A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF PRINCIPALS’
LEADERSHIP STYLE AND
TEACHER ABSENTEEISM

by

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A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine whether McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y, gender, age, and years of experience of principals form a composite explaining the variation in teacher absences. It sought to determine whether all or any of these variables would be statistically significant in explaining the variance in absences for teachers. The Managerial Philosophies Scale (MPS) developed by Jacoby and Terborg (1975) was used to determine the leadership style of each principal identified in this study. Teacher absences were obtained from the Georgia State Education Department Office of Accountability. A survey was used to obtain demographic data on each principal. Each of the five dependent variables was analyzed to determine if one or any combination of the variables explained the teacher absence data. This study found that there was no statistically significant relationship in the gender, Theory X, Theory Y, age, or experience of a principal that explained the variations in teacher absences. The lack of significance in this study was consistent regardless of the grade level of the teachers.
DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this dissertation to my wife and daughter. My family has made sacrifices that allowed me to travel and be away when I needed to in order to manage the necessary steps to complete this degree.

I especially want to dedicate this to my daughter Madilyn. I hope that in the years to come she will see this accomplishment for me and strive to do her best in education. I hope that she will achieve at her highest level as she begins her journey in education. May she never lose that sense of wonder and discovery that all children have inside. I hope she will understand that sometimes making sacrifices is necessary in order to achieve her goals for her life. In doing so, I hope she will always place more value on her family. Family is most important, which is why I have chosen to dedicate this to my wife, my daughter, and my family.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>AESOP</td>
<td>Automated Education Substitute Placement</td>
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<td>FMLA</td>
<td>Family Medical Leave Act</td>
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<td>MPS</td>
<td>Managerial Philosophies Scale</td>
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<td>Organizational Frustration Scale</td>
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................................... ii
DEDICATION ............................................................................................................................... iii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS ......................................................................... iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ............................................................................................................... v
LIST OF TABLES ......................................................................................................................... ix
1. INTRODUCTION .....................................................................................................................1
   a. Linking Principal Leadership and Teacher Absenteeism .................................................. 3
   b. Statement of the Problem .................................................................................................. 5
   c. Significance of the Problem ............................................................................................. 6
   d. Purpose of the Study .......................................................................................................... 6
   e. Study Assumptions .......................................................................................................... 7
   f. Research Question .......................................................................................................... 7
   g. Hypothesis ....................................................................................................................... 7
   h. Definitions ....................................................................................................................... 7
   i. Study Limitations ........................................................................................................... 8
   j. Organization of the Study ............................................................................................... 8
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE .................................................................................................... 9
   a. Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 9
   b. Absenteeism .................................................................................................................... 13
   c. Models of Absenteeism ................................................................................................. 17
d. Other Variables Related to Absenteeism ................................................................. 24

e. Leadership ................................................................................................................... 34

3. METHODOLOGY ........................................................................................................ 46

a. Research Question .................................................................................................... 48

b. Hypothesis ................................................................................................................ 48

c. The Managerial Philosophies Scale (MPS) ................................................................. 48

d. Scoring the MPS ....................................................................................................... 48

e. Reliability and Validity of the MPS ........................................................................... 49

f. Data Collection Procedures ........................................................................................ 49

g. Study Participants .................................................................................................... 49

h. Teacher Absentee Data ............................................................................................. 49

i. Data Analysis ............................................................................................................ 50

4. STUDY FINDINGS ..................................................................................................... 52

a. Absence Data .......................................................................................................... 52

b. Description of the Principals .................................................................................... 55

c. Description of the MPS Data ................................................................................... 56

d. Test of the Hypothesis ............................................................................................. 56

5. DISCUSSION ............................................................................................................. 59

a. Hypothesis ............................................................................................................... 59

b. Theoretical Implications ......................................................................................... 61

c. Recommendations for Future Research ................................................................. 62

d. Conclusion ............................................................................................................... 65

REFERENCES ............................................................................................................... 66
APPENDIX A: LIST OF SCHOOLS BY SYSTEM ................................................................. 76
APPENDIX B: LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENTS .......................................................... 79
APPENDIX C: LETTERS OF APPROVAL ....................................................................... 81
APPENDIX D: MANAGERIAL PHILOSOPHIES SCALE .................................................. 85
LIST OF TABLES

1. Absence Rate per School ...........................................................................................................53
2. Descriptive Data for Principals ..............................................................................................56
3. Descriptive Data for Theory X and Theory Y .......................................................................56
4. Standard Multiple Regression .................................................................................................57
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

For decades business and industry have struggled with the problem of employee absenteeism, a fact that is supported by the vast body of literature that addresses the issue. In fact, absenteeism and turnover are the two most frequent outcomes studied in organizational research (Long & Ormsby, 1987). An estimated cost of employee absenteeism in business and industry is between $20-$25 billion a year.

The problem of teacher absenteeism is of growing concern. Grant (2001) called excessive absenteeism among school personnel one of the most neglected problems in public education. In 1988, Warren reported that most school districts were reporting teacher absenteeism rates of 8%-10%. In fact, it has been shown that teacher absenteeism has dramatically increased during the past few decades. Teachers as a whole continue to have a higher rate of absenteeism than employees in all other occupations (Pitkoff, 1993).

The National Center for Educational Statistics (1998) reported that across the nation, one of every five full-time teachers leaves the profession to pursue a career outside the education field. Some teachers may attribute their dissatisfaction with their careers to stress, and frustration can be one of the major causes of stress. Argyris (1964) explained absenteeism as the employees’ attempt to avoid or express frustration. Stress can lead to other issues on the job, such as lower morale, dissatisfaction with their job, absences, less productivity, and a possible increase in medical costs. Much of the available research on teachers’ stress and their workloads indicates that a teacher’s workload is excessive, and that the negative effects of stress are having
considerable impact on teachers (Naylor, 2001). These effects include declining job satisfaction, reduced ability to meet students’ needs, significant incidences of psychological disorders leading to increased absence from work, and a high proportion of claims for disability caused by stress (Naylor, 2001). Data from a major British insurance company categorized workers according to the amount of depression exhibited, and teachers were the highest ranked, with 44% of their disability insurance claims caused by mental problems, compared to 25% from other groups of workers. A number of British teacher suicides have also been directly related to anxiety over workloads (Bunting, 2000).

One of the most difficult aspects in studying absenteeism among school personnel is what school systems define as an absence varies from system to system, and often from school to school. The lack of a consistent definition of absence from work is not surprising because researchers do not seem to share a common definition. Many researchers suggest that absenteeism be defined as any absence from work over which the employee exercises some control or discretion. This definition does not consider, however, absences that might be caused by attendance at required staff development, conferences, or meetings. Consequently, Ramming (1998) suggested that absenteeism be defined as “any incident of absence for personal reasons that measures two days or less in duration; such reasons generally include personal illness, family illness, and personal business” (p. 15).

Regardless of the reason why teachers are absent, they are, and it is a costly problem. School administrators have long been concerned with reducing teacher absenteeism, but often without the benefit of really understanding the condition they are trying to remedy (Jacobson, 1990). According to Ehrenberg, Ehrenberg, Rees, and Ehrenberg (1989), two of the most costly reasons why research in the field of teacher absenteeism should continue were financial cost of
teacher absences and the negative effect on student learning. When teachers are absent, substitute teachers must fill in the gap in the classroom. Norton (1994) reported substitute teachers as the third highest-ranked “serious” problem, and teacher absenteeism as the number one ranked “general” problem facing personnel directors. Finding qualified substitute teachers is an increasingly difficult task for many administrators. Not only is student learning jeopardized by the lack of a qualified teacher in the classroom, but the monetary cost to the school systems can be substantial as well. The amount of literature that looks specifically at absenteeism among educational personnel is not nearly as extensive (Jacobson, 1990). Studies that have been completed have tended to be prescriptive, looking for ways to decrease the occurrences of teacher absenteeism, or describing the demographic factors related to teacher absenteeism. The present study addresses this void by examining the relationship between teacher absenteeism and principal leadership.

Linking Principal Leadership and Teacher Absenteeism

The evidence indicates that where teachers have freedom to plan their work and opportunities to participate in decisions regarding curriculum and teacher welfare, morale is high. The attitude the principal shows toward the teacher is a significant factor affecting teacher satisfaction. In a 1995 Chicago study, Patrick found a statistically significant correlation between administrative style and school climate. In a study of 758 teachers from Illinois, Arizona, and Florida, Anderman, Belzer, and Smith (1991) found that teacher satisfaction with their job and commitment to the school were positively and strongly associated with a perceived emphasis on recognition, accomplishment, affiliation in the school, and a feeling of cohesiveness regarding the mission of the school. Few research studies have investigated what impact principal leadership style has on teacher attendance (Roquemore, 1987). A Dutch study of teacher absence
in primary schools found that collegial relations and leadership style are more friendly and informal in high absenteeism schools. In low absenteeism schools, the principal had a more directive leadership style (Imants & VanZoelen, 1995). However, an earlier study in a Metro Atlanta school system found no statistically significant relationship between principal leadership style and teacher absenteeism (Roquemore, 1987). Leadership may or may not have a direct correlation with attendance and productivity in education.

McGregor (1967) believed that leader behavior was determined by a set of beliefs that managers hold about workers. Theory X managers believe that employees are motivated by external rewards like money and promotion, and the fear of punishment. Therefore, leaders subscribing to Theory X beliefs are more suited to an autocratic leadership style where decisions are made for employees and they are controlled. On the other hand, Theory Y managers believe that people are motivated not only by extrinsic rewards, but also by intrinsic rewards like freedom to make decisions and freedom to use their imaginations in problem solving. Theory Y beliefs are more suited to the democratic leadership style where employees are encouraged to make their own decisions and to find their own place within the organization.

Although little research has been conducted on the effect of leader behavior on employee attendance, McGregor (1960) noted that authoritarian leader behaviors are counterproductive to an organization and that employees may engage in behaviors to purposefully thwart the attainment of the goals and objectives of the organization. Logically, one behavior employees may engage in is lying out of work. Druss, Schlesinger, and Allen (2001) reported that employees withdraw from jobs in which they do not see themselves as successful by not coming to work. Effective leadership can be a key factor in school improvement success. According to results of a study conducted by McGregor (1967), absenteeism rates in industry were higher
under authoritarian or Theory X leadership, and there was larger improvement in worker attendance under Theory Y leadership. The principal must create an environment at school where teachers strive to be effective teachers to all students (Shellard, 2003). John and Taylor (1999) found that leadership without the “cushioning effect of warmth, respect, consideration, and empowerment creates a closed, and sometimes oppressive, climate” (p. 9).

Statement of the Problem

Teacher absenteeism continues to be a problem for administrators and human resource directors. In Whitfield County, Georgia teacher absences are highest on Fridays and Mondays for the system (AESOP, 2008). Norton (1994) found that 71% of personnel directors reported that teacher absenteeism was one of the main issues facing them. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that in the education profession the rate of absenteeism was double the rate for all other U. S. industries from 1967 to 1974 (Hedges, 1975). Following such reports, large school systems across the nation conducted their own evaluations of absenteeism in their systems. Studies were conducted in Las Vegas, New York, California, Illinois, and Indiana. Each study found dramatic increases in teacher absenteeism. A study conducted by the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (1978) reported that the annual mean teacher absence rate was 4.7% (Elliott, 1982). An earlier study completed for the Illinois State Board of Education showed that there had been an increase of 16% in the teacher absenteeism rate from 1976 to 1977 (Academy for Educational Development Public Policy Division, 1977).

A 1995 study by the Pacific Resource for Educational Learning indicated that students felt vulnerable to teacher absenteeism (Hammond & Onikama, 1997). When teachers are absent, students are left in the hands of substitute teachers. Interruptions in the continuity of the students’ regular instruction contribute to lower achievement scores and increased costs of remedial
education (Skidmore, 1984). Literature and experience tend to indicate that substitute teachers generally provide inferior service compared to that of a certified teacher (Pitkoff, 1993). In one study of urban schools, it was discovered that the rate of teacher absenteeism made no discernible difference in student achievement in those schools classified as high achieving or low achieving. However, in those schools classified as average achieving, teacher absenteeism did make a significant difference in student achievement (Lewis, 1981).

Significance of the Problem

Considering current economic conditions in our country and state, and the difficulty principals have in hiring extremely well-qualified teachers, it is important that researchers be able to identify causes of teacher absenteeism in order to develop solutions to the problem. Although there is no current national data available, Lewis (1981) reported the cost of hiring substitute teachers and paying absent teachers’ salaries at $2 billion annually. Additionally, 75 million hours of contact time with students was lost, which has had a significant impact on student achievement. Research shows that the substitutes who are asked to fill in are significantly less effective than regular classroom teachers, thereby lowering student achievement.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between teacher absenteeism, principals’ leadership styles, and demographic variables (gender, age, and principals’ years of experience). The study was conducted in the public school systems of Whitfield County, Hall County, Forsyth County, and Jackson County, Georgia. Principal Leadership style was determined by participant responses to the Managerial Philosophies Scale (MPS). Individual schools’ teacher attendance rates were collected through Automated Education Substitute Placement (AESOP), which will be the second variable.
Study Assumptions

The following are assumptions made for this study:

1. The Managerial Philosophies Scale accurately assesses the principals sampled and is an appropriate method of collecting data for this study.
2. The sampled principals provided honest responses in this study.
3. Attendance data was recorded accurately by the school systems studied.

Research Question

The following research question was investigated in this study:

1. What are the relationships between Theory X, Theory Y, gender, age, experience, and teacher absenteeism?

Hypothesis

1. Theory X, Theory Y, gender, age, and experience will form a composite explaining variance in absenteeism.

Definitions

The following definitions are provided to assist the reader in understanding the various terms used in this study.

*Teacher Absence Rate*. The average number of days a teacher as a whole is absent from school.

*AESOP*. AESOP is an automated substitute placement service provided by Frontline Placement Technologies for K-12 school districts. Unlike traditional sub-calling programs, AESOP completely automates the process of substitute placement and absence management for over 1,500 school districts worldwide.
Managerial Philosophies Scale (MPS). Developed by Jacoby and Terborg (1975b), this instrument identifies managerial philosophies of managers within an organization within the context of McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y assumptions of the nature of man.

Absence. One full work day missed by a full-time teacher.

Student Achievement. Academic achievement measured by standardized test scores and grades.

Leadership. Establishing a direction and influencing others to willingly follow that direction.

Study Limitations

The variables in this study are limited to the leadership styles of principals in Whitfield County, Hall County, Forsyth County, and Jackson County Schools and the teacher absentee data in these systems.

1. The teacher absentee data were limited to the past 2 years.

2. The results of this study can only be generalized to the teachers and principals in Whitfield, Hall, Forsyth, and Jackson County Schools.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five specific chapters. Chapter 1 provides the introduction, statement of problem, purpose of study, research questions, assumptions, limitations, definition of terms, and organization of the study. Chapter 2 is a comprehensive review of the literature regarding principal leadership style and teacher absenteeism. Chapter 3 provides the methodology and procedure used in the study. Chapter 4 presents a summary of findings, and chapter 5 provides the study summary, findings, conclusions, implications for decision makers, and suggestions for further research.
Absenteeism in the workplace is not a new problem. Throughout history, organizations have had to deal with the short-term replacement of absent employees. Industrial managers have been much more sensitive to the impact of employee absenteeism, both in terms of dollars and productivity, than have educators. In fact, in 1978 the direct cost in lost-but-paid-for labor rose to over $25 billion (Capitan, Costanza, & Klucher, 1980). In 2001, Lippman reported that unscheduled absences in business and industry cost employers approximately $610 per employee per year in lost productivity costs, which could total into the millions for major corporations. Mitchell (2001) added that expenditures associated with employee absences account for approximately 20% of an employer’s payroll costs. Although, in the industrial sector employee absenteeism has received significant attention, surprisingly the research on the causes and effects of absenteeism in education is not as extensive (Jacobson, 1990).

Although generally aware of the business and industrial statistics, school managers have benignly assumed that educators were immune to absenteeism to such an extent. It was believed that professionalism insulated school employees from those trends experienced by the rest of the workforce (Capitan et al., 1980). Yet, differences in definitions of what constitutes absence from work and the categories used to report information about the national workforce make it impossible to readily compare rates of teacher absenteeism with those in other job sectors (Elliott, 1982). However, even when considering these discrepancies, the national data on teacher
absences give rise for concern. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that from 1967 to 1974 the increasing rate of teacher absenteeism was double the rate for the total U.S. industry (Hedges, 1975). Across the nation, school districts are reporting substantial increases in teacher absenteeism (5% in each of the past 16 years). Some observers call the phenomenon a “disease of epidemic proportions.” National figures substantiate their claim: “Each day nearly 200,000 teachers call in sick, resulting in an annual loss of 75 million hours of contact time with students and costing school boards collectively about $2 billion each year” (Lewis, 1981, p. 29).

As a group, teachers exhibit a higher absenteeism rate than employees in most other professions (Pitkoff, 1993). A survey of 135 Pennsylvania school systems found the average teacher was absent 8.2 days a year, a 46% increase over earlier data. The Pennsylvania report also revealed that educational absence rates were significantly higher than all major industry classifications and almost double that of the professional and technical absence rate for private industries (Elliott, 1982). From 1978 to 1979, the teacher absence rates in the Antioch, Illinois Community Consolidated School district averaged nearly 10 days per teacher. In fact, the teacher rate of absence was higher than the student rate of absence of 9 days (Skidmore, 1984).

High teacher absenteeism is expensive. Not only does it drive up the costs associated with paying substitute teachers, but more importantly, it reduces the amount of instruction time students spend with their regular teacher. Breaking the rhythm of regular instruction lowers achievement. It can increase the students’ need for remedial education, which, in turn, bumps up another budgetary category (Skidmore, 1984). Lewis (1981) added that when the cost of paying substitutes was combined with the cost of paying the absent teachers’ salaries, the cost of teacher absenteeism rose to approximately $2 billion annually. During the 1979 calendar year, a suburban Cleveland, Ohio school district of 12,000 students spent $50,000 for substitute
teachers. This was the equivalent to all the funds used to purchase educational equipment for that year (Capitan et al., 1980). A few years earlier in 1972, what New York City paid for substitute teacher salaries accounted for 9% of all certified teacher salaries (Elliott, 1979). Fifteen years later, in the 1986-1987 school year, teacher absences in one New York system cost that system over $450,000 for substitute teacher services (Jacobson, 1990).

Although the financial cost of teacher absenteeism is staggering, there are other costs to consider as well, most importantly, reduced student achievement. Teacher absenteeism is a problem that infiltrates the life of the entire school. It not only creates frustrations for the principal, but it also affects student teaching (Elliott, 1982). Research indicates that higher teacher absenteeism is related to lower student outcomes (Madden, Flanigan, & Richardson, 1991; Pitkoff, 1993; Woods & Montagno, 1997). Lewis (1981) added, “There is a critical point at which the rate of teacher absenteeism begins to inhibit student learning” (p. 29). Conversely, Woods and Montagno discovered that students with teachers who had fewer absences exhibited significantly larger improvements in grade equivalency.

The fact that students are not achieving and that teacher absence rates are mounting reveals the need for change in the organization of the schools, as well as the way instruction is delivered (Pitkoff, 1993). “Liberal contracts for teachers, provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act, and mandatory in-service training have all led to teachers spending less time in their classrooms and to a greater need for substitute teachers” (Jones & National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1999, p. 2).

Additionally, Bamber (1979) suggested that a study of student and teacher attendance indicates that when student absences increase dramatically, so do teacher absences in that school. Still, there are other costs to be considered. The increased amount of details that administrators
must handle when it comes to arranging for substitutes, evaluating substitutes, and addressing the increased discipline problems that inevitably come from the classrooms of substitute teachers, all add to the managerial costs by taking time away from administrators (Elliot, 1982). When members of committees, councils, or study groups are absent, the groups are unable to work toward the completion of goals, and that increases organizational costs. Student activities sponsored by teachers do not occur when teachers are absent, thereby increasing program costs.

In a recent survey conducted by the Substitute Teaching Institute at Utah State University, it was found that 64.8% of school districts do not require substitutes to attend orientation or skills training, and 91.8% of school districts provide no ongoing training for current substitute teachers (Hawkins, 2000). Thus, while permanent teachers are away, their students are experiencing a lack of instructional continuity due to exposure to untrained substitutes. Over the course of their K-12 education, American students spend as much as 5%-10% of their class time with substitute teachers (Billman, 1994). Wyld (1995) estimated that on any given school day, up to 10% of the nation’s classrooms have substitutes. A study of New York City schools by Elliot and Manlove (1977) confirmed what every student knows: substitute teachers are significantly less effective than regular teachers. A study conducted by the Metropolitan School Study Council of Columbia University concluded that substitute teachers were educationally ineffective (Olson, 1971). This study also found that regular teachers were 20 times more effective than substitutes in secondary classrooms.

The remainder of this chapter is organized into absenteeism, absenteeism and student achievement, models of absenteeism, and then other demographic variables that impact teacher absenteeism. The last part of this chapter covers leadership, gender and leadership, and leadership styles, in particular Theory X and Theory Y.
Absenteeism

“Absentee proneness” is defined as the notion that a small percentage of employees are responsible for a great percentage of absenteeism (Garrison & Muchinsky, 1977). Yolles, Carone, and Krinsky (1974) claimed that 10% of the work force is responsible for 90% of absenteeism. Garrison and Muchinsky found that absenteeism measured over a short period of time (e.g., quarter, month, week) would support the notions of Yolles et al. However, when the duration of absence measurement is lengthened, a larger percentage of employees are responsible for the majority of the absenteeism, suggesting that the core of absentee-prone workers shifts over time. Regardless of who is responsible for employee absenteeism, it is a dilemma of growing concern.

“The paucity of research on the causes of absenteeism is undoubtedly due to the fact that data on teacher absenteeism are not regularly reported by school districts to state education departments” (Ehrenberg et al., 1989, p. 73). Another major obstacle in studying teacher absenteeism is that researchers and school systems alike have a difficult time agreeing on the best way to measure absenteeism. As early as 1963, Gaudet cited at least 41 different measures that had been used in the past to define absenteeism. Garrison and Muchinsky (1977) believed that a major issue underlying most absence measures is whether pay is associated with the absenteeism. Many companies differentiate types of absenteeism on the basis of whether or not the employee will be paid during the absence (Garrison & Muchinsky, 1977).

Employee absences for a short period of time are classified as an incidental absence. Absences beyond this period of time are classified as disability. Incidental absenteeism may be broken down into paid and unpaid absences (Garrison & Muchinsky, 1977). Likely, absenteeism is defined differently across school districts or even among schools in the same district, which is
not surprising because researchers do not even share a common definition of absenteeism. Many researchers suggest that absenteeism involves those absences over which employees may exercise some control or discretion (Gibson, 1966; Jacobson, 1989; Ramming, 1998). Regardless of the differing definitions of absenteeism, Lewis (1981) noted the following symptoms of school systems experiencing problems with absenteeism:

1. There is general lack of direction from the school board and the superintendent. Absenteeism issues are generally overlooked as they turn to more pressing issues.

2. School board policy fails to address teacher absenteeism issues. An examination of several hundred board policies yielded none that contained measures to reduce absenteeism.

3. Systems fail to analyze attendance performance of school employees.

4. School environment is determined by administrators’ leadership styles. Where absenteeism is high, leadership is lacking and morale drops, which leads to widespread job dissatisfaction.

5. Systems fail to keep teacher records.

Teacher Absenteeism and Student Achievement

After a national survey of selected principals in 1978, Manlove and Elliot found six major costs associated with teacher absenteeism: (1) instructional costs, (2) financial costs, (3) management costs, (4) program costs, (5) organizational costs, and (6) credibility costs.

All students have the right to receive a good education in this country. According to the National Council on Teacher Quality (2008), the average student sits in a class the equivalent of one full year during the educational experience being supervised by substitute teachers. Along those same lines, in low socioeconomic schools, at-risk students are spending closer to 13.5% of
the entire year with a substitute teacher. This is almost equivalent to 2 years of their K-12 educational experience.

Teacher absenteeism has a direct affect on quality instruction, and therefore it affects student achievement with the lack of continuity in the classroom. The government is keeping student educational performance on the forefront of the improvement agenda as evidenced by the *No Child Left Behind Act* (2002). Adding to this potential negative effect on student achievement is the economic impact on school systems. School districts can become limited on the expansion of quality programs as they face shrinking budgets due to the lack of progress in student achievement.

Research on effective teaching highlights time-on-task as a significant variable in student achievement (Anderson, Evertson, & Emmer, 1980). The more time teachers spend away from class, the more time students spend with substitute teachers. Wiley and Harnischfeger (1974) found in terms of typical gains in achievement over a year’s period, that in schools where students receive 24% more schooling, they increase their average gain in reading comprehension by two thirds and their gain in mathematics and verbal skills by more than one third.

In a recent study on absences of mathematics teachers Bayard (2003) found that there was a significant difference in students’ math scores for teachers who were absent more than 2 days. Although the math teachers as a group had a lower absence rate for the schools researched, their absences had a significant effect on the schools standardized math test scores. Students who had a strong academic record, good grades and good attendance reported less of a drop in math scores than weaker academic students in relation to teacher absence. Conversely, Clay (2007) did not find a significant relationship between teacher absenteeism and achievement in a recent study. Her findings indicate that quality substitutes, quality training for substitutes, and other
variables may have been the reason for not seeing a significant correlation. In districts that required a minimum of 60 college hours for acquiring a substitute certificate the effect of teacher absenteeism was minimal.

It appears that if teachers are dissatisfied with their work lives, not only will they suffer, but their students will suffer as well (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988). Referring to administrators’ need to reexamine their roles as instructional leaders and personnel managers, Deay and Bontempo (1986) suggested that administrators not fail to consider the potential impact of substitute teachers on student learning. “Substitutes are rarely as effective as the regular teachers they replace; therefore, valuable instruction is lost and student achievement may suffer as a result” (Jacobson, 1990, p. 78). Rarely do students, teachers, or administrators regard substitutes as full professionals who meet accepted standards of practice (Abdal-Haqq, 1999). However, most school systems are not adequately preparing or training their substitutes. In fact, a survey conducted by the Substitute Teaching Institute at Utah State University found that 64.8% of school districts do not require substitute teachers to complete an orientation session. Additionally, 91.8% of school districts provide no ongoing training for current substitute teachers (Hawkins, 2000). “It would be safe to say that in many districts substitutes are selected for their availability more often than they are selected for successful teaching” (Capitan et al., 1980, p. 2).

In a study on absenteeism and student achievement Clay (2007) did not find a significant difference in student’s scores on the Missouri Assessment Program in relation to teacher absences. Clay investigated the relationship of teacher absences in students’ achievement in the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP). The population of this study included 5,000 students in grades kindergarten through twelve in the Saint Louis County School District. There were
significant differences in achievement in relation to gender found in this study; however, this
difference was not related to teacher absenteeism. Other variables may also have a positive affect
on student achievement, such as the quality of the substitute teacher that replaces a teacher when
he/she is absent (Clay, 2007).

Models of Absenteeism

Absenteeism and Professional Demographic Variables

Steers and Rhodes in a 1978 studied the major influences that effect employee absences. They used two important variables to examine employee absences. The two variables were an
employee’s motivation to attend and the employee’s ability to attend. Although research has
been conducted on employee absenteeism for the past 50 years, theories on the phenomenon
have been offered from an array of disciplines. Absenteeism, according to Steers and Rhodes
(1978) can be explained by psychologists as pain avoidance.

Absenteeism can also be explained by sociologists as an organizational socialization and
prevailing absence culture (Chadwick-Jones, Nicholson, & Brown, 1982), and by economists as
a way for workers to make trade-offs between labor and leisure (Allen, 1981). An organizational
approach views absenteeism as a function of the job design, work unit size, level of
interdependence among employees, and practices and norms that arise in the workplace; for
example, highly interdependent jobs are thought to foster higher attendance rates because any
one worker’s absence increases the workload for coworkers (Jacobson, 1990, p. 81).

In the individual model of absenteeism, chronic absenteeism is seen as the ultimate
manifestation of deep-seated employee dissatisfaction. “Absenteeism is an employee decision
process in which alternative attendance behaviors are considered in light of existing constraints”
(Jacobson, 1990, p. 81). Finally, based on previous research in absenteeism, Farrell and Stamm
(1988) found that idiosyncratic theories of absenteeism, mainly those emphasizing age, sex, and job satisfaction, do not seem promising.

Steers and Rhodes (1978) developed a model of absenteeism that combines the individual and organizational approaches. The combined model draws on factors from both the individual and organizational areas. The Steers and Rhodes model includes individual characteristics such as education, tenure, age, sex, race, marital status, and family size. From the organizational approach, it includes characteristics such as scope of the job, amount of stress, leadership style, coworker relations, and opportunity for advancement. In addition to the individual and organizational characteristics, Steers and Rhodes considered pressures to attend, such as economic and market conditions, attendance policies, and personal work ethic; and the ability to attend, which is determined by illnesses, accidents, family responsibilities, and transportation problems. Steers and Rhodes (1990) later revised this model and added the major components of attendance motivation and perceived ability to attend.

Unfortunately, there are similar problems with absenteeism in industry as there are with absenteeism in education. Most research has centered on causes and relationships among variables without an attempt to develop a theory or model of absenteeism that might explain the findings of these studies (Scott & Wimbush, 1991). Many researchers have attempted to identify variables in relation to absenteeism so that suitable solutions for this issue can be developed. Much of the research, however, has been conducted in private sector organizations, although absenteeism is often more costly in the public sector (Winkler, 1980).

Absenteeism and Gender

In a study of 502 teachers from a county school system in a mid-Atlantic region, Scott and Wimbush (1991) found women to be absent more frequently than men and have more total
days of absences in a school year as well. Elliot (1982) found that females and minorities appear to have higher absence rates, but when other variables are factored out, the differences are less clear.

Kallio (2006) researched school climate factors as it related to teacher absenteeism. A survey was used to collect school climate data for each school in the district. Teachers and climate data was correlated to the dependent variable of teacher absenteeism. A mutli-linear regression was used to analyze the data (Kallio, 2006).

Kallio (2006) reported that certain characteristics of teachers played a significant role in the number of absences a teacher had in a year. Specifically gender did play a significant role in his study conducted on 280 full-time teachers. The study determined that men took significantly fewer days off during the school year than did women teachers. Kallio also found that elementary school teachers were absent more frequently than secondary teachers were. Perceived role conflicts and the number of dependents were also factors in the amount of days missed by female teachers.

Another study conducted in a school district in Iowa looked at 10 demographic variables and how they related to teacher absenteeism. Of the 10, gender was the only statistically significant correlate found, with females being absent more than males (Redmond, 1978). In a study of 335 Oregon teachers, Sylwester (1979) found women to be absent, on average, almost 2 times more often than men.

Findings in business, industry, and education have been consistent between employee absenteeism and gender, with females absent more than males. Business and government literature indicate a positive correlation between gender and absenteeism (Pitkoff, 1993). In 1973 and 1975, Hedges reported that the absence rate for 18 females in business was approximately
twice that of males. Golden and Barton (1980) studied absence trends in men and women with children over an 11-month period and found a statistically significant difference. The women in the study averaged 40.58 hours of sick leave, whereas the men averaged 34.4 hours per year.

Absence and Age

Ramming (1998) reported a study conducted in East Lake School District in New York, where age and leave accumulation were the only factors related to absenteeism. Age exhibited a statistically significant positive relationship, whereas leave accumulation exhibited a negative relationship. A 1981 Educational Research Service study, National Survey on Absenteeism, of 470 school systems during the 1978-1979 school year revealed that the older the employee, the higher the rate of absence for sickness. For total or uncertified absences, younger employees had higher rates of absence (Elliot, 1982). In a study of 286 elementary teachers, Marchant (1976) found that as the age of the teacher increased so did the absence rate. He concluded that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between age and absence rate. On the other hand, Marlin (1976) noted that the relationship between age and absence rate of teachers was curvilinear. He found that middle-aged teachers were absent less than teachers who were both older and younger.

Absence and Job Satisfaction

According to Pellicer (1984), a lack of job satisfaction caused serious withdrawal problems among teachers that resulted in excessive absenteeism. Pellicer identified recognition, delegated responsibilities, and opportunities for success as job satisfiers; he identified job dissatisfiers as ineffective operating procedures, ineffective supervision, low salaries, poor work relations, and poor working conditions. Before any progress is made toward reducing teacher absenteeism, work dissatisfiers must be replaced by work satisfiers.
Elliott (1982) identified several characteristics of job satisfaction that he found to be related to teacher absenteeism. He found that high levels of absenteeism occurred in school districts where there were low levels of faculty agreement about the goals and policies of the community and district. However, low levels of absenteeism were reported in districts with high levels of community support and policy agreement, and when there are smaller subunits within the school, and the teachers in those units are interdependent.

Much of recent research on teacher absenteeism has focused on when teachers are absent and the geographical locations where teacher absenteeism is highest. The preponderance of research indicates that teacher absenteeism is more prevalent on Mondays and Fridays (Capitan et al., 1980). Pitkoff (1993) also found that absenteeism in education increased with each progressive month of the school year, culminating in May; the highest rate of absenteeism occurred on Mondays and Fridays; and teachers in the Northeastern United States were absent more frequently than those in any other geographic location. Elliott (1982) noted that increased teacher absenteeism on Mondays, Fridays, and at the end of the school year are costing educators a great deal of credibility in the eyes of the community.

Absenceism and Job Assignment

Teacher absenteeism is also found to be higher in elementary schools (Elliott, 1982; Pitkoff, 1993). Marlin (1976) reported that K-2 teachers are absent the most. Employees with higher-level jobs tend to be absent less often than those with lower level jobs; administrators are absent significantly fewer days than teachers; and math and science teachers are absent fewer days than humanities teachers (Elliott, 1982). Redmond (1978) and Sylwester (1979) suggested that the reason more elementary teachers are absent is linked to the fact that more elementary school teachers are females, who exhibit a higher rate of absenteeism than males. The level of
involvement of the employee can also have an impact on the number of absences for workers (Goldberg & Waldman, 2000). If teachers/rank file employees have a sense of ownership or buy into the organization, they tend to absent less frequently. This factor was found to be more significant than many other personal characteristics.

Stress can lead to problems in the workplace such as poor self-esteem, dissatisfaction, absenteeism, decreased productivity, and higher medical costs (Kedjidjian, 1995). Much of the available research on teacher workload and stress states that teacher workloads are excessive, and that the negative effects of stress are having considerable impact on teachers. These effects include reduced ability to meet students’ needs, significance incidences of psychological disorders leading to increased absence from work, and a high proportion of claims for disability caused by stress (Naylor, 2001). Data from a major British insurance company reveal that teachers were the most depressed category of workers, with 44% of their disability insurance claims caused by mental problems, compared to 25% from other groups of workers. A number of British teacher suicides have also been directly related to anxiety over workloads (Bunting, 2000).

Absenteeism and Salary

In its 1981 National Survey on Absenteeism, the Educational Research Service reported teacher absenteeism rates by salary category. The average number of days absent per teacher by average teacher salary was 9.2 days in systems averaging $17,000 or more in annual salary; 7.8 days in systems with salaries of $15,000 to $16,999; 8.0 days in systems with $13,000 to $14,999; and 6.8 days in systems with salaries less than $13,000. In later research, Elliott (1982) reported that absenteeism continued to increase despite pay increases. However, in 1993, Pitkoff found that as satisfaction with pay increased, the rate of teacher absenteeism decreased.
Salaries are often mentioned as a reason for dissatisfaction, but not for satisfaction. Tye and O’Brien (2002) acknowledged that the lack of any clear career ladder has led to teacher dissatisfaction. This was further supported by The National Center for Education Statistics (1997), which found no statistically significant relationship between salary or benefits and teacher satisfaction. Needless to say, the previous findings concerning the relationships of various demographic factors and other variables with teacher absenteeism are mixed. Research that is more recent focuses on the costs of teacher absenteeism, effects of teacher absenteeism on student achievement, and designing programs that might help alleviate the problem.

Some systems have tried to use incentives in order to alleviate the problems with teacher absenteeism. In a 1989 study, Jacobson examined the effects on pay incentives on teacher absenteeism in a New York school district. Jacobson examined the absenteeism in the district the before and after the implementation of the attendance incentive plan. The teachers were rewarded for their attendance if they had less than seven absences for the year. The district set aside $72,809 for the incentive plan. The shares for each teacher would be determined by how many in the district had less than seven absences. The district awarded 1,274 shares, making each share worth $57.16. A teacher with perfect attendance could have been awarded $400.12 (Jacobson, 1989).

Jacobson (1989) compared the teacher absences during he first year of the incentive plan to the teacher absences in the year prior. The district had 292 teachers and it included teachers who worked in the district for both years. A sample t-test was used to determine if the mean number of absences in the year prior to the incentive was significantly different from the number of absences during the first year on the incentive plan. The results were significant in this New York school district. The mean number of absences during the first year of the incentive plan
decreased from 7.21 days the previous year to 5.34 days during the implementation year (Jacobson, 1989). This study revealed that the implementation of a monetary attendance incentive plan significantly increased teacher attendance. The district also reported savings in payroll costs due to the reduction in the number of substitutes needed for the district. The quality of teaching was not examined by Jacobson in this study (1989).

Other Variables Related to Absenteeism

Organizational Climate

Every organization has its own culture or climate within the organization. Organizational climate can be described as a set beliefs or views that is held by the majority employees of the organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). The climate of an organization is what sets it apart from other organizations. Climate affects the behaviors and the perceptions of the employees that are employed in the organization. Climate or culture can affect the way outsiders are treated when they enter or visit the organization. In most cases climate defines the organizational rules and the practices that employees typically sign off on when the begin their employment with an organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

Hoy and Miskel (2001) define school climate as qualities of the school that are experienced by participants. Participants include teachers, students and parents of the community the school serves. School climate is based on the perceptions of the teachers, students and community members. The climate of the school can be referred to as the “personality” of the school (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). Because administrators have a significant impact on the development of the school climate Hoy and Miskel believed that it was important to analyze school climates.
Hoy and Miskel (2001) referenced the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) as the categorized school climates into four different categories. The first category described is an open school climate. In this category cooperation and respect exist within the faculty of the school. The principal listens and is open to ideas from the teachers, and in turn provides teachers with frequent praise that is genuine. Working in this type climate teachers feel safe to try new strategies, and their behavior supports open professional interactions (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

A second category of school climate is the engaged climate (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). The principal being ineffective to be in command of the school and the teachers displaying high professional performance defines this climate. Typically, the principal in this organization is autocratic and has little respect for the needs of the teachers. Teachers are burdened with assignments that they view as busywork. The teachers in the engaged climate have a high degree of respect for each as they display a high level of professionalism. They support each other despite the directives from their principal (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

The third category of school climates is the disengaged climate, and it is a direct contrast to the engaged climate (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). The principal is open and supportive of the teachers in the school. Teachers are expected to use their professional knowledge, and they have very little paperwork. Despite the open supportive environment, the teachers are unwilling to accept the principal. The teachers in this climate can work to disrupt the principal’s leadership, and they do not like or respect each other (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

The final category of school climates defined by Hoy & Miskel was the closed climate. The principal attempts to be directive by assigning routine busywork, and the teachers respond minimally. The principal is seen as unsympathetic to the needs of the teachers. Teachers view the
principal as controlling and strict in an attempt to force his leadership on the group. The climate of the school becomes frustrating which also creates suspicion among the teachers. The principal in the closed climate are nonsupportive, rigid, and the faculty is divided as well as not very productive (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

If the climate of an organization can be affected by the rules and views of the principal, and policies then climate may also affect teacher absenteeism. According to Hoy & Miskel (2001), the principal is responsible for developing trust and motivating the teachers’ effort. The principal is in charge of building loyalty within the faculty. The teacher commitment to the school depends on the climate. The climate of the school can be directly related to the principal (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

In a 1995 study, Patrick investigated the correlation between administrative style and school climate. The null hypothesis was that despite the research on leadership and its influence on participants of the organization there is not a significant correlation between administrative style and climate of the school. The participants of this study were graduate students at Chicago University in the college of education. Each participant responded to The Teacher’s Principal Evaluation Survey, which is used to measure teachers’ attitudes toward the effectiveness of a principal (Patrick, 1995).

The results of Patrick’s study revealed a significant correlation between administrative style and school climate. A second significant correlation was found between the scores on school climate and the gender of the principal. Patrick (1995) concluded that there is no one specific way for a leader to act. However, how they behave does directly impact the climate of the school, which they lead.
One of the major underlying causes of teacher absenteeism is considered to be dissatisfaction with working conditions such as supervision, salary, and policies. When dissatisfaction with conditions becomes too great, employees may terminate employment, although some say absenteeism offers an alternative to quitting because it allows them an opportunity to express their dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1966; Jacobson, 1990). The advantages of high morale include low turnover, less absenteeism, and a better academic environment for instruction (Hunter-Boykin, Evans, & Evans, 1995).

Sun (2004) found statistically significant correlations among several variables and teacher morale. Teacher commitment and morale were higher in schools where rules were clear, clearly communicated, and enforced; and where principals respected teacher judgment and integrity. Principals who were open to allowing teacher input into decision-making experienced higher teacher morale in their schools. One way to improve teacher morale and ultimately teacher attendance is to clearly define polices and procedures and administer them consistently. As noted earlier, increased teacher morale and commitment yield lower teacher absenteeism (Sun, 2004).

Stress in the workplace from the various changes in the job of teaching, teacher reports of lack of time to complete paperwork, and the managing of personal and professional lives all contribute to the absentee problem for schools. According to Clay (2007), teachers can no longer place their target on the middle of the class and be successful. Today they have to use differentiation in teaching for all students, which includes those with special needs and those who need remediation and enrichment. This requires teachers to plan lessons for small groups, use centers, and do individual lesson plans as well.
Teacher stress is not a dilemma that is limited to the United States. “The research evidence from studies of teacher stress carried out in different countries not only attests to the endemic and cross-cultural nature of the phenomenon, but also to how serious the problem is” (Borg & Riding, 1991, p. 263). In a survey of comprehensive school teachers in England, Kyraicou and Sutcliffe (1978) found that 30.7% of teachers rated teaching as either stressful or extremely stressful. Researchers also have found a statistically significant, negative relationship between teacher stress and teacher job satisfaction. In a study of 545 teachers in the Malta educational system, Borg and Riding (1991) reported a statistically significant relationship between teacher stress and satisfaction in teaching.

Yet another type of stress that teachers must face is the stress of public scrutiny. “The stress of public scrutiny and educational reforms over the past three decades underscored teacher burnout as one of the most common and serious afflictions of the nation’s educators,” according to Dunham (1992, p. 2). Burnout has struck all professions, but a review of professional literature and news media reports over the past decade reveals that burnout has struck the teaching profession extremely hard (Kiff, 1986). Burnout begins as an emotional problem that results in energy deficiency, nervousness, knots in the stomach, irritability, anxiety, and difficulty in making the minutest decisions. If the underlying causes of stress are not dealt with, then burnout may progress to behavioral or physical problems. According to Kiff, if steps are not taken to alleviate the stressful situations, burnout can ruin the health of the sufferer.

The effects of teacher burnout are difficult to measure directly, but statistical trends indicate that the problem is significant and widespread. Over the past two decades, large numbers of teachers have left the profession for jobs they feel are less stressful and more financially rewarding (Kiff, 1986). Additionally, Kiff noted that teachers with only a few years
of experience on the job are more likely to leave; a number of career teachers are opting for early retirement; and the number of medical claims filed by teachers is rising.

A growing number of researchers report that burnout can result in ulcers, high blood pressure, headaches, and depression. “Burnout is real, it is insidious, and it robs many teachers of their hunger to pursue their chosen profession while devastating their health. Simply stated, burnout is defined as both emotional and physical exhaustion brought on by unalleviated job strain” (Kiff, 1986, p. 15).

As politicians scramble to bring about education reform, teachers find themselves struggling to adapt to changes that literally vary with each political election. Societal demands and increased public demands on education have produced adverse classroom situations that have led to increased emotional and physical disabilities among teachers (Chance, 1992). For example, Dutch researchers discovered that more than 50% of sickness absence is caused by combinations of psychological factors and the workplace conditions affecting stress (Imants & VanZoelen, 1995). Druss et al. (2001) reported, “If absenteeism can be viewed as a form of withdrawal, teachers are withdrawing from coming to schools in which they themselves are not successful” (p. 732). For example, A New York study found that teachers in Brooklyn high schools were absent an average of 7.8 days per school year. Almost one fourth of the teachers were absent 10 or more days, exceeding their contractual allowance (Pitkoff, 1993).

Firestone and Rosenblum (1988) identified four important organizational factors that influence teacher commitment:

1. Sense of purpose about work
2. Mutual respect and affiliation
3. Administrative support
4. Opportunities for decision making

Each of these factors derives from the relationship between the teacher and principal. Anderman et al. (1991) also suggested that teachers are more satisfied when the school fosters teacher involvement in school decisions, respect, encouragement, and the sharing of information with colleagues, as well as the feeling that teachers and administrators are working together.

Ultimately, the school principal is the person who establishes the ground rules for the operational environment in the school and is directly responsible for developing and maintaining high teacher morale (Hunter-Boykin et al., 1995). Teachers report greater satisfaction in their work when they perceive their principal as someone who shares information with others, delegate’s authority, and keeps open channels of communication with the teachers (Rossmiller, 1992). Workload and support from principals influence teacher burnout, job satisfaction, and occupational commitment (Starnaman & Miller, 1992). There are statistically significant direct relationships between principal leadership behavior, as perceived by the teacher, and satisfaction and commitment (Anderman et al., 1991).

Anderman et al. (1991) argued that teachers’ perceptions of their principals may have a direct affect on their perceptions of the school culture, and that this school culture will be linked to a teacher’s level of contentment and loyalty. Schools should give more consideration to increasing teacher job satisfaction (Heller, Clay, & Perkins, 1993).

**Personnel Policies**

Most school districts are experiencing teacher absenteeism rates of 8%-10% (Warren, 1988). Excessive absenteeism among school personnel is one of the most neglected problems in public education (Grant, 2001). In recent years, however, personnel managers and boards of education have scrambled to develop policies to address the problem. Punishment or suppressing
undesirable behaviors such as absenteeism has been a component of sick leave policy (Rhodes & Steers, 1990). Punishment usually takes the form of requiring employees to phone supervisors when absent, or asking for doctor’s notes upon the teacher’s return to work to verify illness. They found a lower absenteeism rate among teachers in systems that required documentation of illness or a call to the principal at the very least.

Pitkoff (2003) encouraged schools boards to investigate their own policies on sick leave to improve teacher attendance. He made three specific suggestions to school boards. One is to change the wording of their policy on “personal leave” to “emergency leave.” Pitkoff stated that the term personal can give the teachers a sense of entitlement to use these days rather than using them for urgent needs. By changing the name and also the policy from the “use it or lose it” policy, this might help cut down on unnecessary time teachers take off.

The second recommendation from Pitkoff (2003) was to have professional development days outside of the normal instructional days. Workshops or meetings could be held before or after school hours. By holding professional development outside of the normal work day teachers would not be out of the classroom during school hours. The final suggestion was to remove sick leave banks from district policy. He believed that these sick leave banks created instances of high short-term leave and gave the teachers more opportunities to be absent.

In its 1981 National Survey on Absenteeism, the Educational Research Service reported the average number of days absent per teacher by method of absence reporting was 9.1 days in systems using a telephone answering service, and 7.6 days when a specific person is contacted. In other words, systems that had a policy in place requiring absent teachers to contact a specific person experienced fewer absences than those that did not. Winkler (1980) found that policies requiring teachers to provide proof of illness and to report illness directly to the principal were
associated with lower absence rates. Dalton and Perry (1981) found that organizations that do not require proof of illness have higher rates of employee absenteeism. They also reported that organizations that do not reimburse earned but unused sick leave have higher rates of absenteeism. Elliott (1982) also reported that lower levels of teacher absence were associated with reporting procedures that required the teacher to speak directly with the immediate supervisor.

School district policies governing the annual usage of teacher leave days that appear in teacher contracts clearly influence teachers’ usage of leave days (Ehrenberg et al., 1989). Similarly, policies that allow teachers to accumulate days and use them toward retirement or that pay teachers for unused leave are both associated with lower leave usage. These types of “buy-back” policies were studied in Georgia, which is a non-negotiating state for teachers. Teachers in Georgia are nonunionized; therefore, collective bargaining does not exist. Boyer (1994) found that there is no significant relationship between buy-back policies and teacher attendance rates in Georgia. However, the directionality of the findings tended to support the idea that buy-back policies reduce teacher absences.

A 1970 Philadelphia study that involved 56 school districts and 12,000 teachers found that the 11 districts whose sick leave policies matched the minimum allowed by the state had the lowest rate of teacher absenteeism. Conversely, those systems that allowed more sick leave as a result of collective bargaining, experienced higher absence rates (Bamber, 1979).

Policy makers should closely examine their district policies on sick leave and teacher absences. In many cases, the district policy can have a direct effect on teacher absenteeism and the culture of absences in a school district. There is research to support that allowing teacher input in designing district policies on absenteeism can help reduce teacher absences in a school
Principals of effective schools encourage teachers to get involved in developing district policies by serving on committees for the district. Sharing ideas, examining the problems and negotiating with district leaders can be effective in reducing teacher absenteeism.

A 1974-1975 study of 57 elementary schools in California and Wisconsin found that income protection plans for long-term sick leave were associated with higher absenteeism (Winkler, 1980). Elliott and Manlove (1977) reported that a nationwide survey revealed that 86% of responding school systems reported increased demand for substitute teachers following the establishment of more generous sick leave policies. Research has indicated that this is a direct result of policy shifts where teachers view these days as an employee benefit.

Simply put, the more sick leave available, the greater the rate of absenteeism (Pitkoff, 1993). The average number of days absent per teacher by personal leave provisions was 7.9 days in systems that provide 3 days or less of personal leave and 8.8 days in systems, that provided more than 3 days of personal leave. Teachers averaged 10 days absence from work compared to 7 days absence for students and 6 days for noncertified staff (Skidmore, 1984). In 1981, the National Survey of Absenteeism reported the average number of days absent per teacher by negotiating status of school system was 8.2 days in systems that negotiate with teachers and 7.2 days in systems that do not negotiate with teachers.

There are many contributors to the rising rates of teacher absenteeism; however, it seems that a large contributor to teacher absenteeism is the mandatory leave for professional development training programs (Griswold & Hughes, 1997; Hawkins, 2000). In fact, the state of Georgia now includes a required professional development component for every teacher as part of the teacher’s annual evaluation. Along with the obvious issue of the teacher being absent from
the classroom, there is the added issue that many times the training received by the teacher is not always useful (Hawkins, 2000). Matthews (2000) reported that Teachers in Grosse Pointe, Michigan were discouraged that their professional development consisted of vague or irrelevant speeches by college professors or book authors who had never taught a class of freshmen. Matthews also reported that other teachers complained that although some of the in-service activities were good, they seemed to be getting what the administration wanted and not necessarily what the teachers or students needed. Compounding the problem of the teacher being absent from the classroom is the fact that student learning is interrupted with the use of a substitute.

Leadership

There are numerous ways that leadership has been defined. Hoy and Miskel (2001) define leadership as a social influence where one person enlists the aid and support of their followers to accomplish a task or reach a goal. They go on to state that leadership is a social process where an individual “exerts intentional influence over others to structure activities and relationships in a group or organization” (Hoy & Miskel, 2001, p. 392). Leaders inspire their followers to put aside their personal interests in order to achieve the interests of the organization.

Gary Yukl (1998) acknowledged that all groups have a specialized leadership role and responsibilities, which cannot be shared without endangering the effectiveness of the organization. The person with the most responsibility is defined as the leader and other members of the organization are to be the followers. An alternative concept of leadership is the idea that the social process of leading occurs naturally within the social system (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). Leadership is shared among the members of the organization. Subscribing to the shared leadership theory means that leadership is by product or property of the organization, rather than
a product of one individual (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). Hackman and Johnson (2004) define leadership as communication that changes attitudes and behaviors of others. Hackman et al (2004) go on to state that leadership is a fundamental condition of human behavior and daily life. Simply put, “wherever societies exists, leadership also exists,” (Hackman & Johnson, p.33, 2004). Managing or administrating is often equated with leadership. However, Hackman and Johnson (2004) state that managing an organization is different from leading an organization. Managers are generally concerned with the maintaining the standard, leaders are more concerned with the direction of the organization (Hackman & Johnson, 2004).

In a public school setting the person ultimately responsible for the decisions of that school are referred to as administrators not leaders. Hoy and Miskel (2001) stated that administrators by definition emphasize stability and effectiveness. However, leaders persuade people to agree about what needs to be accomplished. Administrators are charged with planning, budgeting, overseeing, and evaluating staff. Leaders motivate employees; they establish direction and inspire the people in the organization.

The leader or manager of an organization may often have to wear many different hats in order to be effective. Mintzberg (1989) stated that a manager’s job can best be explained by the various “roles” or sets of behaviors that can be identified with the position. The first role described by Mintzberg was the figurehead role. In this role, a manager is responsible for greeting important visitors, attending special occasions of employees, and other ceremonial duties.

A second manager role identified by Mintzberg (1989) is the leader role. In most organizations the manager is responsible for hiring and training is own staff. In this role, the manager must resolve the individual needs of the employees while meeting the overall needs of
the organization. This role is different in a school setting. The manager or in the case of the school, the principal may hire the teachers, but the teachers are already trained on how to teach. The principal may have the power of hiring and firing, but the influence of a principal over the training of pedagogy would be minimal.

The type of leadership in American business, industry, and education has changed over time. These businesses are defining a fundamentally different framework for describing and understanding leadership (Block, 1996). In a world governed by technology, politics, and a growing global economy, we must understand the shift in management that is taking place. Leadership can sometimes be mistaken for bossing or managing.

Early in this century leadership has reflected the industry model, which is characterized by power and control (Block, 1996). Commonly known as bossing, it is based on the premise that leaders are to direct and oversee the operations. This model is simple to follow because the people at the top tell the ones in the middle and on the bottom what is expected. Formal authority is exercised, and power is used to make things happen the way they have planned without any input from employees. Somech (2005) stated that managing can be viewed as the act of coordinating people and resources effectively. Managing is one important task of what leaders do, but it is not leadership. Leading has been defined by many people throughout history. The following pages highlight some of the leadership types and qualities in education.

Acknowledgment of the impact of principals’ leadership behaviors on school outcomes has generated an extensive body of research over the past decade (Leithwood, Bagley, & Cousins, 1991). The importance of strong leadership at the school level and the effect of certain leadership behaviors of the principal are both explicit and implicit in professional literature and research. The principal has been singled out as the most important factor in effective schools
(Gallmeier, 1992). Yet, the majority of studies on leaders over the last 50 years were conducted in industrial and military settings. Early principal studies borrowed heavily from these studies (Thomas, 1997). A key point in the early development of models and theories of leadership was made by Lewin and Lippit in 1938. They suggested three different approaches to leadership. The first was autocratic, characterized as directive and task-oriented. The second is democratic, characterized as participative and process and relationship oriented, and the third approach is Laissez-faire, characterized as nondirective and lacking formal leadership. Some leaders have the ability to use pieces of all three of these leadership styles in their repertoire. They have the ability to lead positive change in their organizations; thus they could be called transformational.

Some researchers believe that transformational leaders use their charisma to inspire their followers (Somech, 2005). They talk about their performance being essential, and how confident the leaders are in their followers. Transformational leaders motivate their workers to do more than is thought possible (Avolio & Bass, 1992). Setting higher and higher goals and informing workers of their importance in attaining goals helps workers produce more than was perceived possible. This allows the workers to focus on general goals for the entire group, and on the school. It also enables the workers to realize their personal goals and needs. According to Glanz (2007), “Leadership is predicated on the foundation of changing core beliefs and values” (p. 132). He believed that the relations between transformative leaders and their workers were a powerful force to cause change in a positive direction.

Another important leadership responsibility is to involve stakeholders in the design and implementation of the policies (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Allowing teachers to have input is one of the key responsibilities of an educational leader. It is imperative that teachers
have input on attendance policies and sick leave if leaders want the teachers to change their behavior and take ownership in their behaviors.

Glanz (2007) stated that supervision as a school-based or school-college-based activity, or process, at its best, should engage teachers in meaningful and ongoing instructional dialogue for the purpose of improving teaching and learning in a school. Most people are more likely to participate when they have had a say in developing ideas and practices. Engaging teachers in dialogue that is meaningful for instructional purposes will in turn help improve the learning of the students they teach (Glanz, 2007).

Administrators too often want to prescribe for teachers the lessons and objectives that they teach. Transformational leadership is also concerned about the creation and use of knowledge by leaders to accomplish their objectives for high achievement for all students. Fullan (2003) created a list of beliefs about the effective use of knowledge:

- Knowledge lies less in its databases than in its people.
- For all information’s independence and extent, it is people, in their communities, organizations, and institutions who ultimately decide what it all means and why it matters.
- A viable system must embrace not just the technical system but also the social system—the people, organizations, and institutions involved.
- Knowledge is something we digest rather than merely hold. It entails the knowers understanding and having some degree of commitment.

A number of researchers have studied the relationship between principals’ leadership style and decision-making processes and teacher satisfaction and performance (Koh, Steers, & Terborg, 1995). In a study of metropolitan Washington, DC schools, Hunter-Boykin et al. (1995)
found a small but positive relationship between principals’ leadership styles and teachers’ morale. Broiles (1982) reported that one third of California teachers surveyed rated their jobs as stressful or extremely stressful. Long-term exposure to stress in the workplace provokes sickness absence, psychosomatic symptoms, and burnout (Imants & VanZoelen, 1995).

Leaders can also be distinguished by the extent to which they involve other members of the group in the decision-making process. Authoritarian leaders are instrumental in their decision making, their outlook, and demanding strict compliance from the workers (Senge, 1990). This style of leadership is likely to win little personal affection from workers; however the authoritarian leader may be highly effective when the organization faces a crisis situation that calls for an immediate decision to be made. Democratic leaders have more qualities that seek to include as many workers as possible in the process of making the right decision (Beane & Apple, 1995).

**Gender and Leadership**

There are stereotypes about how men and women in management and leadership operate. Coleman, 2007 performed a comparative study on gender and educational leadership. The basis for this study is the limited progress women have had in accessing leadership positions. The research was based in England where one-third of the secondary principals were women in 2004. However, women made up 56% of the secondary teachers in England (Coleman, 2007).

Coleman (2007) concluded that women tend to deny any issues with promotion when questioned about the lack of promotion to leadership positions. However, when surveyed they can provide personal accounts or accounts of others who have experienced some form of discrimination based on their gender. Coleman reported that the majority of the discrimination was coming from colleagues of women who are in leadership roles in England. Male
counterparts are seemingly still struggling with the intrusion of women into the secondary principal leadership roles (Coleman, 2007).

On the other hand, men are supposed to be aggressive, assertive, decisive, and more inclined to act independently. However, Collison and Hearn (2000) have drawn attention to the stereotypical view of “heroic” leadership, where initiatives are driven by one charismatic leader. The fact that men are associated with the concept of managerialism is linked to their implicit rationalism and in opposition to the view of women as caring. There is now therefore recognition of the concept of masculinities, allowing for ways of leading that take into account class, race, and sexual orientation.

Barriers to promotion in secondary schools in England are strongly linked to the perception of women primarily as caregivers and therefore as outsiders in the field of leadership (Coleman, 2007). There is a link between masculinity and rationality that ensures and sustains gender inequalities on all levels. The current policy context of school systems may impact more on women than men partly because of their visibility arising from their supposed outsider status as leaders. The traditional classification of leadership with male attributes continues to influence public perceptions, and these stereotypes are not beneficial to women, as they define women’s leadership as a deficit model. The target-driven, competitive environment that is now the norm in education may reinforce the traditional, stereotypical male model of leadership to the dismay of women leaders (Coleman, 2005).

Societies assign certain traits to one sex and some to others, but that does not mean that everyone acts according to what society expects. Just as we are socialized to incorporate gender into our personal identities, we also learn to in relation to the pressures of what is expected as males and females. Gender roles are the active expression of gender identity (Konner, 1991).
Because our culture defines males as ambitious and competitive, we expect males to seek out positions of leadership. Thus, females are expected to be good listeners and supportive of other people’s needs.

Parsons (1964) explained that gender continues to play an important part in maintaining society, at least in its traditional form. He claimed that for each of the two sexes, a complimentary set of culturally appropriate activities exists and is specified by society. One could argue that in today’s society, women and men are moving from the norm because of necessity and the economic pressures of the world.

Significant differences continue to appear between female and male high school principals in terms of their age when they take their first administrative job (Eckman, 2004). Eckman surveyed male and female principals in three northern states. The surveys used were: Role Conflict Questionnaire, Role Commitment, and a Job Satisfaction Survey. The dependent variables were role conflict and job satisfaction (Eckman, 2004).

The findings of Eckman’s 2004 study revealed that women who obtain high school principal positions are significantly older than their male counterparts. Eckman indicated that the results she found were consistent with previous studies in that women tended to be older when they began their first principalship, and they tended to have more years of teaching experience than male high school principals (Eckman2004).

In a study on leadership and gender, Mohr (1998) found that the two leadership behaviors most important to both male and female teachers were the ability of a principal to maintain the trust and respect of the staff, and to include teachers in making key decisions. Mohr (1998) also concluded that teachers placed extreme importance on secondary principals’ need to include the staff when determining the vision for the school and ways to achieve the shared vision.
Leadership Style

Being at the top of an organization could be a lonely position. Coleman (2007) stated that female principals at the secondary level often felt isolated in their district. The feeling of isolation was due to the majority of secondary principals in their district were males. In a study on principal leadership style and absenteeism, Kight (2007) stated that teachers who voluntarily moved to other positions within the system reported that dissatisfaction with administration was the main reason for leaving. However, Barge (2004) did not find a significant positive relationship in Theory X leadership, teacher frustration, and teacher absenteeism.

Abraham Maslow developed his Theory of Human Motivation in 1943 (Shafritz & Ott, 2001). His theory was based on human nature needing to satisfy needs. These needs were psychological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization. McGregor based his Theory X and Theory Y leadership on the basic principles of Maslow (Shafritz & Ott, 2001).

In 1960, McGregor developed the Theory X and Theory Y model in which he stated that Theory X leadership resembles authoritarian behavior and is based on the assumptions that the power of the leader comes from the position he occupies, and that people are basically lazy and unreliable. In this theory, management assumes employees are inherently lazy and will avoid work if they can. Because of this, workers need to be closely supervised and comprehensive systems of controls developed. A hierarchical structure is needed with narrow span of control at each level (Shafritz & Ott, 2001). According to this theory, employees will show little ambition without an enticing incentive program and will avoid responsibility whenever they can. Theory X leaders also assume that most people prefer to be directed and desire safety above all else. This model proposed that employees will not show up or produce unless directed on a daily basis. Theory X leadership is a top-down model of managing (McGregor, 1960).
McGregor (1960) stated that Theory X managerial attributes lead to behaviors and systems that rely on rewards, incentives, and regulations. These are all things that supervision would use to control the employees in the work setting. Theory X leadership assumes that leaders direct employees without input or question from their employees. On one extreme managers can be “hard” or very strict (Shafritz & Ott, 2001). There also difficulties when managers use a “hard” approach with employees. If a manager uses force he/she will typically get resistance from the employees. There may also be subtle but effective attempts at sabotage on the organization (Shafritz & Ott, 2001). On the other hand, Shafritz & Ott (2001) stated that there can be problems with use a soft approach. People may take advantage or abuse the weaker more laid-back approach to managing. Subordinates may expect more from the company while producing less and less for the organization (Shafritz & Ott, 2001).

McGregor also argued that managers who can display soft X traits or worldviews. A person considered to exhibit soft Theory X traits would emphasize rewards and incentive to their employees. Incentives in the educational sector may be fewer duties, status in the organization, or committee assignments. This type of leadership is still one of direction and control over the employees of that organization. The soft Theory X manager just uses different methods to establish control over the organization.

Conversely, Theory Y leadership resembles democratic behavior and assumes that the power of leaders is granted to them by those they are to lead, and that people are basically self-directed and creative if properly motivated (McGregor, 1960). It would stand to reason then that the task of management would be to unlock the potential in individuals. Under this style of leadership, Sharif & Ott (2001) state that organizations should recognize the potential of their employees in order to become more effective and productive. In this theory management
assumes employees may be ambitious, self-motivated, anxious to accept greater responsibility, and exercise self-control, self-direction, autonomy and empowerment. It is believed that employees enjoy their mental and physical work duties. It is also believed that if given the chance employees have the desire to be creative and forward thinking in the workplace. There is a chance for greater productivity by giving employees the freedom to perform at the best of their abilities without being bogged down by rules (Shafritz & Ott, 2001). A leader who subscribes to Theory Y leadership tends to believe that, given the right conditions, an employee’s effort in work is as natural as play. Work provides satisfaction and meaning to the employee (McGregor, 1960).

The Theory Y manager also recognizes the influence of learning on the organization (McGregor, 1960). If the work conditions are such that an employee feels empowered, he/she will accept and seek responsibility within the organization. Theory Y managers believe that average intellectual ability of a person is only partially utilized in modern industry and that people are capable of handling complex problems when allowed to do so. Leaders who pursue the Theory Y style of leading are more sensitive, take more time to explain, and listen to the needs of the individuals. These leaders build trust and create ways for employees to collaborate and interact with each member of the staff.

On the surface, one might get the impression that managers who subscribe to Theory X would usually control, direct, and closely supervise individuals, whereas managers who subscribe to Theory Y would be more supportive and facilitating of individuals, attempting to unlock their potential. Hersey and Blanchard (1993) cautioned against this. They suggested that Theory X and Theory Y are attitudes, or predispositions, managers have toward people.
Consequently, although Theory Y assumptions may be the best attitudes for a manager to have, it might be necessary to behave in a Theory X manner toward immature employees who might need “directing” or “controlling.” Another common model of leadership, situational leadership, was developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1972).

Hersey and Blanchard (1972) proposed that leaders’ behaviors should be different in terms of emphasis on task and behavior depending on the maturity of the followers. In other words, a leader might find it necessary to operate in a variety of ways depending on the readiness of the individual to follow the leader. For the purposes of this research, principal leadership style is examined under the Theory X and Theory Y model of leadership proposed by McGregor (1960).

In summary, research shows that teacher absenteeism is a growing concern, what little research that has been conducted reveals inconsistent findings concerning what variables may contribute to the phenomenon. What is known through inspection of data is that for whatever reason, teacher absenteeism continues to rise and so does the expense for paying for those absences, not only financially, but also in the realm of student achievement. Yet, very little research has focused on the possible relationships among between absenteeism and principal leadership style.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in four public school systems. The first public school system, Whitfield County Schools, is located approximately one and a half hours north of Atlanta, GA in Whitfield County. The county has a population of 92,999, with 33,200 located inside the city limits of Dalton. Carpet mills provide the major source of industry. The population demographics of the schools are consistent with the community and are as follows: Caucasian 64%, Hispanic 33%, African American 4.2%, and 3% other (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). The total student population of the school district is 13,354 in grades kindergarten through 12. The total number of certified personnel in Whitfield County Schools is 1,100. Whitfield County Schools has 12 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, and 3 traditional high schools.

The second school system is Jackson County Schools. This school system is located 45 minutes east of Atlanta, GA. The county has a population of 55,778, and the primary source of industry is farming and commuters to jobs in or around Atlanta. The populations of the schools in Jackson County are as follows: Caucasian 83%, Hispanic 8%, African American 8%, Multiracial 2.3% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). The total student population of Jackson County Schools is 6,814 for grades kindergarten through 12. Jackson County Schools has two high schools, three middle schools, and six elementary schools.

The third school system is Hall County Schools, located about 1 hour northeast of Atlanta, GA. The county has a population of 173,256, with 33,340 located inside the city limits of Gainesville, GA. Hall County has a variety of industries that support the population, with a
small percentage of people commuting to jobs in the Atlanta area. The population demographics of the schools are consistent with the community and are as follows: Caucasian 56%, Hispanic 34%, African American 5%, and Multiracial 3% (U. S. Census Bureau, 2008). The total student population of Hall County Schools is 25,461, making up grades kindergarten through 12. Hall County Schools consists of 20 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, and 7 high schools.

The fourth school system is Forsyth County Schools, located about 45 minutes north of Atlanta, GA. The county has a population of 168,060 according to the 2006 census. Forsyth County has several major industries that support the population, along with a percentage of people commuting for jobs in the Atlanta metro area. The demographics of the schools are consistent with the community and are as follows: Caucasian 90%, African American 4%, and Asian 4.6% (U. S. Census Bureau, 2008). Forsyth County Schools consists of 15 elementary schools, 8 middle schools, and 6 high schools.

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship that exists between a principal’s leadership style, age, gender, and years of experience, and teacher absenteeism in the school systems. The study attempts to determine if there is a correlation between the two. This chapter provides a description of the research design and procedures employed in the study. The design of this study is based on a quantitative procedure. Quantitative data were gathered through the Managerial Philosophies Scale (MPS) and from AESOP, the systems personnel tracking system for absences. All principals in the Whitfield County and Hall County School Systems were administered the MPS in order to collect leadership data for each school.
Research Question

The following research question was investigated in this study:

What are the relationships between Theory X, Theory Y, principal’s gender, age, and experience, and teacher absenteeism?

Hypothesis

Theory X, Theory Y, gender, age, and experience will form a composite explaining variance in teacher absenteeism.

The Managerial Philosophies Scale (MPS)

Jacoby and Terborg (1975b) used the principles of McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y assumptions of the nature of man to develop the MPS. McGregor (1960) asserted that the way in which a manager interacts with superiors, peers, and especially subordinates depends on the manager’s philosophy of what motivates human behavior. Prior to the development of the MPS by Jacoby and Terborg (1975b), little empirical research had been done to confirm or discount McGregor’s managerial theories. Since that time, a number of studies have confirmed the validity of McGregor’s assertions (Donnell, & Hall, 1988). Specifically, Hall and Donnell (1979) found that high achievers held significantly less Theory X assumptions than did either average or low achievers.

Scoring the MPS

The MPS consists of 36 items that participants respond to on a scale ranging from +3 (I agree very much) to -3 (I disagree very much). Scoring the instrument yields two scores. The Theory X score indicates the degree to which the respondent subscribes to a more pessimistic view of human nature and the Theory Y score indicates the degree to which the respondent subscribes to a more positive outlook of the nature of human work. Raw scores on the Theory X
scale range from 33 to 130, and from 28 to 85 on the Theory Y scale. Respondents convert their raw scores into percentiles and, using a philosophy scoring graph, determine the degree to which they agree or disagree with Theory X and Theory Y philosophies (Jacoby & Terborg, 1975a).

Reliability and Validity of the MPS

Based on data collected from 161 supervisors and 275 nonsupervisors, the authors constructed a 24-item X scale and a 12-item Y scale, each having high internal consistency ($r = .85$ and $r = .77$, respectively) and acceptable test-retest reliability ($r = .68$ and $r = .59$) for the X and Y scale, respectively (Teleometrics International, 2008).

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected from the principals either through an online survey or directly by the researcher by providing the principals with a hard copy of the MPS. All four superintendents agreed to allow the researcher to distribute and administer the MPS to receive data from the principals in their system. The data were collected at the beginning of the spring 2009 semester. The researcher attached a cover letter to describe the purpose of the study to each participant.

Study Participants

The participants in this research consisted of the principals of the schools in Whitfield County, Jackson County, Forsyth County, and Hall County school systems in Georgia. The MPS was administered to 21 high school principals, 32 middle school principals, and 46 elementary school principals.

Teacher Absentee Data

Teacher attendance data were collected through the Georgia Department of Education’s office of accountability. The researcher assigned a number to each school in order ensure confidentiality of the schools and the personnel in the final report. In an effort to keep long-term
illness, maternity leave, or leave taken under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) from
skewing the data, the researcher excluded any teacher who missed more than the 30 days during
the 2008-2009 school year. Maternity leave generally consists of a 6-week period, which is the
reason for using 30 days as a cut off for the research. Professional leave days were also excluded
due to the fact that Whitfield County Schools is participating in a new system-wide staff
development program. Teachers may have been sent to 2- and 3-day conferences in order to be
trained for the new professional development plan set forth by the county. Thus, these absences
were not included in this research to keep from skewing the data.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were significant relationships
between teacher absenteeism and principal leadership style, age, gender, and years of experience.
To determine any relationships, absentee rates for teachers in each of the schools from Whitfield
County, Jackson County, Forsyth County, and Hall School systems were collected for the 2008-
2009 school year. These data were compared to the age, gender, years of experience, and the
MPS score of each school’s principal.

Demographic data collected from each of the participants were also used to see if a
correlation existed between the sex of the participant and the managerial philosophy identified
by the MPS. The age of the participant was the second variable that was analyzed to see if there
was a significant correlation between age and the philosophy of the participant. The third
variable was years of experience of the principal.

The most commonly used method to establish a relationship between a dependent
variable and several independent variables is a multilinear regression analysis. A multilinear
regression was selected because it provides advantages that complemented the research. The
dependent variable in the multilinear regression analysis was teacher absences as reported by each school. The independent variables were principal leadership style, gender, age, and years of experience. The multilinear regression indicated the separate effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. Significance of the analysis of data was determined at the .05 level.
CHAPTER 4
STUDY FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to present an analysis of the data gathered as a result of this study. This study sought to determine if gender, Theory X, Theory Y, age, and years of experience would form a composite explaining variance in teacher absenteeism. There were five independent variables used in this study and one dependent variable. The data collected in this study were analyzed using multilinear regression analysis with significance being determined at the .05 level. All 99 principals completed the Managerial Philosophies Scale and a demographic questionnaire, and the attendance data for each school were analyzed.

The following research question and null hypothesis were considered in this study:

Research Question: What are the relationships between Theory X, Theory Y, gender, age, experience, and teacher absenteeism?

Hypothesis: Theory X, Theory Y, gender, age, and experience will form a composite explaining variance in absenteeism.

Absence Data

Teacher absence data were collected from the Georgia Department of Education for each of the participating schools. Attendance data were collected for the 2008-2009 school year. The mean absence rate for teachers per school was 9.63 days of sick leave taken for the year (see Table 1). There were 34 schools that had an absence rate of 10 days or higher for the school year. Of the 34 schools with a high absence rate, 24 schools were either middle or high schools. Of the
99 schools participating, 59 were elementary, and the average absence rate for these schools was 9.62. The average absence for the schools at the secondary level was 9.4.

Table 1

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<th>Absence Rate per School</th>
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</table>

Description of the Principals

The principals of each school responded to a survey that requested their age, sex, and years of experience. The mean age of the principals was 48, and the mean years of experience in education were 23. Principals ranged in age from 34 years to 62 years of age (see Table 2), and 62 principals were females. Years of experience in education ranged from 10 to 35.
Table 2

*Descriptive Data for Principals*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>7.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years of Experience</td>
<td>23.32</td>
<td>6.44</td>
</tr>
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</table>

\( n = 99. \)

**Description of the MPS Data**

The Managerial Philosophies Scale was the instrument used in this study to determine the leadership style of each principal. The MPS was administered to 99 principals from four different school systems in Georgia. The MPS yields a Theory X and a Theory Y score for each individual principal. The principals’ raw scores for Theory X ranged from 33 to 95. The principals’ raw scores for Theory Y ranged from 29 to 62. The mean for the Theory X scores was 45, and the mean for Theory Y scores was 44 (see Table 3).

Table 3

*Descriptive Data for Theory X and Theory Y*

<table>
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<td>Theory X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theory Y</td>
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<td>8.77</td>
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**Test of the Hypothesis**

A standard multiple regression was performed between teacher absenteeism rate as the dependent variable and age, gender, experience, leadership style X and leadership style Y
of the principal as independent variables. Analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results of the evaluation of assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity of residuals was accomplished by reviewing a plot of standardized residuals and predicted score on the dependent variable. The plot was generally rectangular in shape thereby indicating assumptions were met (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007).

Table 4  Standard Multiple Regression of Principal Age, Gender, Experience, Leadership X, and Leadership Y on Teacher Absenteeism Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Absenteeism (DV)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Exp.</th>
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<th>Leader Y</th>
<th>B*</th>
<th>β</th>
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<td>Std. Dev.</td>
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\[ R^2 = .060 \]

\[ \text{Adj. } R^2 = .010 \]

\[ R = .245 \]

*Intercept =10.173
Table 4 displays the correlations between the variables, the unstandardized regression coefficients ($B$), intercept, the standardized regression coefficients ($\beta$), $R^2$, and adjusted $R^2$. $R$ for the regression was not significantly different from zero, $F(5.94) = 1.90$, with $R^2$ at .060. The $95\%$ confidence limits for $R^2$ are -0.02 to 0.14. The adjusted $R^2$ value was .01.

None of the beta weights of the predictors was statistically significant. Age ($B=.049, p=.653$), gender ($B=.752, p=.198$), experience ($B=-.097, p=.428$), X leadership style ($B=.038, p=.301$), and Y leadership style ($B=-.030, p=.444$) are all poor predictors of teacher absenteeism rate. These results suggest that the linear combination of the five predictor variables is not a good predictor of absenteeism.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine if specific variables could explain the variance in teacher absenteeism. This study was based on an earlier study on teacher absenteeism in a small public school system in Georgia. Utilizing the conceptual framework of McGregor’s (1960) Theory X and Theory Y to establish the leadership style of principals, leadership style, along with age, gender, and years of experience were evaluated in an attempt to explain the variation in teacher absences.

The following research question and hypothesis was the basis for this study:

**What are the relationships between Theory X, Theory Y, gender, age, experience, and teacher absenteeism?**

**Hypothesis**

Theory X, Theory Y, gender, age, and experience will form a composite explaining variance in absenteeism.

The literature review supports the theory that certain variables can have an affect on teacher absenteeism. In the individual model of absenteeism, chronic absenteeism is seen as the ultimate manifestation of deep-seated employee dissatisfaction (Jacobson, 1989). Another cause of teacher absenteeism is considered to be dissatisfaction with working conditions such as supervision, salary, and policies. When dissatisfaction with conditions becomes too great, employees may terminate employment, although some say absenteeism offers an alternative to quitting because it allows them an opportunity to express their dissatisfaction (Herzberg,
Variables identified in this study were principal leadership style, gender, age, and principal’s years of experience in education. The goal was to provide an explanation for the variation in teacher absences. The analysis of the data determined that a significant relationship at the .05 level did not exist between the independent variables and teacher absenteeism. The literature reviewed for this research supports the proposal that a school principal has a major effect on school climate and teachers’ attitudes toward their job (Jacobson, 1990). There is also literature to support the idea that a manager’s style can influence employee attendance (Lippman, 2001). However, in this study leadership style did not have a significant affect on teacher absences either positively or negatively.

Mining the data for each independent variable did not produce any significant results at the .05 level. However, it is interesting to note that as the principal’s Theory X score increased the number of absences also increased. Likewise, when the principal’s Theory Y score increased the number of absences for teachers decreased. Neither of these correlations was at the .05 level. A plausible explanation for this finding is that the sample size was too small. With an N of 400 or greater, the research may have found a significant relationship in Theory X and Theory Y and teacher absenteeism.

In a similar study on teacher absenteeism, Barge (2004) found a significant relationship between Theory X leadership and the frustration levels of teachers measured by the Organizational Frustration Scale (OFS). The research supported the hypothesis that as Theory X scores increased for the principals, teacher frustration levels also increased. However, Barge did not find significance at the .05 level in Theory X, teacher frustration levels, and teacher absenteeism. This would suggest that even as teachers become frustrated with the leadership of the principal they are not more prone to use absences in order to escape the environment.
Related research has demonstrated that variances in teacher absences may be a result of cultural norms and the number of dependents a teacher has at home (Kallio, 2006). More specifically, the number of dependents that a teacher had in their home has influenced teacher absenteeism. Similarly, female teachers who had dependents at home took more hours of sick leave than male teachers did.

Another issue that can affect absenteeism is teacher sick leave policies. These policies are sometimes viewed as liberal, allowing teachers to feel empowered or expected to be the primary caregiver. Some school systems are now using electronic reporting programs to report absences for teachers that may also give teachers a lesser sense of responsibility in reporting to work. Electronic reporting devices remove the human factor of “calling in sick” for teachers.

The results of this study supported that leadership style, age, gender, and experience do not explain the variation in teacher absenteeism. One variable that was not accounted for in this research was the satisfaction of teachers. In an early study, Bogler (2001) found that teacher satisfaction could play an important role in their job commitment. If teachers report a higher incidence of satisfaction with their job, with their principal, and with colleagues they are more prone to report to school and be involved in other aspects of the job.

Theoretical Implications

This study focused on only two types of leadership: Theory X and Theory Y. As stated earlier, Theory X leaders are more autocratic in their management style. They believe that decisions need to be made for their workers without input. Theory Y managers believe that workers are motivated by intrinsic factors. Workers are encouraged to make decisions on their own and find their own place within the organization. A third theory of leadership that was not a part of this study is Theory Z. Theory Z leaders work to create a culture or a way of life that is
built on trust, loyalty, and commitment to the job one holds (Ouchi, 1981). Leaders who display “Z” type behavior have a broad concern for their subordinates as complete human beings, and use a holistic approach to managing (Chandler, 2001). Decisions for the Z organization are participative and consensual among the staff. Thus, members of the group place, in part, their own fate in the hands of what is decided by the group. According to O’Hanlon (1983), collective decision-making results in collective responsibility. Trust in leadership and other employees is the standard.

Theory X and Theory Y leaders do not take a holistic approach with their employees. Although, Theory Y principals place value on input from their employees, they do not subscribe to the idea of making group or consensual decisions for the school. If teachers felt valued as equally important to the whole organization then their commitment to the organization would in turn be greater. Absence rates could be significantly affected, with a greater sense of commitment toward the organization felt by the teachers. In a “Z” school, no one would try to manipulate the group for selfish reasons (Ouchi, 1981). The organization’s success is dependent on the group dynamics and the collective decision making process.

Recommendations for Future Research

Considering the amount of scrutiny that educators are facing today, and the emphasis society places on test scores, the researcher recommends further study on teacher absenteeism. Based on the findings of this research the following recommendations are suggested for further research.

1. Research on teacher absenteeism based solely on leadership style of the principal should be avoided. If leadership style is one of the factors the researcher may want to include Theory Z leadership style. Schools are most often viewed as professional
organizations. Mintzberg (1989) stated that the professional organization “relies on the standardization of skills” of its employees (p. 175). Teachers have standard skills in pedagogy. They all have years of formal training in teaching in a specific subject area. Some have specialized training in how to be effective with students with special needs. However, the leader, in this case the principal does not train the teachers in their academic area.

Principals much like administrators of hospitals hire individuals who are highly trained in the areas that they need. Professionals control their own work, which can also lead to collective control over administrative decisions (Mintzberg, 1989). This dynamic typically leads to a more democratic administrative structure in a professional organization. Hoy & Miskel (2001) stated that administrators by definition emphasize stability and effectiveness. This would also indicate that administrators have more control over the day-to-day routine of the school. However, leaders persuade people to agree about what needs to be accomplished (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). School administrators are more focused on planning, budgeting, overseeing, and evaluating staff.

Principals have the power to assign before and after school duties, assign teachers to serve on committees, and require lesson plans in a particular format. However, they cannot control the amount sick days a teacher uses in a year. Teachers who are tenured typically have more sick days accumulated therefore the have access to more days off. The administrator “ maintains power only as long as the professionals perceive him or her to be serving their interests” (Mintzberg, p181, 2001). Unless the
district sets a policy that limits the amount days a teacher can take in a year the principal has little power over the use of sick days.

Barge (2004) did not find a significant relationship between principals’ higher Theory X scores on the Managerial Philosophies Scale (MPS) and teacher absenteeism. Additionally, Barge did not find a significant negative correlation in higher Theory Y scores on the MPS and teacher absenteeism. Although Barge did not include other variables used in the design of this research, it strengthens the argument to not use Theory X and Y as a variable in explaining the variations in teacher absenteeism.

2. Based on the findings of previous research involving teacher satisfaction (Bogle, 2001), the researcher recommends additional research correlating teacher absenteeism with satisfaction in their current position, and/or climate of the school. A variable that was not accounted for in this research on absenteeism was satisfaction. Previous research by Borg and Riding (1991) reported that 67% of the teachers they surveyed were satisfied with their job. However, in the same research study Borg and Riding reported a significant positive correlation in stress and the number of absences of the teachers. This finding is also consistent with research conducted by Barge. Barge (2004) reported a significant positive correlation in teacher frustration levels and the number of teacher absences.

In a similar study on teacher absences and school climate, Inmants and VanZoelen (1995) established a significant relationship between school climate and teacher absences. Conclusions reported from this study also indicated that collegial relations were also an important variable in teacher absences. Findings reported by
Barge, Inmants et al, and Borg et al would indicate that research on teacher absenteeism should include teacher satisfaction and climate as variables in the research.

3. Lastly, further research on teacher absenteeism should include the number of dependent children a teacher has in the home as a variable. Research on teacher absenteeism conducted by Kallio (2006) revealed a significant correlation in the number of dependents of female teachers and the numbers of hours of sick leave used. This is of particular interest because this variable has not appeared in any of the previous research studies in relation to teachers. Using the number of dependents as a variable does seem logical in creating a positive correlation to the number of dependents in the home in relation with more frequent occurrences of absences.

Conclusion

Teacher absenteeism will continue to be an issue that principals have to address. With the microscope placed on high stakes testing and graduation rates, principals will have to find creative ways to handle teacher absences. When teachers are out of the classroom students can fall behind, and as a result test scores can plummet. Teachers are the key to ensuring that our students are successful. They are the providers and facilitators of knowledge in the classroom, and substitutes cannot adequately replace the knowledge and skills of a trained teacher.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

LIST OF SCHOOLS BY SYSTEM
List of Schools by School System

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To: Superintendents of Forsyth, Hall, Jackson, and Whitfield Counties

From: Jason Carter

Date: January 01, 2009

Re: Dissertation Research

Dear Superintendent,

I am currently working to complete my doctorate degree from the University of Alabama. For my dissertation I am want to investigate the correlation of principal’s leadership style and teacher absenteeism for Whitfield County Schools. In order for me to get accurate data I will need your permission to pull teacher absences from AESOP for our county for the past three years. I will not use teacher names in completing my research findings so that all personnel records will remain confidential. If you need to contact my advisor at the University of Alabama to verify this information her name is Dr. Rose Newton, and her email address is rnewton@bamaed.ua.edu

Thank you,

Jason Carter
APPENDIX C

LETTERS OF APPROVAL
Great, Jason.

----- Original Message ----- 
From: Jason Carter <jcarter@whitfield.k12.ga.us>
To: Norton, Candace
Sent: Tue Feb 03 07:40:11 2009  
Subject: RE: Research

Dr. Norton,

I really appreciate you providing the opportunity to complete my research in Forsyth County! I too want to make sure that I have consistent data when it comes to teacher absences, and I would much rather pull this information from the central level. I want to be sure to minimize the time from principals as well.

I had the opportunity to meet and talk with Dr. Salloum at the GAEL meetings in Atlanta. I was impressed with their presentation and the way Forsyth is utilizing the “Engage Me” throughout the district.

Thanks again for all your help!

Jason Carter

Assistant Principal for Curriculum

Southeast Whitfield High School

706-876-7000
Yes now that you will be a Hall County employee, there will not be a problem with you accessing the information you need. I will ask Mrs. Cash to send you the official approval form.

Welcome to Hall County!!

Eloise T. Barron, Ph.D.
Assistant Superintendent, Teaching & Learning
Hall County School
770-534-1080 (office), 770-608-6849 (cell)
eloise.barron@hallco.org

Jason Carter
Assistant Principal for Curriculum
Southeast Whitfield High School
706-876-7000
From: Shannon Adams [mailto:sadams@jackson.k12.ga.us]
Sent: Tuesday, December 02, 2008 10:21 AM
To: Jason Carter
Subject: RE: Research

Jason--

This satisfies our concerns. I will serve as the contact person for the system when you are ready to proceed.

Thanks,
Shannon

Dr. Shannon Adams, Superintendent
Jackson County Schools
"...committed to the relentless pursuit of educational excellence."

>>> "Jason Carter" <jcarter@whitfield.k12.ga.us> 12/2/2008 9:01 AM >>>
Yes sir that will be no problem. I really just need total number of absences for each school. For instance, I would need to know how many teachers are in each school and the total number of absences for each teacher and the average number of absences per school. The names are not important at all to my research, and it is easier for to omit the names from the very beginning. My advisor and I are aware of the confidentiality issues.

Jason Carter
Assistant Principal- Curriculum & Instruction
Southeast Whitfield High School
706-876-7000
APPENDIX D

MANAGERIAL PHILOSOPHIES SCALE
Managerial Philosophies Scale

The following list of statements includes some conflicting and opposing points of view. You may find yourself agreeing strongly with some of the statements, disagreeing strongly with others, and not really knowing how you feel about still others.

Whether you agree or disagree with a statement, you can be sure there are other people who feel pretty much as you do. The point is that there are no right or wrong answers on this scale, just different points of view. So the best response is your personal opinion, your point of view.

The major benefit from completing this scale is information about yourself, so respond to all the statements honestly. Attempts to give a “correct” response or to answer the way you think others would want you to will only reduce the accuracy and value of your scores.

Please read each statement and, using a pencil or a ball point pen, circle the appropriate value to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement. Press hard enough to make an impression on the NCR page inside.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>I Agree</th>
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1. The average human being will avoid work if possible.

2. The best way for a manager to get things done is to use personal authority to direct people.

3. The potentialities of the average human being are far above those which are typically recognized in organizations today.

4. Good managers should strive for rationality and the elimination of emotional factors on the job.

5. Most people work only because they have to.

6. Most employees are capable of exercising a certain amount of autonomy and independence on the job.

7. It is only natural for people to seek their most rewarding experiences off the job.

8. Most employees want maximum reward for minimum effort.

9. In most organizations one can generally trust one’s subordinates.

10. The average human being prefers to be directed.

11. Problems which arise in the organization should always be considered coldly and objectively.

12. Even the lowliest untalented laborer seeks a sense of meaning and accomplishment in work.

13. In order to insure that they work toward the organization’s goals, employees must be controlled and directed by supervisors.

14. The average human being wants security above all.

15. Under proper conditions, the average person in an organization learns not only to accept but to seek responsibility.

16. People’s personal goals run counter to those of organizations.
17. Even increased pay is usually not enough to overcome people's inherent dislike of work. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3 | I Agree | I Disagree
18. In most organizations one can generally trust one's superiors. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3
19. Employees will always try to get away with as much as they can. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3
20. The most prevalent type employee wants security. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3
21. For many organizational tasks, managers can rely on the individual to exercise inner self-control. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3
22. Most people are by nature either indifferent or antagonistic toward the goals of the industrial enterprise. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3
23. Most employees in any organization do not possess the potential to be "self-starters" on the job. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3
24. Most employees have the capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity, and creativity in the solution of organizational problems. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3
25. The average human being has relatively little ambition. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3
26. The average human being has an inherent dislike for work. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3
27. People do not need external controls and the threat of punishment, but will exercise inner self-direction and self-control to attain organizational objectives to which they are personally committed. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3
28. In order for people to really be productive in an organization they must be motivated by outside incentives such as money and fringe benefits. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3
29. The average human being wishes to avoid responsibility. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3
30. In most organizations one can generally trust one's peers and colleagues. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3
31. The best strategy for dealing with potential conflict from subordinates is to "divide and rule"—that is, to promote interaction between oneself and individual subordinates, and to discourage interaction between subordinates themselves. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3
32. Giving greater independence to most employees would be bad for the organization. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3
33. The average human being can find work a source of satisfaction. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3
34. People must usually be coerced, controlled, directed, or threatened with punishment to get them to put forth adequate effort toward the achievement of organizational objectives. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3
35. It is frequently a wise procedure never to be too trusting of others in a working organization. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3
36. People are primarily self-motivated and self-controlled. | +3 | +2 | +1 | ? | -1 | -2 | -3