 or higher on the Teacher Keys Evaluation System (TKES).
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
18. My school provides me with time and opportunities to develop the necessary skills/knowledge that are noted in feedback on evaluations.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree

Section V: *Teacher Autonomy*

19. I am encouraged to engage in innovative and creative practices while delivering instruction.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
20. The scheduling of use of time is under my control.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
21. My job allows for much discretion on my part.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
22. The choice of classroom assessments is under my control.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
23. The choice of course materials other than textbooks is under my control.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree

Section VI: Leadership Style

24. The leaders at my school engage in collaborative decision-making process.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
25. The leaders at my school establish clear responsibilities for the teachers.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
26. The leaders at my school provide teachers with a sense of empowerment.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
27. The leadership challenges and stimulates our professional growth during faculty meetings
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree
28. The lines and methods of communication between teachers and the principal in our school are well developed and maintained.
5 - Strongly Agree 4 - Agree 3 - Uncertain 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree

Demographic Questions

29. Gender
(a) Male (b) Female
30. Race
(a) African American (b) Hispanic (c) Caucasian (d) Asian (e) Other
31. How many years of experience do you have as an educator?
(a) 1 - 5 (b) 6 - 10 (c) 11+
32. Which certificate route best describes you?
(a) Ga TAPP (b) Teach for America (c) Traditional
33. Which subject do you teach?
(a) Math (b) Science (c) ELA (d) Social Studies

APPENDIX B

Letters of Approval to Conduct Research

From: Charcia Nichols <cnichols@ivyprepacademy.org>
Date: 10/24/18 4:46 PM (GMT-05:00)
To: bronvia.rives@yahoo.com
Subject: Re: Dissertation Research

Thank you and your research has been approved. We do ask that you do not use the name of the school and all participants be kept anonymous. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Ivy Strong,

Charcia M. Nichols, Ed. D.
Head of Schools

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From: Donna Reynolds <donna.reynolds@libertytechcharter.org>

Date: 10/29/18 8:11 AM (GMT-05:00)

To: bronvia.rives@yahoo.com

Subject: Re: Electronic Questionnaire for Dissertation

I have forwarded this to our principal. He has agreed to allow the teachers to fill out the survey and will let them know at our next faculty meeting, Tuesday, November 6.

Thank you

Donna Reynolds

Assistant Principal, Liberty Tech Charter School

[119 Price Road](#)

[Brooks, GA 30205](#)

(678) 456-5673

www.libertytechcharter.com

"We are Mavericks, facing the future with the goal of changing the world."

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Form

Factors that impact teacher morale within a public charter school setting: a singular- setting analysis

Researcher: Bronvia L. Rives

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Barbara Hill

Introduction: I am a doctoral student at Clark Atlanta University conducting a mixed methodology study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership. You are being asked to participate in this study about your experience as an elementary or middle grades teacher in a public charter school setting. Please carefully read this document before agreeing to participate in this study.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore and compare the factors of teacher evaluation, teacher support, teacher collegiality, teacher autonomy and teachers' perception of leadership styles that impact teacher morale within a public charter school setting. Middle School teachers who teach in either setting will be asked to participate in this study.

Procedures: If you agree to participate in this study, you will complete a questionnaire about factors that impact teacher morale within your particular school setting (public charter). You will not be asked to participate in face - to- face interview processes; thus there will not be any audio files obtained to delete.

Risk and Benefits: There is minimal risk to you. Participation in this study may benefit you personally. However, the researcher hopes to gain information about your experience / perception of factors such as teacher evaluation, teacher support, teacher collegiality, teacher autonomy and leadership styles that impact teacher morale within your particular school type setting.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: Participation in this study is voluntary and you may decline or withdraw participation without any consequence to you. Participation will not be shared with district administration, school administration, or any other personnel. Your choice to participate or not is voluntary and separate from your duties and job description in the school district.

Confidentiality: Steps will be taken to protect you; no identifiable information will be collected from interviews and transcripts. All electronic documents will be stored in an encrypted file on a password protected computer. All physical documents will be stored in separate files in a locked cabinet. There are no monetary gains if you choose to participate in this study. You will have the opportunity to obtain an electronic copy of the dissertation upon completion.

Contact Persons: If you have any questions or concerns about the research study or your participation, please contact Bronvia L. Rives at bronvia.rives@students.cau.edu or chair Dr. Barbara Hill at bhill@cau.edu

Copy of Consent Form to Subject: If you are willing to volunteer for this research and complete the questionnaire, please sign below.

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Researcher: _____

Date: _____

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