School Culture and Leadership: Teacher Perceptions of Title I and Non-Title I Schools

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School Culture and Leadership: Teacher Perceptions in Title I and Non-Title I Schools

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A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in

Educational Leadership

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by

Krista Galea Rose Crum

May 2013

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Keywords: Leadership, Morale, Non-Title I, Poverty, School Culture, Title I
ABSTRACT

School Culture and Leadership: Teacher Perceptions of Title I and Non-Title I Schools

by

Krista Galea Rose Crum

This study was conducted to see if teachers perceive a significant difference in school culture and leadership in Title I and non-Title I schools. Specifically, this researcher considered the possibility that teachers working in Title I schools have lower perceptions of their school’s culture and leadership than teachers working in non-Title I schools. A quantitative study was used to find the perceived differences between school culture and leadership in Title I and non-Title I schools. A quasi-experimental design was selected because preexisting data were collected on teachers in an upper East Tennessee region. The data were collected from the TELL Tennessee survey conducted in 2011 by the Tennessee Department of Education. The TDOE contracted with the New Teacher Center (NTC) to conduct the state’s survey. The NTC is a national organization that has administered surveys in several states and is dedicated to developing and supporting a quality teaching force. The TDOE compiled 8 constructs or focus indicator areas for the survey, and 5 of the 8 indicators were used to determine school culture and leadership. School culture indicators were compiled from the focus questions of facilities and resources and community support. Leadership indicators were compiled from focus questions of student conduct, school leadership, and
instructional practices and support. The population included teachers who taught in public schools, Pre Kindergarten through 12th grade during the 2010 through 2011 school year. This study showed no significant difference in regard to teacher perceptions of leadership in Title I and non-Title I schools in an upper East Tennessee region. However the study did find a significant difference in regard to teacher perceptions of school culture in Title I and non-Title I schools in the area of facilities and resources. An examination of the group means indicates that Title I schools ($M = .845$, $SD = .120$) had a significantly more positive perception of facilities and resources than teachers in non-Title I schools ($M = .786$, $SD = .149$).
DEDICATION

Jeff, I thank you for always standing beside me, for your support, love and encouragement that motivated me to continue this long arduous journey. I have loved you since the first day I saw you and no other person could set a better example of honor, honesty, and respect. Thank you for the laughter that I have enjoyed and the irreplaceable memories.

To Rachel and Aaron who have endured having a mother who was a student during your entire childhood, I say thank you for cheering me through all five degrees that we as a family earned together. I love you both and pray that I have set an example for you to continue to improve your lives with knowledge and determination.

To my mother, Connie Rose, thank you for showing me your strength. I have grown up with the most wonderful memories a girl could have and will be forever grateful to you for making me feel loved every day of my life. Although Dad is not here to see me graduate, I cherish the thought that he would be proud. I am so blessed to have called you both my parents and consider it an honor to be your daughter.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

An extremely dark room with no windows can be changed in a short time when a sliver of light filters through a small crack creating a magnificent illumination. The same can be relative when examining school culture and leadership. A teacher’s perception may depend on the darkness of the school’s culture or how well the leadership illuminates. Perception is built on prior experiences and the words a leader says is very important to understanding. What people feel is the truth is what people perceive (Whitaker, 2009). Studies have been conducted in an effort to determine the secret to improving school culture and leadership, but few can be found that probe into comparing the two in schools based on poverty levels.

Teachers working in Title I or non-Title I school situations are subject to the same pressures of demanding teacher evaluations, raising test scores, and changes in state standards. The United States Department of Education recognizes a school as Title I if 75% or more of the students receive free or reduced priced lunches. A school would not be eligible for Title I status and considered Non-Title I if 35% or fewer students receive free or reduced priced lunch (Gil, 2008). A family of four with earnings of $23,550 would be considered as living in poverty. High poverty schools are eligible for additional assistance from the government’s Title I Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged program. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) on April 9, 1965 in an effort to combat the war on poverty. In Section 1001 of an amendment to the ESEA, one purpose of Title I is to meet the educational needs of low achieving children in our country’s highest poverty
schools, children who are neglected, migratory, limited English proficient, have disabilities, Indian children, and children in need of reading assistance (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The purpose of ESEA was better educational services that would improve academic performance for students from low socioeconomic status (SES) families and lift the poor from poverty. The ESEA has been reauthorized nine times, the most recent when President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) on January 8, 2002. The NCLB focused on closing the achievement gap and additional accountability, choice, and flexibility, leaving “no child behind.” NCLB stipulates that Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) must be made on standardized tests in all subgroups. If Title I schools do not meet AYP for 2 years in regard to the NCLB stipulations, the school is placed in a priority status of school improvement.

Teachers working in Title I schools deal with many children who come to school hungry. Hungry children are in a survival mode that prioritizes a meal as more important than schoolwork. Teachers in low poverty, non-Title I schools may have more students arriving at school ready to learn because there are more support and resources at home. Therefore, teachers in schools that are low poverty or non-Title I face different obstacles than teachers in high poverty or Title I schools. Educators are challenged to be insistent, supportive, and expect more without excuse in order to promote successful students. Education and relationships are the two avenues out of poverty, and students need to be taught to find those avenues (Payne, 2005). These extra challenges are additional strains on a school’s culture as well as the administration. Influences of poverty can weigh heavily on an administrator and the mood of a school, thus,
leadership and school culture must be considered when piecing together the puzzle of school reform.

A change in school culture and leadership often comes on the heels of educational reform. Change in the public educational system of Tennessee was impacted when the state was awarded a large sum of money with the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant. The United States Department of Education, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, awarded the states of Tennessee and Delaware the first two grants in the four billion dollar RTTT grant in March 2010. The grant was based on four key areas: preparing students for success from college to career, developing data systems that aptly measure student success and how to improve performance, recruiting and retaining the best teachers and principals and placing them where they are needed most, and turning around the lowest performing schools. Tennessee was awarded 501 million dollars for the competition and Governor Bill Haslam publically announced the new motto for the state as “First to the Top” (FTT) (ED.gov.2012). The grant brought additional funds to the state in hopes of moving Tennessee closer to the top in the national education quality rankings. The FTT program has completed a year of implementation, from 2010 to 2011, and has shown improvement. Tennessee moved in national ranking of educational quality from 23 in 2011 to 21 in 2012, according to a report from the Education Research Center (Hardy, 2012).

The RTTT grant could be seen as another attempt to reform education. Understanding the requirements of RTTT could bring educators new challenges such as a change in teacher evaluations and prompt return of test scores to schools.
Administrators must evaluate all teachers a minimum of four times, pre- and postconference with teachers about performance and do a professionalism evaluation during the last 6 weeks of the school year. The state developed a rubric to gauge teacher performance. Numbers of 1 to 5 with 5 showing above expectations are assigned to the teacher. Pretenured teachers must score an overall of 4 or 5 to maintain tenure. Distrust and fear has frustrated educators, potentially damaging the morale and atmosphere in schools. This frustration influenced changes in the second year of the new process and the state now allows sections of the evaluation to be combined (Winerip, 2011). Kevin S. Huffman, Tennessee’s education commissioner, and Governor Haslam continue to review policies and listen to feedback. Teachers and administrators were surveyed and the feedback used to improve policies. The Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) Tennessee survey was conducted in 2011 to give an opportunity for educators to be heard and to measure the current learning conditions, environment, support, and resources. The TELL Tennessee survey was developed as part of Tennessee’s First to the Top initiative. The survey will be used collect data from Tennessee educators again in 2013 (Haslam, 2011). Critics of the grant and survey may posit that the responses were gathered too early in the implementation of Race to the Top and the second round of questions may prove to be more realistic. In either instance this survey, unique to Tennessee, could prove to be valuable to school districts for planning school improvement and assessing school culture and leadership effectiveness.
Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine whether a significant difference in teacher perceptions of school culture and leadership exists between teachers working in high poverty Title I schools and those working in low poverty non-Title I schools. The study was an examination of the results of the TELL Tennessee Survey from an upper East Tennessee region to determine if significant differences existed in teacher perceptions of leadership and school culture in Title I and non-Title I schools.

Prior studies have indicated that high poverty schools are perceived as having ineffective leadership, and depending upon where the school is located, views surrounding school culture may assume that many students are working below grade level (Collins, 2001). Anthropologists may categorize this as ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is one type of perception where the culture of others is seen as less important or not as natural as the culture the person observing (Northouse, 2007). Other studies support the notion that dedicated teachers have strong personal feelings about working in high poverty schools and are loyal, dedicated, and invested in supporting the school's leadership and continuously improving the school's culture. School culture, leadership, and poverty were reviewed to determine if a significant difference existed in the perception of teachers working in Title I schools and non-Title I schools.
Research Questions

1. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of student conduct management as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey between Title I and non-Title I schools?

2. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of school leadership as determined by the TELL Tennessee Survey in the areas between Title I schools and non-Title I schools?

3. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of instructional practices and support as determined by the TELL Tennessee Survey between Title I and non-Title I schools?

4. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of facilities and resources as determined by the TELL Tennessee Survey between Title I and non-Title I schools?

5. Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of community support and involvement as determined by the TELL Tennessee Survey between Title I and non-Title I schools?

Significance of the Study

Historically, the teaching profession was one of respect. Changes in family dynamics, the economy, and educational reform may have lessened that perception. Human nature indicates a need to feel valued and respected in society. The face of a school’s culture often depends upon how it is observed. To an outsider or someone not in the business of education, the perception of a school’s culture may be based on
location, facilities, and available resources. A school located in a high poverty area may appear less effective than one located in an affluent neighborhood. Educators know that schools are ever changing with each attempt to reform public schools and that affects school culture and leadership. School administrators know that in order to maintain a positive perception of a school there must be a healthy school culture while lending support to the faculty with managing student conduct, instructional practices, and strong school leadership. Therefore, faculty and administration must collaborate to identify the most challenging issues bearing down on cultural change (Delaney, 2012).

Society and stakeholders need to understand the impact of poverty on student outcomes and the influence of school culture and leadership when making decisions of how to support education. It is vital that school administrators are aware of the connections among poverty, school culture, and their personal leadership. As noted earlier, several researchers have explored school culture and leadership. However, more in-depth exploration of school culture and leadership in Title I and non-Title I schools may be helpful in shaping future school reform.

*Limitations*

This study has limitations that are considered for future researchers. The original design of the TELL Tennessee survey was intended to seek perceptions of teachers in all public schools in the state of Tennessee. This study was a comparison of the perceptions of teachers in Title I schools and non-Title I schools in an upper East Tennessee region.
1. A potential limitation of this study is a lack of data collected on this topic. The TELL Tennessee Survey required at least 51% of each school’s faculty to respond before results were included in the data and only one survey exists at the time of this study. Therefore, one survey limits the data available to researchers.

2. The number of years of experience in a Title I school or non-Title I school was not known, which may have impacted results.

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms or phrases were defined to assist the reader in a better understanding of this dissertation.

1. **Leadership**
   
   Process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2007).

2. **Morale**
   
   The mental and emotional conditions with regard to a task or goal to be accomplished. A sense of common purpose with respect to a group or the degree of mental or moral confidence of a person or group; spirit of optimism (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2007).

3. **Non-Title I**
   
   Schools where 35% or fewer students receive free or reduced priced lunches (Gil, 2008).
4. *Poverty*

A certain level of income relative to a family size. A family of four earning less than $28,665 would be considered at poverty level and students would be eligible for free meals (Parrett & Budge, 2012).

5. *School Culture*

The shared beliefs and priorities that drive the thinking and actions of stakeholders within a school community (Dorsey, 2008).

6. *TELL Tennessee Survey*

The Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning Survey is an online survey conducted in the state of Tennessee that measures the perceptions of teachers in public schools of their working environment.

7. *Title I*

A classification based on the number of students who receive free or reduced priced lunches. Requirements vary from state to state (Gil, 2008).

*Overview of the Study*

This quantitative study analyzed the differences between Title I and non-Title I schools of teacher perceptions on school culture and leadership. Chapter 1 presents the introduction to the dissertation topic, the purpose of the study, and the research questions.

Chapter 2 is a review of the current literature on differences in Title I schools and non-Title I schools. The literature covers topics relevant to the dissertation. Topics include leadership, school culture, and poverty.
Chapter 3 provides the methodology for the research. The methodology includes research questions, the source of the data, the collection method used for the data, data analysis method, and ethical considerations. The methodology included gathering data from an upper East Tennessee school region that included 155 schools from 17 school districts. There were 115 Title I schools and 40 non-Title I schools. There were 5,361 teachers responding to the survey in the upper East Tennessee school region.

Chapter 4 presents the analysis of data. Chapter 5 summarizes the findings and offers recommendations for practice and additional research.

This study addressed the teacher perceptions of school culture and leadership in Title I and non-Title I schools. Comparisons were made in regard to facilities and resources, community support, management of student conduct, and school leadership.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Leadership and school culture are recognized as two of the most important factors in schools regardless of poverty level. Leaders must light the fire and the passion within the staff in a school. Teachers who have an excitement about their jobs and school and consider it an invigorating place to practice their chosen profession build a strong school culture (Whitaker, 2009). Leadership in any type of school is one of the most important aspects. In the 21st century principals must analyze more data, be a master of management, face new discipline problems that relate to technology and social media, and repair teacher morale issues because of the demands of more rigorous teacher evaluation models (Price, 2012). Hoy and Miskel (2008) deducted from leadership studies through the years that certain traits and skills are associated with effective leadership. A leader who builds relationships may be the most effective.

Seifert and Vornberg (2003) submitted that school culture is "the interaction among the following factors: attitudes and beliefs held by stakeholders inside and outside the organization; cultural norms of the school; and the relationships among individuals in the school" (p. 86). The culture of an organization shapes and molds assumptions and perceptions that are essential to comprehending what it means to be an educator (Owens, 2004). Stakeholders have a responsibility to uphold the values of education.
Historically, school culture and leadership have been examined using several theoretical views. Smith and Riley (2009) surmised that school culture embodies leadership, environmental conditions, and morale. In the earliest years culture referred to cultivating crops or animals, or religious worship, hence the term cult. After the 16th and into the 19th century, culture became more about the improvement of the human mind and personal life. Later it evolved into a more spiritual improvement. The term was often used to describe those with higher moral stature. Smith and Riley reported the scrutiny of culture by theorists such as Karl Marx and Max Weber. Marx rebelled against idealism and connected culture to economic life and power. Weber embraced idealism and consented that life was about freedom, replacing life’s sense of purpose trapping people in an iron cage of bureaucracy and rationalism. John Dewey related that the body is born into an environment that is cultured or civilized and becomes so due to educational talents as a transitional process (as cited in Alexander, 1987). More recently school culture has surfaced as an important area to be included in research. With the transitional phase of national educational standards, some believe that a global school culture in the future with world standards (Anderson-Levitt, 2003).

Leadership has been a staple of historical theories. Leadership involves influence. Leadership is not about coercion but about those who influence a group of individuals to move to a common goal. Leadership is often confused with management, which emerged during the advent of industrialized society around the turn of the 20th century (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Hoy and Miskel noted that leadership can be traced back to Aristotle. They also conceptualize that leadership can be examined from viewpoints of power relationships, as a transformational process, or from a skills perspective.
Fleishman and Hunt (1973) maintained that in 60 years there have been 65 different classifications of leadership. Gill upheld that one definition of leadership from the 1920s maintains that it is an ability to sway others into obedient and loyal cooperation and continues that this definition is not viable in today’s view of leadership (Gill, 2011).

School culture and leadership are enveloped by morale. Morale as a word entered English usage in the 1830s and mainly focused on aspects of honor and discipline in the military. There were factors involving morale issues and determining origins of internal or external, positive and negative effects of morale (Corvisier, 1994). In 2008 Watson questioned what constituted morale during The Great War. He researched a soldier’s resilience and combat motivation and found that soldiers with an innate ability to endure hardship were more likely to not become a casualty or combat-ineffective. An outcome of either was detrimental to the war effort. Soldiers who rob the dead or loot from abandoned homes in the name of war commit unethical actions. Unethical behaviors breed mistrust and have an effect on morale. Soldiers, companies, and educators have similarities found in the historical aspects of morale. Losing a war, life savings, or having test scores that are low are variables that may damage the perceived morale of a soldier, company employee, or teacher.

School Culture

School culture is multifaceted in nature and has the ability to influence all aspects of the organization. Teachers need to feel included and supported. Teacher job satisfaction improves when the culture of the school supports active involvement and decision making. Reeves stated, "Meaningful school improvement begins with cultural
change and cultural change begins with the school leader” (as cited in Ebolt & Fulton, 2008 p. 92). Today’s principals are active change agents in light of accountability standards. Principals must ensure that schools’ goals align with the mission for school improvement. Changing school culture, especially in high poverty schools, is a difficult task and requires teachers and leaders to change their mindset (Parrett & Budge, 2012). School culture is built on trust and good training. If the staff knows what is expected and how to do it, then a sense of freedom and innovation is released, trust develops and the school’s culture is stronger (Gray & Streshly, 2008). In Native American reservations, hostile cultural attitudes toward education are seen as a way to erase or subsume indigenous cultural values. The history of our inner cities, our treatment of minorities and the poor, leads to a deficit of trust in mainstream cultural institutions. This is a major hurdle for educators (Kain, 2011).

According to Gladwell (2008), there are many outliers that could have an impact on outcome and one could be culture. He suggested that a prediction could be made as to which countries are best in math ability by knowing which ones place the highest emphasis on hard work and effort. Gladwell listed five countries that have in common a culture shaped by meaningful hard work and wet-rice agriculture, China (Taiwan), Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea. Students with the ability to concentrate and sit still long enough to answer more than 100 tedious test questions are the ones who do the best job with solving math problems. Northouse (2007) reported that the research done by Hofstede on the dimensions of culture are the most referenced. He states the five major dimensions on which culture differs identified by Hofstede as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, institutional collectivism, masculinity-femininity,
and long- and short-term orientation. Power distance creates levels between people based on power, authority, and possessions. Uncertainty avoidance is the degree that groups rely on norms, procedures, or rituals in order to avoid uncertainty. Institutional collectivism is how society encourages the broader interests of society instead of individual accomplishments. The dimension of masculinity-femininity is a measurement of how concerned society is with how biological sex determines the roles of members in a household, organization, or community. Long-term and short-term orientation refers to the extent to which people delay gratification, plan, or prepare for the future. In the school culture setting, the dimension of masculinity-femininity can be seen in the sex of the school leader or teacher leaders and the roles of leadership that emerge and influence the school’s environment.

Maintaining a positive school culture by investing in human capital is a top priority when leaders are asked to improve low performing schools, teacher morale, and do more with less (Delaney, 2012). Protheroe (2006) suggested that maintaining high teacher morale requires a principal’s support of high student learning and nurturing the school environment. Without the proper school culture, even teachers who have an admirable dedication may experience burnout. For educators who choose to stay and teach in high poverty conditions, the job becomes both a liability and an asset when they consider it extremely rewarding and deeply personal (Parrett & Budge, 2012). Corporations that deceive the public, like Enron, can destroy faith and confidence. Employee morale is based on the employees’ role in the workplace and how the company is perceived. Although changing perceptions can be difficult, it can be accomplished. Reality is not so easily changed. Any situation will find unhappy people
as well as those who exude eternal sunshine (Bramble, 2012). Low morale is expensive (Fink, 2012). Fink reported that approximately 22 million employees are disengaged from the American economy and are costing as much as $350 billion dollars per year in lost productivity when considering absenteeism and other workplace problems due to unhappy employees.

The education system has become very data driven. Technology brings into play instant results of right and wrong answers for assessments. A recent study by MetLife (2012) showed a marked decline in teacher morale nationwide that may be linked to results on display from test scores and evaluations. Teachers who are behind in the knowledge and use of technology may not embrace the colorful pie charts and rankings that are available with the click of a mouse. The data force accountability from individuals to whole districts in a state and could have an effect on morale. Teachers may allow the low test scores to have a negative impact on their morale instead of using those as an incentive to improve. The attitude about failure should be to look at it as a detour to a much better outcome than could ever have been imagined (Gordon, 2011). Effective teachers create a positive atmosphere in their schools and classrooms and take a positive approach 10 days out of 10 (Whitaker, 2004).

Facilities and resources are important to teachers. The past 2 decades have seen an increase in the use of technology in teaching practices and student academic use. The primary use of technology in schools has shifted from teachers using a computer to type lesson plans, class rosters, and notes home to parents to integrating technology with curriculum and student interactive learning. The speed of the Internet has gone from extremely slow dial up connection to high speed digital internet (Stronge,
Effective school leaders realize the importance of providing the best technology and resources available. Research confirms that a majority of teachers indicate that technology affects their teaching (Ascione, 2005). Successful school leaders will assess surroundings and support teachers by doing whatever is needed to make their jobs easier and supply them with the proper resources (Green, 2009). Technology is helpful to a teacher, but the actual facility is just as important to a teacher. Inventories for assessing the school facilities would be useful to school leaders. Teachers spend a great deal of time in the school building and have a better attitude about the workplace if it is appealing and inviting (Whitaker, 2010). Schools in poor neighborhoods are often lacking operable bathroom stalls, have dirty, roach infested buildings with outdated learning materials, larger class sizes, and unhealthy conditions (Gorski, 2008). A school leader is supportive to teachers by providing a clean, safe, and attractive environment (Schmidt, 2002).

Another area important to a school’s culture is community support and involvement. Schools that are supported by the community correlate with higher grades, improved parent and teacher relationships, and student success (National Education Association, 2008). Benefits of schools partnering with the surrounding community can have a lasting impact. Valued community partners engage students in future job opportunities, teach them how to be an active member of the community, raise self-esteem, and connect schools with parents in a relaxed setting (Afterschoolalliance.org, 2007). Community involvement is so important to schools that serve urban and poor students. Together, schools and communities create a positive and successful future for students. Tough areas are often disconnected and isolated
from current development and need the schools to provide the connection. A great school is not enough to ensure success for a student (Jehl, 2007).

Leadership

A common perception of leadership denotes that it involves a social influence process where an individual places intentional influence over others in order to build activities or relationships in an organization or group, according to Hoy and Miskel (2008). Hoy and Miskel also conceded that leadership should promote desired outcomes, individual motivation, and shared orientations. Leadership requires impact on others. Washington (2006) maintained that a leader may never know who will be touched or impacted or how important an example of leadership will be to someone else.

The ability of a leader to be competent in developing and maintaining a highly effective team is important to prevent employee morale issues. Improving and maintaining high employee morale is key to organizational success (Fink, 2012). Two functions of leadership, sharing and distributing, reveal a spirit of reciprocity and maintain a constant focus on the learning environment and learning. Fostering caring relationships among peers, providing a safe and orderly workplace, and building a bond between school and students creates leadership capacity (Parrett & Budge, 2012).

The change process developed by Kotter (1990) is a bridge into Transformational Leadership. A new administrator placed in a position to bring about change may implement the change with support from the staff. Kotter suggests that leaders create a sense of urgency. A leader would need to have charisma in order to build a community
of trust and relay the importance of a task that has a deadline. A new administrator could build trust by building relationships, showing concern and interest in the personal aspects of a school team. Creating a vision for change is important. Painting a mental picture would be a way to sell the idea. Share and build on the vision with everyone in the organization, then find any shortcomings in the plan. A principal who needs to improve math scores in the eighth grade finds the best math teacher in the building who can motivate and inspire students to achieve. When change begins to occur and the small goals are met, a leader will celebrate success. This forms a continuum for motivation within the school and perseverance prevails to take the group to the finish line.

Fullan (2006) encourages leaders not to get caught up in the vision. Over planning can cause one to lose sight of the end. Leaders cannot forget their morals and values. Leadership requires characteristics that can motivate change, invest in relationships with followers, delegate jobs while factoring in strengths and weaknesses, inspire followers with charisma and encouragement, and lead them through the process with morals and values that build trust. Fullan's secrets of change are to love them, connect peers with a purpose, build capacity, be nonjudgmental, learn and work, be transparent, and learn to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. Kotter (2012) contradicts Fullan with the illustration of the importance of vision. He maintains that vision is key to producing change. Kotter states that, "Without an appropriate vision, a transformation effort can easily dissolve into a list of confusing, incompatible, and time consuming projects that go in the wrong direction or nowhere at all (p.8)."
Transformational leadership changes and transforms people and finds a place in hearts of great leaders. The influence that is required to change and transform people must come from a charismatic person who is willing to go the distance for the greater good of the people. Transformational leaders lead with kindness and encouragement. A certain amount of faith is injected into the change process. Personal beliefs in the vision would help to sell followers on a vision. Bennis and Thomas (2002) highlighted the changes that occur in transformational leaders as crucibles. A crucible can be an event, tragic or wonderful, that defines leaders. “Leaders create meaning out of events and relationships that devastate non leaders” (p.17). Leaders do not see a life-changing event as uncontrollable; they see it as a challenge or goal that must be reached. “The crucible makes the individual see the world in a new light” (p. 107).

Other researchers maintained that it takes more than one event to determine leadership. Leaders are most often developed by traits and skills (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Five personality traits are associated with effective leadership; self-confidence, stress tolerance, emotional maturity, integrity, and extroversion. Self-confident leaders face adversity with persistence and are more likely to set high goals for their followers and themselves. A leader tolerant to stress tends to stay calm and makes good decisions. Emotionally mature leaders are oriented to self-improvement, maintain cooperative relationships with peers and subordinates, and have an accurate awareness of shortcomings and strengths. Leaders with integrity are honest, responsible, and ethical. Extroverted leaders are social, outgoing, and comfortable in groups. According to Hoy and Miskel, approaching leadership from a trait perspective has a very effective record. The skills approach of leadership demonstrates that technical, interpersonal, and
conceptual skills are most valuable for effective leaders. Technical skills may include knowing the rules of the school, having the ability to manage budgets, interpreting test results, and supervising. Interpersonal skills embody sensitivity, understanding attitudes and feelings of others, and being considerate. Conceptual skills are cognitive skills that involve understanding the organizational change process, thinking logically, and communicating a vision for the organization. A case could be established for leaders that are born with the innate ability to lead. Gladwell (2008) discusses the possibility surrounding the Matthew Effect that is based on Matthew 25:29 in the Bible. He dispels the notion that we deserve greatness and cling to an idea that success is due to individual merit. Maxwell (2004) suggested that individuals look in the mirror and get to know themselves, know that the most important relationship that can be established is with one’s self, and realize that what is seen in the mirror is what others see.

Qualities that teachers expect in a leader are the ability to manage student conduct and facilitating a school with high professional standards of instructional practices and support. Research stresses that teachers want supportive leaders that maintain affective discipline in a school and if discipline is not enforced a hostile feeling arises (Kelly, 2012). The common thought of leaders concentrating on instruction and not discipline is a myth and teachers should be supported with consistent discipline. Students who are disruptive should be removed from the learning area and teachers should be trained on correct procedures with handling discipline (Boyd, 2012). Maximizing instruction in a classroom includes fewer discipline issues and having support from school leaders. Classroom management is one of the most cited reasons for teacher burnout and new teacher retention. Teachers are more confident and more
effective with classroom management if school leaders support them with professional
development and clear expectations of rules and procedures (Kratochwill, 2013).

Leaders who facilitate a school with instructional knowledge support the high
professional standards that are expected from quality teachers. Strong leaders are
effective organizational managers with the skills to raise student achievement,
challenge teachers to grow professionally, and remove or provide support to ineffective
teachers. Many school leaders spend around one third of their day dealing with
discipline and paperwork and must have the vision to fit the expanded version of an
instructional leader and leave behind the traditional leader (Horng & Loeb, 2010).

Leadership is a challenge and a responsibility. Anything that happens in a school has
accountability and responsibility. Stakeholders have responsibilities, but a principal is
held accountable for everything that occurs in the school setting. The 2013 MetLife
Survey of 1,000 teachers and 500 principals found 9 out of 10 principals and 74% of
teachers say that a principal should be held accountable for anything that happens in a
school. Chenoweth and Theokas (2013) observed leaders in high achieving schools
with a large number of students in poverty and found that the leaders shared four
common characteristics. First, the leaders shared a belief in their students’ capabilities
and having rigorous performance standards help to distinguish mediocre from
outstanding teachers. Second, leaders put instruction at the center of their duties.
School-wide routines are established to deter discipline issues and maintain a focus on
instruction. Leaders expect teachers to expect more from their students. Third, leaders
focus on building the capacity of teachers. Teachers who are knowledgeable and
prepared get better results. Working together to build knowledge and develop
professionally strengthens teacher capacity. Fourth, the leaders want to see evidence of what leads to success and what can be learned from failure. Instead of blame there are solutions. Increasing knowledge, resources, sound policies, and strategies are key to building capacity (Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2005). Capacity must be continuous and evident in everyday practice.

Poverty

Poverty is a challenge for society. For many decades, poverty has been on the discussion table for politicians. Welfare, medical care, and education of the poor remain hot topics on the news with little resolution to the issues. Poverty can affect student learning and a teacher's classroom in various ways. A student who lives in stressful conditions such as poverty or high crime areas may lack the necessary sleep for the brain to properly function (Jensen, 2000). Research done by Phillips (as cited in Travernise, 2012), showed that before the age of 6, affluent children spend 1,300 more hours outside their homes than low income children. The more affluent children have opportunities to go to places such as day care centers, shopping malls, museums, or schools. When high income children start school, they have spent about 400 hours more than poor children in literacy activities. This could mean that students from affluent families are starting school with around 57 extra school days than poor students. Put vernacularly, poor students begin the race to success a lap or two behind, which means teachers in high poverty schools may have to work harder to help the students achieve goals. Students who arrive at school tired and anxious may lead to behavior problems in the classroom and extra stress for a teacher.
Research shows that students in poverty do not arrive at the school door on equal footing with students above the line of poverty may never catch up academically, and many drop out of school as early as grade 9 (Arrighi & Maume, 2007). Teachers who are educated about poverty know that the students of poverty need hope, poverty is not indicative of personality, and practice may not improve just because they know more about poverty (Books, 2004). In contrast, another study suggested that poor and minority students’s achievement gap is not due to family surroundings or poverty but to teacher quality (Wong & Wong, 2009). Some students thrive in spite of poverty. One student expresses her experience that she found an escape or outlet from her poverty stricken life in doing well in school and became an avid reader (Espinoza, 2012). Students with a special talent or ability may rise above the ashes of poverty and excel in life. Gifted students from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to have traits of resilience (Niehart, Reis, Robinson, & Moon, 2002). Abraham Lincoln rose to fame from poverty through his own achievements. He was aware of his uncultured background in his journeys, but he overcame by pressing forward toward his goals (Thomas, 2008).

Students who are poor and attend a school that is equal in quality as students who are more fortunate will likely have lower average achievement due to disadvantages (Rothstein, 2008). There are many disadvantages explored by Rothstein. He suggests that there are more school absences possibly due to illnesses such as asthma and anemia and lack of routine medical care. Families in poverty often fall behind in their bills and children must move schools and lose instructional continuity. Low paying jobs result in frequent job changes and this could cause stress to families, creating arguments, discipline issues, and students home alone after school. Rothstein
further contends those students with greater socioeconomic disadvantage often live in neighborhoods with higher crime rate, drugs, single-parent families, fewer adult role models, and less access to zoos, museums, and organized sports. In spite of the inequalities, some students who are disadvantaged always outperform typical middle class students due to natural human variability. Rothstein promotes combining school improvement with reform and stopping the unfair condemnation of schools and teachers to fully close achievement gaps. The culture of poverty arises from several compiled stereotypes (Gorski, 2008). There are several myths explored by Gorski surrounding poverty that have become commonplace in mainstream thinking. One myth is that poor people are lazy and have poor work ethics. The National Center for Children in Poverty (2004) data shows 83% of children in low income families have at least one employed parent and many work more than one job. Jobs that require parents to work evenings and have unpaid leave restricts access to school involvement and creates the myth that poor parents do not value education. Other myths are that poor people are deficient linguistically and tend to abuse drugs and alcohol. The reality is that language that is assumed to be deficient, such as Appalachian English, is just as sophisticated as other vernaculars with complex grammatical rules, and drug use is as prevalent in middle class and wealthy communities but more visible in poor neighborhoods. Educators must be willing to ignore the myths and attempt to quell the negative classism one classroom at a time.

Innovative solutions are often required to find funding to provide basic needs for students to keep them healthier and in school, which is an important factor in closing achievement gaps. One solution to improving high poverty schools in urban areas is to
look outside of the school. Some school districts are finding it necessary to support families by offering health and dental care, mentoring programs, mental health counseling, and preschool in an effort to narrow the achievement gaps (Kenning, 2011). Schools that promote readiness by encouraging activities outside of academics have shown to make a difference in low income students (Ferfuson, Bovaird, & Mueller, 2007). Activities such as athletics and arts increased a student’s school readiness despite the level of poverty.

Schools in areas of high poverty are not always in urban settings. In rural Appalachia there are isolated communities that struggle with poverty. Students in poverty have a chance to succeed if they have strong community support and an administrator who has a desire for students to excel. Low income students are able to learn as well or better than upper class students. There are many people who assume that students who are in urban or rural areas of poverty cannot compete with suburban schools (Thomas, 2009).

**Summary**

Chapter 2 presented a discussion of the literature related to the perceptions of teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools while examining school culture and leadership. The TDOE compiled eight constructs or focus indicator areas for the survey, and five of the eight indicators were researched surrounding school culture and leadership. School culture indicators were compiled from the focus questions of facilities and resources and community support. Leadership indicators were researched from focus questions of student conduct, school leadership, and instructional practices and support. The
aspects of school culture and leadership will continue to intrigue researchers with the revolving door of school reform. The literature review is a valuable tool providing insight into the findings of past researchers.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study was an examination of the difference in teacher perceptions in Title I and non-Title I schools related to school culture, and leadership. The purpose of this study was to determine whether a significant difference in perceptions exist between teachers working in high poverty Title I schools and those working in non-Title I schools and whether school culture or leadership of a school influences teacher perceptions.

A quantitative framework was used to compare significant differences in perceptions between teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools. Included in this chapter are: The Research Design, Population, Instrumentation, Data Collection, Data Analysis, and Research Questions. A quantitative framework was used to examine the possible relationships among poverty, school culture, and leadership. A quasi-experimental design was selected because the data already existed and collecting additional data was unnecessary.

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

The following research questions and null hypotheses were considered during the study. The independent variables in question were Title I schools and non-Title I schools. The dependent variable in each question were perceptions of teachers who worked in a Title I or non-Title I school.
Research Question #1

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of student conduct management as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey between Title I and non-Title I schools?

H₀: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of student conduct management as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey between Title I schools and non-Title I schools.

Research Question #2

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of school leadership as determined by the TELL Tennessee Survey in the areas between Title I schools and non-Title I schools?

H₀: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of school leadership between Title I schools and non-Title I schools.

Research Question #3

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of instructional practices and support as determined by the TELL Tennessee Survey between Title I and non-Title I schools?

H₀: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of instructional practices and support between Title I schools and non-Title I schools.

Research Question #4

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of facilities and resources as determined by the TELL Tennessee Survey between Title I and non-Title I schools?
H₀: There is a significant difference in teacher perceptions of facilities and resources between Title I schools and non-Title I schools.

Research Question #5

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of community support and involvement as determined by the TELL Tennessee Survey between Title I and non-Title I schools?

H₀: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of community support and involvement between Title I schools and non-Title I schools.

Population

The population was comprised of teachers who teach in an upper East Tennessee region in Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grades during the 2010 through 2011 school year. The number of teachers invited to participate in those grades in the upper East Tennessee region was 7,168 during the 2010 through 2011 school year. There were 5,361 educators in the upper East Tennessee region who responded to the TELL Tennessee survey. The upper East Tennessee region contained 115 Title I schools and 40 non-Title I schools at the time of the survey. In each school 51% of the educators were required to respond to the TELL Tennessee survey in order to be considered in the results.

Instrumentation

The data for this study were collected from the TELL Tennessee Survey conducted in 2011 by the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE). The TDOE
revealed the survey to Tennessee public educators in March of 2011 with the purpose of supporting sound educational policies and practices. The results were based on the views and perceptions of certified educators in public schools in Tennessee. The TDOE contracted with the New Teacher Center (NTC) to conduct the state’s survey. The NTC is a national organization that has administered surveys in several states and is dedicated to developing and supporting a quality teaching force. The TDOE compiled eight constructs or focus indicator areas for the survey, and five of the eight indicators were used to determine school culture and leadership. School culture indicators were compiled from the focus questions of facilities and resources and community support. Leadership indicators were compiled from focus questions of student conduct, school leadership, and instructional practices and support.

The TDOE ensures that the analyses presented were based on responses to a survey instrument based on the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey, but customized for the TELL Tennessee Survey by the TELL Tennessee Coalition of Partners and is valid and reliable. The state tested the eight constructs; time, facilities and resources, community support and involvement, managing student conduct, teacher leadership, school leadership, professional development, and instructional practices and support, of their survey by calculating Cronbach’s alphas and all eight construct are reliable with alphas above 0.830. Alphas above a 0.70 are considered as good. An acceptable range of reliability for most instruments is .70 to .90 (McMillan, 2006).
Data Collection

I submitted a request to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval to collect data from an upper East Tennessee region. The IRB determined that my proposed collection activity did not meet the FDA or the DHHS definition of research involving human subjects; therefore it did not fall under the scope of the East Tennessee State University IRB. The survey data were collected from the Tennessee Department of Education's TELL Tennessee website where the information is public.

The research did not contain any information that could be traced to a particular person. Names were not used in the study. The study met ethical standards and shielded individuals from any consequences resulting from the conclusions of the study.

Data Analysis

Independent t tests were used to evaluate the differences in teacher perceptions of school culture and leadership in Title I and non-Title I schools. The population of the study was teachers in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12\textsuperscript{th} grade in an upper East Tennessee region responding to the TELL Tennessee survey in 2010 through 2011.

The survey is the first of its kind in the state and the Tennessee Department of Education will conduct a second survey in 2013. The data were analyzed and provided a statistical analysis of the differences between Title I and non-Title I schools.

Summary

This chapter included data from the TELL Tennessee survey surrounding teacher perceptions of school culture and leadership in Title I and non-Title I schools that were
analyzed and presented. The data were gathered from an upper east Tennessee region consisting of 17 districts and 150 schools. An independent-samples t-test analysis was conducted to evaluate the differences in teachers’ perceptions of five different variables affecting school culture between Title I schools and non-Title I schools.
CHAPTER 4
ANALYSIS OF DATA

The results of the analysis of the research questions identified in Chapters 1 and 3 are presented in Chapter 4. The study was conducted to determine if a significant difference existed in the perceptions of teachers in the areas of 1) managing student conduct, 2) school leadership, 3) instructional practices, 4) school culture, and 5) community support and involvement as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey.

Analysis of Research Data

Research Question #1
Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of student conduct management as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey between Title I and non-Title I schools?

H₀: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of student conduct management in Title I schools and non-Title I schools.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether teacher perceptions of student conduct management differed significantly between Title I and non-Title I schools. The test was not significant, t(153) = .21, p = .837, ns. Therefore the null hypothesis was retained. Cohen’s d was calculated to be .04 which indicated a small effect size. The 95% confidence intervals for the average perception score ranged from -.065 to .080. An examination of the group means indicated that in general teachers in non-Title I schools (M = .770, SD = .195) had a slightly, but not significantly,
more positive perception of student conduct management than teachers in Title I schools (M = .762, SD = .208). Figure 1 shows the 95% confidence intervals for teacher perception of student behavior management. In general a school’s title status did not influence teacher perceptions of student conduct management.

Figure 1. 95% Confidence Intervals for Teacher Perceptions of Student Behavior Management
Research Question #2

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of school leadership as determined by the TELL Tennessee Survey in the areas between Title I schools and non-Title I schools?

H₀: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of school leadership in Title I schools and non-Title I schools.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether teacher perceptions of school leadership differed significantly between Title I and non-Title I schools. The test was not significant, \( t(153) = -.25, p = .806, \text{ ns} \). Therefore the null hypothesis was retained. Cohen’s d was calculated to be .04 which indicated a small effect size. The 95% confidence intervals for the average perception score ranged from -.044 to .034. An examination of the group means indicated that teachers’ perceptions of school leadership Title I schools (\( M = .893, \text{ SD} = .108 \)) were slightly, but not significantly, more positive than teachers in non-Title I schools (\( M = .888, \text{ SD} = .113 \)). Figure 2 shows the 95% confidence intervals for teacher perceptions of school leadership. In general a school’s title status did not influence teachers’ perceptions of school leadership.
Research Question #3

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of instructional practices and support as determined by the TELL Tennessee Survey between Title I and non-Title I schools?

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of instructional practices and support in Title I schools and non-Title I schools.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether teacher perceptions of instructional practices and support differed significantly in Title I and non-
Title I schools. The test was not significant, \( t(153) = -1.13, p = .261, \text{ns} \). Therefore the null hypothesis was retained. Cohen’s \( d \) was calculated to be .18 which indicated a small effect size. The 95% confidence intervals for the average perception score ranged from -.091 to .025. An examination of the group means indicates that teachers in Title I schools (\( M = .721, \text{SD} = .166 \)) had a more positive perception of instructional practices and support than teachers in non-Title I schools (\( M = .688, \text{SD} = .149 \)). Figure 3 shows the 95% confidence intervals for teacher perception of instructional practices and support. In general a school’s title status did not influence teachers’ perceptions of instructional practices and support than teachers.

Figure 3. 95% Confidence Intervals for Teacher Perceptions of Instructional Practices and Support
Research Question #4

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of facilities and resources as determined by the TELL Tennessee Survey between Title I and non-Title I schools?

H₀: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of facilities and resources in Title I schools and non-Title I schools.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether teacher perceptions of facilities and resources differed significantly in Title I and non-Title I schools. The test was significant, t(153) = -2.54, p = .012. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. Cohen’s d was calculated to be .04 which indicated a small effect size. The 95% confidence intervals for the average perception score ranged from -.105 to .013. An examination of the group means indicates that teachers in Title I schools (M = .845, SD = .120) had a significantly more positive perception of facilities and resources than teachers in non-Title I schools (M = .786, SD = .149). Figure 4 shows the 95% confidence intervals for teacher perception of instructional practices and support. In general Title I teachers had a significantly more positive perception of facilities and resources than teachers in non-Title I schools.
Figure 4. 95% Confidence Intervals for Teacher Perceptions of Facilities and Resources

Research Question #5

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of community support and involvement as determined by the TELL Tennessee Survey between Title I and non-Title I schools?

H₀₅: There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of community support and involvement in Title I schools and non-Title I schools.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether teacher perceptions of community support and involvement differed significantly in Title I and non-Title I schools. The test was not significant, \( t(153) = .339, p = .735, \text{ ns.} \) Therefore the null hypothesis was retained. Cohen’s d was calculated to be .06 which indicated a
small effect size. The 95% confidence intervals for the average perception score ranged from -.043 to .060. An examination of the group means indicates that teachers in non-Title I schools ($M = .870, SD = .141$) had a more positive perception of community support and involvement than teachers in Title I schools ($M = .861, SD = .144$). Figure 5 shows the 95% confidence intervals for teacher perception of community support and involvement. In general a school’s title status did not influence teacher perceptions of community support and involvement.

![Figure 5. 95% Confidence Intervals for Teacher Perceptions of Community Support and Involvement](image)
Summary

A series of independent-samples t tests was conducted to evaluate the differences in teachers’ perceptions of five different variables affecting school culture between Title I schools and non-Title I schools. A statistically significant difference was found in teacher perception of facilities and resources. Teachers in Title I schools had a significantly more positive perception of facilities and resources than teachers in non-Title I schools. No other differences were significant.
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Summary of Results

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize and explain the results of this study in relation to teacher perceptions of school culture and leadership in Title I and non-Title I schools and to make recommendations for future practice and research. Schools have a culture that is unique to each individual building and the leadership in the school contributes to its success or shortcomings. Some leaders with the courage to motivate dramatic transformation are placed in low performing schools to change the culture and raise test scores (Hassel, 2009). Changing the culture in a school is changing the very heart and soul of the group. Leaders often meet resistance to the challenges of cultural change when it means added work for the group. The improvement of a school often involves improving the culture and that means changing the way things are done in a school (Whitaker, 2010). Positive teacher perceptions mean finding good leadership to develop school culture. This includes ensuring that facilities and resources such as current technology and a pleasing school environment are adequate for teachers. The community is involved and supportive. School leaders support teachers and have a shared vision with instructional practices, encouraging teachers to try new things, and have autonomy to make decisions. The TELL survey is a way of guiding this balance by gathering information that will lead to school improvement, better conversations about positive teaching and learning conditions in Tennessee (TDOE, 2011).
Research Questions and Findings

This study was conducted to determine if a significant difference existed in the perceptions of teachers in the areas of 1) managing student conduct, 2) school leadership, 3) instructional practices, 4) school culture, and 5) community support and involvement. All of the variables were measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey.

Research Question #1
Management of Student Conduct

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of student conduct management as measured by the TELL Tennessee Survey between Title I and non-Title I schools?

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether teacher perceptions of student conduct management differed significantly between Title I and non-Title I schools. The test was not significant. Non-Title I teachers had a slightly, but not significantly, more positive perception of student conduct management than teachers in Title I schools.

Research Question #2
School Leadership

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of school leadership as determined by the TELL Tennessee Survey between Title I schools and non-Title I schools?
An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether teacher perceptions of school leadership differed significantly between Title I and non-Title I schools. There was no significant difference. Teacher perceptions in Title I schools were slightly, but not significantly, more positive than teacher perceptions in non-Title I schools regarding school leadership.

Research Question #3

Instructional Practices and Support

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of instructional practices and support as determined by the TELL Tennessee Survey between Title I and non-Title I schools?

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether teacher perceptions of instructional practices and support differed significantly between Title I and non-Title I schools. The test was not significant. Teacher perceptions in Title I schools were slightly, but not significantly, more positive than non-Title I schools in regard to instructional practices and support.

Research Question #4

Facilities and Resources

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of facilities and resources as determined by the TELL Tennessee Survey between Title I and non-Title I schools?

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether teacher perceptions of facilities and resources differed significantly between Title I and non-Title I schools.
The test was significant. Teacher perceptions in non-Title I schools were significantly more positive than Title I schools in regard to facilities and resources.

Research Question #5

Community Support and Involvement

Is there a significant difference in teacher perceptions of community support and involvement as determined by the TELL Tennessee Survey between Title I and non-Title I schools?

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether teacher perceptions of community support and involvement differed significantly between Title I and non-Title I schools. The test was not significant. Teacher perceptions of community support and involvement in Title I schools were slightly, but not significantly, more positive than in non-Title I schools.

Conclusions

Based on the data analyzed during this study, it is possible to identify teacher perceptions between Title I schools and non-Title I schools in regard to school culture and leadership in an upper East Tennessee region. The region consists of 155 schools. There were 115 Title I schools and 40 non-Title I schools. The following conclusions were obtained from this study.

Teacher perceptions were not significantly different in Title I schools and non-Title I schools regarding to leadership in the areas of management of student conduct, school leadership, or instructional practices and support, suggesting that teachers
working in schools with a high rate of poverty are generally as satisfied with the leadership practices in handling student conduct, evaluating consistently, and supporting instructional practices as the teachers working in low poverty schools. A leader who is a successful principal in a high poverty school may be just as capable of leading a low poverty school with success due to transformational qualities. Researchers contend that leaders with transformational qualities or flexibility adapt to the needs of the current situation and have the ability to accept the responsibility of discipline, protect teachers from undue distractions during instructional time, and are supportive of teaching practices (Marzano, 2005).

Teacher perceptions of school culture were not significantly different in the area of community support between Title I and non-Title I schools. Teachers and school leaders may have a sense of pride in developing parent and community relationships by building partnerships, promoting school pride, and informing parents or guardians about the school (Wagner, 2006). However, there was a significant difference in teacher perceptions of school culture in the area of facilities and resources in Title I schools and non-Title I schools. Teachers working in Title I schools were significantly more positive than teachers working in non-Title I schools in relation to facilities and resources. One factor that may explain the significant difference is that Title I schools receive additional funding for materials, supplies, and technology (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).
**Recommendations for Practice**

The following recommendations are presented for consideration to teachers and school leaders regarding teacher perceptions of school culture and leadership in Title I schools and non-Title I schools.

1. School improvement teams and professional learning communities should consider the information surrounding teacher perceptions in this study to monitor school culture and effective leadership in individual schools (Delaney, 2012).

2. A school should be inviting and inspire teachers to do their best work (Whitaker, 2009). Teachers and school leaders in Title I and non-Title I schools should be aware of and maintain a high level of staff morale within a building by ensuring that adequate and current facilities and resources are maintained. A thorough analysis of the TELL Tennessee Survey could provide baseline data for schools on teacher perceptions of facilities and resources.

3. Build community and public perception by offering adult learning and giving back to the community (Parrett & Budge, 2012). School leaders and teachers should use the results provided by the TELL Tennessee survey to build a positive school culture by improving instructional and community support.
Recommendations for Future Research

As a result of the findings in this research I make the following recommendations for future research to those interested in teacher perceptions pertaining to school culture and leadership.

1. Compare the 2013 TELL Tennessee survey results to the original survey results used in this study to discover if there are significant changes in teacher perceptions that would improve school leadership and culture.

2. Future studies done on this topic should include TELL Tennessee survey results from all school districts in Tennessee.

3. Compare urban Title I schools to rural Title I schools to examine differences in the two.

4. Consider comparisons of teacher perceptions in districts with the highest rates of poverty to districts with the lowest rates of poverty.

5. Compare teacher perceptions of males to females to see if there is a significant difference.

6. Determine the relationship between TELL Survey factors and student achievement.

Summary

School reform will continue to be addressed by researchers and policy makers striving to improve student success and academic achievement. Teacher perceptions are important to continue researching to monitor the progress of reform. Attention to leadership and culture is important. This study may raise awareness about school
culture and leadership between Title I schools and non-Title I schools. The value in comparing teacher perceptions of school culture and leadership in Title I schools and non-Title I schools is in finding if support and working conditions in a high poverty school adds pressure to school leaders to raise morale, expectations, and show more academic growth than those in low poverty schools (Marzano, 2005). The findings in this study are similar to Chenoweth’s (2010) research on leaders in high poverty schools across the United States. She found that teachers who were supported with respect, discipline, decision making, and expectations were generally satisfied with working in these types of schools and could help their students achieve. Chenoweth concedes that in general, schools with challenging student bodies are low achieving, but there are schools that offer hope and a fair start.

Twenty-six years ago when I lived in a small coal mining town of approximately 800 people diversity only applied to income and not color, there was only one color of skin. Most of the community struggled with poverty but were proud and did not consider it a problem. Times have changed and so have I during my career as an educator both personally and professionally. The realization that leadership is a balance of natural ability and learned behavior encouraged my drive to become an administrator. Working in schools that were very high poverty as well as very affluent sparked my interest in researching Title I and non-Title I schools. I am dedicated to advocating for high poverty schools. Through this research I have found that school culture and leadership are important to the success of students and retaining great teachers. School reform will not happen without leaders and teachers who are able to recognize and use their strengths. A leader who finds and uses strengths within the organization has collected a
treasure. I plan to continue to search for the resources within my school to fit strengths to jobs and to consider each situation as it comes in order to lead with purpose.
REFERENCES


Title I-- improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged, Title IU.S.C. SEC 1001, USDE (2004).


ETSU and ETSU/VA IRB Form 129
Determining Whether a Proposed Activity is Human Research
According to DHHS or FDA Regulatory Definitions

Submitter Name: Krista Crum
Contact Address: 1458 Moyer Lane
Contact Phone #: 4232318334

Title of Proposed Study: Teacher Perceptions of School Culture and Leadership in Title I and Non-Title I Schools

Institutions Responsible for Review:
- Is this proposed activity to be conducted at VA facilities, or using VA patients, time or equipment? □ Yes □ No
  - If yes to above, is this a VHA Operation Activity? □ Yes □ No
  - If yes to above, is the activity you are involved in directed by a VHA Program Office? □ Yes □ No
- Is this proposed activity subject to MSHA rules? □ Yes □ No

1. Provide a DETAILED description of the proposed activity: This dissertation will examine the perceptions of teachers in Title I and Non Title I Schools surrounding School Culture and Leadership. The data will be gathered from one county in East Tennessee from the public domain survey conducted by the Tennessee Department of Education titled the Tennessee TELL survey.

2. Is this project intended for:
   (check all that apply)
   □ thesis
   □ dissertation
   □ potential publication or presentation
   □ dissemination of information outside of ETSU

3. Does this project involve interview, survey, or focus groups? □ Yes □ No
   If yes, attach a copy of the proposed questions.

4. Describe the subject population or data/specimens to be studied.
   The population will be based on anonymous answers from teachers in an East Tennessee county. The answers were responses to the Tennessee TELL survey conducted by the Tennessee Department of Education and is public domain.

5. Answer the following questions.
   A. Is the activity a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation? □ Yes □ No
   B. Is the activity designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge? □ Yes□ No
      If answering "no", you must provide explanation for your answer.
   C. Are you planning to obtain data about living individuals? □ Yes □ No
   D. Are you planning to obtain the data through one or more of the following? □ Yes □ No
      □ Physical procedures performed on those individuals
      □ Manipulation of those individuals
      □ Manipulation of those individuals' environments
      □ Communication with those individuals
      □ Interpersonal contact with those individuals
   E. Does the study involve access to private, identifiable information?
      Private information includes information about behavior that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place. Private

Revision date 7/17/10, revised 4/2/2012, revised 6/5/2012
information also includes information which has been provided for specific purposes by an individual and which the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public (for example, a medical record). Individually identifiable information means the identity of the participant is or may readily be ascertained by the investigator. Individually identifiable information also means the identity of the participant's or may readily be associated with the information.

☐ Yes ☒ No

If answering "no", you must provide explanation for your answer. The Tennessee TELL survey results are available to the public on the state website.

F. Does the activity involve the use of a drug, other than the use of an marketed drug in the course of medical practice? ☐ Yes ☒ No (* If yes, complete page 3)

G. Does the activity involve the use of a medical device, other than the use of an marketed medical device in the course of medical practice? ☐ Yes ☒ No (* If yes, complete page 3)

H. Will data from the activity be submitted to, or held for inspection by, the FDA? ☐ Yes ☒ No

I. Does the activity involve one or more of the following FDA-regulated articles? ☐ Yes ☒ No

☐ Food or dietary supplement that bears a nutrient content or a health claim
☐ Biological product for human use
☐ Electronic product for human use
☐ Infant Formula
☐ Food or color additive for human consumption
☐ Other article subject to the FD&C Act

M. Will the test article be used on one or more humans? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A, no test article

N. Are all of the following true? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A, study does not use device

☐ The test article is a medical device
☐ The medical device will be used on human specimens
☐ The activity is being done to determine the safety or effectiveness of the device
☐ Data from the activity will be submitted to, or held for inspection by, the FDA.

6. Is this proposed activity a medical case study? ☐ Yes ☒ No

*If yes, answer the following questions. If no, skip this section.

A. Is the activity solely retrospective (all data exist at the time this Form 129 is submitted to the IRB)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

B. Were only clinically indicated interventions or data collection done? ☐ Yes ☒ No

C. Will the data be de-identified for the case report? ☐ Yes ☒ No

D. Is any aspect of the case unusual enough that the patient might be identifiable even though normal patient identifiers are removed? ☐ Yes ☒ No

E. How many patients are included in this proposed case study? ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☒ 3 (note: if the proposed activity involves 4 or more patients, it must be submitted as human subject research)

Signature of Submitter

Date 12-11-12

*If the answer is Yes to question F or question G, you must complete page 3.
December 16, 2012

Krista Crum
1458 Moyer Lane
kristacrum@charter.net

Dear Ms. Crum,

Thank you for recently submitting information regarding your proposed project “Teacher Perceptions of School Culture and Leadership in Title I and Non Title I Schools.”

I have reviewed the information, which includes a completed Form 129.

The determination is that this proposed activity as described meets neither the FDA nor the DHHS definition of research involving human subjects. Therefore, it does not fall under the purview of the ETSU IRB.

IRB review and approval by East Tennessee State University is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities are human subject research in which the organization is engaged, please submit a new request to the IRB for a determination.

Thank you for your commitment to excellence.

Sincerely,
Chris Ayres
Chair, ETSUIRB
Appendix C: TELL Tennessee Survey Questions for Determining Teacher Perceptions in Regard to Facilities and Resources

Facilities and Resources

Q3.1 Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school facilities and resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Teachers* have sufficient access to appropriate instructional materials**.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Teachers have sufficient access to instructional technology, including computers, printers, software and internet access.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Teachers have sufficient access to reliable communications technology including phones, faxes and email.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Teachers have sufficient access to office equipment and supplies such as copy machines, paper, pens, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Teachers have sufficient access to a broad range of professional support personnel.***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. The school environment is clean and well maintained.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Teachers have adequate space to work productively.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. The physical environment of classrooms in this school supports teaching and learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. The reliability and speed of Internet connections in this school are sufficient to support instructional practices.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Teachers means a majority of teachers in your school.
**Instructional materials include items such as textbooks, curriculum materials, content references, etc.
***Professional personnel includes positions such as school counselors, nurses, school psychologists and social workers, library media specialists, etc.
Appendix D: TELL Tennessee Survey Questions for Determining Teacher Perceptions in Regard to Community Support and Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q4.1</th>
<th>Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about community support and involvement in your school.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Parents/guardians are influential decision makers in this school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>This school maintains clear, two-way communication with the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>This school does a good job of encouraging parent/guardian involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Teachers*</td>
<td>provide parents/guardians with useful information about student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Parents/guardians know what is going on in this school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Parents/guardians support teachers, contributing to their success with students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>Community members support teachers, contributing to their success with students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>The community we serve is supportive of this school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Teachers means a majority of teachers in your school.
Appendix E: TELL Tennessee Survey Questions Determining Teacher Perceptions of School Culture in Regard to Managing Student Conduct

Managing Student Conduct

Q5.1 Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about managing student conduct in your school.

- a. Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.
- b. Students at this school follow rules of conduct.
- c. Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty.
- d. School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.
- e. School administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.
- f. Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct.
- g. The faculty work in a school environment that is safe.

*Teachers means a majority of teachers in your school.
Appendix F: TELL Tennessee Survey Questions Determining Teacher Perceptions of Leadership in Regard to School Leadership

Q7.1 Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about school leadership in your school.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- Don't know

e. Teachers are held to high professional standards for delivering instruction.

f. The school leadership facilitates using data to improve student learning.
Appendix G: TELL Tennessee Survey Questions Determining Teacher Perceptions of Leadership in Regard to Instructional Practices and Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Practices and Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q8.8 Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about instructional practices and support in your school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. State assessment data are available in time to impact instructional practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Local assessment data are available in time to impact instructional practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Teachers in this school use assessment data to inform their instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Teachers work in professional learning communities to develop and align instructional practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Provided supports (i.e. instructional coaching, professional learning communities, etc.) translate to improvements in instructional practices by teachers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VITA

KRISTA GALEA ROSE CRUM

Personal Data:
Date of Birth: November 25, 1964
Place of Birth: Pikeville, Kentucky
Marital Status: Married

Education:
Public Schools, Elkhorn City, Kentucky
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Teacher, West Elementary School, Morristown, Tennessee, 1995-2006
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Assistant Principal, Lincoln Heights Middle School, Morristown, Tennessee, 2010-2011
Principal, West Elementary, Morristown, Tennessee, 2011-2013

Honors and Awards
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Tennessee School Board Association Award for video production of Beyond the Doors- showcasing industry
Vice President of Delta Kappa Gamma