Relationships Among Job Satisfaction, Professional Efficacy, Student and School Performance, and Teacher Absenteeism

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RELATIONSHIPS AMONG JOB SATISFACTION, PROFESSIONAL EFFICACY, STUDENT AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE, AND TEACHER ABSENTEEISM

by

Laura Beckham Dana

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School of The University of Southern Mississippi in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2014
ABSTRACT

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG JOB SATISFACTION, PROFESSIONAL EFFICACY, STUDENT AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE, AND TEACHER ABSENTEEISM

by Laura Beckham Dana

May 2014

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationships among job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism in Mississippi. This study also addressed methods that can be used by policymakers to better ensure low rates of absenteeism. The study measured the relationship between teachers’ satisfaction with workplace conditions, socioeconomic status of schools, teacher compensation, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and rates of teacher absenteeism. In addition, the study provided participants with the opportunity to suggest methods that can be used by policymakers to better ensure low rates of absenteeism.

The study involved a mixed methods design that yielded quantitative and qualitative data. The study used an original instrument entitled Teacher Job Satisfaction and Professional Efficacy (TJSPE). The instrument utilized 45 questions to gather data about teacher job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism. Teachers of grades 3-5 in the state of Mississippi were asked to participate in the study.

The quantitative portion of the study indicated that there was not a relationship between workplace conditions and rates of teacher absenteeism. There was not a significant relationship between satisfaction with compensation and rates of teacher
absenteeism. And, there was not a significant relationship between professional efficacy and rates of teacher absenteeism. On the other hand, there was a significant moderate inverse relationship between the socioeconomic status of schools and rates of teacher absenteeism. Contrary to much of the extant literature, there was a significant moderate relationship between Mississippi’s school performance metric, QDI, and rates of teacher absenteeism.

Responses to the qualitative portion of the study provided a set of recommendations that administrators and policymakers might implement in order to improve working conditions, satisfaction with compensation, professional efficacy, and teacher attendance. Respondents indicated a need for more time in order to be effective teachers. Respondents indicated a desire for compensation packages to be more attractive. Respondents indicated a desire for greater administrative support in order to gain a better sense of self-efficacy among faculty members. Finally, respondents indicated that administrative support, recognition, and professional development would be beneficial in improving teacher attendance.

The study also included recommendations for further research to assist in decreasing teacher absenteeism. It was the researcher’s goal to add useful insights and policy considerations related that might lessen the occurrence of teacher absenteeism. It is hoped that this study furthers that aim.
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by

Laura Beckham Dana

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
Of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved:

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Leslie Locke

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Dean of Graduate School

May 2014
DEDICATION

The time invested in this study is dedicated to educators devoted to their craft with a passion beyond human understanding. It is my desire to encourage those in the field of education to challenge their students daily in order to make a positive difference in their lives. The challenges we provide our students today will enrich their lives forever.

It is my greatest pleasure to dedicate this to my daughter, Emily. This study would not have commenced without your love, support and sacrifice. You were a constant reminder of my goal. You served as my greatest motivation to complete this milestone.

Finally, I dedicate this study to the memory of my mother. She initiated my dream to continue my education daily. She reminded me over and over during her lifetime that she expected me not only to set goals but to obtain those goals. The life she lived was a determined example of perseverance that inspired me to believe that I could press toward the mark of the completion of this study.
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To my friends and family who held me accountable to continue this study to completion, I give my utmost gratitude. The role you played cannot be defined in words, but you maintained my sanity during many long hours of research. For those of you who listened, read, searched, and reviewed with me, I will forever be grateful.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Teacher absences are a major concern among educational leaders across the United States (Miller, Murnane, & Willet, 2008). Discussions about work-related attendance have caused local school leaders to become increasingly interested in how teacher absences might affect their schools’ accreditation ratings. Researchers have taken on the task of producing numerous studies on the topic, but the problem of teacher absenteeism still exists in educational systems across the United States (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007; Finlayson, 2009; Miller et al., 2008). Kronholz (2013) identified the issue of teacher absenteeism as a concern that school superintendents and building administrators face daily as they attempt to improve the effectiveness of their school districts. Questions about this issue among educational leaders include those that address what administrators are doing to reduce the number of absences in their district (Grimes, 2010; Kronholz, 2013). The purpose of this study was to determine the relationships among job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism in the state of Mississippi. The study also addressed teachers’ perspectives regarding methods that can be used by policymakers to better ensure low rates of absenteeism. The results provided insights to educational leaders about practices through which they might more effectively address the issue of teacher absenteeism in their school system.

Three basic reasons undergird the pressure on school leaders to look at decreasing teacher absenteeism as one way to improve the education provided to public school children. First, the financial cost of finding and paying for substitute teachers, in addition
to paying the teacher, has become substantially high across the nation. According to the extensive work produced by Raegen Miller, The Center for American Progress reported research defining the financial costs associated with teacher absenteeism. Miller et al. (2008) found that the cost of substitutes in addition to the teachers’ salaries for these missed days amounted to about $4 billion each year. Second, recent research completed by two entities indicates that absences have a direct impact on student achievement (Clotfelter et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2008). Finally, predominantly low-income schools often have the greatest need for teachers to improve their practice and are more likely to employ teachers less qualified for the job. In a study of the Cobb County School District, Finlayson (2009) concluded that “students attending school in low socioeconomic areas experience more teacher absences. Research indicates that teachers tend to be absent more often from low-socioeconomic schools, which has a detrimental effect on students who are already struggling” (p. 3). These three basic factors should prompt school districts to target teacher absenteeism in their school improvement plans as they seek to close the gaps between low performing schools and high performing schools.

Researchers at Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) piloted a series of studies in 2005 that suggested several qualities that distinguish high-performing schools from low-performing, high needs schools. The following dynamics were found: teachers in low-performing schools lack a sense of responsibility for student learning when compared to their counterparts from high performing schools. To intensify the concern, according to the U. S. Department of Education (2005), novice teachers often begin their professional career in low-performing, high needs schools. Low performing, high needs schools are often hard to staff. Teachers in these schools are
often provided with minimal resources needed for classroom instruction, making it difficult for teachers to feel successful and thus find satisfaction in their jobs (Auguste, Kiln, & Miller, 2010; Graziano, n.d.; Prince, 2003). The problem is compounded because these low income schools are more heavily influenced by high volumes of teacher absenteeism than schools serving higher income students (Scott, Vaughn, Wolfe, & Wyant, 2007). Students who attend these critical needs schools are more likely to have an absent teacher; these are often the students who face the greatest challenges in learning. Upon gaining experience, these new teachers seek employment in situations that offer less strenuous challenges for their daily work, leaving the low performing, high needs schools to fill the vacant teacher positions (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2006; Graziano, n.d.). The pressure to improve teacher attendance heightens when local districts review the financial costs associated with teacher absenteeism, the impact related to student achievement, and the need to hire and retain highly qualified teachers in low-income settings.

Substantial research has been conducted on the topic of teacher absences in the first decade of the 21st century. The research reveals that an absent teacher affects the progress of an educational system in a number of ways (Kronholz, 2013; Miller, 2012; Polo, 2009; Zuckerbrod, 2008). Polo (2009) found that an absent teacher affects student performance beyond the scope of meeting daily objectives. The classroom teacher implements classroom management skills that accommodate the variety of learners within the classroom. In the teacher’s absence, the classroom management skills are modified, and the instructional delivery of the daily objectives is compromised for learners. Polo (2009) further indicated that elementary students are more distracted by
this behavior of absenteeism than other age groups because they have a developmentally appropriate need for structure. Zuckerbrod (2008) also indicates that the absent teacher affects the community within the school, reducing the time, energy and focus that the school community can designate to their own responsibilities. Due to an absence, the administrators must make arrangements for the substitute to compensate for the responsibilities in the classroom. These responsibilities are often provided by a substitute who is not as qualified to teach the material as the teacher. Other duties fall on other team members within the school community.

Miller et al. (2008) reported a less direct negative effect of teacher absenteeism on student achievement. As schools provide professional development to improve instructional practices in their classrooms, teachers are expected to work as teams during their planning time to strengthen their teaching skills. Teacher absenteeism reduces the amount of time that teams have to plan together and frequently places the bulk of the work load on the teachers who are committed to their profession. The absenteeism not only affects the students of the absent teacher, but also the students of the teachers on his/her team responsible for assuming the duties of the teacher who is absent.

Additional findings revealed through recent research indicates that teacher absenteeism creates a gap in the learning process because teaching becomes fragmented (Heimbigner, 2008; Miller, 2012). This research is motivated by the recognition of the importance of a certified teacher’s presence in the classroom to ensure student development. The quantity and quality of education delivered by the teacher has a direct effect on student achievement (Abdal-Haqq, 1997; Billman, 1994). Throughout the United States, research continues to denote that teacher quality matters. Hanushek, Kain,
O'Brien, & Rivkin (2005) reported that the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement in the educational system is teacher quality. Ballard and Bates (2008) shared the research of Vandevoort, Amrein-Beardsley, and Berliner (2004) in a report that asserts “the quality of a teacher in the classroom is the single most important factor in determining how well a child learns” (p. 560). As administrators are striving to improve schools across the United States, teacher absences provide an excellent place to focus attention for school improvement.

Statement of the Problem

This research focused on relationships among job satisfaction, professional efficacy, school and student performance, and teacher absenteeism. Considerable progress can be made in student achievement in a school year when educational systems function strategically. However, teachers know and often experience the stress of the educational leader’s expectation to ensure that their students gain a year of academic growth during the average school term. Buckley, Schneider, and Shang (2004) revealed that the stress associated with job satisfaction and the lack of professional efficacy increase teacher absenteeism that occurs due to sickness, personal leave, and unapproved absences.

Numerous studies that examine teacher stress have established that some working conditions are a cause of the stress experienced by teachers (Dinham, 1993; Kushman, 1992; Kyriacou, 2001; Punch & Tuetteeman, 1990). This research indicated that working conditions include time, facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership. To the degree that teachers are satisfied, the same body of literature suggests that they will experience reduced stress. Teacher stress often leads to impaired health,
reduced self-confidence and self-esteem, and damaged personal relationships. Teachers who experience stress are likely to be increasingly less effective in areas such as lesson organization, student behavior management, responsiveness to students, and self-confidence (Bakker and Schaufeli, 2000; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). Stressed teachers experience more sick days and are less motivated to teach (Jofres & Haughey, 2001).

This research examined time, facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership to determine teacher satisfaction in the workplace in Mississippi.

Research indicates that teacher commitment is critical to school performance and teacher satisfaction (Fresko, Kfir, & Nasser, 1997; Singh & Billingsley, 1998). Findings suggest that the level of teacher commitment affects student achievement and teacher absenteeism (Fresko et al., 1997; Klushman, Kunter, Trautwein, Ludtke, & Baumert 2008; Reyes & Fuller, 1995; Rosenholtz, 1989). When teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in their classrooms is low, their commitment to their craft shifts or declines. Jofres and Haughey (2001) conclude that teachers’ understanding of their ability to complete a task, professional efficacy, affects their commitment to teach. This study will explore the issue of professional efficacy and its relationship to student achievement and teacher absenteeism.

Ehrenberg, Ehrenberg, Rees, and Ehrenberg (1991) describe the financial concerns associated with teacher absenteeism; such absenteeism is costly to school systems. However, the educational community has failed to adequately address the academic cost associated with teacher absenteeism (Zuckerbrod, 2008). Teacher absenteeism for purposes other than approved designated holidays and approved vacations is detrimental to school districts due to the negative influence on student test
score performance, which in turn determines individual school’s accreditation status. The metric through which this last variable is determined in Mississippi is called the Quality of Distribution Index (QDI).

According to the research of Miller (2008) a student will be taught by someone other than the assigned classroom teacher for the equivalent of almost a year during his/her typical 13 years of grade school. Many substitute teachers lack the educational credentials to perform the job that classroom teachers hold a license to perform. In addition, substitute teachers lack the classroom management skills that develop over the course of a highly qualified teacher’s career. Fox News (2008) alerted the public with a report that focused on the nation’s rates of teacher absenteeism. The report highlighted milestones of a child’s education, equating a school year with the time it takes to learn certain skills like cursive writing and beginning algebra. As the nation becomes increasingly aware of the issues associated with teacher absenteeism, educational administrators are forced to deal with the questions about the relationship among teacher absenteeism, student achievement, and school performance.

Due to teacher absences that can range annually from a few hours to a few months, policymakers have often been frustrated by teacher absenteeism. Miller (2008) identified three reasons to address policies and other factors that influence teacher absences. These reasons include the expense associated with teacher absences, the negative effect on student achievement that accompanies teacher absences, and the disproportionate effect on low-income students associated with teacher absences. Policymakers at the federal, state, and local levels are often restrained in attempts to change the policy because differences in teacher absenteeism data reveal that schools
operating under the same policy can produce very different results (Clotfelter et al., 2007; Ehrenberg et al., 1991; Miller, 2008). These bodies of research suggested that further research is merited to study the absence culture within school districts operating under the same absence policies. Policymakers at the local level in some proactive school districts have experimented with incentive policies to determine the influence on teacher absenteeism (Patterson, 2011). However, the experimentation with bonus schemes, buyback provisions, and co-payment programs have not been evaluated to determine their influence on teacher absenteeism.

This study acknowledged that teacher absenteeism is costly to school systems as a financial expense and to student performance. This study determined the influence of job satisfaction, working conditions, and professional efficacy on teacher absenteeism in the state of Mississippi. The results will be beneficial to school districts as they attempt to improve their student achievement and reserve money to be applied to areas other than substitute teachers and other costs associated with teacher absenteeism.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationships among job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student performance, and teacher absenteeism. The research examined a number of working conditions in the school setting to determine teachers’ perceptions of satisfaction with their working environments. These included (1) satisfaction with workplace conditions in the school, (2) socioeconomic status of schools, (3) satisfaction with teacher compensation, (4) school accreditation level, and (5) number of years of teaching experience. The study also explored teachers’ perceptions of their
self-efficacy. Potential relationships of these constructs with absenteeism were discussed.

In order to explore the variables identified above, the following questions were addressed:

1. To what degree are teachers absent from school for reasons other than approved designated holidays and approved vacations?
2. To what degree are teachers satisfied with the workplace conditions?
3. Is there a relationship between teachers’ satisfaction with workplace conditions and rates of teacher absenteeism?
4. Is there a relationship between the socioeconomic status of schools and rates of teacher absenteeism?
5. Is there a relationship between teachers’ compensation and rates of teacher absenteeism?
6. Is there a relationship between school QDI performance levels and rates of teacher absenteeism?
7. Is there a relationship between perceived professional efficacy and rates of teacher absenteeism?
8. What actions can administrators and policymakers take in order to improve teacher attendance?

The study also explored the following hypotheses, which are directly linked to the research questions above:

H1: There is a relationship between teachers’ satisfaction with workplace conditions and rates of teacher absenteeism.
H₂: There is a relationship between the socioeconomic status of schools and the rates of teacher absenteeism.

H₃: There is a relationship between teacher compensation and rates of teacher absenteeism.

H₄: There is a relationship between school QDI performance levels and rates of teacher absenteeism.

H₅: There is a relationship between teacher perceptions of professional efficacy and rates of teacher absenteeism.

Delimitations

Participants in this study included 3rd through 5th grade teachers in public elementary schools from across the state of Mississippi. Schools in the state of Mississippi were selected by the researcher to gather data from schools with varying socioeconomic and performance levels. The study was limited to an inquiry within a right-to-work state. The study utilized an instrument that allows participants to self-report data about job satisfaction, professional efficacy, and student/school performance. The study did not employ other measures of these variables.

Assumptions

For the purposes of this study it was assumed that the analysis selected and the sample size were sufficient to detect relationships and differences among the study variables. It was assumed that the respondents understood items on the instrument, and that they responded honestly and without fear of reprisal based upon their responses. It was assumed that the Mississippi Department of Education website provided accurate data. Data collected were used to select schools with a range of performance levels.
Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined specifically for this study. Clarification of the definitions of these terms was important to the study.

*Community support and involvement:* for the purpose of this study, community and parent/guardian communication and influence in the school.

*Dissatisfaction:* for the purpose of this study, perception of employees who negatively experience the following hygiene factors in the workplace: company policy, supervision, relationship with boss, work conditions, salary, and relationship with peers (Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson, Richard, & Capwell, 1957).

*Elementary school:* for the purpose of this study, a primary school that includes students in grades Pre-K through 5th grade.

*Facilities:* for the purpose of this study, the physical space in a school that supports teaching and learning, including cleanliness and available space to be productive.

*High-stakes testing:* for the purpose of this study, the act of assigning consequences to standardized test scores.

*Instructional practices and support:* for the purpose of this study, data and supports available to teachers to improve instruction and student learning.

*No Child Left Behind Act of 2001:* a federal act that calls for school districts to close the achievement gap leaving no student behind utilizing high standards and accountability (U. S. Department of Education, 2010).

*Professional development:* for the purpose of this study, availability and quality of learning opportunities for educators to enhance their teaching.
Professional efficacy: the measure of one’s ability to complete tasks and reach goals in a professional setting.

Quality Distribution Index (QDI): one of three components used by the Mississippi Department of Education to determine the accountability/accreditation status of a school. QDI represents an overall measure of student performance on statewide assessments during the previous year. Students in Mississippi take the Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT 2) to measure their achievement. Students do not earn a passing or failing score on the state test. Instead, students are assigned a performance level based on their performance on the test. Performance levels are organized into four proficiency levels: minimal, basic, proficient, or advanced. The QDI is calculated by using the following formula: QDI=(1 X % Basic) + (1 X % Proficient) + (1 X % Advanced). The cut off points in the QDI are 0-99=failing, 100-132=at-risk of failing, 133-165=academic watch, 166-199=succesful, 200-300=high performing (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

Resources: for the purpose of this study, the availability of instructional materials. Instructional materials include technology (e.g. computers, printers, software, and internet access), communication technology (e.g. phones, faxes, email), and office equipment (e.g. copy machines, paper, pens, etc.).

Satisfaction: for the purpose of this study, perception of employees who experience the following motivators in the workplace: achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth (Herzberg et al., 1957).

Student conduct management: for the purpose of this study, policies and practices to address student conduct issues and ensure a safe school environment.
**School leadership:** for the purpose of this study, the cumulative activities of a broad set of leaders in a school. Effective actions of school leaders create trusting, supportive environments and address teacher concerns. School leaders are responsible for developing a vision, creating safe, orderly environments, positively impacting teaching and learning, interacting effectively with external constituencies, and acting with integrity. School leaders are ultimately responsible for the direction of the school.

**Self-efficacy:** for the purpose of this study, the measure of one's own ability to complete tasks and reach goals.

**Socioeconomic status:** for the purpose of this study, the relative standing in society based on income, power, background, and prestige (Woolfolk, 2007). The school’s socioeconomic status is determined by the percentage of students who receive free and reduced meals.

**Student achievement:** for the purpose of this study, the measurement of academic achievement attained by a student during the course of a school year determined by administration of a standardized test.

**Teacher absenteeism:** for the purpose of this study, the rate at which teachers are absent from the classroom, including pre- and post-academic term workdays, for reasons other than designated holidays and approved vacations.

**Teacher compensation:** for the purpose of this study, the wages and other financial benefits earned from a teacher’s labor.

**Teacher leadership:** for the purpose of this study, empowerment of teachers to use their skills and knowledge to improve a situation in which they operate to influence school effectiveness.
Time: for the purpose of this study, the hours available to plan, collaborate and provide instruction during the school day.

Workplace conditions: for the purpose of this study, dimensions of the work environment that include time, facilities and resources, community support and involvement, managing student conduct, teacher leadership, school leadership, professional development, instructional practices and support, and new teacher support.

Justification

Research concerning teacher absenteeism has been ongoing for many years. Researchers have found that teacher absenteeism negatively affects student achievement (Clotfelter et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2008). However, research from the state of Mississippi regarding teacher absenteeism does not exist. In addition, research indicating the causes of teacher absenteeism in the United States is limited. The United States Department of Education (2009) added teacher absenteeism to their data collection process for the first time. The most recent data revealed startling information from the 2009-2010 school year. The rates of teacher absenteeism were measured by calculating the percentage of teachers who missed more than ten days of class during the school year. The national average for teacher absenteeism was 37%. The range from least to greatest was 20.9% to 50.2%. Mississippi’s average was 32.6%. Considering these percentages, school superintendents and building administrators would benefit from additional studies that identify causes that increase the rate of absenteeism in their schools. This research specifically identified antecedents from the workplace that contribute to teacher absenteeism in the state of Mississippi. In addition, this research examined professional
efficacy to determine the relationship between teacher absenteeism and the teachers’ beliefs in their ability to teach elementary students in the state of Mississippi.

The research of Loeb, Darling-Hammond, and Luczak (2005) identified teacher job satisfaction with workplace conditions to be related to the stress that teachers experience professionally. According to Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2005), this stress often leads to teacher absenteeism. Utilizing Herzberg et al.’s (1957) motivation hygiene theory, this study identified factors that induce stress for teachers and increase the rate of teacher absenteeism in Mississippi. The motivation hygiene theory provided insight to job satisfaction as it influences teacher attendance and performance. The constructs to be explored will include time, facilities and resources, community support and involvement, managing student conduct, teacher leadership, school leadership, professional development, instructional practices and support, and new teacher support. Exploring teacher perceptions of job satisfaction as it relates to teacher absenteeism will allow educational leaders a better understanding of the obstacles posed by existing structures in order to reduce the rate of teacher absenteeism.

Bandura’s (1977) theory of professional efficacy also lends insight to teacher absenteeism and job performance. Research from numerous authors have recognized that a teachers’ lack of commitment to his or her task will decrease job performance (Peske & Haycock, 2008; Smith & Rowley, 2005; Wenglinsky, 2002). Commitment is related to the teachers’ belief in their own ability to set and attain goals in their jobs. It will be beneficial to the educational community to examine and better understand professional efficacy as an influence on teacher absenteeism. Exploring professional efficacy as it relates to teacher absenteeism will provide educational leaders with a better
understanding of the causes that impact a school’s and a district’s rate of teacher absenteeism.

The nation’s recent economic downturn has placed funding for education under increased review. Research has identified a financial burden placed on districts as a result of teacher absenteeism (Ehrenberg et al., 1991). The study of Ehrenberg et al. (1991) is important because it revealed that more than half of most educational budgets are comprised of teacher compensation and benefits. Districts could increase funding in other areas of academia if the budgets related to substitutes and teacher absences were reduced.

This research was believed to be both feasible and of interest to the education community because it explores relationships among matters of considerable ongoing interest: teacher job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism. The research explored working conditions and professional efficacy as they relate to teacher job satisfaction in Mississippi. The results provided insights that may enable school districts to improve their overall school performance by reducing teacher absenteeism.

This research further examined the perspectives of elementary school teachers in Mississippi to gain insights about teacher absenteeism. The perspective of elementary school teachers added value to the research because of the potential to identify strategies that will improve teacher attendance. Elementary school teachers from Mississippi responded to questions and provided their perspectives on job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, teacher absenteeism, and policies/practices to reduce absenteeism.
Summary

Decreasing teacher absenteeism could be beneficial to school leaders as one way to improve the education provided to public school children. As administrators are striving to improve schools, the effects of teacher absenteeism on student achievement have infiltrated conversations in school districts across the United States. Absenteeism is an issue that challenges educational systems for several reasons. First, the financial cost of finding and paying for substitute teachers in addition to paying the regular teachers is high. Second, recent research indicates that teacher absences impact student achievement (Clotfelter et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2008). Miller (2008) reported that each year teachers in the United States miss an average of nine to ten of their contractual days for reasons other than designated holidays and approved vacations. In addition, Miller (2008) revealed that during a student’s 13 years of school, he/she will be taught by a substitute teacher for a number of days that equate to approximately one instructional year. A final factor is the fact that some research concludes that teacher absenteeism occurs more often in economically depressed areas (Ingersol & Smith, 2003; Kelly, 2004; Peske & Haycock, 2008). Research discloses that teachers’ absenteeism tends to be more prevalent in low-socioeconomic schools, proving to have a detrimental effect on students who may be already struggling (Ingersol & Smith, 2003; Thomas, 2007). These basic factors should prompt school districts to target teacher absenteeism in their school improvement plans as they seek to close the gaps between low-performing and high-performing students and schools.

The purpose of this research was to gather data identifying teacher perspectives about teacher absenteeism in Mississippi. Additionally, this research determined
relationships among job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism in Mississippi. It was believed that the results will enlighten policymakers and leaders about strategies that aid in school improvement plans.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study examined characteristics of teaching that research suggested influence teacher absenteeism in elementary schools. Throughout this study five independent factors served to determine influences on teacher absenteeism: (1) workplace conditions, (2) socioeconomic status of schools, (3) satisfaction with teachers’ compensation, (4) school performance level, and (5) professional efficacy. The overall hypothesis was that workplace conditions, socioeconomic status of schools, teachers’ compensation, school performance level, and professional efficacy all influence teacher absenteeism. The literature review that follows provides an overview of these independent variables (satisfaction with workplace conditions, socioeconomic status of schools, satisfaction with teacher compensation, school accreditation level and self-efficacy) and the dependent variables. The basic theories of job satisfaction and professional efficacy as they relate to the assumptions about and interactions with teacher absenteeism were explored.

Background

Substantial research from the 20th century identified teacher absenteeism as a negative influence in the advancement of education (Ballou, 1996; Boswell, 1993; Ehrenberg et al., 1991; Madden, Flanigan, & Richardson, 1991; Norton, 1998; Woods, 1990). More contemporary research suggested that problematic levels of teacher absenteeism continued into the 21st century (Clotfelter, et al., 2006; Miller et al., 2008; Podgursky, 2003; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). Researchers have consistently identified the teacher as one of the most important factors in determining student
achievement (Anderson, 2004; Eduviews, 2008; Toch, 2008; Woods & Montagno, 1997). Given the importance attached to the role of teachers, there is cause for concern in the previously-mentioned research from nearly two decades that identifies a relatively consistent pattern regarding teacher absenteeism. On average, public school teachers in the United States are absent 5 to 6% of the days that school is in session (Ballou, 1996; Podgursky, 2003). This means that a substitute teacher will be supervising the classroom for roughly five to six percent of the school year. Simply put, if teachers are absent, then student achievement will be reduced; this will lead to a decrease in school performance.

*Evolution of Sick and Personal Leave Policies*

Capitan and Morris (1980) stated an overall belief that educational leaders assumed that teacher professionalism protected teachers from issues of teacher absenteeism. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics showed an increase in absenteeism by educators that resulted in twice as many days missed by educators in 1967-74 than by employees in the general industry field. Carter (2010) argues that teacher contracts, Family Medical Leave, and professional development have allowed teacher absenteeism to continue to grow.

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) (2000) does not require employers to pay employees for time not worked as a result of sick leave, vacation, or holidays. The Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) (2013) notes that the United States does not guarantee that workers will receive a paid vacation from their employers, even though other developed countries allow paid vacation days ranging from 10-35 days each year. Many employers provide a policy to account for sick leave, vacation days, and holidays but are not required by federal law to provide such. Because teachers are
usually contracted for a set number of student and non-student days each year, school districts typically do not recognize the summer months in the contracted days.

Many state and district policies provide teachers with a substantial number of days each school year to use for sick leave. According to The District Management Council (2004), teachers are allowed approximately two weeks out of the classroom per year due to sick days, personal days, and other excused absences. In their absence the district pays for substitute salaries, recruiting, administrative tasks, and absent teacher salaries.

Mississippi, the location for the current study, outlines in statute the rules and regulations for policy governing sick leave for licensed employees. These rules and regulations maintain that the school board of each school district is required to establish a policy of sick leave for licensed employees that includes the following minimum provisions for sick and emergency leave with pay:

- At the beginning of school year, each licensed employee will be credited with a minimum of seven sick leave allowance days with pay for absences caused by illness or physical disability.

- Any unused portion of sick leave allowance shall be carried over to the next school year for as long as the licensed employee remains employed in the same school district.

- Deduction of pay of licensed employees may not be made because of absence until all sick leave allowance credited to the employee has been used.

- Each licensed employee will be credited with two days of absences to be used for personal reasons during the school year. Restrictions will be placed on the
use of personal leave. These restrictions include the first and last day of a school term or a day before or after a school holiday.

- Beginning in 1992-93, each licensed employee shall be credited with a professional leave allowance to be used for days missed due to meetings authorized by the local school board.
- Upon retirement, each licensed employee shall not be paid for more than thirty days of unused accumulated leave.
- Each school board may adopt rules and regulations, which will reasonably aid to implement the policy of sick and personal leave, including but not limited to, the following general effect: requiring a medical excuse where absence is for four or more consecutive days, or for two consecutive days immediately following a non-school day, providing penalties for a false statement of absence, forfeiture of accumulated or future sick days if the absence results from treatment that could have been scheduled when school is not in session, and increasing sick or personal leave allowances. (Mississippi Code of 1972, SEC. 37-7-307)

School districts in the state of Mississippi have adopted sick and personal leave policies that account for the provisions required by the state, but providing few, if any, incentives to reduce teacher absenteeism. Ehrenberg et al. (1991) asserted that revising these policies could benefit districts, teachers and students. Foster, Lewis, and Onafowara (2003) stated that it is imperative that educational leaders use the research data available to influence the issue of teacher absenteeism in a positive manner.

Research suggests that over time teachers have created a pattern of abuse of sick
and personal leave allowances offered by their school districts. Capitan and Morris (1980) opined that educational leaders assumed that teacher professionalism would keep them from abusing leave policies. Teachers’ misuse of these sick and personal leave allowance demonstrates their perception that these days are their days to use at their own discretion. Over time, studies identify specific cases that detail the extent of teacher absenteeism.

Miller (2008) reported that teachers of grades kindergarten through grade 12 in the United States miss an average of nine to 10 days each year. The absence of a classroom teacher is usually filled by a substitute teacher. Abdal-Haqq (1997) indicated that in most cases, the substitute teacher did not hold the credentials of a certified teacher. Kronholtz (2013) reported that most school districts in the U. S. only require the equivalent of a high school diploma to serve the school as a substitute teacher.

**Policy, Reform, and Teacher Absenteeism**

“You can revise curriculum, toughen graduation requirements, and sing the song of excellence until you’re hoarse: If teachers fail to show up for work, all your good intentions will wither on the boardroom floor” (Freeman, & Grant, 1987, p. 31). The propensity of teachers to miss school is influenced by reform and policies initiatives. While these reforms and policy initiatives are intended to motivate teachers to higher levels of competency and performance, they may also have unintended consequences of increasing stress and absenteeism.

In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) issued a decisive report, *A Nation at Risk*, citing specific evidence that American educators had neglected their responsibilities. The report caught the attention of leaders at the local,
state, and federal levels. Its purpose, in part, was to remind prominent leaders that the nation’s founders promised a fair chance at education regardless of class or economic status. Specific indicators that the nation was not delivering on the promises were described in the report. This report served as a milestone in alerting the nation that the educational foundation of the nation, in the opinion of the authors, had been eroded by the acceptance of mediocrity. At the release of this report, other nations had already begun to surpass educational attainments in the United States. Rogers and Vagas (2009) explained that the erosion of the educational system of the United States can be tied, in part, to teacher absenteeism. When the teacher is absent, student learning is reduced.

Nearly thirty years following the 1983 release of *A Nation at Risk*, many assert that little gain has been made in recovering the unchallenged educational preeminence of America. The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) provide national information that strengthens this assertion. Finlayson (2009) reported that in 1983 the SAT national average score in reading was 503 and in math was 494. In 2008, the SAT national average score in reading was 502 and in math was 515.

The passage of the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) of 1965 signaled the intent of the Johnson administration and Congress to significantly reform public education. Since that time, seven reauthorizations of ESEA have refocused national attention on evolving educational priorities, including the Improving America’s Schools Act (IASA) of 1994 reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 and the Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994. These acts sanctioned setting high achievement goals for students. In addition, provision was made for schools and communities to receive resources to help ensure that students would be successful.
Increasing the expectations for students, by extension, increased the expectations for teachers to deliver a higher quality of instruction.

In 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. NCLB was also a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. In addition to the allocation of federal funding for elementary and secondary school children, NCLB required dramatic changes to accountability systems for schools. NCLB also set as goals more flexibility for communities and individual states, a greater degree of accountability for schools to get results, and the use of proven educational methods by teachers. This legislation required schools to submit annual reports and to administer standardized tests to students in order to measure growth (Boswell, 1993; ESEA, 1965; No Child Left Behind [NCLB] Act of 2001, 2002; Rivken et al., 2005). Measuring and reporting the growth of students engaged teachers in the accountability for school performance. According to Miller, Hess, and Brown (2012), NCLB mandated that all students would be functioning on grade level by 2014 and brought great controversy into the educational world as local and state leaders made attempts to meet that challenge. School districts across the nation have responded to this act in a variety of ways. One pertinent way to meet the requirement in NCLB was to review policies, procedures, and practices that hinder student achievement. Policies, procedures, and practices related to teacher attendance is one area that policymakers should review in order to improve student achievement.

In 2010, President Obama released A Blueprint for Reform of Elementary and Secondary Educational Policies; the elements of these educational priorities were spelled out in significant detail in the American Recovery and Reinvestment (AARA) Act of
2009. The Obama administration intended that these reforms be addressed in an overdue reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. As of this writing, this reauthorization has not occurred. The Obama administration proposed four educational priorities, including (1) teacher and administrator effectiveness; (2) parental involvement; (3) implementation of college and career ready standards; and (4) improvement of student and school performance based on end of the year assessments. While these priorities have not been codified in a new ESEA reauthorization, they became criteria for successful Race to the Top grant proposals and for approval of state requests to waive provisions of NCLB. The goal put heightened attention on student achievement, once again increasing the expectations for teachers.

Over two decades ago, Chubb and Moe (1990) predicted that major educational reforms were destined to fail because the legislation intended to drive such reform only treated the symptoms of the problems rather than the root of the problems. In order to make effective changes, they argued, profound reform that comprehensively addresses the obstacles posed by the existing structures must take place. Auguste et al. (2010) reminded educators that of all of the controllable factors in an educational system, the most important by far is the effectiveness of the classroom teacher. Research suggests that a major obstacle in closing the achievement gap is teacher absenteeism. Educational leaders should, therefore, identify and implement reform that will influence a decline in teacher absenteeism. A focus on the causes of teacher absenteeism will produce a greater understanding of teacher absenteeism and help the educational leaders make effective changes in policy that will likely aid in closing the achievement gap.
NCLB placed greater accountability on teachers to achieve the required outcome that all children would be achieving on grade level by the 2014 school year. School districts responded to the pressure by adopting new curricula, analyzing data from standardized test scores, and holding teachers accountable for instruction conducive to meeting this standard. However, these changes did not improve the overall influence of a teachers’ absence on the student outcomes, as observed by Kallio (2006), who asserted that teacher absenteeism remains one of the greatest obstacles facing educational systems. These changes, on the other hand, increased the level of stress that influenced teachers’ job satisfaction and teacher absenteeism (Clay, 2007).

Teachers respond to such stress in several ways. Teachers who possess a high level of self-efficacy embrace the challenges, set goals, and evaluate their actions to achieve the desired outcome of greater school performance regardless of the workplace conditions, socioeconomic status, QDI, and satisfaction with compensation (Cooper-Twamley, 2009; Pajares, 1996). Teachers who possess a low level of self-efficacy are unable to cope with the challenges to make the necessary changes to improve school performance often resulting in burnout (Bandura, 1997; Henson, Kogan, Vacha-Haase, 2001). Cooper-Twamley (2009) identified teacher absenteeism as the leading response to burnout. Teacher absenteeism is one of the most detrimental ways that teachers respond to stress.

**Costs of Teacher Absenteeism**

Every business incurs costs as a result of absent workers; however, Scott et al. (2007) reported that teachers have relatively high rates of absenteeism in comparison to other employment sectors. The general working population absenteeism rates for 2005
were 2.3% in the public sector and 1.7% in the private sector (Bradley, Green, & Leeves, 2007). Teacher absenteeism does not compare favorably with absenteeism in other employment sector statistics. According to teacher data collected between the 1994-95 and 2002-03 school years in North Carolina, absenteeism rate for teachers was as high as 3.9% (Barmby, Ercolani, & Treble, 2002).

One of the most important reasons for addressing teacher absenteeism deals with the financial burden it places on the school system. Past studies support this conclusion. Ehrenberg et al. (1991) reported in a study conducted in Indiana involving three school districts that 1% of their total operating budget was consumed by the cost of hiring substitute teachers. This amount was large enough for the district to begin research to find better ways to funnel their funds into student achievement instead of the frivolous spending on substitute teachers that showed no returns on the financial investment. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) (2000) reported the total cost nationwide of teacher absenteeism to be $25.2 billion dollars. Because most district policies still allow teachers to miss a substantial number of days each school year and because inflation has increased, that amount was expected to increase (Chatterji & Tilley, 2002).

During the economic recession, districts have looked for more effective ways to use the resources that are available to them. Finlayson (2009) studied the Cobb County School District in Georgia and discovered that approximately $8.5 million was spent to cover the costly 14 days missed by the average teacher during the 2008-2009 school year. The district is a suburban school district serving 106,000 students with 6,800 teachers in 114 school buildings (Allen, 1983; Chaudhury, Hammer, Kremer, Muralidharan, &
Rogers, 2006). One estimate of the cost of substitutes due to excessive teacher absences was on the order of 0.5% of total per pupil expenditures (Roza, 2007).

Miller (2008) retrieved data from the NCES to report the immense costs associated with teacher absenteeism. The report noted that “5.3 percent of teachers absent on a given day, stipends for substitute teachers and associated administrative costs amount to $4 billion, annually” (p. 1) which is an expensive cost for school systems. Recent evidence suggests that the costs associated with teacher absenteeism are increasing, yet the causes and consequences of teacher absenteeism are not well understood. The Office for Civil Rights in the U. S. added teacher absenteeism to its Civil Rights Data Collection Survey (2009), prompting policymakers to focus more attention on teacher absenteeism. Using data from the most recent Civil Rights Data Collection Survey, Kronholz (2013) reported that 36% of the nation’s teachers missed more than ten days each year.

The recent economic implosion has prompted national leaders to search for ways to decrease spending. One area that can ill afford the massive cuts is education. Greenspan (2001) noted that the future of American education should not be compromised by trimming dollars from educational systems. In such circumstances, policymakers and practitioners are increasingly compelled to ensure that education funds are spent wisely. Susan Black (2009) asserted that many school boards are scrutinizing the educational dilemmas that result from teacher absences. Such policymakers have become concerned over the costly effect of teacher absences not only from an academic standpoint but a financial standpoint as well.
Scott et al. (2007) evaluated 2,156 schools in North Carolina in the 2005-2006 school year, collecting school level data involving teacher absenteeism. The evaluation found that over 54 centuries of instructional time were lost as a result of teacher absenteeism during the 2006 fiscal school year in North Carolina. In Pitt County, a cost in the amount of $12,000 was attributed to teacher absenteeism on an average school day; this resulted in over $2,000,000 in lost productivity during the 2006 school year. The study showed that 89% of the absences were accounted for through sick leave.

In an effort to reduce teacher absenteeism, many school districts are implementing incentives to encourage teacher commitment to contracted days. Miller (2008), in an executive report about the nation’s $4 billion dollar cost for teacher absenteeism, asserted that “the right combination of policies could free-up part of this $4 billion to meet other needs while reducing students’ exposure to teacher absence” (p. 3). According to Miller (2008), teachers in Aldine, Texas receive incentives in the form of a bonus each year for excellent attendance. This research has prompted other districts to engage in conversations about initiatives that would decrease teacher absenteeism and direct funds back into direct spending to boost academic progress.

The numerous studies that have reported the effect of teacher absenteeism on student achievement indicate that districts need to revise their attendance policies, procedures, and the enforcement of those procedures (Clotfelter et al., 2006; Cohen, & Hill, 2000; Miller et al., 2008; Smith, & Lambert; 2008). This body of research has directed national attention to the issues related to teacher absenteeism in the nation. Miller (2012), in a report to the Center for National Progress, encouraged policymakers at
the state level to take action against excessive teacher absenteeism by encouraging incentive plans.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation for this study stemmed from previous research by Miller (2008) that indicated that each school year teachers in the United States miss an average of 9-10 of their contractual days. Students, parents, teachers, administrators and the community are aware that teacher absenteeism affects the learning community. However, the factors that play a role in reducing teacher absenteeism have not been adequately addressed. Two prominent theories were used to frame the current research. The first was developed by Frederick Herzberg and addressed employee satisfaction in the workplace. The second was developed by Albert Bandura and considered employees’ belief in their professional capabilities. Workplace satisfaction and professional efficacy were important theories to consider in developing the framework for this study concerning teacher absenteeism.

Herzberg (1976) is credited with the introduction of motivation-hygiene theory to the body of theoretical knowledge that surrounds workplace satisfaction. The theoretical framework focuses on job satisfaction as it relates to teacher absenteeism because prior studies have indicated that a teacher’s absence affects multiple aspects of a school from student achievement to overall school performance to individual teacher productivity. Some assert that absenteeism is influenced by the teacher’s level of job satisfaction (Alshallah, 2004; Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman; 1993; Syptak, Marsland, & Ulmer, 1999). “Satisfied employees tend to be more productive, creative and committed to their employers…few districts have made job satisfaction a top priority, perhaps because they
have failed to understand the significant opportunity that lies in front of them” (Alshallah, 2004, p. 47). Teachers who are satisfied in their jobs have greater focus toward setting and achieving goals and are, therefore, more likely to create situations for their students to perform successfully. Herzberg’s motivation-hygiene theory suggests that the context and the content of the job determine a teacher’s satisfaction and motivation.

Herzberg’s theory, also known as the two-factor theory, identifies two dimensions of job satisfaction: motivation and hygiene. The motivator factor addresses issues of achievement, recognition, responsibility and advancement. When such elements are enhanced, motivation increases. The hygiene factor, on the other hand, involves policy, supervision, compensation, and other elements of working conditions. The hygiene factor does not play a role in motivating employees; however, it does minimize the opportunity for dissatisfaction. Thus, the motivation-hygiene theory asserts that motivators encourage job satisfaction and production. In order to apply the theory, it must be noted that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not treated as opposites in this theory. The theory explains the two dimensions by addressing the job task from the job environment. Hygiene and motivation factors must be present simultaneously in order for employees to experience job satisfaction. Syptak et al. (1999) suggested that job satisfaction cannot be achieved through motivators until the issues in the hygiene dimension have been addressed.

Herzberg’s theory acknowledges the dual nature of its approaches to the sources of job satisfaction that lead to job motivation. His research led to the proposal of several key findings: (a) people are made dissatisfied by a bad environment, but they are seldom made satisfied by a good environment; (b) the prevention of dissatisfaction is just as
important as encouragement of motivator satisfaction; (c) hygiene factors operate independently of motivation factors—one can be highly motivated in his/her work and be dissatisfied with his work environment; (d) all hygiene actors are equally important, although their frequency of occurrence differs considerably; (e) hygiene improvements have short-term effects—any improvements result in a short-term removal of, or prevention of, dissatisfaction; (f) hygiene needs are cyclical in nature and come back to a starting point—“this leads to the what have you done for me lately?” syndrome; and (g) hygiene needs do not have one exact answer to meet every need (Herzberg et al., 1993).

The motivation-hygiene theory provided a useful framework for this study because teachers are responsible for student outcomes, which also impact school performance. When a teacher is satisfied with school policies, supervision, compensation, and working conditions including time, resources and facilities, teacher leadership, and school leadership, he/she will be more likely to embrace the needs of school improvement, and when the teacher is motivated by achievement, recognition, responsibility and advancement, he/she will be more likely to provide productive, creative, and committed service to meet the needs of students. Satisfied and motivated teachers perform with greater productivity and commitment to their jobs. Teachers who are dissatisfied tend to demonstrate unproductive behaviors in their work settings and/or look for new jobs in places that offer more satisfying working conditions. Teacher absenteeism is arguably one of the negative effects of job dissatisfaction.

The theoretical framework also addressed self-efficacy and the work of Albert Bandura (1977), who advanced the theory that one must believe he/she has the capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective
situations. As such actions enable individuals to achieve mastery of their goals, they strengthen self-efficacy. When individuals fail to meet their goals, their self-efficacy is weakened. When teachers are not meeting their goals and their sense of self-efficacy is weakened, the lack of confidence in their job performance may increase the number of absences.

The work of Bandura (1977) identified self-efficacy as a contributor to the different ways that people think, feel, and act. According to his research, a low sense of self-efficacy is associated with depression, anxiety, and helplessness. Persons who exhibit low self-efficacy also exhibit low self-esteem. They often have a blurred insight about their accomplishments, personal growth, and development. On the other hand, persons who exhibit competence in their jobs engage in quality performance and effective decision making processes and have a heightened sense of their efficacy. In addition, those who exhibit high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to choose to perform more challenging tasks (Bandura, 1997; Chan, 2004; Edwards, Green, & Lyons, 2002; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). In the educational setting, professional efficacy has been determined to enhance the success of teachers because teachers with high levels of professional efficacy continuously monitor and adjust their actions in order to advance students academically. Teachers who endure a low level of professional self-efficacy lack the ambition to set goals and pursue those goals persistently (Burke, Greenglass, & Schwazer, 1996; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgoni, & Steca, 2003; Schwarzer, Schmitz, & Tang, 2000; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). In addition, Abraham (2000) reported that teachers who have a high level of self-efficacy tend to be more comfortable in situations with novel tasks, limited supervision, and greater self-direction.
Conversely, teachers who have a low level of self-efficacy were more satisfied in positions where they were given specific instructions to follow regarding their job.

Effective teachers believe that their teaching can change student learning outcomes and their actions demonstrate that belief (Gibbs, 2002; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Henson et al., 2001). Levels of self-efficacy, the belief teachers have about their ability to teach, impact, at least in part, teacher effectiveness (Fives, 2003; Gibbs, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Bandura (1995) reported that “the task of creating environments conducive to learning rests heavily on the talents and self-efficacy of teachers” (p. 19). Pajares (1992) asserted that teachers’ beliefs about their ability to change the outcomes of student learning is related to the decisions and practices that they choose to incorporate in their classroom.

The Department of Education and Training (2005), in a study in Victoria, Australia, found that improving teacher efficacy in a school has quadrupled their impact on student performance. Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) conducted studies that repeatedly showed the importance of professional efficacy and its association with academic outcomes. These outcomes included the teachers’ ability to set goals, their openness to teach new strategies, their competence, persistence, resilience, commitment and enthusiasm for classroom organization and management.

Bandura’s (1994) theory of self-efficacy identified self-inspiration as an attribute of self-efficacy. Onafowara (2005) found that highly efficacious teachers were self-motivated to create learning environments that would meet the needs of even their most challenging students. When teachers work as teams and consider themselves capable of promoting academic performance, they provide their schools with a positive environment
that prompts others to attain goals and support school performance, regardless of the socioeconomic status of the school (Bandura, 1994).

This research examined a number of working conditions in the school setting to determine teachers’ perceptions of and satisfaction with their working environments. These included (a) satisfaction with workplace conditions in the school, (b) socioeconomic status of schools, (c) teacher compensation, (d) school accreditation level, and (e) number of years of teaching experience. The study also explored teachers’ perceptions of their professional efficacy. Potential relationships of these constructs with absenteeism were assessed.

Pertinent Research and Professional Perspectives

The following sections reintroduce the variables that were central to this study of teacher absenteeism. The review of external literature that was pertinent to these variables and the relationships among them is provided. The focus of this review was upon the findings of other researchers and the perspectives of experts on these topics. The dependent variable for the five research hypotheses was rate of teacher absenteeism. The five independent variables were (a) workplace conditions, (b) socioeconomic status of schools, (c) teachers’ compensation, (d) school performance level, and (e) professional efficacy. This section of the literature review provides an overview of these dependent and independent variables. Exploration of the basic theories of job satisfaction and professional efficacy as they related to the assumptions about and interactions with teacher absenteeism follows.
Teacher Absenteeism and Student Achievement

During his/her K-12 education, the typical public school student will be taught by someone other than his/her regular classroom teacher for an average number of days that equates to roughly one full school year (Miller, 2008). Most teachers’ contracts permit the majority of these absences, allowing anywhere from seven to ten sick and personal days each year. Researchers have noted that teacher absenteeism and student achievement vary greatly from district to district and from school to school within a district (Dwyer, 2007; Womble, 2008). Since the average substitute teacher does not obtain the proper credentials to instruct the class, these days are likely to result in lost learning for students (Miller, 2012).

Clotfelter et al. (2007) produced a study using teacher level data from schools in North Carolina. They found that teacher absences affect student achievement. Specific findings showed that for every additional sick day missed by a teacher, math scores decreased by 0.17% of a standard deviation and reading scores decreased by 0.09% of a standard deviation. These researchers asserted that, while the impact of each absence is small, it is statistically significant. As days missed accumulate over a year, the negative impact on student achievement increases. These findings are corroborated by a study completed by Miller et al. (2008), who determined that teacher absences in excess of 10 days will reduce student achievement regardless of the grade level. The findings identified a decrease in student achievement of at least 1% of a standard deviation. The 1% of a standard deviation may seem insignificant; however, for each additional day a teacher misses school, student achievement is affected by an additional reduction of 1% of a standard deviation, regardless of the grade level (Miller, 2008).
The average teacher instructs 25 students in his/her classroom. Considering data like those cited in the aforementioned studies, the results are detrimental when it comes to school performance (Finalyson, 2009; Jasmin, 2008; Miller et al. 2008; Woods, 1990). Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd (2009) cited that teachers are a tremendously important factor in educating students; it follows that the absent teacher will affect student achievement and school performance. Older studies correspond with these findings that teacher absenteeism has a negative effect on student outcomes (Ballou, 1996; Madden et al., 1991; Pitkoff, 1993; Woods & Montagno, 1997). Diminished individual student outcomes result in diminished overall school performance. This effect can be directly tied, in part, to teacher absenteeism.

School Performance

State and federal systems of school evaluation have, for a number of years, focused on the school as the unit of accountability. School performance is the cumulative metric for individual student achievement, and the previous sub-section outlines the impact of teacher attendance on student performance. It was meaningful and pertinent to the purpose of this study, therefore, to assess the impact of teacher absenteeism upon school performance. For the purposes of this study, school performance was determined by the schools’ most recent accountability rating according to the accreditation metric, the Quality Distribution Index (QDI) of the previous school year. In the state of Mississippi, this rating is currently determined by the QDI assigned to each student after performance on the Mississippi Curriculum Test, 2nd Edition (MCT 2). Students’ proficiency levels range from 0-300, from weakest to strongest, and are as follows: basic, minimal, proficient, and advanced. The school’s overall performance is based on the
average of all students taking the MCT 2. Schools are then labeled according to the following cut points from the average QDI: 0-99, failing, 100-132, at-risk, 133-165, academic watch, 166-199, successful, and 200-300 high performing (Mississippi Department of Education, 2010).

Teachers of students in schools that are labeled in the academic watch and at-risk categories experience a different workload than teachers in high performing schools. Teachers in these low performing schools are not able to make school improvements by only completing the minimum requirements. Teachers in such schools are obligated to provide students with more time to practice skills in order to achieve mastery, establish supportive learning environments, and find ways to improve parental involvement (Horng, 2005; Knapp & Shields, 1990). Polo (2009) maintains that the stress that accompanies efforts to address these challenges often result in teachers being absent more often than their counterparts in higher performing schools.

Finlayson (2009) suggests that teacher absenteeism has a detrimental affect not only on student performance, but school performance as well. When Fiske (2008) revisited the information from A Nation at Risk 25 years later, he concluded that the education of America’s students still did not surpass the education obtained by previous generations. Fiske claimed the purpose of the original document was to put education on the national political agenda, where it has remained. Prominent researchers indicate that even though education has been placed on the political agendas of recent presidents, American students have not made adequate progress in education (Fiske, 2008; Miller, 2012; Woods & Montagno, 1997).
In reviewing these studies, the researcher concluded that school performance may be an independent variable that impacts teacher absenteeism. In Mississippi, the location of this study, school performance is determined by the cumulative results of students’ achievement on state assessments. Since teacher absenteeism affects student achievement, the study included a hypothesis aligning school performance with teacher absenteeism.

*Teacher Discretion over Teacher Absenteeism*

Numerous studies detailing the negative effects of teacher absenteeism on student performance have brought to attention the need to address the causes associated with missed days (Abdal-Haqq, 1997; Bayard, 2003; Black, 2009; Bradley et al., 2007; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2009; Miller, Murnane, & Willet, 2007; Miller, 2008; Miller et al., 2008). Research identifies workplace stress, lack of professional efficacy, maternity leave, and illness contracted from students to be the top causes of teacher absenteeism (Clotfelter et al., 2009; Norton, 1998; Podgursky, 2003). Additional research suggests that teachers’ absences are discretionary, often occurring on Mondays and Fridays, and lead to a pattern consistent with the teachers’ desires to have a longer block of leisure time off (Bundren, 1974; Clotfelter et al., 2007; Duflo & Hanna, 2006; Malick, 1997; Pennsylvania School Boards Association, 1978; Podgursky, 2003; Rhodes & Steers, 1990).

Additional research indicated that this pattern of missing Mondays and/or Fridays is associated with teacher stress (Miller et al., 2007; Podgursky, 2003) and the lack of professional efficacy (Caprara et al., 2003; Norton, 1998; Rinehart, & Short, 1994). Satisfaction associated with a teacher’s job is influenced by the stress of the workplace
Teachers claim that their stress comes from the mental and physical exhaustion associated with educating and maintaining a safe environment for 20-30 students every day (Miller, 2008; Podgursky, 2003). Teachers are expected to write effective lesson plans, be a part of a team, teach a common curriculum, and analyze test data to determine the effects of their teaching. In addition, teachers must use the data to set goals to remediate students who have not mastered a skill and enrich students who have mastered a skill. Teachers also undergo strenuous observations and evaluations from administrators. Caprara et al. (2003) claim that teachers who lack the professional efficacy to function under these pressures are more likely to miss days of school. Teachers who have a high level of professional efficacy identify daily tasks and create strategies in order to be successful (Cooper-Twamley, 2009).

Approximately three fourths of the educators in the United States are female (Miller, 2008). In addition to their job as teachers, they are usually the primary caretakers in their families (Bayard, 2003; Miller, 2008; Podgursky, 2003). When their children are sick, they must stay home to nurture them. In addition, most teachers are either at the age of taking maternity leave or caring for an aging parent. Days missed in order to address these life events rarely fall within the approved school vacation days or holidays; rather, they are addressed through sick and personal leave.

Abdal-Haqq (1997) shared that regardless of the cause, when substitutes show up, it’s not just the teachers who get a day off. Prominent researchers reported that most students will have a substitute to replace their classroom teacher 5-10% of the time that they attend elementary and secondary schools (Billman, 1994; Bowers, 2001; Henderson, Protheroe, & Porch, 2002). Student outcomes are under constant review in educational
systems across the United States. The rigor of teaching within the context of state and federal accountability systems increases the stress level associated with a teacher’s job. Increased stress influences the job satisfaction of teachers.

In any career, job satisfaction is connected to an individual’s work situation. Rinehart and Short (1994) defined job satisfaction as the overall feeling about one’s job and can be compared to specific outcomes, such as productivity. A teacher’s satisfaction with his/her profession influences the quality and stability of his/her teaching. Naylor (2001) argued that teachers who are not satisfied in their profession will be less motivated to teach at their optimal performance level.

Teacher job satisfaction is affected by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Most teachers choose education as their career because of intrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors might include the enjoyment of teaching a new skill to someone and working with young people. Researchers noted that while intrinsic motivators may entice teachers into the profession, extrinsic factors may affect their satisfaction in the job. Extrinsic factors that influence job satisfaction include salary, perceived support from educational leadership, and availability of resources (Choy, 1993; Druss, Schlesinger, & Allen, 2001). The next sections address such workplace variables.

Job Satisfaction and Workplace Conditions

The impact of job satisfaction on attendance has received some attention in recent literature. Neubert (2004) stated that an employee who is satisfied is more likely to avoid absences than employees that are dissatisfied with their current position. Some researchers and practitioners subscribe to the belief that improving working conditions will positively impact teacher attendance (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, &
Xanthopoulou, 2007; Johnson, 2006). Pitkoff (1993) found that job satisfaction, based on strong and supportive principal leadership, good working conditions, high levels of staff collegiality, high levels of teacher influence on school decisions, and high levels of teacher control over curriculum and instruction are associated with better teacher attendance. McElroy (2005) ranked factors that influence job satisfaction using a report from the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality. Of those factors ranked by the author, the most influential included time, facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership.

In addition, numerous research studies indicate that some school demographic variables are associated with teacher absences. Elementary schools, larger schools, and high-poverty schools experience higher teacher absence rates than their upper-grade, smaller, and more affluent counterparts (Hanushek, Kain & Rivkin, 2004; Klusmann et al., 2008; Loeb et al., 2005). Hanushek et al. (2004) indicated that workplace conditions serve as a good predictor of teacher absenteeism. These researchers suggest that teachers are more likely to come to school if they perceive their school as a satisfying place to work. Beaugez (2012) noted that administrative responsibility includes the task of being aware of working conditions that may be detrimental to the school environment. Billingsley (2004) suggests that administrators focus on creating work environments that attract and keep teachers in their schools. Creating working environments that accommodate the needs of teachers and students provide for a more satisfactory experience than environments that do not accommodate for the teacher and student needs (Alshallah, 2004). Working in a dilapidated environment could lead to dissatisfaction of a teacher with his/her workplace. Based on previous studies, this research identifies four
dimensions of workplace conditions that contribute to teacher job satisfaction. These variables include time, facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership. These variables were related to teacher absenteeism to determine if a relationship exists between job satisfaction and teacher absenteeism.

*Job satisfaction and time.* Workplace conditions include the time teachers have to adequately prepare, the facilities and resources available to the teacher, the level of teacher empowerment offered by school leadership, and school leadership. Brendle-Corum (2010) identified workplace conditions as having a direct impact on the teachers’ ability to be successful. Poor working conditions can lead to a lack of satisfaction with any career, but with a teacher poor working conditions may also negatively influence student outcomes as well as school performance.

Elementary teachers in grade levels pre-K through grade 6 typically have less than one hour designated for planning and preparation for teaching numerous subjects and classes. Hirsch (2005) reported from a study in North Carolina that most teachers use more than five hours per week outside of school to complete lesson plans and paper work required by their school. Johnson (2006) suggested that stressful working conditions evolve as a result of the lack of time to adequately plan lessons, teach, and assess their students.

Numerous studies have evaluated the issue of time as it relates to teacher job satisfaction (Abdullah, Uli, & Parasuraman, 2009; Bishay, 1996; Giacometti, 2005). These studies determined time as a factor that is important to teachers’ satisfaction in their professional careers. Results from NCWCS identify factors that impact the relationship between time and teacher absenteeism to include time to collaborate with
colleagues, minimal interruptions while teaching, sufficient instructional time to meet students’ needs, limited duties that interfere with educating students, and reasonable class sizes to optimize instruction.

*Job satisfaction and facilities and resources.* Teachers’ perceptions of their workplace conditions are influenced by the resources available to effectively do their jobs. A lack of resources available to teachers can contribute to workplace stress. Johnson (2006) indicated that teachers typically support a standards-based-curricula but often lack the resources necessary to effectively teach such curricula. Berry, Smylie, and Fuller (2008) reported that teachers cite a lack of resources to effectively perform their job as one of the top reasons for leaving the educational field. Since the fall in the national economy in 2008, school systems have been forced to make budget cuts. Resources are often the first item removed from school budgets.

Data from a North Carolina survey identified improving facilities and resources as one way to improve teacher job satisfaction (Ladd, 2009). Facilities and resources are important factors that help determine teacher satisfaction. Such resources include sufficient access to appropriate instructional materials; sufficient access to instructional technology, including computers, printers, software, and internet access; sufficient access to office equipment and supplies such as copy machines, paper, pens, etc.; and access to reliable communication technology, including phones, faxes, and email. Factors that involve facilities include a clean and well maintained building, adequate space to work productively. The physical environment of classrooms in the school supports teaching and learning.
Job satisfaction and teacher leadership. Edwards et al. (2002) perceived teacher leadership to refer to the empowerment of teachers to use their skills and knowledge to improve a situation in which they operate. Rinehart and Short (1994) studied teacher leadership in relationship to job satisfaction and found that when teachers have a sense of control over the programs and curricula that they teach, they tend to be more satisfied in their jobs. Sweetland and Hoy (2000) identified teacher leadership as a critical factor that influences school effectiveness. Bogler and Somech (2004) examined subscales of teacher leadership to best predict outcomes of teacher satisfaction. Teacher leadership involves the following: (a) teachers are trusted to make sound decisions about educational issues, (b) teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues, (c) the faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems, and (d) teachers are effective leaders in this school.

Marvel, Lyter, Peltola, Strizek & Morton (2007) reported that teachers gain greater satisfaction from their work when they are allowed to contribute to decisions relating to scheduling, selection of materials, and professional development. Hirsch and Emerick (2007) shared that “teachers with positive perceptions about their working conditions are much more likely to stay at their current school than educators who are more negative about their conditions of work, particularly in the areas of leadership and empowerment” (p. 14).

Job satisfaction and school leadership. Marvel et al. (2007) identified school leadership as the most crucial element in determining teacher satisfaction in the workplace. Hirsch and Emerick (2007) determined that trust between administrators and staff is strongly correlated with teacher job satisfaction. Factors of trust included clear
communication of expectations, shared vision, consistent support from school leaders, and a process for group problem solving.

Hoy and Sweetland (2000) discovered that teachers who experience poor workplace conditions will withdraw through chronic absences or withdraw psychologically by becoming indifferent, passive or apathetic. Administrators are faced with the daunting task of not only motivating teachers to teach effectively but to show up for work to teach. Several studies have been conducted to examine the effectiveness of school leadership (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ingersol & Smith, 2003). School leadership tends to be more effective when teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them, teachers feel supported by leadership, teachers feel they are held to high professional standards, teacher evaluation is assessed objectively, and teachers are recognized for their accomplishments.

The National Center for Educational Statistics conducted the Schools and Staffing Survey, 2003-04, matching administrators and teachers in elementary schools to determine the effect of school leadership on teacher job satisfaction. Pogodziski, Young, Frank, and Bleman (2012) shared findings from the survey results that indicated that the relationship between administrators and teachers affects the job satisfaction of both parties. The overall finding was that administrators’ relationships affected all aspects of the school culture.

Berry et al. (2008) reported that school leaders have an influence on teacher job satisfaction. Administrators influence the conditions of the school climate in which the teacher performs instruction. These researchers identified school leadership as the most influential factor in determining job satisfaction.
Teacher Compensation and Teacher Absenteeism

Salary and benefits make up the compensation package that can influence teacher job satisfaction. In order to attract and retain high quality teachers, policymakers are searching for ways to improve teacher compensation packages. Teacher compensation has historically been based on a state salary schedule.

Goldhaber (2009) of the Center for American Progress, identified factors that researchers believe are important in determining teacher job satisfaction. An obvious factor was the teachers' perceptions of being adequately compensated for the jobs they perform. The next factor was benefits provided by the district.

In addition to these factors, research showed that pay for performance influences teacher satisfaction (Johnson & Papay, 2009). Beaugez (2012) indicated that other professionals, such as doctors and lawyers, have a more impressive compensation package in comparison to teachers. These contrasts reflect poorly on the compensation enticements for entering the educational profession. Kopkowski (2008) explained that the perception of being inadequately compensated grows substantially when educators encounter numerous obstacles in their careers. These obstacles included lack of administrative support, and poor working conditions.

Socioeconomic Status

The literature suggests that the socioeconomic status of students attending a school may impact a teacher’s propensity to be absent. A school’s socioeconomic status is frequently operationalized as the proportion of students eligible to receive free and reduced-priced meals at school. NCLB and other federal policies identify an achievement gap, the disparity in academic performance between low-performing
students and high performing students, among schools of low socioeconomic status and high socioeconomic status. The achievement gap is evident in grades, standardized test scores, graduation rates, and other measures of success in education. The term is most often used to describe the lower performance of students from families with low income compared to students from families with high income.

Families who obtain the eligibility for free and reduced-priced meal status often have limited access to community resources that promote and support children's development and school readiness. Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeir, and Maczuga (2009) reported that parents and other caretakers in low socioeconomic households often exhibit inadequate skills to assist their children by reading to and reading with them. Also, these families may lack information about childhood immunizations and nutrition. Zill, Collins, West, and Hausken (1995) stated that having inadequate resources and limited access to available resources can negatively affect families' decisions regarding their young children's development and learning. Aikens and Barbarin (2008) claimed that inadequacies associated with children from families with low socioeconomic status are at greater risk of entering kindergarten less prepared than their peers from families with median or high socioeconomic status. Houston (2007) identified low socioeconomic schools as more likely to serve students who needed to make academic progress. Low socioeconomic status schools often lack resources and professional development to adequately train their educators for their uniquely challenging roles in such schools (Bakker et al., 2007).

Miller et al. (2007) studied teacher absenteeism in relationship to achievement gaps. The results stated that students in the schools identified as having high
concentrations of low-income families endure more teacher absences than schools with high concentrations of high-income families. In addition, Clotfelter et al. (2007) reported that schools in the poorest income quartile averaged one extra sick day per teacher than schools in the highest income quartile. The results of this research identified persistently higher rates of teacher absenteeism among schools in the poorest income quartile.

Peske and Haycock (2008) argued that the disparity between high performing schools and low performing schools has little to do with what the students bring to the classroom based on their background. However, these educators state that when districts provide inadequate resources for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, they are at a disadvantage compared to their counterparts. Spencer (2005) posited that children from low socioeconomic backgrounds are at a disadvantage because they do not have access to highly effective teachers.

Bruno (2002), Clotfelter et al. (2009), and Pitkoff (1993) also reported that schools with large proportions of students from low-income households suffered more teacher absences than schools with a higher socioeconomic status. When these factors are compounded by increased teacher absences due to health-related issues and stress, the excessive absenteeism affects the overall school performance (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2000; Prince, 2003; Useem, Offenberg, & Farley, 2007). Socioeconomic status appears to be an independent variable that impacts teacher absenteeism.

**Professional Efficacy**

The quality of teacher practice, i.e., the teacher’s effectiveness, is critical in making progress in student achievement. Research suggests that classroom management, student behavior, ability to motivate and challenge students, capability to provide
alternative explanations, involve parents, and the ability to assess student learning are related to the teachers’ sense of professional efficacy (Henson et al., 2001; Pajares, 1996; Protheroe, 2008). Hoy (2000) defined professional efficacy as the teachers’ confidence in their ability to promote student learning and academic success. Cooper-Twamley (2009) reported that high teacher efficacy has a positive impact on student success. Shaughnessy (2004) reported that teachers who believe in their ability to complete a task will act on that belief by setting goals and applying strategies to motivate students’ success. Low professional efficacy, on the other hand, results in a negative effect on classroom management, student behavior, the ability to motivate and challenge students, the capability to provide alternative explanations and involve parents, and the ability to assess student learning.

Professional efficacy guides teachers to persist in order to overcome the struggles associated with their school environment to effectively meet the goals for accountability. Overbaugh and Lu (2007) reported that teachers who possess the drive to implement beneficial practices will overcome environmental obstacles (socioeconomic challenges, working conditions, etc.) in order to satisfy the accountability requirements of local, state, and federal policy. On the other hand, the lack of professional efficacy limits a teacher’s ability to implement effective instructional practices. According to Tucker et al. (2005), in order for teachers to deliver high quality instruction, they must have the belief that they can overcome the necessary obstacles to be successful.

Bandura (1997) found that people who experience low levels of professional efficacy lack the drive to set goals, much less achieve goals set for them by school leaders. When teachers with low levels of professional efficacy are faced with challenges
their thoughts, feelings, and actions results in negative behavior (Bandura, 1997). Teachers who lack the reinforcement of a sense of professional efficacy as they face the daily challenges of educating children are more likely to engage in patterns of teacher absenteeism.

The rigorous demands of educational accountability delivered by current federal policies have placed strict measures requiring schools to overcome the differences faced by socioeconomic challenges of their schools in order to educate students. Every school’s demographic makeup is different, but the requirements for vastly accelerating student proficiency remain the same; this requires a greater sense of professional efficacy for teachers who teach in the more challenging schools. This research will address the relationship of professional efficacy with teacher absenteeism.

*Administrative Issues That Impact Teacher Absenteeism*

Rogers and Vegas (2009) identified teacher absenteeism as an administrative issue at the school level. Administrators of teachers who have a pattern of increasing absences in their school need a way to address the issue. Heller, Daehler, and Shinohara (2003) argued that good policies that decrease teacher absenteeism also included a progressive discipline clause for each infraction. Under a progressive discipline clause, employees would receive increasing levels of punishment each time the policy is violated. The goal with progressive discipline is to shape the employee’s behavior while training him/her to be more effective as a teacher. The policy should be procedurally clear and effective for all employees throughout the school year (Gardner & Stough, 2002; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2010; Heller et al., 2003). Bruno (2002) purported that in areas where teacher absenteeism is high, morale tends to be low among teachers;
this often exacerbates high turnover at the end of each year. Low morale results when teachers feel more burdened because they may have to plan for teachers who are absent.

Uehara (1999) provided suggestions for effective administration to reduce absenteeism in the article, “Where is Our Teacher?” as a result of an applied research and development project. The recommendations suggested that the supervisor should provide effective administration. Recommendations that cut down on absences include (a) allowing unlimited accumulation of sick leave days from year to year, (b) making good attendance a requisite for job tenure and continuation of employment, (c) requiring that teachers speak with the principal when calling in sick and not a secretary, an answering machine, a text message, or an e-mail, and (d) holding administrators accountable for upholding the policies of the district.

Teachers who have supportive principals are less likely to report stress-induced illness. Such illness often leads to teacher absence. Teachers considered principals to be supportive if they strived to improve the working conditions of the teachers, set and enforced discipline for students, evaluated work fairly, provided adequate procedures for airing grievances, and supplied teachers with performance feedback (Danielson, 1996; Duflo & Hanna, 2006; Goldstein & Noguera, 2006; Hoy & Sweetland, 2000).

Jacob (2010) found that teacher absenteeism in the Chicago Public School District was reduced when administrative leaders enforced more control over school job performance and policy. Jacob further found that in instances where job security safeguards were reduced, teacher absences were cut by 10%. Reduction in job security also reduced the number of absences by teachers who normally accumulated more than 15 absences a year by 20%. The implication of the research addressed in this section is
that positive, proactive leadership by administrators, changes in policies concerning
teacher absenteeism, and effective enforcement of such policies by administrators, could
potentially improve student achievement (Eisenberg, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa,
1986; Ingvarson, Meiers, & Beavis, 2005).

Policy Initiatives to Improve Teacher Attendance

Given the magnitude of concerns about the impact of teacher absenteeism, it is
not surprising that districts implement policies and programs to improve attendance rates.
The District Management Council (2004) studied Aldine Independent School District and
the Dallas Independent School District to better comprehend the ramifications of their
teacher incentives program. The researchers discovered that monetary incentives are
effective in eliminating teacher absences. Aldine’s incentive program allows employer-
matching contributions for teachers. This school district has saved and reallocated
approximately $284,000 a year to provide other resources in the district. Dallas enlisted
the community in an attempt to improve teacher attendance. The local business funds
parties and awards various prizes, including new automobiles for teachers with perfect
attendance. The awards program has doubled the number of teachers in the Dallas
Independent School District with perfect attendance. Research has shown over the past
two decades that incentive plans work; however, districts continue to overlook the
benefits, monetarily and academically, that such plans could offer (Cantrell, 2003;

Keller (2008) noted that the Lancaster Independent School District in Dallas,
Texas desired to redirect the $200,000 spent in substitute costs to boost learning. The
local school board implemented an improvement plan that would move these resources,
normally spent to fund substitute teachers, to academically boost the learning of 5,800 students in the district and finance teacher incentives that would decrease the need for substitute teachers. The impact resulted in improved test scores and a lower rate of teacher absenteeism. Keller concluded that the district serves as a model for other school systems that desire to see a greater return on their investment in student learning.

Summary

Attracting and retaining highly qualified and effective teachers will determine the success of the nation’s schools in the 21st century. It is imperative that local, state, and federal policymakers begin to study the foundational cause of persistent school problems as they initiate specific educational reforms in America (Ben-Jacob, Levin, Ben-Jacob, 2000). It is arguable that teaching in the 21st century provides greater challenges for teachers than the expectations that confronted their counterparts in earlier decades. Teacher performance evaluations are often based not only on dimensions of teaching practice, but also on their documentable impact on student achievement. Thus, highly qualified teachers also need to be highly effective. However, these evaluations often provide teachers with a satisfactory rating, even when their absences may have been extensive and been a partial cause of the school’s decline in overall performance. Teacher presence is of utmost necessity if teachers are to be highly effective and contribute to the process of school improvement.

In many districts the struggle exists to provide a highly qualified teacher in every classroom. NCLB placed great emphasis on the achievement of children, regardless of socio-economic status and race or ethnicity, by requiring that all students perform at or above grade level in reading and math. By examining teacher professional efficacy and
teacher job satisfaction in relationship to teacher absenteeism, this research study will be useful to elementary schools seeking to improve their performance levels.

Research has linked teacher absenteeism to student achievement and school performance. The literature review also identified job satisfaction and professional efficacy as factors that influence teacher absenteeism. It was important, therefore, to assess factors related to teacher absenteeism and take measures to eliminate the sources of excessive teacher absenteeism.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationships among job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism in Mississippi. The study also addressed methods that can be used by policymakers to better ensure low rates of absenteeism. Chapter III outlines the research design and methodology employed in this study. The following section explains the research questions and the related hypotheses for the study. In addition, this chapter describes the region of interest and nature of participants. An instrument was developed to gather data for the study. Details about the instrument are provided in the related section of this chapter. This chapter addresses the types of analyses that yielded data through which conclusions about the research questions and hypotheses were reached.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. To what degree are teachers absent from school for reasons other than approved holidays and vacations?
2. To what degree are teachers satisfied with the workplace conditions?
3. Is there a relationship between teachers’ satisfaction with workplace conditions and rates of teacher absenteeism?
4. Is there a relationship between the socioeconomic status of schools and rates of teacher absenteeism?
5. Is there a relationship between teachers’ compensation and rates of teacher absenteeism?
6. Is there a relationship between school QDI performance levels and rates of teacher absenteeism?

7. Is there a relationship between perceived professional efficacy and rates of teacher absenteeism?

8. What actions might administrators and policymakers take in order to improve teacher attendance?

The study also explored the following hypotheses, which are directly linked to Research Questions 3-7 above.

H1: There is a relationship between teachers’ satisfaction with workplace conditions and rates of teacher absenteeism.

H2: There is a relationship between the socioeconomic status of schools and the rates of teacher absenteeism.

H3: There is a relationship between teacher compensation and rates of teacher absenteeism.

H4: There is a relationship between school QDI performance levels and rates of teacher absenteeism.

H5: There is a relationship between teacher perceptions of professional efficacy and rates of teacher absenteeism.

Participants in the Study

Certified teachers of students in grades 3-5 from across the state of Mississippi were solicited to participate in the study. In addition to being from districts that were geographically representative, these teachers were from a sample of schools with diverse socioeconomic and performance levels. These included elementary schools from the
following school districts: Attala County School District, Biloxi Public School District, DeSoto County School District, Hattiesburg Public School District, Kosciusko School District, Leake County School District, Pascagoula School District, Perry County School District, and Sunflower County School District. These districts were chosen based on 2011-2012 school year QDI results and poverty level data registered in the Mississippi Assessment and Accountability Reporting System (MAARS) in order to gather data from districts/schools with diverse performance levels. Elementary schools were identified in each participating district. There are approximately 500 certified teachers in grades 3-5 in the elementary schools included in this study. A sufficient number of instruments were distributed to provide one for each teacher in these elementary schools; a return of at least 100 completed instruments was anticipated.

All survey responses applied to the 2012-2013 school year. Item 1 of the instrument determined years of experience. The responses of teachers who were new to the profession or to their schools at the beginning of the 2013-14 school year were excluded. Completed surveys returned within three weeks of distribution were included in the data analysis.

Research Design

The research design for this study was a mixed-methods study. The information was collected from public elementary school teachers and included both quantitative and qualitative data. The independent variables for this study included (a) workplace conditions, (b) socioeconomic status of schools, (c) teachers’ compensation, (d) school performance level, and (e) professional efficacy. The dependent variable was teacher absenteeism. Data that are time-specific referred to the 2012-2013 school year.
Instrumentation

Instrument Development

This study utilized a survey instrument containing 45 questions that provided quantitative and qualitative data. In order to address the demands of the proposed study, The Teacher Job Satisfaction and Professional Efficacy Instrument (TJSPE) was devised by obtaining elements from two existing instruments. The two original instruments were The North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (2002), and The Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (2001). The Teacher Job Satisfaction and Efficacy Instrument was designed by the researcher to gather data about teacher job satisfaction with working conditions and professional efficacy. The Teacher Job Satisfaction and Professional Efficacy Instrument was divided into five sections as described in the following paragraphs and is attached as Appendix A.

The North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (NCWCS) (2002) was adapted for use within The Teacher Job Satisfaction and Efficacy Instrument. Questions from the NCWCS (2002) included in The Teacher Job Satisfaction and Efficacy Instrument were limited to those that address time, facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership. The NCWCS is an instrument in open domain. Specific permission for its use was, therefore, not required.

The Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (2001) was also adapted for use within The Teacher Job Satisfaction and Efficacy Instrument. The Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale questions were added to The Teacher Job Satisfaction Instrument to gather data about teachers’ perceptions of their professional efficacy. The Teachers’ Sense of
Efficacy Scale (2001) is also an instrument in open domain. Specific permission for its use was therefore not required.

The TJSPE was divided into five sections. The sections included demographics, working conditions, satisfaction with compensation, professional efficacy, and policy. TJSEP was composed of 45 questions designed to gather quantitative and qualitative data about teacher job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism.

Instrument Sections and Subscales

The first section of the TJSPE was the demographics section. This section collected information from the participants related to their current teaching positions as certified elementary school teachers. Item 1 was used to screen for first year teachers and teachers new to their respective schools. Items 2, 3, 4, and 5 from the demographic section determined the number of days that participants were absent, the number of student days in the school calendar, the socioeconomic status of the school, days of teacher absence, number of days in the school calendar, and school performance levels. The demographic section provided data for use with Research Questions 1, 4, and 6. Items 2 and 3 provided the data through which Research Question 1 was addressed. Each respondent’s rate of teacher absenteeism was computed as a percentage derived from the division of the number of absences by the total number of school days in the student academic calendar. These same statistics on rates of absenteeism provided data for the dependent variable, rates of teacher absenteeism in Research Questions 3-7, and the related Hypotheses 1-5. Item 4 in the demographic section provided data for the independent variable of socioeconomic status in Research Question 4, and the related
Hypothesis 2. Item 5 in the demographic section provided data for the independent variable of QDI in Research Question 6 and the related Hypothesis 4.

The second section of the instrument, which addresses workplace conditions, gathered information related to teachers’ perceptions of the circumstances in which they work. This section was further divided into subscales. These subscales include time, facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership. This section of the instrument provided data on teacher perceptions of working conditions to be used in analysis of Research Questions 2 and 3. The previously mentioned data for the dependent variable, rates of teacher absenteeism, is included in the analysis of Hypothesis 1, is related to Research Question 3. Items 6-10 were the subscale for the construct of time. Items 11-17 were the subscale for the construct of facilities and resources. Items 18-22 were the subscale for the construct of teacher leadership. Items 23-27 were the subscale for the construct of school leadership. Items 6-27 in the instrument used a 5 point Likert-type scale to address the research questions regarding working conditions. These items were scaled from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree. An open-ended response item completed the second section of the instrument. This item collected teachers’ responses to the following question: What actions might administrators and policymakers take in order to improve working conditions including time, facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership?

The third section of the instrument gathered data about teacher satisfaction with compensation. Participants responded to items to provide data on teacher perception of satisfaction with compensation. Items 29 a-i from the compensation section of the instrument provided data for the independent variable in Research Question 5 and the
related Hypothesis 3. Items 29a-i in the instrument used a 4 point Likert-type scale to address the research questions regarding compensation. Items 28a-i were scaled from 1=Very Dissatisfied, 2=Somewhat Dissatisfied, 3=Somewhat Satisfied, and 4=Very Satisfied. The response of Not Offered was not scored, nor included in calculations of means regarding teacher satisfaction with compensation. The previously mentioned data for the dependent variable, rates of teacher absenteeism, were also included in the analysis. In addition, an open-ended response item appeared in the third section of the instrument. This item collected teachers’ responses to the following question: What actions might administrators and policymakers take in order to improve teacher satisfaction with compensation?

The fourth section gathered teachers’ views about their self-efficacy. The participants responded to 13 items (Items 31-43) using a Likert-type scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating nothing and 5 indicating a great deal. Data collected from Items 31-43 in section 4 provided information about the independent variable, professional efficacy, used to analyze Research Question 7, and the related Hypothesis 5. The previously mentioned data for the dependent variable, rates of teacher absenteeism, was also included in the analysis. Item 44 was an open-ended response item. This item collected teachers’ responses to the following question: What actions might administrators and policymakers take in order to improve sense of self-efficacy among faculty members?

The final section addressed the qualitative component of the study. This section consisted of a single constructed-response question pertaining to teachers’ professional input regarding what administrators and policymakers can do to improve teacher
attendance. Responses to this item provided data to be used in the analysis for Research Question 8.

**Instrument Validity and Reliability**

In order to strengthen the validity of the instrument, the researcher assembled a panel of experts in the field of education to review and validate The Teacher Job Satisfaction and Professional Efficacy Survey. The panel included a superintendent, a human resources director, a principal, a lead teacher, a former chief school officer, the advisor of my dissertation committee, and a researcher associated with the North Carolina Working Conditions Survey (NCWCS). The panel members were provided with an explanation of the study (Appendix B) and questionnaire to guide their review and feedback (Appendix C).

Once the panel completed its review, the instrument was edited by the researcher and submitted with other proposal materials for approval by the University of Southern Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). After obtaining approval from the IRB, a pilot study was conducted to gauge the reliability of the instrument. Twenty teachers participated in the pilot study. The data obtained were analyzed using the statistical program SPSS. Cronbach’s alpha was used to test instrument reliability. The test produced a reliability coefficient of greater than .700 in all constructs, indicating that the items on the instrument had an acceptable internal consistency. The results of the Cronbach’s alpha test of reliability for the pilot are provided in Table 1.
Table 1

*Cronbach’s Alpha for Pilot Study and Dissertation*

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<tr>
<td>School Leadership (q23-27)</td>
<td>.861</td>
<td>.888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Compensation (q29)</td>
<td>.820</td>
<td>.980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy (q31-43)</td>
<td>.896</td>
<td>.968</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cronbach’s alpha was also used during the formal study to assess the reliability and internal consistency of the quantitative items. This test of coefficient reliability was performed on all items to determine how adequately the instrument measured a single concept. In order to be considered acceptable, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient must be .7 or greater. As shown in Table 1, the test disclosed reliabilities of greater than .70 during the pilot study and dissertation study. These coefficient levels were more than sufficient to indicate the reliability of the instrument for use in the study.

Procedures

This study involved teachers in elementary schools across the state of Mississippi. An introductory letter was delivered to district superintendents seeking permission for their school districts to participate in the study (Appendix D). The letter made clear that
no districts would be identified by name in the study. Once permission for the study was granted by the various school districts’ superintendents, the researcher contacted elementary school principals (Appendix E) to secure permission to involve their schools in the research. The researcher requested the name of a contact person on each campus to distribute and gather instruments. The researcher secured approval for the study from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of The University of Southern Mississippi (Appendix F). The researcher hand delivered and/or mailed the surveys to the schools, along with a cover letter providing an explanation of the study, distribution of survey materials, and return of the completed documents to the researcher (Appendix G). The contact person for each school distributed the survey to certified teachers in grades 3-5.

An introductory letter to the participants (Appendix H) and informed consent document (Appendix I) accompanied each survey to provide information about the study. Explanation that participation in the study was voluntary and strictly confidential was included in the letter and the consent document. The contact person in each participating school collected the completed surveys and mailed them to the researcher in the provided self-addressed stamped envelope. Completed surveys were to be secured in a locked filing cabinet by the researcher for no more than one year and then destroyed. Once all data were collected, the results were analyzed in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5. Once the study was completed, district personnel that requested a summary of the results were mailed a report of the research findings.

Analyses of Results

Accepted statistical procedures were used to analyze the data in the study. The statistics package used was SPSS. Analyses of demographic variable descriptives were
conducted by running descriptive statistics that included frequencies, standard deviations, and means. Descriptive statistics were run to determine the frequencies, standard deviations, and means for the variables of teacher satisfaction with workplace conditions, socioeconomic status of schools, satisfaction with compensation, and QDI performance levels. ANOVA statistics were computed to determine the relationships among teacher satisfaction in the workplace, and teacher absenteeism, which were addressed in Research Question 3 and the related Hypothesis 1. Spearman statistics were computed to determine the relationships among the socioeconomic status of schools, QDI performance levels, and teacher absenteeism, which were addressed in Research Questions 4 and 6, and the related Hypotheses 2 and 4.

Descriptive statistics were run to determine the frequencies, standard deviations, and means for the variable professional efficacy. Pearson’s $r$ statistics were computed to determine the correlation between professional efficacy and teacher absenteeism. These data were used in the analyses for Research Questions 5 and 7 and the related Hypotheses 3 and 5.

Research Question 8 required a constructed response to an open-ended item that inquired about actions that administrators can take to improve teacher attendance. Using thematic coding and grounded theory analyses (Creswell, 2009), the researcher analyzed the results of Research Question 8. This technique of using a set of systematic steps was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). In the initial stage of coding, the researcher generated codes from the information provided by the participants. The researcher then used axial coding (Creswell, 2009) to generate categories from these themes and compare
the relationships of the coded data. The results yielded a set of recommendations that appear to have relatively significant participant support.

Summary

Chapter III described the methodology for this study. The purpose of the study was to determine if a significant relationship exists among job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism in Mississippi. Likewise, the study presumed that determining if a significant relationship exists between teacher absenteeism and certain school, teacher, and workplace conditions, would serve as another way to analyze school organizational structures. Results from this study may also be useful in analyzing the connection between teacher absenteeism and student achievement; this may be of particular interest in low-socioeconomic schools, where teacher absenteeism has been found to be elevated. The results of this study will help policymakers and practitioners better understand the issues surrounding teacher absenteeism and to provide results that may be instructive as they seek to improve rates of teacher attendance.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

Teacher absenteeism has the potential to be detrimental to education in general, to students in particular, and debilitating to the capacities of Mississippi school administrators to fulfill their daily responsibilities. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationships among job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism in Mississippi. This study also addressed methods that can be used by policymakers to better ensure low rates of absenteeism. The study measured the relationship between teachers’ satisfaction with workplace conditions, socioeconomic status of schools, teacher compensation, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and rates of teacher absenteeism. In addition, the study provided participants with the opportunity to suggest methods that can be used by policymakers to better ensure low rates of absenteeism. This chapter describes the outcomes of the study and reports both quantitative and qualitative results.

Quantitative Results

The research in this study was conducted through a mixed-methods design. The instrument yielded quantitative and qualitative responses that were collected from public elementary school teachers in grades 3-5 in the state of Mississippi. An original instrument entitled The Teacher Job Satisfaction and Professional Efficacy Instrument (TJSPE) was utilized for this study. The TJSPE contained 45 questions and was divided into five sections. The first section addressed items about the respondent’s demographic information. The demographic section included items regarding teachers’ number of years at current location, number of days missed by the teacher, number of days in a normal school year, socioeconomic status of schools, and QDI. The second section
addressed items regarding workplace conditions. The second section was divided into subscales to gather information related to teachers’ perceptions regarding time, facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership. Section 2 contained an open-ended question to collect teacher perceptions about how to improve workplace conditions. The third section gathered data about teacher satisfaction with compensation. Section 3 also contained an open-ended question that allowed teachers to suggest methods that administrators and policymakers might take in order to improve teacher satisfaction with compensation. The fourth section collected data about teachers’ beliefs about their self-efficacy. Section 4 also contained an open-ended question to collect teacher perceptions about how to improve faculty members’ sense of self-efficacy. The final section consisted of a single constructed-response question pertaining to teachers’ professional input regarding actions administrators and policymakers might take in order to improve teacher attendance.

**Demographic Items**

Six superintendents gave the researcher permission to conduct research in their districts. Three-hundred and fifty surveys were distributed among 14 schools throughout the six districts. One district did not have any participation. Of the 350 teachers to whom surveys were sent, 124 (35.4%) of the teachers returned completed surveys. Of the 124 participants who responded to the survey, 40 were employed for the first year as educators at their respective schools and therefore, were instructed to return their surveys without completing them. Eighty-four of the participants had been employed one year or more as educators at their current school sites. These responses of these 84 participants provided the basis for analyses related to the research questions and hypotheses.
The 84 qualifying participants reported missing a range of days from 0 to 46 days.

The highest percentage (23.8%) of participants reported being absent from school three days. Among other respondents, 14 (16.7%) missed five days and 11 (13.1%) missed two days. Four participants (4.8%) reported missing 10 days or more during the 2012-2013 school year. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

*Teacher Demographic Frequencies and Percentages for Missed Days*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 3 of the instrument utilized for this study was utilized to determine the total number of student days in a normal school year for a teacher receiving a full salary. Participants for the most part responded that the total number of student days in a normal school year for a teacher receiving full salary was 180 days. Fifteen teachers responded that the total number of student days in a normal school year for a teacher receiving full salary was 182 days. The frequencies and percentages are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Teacher Descriptives for Number of Days in School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Days in School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>82.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>182</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item 4 of the instrument elicited a response from participants to determine the schools’ socioeconomic status based on the eligibility of students for free or reduced-priced meals. The schools’ socioeconomic status based on the eligibility of students for free or reduced-priced meals varied. Twenty-six participants (31.0%) responded that 90-100% of their students received free or reduced meals. Twenty-three participants (27.4%) responded that 80-89% of their students received free or reduced meals. Twenty-one participants (25.0%) responded that 70-79% of their students received free or reduced meals. The remaining 14 participants (16.7%) reported that 60-70% of their
students received free or reduced meals. The frequencies and percentages are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics for Socioeconomic Status of Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free/reduced meals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-100%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total`</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants responded to Item 5 to provide the performance level of their school. The performance level was determined by the schools QDI score based on the state achievement test during the 2012-2013 school year. Thirty-one participants (36.9%) responded that the school’s QDI rating was at the level of failing. Thirty-one participants (36.9%) responded that the school’s QDI rating was at the level of academic watch. Sixteen participants (19.0%) responded that the school’s QDI rating was at the level of at risk. And six participants (7.1%) responded that their school’s QDI rating was at the level of successful. There were no participants from high performing schools. The frequencies and percentages are shown in Table 5.
Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics for QDI*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QDI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failing</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Risk</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Watch</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantitative Analysis: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to determine frequencies, means, and standard deviations for the variables associated with teacher satisfaction with workplace conditions; these variables included time, facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership. Participants responded to Items 6-27 using the following Likert Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, and 4=Strongly Agree.

The instrument was composed of statements designed to elicit input about teachers’ perceptions of time. Items 6-10 provided data about time available to collaborate with colleagues, allowance of instructional time with minimal interruptions, sufficient instructional time, duties, and class size. The highest mean (M=3.00) indicated that teachers agree with the statement from Item 7, which read, teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions was the response with the highest means. Participants’ responses to Item 6 (M=2.98), Item 9 (M=2.89), and Item 10
(M=2.90) indicated that teachers tend to agree that they have time to collaborate with colleagues, are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students, and class sizes are reasonable such that teachers have time available to meet the needs of all students. The lowest mean (M=2.75) indicated slight agreement with Item 8, which read, teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.

The results of the descriptive statistics for the construct of satisfaction with time are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

**Descriptive Statistics for Working Conditions: Time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q6 Teachers have time to collaborate with colleagues</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7 Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8 Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9 Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10 Class sizes are reasonable such that teachers have time available to meet the needs of all students</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Likert Scale 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree; (N=84)
The instrument items were used to gain input about teachers’ perceptions of facilities and resources. Descriptive statistics from Items 11-17 indicated an overall agreement with statements addressing satisfaction with facilities and resources. The lowest mean reported in the results was 3.17 on a scale of 1-4. The lowest mean (M=3.17) was associated with the statement that addressed sufficient access to appropriate learning materials. The highest mean (M=3.43) revealed that most school environments were clean and well maintained. The results of the descriptive statistics for the construct of satisfaction with facilities and resources are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for Working Conditions: Facilities and Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q11 Teachers have sufficient access to appropriate instructional materials.</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12 Teachers have sufficient access to instructional technology, including computers, printers, software, and internet access.</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13 Teachers have sufficient access to office equipment and supplies such as copy machines, paper, pens, etc.</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14 Teachers have access to reliable communication technology, including phones, faxes, and email.</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q15 The school environment is clean and well maintained.</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16 Teachers have adequate space to work productively.</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q17 The physical environment of classrooms in this school supports teaching and learning.</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Likert Scale 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree; (N=84).

The instrument included statements that elicited teachers’ perceptions regarding teacher leadership. Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze participants’ responses to Items 18-22. These analyses revealed a relatively small range of mean scores (M=3.00 to M=3.14). The highest mean (M=3.14) was associated with Item 22, which indicated that teachers’ agree that teachers are effective leaders in their school. The lowest mean (M=3.00) was associated with Item 21, which indicated that teachers’ agree that the faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems. The results of the descriptive statistics for the construct of satisfaction with teacher leadership are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics for Working Conditions: Teacher Leadership*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 Teachers are recognized as educational experts.</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q19 Teachers are trusted to make sound decisions about educational issues.</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q20 Teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues.</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q21 The faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems.</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q22 Teachers are effective leaders in this school.</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Likert Scale 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree; (N=84).

The instrument included statements to elicit teachers’ perceptions regarding school leadership. Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze participants’ responses to Items 23-27. Descriptive statistics indicated that the lowest mean, which was associated with Item 23, was 2.88. This item stated that teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them. The results indicated that the highest mean (M=3.40) was for Item 25, which stated that teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction. There was consistent agreement about the statements in Items 23-27 according to the descriptive statistics for satisfaction with school leadership. The results of the descriptive statistics for the construct of satisfaction with school leadership are shown in Table 9.
Table 9

**Descriptive Statistics for Working Conditions: School Leadership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q23 Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them.</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q24 The school leaders consistently support teachers.</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25 Teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction.</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q26 Teacher performance is assessed objectively.</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q27 Faculty members are recognized for accomplishments.</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Likert Scale 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree; (N=84).

Descriptive statistics were computed to determine frequencies, standard deviations, and means for the items associated with the construct of teacher satisfaction with compensation. Items 29 a-i on the instrument allowed the participants to respond to items addressing base salary, general medical insurance, dental insurance, group life insurance, merit pay plans, salary incentives, salary supplements, compensation for extra duties, and state retirement plans. The results indicated teachers’ level of satisfaction with their district’s compensation during the 2012-2013 school year. The item used a Likert scale ranging from Not offered=1, Very Dissatisfied=2, Somewhat Dissatisfied=3, Somewhat Satisfied=4, and Very Satisfied=5. The responses marked as “Not Offered” were not utilized in the analysis process for Items 29 a-i. Responses with a score of 1
were discarded. The satisfaction scale ranged from 2-5. The highest mean was for the item related to state retirement plans (M=3.80); this mean indicated that respondents were approaching the level of somewhat satisfied with this compensation element. The lowest mean (M=3.23) was compensation for extra duties. The response theme of the participants regarding the compensation package was one of ambivalence. Participants responded to the item addressing merit pay plans (M=3.26) and salary incentives (M=3.27), at a level indicating they were somewhat dissatisfied with these compensation elements. Respondents indicated that salary supplements (M=3.34) and group medical insurance (M=3.35) were compensation elements providing greater satisfaction than merit pay and salary incentives but still at a level indicating that they were somewhat dissatisfied. The participants tended to be undecided toward the following compensation elements: dental insurance (M=3.47), base salary, (M=3.51), and group life insurance (M=3.53). The results of teacher satisfaction with compensation are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for Satisfaction Compensation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q29a Base Salary</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q29b General Medical Insurance</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q29c Dental Insurance</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q29d Group Life Insurance</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q29e Merit pay plan</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q29f Salary incentives for teaching in a hard-to-staff school</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q29g Salary supplements that the district adds to the base state salary schedule.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q29h Compensation for extra duties</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q29i State retirement plan</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Likert Scale 1 = Not Offered, 2 = Very Dissatisfied, 3 = Somewhat Dissatisfied, 4 = Somewhat Satisfied, and 5 = Very Satisfied; (N=84).

Descriptive statistics were computed to determine frequencies, means, and standard deviations for the construct of self-efficacy. The participants responded to Items 31-43 on the instrument that probed for teachers’ perceptions about their efficacy. The response options were 1=Nothing, 2=Very Little, 3=Some Influence, 4=Quite a Bit, and 5=A Great Deal. The lowest mean (M=3.49) was Item 38, which asked, “How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?” Item 41 had the highest mean (M=4.24). This indicted that teachers perceive that they can do quite a bit to establish routines to keep activities running smoothly. The means for all but one of the items regarding self-efficacy (Item 38; M=3.49) indicated a perception that teachers perceive that they can do quite a bit to influence learning. These results are shown in Table 11.
Table 11

*Descriptive Statistics for Self-Efficacy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q31 How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q32 How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q33 How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q34 How much can you do to help your students’ value learning?</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q35 How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q36 How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q37 To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q38 How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q39 How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q40 How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q41 How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q42 How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q43 How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Likert Scale for Self-Efficacy: 1 = Nothing, 2 = Very Little, 3 = Some Influence, 4 = Quite a Bit, and 5 = A Great Deal; (N=84).

Total Subscale Means for Working Conditions, Compensation, and Self-Efficacy

Descriptive statistics were computed to determine frequencies, standard deviations, and means for the working conditions subscales of time, resources and facilities, teacher leadership, school leadership, and for the subscales of self-efficacy and satisfaction with compensation. The results for the overall working conditions, self-efficacy, and satisfaction with compensation are shown in Table 12.
Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for Overall Working Conditions, Compensation, and Self-Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working Conditions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities and Resources</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Leadership</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Leadership</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Likert Scale for time, facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree; Likert Scale for Self-Efficacy: 1 = Nothing, 2 = Very Little, 3 = Some Influence, 4 = Quite a Bit, and 5 = A Great Deal; Likert Scale for Compensation: 1 = Not Offered, 2 = Very Dissatisfied, 3 = Somewhat Dissatisfied, 4 = Somewhat Satisfied, and 5 = Very Satisfied (N=84).

Research Questions and Hypothesis Results

Eight research questions and five hypotheses were examined in this study. The dependent variable, which was associated with each of the five hypotheses, was rates of teacher absenteeism. Each respondent’s rate of teacher absenteeism was computed as a percentage derived from the division of the number of absences by the total number of school days in the student academic calendar.

Research Question 1 was worded as follows: To what degree are teachers absent from school for reasons other than approved holidays and vacations? This question utilized participants’ response of Items 2 and 3 from the instrument to provide data to analyze Research Question 1. The highest number of days missed ranged from 2-5 days.
with more than 50% of the participants’ response falling within this range. The data collected are shown in Table 2.

Research Question 2 addressed teachers’ workplace conditions. Research Question 2 was as follows: To what degree are teachers satisfied with workplace conditions? The mean for the construct of time was 2.90. The mean for the construct of facilities and resources was 3.30. The mean for the construct of teacher leadership was 3.07. The mean for the construct of school leadership was 3.13. These means suggest slight agreement to agreement that respondents are satisfied with workplace conditions.

Research Question 3 was as follows: Is there a relationship between teachers’ satisfaction with workplace conditions and rates of teacher absenteeism? The related Hypothesis 1 stated, there was a relationship between teachers’ satisfaction with workplace conditions and rates of teacher absenteeism. The 84 respondents reported various levels of satisfaction with workplace conditions ranging from 1=Strongly Disagree to 4=Strongly Agree. Participants were asked to respond to Items 6-27 regarding time, facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership. The dependent variable, rates of teacher absenteeism, was also used in the analysis associated with Hypothesis 1. The regression computed for workplace conditions indicated that there was not a significant relationship between teachers’ satisfaction with workplace conditions and teacher absenteeism. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was not supported. The results were as follows: $F(4,79)=.703, p=.592, R^2=.034$. The results of the regression are found in Table 13.
### Table 13

**Coefficients for Workplace Conditions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>8.530</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>.854</td>
<td>.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities and Resources</td>
<td>-2.458</td>
<td>-.249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Leadership</td>
<td>1.291</td>
<td>.138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Leadership</td>
<td>-.628</td>
<td>-.066</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Dependent Variable: Rates of Teacher Absenteeism; (N=84)

The socioeconomic status of schools was measured by the eligibility of students who received free or reduced priced meals. Research Question 4 was as follows: Is there a relationship between the socioeconomic status of schools and rates of teacher absenteeism? Spearman correlations were computed to test the related Hypothesis 2. The Spearman correlation results (.201, \( p=.067 \)) indicated that there was a significant, albeit moderate, inverse relationship between the socioeconomic status of schools and rates of teacher absenteeism. Hypothesis 2, therefore, was supported. When the socioeconomic status of schools decreased, teacher absenteeism increased. The results are shown in Table 14.
Table 14

*Spearman’s Rho Correlation of Socioeconomic Status of Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>-.201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Absences</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Research Question 5 was as follows: Is there a relationship between teachers’ compensation and rates of teacher absenteeism. Items 29 a-i were utilized to gather data to analyze Research Question 5 and test the related Hypothesis 3. Items included satisfaction with base salary, general medical insurance, dental insurance, group life insurance, merit pay, salary incentives for hard to staff schools, salary supplements added to the base salary, compensation for extra duties, and the state retirement plan. Means for these items appear in Table 10. Pearson’s $r$ correlations were computed for the analysis of Hypothesis 3. The results of the Pearson’s $r$ correlation of -.010, $p=.929$ showed that there was not a significant relationship between teachers’ satisfaction with compensation and rates of teacher absenteeism. Hypothesis 3 was not accepted. Results for this analysis are shown in Table 15.
Table 15

Pearson’s Correlation for Teacher Satisfaction with Compensation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Absences</td>
<td>-.010</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.929</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 6 was as follows: Is there a relationship between school QDI performance levels and rates of teacher absenteeism? Item 5 from the instrument was utilized to determine if a relationship exists between QDI performance levels and rates of teacher absenteeism. The following numeric values were assigned to the various school level ratings: 1=failing, 2=at risk, 3=academic watch, 4=successful, and 5=high performing. Spearman correlations were computed to test the related Hypothesis 4. There was a moderate significant relationship between QDI and teacher absenteeism according to the results of .271, \( p=.013 \). These results indicate that as QDI goes up, teacher absenteeism increases. Thus, the related Hypothesis 4 stating there was a relationship between school QDI performance levels and rates of teacher absenteeism was supported. These results are shown in Table 16.
Respondents were asked to respond to a series of questions regarding their professional efficacy. Participants responded to Items 31-43, which addressed the teachers’ ability to influence dimensions of their work with students. Pearson’s \( r \) correlations were computed to determine the correlation between professional efficacy and teacher absenteeism in Hypothesis 5, which read, “There is a relationship between perceived professional efficacy and rates of teacher absenteeism.” The Pearson’s \( r \) correlations provided results that were not significant at -.043, \( p=.699 \). There was not a relationship between perceived professional efficacy and rates of teacher absenteeism; the hypothesis, therefore, was not supported. These results are shown in Table 17.

Table 16

*Spearman’s Rho Correlation of QDI*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>QDI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Absences</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Table 17

*Pearson’s r Correlations between Self-Efficacy and Teacher Absenteeism*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Self-Efficacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>-.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Absences</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qualitative Data Analysis

Thematic coding and grounded theory models (Creswell, 2009; Glasser & Strauss, 1967) were used to analyze participants’ constructed responses to open-ended questions found in Items 28, 30, 44, and 45 on the instrument. These responses provided additional data regarding respondents’ perceptions of workplace conditions, satisfaction with compensation, teachers’ sense of self-efficacy, and teacher attendance. Codes were generated from the information provided by the participants. Axial coding was used to generate categories. The categories were used to compare relationships of the coded data (Creswell, 2009). The results yielded a set of recommendations that might aid administrators and policymakers in plans to improve working conditions, satisfaction with compensation, teachers’ sense of self-efficacy, and teacher attendance.

Participants were asked to provide a constructed response to Item 28, an open-ended question which read, what actions might administrators and policymakers take in order to improve working conditions including time, facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership? The results yielded a set of recommendations that appeared to be consistent among participants. Participants’ responses aligned thematically to the constructs in the question relating to time, resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership. In addition to these constructs, professional development and additional responsibilities developed as a category as a result of the coding process.

The qualitative responses were consistent with the quantitative results regarding satisfaction with time (M=2.90); while participants expressed moderate satisfaction with time as a working condition, it was the condition with the lowest satisfaction rating. The
qualitative data for time were divided into two categories: instructional time and planning time. The category labeled instructional time included respondents’ suggestions to improve working conditions by improving issues that hinder quality instructional time. A recurring code for instructional time was to reduce paperwork required by teachers during their instructional periods. One participant recommended “integration of computer programs to assist with paperwork.” Another participant suggested, “policymakers should vote to put more people in the classroom such as clerks and assistant teachers (teachers spent way too much time gathering and preparing).” This response was strengthened by additional recommendations to limit disruptions during instructional time and protect the instructional time. A recommendation from one respondent was “limit announcements made during instructional hours.” An additional insight for protecting the instructional time was to “limit the disruptions by administrators and peers to ask a quick question” during instructional time.

The category labeled planning time also indicated that teachers perceive that they are required to complete too much paperwork during their planning time; this takes away from planning for instruction. Participants desire additional planning time to plan for instructional time and collaborate with colleagues. One participant responded “We need more time for planning. Too much emphasis is placed on paperwork which takes away from instructional time.” A common issue that developed in the constructed responses from participants was the recommendation to eliminate disruptions to planning time often caused by meetings or extra duties. One participant responded that time should be “dedicated to planning for instruction and not for general meetings.” A participant also recommended that “additional planning time should be allowed for teachers who are
required to use planning time for additional duties.” In addition, teachers suggested adding work days for teachers to have more time to plan. One participant suggested, “provide additional work days for teachers to plan. Offer half-days for students—work days for teachers.” One participant stated, “I feel we need additional assistants to assist with paperwork and gathering teacher materials during planning times.” Providing additional and protected time to plan and collaborate would improve working conditions.

Participants’ responses indicated that in order to improve working conditions, administrators and policymakers should consider providing necessary resources for the classroom. This category was labeled resources. One teacher responded that a need exists for “Common Core resources since Mississippi has adopted the Common Core Curriculum Standards for the state.” In addition, a participant responded that “technology needs to be upgraded in order to accommodate Common Core Curriculum Standards.” Participants also identified a need for textbooks with recommendations such as “students all need textbooks (this would benefit teachers, students, and parents). It is very hard to help students without these,” and “it would benefit all students and parents to have access to a textbook to review materials and content.” Administrators and policymakers should consider these recommendations in order to improve working conditions related to resources.

Participants further recommended that administrators and policymakers improve working conditions by including teachers in decisions about the school. The category labeled teacher leadership included suggestions to involve teachers in setting policy, involve teachers with decisions about curriculum, and involve teachers in decisions about
teaching material. Participants desired that administrators and policymakers collaborate with teachers about issues that involve teacher leadership.

To improve working conditions, respondents asserted that administrators and policymakers should consider the construct of school leadership. Teachers expressed a desire that administrators treat all teachers fairly, consistently, and without bias. One participant’s response indicating such desire stated, “less bias from administrators, more availability for all teachers to attend workshops instead of only the chosen ones.” Teachers want administrators to be clear about school policy and procedure by providing written documents detailing such guidelines. Participant responses identifying a need for written expectations for clarity included a recommendation for school leaders to “provide guidance for expectations, helping to keep all teachers on the same track” and to “provide written documentation of expectations.” Teachers also desired that administrators improve communication. One participant responded that “communication could be improved by giving more advanced notice for upcoming events and written expectations as they change.” School leaders would benefit from considering these recommendations to improve working conditions for their staff.

Participants responded to Item 30 of the instrument with a constructed response to an open-ended question that asked, what actions might administrators and policymakers take in order to improve teacher satisfaction with compensation? The results yielded a set of recommendations that appear to have relatively broad participant support. The codes that were generated for Item 30 included pay raise, supplements, adequate resources, and general medical insurance.
The results for the category labeled pay raise indicated that teachers desire an increase in pay, in general, to the national average base pay for teachers. Arguments included statements from teachers that pay “needs to be comparable to doctors and lawyers” and policymakers need to “increase pay because teachers are responsible for teaching future leaders.” One teacher responded, “teachers are underpaid. I believe teachers choose the profession because of their love for students and not the salary, however, we are responsible for teaching our future leaders.” In general, teachers responded that a pay raise of any amount would be beneficial to improving teacher satisfaction with compensation.

In addition to a pay raise, teachers responded that compensation for extra duties and hours worked after school to complete school related tasks would aid in improving teacher satisfaction with compensation. Responses from participants included, “pay for after school duties required for school function but not necessary for classroom instruction,” and “teachers who perform extra duties should receive adequate pay for those extra jobs. Teachers should receive compensation for extra afternoons, Saturdays, and other school functions.” Teachers also desire an increase in local supplements and supplements for additional responsibilities including service as grade level chairs, inclusion teachers, and committee chairs. Responses also included observations that the provision of adequate teacher resources including textbooks, teaching tools, and general school supplies that teachers pay for out of pocket would improve teacher satisfaction with compensation. One participant’s response was a summation regarding adequate resources: “I’m not sure if it is possible to improve teacher satisfaction through compensation, its hard enough for other things to be paid for. Rather than compensation
for the teacher, I think making sure each teacher has adequate resources to do his/her job is far more important than compensating individual teachers.” These recommendations would improve teachers’ satisfaction with workplace conditions regarding compensation.

The final category for compensation was general medical insurance. Teachers desire better quality insurance, at a cheaper rate, with a co-pay. Teachers recommended providing lower deductibles and cheaper rates for families. One participant stated, “better medical insurance/plans for families with lower deductibles and lower cost of insurance” would improve satisfaction with general medical insurance as it relates to working conditions. In addition, teachers indicated that deductibles for their general insurance are too expensive, as indicated by one participant’s response: “I can’t afford to insure my family.” Improving the overall quality and reducing the expense of the general medical insurance would improve teacher satisfaction with compensation.

The third open-ended question asked participants to provide a constructed response to Item 44: What actions might administrators and policymakers take in order to improve the sense of self-efficacy among faculty members? The results of the constructed responses to this open-ended question yielded a set of recommendations that appear to have relatively broad participant support. The qualitative data were placed within the following four categories: resources, discipline, school leadership, and professional development.

In order to improve the sense of self-efficacy among faculty members, participants suggested that schools provide necessary resources to enhance teacher capabilities in the classroom, as indicated by such participant responses as, “they can ensure that we have all the learning tools needed for the classroom,” and “get textbooks
so that we don’t have to copy or borrow from other teachers.” Resources identified by teachers as necessary included textbooks, learning tools, and general school supplies. These responses from teachers suggested that having the necessary materials to be successful aids in building self-efficacy.

Discipline was another category that developed as a result of qualitative data analysis. Teachers indicated a need for administrators’ support of their discipline efforts. An example of the comments indicating the need for support with discipline was “acknowledge great classroom management, however, do not blame unacceptable behavior on classroom management. Address the real problem.” The suggestion included providing a set school-wide discipline policy that all teachers and administrators in the building follow. Recommendations from teachers included, “have a general policy in place for all schools so students know what is expected from school to school,” and “develop a set of school rules and procedures for all students to follow.” Teachers indicated a feeling of not being trusted by administrators when addressing repeated behavior problems as evidenced by comments like “trust the teacher’s opinions and gut feelings regarding repeat behavior problems.”

School leadership was an additional category that developed as a result of the analysis. Teachers indicated that self-efficacy of faculty could be improved if administrators were friendly, encouraging, consistent, and available. One participant responded, “they could be friendly and encouraging instead of unfriendly and looking for faults.” An additional response regarding administrators was “be more consistent and available for questions and support.” Teachers suggested that administrators provide feedback about their teaching and acknowledge good classroom management. In
addition, participants suggested that self-efficacy could be improved if administrators assist with issues that need to be corrected. Participants believed that the administrators’ role should go beyond simply discussing the issue; they should play an active part in resolving issues. One such response asserted, “when teachers express an issue, administrators could help them instead of just talking about it.” Recommendations indicated that teachers need to offer a more solid leadership approach.

The final suggestions involved providing professional development in order to improve self-efficacy. Suggestions for topics to strengthen professional efficacy included classroom management, Common Core Curriculum Standards, and school policies and procedures. One participant suggested, “continue to have staff development that address the needs of their faculty and staff.” These results indicated that teachers would be more efficacious if they were knowledgeable about the areas of professional development mentioned.

The final open-ended question (Item 45) provided data for Research Question 8 and read, what actions might administrators and policymakers take in order to improve teacher attendance? Once again, the results yielded a set of recommendations that appear to have relatively broad participant support. Categories generated from the coding of responses about ways to improve teacher attendance included school leadership, incentives, stress.

Participants responded that stress is an indicator of the likelihood of teacher absenteeism. One participant responded, “stress is high among teachers. Stress leads to sickness and absent teachers. So, focus on reducing stress felt by teachers.” An additional comment provided a more in-depth perception about teacher stress stating,
“Teachers should receive adequate planning/preparation time to relieve stress which leads to illness. Teachers who have good attendance should be rewarded.” In order to prevent stress, teachers suggested that administrators and policymakers build in work days to prevent teacher burnout. These additional days would offer more planning time for teachers to catch up with completing paperwork. In addition, teachers indicated a feeling that administrators may not be sensitive to teachers’ discernment of patterns of misbehavior by students, and that they may not acknowledge or treat such conduct accordingly. Related comments included observations such as, “be mindful of tone, facial expressions and overall demeanor when addressing issues with teachers.” Unsupportive tones produce a sense of lack of confidence in the teachers’ ability to recognize patterns of misbehavior and create a sense of inferiority in the teachers as they are left with the task of dealing with behaviors in their classrooms that need administrative intervention. One participant responded that administrators could “offer to assist in the classroom and show teachers what is expected instead of just telling them about the expectation.” Lack of administrative support around discipline creates stressful situations that often results in teacher absenteeism.

Participants responded that teacher absenteeism could be improved if administrators would improve school leadership. Teachers suggested that administrators focus on the positive aspects of the school and individual teachers. Suggestions also included that administrators provide a good support system in which teachers know their value. Comments included, “offer some positive comments and don’t comment on small errors by one teacher to the whole staff,” and “ensure that teachers are treated fairly and receive praise for what they do.” When errors are cited, teachers suggested that
administrators deal with those in private and not in front of the whole staff. In addition, teachers recommended that consequences be set for repeated patterns of absenteeism; “have a plan for excessive absences and implement for everyone.”

Finally, teachers suggested that incentives would be beneficial in improving teacher attendance. Suggestions for simple motivational incentives included duty free lunch, gift cards, no recess or cafeteria duty, blue jean pass, and early leave pass. More extravagant suggestions for incentives included cash bonuses, buy back of days not used each year, off-campus lunch, and recognition for high attendance at a special event. Teachers suggested that recognition of perfect attendance and related incentives not occur simply once a year. Rather, they noted that incentives would be more effective if they were offered incrementally at the end of each week, month, quarter, and year.

Summary

The purpose of this research study was to determine the relationships among job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism in the state of Mississippi. The study also addressed teachers’ perspectives regarding methods that can be used by policymakers to better ensure low rates of absenteeism. An original instrument was designed and utilized in this study. The instrument yielded quantitative and qualitative data. The data indicated that there is not a significant relationship between workplace conditions and teacher absenteeism. There is a moderate inverse relationship between the socioeconomic status of schools and teacher absenteeism. There is not a significant relationship between teacher satisfaction with compensation and teacher absenteeism. There is a moderate significant relationship between QDI and teacher absenteeism. There is not a significant relationship between
teachers’ sense of self-efficacy and teacher absenteeism. The results also yielded a set of recommendations that might prove potentially helpful for administrators and policy-makers to take in order to improve teacher absenteeism. Chapter V provides a discussion of these results.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationships among job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism in Mississippi. This study also addressed methods that can be used by policymakers to better ensure low rates of absenteeism. The study measured the relationships among teachers’ satisfaction with workplace conditions, socioeconomic status of schools, teacher compensation, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and rates of teacher absenteeism. In addition, the study provided participants with the opportunity to suggest methods that can be used by policymakers to better ensure low rates of absenteeism.

Summary of Procedures

The data that were used in order to analyze the research questions and hypotheses in this study were obtained from 84 completed instruments submitted by third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers from across the state of Mississippi. Once the instrument, which was entitled Teacher Job Satisfaction and Professional Efficacy Survey, was developed, an expert panel was organized to review and validate the instrument. The researcher sought approval from the superintendents of nine school districts in Mississippi. Two superintendents did not respond. A third district denied the researcher permission to conduct research. After six superintendents granted the researcher permission to conduct the research study, approval was sought from and granted by the University of Southern Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). Within the six districts, fifteen elementary schools participated in the final study. A pilot study was conducted to obtain data to test the reliability of the instrument. These data were analyzed using the
Cronbach’s alpha test of coefficient reliability. The test disclosed reliabilities of greater than .700 during the pilot study as well as during the subsequent dissertation study; these coefficients suggested that the item subscales had an acceptable internal consistency.

The researcher mailed the instruments to the participating schools through the United States Postal Service at the end of October 2013. Each school’s instrument package included sufficient copies of the cover letter to accompany the instrument. Instruments returned within three weeks were included in the study. Schools were provided with a self-addressed stamped envelope in order to enable the site contact persons to return their instruments to the researcher. The researcher numbered each survey as the instruments were received.

Quantitative and qualitative data were provided as a result of the mixed-methods study. The researcher utilized a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to record the quantitative data. The researcher recorded the qualitative data in a Microsoft Word document to be analyzed. Compilation and analysis of the data were performed by the researcher. Descriptive statistics, regression, Pearson’s r correlations, and Spearman’s correlation were used to analyze the quantitative data. Grounded Theory techniques were used to analyze the qualitative data.

Major Findings

Participants’ responses to the instrument provided data for this study that were both interesting and useful. There were 124 initial respondents. Forty of those responding were first year teachers at their respective campuses; therefore, they were asked to submit their instrument without completing them in order to account for data
from the previous school year for the schools participating in the study. Eighty-four participants returned completed surveys that provided data for this research.

Research Question 1 asked, to what degree are teachers absent from school for reasons other than approved holidays and vacations? The frequencies and percentages for missed days can be found in Table 2. Absences ranged from 0-46 missed days. The highest percentage of participants reported being absent from school three days. Among other respondents, the most frequent numbers were five and two for total days missed. A relatively low percentage missed ten or more days. Other demographic data revealed that the total number of days in a normal school year for a teacher receiving a full salary was either 180 days or 182 days. These data also enabled the researcher to calculate the rate of teacher absenteeism, the dependent variable in the study hypotheses, for each respondent. The rate of teacher absenteeism for participants in this study, 4.89%, was much lower than the national rate of teacher absenteeism, which has been reported as approximately ten missed days per year (Black, 2009; Bradley et al., 2007; Clotfelter et al., 2009; Finlayson, 2009; Miller et al., 2007).

Descriptive statistics for participant responses were computed to profile teacher perceptions of workplace conditions that included time, facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership. Research Question 2 asked, to what degree are teachers satisfied with workplace conditions? The four constructs for workplace conditions were each measured through the items in related subscales. The means for the four constructs of time, facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership ranged from 2.90-3.30. Participants gave the construct of time the lowest mean. The other constructs of facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership
received higher ratings. All of these means correspond generally to a rating of agree, indicating that respondents were largely positive about these dimensions of their working conditions.

Research Question 3 asked, is there a relationship between teachers’ satisfaction with workplace conditions and rates of teacher absenteeism? The related Hypothesis 1 predicted that there would be a relationship between teachers’ satisfaction with workplace conditions and rates of teacher absenteeism. However, the regression results revealed that there was not a relationship between teachers’ satisfaction with workplace conditions and rates of teacher absenteeism.

The socioeconomic status of schools was based on the eligibility of students to receive free or reduced-priced meals. Woolfolk (2007) described socioeconomic levels as low, moderate, and high. Over half of the respondents reported working in schools where 80-100% of students were eligible to receive free or reduced-priced meals. Among the schools of the remaining participants, 60-79% of students were eligible to receive free or reduced-priced meals. Research Question 4 asked, is there a relationship between the socioeconomic status of schools and rates of teacher absenteeism? The related Hypothesis 2 predicted that there would be a relationship between the socioeconomic status of schools and rates of teacher absenteeism. The Spearman’s rho correlation indicated a moderate significant inverse relationship between the socioeconomic status of schools and rates of teacher absenteeism.

Research Question 5 asked, is there a relationship between teachers’ compensation and rates of teacher absenteeism? The item that provided data on teacher perceptions of compensation listed pay and benefit elements that included base salary,
general medical insurance, dental insurance, group life insurance, merit pay plans, salary incentives for hard to staff schools, salary supplements, compensation for extra duties, and state retirement plans. The means for these items ranged from 3.23-3.80 on a scale that ranged from 2-5 (the score of 1 corresponded to a response of non-applicable). State retirement plan was the element of compensation that received the highest mean score, indicating that participants were somewhat satisfied with their state retirement plans. The lowest mean was compensation for extra duties. The results regarding these elements indicated ambivalence among participants regarding their compensation packages.

Participants’ responses about merit pay plans and salary incentives indicated that they were somewhat dissatisfied with these compensation elements. Respondents indicated that salary supplements and group medical insurance were compensation elements providing greater satisfaction than merit pay and salary incentives, but their mean responses were still at a level of somewhat dissatisfied. The participants tended to be undecided toward the compensation elements of dental insurance, base salary, and group life insurance. The Pearson’s r correlation for the related Hypothesis 3 revealed that the level of satisfaction with compensation did not have a significant relationship with teacher absenteeism.

Each participant reported his/her school’s QDI school performance rating based on the following status: failing, at-risk of failing, academic watch, successful, and high performing. Among the participants responding, 36.9% had a QDI representative of the lowest status indicating a failing school performance ranking for the 2012-2013 school year. In addition, 19.0% of the participants reported that their school was labeled at risk. Among other respondents, 36.9% reported that their school was at the level of academic
watch. It is important to note that only 7.1% of the respondents reported a ranking of successful, and none of the schools reported a ranking of high performing. Research Question 6 asked, is there a relationship between school QDI performance levels and rates of teacher absenteeism? The related Hypothesis 4 was tested using Spearman’s rho; the correlation showed that as QDI increases, so does the rate of teacher absenteeism.

Research Question 7 asked, is there a relationship between perceived professional efficacy and rates of teacher attendance? Participants responded to a variety of questions that probed their perceived sense of self-efficacy. The overall mean for self-efficacy was 4.01, indicating that teachers believe they can do quite a bit to influence educational matters in their classrooms. The Pearson’s r correlation for the related Hypothesis 5 revealed that there is not a significant relationship between teachers’ sense of self-efficacy and teacher absenteeism.

Research Question 8 was analyzed through the qualitative data collected from the participants. Research Question 8 asked, what actions might administrators and policymakers take in order to improve teacher attendance? Teachers were asked to respond to Items 28, 30, 44, and 45, which required a constructed response to open-ended questions designed to elicit recommendations for actions that administrators and policymakers might take in order to improve working conditions, satisfaction with compensation, sense of self-efficacy, and teacher attendance. The open-ended questions provided data from the teachers’ perspectives of their experiences during the 2012-2013 school year. Each item produced between 20-39 responses from participants. These responses yielded a set of recommendations for administrators and policymakers that appeared to have broad participant support.
Item 28 of the instrument asked teachers to respond to the following question: What actions might administrators and policymakers take in order to improve work conditions including time, facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership? The results from participants’ responses communicated that the most consistent recommendation for actions that might improve working conditions would be in the area of time. Responses in this category included reducing paperwork, increasing time in class periods, and protecting planning time. More than half of the responses to Item 28 communicated that time was the construct that caused the least satisfaction with workplace conditions.

Teachers responded to the following question in Item 30: What actions might administrators and policymakers take in order to improve teacher satisfaction with compensation? This question generated recommendations categorized into the following themes: base salary, general medical, and incentives. These three themes received broad support from the participants. Participants overwhelmingly indicated that a desire to raise teacher base salary to the national average. Participants also indicated a desire to improve the general medical insurance by lowering premiums, gaining a better quality insurance, and charging cheaper rates to enroll families. Participants further recommended that incentives be offered for teachers with perfect attendance. These incentives were as simple as blue jean passes and as complex as paying teachers for the actual hours invested in their job each week with a rate comparable to doctors and lawyers.

Item 44 of the instrument asked, what actions might administrators and policymakers take in order to improve the sense of self-efficacy among faculty members?
The responses from this item yielded categories that included providing resources and providing support from administrators. More than half of the responses indicated that the action most supported by teachers to improve the sense of self-efficacy would be to receive support from administrators. This category included suggestions such as discipline assistance in the classroom, execution of set procedures, encouragement, feedback, and consistency. Provision of resources received a significant number of responses and included providing textbooks, learning tools, planning time, and professional development.

The final open-ended question asked, what actions might administrators and policymakers take in order to improve attendance? Categories generated from the responses about teacher attendance included school leadership, incentives, and stress. School leadership, incentives for high attendance, and reduction in stress were cited by equivalent numbers of participants. Respondents suggested that educational leaders take a strong school leadership role. This role would involve support from administrators, including positive comments, fair treatment, modeling of high attendance, and good work ethic. Participants responded that incentives for high attendance rates would be beneficial in improving teacher attendance. Incentives suggested by participants included duty free lunch, gift cards, no recess or cafeteria duty, blue jean pass, and early leave pass. More extravagant suggestions for incentives included cash bonuses, buy back of days not used each year, off campus lunch, and recognition for high attendance at a special event.

Participants indicated that stress is an indicator of the likelihood of teacher absenteeism. Suggestions from participants to reduce stress included scheduling breaks
in the school calendar to prevent teacher burnout. These additional breaks throughout the year would benefit teachers by providing time to complete required paperwork. Teachers also indicated the desire to be treated with the authority as a professional when dealing with students who have a pattern of misbehavior in the classroom. The responses indicated that stress results from the lack of support from administrators when teachers are dealing with discipline of repeated behaviors.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationships among job satisfaction, self-efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism. The major findings of this study were consistent in some instances with previous research but inconsistent in others. The rate of teacher absenteeism is an obvious example of the latter type of finding. In a benchmark study, the USDE (2009) reported a national average rate of teacher absenteeism to be ten or more days per school year. Ballou (1996) and Podgursky (2003) found that teachers’ mean rates of absenteeism during the school year were in the 5-6% range. Unlike these findings, respondents in the current study reported that they stayed well below their allowance of sick and personal days, with three (approximately a 2% absence rate) being the most frequently missed number of days. The overall average rate of absenteeism among respondents was 4.89.

The responses from the quantitative data regarding working conditions revealed that these teachers are reasonably satisfied with working conditions; however, absenteeism was not impacted by satisfaction with working conditions. This lack of statistical correlation may be due, in part to consistently low levels of absenteeism among respondents; this reduces variability in the dependent variable, which can in turn impact
the likelihood of discerning correlation. The phenomenon of consistent general satisfaction with working conditions at both the item and subscale level might further reduce the likelihood of correlation; there was a relatively low variability among the means for the independent variables.

While respondents generally agreed that they were satisfied with the working condition of time, this construct produced the lowest mean score (2.90) among the working conditions. These results were consistent with numerous studies reporting that time is a factor that is important to teachers’ job satisfaction (Abdullah et al., 2009; Bishay, 1996; Giacometti, 2005). The other constructs of working conditions, facilities and resources (M=3.30), teacher leadership (M=3.07), and school leadership (M=3.13) received ratings indicative of satisfaction. These results were consistent with prior studies indicating that satisfaction with facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership may lead to lower rates of absenteeism (Emerick & Hirsch, 2007; Ladd, 2009; Marvel et al., 2007).

When asked to recommend actions that administrators and policymakers might take in order to improve working conditions, teachers responded overwhelmingly that the construct of time was the working condition that needs greatest attention. Specific comments included additional and protected time for instruction, additional and protected time for planning, provision of necessary resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership.

According to data collected by the National Education Association (2012) the national average for base pay in the United States is $35,672. The Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2009) gathered data that indicated Mississippi ranks 40th in the nation for base
pay for teachers. The data gathered in the present study to determine satisfaction with compensation indicated that even though teachers are ambivalent about their level of satisfaction with compensation, it does not appear to impact teacher absenteeism at their schools. These results are inconsistent with prior studies that indicate that teachers’ satisfaction with compensation influences teacher attendance (Goldhaber, 2009; Kopkowski, 2008). The majority of comments regarding base salary included recommendations for an increase to the base salary to make it comparable with the national average. Additional suggestions include providing adequate resources, supplements, and higher quality insurance.

Prior research indicates that schools exhibiting a low socioeconomic status often experience higher rates of teacher absenteeism (Bakker et al., 2007; Finlayson, 2009; Houston, 2007; Miller et al., 2007; Morgan et al., 2009). This study was consistent with previous research because a moderate inverse relationship was shown between socioeconomic status and rates of teacher absenteeism. While previous research was corroborated by the current study, the rates of teacher absenteeism among this study’s respondents were not as high as the national average for teacher absenteeism. This may help to explain the relatively low inverse correlation. Brogan (2009) reported that students from low socioeconomic status schools require an educational system with a more skillful and focused approach. Auguste et al. (2010) reported that teachers in low socioeconomic status schools are often paid less, and have less training than their counterparts at high socioeconomic schools. The participants responding from high-poverty schools tended to exhibit a higher rate of teacher absenteeism than those from their wealthier counterparts.
National studies have linked high teacher absenteeism to lower student achievement (Kronholz, 2013; Miller, 2012). The results for the current study were inconsistent with previous research in that there was a significant moderate relationship between Mississippi’s student performance metric, QDI, and rates of teacher absenteeism. The results of the current study showed that as QDI increases, teacher absenteeism increases. This contradicts research that typically finds that schools classified with a low performance rating tend to be challenged by a greater rate of teacher absenteeism than schools with successful QDI performance levels. It is important to note that the results of this study did not show that participants were utilizing all of their sick and personal days; rates of teacher absenteeism among study participants were relatively low compared to national averages (2% in this study versus 5-6% in other studies). In addition to the lower rates of teacher absenteeism presented in this study, only a small proportion of the participants (7.1%) responded from successful schools, and there were no respondents reported from high-performing schools. The lack of statistical correlation may be due to the low levels of response from successful and high performing schools. The respondents from this study were primarily from schools with the performance level of failing, at risk, and academic watch. These circumstances may help explain the significant moderate relationship that exists in the current study between QDI and rates of teacher absenteeism.

Pearson’s $r$ correlations indicated that there was not a relationship between participants’ sense of self-efficacy and teacher absenteeism. The results of this study showed that teachers have a relatively high sense of self-efficacy with an overall mean of 4.01 on a scale of 5. Prior research reports that teachers who possess the drive to
implement beneficial practices will overcome environmental obstacles (Overbaugh & Lu, 2007) and highly efficacious teachers have a positive impact on student success (Cooper-Twamley, 2009). The element with the highest mean (M=4.24) indicated that teachers believe they can establish routines to keep activities running smoothly. The element with the lowest mean (M=3.49) indicated that teachers believe they have some influence with how much they can assist families in helping their children do well in school. The qualitative data for improving sense of self-efficacy among faculty members suggested that provision of resources, support from administrators, and professional development would be influential in improving a sense of self-efficacy.

The qualitative responses dealing with actions that administrators and policymakers might take in order to improve teacher attendance suggested that teachers want to improve and desire more support from administrators in that endeavor. Recommendations emerged from participants’ responses that included school leadership, incentives, and stress. Recommendations to improve teacher attendance through school leadership included a good support system provided by administrators. Teachers recommended that administrators focus on the positive aspect of school and the school climate. Recommendations also included a reduction in the stress that encumbers teachers as a result of lack of administrative support. A suggestion to improve this element of school leadership included providing a written set of policies and procedures that are followed with fidelity by administrators. In order to reduce stress, teachers suggested that additional work days be built into the regular school calendar. And, finally, teachers recommended that incentives become part of the policies and procedures in order to improve teacher attendance. Suggestions for incentives included incentives
that are relatively easy to implement as well as being motivators for teacher behavior. These simple incentives included duty free lunch, gift cards, no recess or cafeteria duty, blue jean pass, and early leave pass. Additional incentives that motivate teacher behavior included cash bonuses, buy back of days not used each year, off-campus lunch, and recognition for high attendance at regular intervals.

The literature review found in Chapter II of this study discussed two prominent theories used to frame the current research. The first was developed by Frederick Herzberg (1976) and addressed employee satisfaction in the workplace. The second was developed by Albert Bandura (1977) and considered employees’ belief in their professional capabilities. Satisfaction in the workplace and self-efficacy proved to be important theories to consider in developing the framework for this study concerning teacher absenteeism.

Previous research has shown that absenteeism is influenced by the teacher’s level of job satisfaction (Alshallah, 2004; Herzberg et al., 1993; Syptak et al., 1999). Herzberg is credited with the introduction of motivation-hygiene theory to the body of theoretical knowledge that surrounds workplace satisfaction. In the current study, teachers reported general satisfaction with working conditions in the 2012-2013 school year. Herzberg’s theory, also known as the two-factor theory, identified two dimensions of job satisfaction: motivation and hygiene. The motivator factor addresses issues of achievement, recognition, responsibility, and advancement. The hygiene factor involved policy, supervision, compensation, and other elements of working conditions. The qualitative data for the current study suggested that motivator factors were not in place. The motivators encourage job satisfaction and production. In adherence to this theory, even
though a relationship was not shown between working conditions and rates of teacher absenteeism, the quality of work produced by teachers as a result of dissatisfaction is an issue.

Previous research has shown that highly effective teachers are better equipped to handle challenging tasks (Bandura, 1997; Chan, 2004; Edwards et al., 2002; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). In addition, teachers who exhibit high levels of self-efficacy continuously monitor and adjust their actions in order to advance students academically. The study explored the novel research issue of whether or not perspectives on self-efficacy might be related to teacher absenteeism. This initial inquiry revealed a group of teachers who felt they were capable of doing quite a bit to enhance student achievement. However, the results indicated that there was not a significant relationship between self-efficacy and teacher absenteeism. The highest mean (M=4.24) reported by the 84 participants addressed how well teachers can establish routines to keep activities running smoothly. The lowest mean (M=3.49) indicated that teachers feel they have some influence with assisting families in helping their children do well in school.

Limitations

This study was limited by some factors. Participants were limited to teachers in grades 3-5 in the state of Mississippi. Conclusions of this study should not be generalized to other geographic regions.

While the sample of districts was designed to ensure diverse representation relative to geographic, socioeconomic, and performance variables, the study was limited by the lack of participation from schools within districts that exhibited the QDI status at the level of high performing and schools of low poverty levels.
An additional sample limitation relates to the number of respondents and the degree to which they proved to be representative of the teaching population. The final respondent pool of 84 individuals was relatively low. The failure of some districts to participate in the study may have further limited the diversity of these groups.

The participant responses to the items regarding self-efficacy suggested that they believe themselves to be highly efficacious teachers. This variable had a mean of 4.00 on a scale of 5. The outcome may have produced more influential results if all schools/districts had participated. In addition, the fact that teachers responded to their sense of self-efficacy might be a limitation in itself. Gaining the perspective of administrators or parents regarding the teachers’ efficacy would have been helpful.

Importance to the Field of Educational Leadership

Freeman and Grant (1987) are quoted as saying, “Educational leaders can revise curriculum, toughen graduation requirements, and sing the song of excellence until you are hoarse. If teachers fail to show up for work, all your good intentions will wither on the boardroom floor” (p. 1). The propensity for teachers to miss school is influenced by reform and policy initiatives, by socioeconomic circumstances, and other variables. This research is important to the field of Educational Leadership because it sheds light upon factors that contribute to the rates of teacher absenteeism.

This study is important to the field of educational leadership because it explored relationships among job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism. In addition, this study examined relationships among teacher absenteeism and certain school, teacher, and workplace conditions including time, facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership. Where
significant relationships were found, there are opportunities for policymakers and administrators to re-examine conditions and strategies in their schools that might positively impact teacher attendance. Where significant relationships were not found, there is likewise opportunity to consider the implication of current practice, and there are opportunities for re-examining the variables through future research. For example, this study assuredly raises anew the connection between teacher absenteeism and student achievement. Similarly, this study may be of particular interest in low-socioeconomic schools, where teacher absenteeism has been found to be elevated.

This study will help policymakers and practitioners better understand the issues surrounding teacher absenteeism. Additionally, this study will provide results that may be instructive as policymakers and practitioners seek to improve teacher attendance.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Educational leaders have identified teacher absenteeism as a concern faced daily by administrators as they attempt to improve the effectiveness of their schools (Kronholz, 2013). Questions about teacher absenteeism among educational leaders included those that addressed what districts can do to reduce the number of absences in their district (Grimes, 2010; Kronholz, 2013). Additional research has reminded educational leaders that of all the controllable factors in an educational system, the most important by far is the effectiveness of the classroom teacher (Auguste et al., 2010). The impact that a teacher has on student achievement is hampered when teachers are absent (Clotfelter et al., 2009; Finlayson, 2009; Miller, 2012). In spite of reform mandates and research studies, absenteeism remains an issue that still challenges educational systems today.
Therefore, it is important for educational systems to develop policies and procedures that improve teacher attendance.

In the current study, there was not a significant relationship between workplace conditions and rates of teacher absenteeism. Respondents reported reasonable satisfaction with the conditions of their work environments. Prior research shows that workplace conditions influence rates of teacher absenteeism (McElroy, 2005). Therefore, if workplace conditions are satisfactory, teachers are less likely to miss school. The researcher recommends that educational leaders ensure that workplace conditions, particularly around the issues associated with time, remain at a level that provide satisfaction to the teacher. Individual schools would benefit from identifying and improving conditions of the workplace including time, resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership that cause dissatisfaction for employees. Participants recommended increasing and protecting instructional time as well as planning time. Participants recommended provision of necessary resources including textbooks, technology, assistant teachers, and Common Core resources. Participants also recommended involving teachers in setting policy, decisions about curriculum, and decisions about teaching material.

The results of this study were consistent with prior studies indicating a relationship between socioeconomic status and rates of teacher absenteeism. It is apparent that low socioeconomic schools are hit harder as a consequence of teacher absenteeism than their more affluent socioeconomic schools. Leaders in high poverty schools need to be aware of the tendency for teachers to be absent more and to address attendance through policy and procedures providing incentives for attendance in order to
reduce teacher absenteeism. Relevant practices noted in the literature review included finding ways to provide resources that would assist families with early development of school readiness skills (Morgan et al., 2009). Other relevant practices include providing professional development for teachers that offers necessary skills to close the gap between high poverty schools and their wealthier counterparts. Participants offered further insight into potential practices to improve attendance, including a solid school leadership approach, incentives for high attendance, and reduction in the amount of stress felt by teachers.

Mississippi ranks 40th in the nation for teacher pay. In order to attract and retain quality teachers, policymakers should continue to search for ways to improve teacher compensation packages. One way to improve teacher satisfaction with compensation would be to improve Mississippi’s teacher pay. Beaugez (2012) indicated that in comparison to teachers, other professionals have a more impressive compensation package. Kopkowski (2008) explained that the perception of being inadequately paid grows when the challenges of high poverty levels exist. It is recommended that educational leaders and policymakers not only seek ways to improve elements of teacher compensation but also consider salary supplements for hard to staff schools.

Previous research indicates that despite the involvement of political agendas of recent presidents, American students have not made adequate progress in education (Fiske, 2008; Miller, 2012; Woods & Montagno, 1997). Participants of the current study were generally from lower performing schools. The rates of teacher absenteeism were relatively low in light of the national rate of teacher absenteeism, which is currently ten days a year. It would be useful to examine practices in schools with low socioeconomic
status and low teacher absenteeism in order to draw lessons that might be generalized to other high-poverty schools.

Cooper-Twamley (2009) reported that highly efficacious teachers have a positive impact on student achievement. The current study did not find a relationship between professional efficacy and rates of teacher absenteeism. The results of this study found teachers who believe they are effective in their classrooms. However, the schools associated with the teachers in this study also reported working at low socioeconomic schools. It is recommended that educational leaders assess professional efficacy of teachers through means other than self-reporting and provide professional development in areas where teachers exhibit weakness.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations for future research are offered in order to advance the understanding about and diminish the occurrence of teacher absenteeism.

1. Future research is recommended to determine constructs in addition to job satisfaction, professional efficacy, compensation, and student and school performance that might influence teacher absenteeism. It would further be beneficial to expand research to obtain a greater understanding of how job satisfaction impacts teacher absenteeism.

2. Future research would be strengthened if data on absenteeism among respondents could be determined independently rather than through self-reporting.
3. Future research is recommended to obtain administrators’ and parents’ perceptions of teacher efficacy. Such findings should be further examined for their relationship to teacher absenteeism.

4. Future research is recommended to determine the quality of work produced by dissatisfied teachers who come to work.

5. Future research should include a larger group of respondents in schools that are more representative in terms of geographic, socioeconomic, and performance variables.

6. Future research should explore the phenomenon of teacher absenteeism in other grade levels. It would be beneficial to assess the impact of job satisfaction, compensation, professional efficacy, and student and school performance at other grade levels.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationships among job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism in Mississippi. This study also addressed methods that can be used by policymakers to better ensure low rates of absenteeism. The study measured the relationship between teachers’ satisfaction with workplace conditions, socioeconomic status of schools, teacher compensation, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and rates of teacher absenteeism. In addition, the study provided participants with the opportunity to suggest methods that can be used by policymakers to better ensure low rates of absenteeism.
The study involved a mixed methods design that yielded quantitative and qualitative data. The study used an original instrument entitled Teacher Job Satisfaction and Professional Efficacy (TJSPE). The instrument utilized 45 questions to gather data about teacher job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism. Teachers of grades 3-5 in the state of Mississippi were asked to participate in the study.

The quantitative portion of the study indicated that there was not a relationship between workplace conditions and rates of teacher absenteeism. There was not a significant relationship between satisfaction with compensation and rates of teacher absenteeism. And there was not a significant relationship between professional efficacy and rates of teacher absenteeism. On the other hand, there was a significant moderate inverse relationship between the socioeconomic status of schools and rates of teacher absenteeism. Contrary to much of the extant literature, there was a significant moderate relationship between Mississippi’s school performance metric, QDI, and rates of teacher absenteeism.

Responses to the qualitative portion of the study provided a set of recommendations that administrators and policymakers might implement in order to improve working conditions, satisfaction with compensation, professional efficacy, and teacher attendance. Respondents indicated a need for more time in order to be effective teachers. Respondents indicated a desire for compensation packages to be more attractive. Respondents indicated a desire for greater administrative support in order to gain a better sense of self-efficacy among faculty members. Finally, respondents
indicated that administrative support, recognition, and professional development would be beneficial in improving teacher attendance.

The study also included recommendations for further research to assist in decreasing teacher absenteeism. It was the researcher’s goal to add useful insights and policy considerations related that might lessen the occurrence of teacher absenteeism. It is hoped that this study furthers that aim.
APPENDIX A

TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION AND PROFESSIONAL EFFICACY SURVEY

Directions: This study requires information from the 2012-2013 school year. If you are a first year teacher or a new teacher at this school for the 2013-2014 school year, please answer the first question only and return your survey. This survey is designed to help the researcher gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that impact the satisfaction of teachers in their school activities. If you worked at this school during the 2012-2013 school year, please respond to each of the questions and statements below. Your answers are confidential.

Section 1: Demographics

1. How many years have you been employed as an educator at this school?
   - [ ] First year (return your survey)
   - [ ] One year or more (please answer the following questions)

2. What is the number of days that you missed school during the 2012-2013 school calendar year for reasons other than approved holidays and scheduled vacations?
   - Number of days absent ______________________________

3. In your district, what is the total of student days in a normal school year for a teacher receiving a full salary? ________________________ days

4. What is your school’s current socioeconomic status based on the eligibility of students for free or reduced-priced meals?
   - [ ] 90-100% free or reduced-price meals
   - [ ] 80-89% free or reduced-price meals
   - [ ] 70-79% free or reduced-price meals
   - [ ] 60-69% free or reduced-price meals
   - [ ] Less than 60% free or reduced-price meals
5. What is your school’s Quality Distribution Index (QDI) rating?

☐ Failing

☐ At-risk of Failing

☐ Academic Watch

☐ Successful

☐ High Performing

**Section 2: Working Conditions**

Please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements about the use of time in your school, your school facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, and 4=Strongly Agree).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>1</th>
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<td>6. Teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues.</td>
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<td>7. Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions.</td>
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<td>8. Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.</td>
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<td>9. Teachers are protected from duties that interfere with their essential role of educating students.</td>
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<td>10. Class sizes are reasonable such that teachers have time available to meet the needs of all students.</td>
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**Facilities and Resources**

<p>| 11. Teachers have sufficient access to appropriate instructional materials. |     |     |     |     |
| 12. Teachers have sufficient access to instructional technology, including computers, printers, software, and internet access. |     |     |     |     |
| 13. Teachers have sufficient access to office equipment and supplies such as copy machines, paper, pens, etc. |     |     |     |     |</p>
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<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<td>14. Teachers have access to reliable communication technology, including phones, faxes, and email.</td>
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<td>15. The school environment is clean and well maintained.</td>
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<td>16. Teachers have adequate space to work productively.</td>
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<td>17. The physical environment of classrooms in this school supports teaching and learning.</td>
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<td><strong>Teacher Leadership</strong></td>
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<td>18. Teachers are recognized as educational experts.</td>
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<td>19. Teachers are trusted to make sound decisions about educational issues.</td>
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<td>20. Teachers are relied upon to make decisions about educational issues.</td>
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<td>21. The faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems.</td>
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<td>22. Teachers are effective leaders in this school.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School Leadership</strong></td>
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<td>23. Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them.</td>
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<td>24. The school leaders consistently support teachers.</td>
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<td>25. Teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction.</td>
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<td>26. Teacher performance is assessed objectively.</td>
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<td>27. Faculty members are recognized for accomplishments.</td>
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28. What actions might administrators and policymakers take in order to improve working conditions including time, facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership?
Section 3: Satisfaction with Compensation

Please respond to the following questions regarding your level of satisfaction with your district’s compensation during the 2012-2013 school year. 1=Not offered, 2=Very Dissatisfied, 3=Somewhat Dissatisfied, 4=Somewhat Satisfied, and 5=Very Satisfied.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not Offered</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat Satisfied</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
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<td>29. What is your level of satisfaction with the following benefits in your district?</td>
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<td>a. Base salary</td>
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<td>b. General medical insurance</td>
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<td>c. Dental insurance</td>
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<td>d. Group life insurance</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Merit pay plan (A merit pay plan is a system in which teacher’s performance is a significant factor in determining his/her compensation.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Salary incentives for teaching in a hard-to-staff school</td>
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<td>g. Salary supplements that the district adds to the base state salary schedule</td>
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<td>h. Compensation for extra duties</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. State retirement plan</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

30. What actions might administrators and policy makers take in order to improve teacher satisfaction with compensation?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
### Section 4: Self-Efficacy

Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below (1 Nothing, 2 Very Little, 3 Some Influence, 4 Quite a Bit, and 5 A Great Deal).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nothing</th>
<th>Very Little</th>
<th>Some Influence</th>
<th>Quite a Bit</th>
<th>A Great Deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?</td>
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<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?</td>
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<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>How much can you do to help your students’ value learning?</td>
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<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?</td>
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<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?</td>
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<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

44. What actions might administrators and policymakers take in order to improve the sense of self-efficacy among faculty members?
Section 5: Policy

45. What actions might administrators and policymakers take in order to improve teacher attendance?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX B

EXPLANATION OF THE STUDY FOR EXPERT REVIEW PANEL

Title of Study: RELATIONSHIPS AMONG JOB SATISFACTION, PROFESSIONAL EFFICACY, STUDENT AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE, AND TEACHER ABSENTEEISM

Researcher: Laura Beckham Dana

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationships among job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism. The study will also address perspectives regarding methods that can be used by policymakers to better ensure low rates of absenteeism. The results will provide insights to educational leaders about practices through which they might more effectively address the issue of teacher absenteeism in their school system.

The participants will be selected through a voluntary sample selection from schools across the state of Mississippi. Schools were selected based on previous QDI results and poverty level data in order to gather data from districts/schools with diverse performance levels. Surveys will be delivered to the schools, and subjects will be asked to complete the surveys on a voluntary basis.

This instrument in the form of a 45-item questionnaire is designed to gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that impact the satisfaction of teachers in their school activities. Responses to the survey will gather quantitative and qualitative data.
APPENDIX C

TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION AND PROFESSIONAL EFFICACY SURVEY VALIDITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for agreeing to provide your time, expertise and assistance in the development of this instrument that will be used to gather data for this study. Your input and feedback are extremely important, greatly appreciated, and will be used to make any necessary adjustments in order to more effectively meet the criteria and overall goal of this study.

The purpose of the instrument you are evaluating is to determine its appropriateness for a study of the relationships among job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism. In addition the study will address perspectives regarding methods that can be used by policymakers to better ensure low rates of absenteeism. It is hoped that the data collected through these surveys will provide valuable insight for possible adjustments to current policy and practices that may influence teacher absenteeism.

Please take your time and critique the attached questionnaire by answering either “Yes” or “No” to the questions below, as well as providing the reasoning behind any responses that receive a “No” on the lines that follow.

Reviewer’s Name/Credentials: _______________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>If you selected No, please write why, and provide any feedback and/or suggestions that you feel would correct this aspect of the survey.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has the survey been developed with the use of language that can be easily understood by the participants in this study?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the survey address suitable issues in the statements that will allow the researcher to obtain sufficient information regarding teacher perceptions of working conditions including time, facilities and resources, teacher leadership, and school leadership?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>If you selected No, please write why, and provide any feedback and/or suggestions that you feel would correct this aspect of the survey.</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the survey address suitable issues in the statements that will allow the researcher to obtain sufficient information regarding teacher perceptions of <strong>satisfaction with compensation</strong>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the survey address suitable issues in the statements that will allow the researcher to obtain sufficient information regarding teacher perceptions of <strong>self-efficacy</strong>?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the survey address suitable issues in the statements that will allow the researcher to obtain sufficient information regarding teacher perceptions of <strong>teacher absenteeism</strong>?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you believe any of the survey items have the potential to come across as invasive and/or offensive to the participant?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Please specify the item number(s) with your response if you selected “Yes”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>If you selected Yes, please write why, and provide any feedback and/or suggestions that you feel would correct this aspect of the survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any items within the survey that you believe should be excluded from the survey?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Please specify the item number(s) with your response if you selected “Yes”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any survey items that you feel should be included that are <strong>not</strong> currently included on the questionnaire attached?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*If you selected “Yes” please write your suggested statement(s) below:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any particular items within the survey that you would modify?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Please specify the item number(s) with your response if you selected “Yes”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please feel free to provide any further suggestions or comments that you feel would strengthen the validity of this questionnaire in the adjacent section:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comments/Suggestions:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please specify the item number(s) with your response if you selected “Yes”.*
APPENDIX D

SUPERINTENDENT’S PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH LETTER

Date
Name of Superintendent
Name of School District
Address

Dear Superintendent ________________________________:

My name is Laura Beckham Dana and I am a graduate student enrolled in the Educational Leadership doctoral program at The University of Southern Mississippi. I am in the final stages of completing my proposal in preparation to defend my final dissertation. The title of my dissertation is Relationships among Job Satisfaction, Professional Efficacy, Student and School Performance, and Teacher Absenteeism. The study is beneficial to your district because of the growing demands placed on teachers, administrators and students to meet state and federal requirements as mandated in current policy reform for education.

I am requesting permission to include data from your elementary schools for the purpose of collecting pertinent information related to teacher absenteeism. With your permission, I will meet with the principals of your elementary schools, either by phone or in person, to introduce the study and distribute the surveys. Teachers will be asked to complete the survey and return it to the school counselor or a designated contact person. The school counselor or designated contact person will return the completed survey to me in the self-addressed envelope that I will provide.

If you grant me permission to conduct this research at your elementary campuses please copy and paste the content of the enclosed consent form to your district letterhead, sign it, and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please feel free to contact me via email at laura.dana@eagles.usm.edu or by telephone at 228-217-3922.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Yours in education,

Ms. Laura Beckham Dana
Doctoral Candidate, University of Southern Mississippi
SUPERINTENDENTS’ PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH:
CONSENT FORM

As superintendent of ________________________________ District,

I grant Laura Beckham Dana permission to conduct educational research in the district
during the Fall semester of the 2013-2014 school year.

This research will be conducted to determine the relationship and impact of job
satisfaction and professional efficacy on teacher absenteeism. Permission is granted to
contact the principals in order to introduce the study and distribute survey instruments to
teachers in elementary schools in the specified school district. It is my understanding that
participation in this study is voluntary. All responses will be kept confidential.
Individuals will not be identified in any manner.

_________________________________  ______________________
Superintendent’s Signature             Date
APPENDIX E

PRINCIPALS’ PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH LETTER

Date
Name of Principal
Name of School/School District
Address

Dear Principal ________________________________:

My name is Laura Beckham Dana and I am a graduate student enrolled in the Educational Leadership doctoral program at The University of Southern Mississippi. I am conducting research to complete the requirements for my dissertation. The title of my dissertation is Relationships among Job Satisfaction, Professional Efficacy, Student and School Performance, and Teacher Absenteeism. The study is beneficial to your school because of the growing demands placed on teachers, administrators and students to meet state and federal requirements as mandated in current policy reform for education.

I have been granted permission by your superintendent to conduct research in the district. I am requesting your participation in the research in order to gather data from certified elementary teachers in grades 3-5, for the purpose of collecting pertinent information related to teacher absenteeism. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. I ask that the survey documents be given to your school counselor or media specialist to be distributed to teachers in grades 3-5 at your school. Teachers will be asked to complete the survey and return it to the school counselor or media specialist. I am requesting that the school counselor or media specialist collect completed surveys and return to me in the self-addressed envelope provided.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please feel free to contact me via email at laura.dana@eagles.usm.edu or by telephone at 228-217-3922.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Yours in education,
Ms. Laura Beckham Dana
Doctoral Candidate, University of Southern Mississippi
APPENDIX F

IRB APPROVAL

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 13091702
PROJECT TITLE: Relationships Among Job Satisfaction, Professional Efficacy, Student and School Performance, and Teacher Absenteeism
PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation
RESEARCHER(S): Laura Beckham Dana
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education and Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership and School Counseling
FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 09/19/2013 to 09/18/2014

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board
September 11, 2013

Dear Colleague,

I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program at The University of Southern Mississippi. I have successfully completed my coursework, and I am in the process of conducting research associated with my dissertation topic: *Relationships among Job Satisfaction, Professional Efficacy, Student and School Performance, and Teacher Absenteeism.* I have obtained permission from your superintendent (see attached) to distribute a simple survey to participating teachers at your school.

All identifying teacher and school information will remain anonymous throughout the study. The data will not include any information disclosing names of teachers or students. Once the dissertation is complete, I will gladly share the findings of this research with interested individuals.

The following are directions for distributing, completing, and collecting the survey:

1. Please distribute the participant cover letters, adult consent documents, and surveys to certified teachers in grades 3-5.
2. Have the teachers complete the surveys and place them in the envelope provided in a designated location.
3. Once all teachers have inserted the surveys to the designated envelope, please return the surveys to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope.

Thanks again for your assistance in this professional endeavor. Should you have any questions or need assistance, I can be contacted at 228-217-3922 or laura.dana@eagles.usm.edu

Yours in education,

Laura B. Dana

Doctoral Candidate, USM
APPENDIX H

PARTICIPANT COVER LETTER

September 11, 2013

Dear Participant,

I am conducting research to determine the relationships among job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism. The study will also address teacher perspectives regarding methods that can be used by policymakers to better ensure low rates of teacher absenteeism. For this study, information is needed from 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade teachers.

Please take a few moments to complete the enclosed survey. This study requires information from the 2012-2013 school year. If you are a first year teacher or this is your first year at this school, please answer the first question only and return your survey. It should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete. The instrument is divided into five sections. The first section seeks pertinent demographic information related to your current teaching position. The second section will gather information related to your perception of the circumstances in which you work. The third section will gather information about your satisfaction with compensation. The fourth section will gather your beliefs about your self-efficacy. And, the final section will gather your input regarding what administrators and policymakers can do to improve teacher attendance.

The data collected will be compiled and analyzed. All identifying teacher and school information will remain anonymous throughout the study. The data will not include any information disclosing names of teachers or students. As the researcher, I sincerely appreciate your participation; your completed survey will serve as your consent to participate. However, your participation is voluntary and you have the right to decline participation. If you decide to withdraw from the participation at any time there will be no penalty.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that all research fits the federal guidelines for involving human subjects. Any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board. The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-001, (601) 266-6820.
Thanks again for your assistance in this professional endeavor. Should you have any questions or need assistance, I can be contacted at 228-217-3922 or laura.dana@eagles.usm.edu.

Yours in education,

Laura B. Dana

Doctoral Candidate, USM
APPENDIX I
ADULT CONSENT FOR RESEARCH FORM

University of Southern Mississippi
118 College Drive #5147
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
(601) 266-6820

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Date: September 11, 2013

Title of Study: Relationships among Job Satisfaction, Professional Efficacy, Student and School Performance, and Teacher Absenteeism

Researcher: Laura Dana (228) 217-3922

Email Address: laura.dana@eagles.usm.edu

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Thelma Roberson

What are some general things you should know about this research study?
You are being asked to participate in a doctoral research study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you have the right to decline participation. If you decline to participate or decide to withdraw from participation at any time there will be no penalty.

This type of research study is designed to gain new knowledge about a particular topic. The information gained from this study will be used to benefit current and future educators. However, please be aware that research of this sort may not provide direct benefit to you as an individual and there are sometimes risks associated with participation in research. In this instance, the risks are very minimal and are described in a subsequent section of this document.

Details about this study are discussed in detail below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about your participation in this study. If you have any concerns or questions please feel free to contact the researcher, listed above.

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of this study is to determine relationships among job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism. The study will also address perspectives regarding methods that can be used by policymakers.
to better ensure low rates of absenteeism. The results of this study will provide insights to educational leaders about practices through which they might more effectively address the issue of teacher absenteeism in their school systems. For this study information is needed from 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade teachers.

**How many people will take part in this study?**
If you decide to participate in this research, you will be one of approximately 200 participants in the study.

**How long will your participation in this study last?**
You will be asked to complete a survey instrument that should take no more than 20 minutes to complete. You may request a report of my findings at the conclusion of this study by emailing me at laura.dana@eagles.usm.edu.

**What will happen if you take part in the study?**
You will be asked to complete the survey instrument. A completed, returned survey instrument will serve as consent for your anonymous participation in this study. Upon completing the survey, please place them in the envelope located in the designated place. The researcher will maintain confidentiality of your responses by storing all returned instruments in a locked cabinet through the duration of the study. The survey instruments will be shredded upon completion of this project.

**What are the possible benefits of participating in this study?**
The benefits of this study are related to the information it will provide to practitioners, administrators, policymakers, higher education teacher preparation instructors, and other researchers. The purpose of this study is to determine relationships among job satisfaction, professional efficacy, student and school performance, and teacher absenteeism. The study will also address perspectives regarding methods that can be used by policymakers to better ensure low rates of absenteeism. The results of this study will provide insights to educational leaders and policymakers about practices through which they might more effectively address the issue of teacher absenteeism in their school systems.

**What are the possible risks or discomfort involved with being in this study?**
Risks associated with this study are minimal. The risks are that participants may not feel comfortable answering questions about their work place conditions, satisfaction with compensation, and sense of self-efficacy, or that their responses might prompt negative consequences. To alleviate these concerns, the researcher will ensure that their participation is anonymous and confidential. The data collected will be kept strictly confidential in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s home. Only the researcher and the committee members will have access to the responses. All surveys collected for this study will be destroyed by shredder after one year.

**How will your privacy be protected?**
Participants will not provide any personal information on the survey instrument. Participants will not be identified in any report or publication about this study. The
collected surveys will be placed in a locked cabinet. Only the researcher and committee members will view the actual surveys. The surveys will be shredded after one year.

**What if you have questions about this study?**
You have the right to ask any questions you may have about this study. Please feel free to contact the researcher listed at the beginning of this document to get answers to your questions.

**What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**
This study has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee. This committee ensures that all research fits the federal guidelines for involving human subjects. Any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-001, (601)266.6820.
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