THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB SATISFACTION, TEACHER ABSENTEEISM, AND INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT IN MATH AND LANGUAGE ARTS: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY

by

Daniel Keith Winters

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between teacher absenteeism and student achievement in math and language arts in the rural environment. *Classical Economic Theory* was used as a foundation in combination with *Choice Theory* and *The Model of Learning* to examine the role of the teacher and how the chronically absent teacher impacts the quality of learning for the student. The nature of substitute teaching was reviewed as well as how a break in continuity of instruction, caused by the chronically absent teacher, affects the overall quality of the educational environment. The amount of time teachers are absent from instructional duties and the reasons teachers miss school were examined. A correlational research design was utilized to determine if a relationship between teacher absenteeism and student achievement based on archived Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) data exists. The study specifically examined how student attainment, in the areas of math and language arts, may be related to teacher absenteeism and how teachers' job satisfaction relates to teacher absenteeism. Results suggest a weak correlation between absenteeism and student achievement and a general feeling of approval in the measure of job satisfaction.

Keywords: teacher absenteeism, student achievement, adequate yearly progress (AYP), Reporting Categories Performance Index (RCPI), Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP)

DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to dedicate this project to my grandfather Dan. You spent your life making us a respectable people, growing the church, and keeping the family. Your selfless example is one for all of us to aspire to follow. I can never forget your wise council; "Get all the education you can, son." At the age of 93, you continue to inspire me, and I am thankful God has kept us together.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Students today face many obstacles when attempting academic proficiency. Public Law (PL) 107-110, commonly referred to as The No Child Left Behind Legislation (NCLB), has created a culture of constant evaluation, reorganization, and quasi-accountability for public schools in the United States (Wallis & Steptoe, 2007). Although 10 states have recently received waivers for NCLB requirements, the process of obtaining a waiver entailed a guarantee by the state that strenuous accountability procedures continue to drive pedagogy (Hu, 2012; Layton, 2011). These forces continue to multiply the pressures on students to demonstrate academic proficiency. Likewise, the pressure on the local school system to have students perform at proficient levels is enormous (Derthick & Dunn, 2009). In the era of accountability, investigating and exploring teacher absenteeism may provide many solutions to these student obstacles, as well as help satisfy accountability requirements for local school districts. The manifestations of problems associated with teacher absenteeism provide an intriguing potential to alleviate, or at least begin to address, some of these obstacles.

Of the many barriers for student success, one often-overlooked aspect of student proficiency is teacher absenteeism (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2009; Roza, 2007; Woods & Montango, 1997). Many districts in the United States average 14 days per teacher in missed workdays each school year (Finlayson, 2009; Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007). Teachers with excessive absenteeism cause an interruption of the continuity of the learning process for students enrolled in their classes (Damle, 2009). In addition, there is an increased financial burden on the local school budget to pay for substitute teachers, as well as peripheral clerical duties associated with acquiring substitute teachers and associated services (Bruno, 2002; Damle, 2009; Miller, 2012; Woods & Montango, 1997; Wyld, 1995). Although many certified teachers utilize the opportunity of substituting as a stepping-stone to a permanent teaching position, in many

instances the substitute teacher is seldom qualified to provide adequate instruction in place of the professional teacher (Miller, 2012; Wyld, 1995). Studying teacher absenteeism will help define the relationship of teacher attendance to school expenditures, the continuity of the instructional process, and the value of modeling behaviors for students to follow.

There seems to be an element of professional disconnect with teachers in many school districts, especially in urban settings (Bruno, 2002), which results from a frustration with poor resource allocations, challenging social and political structures, and diminished school climate (Miller, 2012). This disassociation seems to encourage teacher absenteeism (Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007) and encourages the degradation of professionalism and collegiality within the school environment itself (Miller, Murnane, & Willett, 2008). According to Miller (2012), the culture of schools may be altered by a collusive behavior among teachers that encourages absenteeism. The impact the absentee has on students should be the first consideration when measuring the overall cost of absentee teachers. The negative effects of absenteeism on school climate, the resulting financial burdens encountered by the local school system, and the reasons teachers are dissatisfied with work should be secondary concerns.

Background

Absenteeism in the general workforce of the United States is well studied and has been estimated to cost employers about 180 billion dollars yearly (Weaver, 2010). Traditionally, there have been fewer scholarly inquiries pertaining to the element of teacher absenteeism and its contributory effects on student achievement (Clotfelter et al., 2009; Damle, 2009; Miller et al., 2008). Most all of the studies that have been conducted have taken place in metropolitan areas near large universities such as that of Clotfelter et al. (2009), near the North Carolina Research Triangle and Herrmann and Rockoff (2010) from the New York City area. Therefore, research into the effects of teacher absenteeism in a rural setting should provide needed supplementation

to this growing body of knowledge.

Research suggests that many school districts discourage scrutinizing teacher absenteeism because of the difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers (Bruno, 2002; Scott, 1998; Wyld, 1995). Thus, unchallenged absences by teachers may have become an unspoken fringe benefit of employment (Miller et al., 2008; Wyld, 1995). Steers and Rhodes (1978) explained that granting 12 sick days per year, would invariably mean that some employees would be "sick" for twelve days that year. Much evidence collected since their process model of absenteeism was developed suggests that organizational policies are associated with absence behavior (Dalton & Mesch, 1991). However, recent changes in accountability and evaluation of teachers have encouraged an analysis of teacher attendance at work, and in 2009 The Office for Civil Rights in the U.S Department of Education began collecting data about teacher absenteeism (Miller, 2012).

Although some school districts may permit soft evaluation of teacher absenteeism (Scott, 1998), much evidence suggests that teacher absenteeism is a factor in diminishing the positive educational experience of the student (Damle, 2009; Miller, 2012). Some studies suggest students who struggle the most, those who live in areas of lower socio-economic status and poverty areas, have teachers who also have the highest rates of absenteeism (Bruno, 2002; Miller, 2012). This high rate of absenteeism creates a snowball effect, which lowers the students' likelihood of becoming academically proficient (Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007).

The financial cost for the loss of days appears to be enough reason to investigate teacher absenteeism. Some estimates of the effects of teacher absenteeism approach 25 billion dollars per year in the United States (Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007). Other estimates are near 4 billion dollars annually (Miller, 2012). In addition to monetary considerations, there are negative educational burdens encumbered by the students of the absent teacher that must be addressed as

well. Woods and Montagno (1997) suggest that more than 75 million contact hours between the teacher and student are lost every year due to teacher absenteeism. Although substitute teachers often perform an admirable attempt to fill in for the missing teacher, the unfortunate truth is that they seldom teach with the same quality and rigor as the actual teacher of the class (Bruno, 2002; Damle, 2009; Miller et al., 2008; Weems, 2003; Woods & Montagno, 1997).

In order to establish a more complete picture of why many teachers choose to miss work, this study assesses the amount of job satisfaction the chronically absent teacher possesses and compares that to the job satisfaction of teachers who are not chronically absent. Although some studies suggest that teacher job satisfaction is at an all-time high (Peckham, 2007; Rebora, 2009), others such as Landers, Alter, and Servilio (2008) quickly temper that statement with a breakdown of the data by demographics and job assignment. A recent report by the Washington Post cites evidence that current teacher job satisfaction is at a 25 year low (Strauss, 2013).

Bruno (2002) concludes that teaching in an economically disadvantaged urban school increases the susceptibility of teachers to be absent, and it is associated with the climate in which they work. Indeed, it appears that many teachers, especially in traditionally tough areas to perform the art of teaching, have legitimate reasons to be dissatisfied with their employment circumstances. Klassen, Usher, and Bong (2010) report that teacher stress, resulting from negative dealings with administrators, students, and the public, causes serious somatic and behavioral consequences. The resulting consequences include manifestations of burnout, depression, poor performance, and absenteeism (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). An examination of the level of job satisfaction the chronically absent teacher possesses should provide insight into the role this factor plays in teachers regularly attending work.

Some research has determined there is a lack of correlation in job satisfaction and work performance as well as attendance in many industrial and business settings (Scott & Taylor,

1985). However, many still believe that the job situation in which the employee is working is mediated by job satisfaction, which affects absenteeism and job production (Steers & Rhodes, 1978). There is substantiated evidence that those who work in human services may have their attendance rates and job production affected by job satisfaction (Spector, 1985). There is also evidence of strong correlations in general employment sectors that voluntary absences by employees are related to the measure of organization commitment and job satisfaction of the individual (Sagie, 1998). The Spector *Job Satisfaction Survey* was designed to measure the job satisfaction of people working in the human services (Spector, 1985) and was utilized in this study to measure the effect that teachers' job satisfaction had on their attendance at work, and how that, in turn, affected the performance of students in their respective classes.

The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) provides an excellent tool for initiating an investigation into the effectiveness of the chronically absent teacher by examining students' results in math and language arts. The TCAP was initiated in 1992 and has an accumulation of information about teacher effectiveness for grades 3-8 that has been maintained diligently since that time (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013). This data is readily available for teachers who instruct in grades 3-8 and may be utilized to determine the amount of achievement their students have attained during previous years.

Problem Statement

High rates of voluntary teacher absenteeism are symptomatic of a negative school climate and diminished student achievement (Bowers, 2001; Bruno 2002; Shapira-Lishchinsky & Rosenblatt, 2010) in the target school system. Previous studies have linked climate and academic achievement (Sherblom, Marshall, & Sherblom, 2006) and negative climate and teacher absenteeism (Bruno, 2002; Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007; Miller et al., 2008). The local school system, used for this study, struggles to maintain Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as

assessed by the Tennessee Department of Education. Many of the local schools operate at or below the proficient level, causing constant anxiety that failure of some of the local schools and possibly the school system is imminent. The determination of AYP is based on the Tennessee Comprehensive Achievement Program (TCAP). The TCAP assessment is administered each year to public school students in grades 3-8.

Since the 2001-2002 school year, the target school system has taken strategic action to decrease the amount of teacher absenteeism using various monetary awards systems. There is speculation that the high rate of teacher absenteeism, approximately 12 days per year, is a sign of other problems such as negative climates within schools, lack of collegiality, and a general disenfranchisement with the school system. Although there have been numerous conflicts in bargaining issues between the local teachers' union and the board of education, one area in which they are in agreement is that teachers are missing too many workdays. The strategies taken to improve this situation are beyond the scope of this examination. Nevertheless, there has been little or no progress made in improving the attendance rates of the local teachers. An investigation into a connection between absenteeism rates and student achievement may provide a basis for the improvement of student achievement as well as encourage the building of a positive school climate. Bruno (2002) and Jacobs and Kritsonis (2007) hypothesize that the quality of school climate is related to teacher absenteeism. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment mediates the employee's absentee behavior depending on his or her current employment circumstances (Ostroff, 1992; Shapira-Lishchinsky & Rosenblatt, 2010).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to attempt to measure and understand the relationship between student achievement in math and language arts and the absenteeism rate of teachers in the target school system, in order to try to establish a basis for a proactive intervention that

ultimately improves the achievement levels of local students. There is evidence in the literature that there is a parallel between teacher absenteeism and the achievement of students (Bruno, 2002; Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007; Miller, 2012). The achievement rate of many of the local schools has narrowly escaped an evaluation of failure status according to state report card data. If a significant correlation exists between student achievement in language arts and mathematics and the amount of teacher absences, the Local Education Agency (LEA) could explore interventions to improve teacher attendance based on the findings of this research. Significant findings may also contribute positively to the teaching culture and help promote an awareness of the need for improvement in teacher attendance at work.

Significance of the Study

During the 2012-2013 school year, the 474 teachers of the target school system missed a combined 5,738 days of student instruction. This amount of absenteeism is above the national average and might have an effect on the quality of education for the students in this district. This would be consistent with issues discussed in the literature concerning teacher absenteeism (Bruno, 2002; Clotfelter et al., 2009; Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007; Miller et al., 2008, Miller, 2012; Woods & Montagno, 1997). The data may represent an apparent increasing trend from the data first reported to the investigator during the 2008-2009 school year. The original data reported 499 teachers missing a combined 4,607 days of school. The achievement levels in most of the local schools are adequate; however, the Tennessee State Department of Education has placed three of the schools on the statewide focus list, and school improvement for those schools is deemed mandatory. There is also concern at the district level that several of the marginal schools are losing ground and will soon become labeled as “at risk” or become focus schools. Research in the area of teacher absenteeism may provide information for the local administrators to intervene proactively in some schools that have been labeled “at risk” and aid in preventing

future sanctions from the state department of education towards underperforming schools.

Research Questions

Traditionally, the literature concerning teacher absenteeism focused on the monetary cost of teacher absenteeism and less on the academic effects the absenteeism was having on student achievement (Woods & Montagno, 1997). Likewise, much of the teacher absentee studies conducted traditionally were based in urban populations, such as Bruno (2002) working in the Los Angeles area of California, and Miller, Murnane, and Willett (2008) that include data for Ormondale School District, located in the northern United States. Each of these studies and others like them reported mixed outcomes and elusive and often contradictory results because of the many variances in teacher skills (Miller et al., 2008), quality and availability of substitutes (Damle, 2009), and associated school climate (Bruno, 2002). Job satisfaction and its role in job commitment is a popular concept in the literature, although the role of job satisfaction for teachers remains sparsely studied in rural settings (Klassen et al., 2009). Based on the review of literature, the researcher believes that some plausible questions concerning the rate of absenteeism within the target school system that may contribute to the growth of knowledge in these areas are as follows:

1. What is the strength and nature of the relationship between student performance in reading and language arts, as measured by the TCAP, and teacher absenteeism in the rural environment?
2. What is the strength and nature of the relationship between student performance in mathematics, as measured by the TCAP, and teacher absenteeism in the rural environment?
3. What is the strength and nature of the relationship between job satisfaction and teacher absenteeism in the rural environment?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were generated from the research questions:

1. Student performance in reading and language arts, as measured by the TCAP, will be statistically significant and positively correlated to teacher absenteeism in the rural school environment.

   Null hypothesis: Teacher absenteeism is not significantly correlated with student achievement, as measured by the TCAP, in reading and language arts in the rural school environment.

2. Student performance in math, as measured by the TCAP, will be statistically significant and positively correlated to teacher absenteeism in the rural school environment.

   Null hypothesis: Teacher absenteeism is not significantly correlated with student achievement as measured by the TCAP in math in the rural school environment.

3. Teacher job satisfaction, as measured by the *Job Satisfaction Survey,* is significantly and negatively related to the rate of teacher absenteeism in the rural school environment.

   Null hypothesis: Teacher job satisfaction is not significantly related to teacher absenteeism in the rural school environment.

Identification of Variables

In the design of the study, the predictor variable is the absentee rate of the teacher calculated by averaging the total number of sick leave absences for the most recent three consecutive school years. The co-variables are the amount of student achievement relative to the state TCAP mean in math and reading and language arts derived from the same three year time period. Job satisfaction, defined as the extent that a person likes, dislikes, or is indifferent to

their current job assignment (Spector, 1997), is another co-variable determined by the administration of the *Job Satisfaction Survey*. The (JSS) is scored according to a predetermined classification of scores in three range classifications: satisfied, dissatisfied, or ambivalent (Spector, 2009).

The selected sample of teachers who have missed nine or more days of school on average for three consecutive years will act as the experimental group. Teachers missing five or fewer days on average for the same time period will act as the control group.

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions

The researcher assumes that teachers who have demonstrated chronic absences for the last three years have made a habit of missing school. Teachers who have been chronically absent for an average of more than nine days per school year are missing five percent of their work year, an abnormally high percentage compared to similar professions (Roza, 2007). There is also the assumption that teacher absenteeism aids in a negative climate for the absent teacher's peers and that the school system accrues an unwanted financial burden for this chronic behavior.

Limitations

The findings of this study will be applicable only to the population of local teachers sampled. The data generated will be limited to the data collected for the teachers and reported on the state report card. The accuracy of the absentee data is limited to that provided by the local county government finance department. Although the Tennessee Department of Education keeps yearly progress data for individual teachers, these records are not public record; therefore, the investigation is limited to accessible records for teacher effect data.

Research Plan

The research plan is correlational in design, which fits with the archival nature of the data. The predictor variable for this research is the rate of absenteeism for the teacher. Teachers included in this research were those who missed more than nine days (i.e., 5%) of school for the last three consecutive years as compared to those who have averaged missing five days (i.e., 2.5%) of school or less for the same three year period. The data for teacher attendance was obtained from the local county finance department and was sorted according to the grade level and subject area taught by the teacher. One co-variable consisted of the average student scores on the TCAP for the consecutive three year period. This information was obtained from the Local Education Agency's testing department, and matched with the sorted absentee data. For evaluative purposes, the study was limited to those teachers who teach in elementary grades 3-8.

The evaluative process examined the state report card issued for each teacher's class (three year average) after the state mandated tests have been scored and recorded. Therefore, special teachers (i.e., those who teach untested subjects such as art, music, and physical education) were not included in the sample. Similarly, special education teachers were not included in the sampling process, and students who qualify for special education services who are placed in the regular classroom did not have their test scores included in the comparison of data. For the purposes of this study, science and social studies TCAP data were not utilized. Currently, the state department of education uses mathematics and reading and language arts scores to determine school quality, but they do not use science and social studies scores. Language arts and mathematics data were analyzed using basic statistical procedures along with the data for each teacher's absences.

The target sample size was 30 teachers for each group to be investigated and once the sorting of the data was complete the resulting groups consisted of these numbers:

Group 1-teachers who averaged missing five days or less per school year for three years and taught math, $n = 25$.

Group 2-teachers who averaged missing five days or less per school year for three years and taught reading and language arts, $n = 24$.

Group 3-teachers who averaged missing nine days or more per school year for three years and taught math, $n = 35$.

Group 4-teachers who averaged missing nine days or more per school year for three years and taught reading and language arts, $n = 34$.

All of the participants in these groups were Caucasian and ranged in age from 24 years old to 60 years old.

The researcher evaluated the data in order to identify if a relationship exists. The correlational design used SPPS version 21 to track and manipulate data and the three year average was determined for each respective individual for absenteeism and TCAP scores. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated with a confidence interval set at $p = .05$. The results were then analyzed graphically and the strength of the correlation evaluated.

Another aspect of the study was to determine if a relationship exists between the level of teacher's job satisfaction and his or her attendance patterns. In this aspect of the study, job satisfaction is the co-variable, and the rate of absenteeism is the predictor variable. For this part of the study, the above-mentioned absentee data was utilized to group teachers into two groups: those missing five days or less on average and those who averaged missing nine days or more for three years. These teachers were administered the JSS, by two independent researchers on a voluntary basis. From the sample of teachers who averaged missing five days or less, 25 completed the survey. Of those teachers who missed nine days or more of school on average, 21 agreed to complete the JSS. The results of these surveys were compared to established norms to

determine the overall level of teacher satisfaction in each group and then to determine if there was an association to absentee behavior.

Core Terms

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) – continuous and substantial yearly improvement toward achieving proficient and advanced performance levels (Schwarz, Yen, & Schafer, 2001).

Individual Profile Report (IPR) – information regarding a student's overall performance on the content area and in each reporting category (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010).

Intermediate School- traditionally considered grades 4-6 or for students aged 11-13 (Farlex, 2014) but for the purpose of this study, grades 3-8.

Convenience Sampling- a group of cases that are selected simply because they are available and easy to access (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

Job Satisfaction- an emotional-affective response to a job or specific aspects of a job (Spector, 1985).

Purposive Sampling- the process of selecting cases that are likely to be "information rich" with respect to the purposes of a qualitative research study (Gall et al., 2007).

Reporting Categories Performance Index (RCPI) - the estimated number of items students would be expected to answer correctly if there had been 100 similar test items (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010).

Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) - a criterion referenced test administered to students in grades 3 - 8 each year in Tennessee (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013).

Teacher Collective Efficacy- a group attribute rather than an aggregate of many

individual teacher's self-efficacy beliefs (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Ishan, 2013).

Teacher Self-Efficacy- the beliefs teachers hold about their personal capabilities to perform their duties in the classroom (Klassen, Usher, & Bong, 2010).

Quick Score Report – The report for the progress of the students within the individual teacher's class for the previous academic year (Tennessee Department of Education, 2010).

Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS) - A statistical method used to measure the influence of a district or school on the academic progress (growth rates) of individual or groups of students (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013).

Presenteeism – the problem when a worker is on the job but not fully functioning, due to illness or dissatisfaction (Cooper, 2011).

Fit Theory - how compatible the employee is with his or her work environment, how the demands of the job match the individual's abilities to accomplish the task, and how the reality of the work environment matches the employee's perception of the work environment (Chenevey, Ewing, and Whittington, 2008).

Withdrawal behavior – actions intended to place physical or psychological remoteness between employees and their workplaces (Carmeli, 2005).

Summary

In an educational world that is focused on accountability and restructuring, the relationship between teacher absenteeism and student achievement remains a poorly investigated and addressed subject especially in the rural environment. This project was an attempt to determine the nature of that relationship and to define the parameters of what motivates teachers to miss school, as well as to measure how teachers being absent from work affects students. Specifically, this study addressed the problem of teacher absentee rates and the effect that

absenteeism has on the target school system's academic performance in language arts and mathematics in a rural setting. A defined link between teacher absenteeism and student performance could be used to proactively intervene in the negative climate and associated behaviors generated by absentee teachers in order to enhance the learning environment and performance of students in these academic areas.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Although teachers have made great strides in promoting their professional status in the past three decades, one aspect of the teaching culture that encourages an unprofessional view of educators is teacher attendance at work (Podgursky, 2003; Sawchuk, 2008; Weems, 2003). This study is an examination of the relationship between teacher absenteeism and student achievement in the interest of improving the professional status of teachers, as well as of enhancing the educational process of the students. This literature review is an evaluation of the associated aspects of teacher absenteeism as well as the factors that influence job satisfaction. The literature contains discussion of the nature of substitute teaching along with how a resulting break in continuity of instruction affects the overall quality of the instructional environment when teachers are absent. The amount of time teachers miss work is examined and the nature of the TCAP is appraised.

The archival nature of teacher absentee records and the readily available TCAP data provide an opportunity to use basic correlational techniques to search for a relationship between teacher absenteeism and student performance. The researcher used the data from the TCAP to investigate the relationship between student performance and teacher absenteeism. The correlational research design allowed the researcher to investigate the relationship between teacher absenteeism and student achievement through a simplistic evaluation of existing data. Therefore, a section of the literature review describes the nature of the TCAP assessment process in order to aid the reader in the understanding of this process and the applied use of this information.

Studies such as those of Bruno (2002) and Jacobs and Kritsonis (2007) suggest that job satisfaction is related to the absentee rate of employees; consequently job satisfaction is

investigated in order to understand the motivation driving teacher absenteeism. The nature and origin of the JSS is examined in the literature review as well other aspects of employee productivity related to absenteeism.

Theoretical Framework

From an employment point of view, *The Classical Theory of Economics* provides a basis to evaluate why teachers should be present in the classroom (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). The behaviors of employed teachers who fail to perform their jobs by missing work can be examined psychologically using William Glasser's (1998) *Choice Theory*. In this study, the researcher examined the theoretical foundation for the negative effect of educational pedagogy practices of the chronically absent teacher using the idea of John Carroll's *Model of Learning* (1963).

The Classical Theory of Economics and the work of Sir William Author Lewis (Tignor, 2004) can be applied to make the assumption that individuals enter the teaching profession because of the attractiveness of the benefits and rewards it provides compared to other viable outlets of employment. Guarino, Santibanez, and Daley (2006) explain the employment of teachers in this way:

> In summary, economic labor market theory suggests that the willingness of individuals to obtain the necessary qualifications and work as teachers depends on the desirability of the teaching profession relative to alternative opportunities. Individuals compare the overall compensation-salaries, benefits, working conditions, and various forms of rewards-offered by teaching with that offered by other jobs or activities available to them. Schools and districts can influence elements of overall compensation to bring supply in line with their demand for teachers. In addition, they may adjust their standards of teacher quality according to whether teachers are in short supply or large supply (p. 177).

Thus, once an individual is employed as a teacher, he or she is likely to approach daily employment activities from that foundational basis. Just as the schools and districts can influence elements of overall compensation and demand, they also are partly responsible for influencing the retention and work ethic of the employee (Gaziel, 2004; Guarino et al., 2006). This influence can be measured through job satisfaction instruments such as the JSS designed by Paul Spector (2009).

The employee also has a role in determining the daily interaction that occurs between employee (teacher) and employer (administrator). Two possible reasons to miss work are voluntary absence, when the employee chooses to miss, and involuntary absence when the employee is forced to miss due to circumstances outside of his or her control (Gaziel, 2004; Steers & Rhodes, 1978). In *Choice Theory*, Glasser (1998) explains that poor quality work emulates from the decisions employees make on a daily basis. Glasser (1998) states, "Unhappiness, not so much with the job itself, but with the person you work for or the people you work with, is a leading cause of low-quality work" (p. 284).

There exists more than 50 years of research about the topic of worker absenteeism and the reasons it occurs, much of which has proven inconclusive (Gaziel, 2004). Certainly, a difficulty in researching absenteeism is determining the extent to which an employee is free to choose to be absent (Steers & Rhodes, 1978). However, there seems to be a trend in absenteeism that assumes most avoidable absentee events are short term, and longer term absenteeism is usually unavoidable (Dalton & Mesch, 1991). Voluntary absence is usually marked by short duration and high frequency (Gaziel, 2004). The concept of shirking or missing work when there is not a legitimate reason for doing so and its manifestation into a chronic behavior for employees is very difficult to define and study (Ose, 2005). A synthesis of the available research reveals that employees miss work 35% of the time for personal illness, 21% of the time for

family issues, 18% of the time for personal needs, 14% of the time as an entitlement, and 12% of the time because of stress (Weaver, 2010).

Absenteeism is one type of withdrawal behavior, and it can become problematic when employees perceive one or more of the five basic organizational culture components as being negative (Carmeli, 2005). Carmeli (2005) cites these components as (a) lack of job challenge, (b) poor communication, (c) lack of trust, (d) lack of a feeling of innovation, (e) and social cohesion. It is important to note that these components are based on the employee's perception of the existence of each component and its quality rather than on indicators confirming the value and existence of the components other than the employee (Warr & Inceoglu, 2012).

Herzberg, Maunser, & Snyderman (1959) delineated job satisfaction into motivators: recognition and achievement as positive job factors, and hygiene factors, such as salary and working conditions, as being negative aspects. In Herzberg's view, job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are on two separate continuums based on physical and psychological needs, and these do not necessarily overlap (Tietjen & Myers, 1998). Locke (1976) tempered Herzberg's view of job satisfaction by pointing out that it lacked a value component, and that physical needs and psychological needs are not easily separated. The work of these two theorists provide much of the modern understanding of balancing tasks and relationships and the role leadership plays in these dynamics including withdrawal behavior and absenteeism (Steers & Porter, 1975; Tietjen & Myers, 1998).

Carroll (1989), when reflecting upon the 25 year anniversary of his *Model of Learning*, postulated that learning was a function of the amount of time needed to learn a quantity of knowledge, divided by the amount of time allotted to learn the subject matter. According to the *Model of Learning*, the amount of time teachers spend teaching material is directly related to the outcomes of the student. McIlrath and Huitt (1995) provide this summary of Carroll's (1963)

Model of Learning:

> In his model, Carroll states that time is the most important variable to school learning. A simple equation for Carroll's model is:
>
> **School Learning = f (time spent/time needed)**.
>
> Carroll explains that **time spent** is the result of **opportunity** and **perseverance**. **Opportunity** in Carroll's model is determined by the classroom teacher; the specific measure is called **allotted** or **allocated time** (i.e., time allocated for learning by classroom teachers.) **Perseverance** is the student's involvement with academic content during that allocated time. Carroll proposed that perseverance be measured as the percentage of the allocated time that students are actually involved in the learning process and was labeled **engagement rate**. **Allocated time multiplied by engagement rate** produced the variable Carroll proposed as a measure of time spent, which came to be called **engaged time** or **time-on-task** (para. 5; emphasis original to text).

It is important to note that the engaged time of the student is paramount to developing successful students and that any disruption of this dynamic will result in diminished results. Teacher absenteeism is a major cause of disruption of the teaching-learning process (Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005) and Carroll's *Model of Learning* describes how the absent teacher affects the opportunity the student has to be exposed to subject matter.

The acceptance of a job offer implies acceptance of the wage rate and the working conditions in which the employee will work (Ose, 2004). Individuals make this choice based upon a determination that the profession of teaching is the most viable form of employment for them (Guarino et al., 2010). Glasser (1998), in *Choice Theory*, explains that individuals who exhibit negative behaviors at work, such as chronic absenteeism, are consciously choosing to manifest these behaviors. Carroll's *Model of Learning* can be used to explain how the

chronically absent teacher is impacting the quality of instruction for the student in a negative manner through the breakdown of time on task (Carroll, 1989).

Because the examination of the relationship between teacher absenteeism and student achievement in the literature is in its infancy (Clotfelter et al., 2009; Damle, 2009; Gaziel, 2004; Miller et al., 2008; Shapira-Lishchinsky & Rosenblatt, 2009), this investigation centered on a level one investigation. Miller, Murnane, and Willett (2008) describe the present state of understanding of the relationship between teacher absences and student achievement:

> Many studies have found a negative relationship between teacher absences and student achievement. However, these studies do not provide compelling evidence of a causal link between teacher absences and student achievement because they do not deal explicitly with the potential correlation between measures of teacher skill and effort (p. 184).

In this study, the researcher attempted to establish a correlation between teacher absenteeism and student achievement. Finding a link between teacher absenteeism and student achievement at the local level may lead to future studies that examine in detail the causality of the phenomenon.

The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program

The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) is a criterion-referenced achievement test designed to evaluate student proficiency in mastering the Tennessee curriculum as outlined in the Tennessee Curriculum Framework (Tennessee State Department of education, 2010). In grades 3-8, the TCAP achievement test encompasses the disciplines of reading and language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The test has been in use since the 1986-87 school year and has undergone several revisions in order to maintain its relevance to the contemporary educational process (Tennessee State Board of Education, 2005). Components of

the test allow for longitudinal review of skills as well as classifying students as proficient, advanced, or below proficient in current achievement. The TCAP is administered state-wide to all students in grades 3-8 during a testing window in the months of April and May of each school year. The results of the test are available in September and October of the next consecutive school year (Tennessee State Department of Education, 2013).

Review of the Literature

Assuming that teachers choose the profession of teaching, and that being absent from work causes a breach in the Carroll (1963) learning equation, the current literature was examined to define the parameters of teacher absenteeism and its associated phenomena. Previous research concerning the effects of absenteeism in the general workforce, how that chronic absentee behavior affects job performance, and how being absent from work is associated with job satisfaction and the health of the organization is examined. The literature is then reviewed to see how these concepts relate to the art of teaching.

Steers and Rhodes (1978) point out that the necessity to miss work is often out of the employee's hands, such as in situations of sickness or family responsibilities. On the other hand, for those who abuse leave policies and sick leave, Glasser's (1998) *Choice Theory* dictates that a conscious choice must be made by the employee to decide to be chronically absent from work. Indeed, the measurement of absenteeism confounds any research, and excused absences, unexcused absences, and extended weekends are often mixed in absentee reporting and measurement (Dalton & Mesch, 1991).

Once an individual makes the conscious choice to accept employment in a profession, he or she goes through a compliance stage that is based on external rewards or fear of punishment (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955). When the employee and organization have a healthy relationship, the employee feels established within the organization, and he or she begins to work towards

social development and recognition (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). The employee's commitment to the organization occurs when harmony exists between the values of the employee and the organization, and the employee accepts the organization's values and norms as his or her own (Aydin, Sarier, & Uysal, 2013). When there is an unhealthy relationship between the organization and the employee, job productivity diminishes, and the potential for absenteeism and attrition greatly increases (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955; Carmeli, 2005). Therefore, it is necessary to examine the theoretical relationships between motivation, job satisfaction organizational culture, and absenteeism in the workforce.

Motivation, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Culture, and Absenteeism in the Workforce

Motivation and job satisfaction. In the view of many, the modern concept of job satisfaction grew out of the Hawthorne experiments conducted in the 1920's and observed by Harvard Business Professor Elton Mayo for several years (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955; Chlldress, 2014; Gabor, 2000; Judge et al., 2001; Spector, 1997; Steers & Porter, 1975). Mayo, along with his associate Fritz Roethlisberger, are credited with making the science of human management legitimate and humanistic through the synthesis of several years of observations and interviews conducted by the Harvard professors and their associates (Gabor, 2000). Mayo discovered that intrinsic motivation had an untapped effect on production that sometimes trumped traditional styles of management, which included forceful overseeing, lack of breaks, questionable physical conditions, and working many hours in the Hawthorne Western Electric Plants near Chicago (Mayo, 1960; Gruneberg, 1976).

Human relations. Mayo's work evolved into three scholarly points of view and arguments concerning employee motivation and production: (a) job satisfaction leads to production, (b) job satisfaction leads to performance moderated by other variables, (c) and that job performance leads to job satisfaction (Steers & Porter, 1975). These groundbreaking

experiments arose from the failed attempt to link the alteration of lighting in the work environment to the work output of telephone factory workers (Chlldress, 2014). The net result was the discovery that monetary pay was not necessarily the most influential motivator of job performance (Gabor, 2000; Chlldress, 2014).

The first experiment took place with groups of female workers who were responsible for assembling relay switches for telephones (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1966). The experiment was designed to investigate the role of fatigue and the rate of increased production achieved by initiating rest periods for the employees as well as a pay incentive (Mayo, 1960). Mayo concluded from this experiment that a listening supervisor and the conditions in which the employee worked had more of an effect on production than pay incentives, the number of hours worked by the employee, and the amount of fatigue the employee experienced (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1966; Gabor, 2000).

In another experiment, a group of workers who were paid according to their production of wiring telephone banks were discovered to be setting their own norms based on their conceptualization of fair output (Mayo, 1960; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1966). The group ostracized those who did not provide enough work output as well as those who had more work output than the group deemed necessary (Gabor, 2000). These behaviors manifest out of the fear that management would negatively alter their rate of pay if they produced inefficiently or too efficiently (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1966; Gabor, 2000). These observations caused the Harvard researchers to generalize principles of human management, which included the idea that monetary compensation was less of an issue of job satisfaction than perceived fairness in employee treatment (Gabor, 2000). Specifically, they explained that concise and pertinent conversation was a necessity, and working together cooperatively in a friendly and sometimes competitive environment, embracing a spirit de corps climate, was the secret to maximizing

productivity (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1966).

Among the criticisms of the findings of the Hawthorne studies, was that the research itself was pseudoscience or amateur psychology that diminished the emphasis in the workplace on analysis, judgment, and decision making while fostering a climate of insincere manipulations of the employee (McNair, 1957). Brayfield and Crockett (1955) were concerned that researchers had overlooked individual differences because of their zeal to promote the generalizations of what they had discovered. Other critics pointed out that much of the assumption of the importance of human needs revolved around the emphasis Mayo had placed on an isolated incident of employees denouncing a pay increase because not all of them received it for production increase (Carey, 1967). Traditional thought advocated that job production could be directly divergent of job satisfaction in facilities that did not have union representation because of the fear of immediate discharge from work due to not meeting production quotas (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955).

Some modern research affirms that pay incentive has importance in determining the amount of job satisfaction employees experience, and may be complementary with intrinsic motivators such as recognition (Stringer, Didham, & Theivananthampillai, 2011). One theory suggests that a relevant amount of pay to the individual's desired amount of earning opens the door for attributes of the job that are psychologically fulfilling (Warr & Clapperton, 2010).

While various aspects of criticism of Mayo's work have appeared over the past century, he has provided an avenue of dialog and examination of the motivational aspects of the employee that has brought great change to industry and society (Bruce & Blackburn, 1992). Although Roethlisberger worried that an element of faddism had developed from their work (Gabor, 2000; Judge et al., 2001), Mayo defended their work from such criticism by suggesting that ideologues were attempting to use their findings to favor one group or another. In Mayo's

view, successful growth of the employee lead to successful growth of the employer, which leads to a successful growth of a nation (Mayo, 1960; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1966).

Dual factor theory. In 1958, Frederick Herzberg (Herzberg, Maunser, & Snyderman, 1959) developed a study to define job-attitude factors, which launched a new era of the investigation of job motivation (Tietjen & Myers; 1998). These factors were derived from Herzberg's "dual factor" postulate that humans had two basic needs: an animalistic need to avoid pain and a human need to grow psychologically (House & Wigdor, 1967). These first level employment factors included (a) recognition of achievement, (b) a possibility for growth and advancement, (c) salary increases, (d) interpersonal relations, (e) responsibility, (f) policy and conditions, (g) work itself, (h) factors in personal life, and (i) status and job security (Herzberg et al.,1959). These elements, along with other factors such as pay, supervision, and the organization itself complement one another and underpin employee motivation (Stringer et al., 2011).

Critics of Herzberg's work aimed at the labeling of job satisfaction as originating in intrinsic aspects such as responsibility and advancement possibilities as opposed to looking to hygiene or extrinsic aspects such as policy and salary for job dissatisfaction (King, 1970). Although Herzberg's theory developed into what is known in the literature as the "Herzberg Controversy," many scholars credit him with promoting the idea that job satisfaction and the motivation to work are based on more than monetary gain and fringe benefits, and that other factors, such as advancement and recognition are also powerful needs to be met in the workplace (Steers & Porter, 1975). The intriguing aspect of Herzberg's work is that it forced managers and scholars to focus on the worker's need to fulfill the upper levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Tietjen & Myers, 1998). Herzberg's work also promoted making work less mundane through the restructuring of tasks to make the work interesting (Spector, 1997).

Edwin A. Locke strongly criticized Herzberg, as he felt Herzberg's theories of employee motivation relied too much on linking supervision to employee dissatisfaction, and that task related events could be responsible for satisfaction and dissatisfaction in employees (Steers & Porter, 1975; Tietjen & Myers, 1998). Locke, and his colleagues, helped to establish that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction could be a product of intrinsic motivation (Gruneberg, 1976). Locke's work proceeded to evaluate motivations by distinguishing values from needs and in doing so established his theory in harmony with Maslow while giving the individual employee responsibility for determining choices, and emotional reactions (Tietjen & Myers, 1998). In Locke's view, the determination of job satisfaction occurs when the discrepancy between one's perceived job performance and actual performance is small (Gruneberg, 1976).

Equity. The idea of equity in social exchange, advanced by Stacy Adams in the mid 1960s, marked the beginning of the examination of the processes that lead to inequity in the workforce and the realization that perception of equity or inequity is a major influence of employee motivation (Steers & Porter, 1975; Stringer, 2011). Employees base the amount of effort placed into performing tasks on the equitable perception they have of their rate of pay, the tasks given to them to perform, and the social status they and their co-workers possess (Adams, 1963). The worker and employer are in a direct exchange relationship, or the worker and co-worker are in a direct exchange relationship with an employer (Goodman & Friedman, 1971). There seems to be a potential for the perception of inequality between the worker and co-worker when compensation is provided as an incentive for motivation (Stringer et al., 2011).

In the working environment, the employee is in a dynamic state of input-what the worker gives to the job-and outcomes-what the worker takes from the employer for working, in the form of compensation (Chapman, 2014). Adams defined inputs as skills, education, and effort, while outcomes are pay, promotion, and job status (Adams, 1963; Carrell & Dittrich, 1978). Equity is

achieved when the ratio between input and outcome is in balance (Chapman, 2014). The greater the perceived inequity, the greater the employee's drive is to reduce or equalize the tension caused by the injustice (Goodman & Friedman, 1971).

The role of perception in the determination of job fulfillment has become a major consideration when measuring levels of job satisfaction (Hopkins, 1983, Spector, 1997; Warr & Clapperton, 2010; Stringer et al., 2011). Adams (1963) based his theories and experiments on initial research of supermarket clerks and grocery baggers, which discovered a slowing in production by as much as 27% when employees perceive that they are misaligned socially with a co-worker. This behavior, now termed demotivation, manifests itself in a variety of negative behaviors such as being disgruntled, disruptive, and even openly hostile when the employee perceives an injustice in equity (Chapman, 2014).

Other aspects of Adams's (1963) theories considered that the employee's perception of low pay for a service led to lower quality work at a slower pace, while higher quality work resulted from the feeling of overpay for a service, as determined by social standing. These behaviors can lead to absenteeism on behalf of the employee and ultimately the loss of the employee if the perception is not altered (Adams, 1963; Carmeli, 2005; Carrell & Dittrich, 1978; Chapman, 2014; Ostroff, 1992). The point of view of the employee may be classified into (a) benevolent, or altruistic in nature, (b) equity sensitive, or feeling guilt either from being overpaid or stress from being underpaid, and (c) entitled, or having a strong feeling of always expecting better compensation, pay, and treatment (Huseman, Hatfield, & Miles, 1987). Managers should consider not only the wellbeing of the specific worker, but also the perception of all workers within the system according to these generalizations when addressing the needs of the employee (Stringer et al., 2011; Chapman, 2014).

The self-concept of the employee concerning task abilities or job skills greatly influences

the perception of pay equity (Goodman & Friedman, 1971; Huseman et al., 1987). In general, the benevolent personality projects the idea that they are not upset with being underpaid, and would experience a feeling of guilt if being overpaid, while the entitled would always feel underpaid, and the equity sensitive would have job satisfaction when the ratio of pay to performance is near equal (Huseman et al., 1987).

Much of Adams's original work occurred in laboratory settings, and real world applications seemed to alter the stability of the overpay aspect of the theory (Goodman & Friedman, 1971; Chapman, 2014). Each of these perspectives is subject to the mindset of the employee and dependent on the environmental climate of the system within which they are working (Carrell & Dittrich, 1978).

Today, equity theory is generally accepted as a way for managers to understand that workers do not see themselves in isolation, rather they view themselves as members of a culture and must be managed accordingly (Chapman, 2014). Managers considering the utility of equity theory should strongly consider gender, ethnic origin, personality traits, and if the reactions of employees are based on tangible outcomes or a perception of injustice before making decisions (Huseman et al., 1987; Chapman, 2014). Modern research is suggesting that extrinsic motivation in the form of income, as well as intrinsic rewards are important to each of these employee types, with fair compensation for work having the strongest link to job satisfaction (Stringer et al., 2011). There is also a consensus that any perception of unethical conditions leads to a decrease in organizational commitment and organizational effectiveness (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Even-Zohar, 2011).

Individual characteristics. The happiness of the individual on the job seems to be somewhat hereditary as well as circumstantial and is moderated by daily operation of the organization (Warr & Clappperton, 2010). Psychological factors are influenced by skill variety,

the type and significance of a task, and how autonomy and feedback by supervision is related to job satisfaction, motivation, and turnover (Spector, 1997). From a macro perspective, job satisfaction is related to organizational effectiveness, and is demonstrated by the employee through loyalty to the organization, job performance, and job citizenship (Ostroff, 1992). This measure of employee fit to type of job is driven by the growth needs of the individual; those with more needs require much more complex jobs to obtain an adequate level of satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

Citizenship on the job denotes positive social interaction, including cooperation and collaboration, which strongly influences production (Ostroff, 1992). Job satisfaction is also dependent on the circumstances of the individual and the potential of similar available jobs that would increase or decrease the happiness of the individual (Warr & Clapperton, 2010). A modern synthesis of job satisfaction would suggest essential components of job happiness are (a) having a sense of value and personal influence, (b) using one's abilities, (c) having goals or demands to meet, (d) clearly voiced requirements, (e) social contacts, (f) adequate compensation, and (g) a worksite with an adequate physical setting (Warr & Clapperton, 2010). These essentials must be reinforced with supportive supervision, a good career outlook, and fair treatment (Ostroff, 1992; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Warr & Clapperton, 2010).

Organizational culture. Organizational commitment can be defined as the way in which employees approach work, and how dedicated they are to achieving a quality product. Organizational commitment has three components: (a) the affective aspect, which measures the emotional attachment the employee has to organization, (b) the normative aspect, which defines their loyalty to continue working for the organization that employees them; and (c) the cost-based measure, which defines the profit in staying with the organization compared to the cost associated with leaving it (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Although job satisfaction may be the result of an employer treating his or her employees well, it is also a reflection of organizational functioning and an indicator of emotional and psychological well-being of the organization (Spector, 1997). Historically, much of the research concerning job satisfaction is about how to have satisfied employees rather than why to have them (Bruce & Blackburn, 1992). However, contemporary findings suggest that job satisfaction is better understood at the organizational level (Carmeli, 2005; Ostroff, 1992). Organizational circumstances and individual outlooks have modified many of the traditional facets of job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2001). As Carmeli (2005) explains, this can have long-term effects on the nature of the employees in an organization:

> Individuals are attracted to certain organizations or jobs because they believe they can achieve a substantial fit. When they fail to meet the expectations and do not fit well with their environment, they develop withdrawal behaviors. As a result the members who remain will not only be similar to each other, but will also constitute a more homogeneous group than at the start (p. 182).

How well an individual matches the organization is described as Person-Job fit (Warr & Inceoglu, 2012). *Fit Theory* considers how compatible the employee is with his or her work environment, how the demands of the job match the individual's abilities to accomplish the task, and how the reality of the work environment matches the employee's perception of the work environment (Chenevey et al., 2008). The Person-Job fit (P-J fit) has been found to influence both job satisfaction and job engagement, which in turn can alter depression and burnout in employees (Anderson, Spataro, & Flynn, 2008; Warr & Inceoglu, 2012).

A healthy organization considers the macro needs of the employee through the social interaction in the workplace and in society in general (Judge et al., 2001; Spector, 1997). Important organizational cultural components are: (a) job challenge, (b) communication, (c)

trust, (d) innovation, and (e) social cohesion (Carmeli, 2005). These components can motivate the individual employee and create job engagement, which is related to job satisfaction (Warr & Inceoglu, 2012). It seems that job satisfaction is determined by the way a person views the world, as moderated by the organizational circumstances in which he or she is working (Judge et al., 2001; Ostroff, 1992; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Job satisfaction results when the employee's wants and feelings have been fulfilled, or have the expectation of being fulfilled, by the organization (Warr & Inceoglu, 2012). The concept of job satisfaction has evolved from analyzing one's feelings about employment to being demarcated as the effect the physical and psychological aspect of the work environment has on job productivity (Zhu, 2013). Thus, the modern employer should view intrinsic motivators and extrinsic rewards as being complementary rather than one necessarily dominating the other (Stringer et al., 2011). Although many studies have found only a moderate to low correlation to job satisfaction and productivity, modern researchers have broadened and re-conceptualized the role of happiness of the employee and the role of the individual employee's satisfaction (Kaplan, Bradley, Lunchman, & Haynes, 2009).

Withdrawal, absenteeism, and job satisfaction. Absenteeism, as well as employee turnover related to job satisfaction, are forms of withdrawal behavior (Mitra, Jenkins, & Gupta, 1992). Withdrawal behaviors are a set of attitudes and behaviors used by employees when they stay on the job but are not fully engaged in the work (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Even-Zohar, 2011). Withdrawal includes behaviors such as being tardy to work, leaving early from work, and choosing to be absent from work on a voluntary basis as a compensatory method of rectifying a perceived injustice in the workplace (Berry, Lelchook, & Clark, 2012).

Withdrawal behavior manifests itself in physical aspects such as lateness, absenteeism, and turnover, as well as in psychological aspects such as presenteeism and burnout (Maneotis,

2014). There are at least four current models in the literature that are used to explain withdrawal behaviors in the workplace, and many of them are related to a progression of negative behaviors caused by an antecedent that created a perception of injustice (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Even-Zohar, 2011). The progression of physical behaviors from being chronically late, to being chronically absent, to considering another job, and then finally to turnover is the classical conception of the withdrawal process caused by the negative perception of an inequality (Berry et al., 2012). However, there are many aspects of behavior and psychology that mediate the progression of these behaviors, and often the study of these negative events confuse or contradict aspects of each model (Spector & Fox, 2010). Much of the confusion of how withdrawal affects the workforce results because many of the behaviors are moderated by the individual's disposition, societal status, and the strength of the economy (Maneotis, 2014). Another problem in accurately describing withdrawal is that it is a broadly defined and all-encompassing concept used for a variety of negative behaviors (Koslowsky, 2009).

Burnout and presenteeism are the psychological forms of withdrawal behaviors and have a physical presence in somatic illness and associated absence, as well as an increased propensity for questionable voluntary absence (Maneotis, 2014). Burnout manifests from emotional exhaustion created by the frustration of not being matched with one's job or a perceived injustice by the employing organization (Cole, Bernerth, Walter, & Holt, 2010). This person-organization mismatch also contributes to a form of presenteeism of the job dissatisfied who are healthy, but have little job engagement while at work because of being disgruntled with the job assignment (Cooper, 2011). Presenteeism also often takes the form of conducting personal business during working hours as a way of the employee to obtain retribution for a perceived injustice by the organization (Prater & Smith, 2011). Burnout includes somatic aspects such as chronic fatigue, insomnia, increased physical illnesses, and physical symptoms in the respiratory, heart and

gastrointestinal areas of the body (Carter, 2010). This often leads to cynicism and detachment from the job (Friedman, 2003). Other symptoms of burnout include a marked increase in anxiety, depression, loss of appetite, and anger which contribute directly or indirectly to absenteeism by the employee (Carter, 2010). Individuals experiencing burnout experience a loss of enjoyment from their work, become pessimistic towards others, often work in isolation, and feel that their productivity has been depleted or is non-existent (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Rhenen, 2009; Carter 2010).

Researchers have acknowledged the connection between job dissatisfaction and employee absenteeism since the Hawthorne studies (Mayo, 1960; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1966), and this connection has been in a constant debate since (Spector, 1997). Intuition would seem to predict that an employee who was disgruntled with the job would be likely to miss work more frequently than the employee who enjoyed work (Steers & Rhodes, 1978). However, the nature of the job and the circumstances of the individual employee cause a complex assortment of reasons to be absent from work and for feelings of job satisfaction (Scott & Taylor, 1985). For example, low job satisfaction and absence due to illness and stress have a proven correlation (Ostroff, 1992, Spector 1997), although that correlation may apply to as little as 5% of organizational settings (Maneotis, 2014).

Traditionally, absenteeism has been considered to take two forms, voluntary absence and involuntary absence, and were studied accordingly (Banks, Patel, & Moola, 2012; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009; Steers & Rhodes, 1978). Within this classification system, basic assumptions were that voluntary absence was generally short-term and often labeled with derogatory terms such as “sickie” or “shirking” (Ose, 2005). Longer term absences are usually accepted as legitimate and are taken for good causes such as bereavement, extended illness, or injury (Sagie, 1998). Unfortunately, most research has used the length of the absence to classify

it as justified or labeling it as unexcused when investigating absenteeism (Goldberg & Waldman, 2000). This lack of confirmation of why the employee missed work has added to the confusing results researchers have obtained when studying employee attendance (Dalton & Mesch, 1991; Goldberg &Waldman, 2000; Ose, 2005; Sagie 1998). Some reports in the literature suggest that there is a strong connection to short-term voluntary absence and inadequate compensation of the employee (Ose, 2005). The use of regular short-term leave may well be a coping mechanism to compensate for an underpaying job that has a great deal of physical and or mental stress (Markussen, Roed, Rogeberg, & Gaure, 2011; Ose, 2005).

Absenteeism appears to be more common in employees 30 years of age and younger, and less common in employees between the ages of 30 and 50 years old (Markussen et al., 2011). Chronic absenteeism also seems to follow a social gradient with those occupying the top of a hierarchy of educational attainment having the propensity to miss less work than those who have attained only a compulsory education (Markussen et al., 2011). There is also evidence that the climate of the organization and the norms of the employees encourage or discourage the abuse of leave time (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). For example, group norms may encourage co-workers to work through a cold or minor illness but encourage employees to miss work for severe illnesses or deaths in the family (Klassen et al., 2010).

In the case of voluntary absences or preventable absenteeism, researchers find that a small number of employees are usually responsible for most of the missed days encumbered by the organization (Dalton & Mesch, 1991). For example, one recent study suggested that about 20% of an organization's employees miss 99% of the total sick days per year in the typical organization (Markussen et al., 2011). Employees often miss work because of a mismatch of their abilities or aptitudes with the role of their jobs (Steers & Rhodes, 1978), or because their perception of fair treatment or compensation does not match what they are gaining from their

work (Ose, 2005). If employees have the perception that the ratio of input to outcome is unequal because of unfairness, they often participate in withdrawal behaviors including missing work as compensation (Banks et al., 2012).

The problems with measuring absences, whether they are self-reported or investigated by the supervision of the organization, add to hindering clarity about such topics as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Dalton & Mesch, 1991; Ose, 2005; Sagie, 1998). Steers and Rhodes (1978) saw job satisfaction as being an intermediate between leader style and absenteeism relationship. Some studies suggest that a link between job satisfaction and absenteeism is very difficult to establish without specific job task and job satisfaction investigation (Spector, 1997).

Job satisfaction has also been viewed as a mediator between individual predictors of absenteeism and situational predictors of absenteeism (Goldberg & Waldman, 2000). For example, Brayfield and Crockett (1955) reported a poor correlation in job satisfaction and absenteeism until they examined the specific job and gender, as well as the level of job skill. When studying the absenteeism of white-collar women, the researchers found no correlation in job satisfaction and absenteeism, but discovered a strong correlation in white-collar men and absentee behavior (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955). Others believe that job satisfaction has nothing to do with absentee behavior, and cite many researchers who have found a weak or negligible association between job satisfaction and work attendance (Judge et al., 2001). However, when absences are clarified and insured to be either necessary or frivolous, many researchers find a strong correlation with voluntary absenteeism and level of job satisfaction (Sagie, 1998). Job satisfaction is also associated with group structure and absenteeism in that work group cohesion leads to low absence when job satisfaction is high, and that work group cohesion leads to high absenteeism when job satisfaction is low (Ose, 2005).

Other studies suggest that absenteeism may be due to job satisfaction where tenure and policy procedures permit a luxury of absent acceptance on behalf of an organization (Spector, 1997). In countries where government mandated insurance leave guarantees the employee a full day's pay for a sickness absence, absenteeism seems to increase to approximate the limit of days defined for compensation (Markussen et al., 2011). Likewise, many organizations have leave policies such as "use it or lose it," or a lack of scrutinizing of absenteeism that often encourages the individual to miss work (Dalton & Mesch, 1991).

Job Satisfaction, Organizational Culture, and Absenteeism in Education

Job satisfaction in teaching. Although various reports of teacher satisfaction have been in vogue in recent years, Bulletin Board (2013) currently reports that only 32% of teachers now are very satisfied with their job as opposed to 62% in 2008 (Peckham, 2007; Rebora, 2009). Recent studies suggest that reasons for dissatisfaction include the current pace of organizational change the profession is undergoing, increasing workload of teachers, poor media representation, and increasing bureaucracy (Crossman & Harris, 2011). Much of teacher job satisfaction is attributed to intrinsic aspects such as positive interactions with students and ability utilization (Huysman, 2008). Student misbehavior seems to account for much job dissatisfaction as well much attrition leading to huge shortfalls on certified available employees nationally (Landers, Alter, & Servilio, 2008). Historically, poor leadership and student discipline, as well as large class sizes have been recognized to contribute to the poor job satisfaction of teachers (Bruno, 2002). Efforts to reduce workload and increase teacher satisfaction should decrease the volume of teachers' contact time with students, increase support service, and reduce government initiatives (Butt & Lance, 2005).

Job satisfaction is more prevalent in schools that have a positive motivating principal, such as a principal who is an inspiring, transformational leader as opposed to a laissez-faire style

leader (Aydin et al., 2013). Transformational leaders are visionaries who inspire employees and often participate in the work and change process, as opposed to a laissez-faire leader who abdicates responsibility and makes little effort to help employees (Northouse, 1997). An inspiring leader influences employees to maintain the vision of the organization and to feel ownership and belonging to the school (Lucus et al., 2012).

School climate. In the general employment culture, poor management is often attributed to poor productivity and negative work climate (Prater & Smith, 2011). Links to leadership management styles and their effects on job attendance and job satisfaction of employees have generally supported an association with job satisfaction and been difficult to pinpoint with absenteeism (Steers & Rhodes, 1978). However, the link between absenteeism and leadership style is less elusive when the job satisfaction is examined with their level of organizational commitment within the school setting (Ostroff, 1992). One line of thought is that teacher absence is associated with the lack of a supportive principal, which fosters a negative school climate (Gaziel, 2004; Scott, 1998). Leaders who support their staff through the presence of flexibility and autonomy rather than being an overbearing and restrictive principal seem to foster the most conducive instructional climates (Gaziel, 2004; Carlsen, 2012). In general, leaders who provide an element of autonomy and nurture a collegial atmosphere while providing opportunities for social activities trumps one who is vague and lacks sufficient authority to implement or accomplish promised actions (Carlsen, 2012). School leaders who demonstrate a transformational leadership style have a powerful influence on teacher absentee rates (Lucus et al., 2012). Much of this results from teachers feeling supported and feeling that there is a thoughtful design to the scheduling, planning, and organization of the school (Carlsen, 2012).

Recent findings have suggested that there is an element in the overall quality of the school, defined by its teacher quality, which affects the magnitude of the influence on teacher

absentee behavior (Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005; Tingle et al., 2013). The climate of the school can change from one of a strong focus on teacher responsibilities to students, to one of no obligations to students when personnel changes occur (Carlsen, 2012). To compound this effect, schools of affluence often hire more experienced teachers, and school districts often place novice and lower quality teachers in struggling schools (Bowers, 2001; Bruno, 2002; Clotfelter et al., 2009). This phenomenon greatly complicates defining a direct link to the extent which chronic absenteeism on the part of the teacher directly affects student performance (Clotfelter et al., 2009; Miller, 2012). Carlsen (2012) found that schools with shared beliefs among teachers who assumed that they were responsible to the student for academic growth had teachers with higher thresholds for sickness than ones who held little regard for the students' needs.

In education, traditional thought is that a high rate of absenteeism by teachers magnifies the poor quality of instruction being received by students, thus lowering the students' likelihood of becoming academically proficient (Bruno, 2002; Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007; Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005). Therefore, absentee culture manifests from a system of shared beliefs of positive climate and good teacher attendance or negative climate and poor teacher attendance among teachers and is often associated with the amount of independence the employee has at work (Gaziel, 2004). Teachers in positive school cultures often work through minor issues like colds and nagging ailments (Carlsen, 2012). Ironically, these schools seem to have an accepting culture for teachers being absent, although they do not have problems with chronic absenteeism due to group norms (Carlsen, 2012).

Teacher Absenteeism. A great deal of evidence suggests that teacher absenteeism is a factor in diminishing the positive educational experience of the student (Damle, 2009; Gaziel, 2004; Herrmann & Rockoff, 2010; Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007; Kronholz, 2013; Pitkoff, 1993; Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005; Scott, 1998). There is also concern that many students who reside

in areas of lower socio-economic status (SES), such as students who attend inner-city schools, have teachers who have the highest rates of absenteeism which may perpetuate inequity in educational oppertunities (Bruno, 2002; Clotfelter, et al., 2009; Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007; Miller et al., 2008; Pitkoff, 1993; Scott, 1998). Recent tracking by the Office of Civil Rights found that 33% of high school teachers missed more than ten days of school compared to 36% of middle grades teachers, and 38% of elementary teachers (Miller, 2012). The absent teacher is associated with higher achievement gaps, higher financial cost, and a negative association with school culture and climate (Miller, 2008).

Much of the current research seems to focus on school climate and dynamics, and less on the specific teacher-student relationship and student achievement (Gaziel, 2004). Although Bruno (2002) had a primary objective of promoting social justice for inner-city schools, his research focused attention to the geographical isolation of inner-city students and the effects of the absent teacher. He clearly outlined much of the social behavior patterns associated with negative school climates, which in turn is associated with instructional disruption for students (Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007). The percentage of students reading below grade level has a strong association with teacher absentee rates as well although the mechanism for this association remains poorly defined (Bowers, 2001; Pitkoff, 1993).

The more experienced teacher has a greater impact on student test scores when they are absent than a similar absence by an inexperienced teacher (Herrmann & Rockoff, 2010). To quantify the effect of teacher absenteeism in non-technical language, replacing an average teacher with a substitute teacher for 10 days has the same effect on student achievement as placing a teacher ranked in the 10th percentile of teachers in the classroom for the entire school year in math (Herrmann & Rockoff, 2010; Kronholz, 2013). To a lesser effect, it is similar to a 20th percentile teacher replacing an average teacher in reading and language arts (Herrmann &

Rockoff, 2010). This phenomenon is followed closely in rank by an association with the school population having a high incidence of eligibility for free and reduced lunch (Bruno, 2002; Clotfelter et al., 2009; Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007), although an extensive study by Herrmann and Rockoff (2010) found no significance in poverty measured by free lunch receipts. Others such as Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor (2009) and Miller (2012) suggest the placement of novice teachers in underachieving schools sometimes clouds the data because non-tenured teachers tend not to be absent as often as tenured teachers.

There seems to be much consensus that this inequity in education is a result of teachers in urban and other poverty areas working under more stressful conditions and that the attenuation of school resources and poverty together create an insurmountable obstacle for students (Bowers, 2001; Bruno, 2002; Clotfelter et al., 2009; Miller, 2012; Scott, 1998). When researchers in North Carolina ranked teacher absences according to free and reduced lunch receipts, teachers in poverty areas were found to miss approximately one extra sick day per school year (Clotfelter et al., 2009). Although Clotfelter et al.'s findings may seem insignificant, The Department of Education Office of Civil Rights estimates that teachers in minority areas miss approximately 3.5% more school than their counterparts (Miller, 2012). Although the problem of teacher absenteeism may be magnified in areas of geographical poverty as Bruno (2002) documented, the issue of teachers missing work applies to all school districts to some extent (Roza, 2007).

Some studies suggest that the link between teacher absenteeism and student achievement is determined more by who is absent rather than the status of the locality (Bowers, 2001; Herrmann & Rockoff, 2010; Pitkoff, 1993; Tingle et al., 2013). For example, it appears that a reading teacher in primary grades may have a much greater impact on student achievement by missing 10 school days than a secondary teacher missing a similar amount of time (Bowers, 2001). Newer findings suggest that the timing and experience of the teacher have a greater

impact on student achievement than socio-economic status or geographic location (Herrmann & Rockoff, 2010; Tingle et al., 2012) and may include factors such as the overall quality of the teachers in the school (Tingle et al., 2012). When experienced teachers miss school there is a greater loss of test scores than when inexperienced teachers miss the same amount (Herrmann & Rockoff, 2010). This effect is most pronounced in mathematics (Herrmann & Rockoff, 2010).

There seems to be some discrepancy in understanding the role of minority representation within school districts as to how often teachers take leave. Preliminary data from the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights suggests that the percentage of African American students in a school is associated with absentee behavior of more than 10 days by teachers and that a similar phenomenon occurs with Latino students (Miller, 2012). However, one study conducted in the northeastern United States suggests that teachers of Hispanic students missed fewer days than did teachers of Caucasian students (Herrmann & Rockoff, 2010).

Absence culture. Woods and Montagno (1997) explain that the disruption of stability in instruction initiated by the teacher's absence results in a breakdown of the rigor of the curriculum. This creates a discontinuity in the instructional process and decreases the effectiveness of the teacher (Damle, 2009; Miller, 2008; Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005). It seems that this separation of positive instructional processes tends to feed upon itself (Bruno, 2002; Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007; Kronholz, 2013; Miller, 2012). It is, therefore, plausible that chronic absenteeism by a teacher can have negative effects on his or her students as well as the climate of the school (Kronholz, 2013; Miller, 2008; Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005). Some recent research suggests that the climate of the organization influences whether absenteeism is perceived as a negative issue of non-trust or a needed occurrence in a positive trusting environment (Carlsen, 2012). It is also reasonable to believe that chronic absenteeism on the part of the teacher (employee) is associated with the level of commitment the employee has for the organization

(Meyer & Allen, 1997). There is the possibility that habitual misuse of leave time by a few employees leads to a cycle of abuse of sick days that ultimately fosters a self-sustaining negative climate (Carlsen, 2012).

Several studies also found that higher teacher absenteeism tends to encourage higher absenteeism in students (Bruno, 2002; Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007; Kronholz, 2013; Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005). In reality, it seems that many students base their view of education through a lens focused on the actions of their classroom teacher as a role model (Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005). The emphasis the classroom teacher places on being at school inherently translates to the value of the educational process determined by the classroom teacher's attendance behavior in the eyes of the classroom students (Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007). Therefore, there seems to be a decrease in the desire of students to learn and participate in class when a teacher is chronically absent (Bruno, 2002; Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007) and the development of an absentee culture that manifests teacher to teacher, as well as teacher to student (Kronholz, 2013; Miller, 2008; Miller, 2012; Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005).

Some research suggests that chronic absentee behavior develops informal norms among teachers, causing an escalation in absentee behavior, and that other forms of absentee culture develop a breakdown of professional trust when teachers miss work (Miller, 2012; Shapira-Lishchinsky & Ishan, 2013). The breakdown of trust can occur between the employee and the supervisor, between colleagues, or between both groups in an organization (Carlsen, 2012). Professional trust may also be eroded by the current wave of accountability and the breech of contracts and pensions that has replaced a stable and more satisfying working environment teachers once knew, causing an increase in withdrawal behavior (Butt & Lance, 2005). In many urban schools, and other areas of poverty, colleagues cover for the absent teacher because of the lack of available substitute teachers, adding to the perception of inequality of workload by

teachers who seldom miss work (Bruno, 2002; Clotfelter et al., 2009).

There is also an associated phenomenon outlined in the literature labeled “presenteeism”, which describes employee behavior that has little to no productivity because of recuperation from calamitous life events, chronic health conditions, loss of loved ones, or simply a refusal to perform at a productive level (Herrmann & Rockoff, 2010; Prater & Smith, 2011).

Monetary costs of absenteeism. The financial cost for the loss of days can be examined from many different aspects. Current estimates of the costs of absenteeism in the United States workforce is 180 billion dollars for absenteeism and 118 billion dollars for presenteeism (Weaver, 2010). Within the educational portion of those estimates for the total cost for teacher absences nationwide are between 25 billion dollars per year (Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007) and 40 billion dollars total (Rosenblott & Shirom, 2005). Approximately four billion dollars of these funds will be spent on substitute teachers directly (Miller, 2008; Sawchuk, 2008). Roza (2007) estimated that the average national cost of paying for the substitute teacher was a minimum of one hundred dollars per day. This accounts for approximately 1% of most local school systems’ budget per operating year depending on the estimate (Finlayson, 2009; Roza, 2007). Furthermore, the financial impact of arranging for the substitute teacher and the subsequent paperwork associated with the absence is an unconsidered burden upon the school system (Bowers, 2001). Because of great variance in the reporting of absentee data from state to state, an accurate comprehensive cost figure may be elusive, however not negligible (Miller, 2012).

Although the actual monetary cost of teachers missing school is debatable, there seems to be a consensus in the literature that there is a burden placed on the education system that could be curtailed by teachers attending work (Bowers, 2001; Damle, 2009; Miller, 2012; Roza, 2007; Woods & Montango, 1997; Wyld, 1995). The parameters of costs other than financial are less certain because of conflicting results from various studies that have attempted to link

absenteeism to student performance (Bowers, 2001; Clotfelter et al., 2009; Miller 2012; Tingle et al., 2012).

Instructional and emotional effects of absenteeism. Among the concerns vocalized by Woods and Montagno (1997) are that the cost of teachers missing school has a much greater impact beyond financial considerations. Lewis (1981) reports an estimated national loss of 75 million contact hours of instructional time with students. This disruption of the daily routine has an immediate effect on the colleagues of the absent teacher, the climate of the school, and the morale of the staff and students (Bowers, 2001, Bruno, 2002; Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007; Kronholz, 2013; Miller, 2008; Miller et al., 2008; Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005; Sawchuk, 2008). Teacher absentee behavior influences student absentee behavior, which, in turn, contributes to truancy and other deviant behaviors associated with self-worth in students and communities (Bruno, 2002; Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007; Rosenblott & Shirom, 2005). Teacher absenteeism is also associated with smaller student growth scores, a decline in administrative performance measures, and a decline in other academic dimensions (Damle, 2009; Miller, 2008; Woods & Montagno, 1997).

An absent teacher equates to a lowering of instructional intensity (Miller et al., 2008), which varies from being very significant on a day-by-day basis to less significant when extended leaves are taken (Bowers, 2001; Herrmann & Rockoff, 2010). A variety of estimates of the extent of the effect exist, and one common avenue of measure is the standardized test (Herrmann & Rockoff, 2010). Studies suggest the use of a substitute for four weeks may cause a corresponding 11 point difference on test scores (Damle, 2009) and significant drops in testing scores when teachers miss on testing day and the surrounding window of its administration (Herrmann & Rockoff, 2010). Another estimate is that every 10 absences incurred by a math teacher has the same effect of replacing a teacher of 3-5 years of experience with a teacher with

1-2 years of experience (Miller, 2008). One study concluded that when a teacher is absent 10 school days, the effectiveness of instruction is reduced by 1- 2% of a standard deviation (Clotfelter et al., 2007). Missing these 10 days of school results in students receiving the same effect on instruction as replacing an average teacher with one in the 10th percentile in math and the 20th percentile in language arts (Herrmann & Rockoff, 2010; Kronholz, 2013).

Many classroom absences, resulting in the loss of instruction, are incurred by students when teachers attend professional development or perform other duties, such as coaching, that take place when the teacher would otherwise be conducting class (Bowers, 2001; Miller, 2012). These hours are not necessarily recuperated by the substitute teacher or the teaching assistant dependent on the depth of professionalism the temporary teacher possesses (Miller 2012; Weems, 2003; Woods & Montagno, 1997). Indeed, there is a sundry divergence in qualifications for substitute teachers nationally that ranges from a basic GED diploma (Kronholz, 2013) to full time certified teachers who enjoy the same benefits as regular classroom teachers (Herrmann & Rockoff, 2010).

The nature of substitute teaching. Modern education is dependent on the relationship status of teachers and students to provide instruction and socialization (Bowers, 2001; Weems, 2003). This relationship suffers when either party is absent. The result of a teacher missing school is unique and is beyond the scope of other employee-employer relationship examinations (Miller et al., 2008; Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005). Some research suggests that students spend an equivalent of one year with a substitute teacher in the course of obtaining a K-12 education (Damle, 2009) and that the issue of the absent teacher is a major factor in the unequal education of students in larger school districts (Bruno, 2002; Tingle et al., 2012). It has also been noted that teacher absence disproportionately affects students from low-income areas (Bruno, 2002; Miller, 2012). The effects in smaller school districts and rural areas are no less devastating

(Bowers, 2001; Damle, 2009). A teacher in a school with a small population, 10 teachers for example, may cause a major disruption of the educational process by missing as few as six unplanned workdays (Bowers, 2001). One avenue of this discontinuity in instruction can be understood by examining the nature of substitute teaching (Weems, 2003; Woods & Montango, 1997).

The ambiguity that results when the substitute teacher fills in for the classroom teacher has become well renowned within contemporary education circles and popular culture (Weems, 2003; Woods & Montagno, 1997). The effect the absent teacher and resulting substitute has on the climate of the school begins when the teacher first informs her contact she will not be coming to work (Woods & Montagno, 1995). The stereotypical substitute teacher is characterized as being ill prepared and often only semi-educated (Bruno, 2002; Kronholz, 2013; Miller, 2008; Weems, 2003; Woods and Montagno, 1997). The trite description of the substitute teacher is one who acts as an ill-informed babysitter and lacks the ability and authority to manage students (Wyld, 1995). These clichéd temporary workers have only movies, end of chapter busy work, and worksheets at their disposal to provide instruction for the students (Damle, 2009; Miller et al., 2008; Woods & Montagno, 1997).

Although the use of a substitute teacher may generate less than favorable instructional environments at times, it is the actual emphasis, or lack of emphasis, that society places on the absent teacher and her fill-in for the day that creates poor instructional environments (Weems, 2003). Weems (2003) poignantly defends the substitute teacher and explains that popular culture sees substitutes in three major categories: (a) an incompetent and unqualified teacher, (b) a deviant outsider, or (c) as a guerilla educator.

Some studies suggest that teachers, administrators, and students seem to have lower expectations of substitute teachers (Damle, 2009; Miller, 2008). Unfortunately, these droll views

of the substitute teacher frequently act as a type of self-fulfilling prophecy that often ends up manifesting some highly non-instructional environments within the classroom (Damle, 2009; Pitkoff, 1993). The reality of having a substitute teacher may only be moderately better than the truisms found in the stereotyping, and it is unreasonable to expect equal performance from substitute teachers standing in for the regular classroom teacher (Bowers, 2001). Many studies suggest that substitutes are unprepared to provide instruction, especially in middle and high school grades (Bowers, 2001; Bruno, 2002; Damle, 2009). Miller et al, (2008) reported that at least 19 states do not require that substitute teachers hold a bachelor's degree in order to be employed which is in stark contrast to other similar countries like Canada and Australia. Some states require subject specific or event specific bachelor's degree requirements for employment as a substitute. For example, a state may require a substitute to hold a bachelor's degree in order for a teacher to take an extended leave but not for a single day's absence. If these substitute teacher policies are excluded from the requirement considerations, 37 states lack a college degree requirement and only one state, North Dakota, requires the same credentials of substitutes teacher as are expected of the regular classroom teacher (Miller et al., 2008; Miller, 2012).

Opinion surveys show administrators have more confidence in substitutes in elementary grades than in high school subject areas (Damle, 2009). As grade level increases, schools organize job assignments according to content area (Woods & Montagno, 1997). Teachers often specialize in a specific area in order to fit the instructional needs of the student (Wyld, 1995). This specialization tends to create the need for an expert in a given field to provide adequate instruction about subject matter when the teacher is absent (Miller et al., 2008). In areas such as math, science, and vocationally related subjects, the availability of qualified personnel to act as a fill-in are non-existent (Bowers, 2001; Bruno, 2002; Damle, 2009).

In addition, the probability of any instructor being able to enter a classroom and assume

instruction with continuity and rigor is highly unlikely because of personality differences, established relationships between students and teachers, and an acquired knowledge by the substitute of material covered previously in the course (Bruno, 2002; Woods & Montagno, 1997). The daily interaction of the teacher and the students leads to a rapport that is unique to each individual teacher's class (Miller, 2012).

It is very likely that the substitute teacher will not be able to provide comprehensive instruction to the students during the short time spent as a proxy for the teacher (Miller et al., 2008). More likely, the day will be a day of survival for the substitute teacher and the students (Weems, 2003). There is a very good chance that the provided lesson plans consist of busy work designed to occupy the students' day and discourage class disruptions (Bruno, 2002).

In clarification of the plight of the substitute teacher, Weems (2003) explains that the popular perception of the substitute and the resulting culture is a product of our own inadequacies in the teaching profession:

> Representations of substitute teachers reflect a cultural imaginary in which the public and profession project and try out images of what teachers ought to be or never become. Deviant historiography, or the analysis of how deviant subjects are labeled as such, illuminates that representations of substitute teachers are sites in which image of good and bad teaching are negotiated and contested. Representations of substitute teachers call attention to the limits of discourses of professionalism even while they make professional development initiatives possible. Despite critiques of the substitute teacher within public and educational practitioner accounts, the use of substitute teachers is necessary to the field of education and the professional teacher. Thus, substitute teachers inhabit a contradictory position within discourses of professionalism and educational reform-both conceptually and in practice (p. 263).

Although much legitimate criticism may be targeted at the substitute teacher, the reality is that the majority of substitutes receive little or no training before attempting to fill in for the professional teacher (Damle, 2009).

Substitute teachers in the United States may be in need of better training and organization, however, substitutes here are much better qualified and available than in most other countries (Miller et al., 2008). Many of the current findings suggest that substitutes who fill in for teachers for extended leave have a much greater success than when teachers miss for isolated absences because of requirements to hire certified teaching professionals for such instances (Herrmann & Rockoff, 2010). This could be used as evidence to petition policy makers and legislators to consider requiring better training and credentials for substitute teachers (Miller, 2012).

Why teachers miss work. The reasons teachers are absent have many variations that are broadly reported into two categories: illness and leisure time activities (Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007). The use of leave time to combat exhaustion, the mental health day, is the sometimes questionable use of leave days by teachers to counter mental fatigue and may constitute a third classification (Bowers, 2001). Although these days may be questioned, research confirms that teaching ranks among the most stressful of jobs worldwide (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Yang, Ge, Hu, Chi, & Wang, 2009). Bowers (2001) delineates three basic reasons teachers miss work: serious illness, minor illness, and paid vacation. However, the potential ambiguity in these classifications seem to lead to more confusion about the legitimacy of teachers being absent.

Stress. One of the more common reasons cited by absent employees for missing work, other than health related issues, is the lack of job satisfaction due to stress (Steers & Rhodes, 1978; Sagie, 1998; Gaziel, 2004; Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005; Hilton, Sheridan, Cleary, & Whiteford, 2009; Spector, 2009). Hilton, Sheridan, Cleary, and Whiteford (2009) explain that

issues such as overwork, stress associated with work, and resulting mental health issues can also contribute to employees becoming chronically absent. However, the line between stress, somatic illness, and mental health issues remains poorly defined and this problem manifests itself when attempting to answer whether or not teachers are justified in taking a day off from work because of stress (Klassen et al., 2010). In the majority of instances, the final determination of whether or not the teacher works is determined by the teacher rather than the medical professional (Bowers, 2001; Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005).

Bruno (2002) projects the idea that a growing number of teaching professionals see sick leave days as an entitlement to be used in the pursuit of leisure as well as for health related issues. Indeed, there seems to be an established and accepted culture among teachers who endorse the misuse of sick days to extend holidays, participate in vacations, or take a mental health break (Zirkel & Gluckman, 1995).

Those who work in the education environment likely admit that there is truth in the entitlement mentality of some teaching professionals. However, there certainly are other legitimate concerns related to the stress of educators that may explain why they miss work. Recent studies conducted by Klassen, Usher, and Bong (2010) examined the role of teachers' collective efficacy and its effect on job satisfaction. They explain the relationship between job stress, job satisfaction, and teacher absenteeism as follows:

> Teacher stress–defined as the experience of negative emotions resulting from a teacher's work–is inversely related to teacher self-efficacy and positively related to poor teacher pupil rapport and low levels of teacher effectiveness. The outcomes of teachers' work-related stress are serious and may include burnout, depression, poor performance, absenteeism, low levels of job satisfaction, and eventually the decision to leave the profession (p. 466-467).

This study relates the effects of teacher absenteeism and the physical location of the school, described by Bowers (2001) and Bruno (2002), with mental and somatic illness caused by stress in the teaching workforce. Each of these studies also suggested associations with teacher absenteeism and the working environment, although specific relationships were not examined. The amount of self-efficacy a teacher feels is also associated with the occurrence of stress initiated somatic and mental health issues experienced by educational professionals (Klassen et al., 2009). When teachers have the perception of being overburdened, feel a lack of support by the school system, or possess a feeling of depersonalization the organization for which they have little or no influence with, burnout is likely to result (Friedman, 2003).

External reasons for absenteeism. Non-medical issues such as the distance employees live from the school in which they work, geographic and climatic conditions, grade level of the school, and satisfaction with the rate of pay also seem to influence a teacher's regular attendance at work (Herrmann & Rockoff, 2010). Pitkoff (1993) reported that the distance to work and the quality of the commute, as well as the climatic conditions were correlated to teachers' absentee rates. He also found that the absentee rates were lower when teachers were satisfied with their rate of pay.

When and how often teachers are absent. Many researcher suggest that between five and ten percent of the teaching force is absent on any given school day (Kronholz, 2013; Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005; Wyld, 1995) and that this number has been increasing (Wyld, 1995) with legitimacy since the passing of The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 (Herrmann & Rockoff , 2010). Miller (2008) estimates a daily teacher absence rate of 5.3% of reported absences and between eight and ten percent with unreported absences. Some local examples have been documented to be as high as 40% of teachers missing work per day and having an average absentee rate of 21 days per year (Kronholz, 2013). Recent tracking by the

Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights found that a third of high school teachers and slightly less than 40% of middle and elementary teachers miss more than 10 days of school each year (Miller, 2012).

Miller, Murnane, and Willett (2008) provide some of the most recent data of estimates for the national average of teacher absenteeism. The current estimate is approximately 11 days, or six percent of the school year (Clotfelter et al., 2009), compared to a 20% average absentee rate in many developing nations, but a three percent rate in other industrialized nations, such as the UK and Australia. Roza (2007) explains that an individual of a similar professional status in a differing field of employment misses about three days of work per year. However, the estimate by Roza may not fully explain the plight of teachers and their associated absenteeism rates. If teachers' absenteeism rates are compared only to other front line professionals such as social workers, nurses, and home health care providers, there is not a notable difference in the occurrence of missing work (Bowers, 2001).

Jacobs and Kritsonis (2007) report that elementary school teachers are absent from work more often than secondary level teachers. One possible reason for these increased absences is that elementary schools were notorious places for sickness (Bowers, 2001; Miller et al., 2008). Miller et al. (2008) also explained that many teachers, elementary and secondary, use personal days to extend weekend and holiday leisure time. This can have a significant effect on education for students in the elementary grades that are learning foundational skills (Bowers, 2001).

November, January, and April seem to be the months that accumulate the most days of being absent by teachers; these absences are likely associated with the holidays that occur during each respective month (Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007; Clotfelter et al., 2009). There seems to be a discrepancy in absentee behavior between the two studies when describing the most missed day of the week for teachers to miss work. Jacobs and Kritsonis (2007) report Wednesday as the

favorite day for teachers to be absent. However, Miller, Murnane, and Willett (2008) found that Mondays and Fridays are in a virtual tie for the favorite day for teachers to miss work.

Profile of the absent teacher. The following generalizations are common in the literature concerning the chronically absent educator: Teachers who have obtained tenure are more likely to miss work than those who have yet to earn tenure (Clotfelter et al., 2009). Younger teachers seem to have better attendance after they have established themselves in the profession (Clotfelter et al., 2009; Miller et al., 2008). Teachers who have completed child-rearing obligations tend to miss less work until pre-retirement age when excessive absences become common (Bowers, 2001; Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007). Elementary school teachers miss more days than do secondary teachers (Miller, 2012). Teachers who have received negative evaluations also miss more days of school than those who have positive evaluations and there may be a correlation or self-fulfilling prophecy associated with this phenomenon (Pitkoff, 1993). There is a dip in attendance rates of male employees in their thirties that is thought to be influenced by the onset of familial obligations once the teacher begins a household (Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007). Female teachers tend to be absent more often than male teachers. Many believe that two factors influence this trend: there is a disproportionate amount of female employees to male employees in the field of education, and much of the time missed by the females is a result of maternity leave and associated duties of child rearing (Finlayson, 2009; Miller et al., 2008).

Jacobs and Kritsonis (2007) discovered that teachers with higher degrees tend to miss more days than those with standard teaching credentials. There also seems to be a tendency for teachers to be absent from work for four days or more during the school year to participate in staff development activities that are often disingenuous and wasteful (Dickinson, McBride, Lamb-Milligan, & Nichols, 2003). Although this activity time is usually endorsed by local

district oversight, the increased absence of teachers for the activities may be contributing to a detrimental effect on student achievement. Furthermore, teachers being away from actual instructional processes may never be accounted for in instances such as field trips, athletic events, and extracurricular activities, such as coaching. These activities frequently cause the regular classroom teacher to be absent from class but do not result in a teacher being recorded as being absent (Bowers, 2001).

Summary

Although the literature is sparse on the issue of teacher absenteeism, there is an apparent link between the climate of a school and teacher work attendance (Bruno, 2002; Clotfelter et al., 2009; Pitkoff, 1993). There is also evidence suggesting that there is a plausible link between student achievement and the teacher absentee rate created by the disruption of instruction when substitutes fill in for teachers (Pitkoff, 1993; Wyld, 1995; Woods & Montagno, 1997; Bowers, 2001; Miller et al., 2008). This hypothetical link, if established and addressed, may offer a method to improve the noted dismal student achievement in rural schools with low SES rates and schools in geographical positions such as inner city schools, which struggle to achieve student success.

The TCAP is a state assessment instrument that provides a method of measuring student achievement. The data archived through the years from the TCAP provides an opportunity to evaluate student performance and better understand the effect teacher absenteeism has on student achievement. Understanding when and why teachers miss school is an integral component of explaining the phenomenon of teacher absenteeism.

The idea of job satisfaction has led to managers thinking of equity in the working environment, organizational culture, and how these relate to compensation for the worker. Job satisfaction for teachers seems to act as a mediator between complex variables including

compensation, burnout, and illnesses.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The target school system is located in eastern Tennessee. It serves a population of 5,682 students in grades K-12 who live in rural and suburban environments. The 474 teachers employed by the school system work in diverse situations ranging from a historical elementary school that has provided nearly 100 years of service to a modern structure built within the last 20 years. There are 16 schools within the target school system: three high schools, a junior-senior high school, one middle school, one primary school (K-4), one alternative school, and nine elementary schools. The school system has several schools that are performing at proficient levels; however, some of these schools have such marginal scores that they risk incurring failure status by the state department of education. The state department of education deemed two of the elementary schools and one high school as focus schools. The primary school was given reward school status last year. Focus school status designates the school as being in the top 10% of schools with achievement gaps within the state, while reward school status recognizes the school for being in the top 5% for achievement in the state (Tennessee State Department of Education, 2012).

As with all Tennessee public schools, students in elementary grades 3-8 are tested yearly via the TCAP. The Tennessee State Department of Education (TSDE) began the inclusive testing of students during the 1998-1999 school year by using the TCAP. Although the TCAP has been revised numerous times, and has changed from a norm-referenced assessment to a criterion-referenced test, it has been established as a valuable and underutilized source of data. The local archives of the school system maintain a three year backlog of electronic data for this assessment. This data was readily available and accessible to the researcher. Similarly, the school system's Finance Department maintains public records concerning teacher absenteeism

that are archived at the end of each school year.

Participants

Elementary level teachers in grades 3-8 were chosen for the sample because of the availability and use of convenience sampling of the data from the TCAP assessment for the evaluation of student achievement. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) define convenience sampling as "a group of cases that are selected simply because they are available and easy to access" (p.636). Although convenience sampling lacks the desirable trait of randomness, it has the utility of taking advantage of readily accessible information available to many social scientists (Moore, 2004, Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Because of the use of convenience sampling, the reader should be mindful that the information generated by this study may have many population specific traits that may not generalize to other populations. It should also be noted that some of the utility of this study was to better understand the absentee dynamics of the local population of teachers and its relationship to achievement of the local students.

The researcher delineated and targeted teachers who had viable TCAP data for three years to participate in groups according to absentee behavior over a period of three years. The absentee behavior fit within the following criteria according to the literature: Teachers who miss four days of school, or about 2% of the work year, are within the parameters of an acceptable amount of absences for a professional employee such as a teacher. Missing nine days, or about 5% of the work year, is considered by most to be excessive for someone of professional status (Clotfelter et al., 2009; Miller et al., 2008; Roza, 2007). Due to a lack of available participants who had missed four days or less of school on average for three years, the criteria for grouping was modified to five days or less.

The participants in this study ranged in age from 24 years old to 60 years old. They were divided into groups according to the subject matter in which they had viable TCAP scores. The

participants ranged in experience from less than five years to more than 30 years of experience in teaching. All of the participants were Caucasian. The groups have the following number of participants, grouped according to having viable TCAP data in math and in reading and language arts (RLA):

Group 1, Teachers with TCAP data in math who missed 5 days or less $n = 25$.

Group 2, Teachers with TCAP data in RLA who have missed 5 days or less $n = 24$.

Group 3, Teachers with TCAP data in math who missed 9 days or more $n = 35$.

Group 4, Teachers with TCAP data in RLA who missed 9 days or more $n = 34$.

Table 1 displays the breakdown of the groups by gender ratio and by years of experience.

Table 1

Experience and Gender by Group

Group	Years of Experience							Gender
	3 - 5 years	6 – 10 years	11 – 15 years	16 – 20 years	21 – 25 years	26 – 30 years	30 + years	M/F
Math 5 Days or Less	2	4	7	3	5	2	2	12/13
RLA 5 Days or Less	2	5	6	3	3	4	1	12/12
Math 9 Days or More	1	3	7	9	6	8	1	3/32
RLA 9 Days or More	1	1	8	7	9	7	1	1/33

Note. There are gender ratio discrepancies in the groups who averaged missing more than nine

days per year.

Sample groups were purposeful by design. Gall et al. (2007) defines purposive sampling as "the process of selecting cases that are likely to be "information rich" with respect to the purposes of a qualitative research study" (p. 650). The choice to sample grades 3-8 teachers from the convenience sample available was made because of the similarity in reporting and scoring TCAP assessments for each grade. Students in primary grades and high school grades have assessments that are not similar to the TCAP and may not provide similar information concerning student achievement. The purposeful grouping teachers into those missing five days or less or nine days or more was based on information in the literature that reflected that five days of absence per year is an acceptable amount for a professional employee whereas nine days per year is considered exuberant.

One sample group was chosen based on the teacher being absent five days or less per year. The other sample group was chosen based on the teacher being absent nine or more days per school year. The purposeful grouping of teachers, who averaged missing five days or less per year, or nine days or more per year, established that the teachers' attendance patterns were habitual and were, therefore, possibly suspect in influencing the achievement of students. Measuring the correlation of the two separate groups strengthened the results found by calculating a correlational coefficient because it isolated the specific behavior through similar grouping.

The use of the JSS attempted to describe why teachers chronically missed school or diligently attended work. The JSS provided insight to the causality of the calculated correlational coefficients by measuring the amount of satisfaction each sampled teacher felt for their job.

Setting

The target school system has acknowledged that a problem exists with teacher absenteeism. During the past seven years, the Local Education Agency (LEA) has taken steps such as offering bonus pay to teachers with perfect attendance each semester and a drawing at the end of the school year for a sizeable cash prize for those who do not miss work for an entire year. The data before this incentive program started is not available to the primary researcher. For the period of these seven years of monetary incentive, the strategies seem to have had very little effect on improving teacher attendance. During the last school year, for example, the teachers of the local school system missed 5,738 days of school. This amounts to an average of approximately 12 days per year, per teacher. Although the problems of teacher absenteeism and marginal student achievement had been identified for several years before in the school system, there has not been an investigation into a potential relationship between the data stored in these two separate annals and what insights this data may supply in addressing these issues.

The school system is located in a semi-rural locality of East Tennessee. The bulk of the school district's infrastructure was built during the 1960s with one of the elementary gymnasiums dating to the 1930s. Two of the elementary schools were constructed within the last 20 years because the schools they replaced were destroyed by natural disasters. Of the 474 professional employees working within the district, 417 are teachers in K-12 grades while the remaining employees work in administration, pre-K instruction, and district level positions.

During the 2012 -2013 school year, the system served 5,524 students. Students who are economically disadvantaged comprised 3,959 of this population, and 4,212 of them were eligible for Title 1 services. The student body demographics consisted of 96% Caucasian, with 20 Native American students, 102 Hispanic students, nine Asian students, and 51 African American students. All schools within this district are considered safe schools by the state of Tennessee.

The student attendance rate is 91% with a cohort dropout rate of 6.7% and a graduation rate of 89.8%.

The district has a per pupil expenditure of $9,009 compared to the state average of $9,123 per student. The school system receives 23.6% of its funding from local funds as opposed to the state average of 39.2%. Federal funding supplies 17.3% of funding compared to 14.3% for the state average. The largest portion of the budget is supplied from state funds, 59.2%, as opposed to the 46.5% state average. The student body has a slightly larger population of male students, 52%, as opposed to 48% female.

The district has three high schools and one junior-senior high school. The largest high school serves a diverse population of more than 500 students. Many of these students reside within the suburbs of the city, which serves as the county seat. The school is fed by a fifth through eighth grade middle school with more than 500 students and a pre-K through fourth grade school serving more than 500 students. Students from one pre-K through eighth grade school also attend this high school. This school has a student population of approximately 300 students as it recently absorbed an antiquated K through eighth grade school whose population was less than 100. This school closure took place during the current calendar year. These schools often lose many of their better students to the nearby city school system, especially when students are promoted to high school.

The second largest high school has a student population of approximately 400 students and is fed by three schools. One school is a pre-K-8 grade serving about 700 students and was constructed within the last 20 years. The second school is a pre-K-5 grade school serving 300 students. The third school is in a very rural locality and serves approximately 120 students in pre-K through eighth grades.

The third largest high school houses approximately 350 students. It is fed by three

schools. One of these three schools is in a suburban setting and has a student population of approximately 550 students in pre-K through eighth grades. Another school in this district is in a rural setting and has a population of about 300 students in grades K through eight. In an unusual circumstance, the high school receives some students from another pre-K through eighth grade district school who shares its promoted students with the city school district. This school has approximately 300 students enrolled.

The junior-senior high school has one feeder school and both schools are in a rural area approximately 25 miles from the county seat and many of the other schools. It is fed by the newest school in the district that has a student population of approximately 400 students in grades pre-K through six. The junior-senior high school has a population of about 320 students. The district also operates an alternative placement school that has seven professional employees and a variable population.

Instrumentation

The Nature of the TCAP

The TCAP data is assumed to be a reliable and valid criterion-referenced test. It is standardized and has been in use for many years. The current version is produced, maintained, and scored by Pearson Publishers in their Educational Measurement Group (2008). Although the reliability and validity measures are not readily available for the TCAP, the proficiency rate is set each year according to set state cut scores, and the proficiency score is determined by the estimated percent correct the student would have scored if the test had 100 questions.

The TCAP class roster report provides data for the individual teacher's class. The report is derived from the completion of a criterion-referenced test by the students in grades 3-8 each year. It is delineated into scaled scores and Reporting Categories Performance Index (RCPI) scores. RCPI scores are the estimated number of items that the student would be expected to

answer correctly had there been 100 items on the test. The average RCPI score for the teacher, school system, and state is available at a glance on the Class Roster Report. This information is utilized as an index of performance and reported in the following chapter.

Scores vary by grade level, with scores in reading and language arts having a proficiency range between 40 and 50, and scores in mathematics having a proficiency range between 30 and 40 (Tennessee State Department of Education, 2013). In general, proficiency levels are set slightly below the state average, and teachers who are scoring at or above the state average are considered to be performing at an adequate level. The teachers in each sample had their class RCPI averaged for three years, determined by reporting categories in reading/language arts and mathematics. These average scores were then compared to an index composite of the state scores for the same three year period.

The RCPI Mathematics Report is divided into number theory, computation, algebraic thinking, real world problem solving, data analysis and probability, measurement, and geometry. As an example of these scores, Table 2 lists some of the information contained in the Class Roster Report. The subject divisions and scoring are similar for any class in grades 3-8.

Table 2

Report for Mathematics

Report Level	Math Processes	Numbers & Operations	Algebra	Geometry & Measurement	Data Analysis, Stats, Probability	Composite
Teacher	65	82	58	76	81	72
School	62	79	57	73	77	69
System	50	69	48	63	64	59
State	56	74	53	67	69	64

Note. Table is adapted from an example from Pearson Education, (2013). The data in the table could have been obtained from any grade, 3-8.

The information in Table 2 can easily be manipulated to obtain a three-year mean for the teacher in each reporting category by averaging the composite score for three consecutive years. This information can then be compared through multivariate analysis to determine the significance of potential differences in teachers who have missed five days per school year for the last three consecutive years and those who have missed nine or more days per school year.

The Class Roster Report for reading and languages art is delineated in a similar fashion by subsections. The subsections include: (a) the understanding of content, (b) deriving meaning from the text, (c) vocabulary, (d) the organization of writing, (e) the process of writing, grammar, and (f) the techniques and skills of writing. The report also provides a composite score that can be averaged just as the above data and evaluated as an index for the teacher's performance in the classroom during three consecutive years.

Table 3 is an example of the information contained in the Class Roster Report for reading and language arts.

Table 3

Report for Reading and Language Arts

Report Level	Language	Vocab	Writing & Research	Media	Logic	Informational Text	Literature	Composite
Teacher	80	74	69	64	68	69	69	70
School	80	74	71	67	72	71	70	72
System	77	72	70	66	73	70	68	70
State	78	73	71	67	73	72	70	72

Note. Table is adapted from an example from Pearson Education, (2013). The data in the table could have been obtained from any grade, 3-8.

The data in Table 3 can be used just as the data in Table 2 to determine the progress of students in an individual teacher's class over a consecutive three-year period. As a peripheral result, the teacher's average RCPI score for three years can also easily describe the status of the teacher's instruction to the state averages by subgroup.

Job Satisfaction Surveys

The Spector (2009) JSS was administered by independent researchers to the same sample of teachers in order to evaluate their overall impression of the working environment. The survey contains 36 items that assess the nine facets of the working environment that relate to job satisfaction. Figure 5 and 6 are replications of the survey (see Appendix A).

Because of reverse scoring of negatively worded items, the score range is from 4 to 24 for each stem. Scores for each specific stem of 4-12 indicate job dissatisfaction, scores of 12-16 are ambivalent, and scores of 16 to 24 indicate an individual's job contentment (Spector, 2009). The survey consists of nine different facets placed into the scale form as follows (Spector, 2009):

Pay – the amount of contentment with monetary compensation

Promotion – the feeling of fairness in opportunities for job advancement

Supervision – feelings towards immediate supervisor

Fringe benefits – monetary and non-monetary fringe benefits

Contingent rewards – appreciation, recognition, and rewards for good work

Operating procedures – operating policies and procedures of the organization

Co-workers – how the employee feels about the people they work with

Nature of work – the level of enjoyment the employee gets from task completion

Communication – the quality of communication in the organization

Spector reports that the instrument has an internal consistency reliability of α .91. In order to maintain copyright fidelity, the instrument was administered within his consenting guidelines, which required the results to be shared with him (Spector, 2009).

In order to maintain the confidentiality of the respondent and increase the likelihood of true responses, the JSS was administered by two independent research volunteers. The primary researcher works at the district level in the school system although not in a direct related role to the participants. The respondents (participants) and the independent research representatives had limited knowledge of the complete study according to Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines, in order to encourage complete and truthful answers and maintain the confidentiality of information of the participant. The participants were aware that the study dealt with teacher absenteeism and student achievement, but they were not aware of the method of matching absenteeism to the amount of student achievement, nor were they advised as to why they were chosen to participate in the survey. Each participant was asked to contribute to the study and only told that they had been chosen to complete a survey questionnaire about job satisfaction in the schools.

Procedures

After obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and consent from Liberty University and the local school system, the researcher began examining the archived data for the sampled teachers' TCAP scores and their absentee rates. In order to maintain confidentiality, the researcher assigned the teachers to groups and assigned each of them a four-digit code. Matching codes were applied to corresponding achievement data and then compared to each teacher's absentee rate. Once the codes of the teacher were applied, the teacher's name was blacked out on any hard copies of the stored data. The absentee data and the student achievement data were stored and locked in separate places as well.

The primary researcher had the independent researchers administer the JSS to those teachers who had missed nine days or more or five days or less on average for the previous three school years. In order to avoid potential bias, the primary researcher did not know which teacher in the respective group completed the survey. The primary researcher worked in the target school district as a director of curriculum, but was not in a direct supervisory role of the participants completing the survey pertaining to absenteeism, which is a personnel issue.

The independent researchers were contracted employees of the district who work with technology and provide services for students who cannot physically attend school. They were familiar with each school, had a working relationship with each building principal, and had background checks and other credentials necessary to visit each school building. There was one male and one female independent researcher. The independent researchers volunteered to deliver and collect the surveys to the participants, and disseminated and collected the information for the primary researcher over the period of several weeks in the fall of 2012. This data was scored by hand and then entered into spreadsheets by the primary researcher.

The *Job Satisfaction Surveys* were scored by the primary researcher according to

Spector's (1999) guidelines. These instructions appear in Appendix B of this document. The survey contains 36 item stems. The respondent chooses a number from 1-6 to match the level of feeling they have towards the stem statement. The stems are positive and negative in direction and the 19 negative stems must be scored in reverse with a 1 response being changed to a 6 consecutively through numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, and a 6 response being changed to a 1. There are 19 negative response items on the survey.

Because of the design of the instrument, templates were constructed by the primary researcher to aid in the scoring of the completed surveys. Question stems with missing responses were assigned a 3 or 4 alternatively per Spector's (1999) instructions. Once the surveys were scored, the results were tabulated and evaluated according to Spector's classification of scores (Spector, 2009). The range of possible scores for the entire instrument are from 36 to 216. Scores in the range of 36 to 108 indicated dissatisfaction, scores from 108 to 144 indicated ambivalence, and scores from 144 to 216 indicated satisfaction. Spector has established norms for different groups of employees based on accumulated scores. He cautions that these norms, available on his website, are for occupations and employees in North America and are not necessarily applicable for use in other cultures (Spector, 2009).

Research Design

Archived data lends itself well to ex-post-facto research, and the sample population in this study was not large enough to utilize random sampling. The simplest form of statistical analysis for the study that provided a base for understanding a possible relationship between teacher attendance and student achievement is correlational design. Correlational research lends itself well to archived data in order to investigate if a relationship exists among variables. Because this is a level one study, correlational research is the simplest technique to measure a relationship between teacher absenteeism and student achievement. To examine the proposed

relationship between teacher absenteeism and student achievement, two samples of a minimum of 30 were targeted and deliberately drawn from the archived data of teacher absentee reports. Samples of 30 are large enough to be statistically relevant, yet small enough to be applicable to the population of local teachers. Participants in this study were below the sample target of 30 for those teachers missing five or fewer days, and above the target of 30 for those missing nine days or more on average for the previous three years. Finding teachers who had averaged missing five or less days during the previous three years was much more of a challenge than preliminary investigation had suggested.

Elementary level teachers in grades 3-8 were chosen for the sample because of the availability of the TCAP assessment data for the evaluation of student achievement. TCAP data is maintained only for grades 3-8 in Tennessee. The reliability of the TCAP and its availability as a similar yearly comparison among teachers was a deciding factor to limit the study to elementary grades. Data for high school students is not similar enough in nature to make comparisons among several teachers.

The Spector (2009) *Job Satisfaction Survey* was utilized in hopes of determining the motivational factors that drive teacher behavior concerning employment and job attendance. The survey has the potential to identify possible factors that cause employees to miss work. It also could identify work attributes that positively influence teacher presence at work.

Research Questions

The research focused on the following research questions and hypotheses:

1. What is the strength and nature of the relationship between student performance in reading and language arts, as measured by the TCAP, and teacher absenteeism in the rural environment?
2. What is the strength and nature of the relationship between student performance in

mathematics, as measured by the TCAP, and teacher absenteeism in the rural environment?

3. What is the strength and nature of the relationship between job satisfaction and teacher absenteeism in the rural environment?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were generated from the research questions:

1. Student performance in reading and language arts, as measured by the TCAP, will be statistically significant and positively correlated to teacher absenteeism in the rural school environment.

   Null hypothesis: Teacher absenteeism is not significantly correlated with student achievement as measured by the TCAP in reading and language arts in the rural school environment.

2. Student performance in math, as measured by the TCAP, will be statistically significant and positively correlated to teacher absenteeism in the rural school environment.

   Null hypothesis: Teacher absenteeism is not significantly correlated with student achievement as measured by the TCAP in math in the rural school environment.

3. Teacher job satisfaction, as measured by the *Job Satisfaction Survey,* is significantly and negatively related to the rate of teacher absenteeism in the rural school environment.

   Null hypothesis: Teacher job satisfaction is not significantly related to teacher absenteeism in the rural school environment.

Data Analysis

Using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS version 21 to track and manipulate data, the researcher calculated the mean number of absences for the past three years for each teacher in the two sample groups. The three-year average for the individual teacher was determined using the previously discussed Class Roster Reports for Mathematics as well as Reading and Language Arts. Similarly, the three-year mean for the system and the state was determined for each sub-group of the Class Roster Reports.

After the mean for the respective academic discipline was determined, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient *(r)* was calculated for each group of teachers. The two-tailed confidence interval was set at $p = .05$ which should provide enough reliability to determine if the observed variance in the means of the comparison groups differ enough to suggest a relationship and diminish a chance correlation. In other words, the $p = .05$ confidence interval provides 95% confidence that the resulting calculations occurred within the actual population and were not a result of outlier data that produced a chance correlation calculation. A two-tailed confidence interval was chosen because the direction of the possible correlation is unknown. The results of the calculations are expressed in graphic form through the use of scatter plots to visually express the nature of the collected data.

For the question one null hypothesis, teacher absenteeism is not significantly correlated with student achievement as measured by the TCAP Language Arts Assessment, the data were manipulated in the following manner: The researcher used the data for three consecutive years of sampled teachers and their TCAP scores presented as in Table 3. A composite score for language arts was determined by calculating the mean from each subject area for each year. The mean was then determined for the three years and that score was compared to the mean score of all teachers for that grade level determined by similar techniques for the state average scores in

language arts. This data, along with the mean for the number of days missed by each teacher, was evaluated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (*r*) to determine the significance of the correlation.

For the question two null hypothesis, teacher absenteeism is not significantly correlated with student achievement as measured by the TCAP Mathematics Assessment, the data were manipulated in the following manner. The researcher examined the data for three consecutive years of sampled teachers and their TCAP scores presented as in Table 2. A composite score for mathematics was determined by calculating the mean from each subject area for each year. The mean was then determined for the three years and that score compared to the mean score of all teachers for that grade level determined by similar techniques for the state average scores in mathematics. This data, along with the mean for the number of days missed by each teacher, was evaluated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (*r*) to determine the significance of the correlation.

For the question three null hypothesis, teacher absenteeism is not significantly related to job satisfaction, the primary researcher had two independent researchers issue surveys to the selected samples of teachers. The surveys were coded as either administered to teachers who miss five days or less of school per year and those who miss nine or more days per year on average. The returned surveys were evaluated using Spector's guidelines that are as follows for each facet of the survey. Those who scored 4-12 were determined to be dissatisfied with their job in this area. Those scoring 12-16 are considered neutral, and those who score 16-24 were content with their job in the specific sub-category stem. These scores were then compared to the number of days teachers miss on average for three years to see if there was a correlation between job satisfaction and teacher absenteeism. The hope was that the survey would provide insight to what teachers like or dislike about their respective job situation.

Summary

This study examined the possible relationship between teacher absenteeism and student performance in a semi-rural school system in eastern Tennessee. Teachers who instruct grades 3-8 mathematics and language arts were sampled and grouped according to their attendance record. The two resulting groups consisted of teachers who had averaged missing five or fewer days per school year and those who had missed nine days or more per school year for the last three school years. The target sample for each group was 30 individuals, although the researcher found only 25 participants who qualified as math teachers and 24 who qualified as reading and language arts teachers. Each individual teacher's TCAP data for the last three years in the areas of language arts and mathematics were averaged to form a composite score. This data was then used to calculate a correlation coefficient to see if a significant relationship existed between teacher attendance and student performance on the respective TCAP assessments. Finally, the JSS was administered to teachers who had averaged missing nine or more days per year in order to see if the chronic rate of absenteeism was related to job satisfaction.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to compare teachers' chronic attendance habits to their levels of job satisfaction and to their TCAP achievement scores. Specifically, the study examined how teachers who had missed five or fewer days per year on average for three years and those who had missed nine or more days on average for three years compared on their students' average TCAP performance for the same period of time. The study also examined the role that job satisfaction had concerning the attendance behavior of these two groups.

This study sought to determine if a relationship existed between teacher attendance at school and student performance on the state standardized TCAP test. The Pearson product-moment coefficient was chosen for this study because of its simple quantitative design.

The research questions and hypotheses are as follows:

1. What is the strength and nature of the relationship between student performance in reading and language arts, as measured by the TCAP, and teacher absenteeism in the rural environment?
2. What is the strength and nature of the relationship between student performance in mathematics, as measured by the TCAP, and teacher absenteeism in the rural environment?
3. What is the strength and nature of the relationship between job satisfaction and teacher absenteeism in the rural environment?

Hypotheses

1. Student performance in reading and language arts as measured by the TCAP will be statistically significant and positively correlated to teacher absenteeism in the rural school environment.

   Null hypothesis: Teacher absenteeism is not significantly correlated with student

achievement as measured by the TCAP in reading and language arts in the rural school environment.

2. Student performance in math as measured by the TCAP will be statistically significant and positively correlated to teacher absenteeism in the rural school environment.

   Null hypothesis: Teacher absenteeism is not significantly correlated with student achievement as measured by the TCAP in math in the rural school environment.

3. Teacher job satisfaction as measured by the *Job Satisfaction Survey* is significantly and negatively related to the rate of teacher absenteeism in the rural school environment.

   Null hypothesis: Teacher job satisfaction is not significantly related to teacher absenteeism in the rural school environment.

Data Collection

The researcher obtained permission from the appropriate IRB and local authorities to conduct the study. After permission was granted, the researcher obtained and correlated data from the testing department of the local school district and the finance department of the local county government. The testing department provided data concerning teachers' TCAP scores with all personal information removed other than the name of the teacher. The finance department provided absentee data for all teachers for the past three years with all personal information removed except the employee's name. The information from the testing department was separated by subject area and matched with the record of the individual teacher's attendance behavior for the last three years. This information was then coded into two categories, 01 for those teachers who had missed five days or less of work during the past three years, and 02 for those who had missed nine days or more during that three year period.

The researcher then petitioned help for data collection from two independent researchers who visited each participant to obtain permission to conduct the study and to administer the job satisfaction surveys. Upon the return of the surveys, the primary researcher sorted the data and logged it in spreadsheet form.

Instrumentation

The instrument used to measure the possible emotional connection to attendance behavior was the JSS produced by Paul Spector. The survey has been in use for several years and Spector reports an internal consistency of α equal to .91 (Spector, 2009). The JSS utilizes a summated rating scale with six choices per item with 36 questions total. These choices examine the divisions of pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operation procedures, co-workers, the nature of work, and communication. Each question stem has a range of options from strongly disagree to strongly agree. About one half of the items are worded in such a manner that they must be reverse scored. The possible range of scores for each of the 36 items is from 4 to 24, and a total score for each survey from 36 to 216. High scores indicate job satisfaction, midrange scores indicate indifference, and low scores indicate dissatisfaction. Items that are left blank by the participants were scored either as a 3 or 4 in alternating use as directed by Spector. Three participants, one from the code 01 group and two from the code 02 group, left items unscored during this survey.

Population and Participants

The population was chosen from teachers who had taught grades 3-8 for the last three consecutive years. The criteria for using their data for examination was altered to those who had missed five or fewer days for the first test group and the original nine or more days for the second test group. The criteria for the first group was changed because there were not enough teachers teaching this grade level who had missed four or fewer days to attempt the target sample

of 30. Altering the criteria resulted in an increased sample size that included several teachers who had missed fractional days over four but less than five. The inclusion of teachers who missed up to five days is still very close to the 2% population outlined in the literature. Because a full sample of 30 teachers who had missed less than five days on average for the past three years could not be obtained, the Excel forecast function was utilized to extrapolate the data to fit a sampling model of significance.

TCAP Samples and Analysis

The sample of teachers who had missed an average of five days or less for the previous three years and who had valid TCAP scores in math for that period had a participant count of 25. Thirteen of the participants were female and 12 were male. The mean number of days this group missed was equal to 2.9, with a range between zero and five. The average TCAP score for this group of participants was 36.7 with a range between 17.9 and 73.9. The Pearson product-moment coefficient (r) for this set of data is $r = 0.2$ with a p value of .327. This suggests a very weak or no association between student achievement scores and teacher attendance. Figure 1 represents the data for those math teachers who had viable TCAP data and missed five days or less of work for three years.

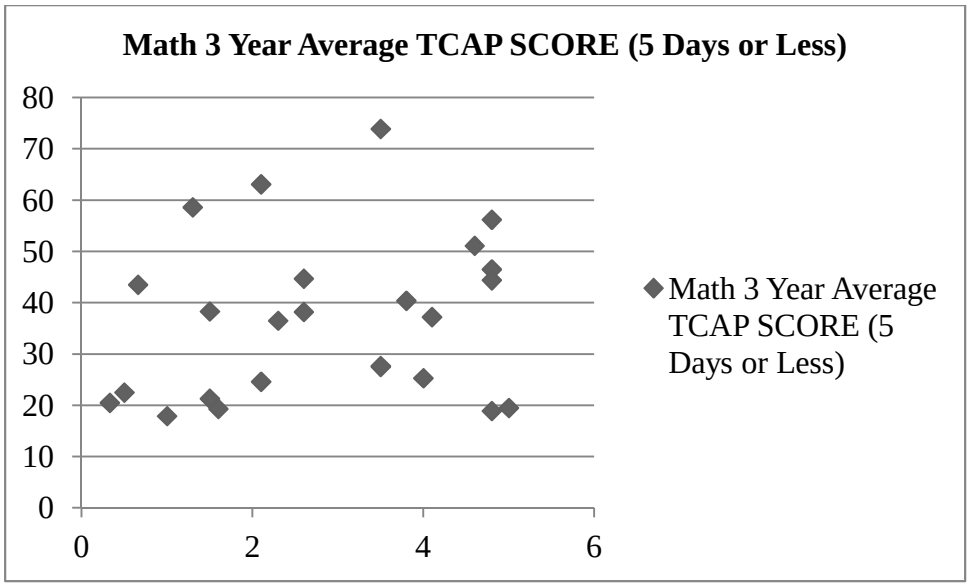

Figure 1. Data for Math Teachers Missing 5 Days or Less (p = .327; r = .2)

There were 24 participants who met the criteria for missing five days or less on average for three years, and who had taught reading and language arts. This sample included 12 female and 12 male teachers. The mean number of days this group missed was 3.5 days. The range of absences for this group for the three-year average was from .33 to five days. Teachers in this sample had an average TCAP score on reading and language arts of 46.8 with a range between 19.5 and 67.1. The Pearson Coefficient for this data was r = 0.18 and a calculated p value of .389. The r-value of .18 suggests little association between teacher absenteeism and achievement scores in reading and language arts. Figure 2 represents the distribution of this data for reading and language arts teachers who had missed five days or less on average for three years.

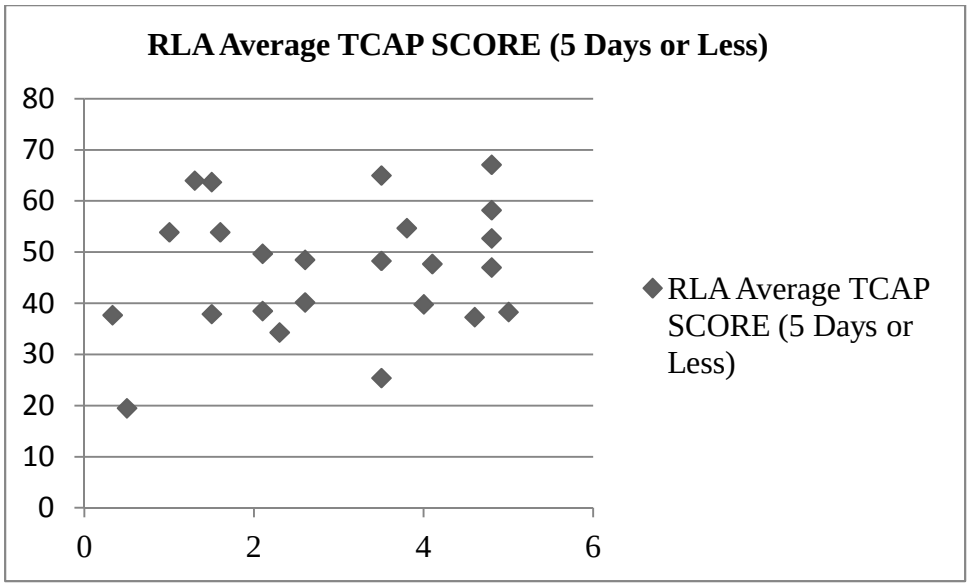

Figure 2. Data for RLA Teachers Missing 5 Days or Less (p = .389; r = .18)

Teachers who were sampled for having missed nine or more days on average for the previous three years with viable math scores for the same time period had missed an average of 15.6 days per year. The average range of these absences was between nine and 33.6. There were 32 female teachers and three male teachers for a sample total of 35 individuals. These teachers had an average score of 37.2 on the TCAP assessment for three years. The Pearson product-moment coefficient for this data was equal to 0.19 and a p value of .267. An r-value of .19 suggests little association between absenteeism of nine or more days per school year and student achievement in math. Figure 3 shows data for those teachers who taught math and had viable TCAP scores and missed nine days or more of school on average for three years.

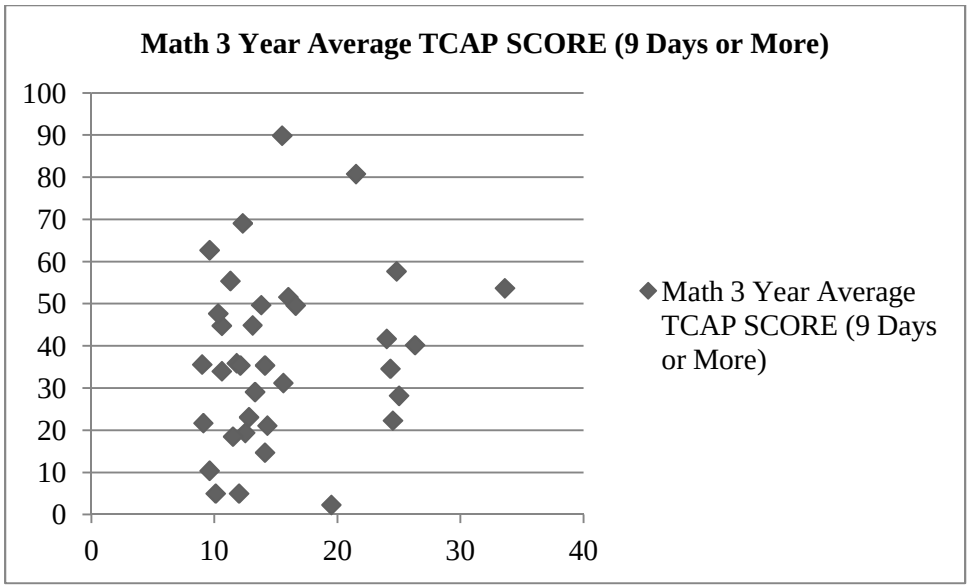

Figure 3. Data for Math Teachers Missing 9 Days or More (p = .267; r = .19)

The teachers in the reading and language arts sample who missed more than nine days on average for the previous three consecutive years numbered 33 females and one male, for a total of 34 participants. The average score of these individuals on the TCAP assessment during this time was 45.8. The average range of scores for this group was from seven to 87.1. The average number of days these teachers missed totaled 16 with a range between nine and 33.6. The *r* value for this data was equal to 0.02 with a *p* value of .242. The r value of .02 suggests no relationship between teacher absenteeism of nine days or more and reading and language arts achievement. Figure 4 represents data for teachers who had viable TCAP scores for RLA and who averaged missing nine days or more per school year for three years.

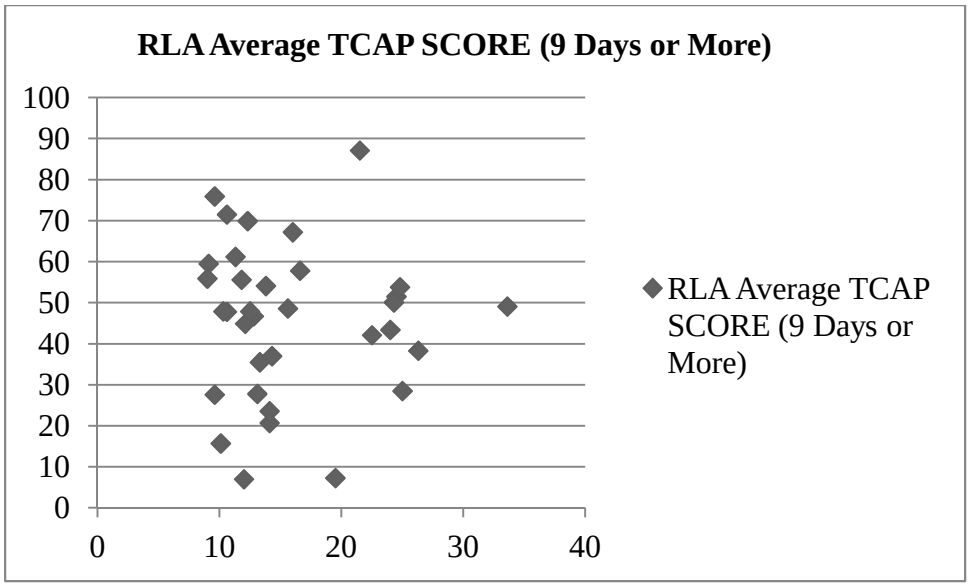

Figure 4. Data for RLA Teachers Missing 9 Days or More (p = .242; r = .02)

Table 4 provides a comparison guide to participants' scores on the state achievement test. Teachers who missed five days or less in the local system had students who scored an average of 48.6 in reading and language arts, and scored an average of 36.7 in math. Those missing nine days or more scored an average of 45.8 in reading and language arts and 37.2 in math.

Table 4

Tennessee State TCAP Scores Grades 3-8, School Years 2010-2012

Test	2010	2011	2012	3 yr. average
Reading & Language Arts	49	49	50	49.3
Mathematics	49	50	52	50.3

Note. Data is from Tennessee Department of Education (2013).

Job Satisfaction Survey Selection and Results

The JSS was administered to both the teachers who were in the group who had missed five days or less and those who had missed nine or more days on average during the previous

three years, and who had viable TCAP data to review in math and/or reading and language arts. The survey code was simplified to match an anonymous return after the independent researcher representatives administered the survey. The results are coded 01 for those teachers who had missed five days or less during the previous three years and 02 for those who had missed nine or more days during the same time.

Data collected and expressed in Table 5 came from 25 respondents who were amicable to participate in the research. Noteworthy results from the survey totals were those in the areas of work itself and communication. Spector's (2011) tabulated norms for these areas were 18.5 for co-workers and 14.6 for communication. The benefits sub-group received a much higher response, at 21.8, compared to the national norm of 14.3. This group also reported higher than norm values for promotion, which is 11.7 for the norm value and 14.8 for the reported value. The communication score of 17.32 is also somewhat above the norm score of 14.6.

Table 5

Job Satisfaction Data for Teachers Who Have Missed Five Days or Less - Code 01

Pay	Promotion	Super-vision	Benefits	Rewards	Conditions	Co-Workers	Work	Communication	Total
17	12	20	17	16	17	23	20	22	164
18	15	24	23	21	10	22	22	20	175
6	18	24	23	18	5	16	23	15	148
14	10	22	17	14	13	20	18	18	146
19	18	24	15	22	18	24	24	21	185
12	7	21	16	12	13	18	21	19	139
13	18	19	17	18	13	23	21	16	158
14	17	24	16	17	14	22	23	18	165
13	17	24	15	26	16	21	24	21	167
19	16	23	21	30	23	19	21	20	182
14	7	21	12	7	8	20	10	13	112
11	12	22	22	13	9	14	19	19	141
7	19	23	16	15	14	21	19	16	150
14	17	22	22	15	12	23	21	18	164
10	10	23	12	14	11	21	24	21	146
11	18	16	12	14	16	24	24	14	149
18	18	24	20	20	9	22	24	17	172
12	13	22	15	16	14	18	24	17	151
19	16	22	20	20	16	24	20	21	178
16	13	22	16	18	10	24	18	20	157
7	15	21	18	15	13	16	22	14	141
7	10	19	13	9	9	24	19	14	124
12	14	23	12	10	7	18	23	6	125
22	22	24	23	24	19	23	23	22	202
16	10	16	14	13	12	15	15	11	122
					Averages				
13.64	14.48	21.8	17.08	15.88	12.84	20.6	20.88	17.32	154.52

Table 6 depicts the data collected from teachers surveyed who had missed nine or more days on average during the past three school years. Thirty-five teachers were sampled to participate and 14 declined to participate, $n = 21$. This sample of scores differed from the norm scores provided by Spector (2011) in that benefit scores were elevated from a norm of 14.3 to a reported average of 16.66. The sub-group co-workers also had a higher score than the reported norm of 18.5. Data in Table 6 was obtained during the 2012-2013 school year.

Table 6

Job Satisfaction Data for Teachers Who Have Missed Nine Days or More - Code 02

Pay	Promotion	Supervision	Benefits	Rewards	Conditions	Co-Workers	Work	Communication	Total
14	13	22	17	6	11	19	24	22	148
5	10	11	10	4	5	8	19	8	80
15	19	24	22	18	19	23	23	22	185
16	12	18	13	9	13	24	19	22	146
16	9	18	11	10	8	20	21	11	124
12	15	17	18	13	11	24	23	20	153
15	13	23	12	14	10	24	21	22	154
13	13	23	20	12	7	21	19	16	144
19	13	24	10	13	12	20	22	14	147
13	7	19	12	17	11	19	22	17	137
10	10	19	14	12	13	21	19	14	132
20	11	24	21	19	15	23	22	17	172
18	19	22	23	23	17	21	21	11	175
7	10	9	20	13	18	21	17	9	124
16	15	22	22	10	14	23	22	24	168
8	4	19	18	10	16	21	23	7	126
15	19	24	21	20	12	22	24	19	176
11	14	12	15	11	11	22	17	19	132
9	6	12	19	11	11	10	18	9	105
7	10	16	11	5	11	15	17	6	98
17	23	24	21	19	14	24	23	21	186
					Averages				
13.14	12.61	19.14	16.66	12.80	12.33	20.23	20.76	15.71	143.42

Hypothesis Evaluation

Hypothesis 1

Research question 1. What is the strength and nature of the relationship between student performance in reading and language arts, as measured by the TCAP, and teacher absenteeism in the rural environment?

Hypothesis 1. Student performance in reading and language arts as measured by the TCAP will be statistically significant and positively correlated to teacher absenteeism in the rural school environment.

Null Hypothesis: Teacher absenteeism is not significantly correlated with student achievement as measured by the TCAP Language Arts Assessment in the rural environment.

Evaluation of hypothesis 1. The results of each subgroup in the investigation suggest a very weak to no correlation. The group who missed five days or less on average for three years had a *p* value of .389 and a *r* value of $r = 0.18$ and the group who missed nine days or more had a *r* value of $r = 0.2$ with a *p* value of .242. Each result provides little evidence of an association. Based on the confidence interval of $p = .05$ the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Hypothesis 2

Research question 2. What is the strength and nature of the relationship between student performance in mathematics, as measured by the TCAP, and teacher absenteeism in the rural environment?

Hypothesis 2. Student performance in math, as measured by the TCAP, will be statistically significant and positively correlated to teacher absenteeism in the rural

school environment.

Null hypothesis: Teacher absenteeism is not significantly correlated with student achievement as measured by the TCAP Mathematics Assessment in the rural environment.

Evaluation of hypothesis 2. The mathematics data also demonstrated very weak Pearson product-moment coefficient results. The sample of teachers missing five days or less yearly had a *p* value of .327 and a *r* value of $r = 0.2$. The participant group missing nine or more days had a *p* value of .267 and a *r* value of 0.19. All values are very weak and provide little evidence of a relationship. Based on a *p* value of .05, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Hypothesis 3

Research question 3. What is the strength and nature of the relationship between job satisfaction and teacher absenteeism in the rural environment?

Hypothesis 3. Teacher job satisfaction, as measured by the *Job Satisfaction Survey*, is significantly and negatively related to the rate of teacher absenteeism in the rural school environment.

Null hypothesis: Teacher absenteeism is not significantly related to job satisfaction.

Evaluation of hypothesis 3. Table 7 provides a meter for the data collected during the study. Spector's work suggested that in general, those scores that fall between 4 and 12 on the subscales are dissatisfied, scores between 12 and 16 are ambivalent, and scores from 16 to 24 are satisfied (Spector, 2009). The 36 item total has a range between 36 and 216 possible scoring. Scores in the range of 36 to 108 indicate dissatisfaction, 144 to 216 suggest satisfaction, and between 108 and 144 are neutral (Spector, 2009).

Table 7

Norms for the Job Satisfaction Survey in Primary and Secondary Education

Facet	Mean	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation of Sample Means
Salary	12	8.5	2.1
Promotion	11.7	10.8	2
Supervision	19.1	19.5	2
Benefits	14.3	12.9	1.8
Rewards	13.6	12.3	1.6
Conditions	12	11.6	2.5
Co-workers	18.5	18.5	1.2
Work Itself	19.4	19.8	1.5
Communication	14.6	13.1	2.2
Total	135	126.7	7.3

Note. Adapted from Spector (2009).

Within these criteria, the general attitude of teachers with those missing five days or less was a mean score of 154, suggesting satisfaction, and those missing nine days or more had a mean score of 143, suggesting indifference. The subscale scores suggest a slight elevation of scores from the norm in the co-worker, work itself, and benefits facets. There seems to be little evidence of any true dissatisfaction among most subgroups. Many of the results appear to be of ambivalence, and do not seem to indicate either a misuse of sick leave—according to phenomena outlined in the literature by studies such as Dalton and Mesch (1991) who found a positive correlation to job satisfaction—or the use of sick leave as an entitlement. The null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Summary

Data collection began during the 2012-2013 school year. Participants were divided into categories according to attendance behavior: those missing five days or less and those missing nine days or more. Archived data for the TCAP achievement test was examined and delineated into three-year average math scores and three-year average reading and language arts scores for each participant. Scores for both groups of participants were below the state average for each respective discipline. The scores were not significantly different by group. The Pearson product-moment coefficient calculations (r) suggest a weak to no correlation between the two events.

Two independent researchers then administered the JSS to participants in two groups, those missing five days or less and those missing nine days or more. The results of the surveys suggest a general measure of satisfaction towards the work environment. A slightly elevated level of satisfaction was found in both groups in the "benefits" category, and those missing nine days or more had a slight elevation in the "co-workers" category.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Consensus in the literature and in the public perception promotes the idea that teachers miss an exuberant amount of work compared to other professionals. This follows with the common sense approach that teachers who are chronically absent cannot provide the same quality of education for their students as would otherwise be obtained if they seldom were absent. Although some evidence in the literature concludes that the chronically absent teacher has a significant effect on the overall achievement of students in the classroom, the exact link to that mechanism remains elusive with the findings of this study. Similarly, it appears that teacher absenteeism has little to do with teacher job satisfaction.

Evaluation of Problem Statement

The purpose of this study was to attempt to find and measure a relationship between student achievement in math and language arts and the absenteeism rate of teachers in the target school system. Understanding this relationship may establish a basis for a proactive intervention that could be used to improve the achievement levels of local students. The available literature on the subject of teacher absenteeism and student achievement has been consistent in explaining that such links are difficult to establish. The results of this study have been no less nebulous in providing evidence that an association exists. However, this study has revealed insights to the researcher that may ultimately contribute to better teacher attendance locally, to better use of leave by educational professionals, and to increased achievement by students. Future studies may also avoid pitfalls this researcher encountered.

Summary of Methodology

This study utilized the available data from a local school system to investigate the potential relationship between chronic teacher absentee behavior and student achievement in mathematics and reading and language arts. Teachers who had taught grades 3-8 for three

consecutive years and had viable TCAP data were evaluated to see if an association existed with their attendance behavior patterns. Four samples were deliberately drawn from archived TCAP data based on two criteria. Teachers were categorized into two groups according to the three year average absentee data. Teachers who had missed five days or less were compared to those who had missed nine days or more for reading and language arts as well as mathematics. The Pearson product-moment coefficient was used to measure the strength of the correlation.

The sample of teachers drawn for each of the above mentioned samples were administered the JSS to evaluate their level of job contentment. This data was evaluated to see if there was a significant difference in job satisfaction in teachers who missed fewer days compared to those who averaged missing several days.

Summary of Results

Those teachers missing five days or less had an average RCPI score of 36.7 as opposed to 50 for the state average on the math portion of the TCAP assessment. In the reading and language arts group for this category the average RCPI score was 46.8 in respect to 49.3 for the state average. For those teachers who averaged missing nine days or more, the average RCPI math score was 37.2 and the reading and language arts RCPI score was 45.8 on the TCAP assessment. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient for the two math groups was calculated to be $r = .2$ for math and $r = .18$ for reading and language arts. The r values for participant's scores who averaged missing nine days or more for math were $r = .19$ and for reading and language arts $r = .02$. Each calculation of r value suggests little or no correlation to absenteeism. These results, although not statistically significant, are opposite of what the initial intent of the study set out to find and are counterintuitive. It should be pointed out that many variables were not controlled for in this study, including the incidence of maternity leave, extended sick leave, ability level of the class, and student absenteeism. All of these are potential

concerns that should be considered in future studies of teacher absenteeism.

The individuals from the group who chose to participate in the *Job Satisfaction Survey* scored a general score moderately satisfied. The scores that were elevated the satisfaction level by subcategories were those of benefits and co-workers. Although contrary to intuition, Spector (1997) points out that in general employment, absenteeism is sometimes slightly too moderately correlated with job satisfaction rather than dissatisfaction. This may well be because the ability to miss work occasionally without the worry of punitive consequences is an aspect of job satisfaction, or as discussed, a hidden fringe benefit (Bowers, 2001).

Contribution to Knowledge

Researcher's Insights

Future researchers should note that there might be reasonable explanations for teachers missing more than nine days on average during a school year, such as maternity leave or a developed medical concern that elevates the average of days missed for the individual. For example, a teacher may have missed only four days in two years, and then have taken a 60 day maternity leave, which placed her in the more than nine day per year average group. Although this teacher had excellent standardized test scores and generally good attendance at work, she would be grouped with other teachers whose poor attendance behaviors actually result in poor test results. Future research should include a larger potential sample population to remove teachers who have taken maternity leave or extended sick leave in order to prevent the possibility of incorporating teachers with otherwise excellent attendance into the group. Another aspect of this phenomenon is that when a teacher takes an extended leave for sickness or family obligations, there is a much greater chance that a quality professional replacement will assume his or her duties in the classroom (Herrmann & Rockoff, 2010).

Theoretical Implications

Implications for the explanation of use of sick leave are likely related to the need for teachers to have release time to avoid burnout or to cope with being on the front line of a rapidly evolving society. Society often downplays the amount of stress teachers encounter on a daily basis and expects them to fulfill multiple roles that are similar to social workers and health care workers, as well as provide instruction to students. The modern teacher seems to be overwhelmed to the point he or she needs to have his or her job role, time, and co-worker interaction re-thought, just as in the Hawthorne experiment. This may result in a re-invigorated teaching culture through the use of technology, aspects of co-worker interdependence such as team teaching, and appropriated stress relief time. Guarino et al. (2006) explain that often individuals who choose to become teachers have made the choice to do so in light of "opportunity costs," or losing the possible other benefits of alternative employment and other forms of viable employment. In the rural area of study, the local school system may be the best form of employment for individuals with the rewards of moderate compensation, benefits, and a similar daily schedule as their children will have while they attend school. Thus, the attractiveness of employment as a teacher in such a limited employment area may attract and retain individuals who would not be employed as teachers in a larger population with many other viable avenues of employment. This combination of limited employment opportunities and a moderate paying job with good benefits may promote individuals to seek and remain in teaching who have a poor fit to job task such as Carmeli (2005) described as effecting organization populations over long periods of time. This may be effecting job engagement as outlined by Anderson et al. (2008), and Warr and Inceoglu (2012).

Unanticipated Findings

Among the unexpected findings were that teachers who attend school regularly did not

seem to value their job much more than those who are chronically absent from work. Similarly, it was very confusing that those teachers who chronically miss work were not very critical of the job, and in fact, both groups scored the supervision, co-workers, and work itself as being among their highest in level of satisfaction. Also disturbing is that neither group felt happy with working conditions. Among the consistent themes in the literature are that the most productive work cultures have elevated job satisfaction, but a quick glance at student achievement scores as compared to state averages suggests that productivity is at a minimum within the local school system. Seemingly, one may suspect that having a minimum amount of job satisfaction isn't related to productivity. A plausible explanation for the similarity of the responses and feelings of the two groups with diverging attendance patterns may be explored through the concept of presenteeism. As Cooper (2012) points out, one group may have good attendance but very poor work productivity and be guilty of presenteeism while on the job. Having the ability to be present at work and avoid or neglect many of the job tasks without punitive consequences may also foster a quasi-sense of job satisfaction similar to what Spector (1997) describes as a moderate or elevated amount for occasional populations with less than stellar job performance.

Shapira-Lishchinsky and Ishan (2013) suggest that much of the conflicting information generated about teacher absenteeism, job satisfaction, and organizational culture is because of the scales used to measure each facet and the ambiguous tracking of teacher absenteeism. They have worked towards developing a reliable scale that measures job attitudes and their association with teacher absentee events in hope of proactively resolving the issue of excessive absenteeism.

Implications for Practice

The issue of teacher attendance can be addressed from many different aspects. A plausible solution for immediate practice at the local level should involve the hiring of a few certified teachers who act as fill-in teachers when the actual teacher is absent (Miller et al.,

2008). If a certified teacher were available in each building to fill in for teachers of math and reading and language arts and provide a competent amount of instruction on absentee days, the negative effective of the ill-prepared substitute outlined in the literature could be diminished. A certified substitute available for use in a specific building could be well trained in subject matter and have an established rapport with students and building level procedures and the general operation of the school. This would greatly compensate for many noted issues associated with teacher absenteeism, but not resolve the financial aspects or teacher absenteeism. This would also foster a cultural change that sets higher expectations for substitutes who have traditionally had much lower expectations by all stakeholders (Damle, 2009). As Weems (2003) points out, much of our problems during teacher absences are generated by the popular conception of the role substitute teacher. If we change that perception by recruitment, placement, and retention of quality people as substitutes, we may increase student achievement and promote positive climate.

As far as researching for financial solutions for absent teachers, a better focus of energy from administrators and policy makers may be to focus on what is good for students, rather than simply the potential cost savings that can be generated by teachers not missing school. In other words, the necessity for somatic and mental health and the legitimate need for the teaching professional to have release time should continue to be investigated and defined until a happy balance can be achieved between optimum student performance, optimal teacher wellbeing, and professional stature (Silva, 2010). When considering restructuring the organization of schools, policy makers and administrators should be mindful of the importance that the perception of fairness and trust has on the work ethic of the employee (Carlson, 2012).

The thoughtful revision of policy could also make great differences in the use and abuse of leave provisions. Miller et al. (2008) describes several incentive schemes that include buying back unused sick days, or substantial bonus pay for exceptional attendance. Jacobs and Kritsonis

(2007) suggest that contributions to retirement accounts are also excellent incentives to increasing and changing attendance patterns of teachers. Rosenblatt and Shirom (2005), suggest a screening process for potential employees that could help diminish the hiring of individuals that have personality traits, established work habits, poor work ethic, and other factors that are associated with chronic absenteeism.

This study aids in the overall knowledge base pertaining to teacher absenteeism in that it helps to clarify that absenteeism by teachers is a very complex and dynamic element that needs much greater study in order to understand the effects it has on achievement. It also is indicative of the complexities that exist within the classroom and the need to further understand the workings of the teacher-student relationship.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. The greatest determent of this study was that it had a limited sample size. A larger sample size would produce stronger and more generalizable data. Having a larger sample size would also alleviate the necessity to include individuals in the data that may distort findings. For example, the literature suggests that teachers on maternity leave or who have a debilitating illness may miss copious amounts of work, but for single year events. These events may distort the data due to poor student performance during the year of the maternity leave, or the quality of the substitute teacher hired to replace the teacher on the extended leave. The three-year average of the teacher's scores may also not be reflective of the teacher's behavior patterns, as an extended leave for a single event for maternity leave may push the three-year absentee rate well above the five day investigative limit. Maternity leave and health related issues may also have caused a teacher to be placed into the more than nine day category by average with the possibility that she may have had very good scores on the standardized test due to two years of diligent attendance. Other limitations included that the

local population of teachers in grades 3-8 had been in a great deal of flux during the past three years, making it difficult to obtain a sample population that had taught the same grade level for three consecutive years. This moving of personnel would have less impact on potential samples if the sample population were larger.

Future Research

Looking at how teachers view themselves as collective and how that view influences absentee decisions may be the key to alleviating the negative aspects associated with teachers missing work (Shapira-Lishchinsky & Ishan, 2013). Research for future investigations into teacher absenteeism should pertain to how teachers view themselves as professionals and how the community views teaching as a profession. Much of the research suggests that teachers view the ability to miss school as an unwritten entitlement that comes in place of an underpaid and less respected profession (Podgursky, 2003). This study may have been better served if teachers had been asked if being able to miss school was a factor in their overall satisfaction with their job. As a related factor, future research should include a component that measures the teacher's job satisfaction as it relates to the students and a survey such as the one being developed by Shapira-Lishchinsky & Ishan (2013) that determines the collective efficacy and affective attitudes teachers have towards absenteeism. The work of Landers, Alter, and Servilio (2008) could be used to enhance the *Job Satisfaction Survey* as well.

On a local level, future research should also include an investigation into the climate of schools specifically related to the emphasis the local teaching staff has on being viewed as professionals and how disenfranchised teachers view the management of the school system as a whole. Instruments offered through the Tennessee State Department of Education (2013) such as the TEAL survey and Tripod survey are excellent resources for these potential investigations. The associated teacher evaluation instrument could also be used to determine if an association

exists among teacher performance, student achievement, and teacher attendance.

The identification of possible subgroups that had a greater amount of chronic absenteeism including those by amount of tenure, socio-economic structure of the individual school, and geographic location could also yield a better quality of information. These subgroup studies may well glean more useful information if they are conducted in a qualitative manner as Carlsen (2012) suggests. These future investigations should also incorporate the strategic ways teacher attendance could be encouraged through monetary incentives as well as affective rewards rather than on simply focusing on financial bottom lines and political capital which often generates counterproductive morale issues for the teaching community.

Self-Reflection

The quandary that seems to affect the local school system may be better served by following this advice from Albert Bandura (1997):

> Efforts to reduce venerability to occupational stress and burnout at the organizational level must address the various ways in which employees' self-efficacy is undermined by the institutional practices. Employees need some control over matters that affect their work life and give them a sense of ownership for what they produce. Their work should be evaluated on the basis of what they can control. To have little control over the way in which the work life is structured but to be held accountable for the results is exasperating and stress provoking. Employees need the benefit of programs for developing and upgrading their skills and helpful feedback systems that enable them to achieve a greater sense of efficacy and success in their work (Leiter, 1992). Restructuring of work into meaningful activities with variety, challenge, and opportunities to exercise initiative counteracts stressful stagnation. Finally, people need to be provided with a system of social support from co-workers along with efficacious leadership that creates a sense of

mission and purpose.

> Employee absenteeism is a chronic problem incurring costs that run into the billions of dollars annually by disrupting work schedules and lowering productivity. Absenteeism is not simply a matter of job dissatisfaction. Employees disclose a variety of factors that keep them from getting to work. They include family problems, conflicts with supervisors and coworkers, transportation difficulties, job stressors, personal problems with alcohol and drugs, boredom with their jobs, medical appointments and illness, and viewing some time off from work as an employee privilege (Latham & Frayne, 1998). Frequent absences from work only exacerbate the difficulties, resulting in escalating organizational sanctions from official warning to placement on probation to termination (p. 467).

This study has had many challenging aspects, but it has helped the researcher clarify that being an educator is a privilege, a calling given by God to those He directs to cultivate students and lead culture. Although there are many aspects of negativity in examining the use and misuse of sick leave by professional adults, many fellow educators are diligently trying to serve their students and communities while preserving their lifestyle and coping with a rapidly evolving society.

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APPENDIX A

Job Satisfaction Survey

Please use the following link to access Dr. Paul Spector's Job Satisfaction Survey website:

http://shell.cas.usf.edu/~pspector/scales/jsspag.html

Then click on: JSS scale: Original English

Figure 5. Job Satisfaction Survey Page 1

Job Satisfaction Survey Page 2

Please use the following link to access Dr. Paul Spector's Job Satisfaction Survey website:

http://shell.cas.usf.edu/~pspector/scales/jsspag.html

Then click on: JSS scale: Original English and scroll to page 2.

Figure 6. Job Satisfaction Survey Page 2

APPENDIX B

Instructions for Scoring the Job Satisfaction Survey, Jss

Please use the following link to access Dr. Paul Spector's Job Satisfaction Survey website:

http://shell.cas.usf.edu/~pspector/scales/jsspag.html

Then click on: JSS scoring instructions

Interpreting Satisfaction Scores with The Job Satisfaction Survey

Please use the following link to access Dr. Paul Spector's Job Satisfaction Survey website:

http://shell.cas.usf.edu/~pspector/scales/jsspag.html

Then click on JSS score interpretation

Job Satisfaction Survey Norms

Please use the following link to access Dr. Paul Spector's Job Satisfaction Survey website:

http://shell.cas.usf.edu/~pspector/scales/jsspag.html

Then click on: JSS norms