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The Relationship between Teacher Empowerment and Student Achievement

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER EMPOWERMENT AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement. Participants in this study were administered the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES); this scale measures teacher empowerment on six dimensions: decision making; professional growth; status; self-efficacy; autonomy; and impact (Martin Crossland, & Johnson, 2001). The participants' mean score of the 2010-2011 Criterion Referenced Competency Test scores (CRCT) were used as a measure of student achievement. The SPES were distributed to teachers in five middle schools in one school district in Georgia. The response rate for this study was 85.2 percent.

A Pearson Correlation was computed to determine the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement. A Pearson Correlation was also computed to determine the relationship between each of the six subscales and student achievement. The findings indicated no correlation between teacher empowerment and student achievement and only a slight statistically significant correlation between status (one of the six dimensions of teacher empowerment) and student achievement.

INDEX WORDS: Teacher empowerment, Decision making, Professional growth, Status, Self-efficacy, Autonomy, Impact

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ACHIEVEMENT

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DEDICATION

This research study is dedicated to my family. First to my husband, Jeff, words cannot express how grateful I am for all of your love and support during this endeavor; some days it seemed as if I wouldn't make it, but you helped me to persevere. Next, to my children, Brittany and John-Taylor, thanks for giving mom up for quite some time. Whenever I thought I wanted to give-up; I always looked to the two of you, and knew I had to keep going, so that I could set the standard. Always strive to be the best you can be! To my mom, you have always been my cheerleader; you knew I could do this; thanks for loving and believing in me. Yes, you can announce it in church! Dad and Joyce, thanks for always encouraging me and always believing in me. To my in-laws, Mr. and Mrs. Kelly, thanks for always being supportive of me.

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Chapter One

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), *adequate yearly progress* (AYP), *graduation tests*, and

criterion-referenced competency test (CRCT) are phrases often heard in educational settings.

Testing and accountability have become a major focus in education. Educators seek methods to

improve test scores which often result in school reform. States are joining the ranks of other

organizations and using teacher empowerment as a key component in restructuring schools

(Hirsch, Emerick, Church, Fuller, 2006a).

In any business or organization, working conditions of employees have an impact on

efficiency (Hirsch et al., 2006a). Many states are following the lead of North Carolina's former

Governor. Governor Easley made an intensive effort to reform schools and to create essential

conditions for teacher and student success, one of which is identified as teacher empowerment

(Hirsch et al., 2006a). Although empowerment was a theme found in many organizations during

the 1980's, the idea of empowering teachers entered education in the 1990's (Rinehart & Short,

1994; Short & Rinehart, 1993). "Empowerment is defined as the opportunities an individual has

for autonomy, choice, responsibility, and participation in decision making in organizations"

(Short & Rinehart, 1993, p. 592). Empowerment is a feeling of enablement (Janssen, 2004).

Berry, Fuller, and Williams (2007); Berry, Fuller, and Williams (2008); Davidson and Dell,

2003; Foster (2004); Hirsch et al., 2006a; Hirsch, Freitas, and Villar (2008) concur school

improvement is enhanced by the use of teacher empowerment.

Although the quality of the teacher is a major influence on student achievement, it is less clear

how empowerment of teachers is related to student achievement. If more studies were conducted

to establish the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement, it would

help administrators decide about more democratic approaches in schools. If there is a strong

positive relationship between achievement and empowerment, then school leaders could benefit

by approaching leadership from a more participatory perspective. If empowerment and

achievement are not related, then teacher leadership may be desirable in a school, but it may not

be a factor of student achievement. The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship

between teacher empowerment and student achievement.

Background of the Study

Over the past two decades, the Center for Teaching Quality has conducted surveys on teacher

working conditions in at least five states. The administering of surveys began in 2002 in the

state of North Carolina. Governor Easley, former governor of North Carolina, decided to make

an intensive effort to reform schools and create the conditions essential for teacher and student

success (Hirsch et al., 2006a). The North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey was

given in 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008; approximately 254,249 responses were received (Hirsch et

al., 2006a; Hirsch & Church, 2009a, 2009b). The North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions

Survey asked North Carolina teachers questions about time, professional development,

leadership, empowerment, and facilities and resources. In 2006, sixty-six percent

(approximately 75,000) of North Carolina's educators responded; the responses came from 1,985

(approximately eighty-eight percent) of the state's schools (Hirsch et al., 2006a). The findings

indicate teachers' working conditions affect student learning. The North Carolina Teacher

Working Conditions survey was replicated in at least four additional states/districts (Hirsch et al.,

2006a).

Another state that administered the survey was South Carolina. In 2004, educators

(approximately 15,200; ninety percent of South Carolina's schools) answered questions on six

domains, facilities and resources, time, professional development, leadership, empowerment, and

mentoring and induction (The Southeast Center for Teaching Quality [SECTQ], 2004). Findings indicate working conditions in South Carolina are important to increasing student achievement (SECTQ, 2004). For reform to occur, working conditions must be addressed (SECTQ, 2004). The domains that teachers considered to be the most crucial to improving student achievement were very similar in South Carolina and North Carolina. In South Carolina the teachers indicate empowerment (29 percent) and time (24 percent) and in North Carolina it was time (29 percent) and empowerment (25 percent) (Hirsch et al., 2006a; SECTQ, 2004). The SECTQ and Hirsch et al. concur working conditions are essential to increasing student achievement.

Clark County School District in Nevada administered the Teachers' Working Conditions survey in 2006; there were very similar results to the findings from North Carolina and South Carolina (Hirsch, Emerick, Church, & Fuller, 2006b). Clark County School District surveyed approximately 8,500 educators from 47.5 percent of their schools. Clark County School District teachers, similar to their counterparts from North Carolina and South Carolina, indicate empowerment (28 percent) and time (26 percent) as a critical domain in improving student achievement (Hirsch et al., 2006b).

The Teachers' Working Conditions survey was administered in Arizona in 2007 (Berry et al., 2007). The educators (approximately 32,000; about 53 percent of the state's schools) responded to questions in five domains; time, professional development, leadership, empowerment, and facilities and resources (Berry et al., 2007). The domains that teachers considered the most critical in impacting student achievement in Arizona were similar to the findings in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Clark County School District. Empowerment (34 percent) and time (28 percent) were the two dominant domains (Hirsch et al., 2006a).

Kansas administered the Teacher Working Conditions survey. Approximately 16,600 educators from 695 schools responded to the survey. The findings from Kansas were similar to the findings in North Carolina, South Carolina, Clark County, Nevada, and Arizona. The two dominant domains were time (35 percent) and teacher empowerment (23 percent) (Hirsch et al., 2006a).

Empowerment, as a critical domain to teachers' working conditions, implies that teachers desire a major voice in school improvement. For reform to occur, teachers' working conditions should be considered (Hirsch et al., 2006a). It is suggested that school districts listen to the ones who are the most knowledgeable about teaching and learning, the classroom teacher (Hirsch et al., 2006a). Empowered teachers encourage colleagues to improve student achievement (Anderson, 2004). Teacher empowerment creates a positive learning environment (Martin, Crossland, & Johnson, 2001). According to Hirsch et al. (2006a), working conditions which are sometimes overlooked, are essential to student learning.

Teachers are a major factor that impact student achievement; therefore, it is imperative to research conditions that affect teaching quality (Hirsch et al., 2006a). Results from the North Carolina working conditions survey indicated that schools where teachers were involved in making instructional decisions showed an increase in school level achievement (Hirsch & Church, 2009b). Teachers from five states indicated empowerment as an essential component in increasing student achievement (Berry et al., 2007; Hirsch et al., 2006a, 2006b; SECTQ, 2004).

Administrators are an important component in empowering teachers; they must be transformational leaders, those that empower their staff (Hirsch et al., 2006b; Leech & Fulton, 2008). Administrators should consider allowing teachers to assist in hiring and budgeting decisions and choosing the content of their professional learning; this will help the teachers to

feel more empowered (Hirsch et al., 2006a, 2006b; SECTQ, 2004). Administrators should

consider promoting an atmosphere of trust; teachers who have a positive view of the

administrators in the building feel more empowered (SECTQ, 2004). It is suggested that

administrators be an integral part of creating a climate for teacher empowerment to occur (Leech

& Fulton, 2008).

   When administrators promote participatory leadership/distributed leadership, teacher leaders

will evolve and this will often lead to teacher empowerment (Leech & Fulton, 2008).

Administrators should motivate teachers to be teacher leaders (Leech & Fulton, 2008). Teachers

who are allowed to participate in decision making and other aspects of leadership will feel more

empowered (Leech & Fulton, 2008). According to Hulpia, Devos, and Rosseel (2009),

distributed leadership is important in creating high performing schools.

   "Teacher empowerment is a complex construct" (Short, 1994, p. 488). It has six dimensions;

the dimensions were revealed in a study of 211 teachers; the teachers rated 68 beliefs about what

makes them feel empowered. Six dimensions emerged (Short & Rinehart, 1992). According to

Short and Rinehart (1992), the six dimensions of teacher empowerment are: decision making;

professional growth; status; self-efficacy; autonomy; and impact. Some of these same

dimensions are evident in the questions from the empowerment section of the Teacher Working

Conditions Surveys which were administered in at-least five states (Hirsch et al., 2006a). The

dimensions of decision making, status, self-efficacy and autonomy were evident in the questions

from the empowerment section of the Teacher Working Conditions Surveys (Hirsch et al.,

2006a).

Dimensions of Teacher Empowerment.

Beginning in 2002, the center for Teaching Quality began conducting research on teacher working conditions; surveys with questions on five domains (time, professional development, leadership, empowerment, and facilities and resources) were administered to approximately 256,949 educators in five states; one of the domains was teacher empowerment (Hirsch et al., 2006a, 2006b; Berry et al., 2007; SECTQ, 2004). The results were analyzed to determine if there was a correlation between each one of the domains and student achievement. The findings indicate a positive correlation between teacher empowerment and student achievement

Decision-making

Decision-making is one dimension of empowerment (Short & Johnson, 1994; Martin et al. 2001). Allowing teachers to have a role in making decisions about their work environment is important to achieving empowerment (Hirsch et al., 2006a). Hirsch et al. suggest teachers are the best equipped individuals to make decisions about what happens in their classrooms.

Professional growth

Professional growth concerns the teacher's perception of whether or not they are allowed to develop their skills (Rinehart & Short, 1994; Short & Johnson, 1994). Teachers should be allowed to collaborate with their peers and participate in professional learning concerning various teaching strategies (Hirsch et al., 2006a). Professional learning is imperative for teachers to meet the needs of the diverse learners of today (Hirsch et al., 2006a). According to Martin et al. (2001) teachers should model life-long learning.

Status

Status is another dimension of empowerment (Klecker & Loadman, 1998a; Short & Johnson, 1994). Status refers to the amount of attention a teacher receives from parents, students,

community members, peers and superiors (Klecker & Loadman, 1998a; Short & Johnson, 1994).

Status also refers to a teacher's belief that their work is valued by their colleagues (Klecker &

Loadman, 1998a).

Self-efficacy

Another dimension of empowerment is self-efficacy (Short & Johnson, 1994; Klecker &

Loadman, 1998a). Self-efficacy is the belief that one possesses the ability to perform their job

effectively (Janssen, 2004; Short & Johnson, 1994). According to Martin et al. (2001) teacher

empowerment is important to self-efficacy.

Autonomy

Teacher empowerment involves autonomy (Short & Rinehart, 1993). According to Klecker

and Loadman (1998a) autonomy refers to the sense of freedom to make decisions. It is

important to regard teachers as professionals and allow them to make decisions concerning their

job (Hirsch et al., 2006a).

Impact

The final dimension of empowerment is impact. Martin et al. (2001); Short and Johnson

(1994) concur that impact is the perception that one influences the school environment. Having

a positive impact on the school environment can have a positive effect on a teacher's self-esteem

(Martin et al., 2001; Short & Johnson, 1994).

<center>**Teacher Empowerment and Student Achievement**</center>

In the last decade there have been studies conducted that established a positive relationship

between teacher empowerment and student achievement. Frye, Fugerer, Harvey, McKay, and

Robinson (1999) conducted a study in a school district in Florida; the project began in one

elementary school and was expanded to include 63 elementary schools and eight secondary

schools. The project's purpose was to empower teachers and increase student achievement though the use of inquiry. Results from this study indicate a higher rate of achievement for students whose teachers were involved in problem-solving and decision making.

Davidson and Dell (2003) conducted a similar project in three rural southeastern schools; in this study the entire school was involved in the inquiry process; whereas, in the study in Florida certain teachers were involved in the process. Results from this project indicate that involving teachers in the inquiry process increased student achievement (Davidson & Dell, 2003). Another study was conducted by Sweetland and Hoy (2000); the study involved 2,741 teachers in New Jersey. The purposes of the study were to investigate a relationship between school climate and teacher empowerment and a relationship between teacher empowerment and school effectiveness. The findings indicate teacher empowerment is a predictor of student achievement. The findings indicate a positive correlation between teacher empowerment and student achievement.

Even though some researchers have found a positive correlation between student achievement and teacher empowerment, other researchers have not been able to determine a direct correlation. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) surveyed 2,465 teachers and 44,920 students in a large Canadian school district. The purpose of the study was to determine if teacher leadership had a direct correlation to student engagement/achievement; the findings indicate no direct correlation between teacher leadership and student engagement/achievement. The findings also indicate that having teachers lead and teach may diminish the focus on teaching. Martin et al. (2001) conducted another study of 271 elementary teachers in southwest Missouri; the participants in the study were administered the Responsibility for Student Achievement Scale and the School Participant Empowerment Scale. The results indicate no direct correlation between teacher

empowerment and student achievement, but suggest a need for further research. Zembylas and

Papanastasiou (2005) conducted a study of 449 elementary and secondary teachers from Cyprus.

The teachers were given a questionnaire on teacher empowerment and job satisfaction. The

findings indicate there is no direct correlation between teacher empowerment and student

achievement, but suggest that teachers who are empowered to make decisions are likely to feel

they have the ability to improve student achievement; the findings in this study also suggest

additional research on the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement.

   While some studies have identified a correlation between teacher empowerment and student

achievement and others have not; focusing on improving working conditions will surely increase

teaching quality which should lead to increased student achievement (Martin et al., 2001).

According to Berry et al. (2007); Hirsch et al. (2006a), (2006b); SECTQ (2004), teachers

indicated that improving working conditions positively effects student achievement. Teachers in

five states indicated teacher empowerment as essential to improving student achievement (Berry

et al., 2007; Hirsch et al., 2006a, 2006b; SECTQ, 2004). However, in at least one study,

researchers suggested that empowerment of teachers may diminish the instructional role

(Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999).

Statement of the Problem

   Empowerment is allowing teachers to be an active participant in the instructional decisions of

the school; it is recognizing teachers as the experts about teaching and learning issues. Teacher

empowerment is encouraging teachers to be involved in quality professional learning and

providing it. Teacher empowerment is acknowledging teachers' major contributions to

improving student achievement. School leaders play an integral role in creating an atmosphere

where teacher empowerment can occur (Leech & Fulton, 2008; Hulpia et al., 2009).

There is inconclusive evidence in the literature as to whether teacher empowerment directly affects student achievement; there are findings from some large studies that indicate a correlation between teacher empowerment and student achievement, and there are other findings that indicate no correlation. It seems if teachers feel empowered by having control over integral parts of their job; being actively involved in decision-making; believing that they are able to differentiate for all students; being well-respected by their peers and the community they serve; being allowed to grow professionally; and believing they have influence over the work environment, they will be more effective and this should have an impact on student achievement. Since the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement is unclear, additional research is needed.

In this age of accountability, teachers are being held accountable for student achievement, but it is not understood how empowered teachers are in schools and the extent to which their empowerment is related to student achievement. If more studies were conducted to establish a positive correlation between teacher empowerment and student achievement then the six dimensions of teacher empowerment could be a focus for administrators. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement.

Research Questions

The overarching question was: What is the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement: To guide the study, the researcher responded to the following subquestion: To what extent are middle school teachers empowered as measured by the six subscales of the School Participant Empowerment Scale: decision making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact?

Significance of the Study

Many systems have restructured to improve student achievement. Since teachers have the most direct impact on student achievement, one of the components of many of the restructuring initiatives is teacher empowerment. The major goal of restructuring and school improvement is to improve student achievement, so it is important to know the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement. School leaders may benefit from the findings of this study, as more studies may help establish a clearer picture of the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement.

Teacher participants will also benefit from the study as teacher roles have become more complex in this era of testing and accountability. A negative correlation tends to be explained in the literature by the fact that as teachers are more empowered to participate in autonomy, decision making, self-efficacy, status, professional growth, and impact, then student achievement may suffer. Findings of the study may tend to support an empowerment role or a relief of the role for teachers because it will identify whether or not a focus on teacher empowerment is warranted.

There is research that identifies teacher empowerment as an important component to teachers, but there is limited research that identifies a direct correlation between teacher empowerment and student achievement. This study will advance the knowledge in this area. It will determine the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement. It will attempt to identify a direct correlation between teacher empowerment and student achievement.

This study is important to the researcher because she is employed in a school system that has several middle schools on the "needs improvement" list; these schools have not made adequate yearly progress for several years. All of the schools in the county have a school

improvement plan; one of the components in the plans is teacher empowerment. Therefore, it will be beneficial to the researcher to determine if there is a relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement.

Research Procedures

It is difficult to obtain test scores of individual teachers; Squire County (pseudonym) agreed to allow the release of test scores by teachers, which created conditions to support a quantitative research design. Therefore, the quantitative study was conducted in one district. With nine middle schools in Squire County (pseudonym), the researcher delivered, administered and collected the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) from five of the nine middle schools in the county. All teachers in the five middle schools, 135 received the instrument. The SPES was used to collect the teacher empowerment data. The SPES includes six dimensions: decision making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact. There was a return rate of 85.2 percent. The results from the spring 2010-2011 administration of the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) were used to collect the student achievement data.

The researcher used a quantitative design to examine the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement, a Pearson correlation. A quantitative design examines results by controlling the independent variable, teacher empowerment and then comparing the independent variable to the dependent variable, student achievement (Smith, 2003).

Delimitations

The scope of the study of empowerment includes middle school teachers in one school district in Georgia; therefore, the findings of this study may not be genaralizable to other age groups or

other states. The student achievement scores of the participants are represented by performance on state test scores from one year.

Limitations

The study uses standardized test scores as a measure of student achievement; student standardized test scores as a measure of student achievement does not account for other measures of student performance.

The researcher will not have control over the self-reporting integrity of the participants who submit written responses.

Summary

Assuring that all students achieve is the primary goal of most educators. It is imperative for educators to be able to create effective schools. Teacher empowerment is being used to help create effective schools. Teacher empowerment refers to involving teachers in decision making, making sure they feel good about their teaching ability, allowing them to have control over certain aspects of their career, and ensuring that they believe they have an impact on the organization. Teachers are the most equipped to make decisions about teaching and learning.

The purpose of this quantitative study is to determine the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement. The study was conducted in one school district in Georgia. Since the major goal of school improvement plans is student achievement, it is important to determine the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement.

Chapter II

Review of Research and Related Literature

While there are many factors that influence student achievement, one of the factors is teacher empowerment (Berry et al., 2007; Hirsch et al., 2006a, 2006b; SECTQ, 2004). There is inconclusive research about the benefits of teacher empowerment and its affect on student achievement; there are findings that indicate that teacher empowerment will help to create effective schools and other findings that indicate that teacher empowerment is a hindrance to student achievement. Schools are learning centered and student achievement is the intent (Martin et al., 2001).

This chapter presents a review of the literature pertaining to teacher empowerment and student achievement. The chapter begins with an overview of the role of the administrator in teacher empowerment, followed by a synthesis of research on teacher leadership, one approach by which empowerment may emerge and prevail in a school. Next, the researcher provides an in-depth definition of teacher empowerment and an explanation of the construct with various dimensions. In the next section, the researcher describes the major instruments that have been designed to measure teacher empowerment, followed by an explanation of how student achievement is measured in schools. Finally, the chapter reviews the impact of teacher empowerment on student achievement.

Administrative Leadership in Schools

During the past two decades there has been a tremendous amount of research focused on leadership (Hallinger, 2003; 2005). Two models/approaches of leadership have dominated the research: instructional leadership and transformational leadership (Hallinger, 2003; 2005; Kurtz, 2009). Instructional leadership was the focus during the effective schools movement of the

1980's; it was characterized by a principal who took control of all decisions particularly concerning curriculum and instruction (Hallinger, 2003; 2005). The transformational leadership approach was the focus during the 1990's; it was characterized by shared leadership, learning communities, and teacher leadership. Although there are opposing views of which leadership approach is the most effective, a general consensus has emerged from the research; it does not matter whether the model is on the top-down instructional leadership approach or the transformational leadership approach, there is a consensus that principals are essential to creating effective schools (Brennikmeyer & Spillane, 2008; Graczewski, Knudson, & Holtzman, 2009; Hallinger, 2003; 2005; Kurtz, 2009).

Principals play a critical role in the leadership of schools. Several studies identify the critical role in relation to teaching and learning in schools. A study of nine elementary schools in San Diego was conducted. Over a span of two and half years to examine leadership and professional learning, a research team was created to review the reform effort being utilized by the school district. After the review, the team decided on the particular areas they would focus when visiting the nine schools. The research team visited each of the nine schools six times each; during each visit, the principal, assistant principal(s), peer/instructional coach(s), and up to twelve randomly chosen teachers were interviewed. The team asked questions about leadership and professional learning. The team gathered information about the staff's perception of the leaders in each of the schools. The results from the review of the district and the interviews indicated that principals are key to improving teaching and learning because they had the most direct contact with the teachers (Graczewski et al., 2009). Gewertz (2003), Hallinger (2003), and Stricherz (2001) concur that there is a focus on making principals instructional leaders.

Hallinger (2003) has conducted years of research on leadership; the findings suggested that the similarities between instructional leadership and transformational leadership are sizeable; therefore, the components were combined to determine a focus for principals (Hallinger, 2003). The principal should focus on generating a sense of purpose, developing high expectations, advancing teaching and learning, creating a compensation system that mirrors the goals set for the staff and students, providing quality professional learning, being visible and modeling the standards that are set for the school (Hallinger, 2003).

Although the principal is essential in creating effective schools, there are studies that indicate that the principal should use a distributed form of leadership ((Brennikmeyer & Spillane, 2008; Graczewski et al., 2009; Hallinger, 2003; 2005; Kurtz, 2009).

Leech and Fulton (2008) conducted a study in a large urban school district; principals (646) with two years of experience were a part of the study; 1846 teachers were surveyed. The teachers completed the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), and the Shared Educational Decisions Survey-Revised (SEDS-R). Findings from the study indicate the need for principals to have the skills to create learning communities; there was a need for the principal to embrace the idea of shared decision-making and for the principal to be a visionary; ready to create an environment that fosters collaboration (Leech & Fulton, 2008).

Hulpia et al. (2009) found similar results to Leech and Fulton (2008) in a study of 1770 teachers and teacher leaders in 46 secondary schools. The teachers and teacher leaders completed the Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) the results indicated a need for the leadership team to work collaboratively and for there to be a shared vision. There was also a need for open communication.

Finally, Hulpia, Devos, and Van Keer (2010) conducted a study of 1522 teachers in 46 schools in Flanders (Belgium). The teachers completed the Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire. The findings concur with the findings from Hulpia et al. (2009) there was a need for the leaders to work collaboratively, to have open communication, and to articulate a clear vision. School leaders are essential in creating an atmosphere where teacher leadership can occur. The school leader must involve teachers in the decision making process.

Teacher Leadership

The topic of teacher leadership is prevalent in current educational leadership literature (Hulpia et al., 2009; Hulpia et al., 2010). Hulpia et al. (2009) and Hulpia et al. (2010) concur teacher leadership refers to the distributing of tasks that have traditionally been reserved for the principal/administrative staff. Distributed leadership does not just happen because tasks are assigned.   Distributive leadership/participatory leadership involves teams collaborating to make decisions. There must be a cooperative team for distributed leadership to occur; therefore, teacher leadership often involves the creation of a leadership team (Hulpia et al., 2009; Hulpia et al., 2010).   This team usually includes the principal, assistant principal, and teacher leaders; this team must function as a cooperative group (Hulpia et al., 2009; Hulpia et al., 2010). Berry, Daughtrey, and Wieder (2010a, 2010b); and Wayne and Youngs (2003) concur that when teachers are empowered to be teacher leaders it increases their confidence and often enhances their ability to be more effective. Although distributed leadership is a rather recent development in leadership studies, early indications are teacher empowerment that occurs when leadership is distributed can be an essential factor to student learning (Berry et al., 2010a, 2010b).

Teacher Empowerment

One of the promising models in school reform is teacher empowerment, which is related to teacher leadership (Hirsch et al., 2006a). According to Short and Johnson (1994) teacher empowerment is important in educational reform. Empowerment in educational reform stems from the business sector (Short & Johnson, 1994). Davison and Dell (2003); Martin et al. (2001) and Short and Johnson concur that teachers will be more creative and productive if they are empowered; this productivity should improve school effectiveness. The end result should be improved student achievement (Davison & Dell, 2003; Martin et al. 2001; Short & Johnson, 1994).

Teacher empowerment has been viewed by many researchers as promoting collegiality, providing quality professional learning, and acknowledging the impact that teachers have on student achievement (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2005). Teachers are the most equipped to make decisions concerning teaching and learning, so it is imperative to research the conditions that will ensure that teachers are able to effectively perform their jobs (Hirsch et al., 2006a, 2006b; Wan, 2005). According to Wynne (2001), the goal of teacher empowerment is improved student achievement. Results from a study of 449 teachers in Cyprus to determine if professional growth, decision-making, promotion, and status affect a teacher's sense of empowerment indicated that status, decision making and personal growth does increase a teachers' feeling of empowerment (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2005).

In another study, Anderson (2004) discusses two types of teacher leadership/empowerment, formal (department chairs, lead teachers, mentors etc.) and informal (well-versed in their craft and able to influence colleagues to hone their skills). The results from this study indicated a need for caution in the use of formal teacher leaders (Anderson, 2004). Formal leaders often

resemble administrative leaders and this may prevent some teachers from assuming leadership roles (Anderson, 2004). Anderson stated the schools in the study created informal leadership roles; these teachers were empowered. They were allowed the autonomy to make decisions and they were provided the opportunity to participate in professional learning. They were respected as educational professionals. These informal leaders influenced the entire organization; the informal teacher leaders did support school improvement.

Short and Rinehart (1992) conducted three studies to create an instrument which would be used to determine a participants level of empowerment. Study 1 included 79 teacher leaders from the Reading Recovery Program from across the United States and other countries; it also included 4 experts on school empowerment. Study 2 included 211 secondary teachers from three states and Study 3 included 176 teachers in three schools. "Two of the schools had participated in a 3-year national project to create empowered school participants. Teachers in the third school had not participated in any intervention effort related to teacher empowerment" (Short & Rinehart, 1992, p.956). Results from these studies indicated six dimensions of teacher empowerment. The six dimensions of teacher empowerment are decision making, autonomy, professional development, impact, status, and self-efficacy (Short, 1994; Short & Rinehart, 1992).

Dimensions of teacher empowerment

   Decision making.

One dimension of teacher empowerment is decision making. Teachers should be involved in making decisions concerning all aspects of the teaching and learning process to include curriculum, textbooks, scheduling, planning, personnel selection, and goal setting (Davidson & Dell, 2003; Levin, 1991; Short, 1994; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000; Whitaker & Moses, 1990). In

order for change to occur teachers must become partners in the process (Whitaker & Moses, 1990). Their involvement must have an impact on final decisions (Short, 1994; Whitaker & Moses, 1990). Allowing teachers to be involved in decision making will result in teachers being responsible for solving problems; they will no longer just identify the problems (Short, 1994; Whitaker & Moses, 1990). People tend to be more committed to ideas/projects if they are involved in the designing and planning process (Short, 1994; Short & Johnson, 1994; Whitaker & Moses, 1990). Klecker and Loadman (1998a) in a study of 10,544 classroom teachers in Ohio defined and measured the dimensions of teacher empowerment. The findings from the study indicated that the teachers in the study felt they were recognized in their schools; felt there was support for their professional growth; and felt they were equipped to differentiate for the students, but they did not feel they were involved in decision-making; therefore, the overall rating of empowerment remained in the neutral range (Klecker & Loadman, 1998a).

Shared decision making is necessary for teacher empowerment to occur (Klecker & Loadman, 1998a). In another study of 2,741 teachers conducted in 86 New Jersey middle schools; this study was conducted to determine the relationship between teacher empowerment and school climate; the findings concluded that teachers felt more empowered if they were involved in the decision making process (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000). The findings from a study of the Accelerated Schools Project model (the project was conducted in three rural schools with 24 teacher participants) concur with the findings from Sweetland and Hoy (2000); for empowerment to occur teachers must be actively involved in the decision-making process (Davidson & Dell, 2003). Jinkins (2001) conducted a small study consisting of three teachers and nine students; the participants in the study participated in intense professional learning; the study investigated how knowledge and the use of the teaching/learning cycle in reading instruction influence decision-

making and student achievement. Baseline data was collected using running records and writing samples; progress was monitored using the same items. The findings supported the use of increased decision-making for teachers; there was a correlation between teachers making instructional decisions and improved student achievement. Finally, the findings, from a study of a 100 participants on the detailed analysis of teacher empowerment, also concur with Jinkins; Klecker and Loadman (1998a); and Sweetland and Hoy there is a correlation between teachers who have the highest involvement in the decision making process and their perception that empowerment is really beneficial (White, 1992).

Professional Growth.

Another dimension of teacher empowerment is professional growth. Teachers should be provided the opportunity for continuous professional growth; teachers feel more empowered when they are knowledgeable about their subject (Short, 1994). Glenn (1990) stated leaders should recognize teachers that are involved in professional development. People are more confident when they are good at their craft (Short, 1994; Whitaker & Moses, 1990). Short; Whitaker and Moses agree instruction will improve when teachers are skillful. Good professional learning is necessary for quality teaching and improved scores (SECTQ, 2004).

According to Berry et al. (2010a) results have proven that the reason "American students do not perform as well as many of their international peers on achievement measures in math and science is that their teachers are not given the kinds of opportunities they need to learn from each other" (p. 10). Results from a national survey of 1,210 teacher leaders indicated that teachers who have the opportunity to collaborate with their peers improve their teaching effectiveness (Berry et al., 2010a). The results also indicated that teachers joined local networks because they wanted to be able to exchange ideas with other professionals (Berry et al., 2010a). Finally,

according to the results from the 2006 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey, teachers indicated a need for time to participate in professional development (Hirsch et al, 2006a).

   Status.

   Status is a dimension of teacher empowerment. Status refers to the professional respect that teachers receive from peers; it is when peers acknowledge their expertise (Short, 1994; Whitaker & Moses, 1990). Teachers feel that the status of the profession has suffered because of the public's low opinion of public education (Short, 1994; Whitaker & Moses, 1990). It is important for the status of the profession to be improved and this can be done through empowering teachers to make decisions affecting their careers (Whitaker & Moses, 1990). Results from the Clark County Teacher Working Conditions Survey which included responses from approximately 8,500 educators indicated that teachers being recognized as educational experts had a positive effect on student achievement (Hirsch et al., 2006b). According to Hirsch et al. (2006b), "For every 10 percent increase in the percentage of educators who agree that they are recognized as experts, a 1.7 percent increase in the proportion of students proficient or above in math can be estimated" (p.7).

   Self-Efficacy.

   Self-efficacy, a dimension of teacher empowerment refers to teachers believing they have the skills to perform the job (Short, 1994; Whitaker & Moses, 1990). Teachers need to know that they are competent to make a difference (Short, 1994; Whitaker & Moses, 1990). Self-efficacy increases as teachers develop competence. When teachers believe their knowledge of teaching and learning is of value; they will feel more empowered (SECTQ, 2004). Teachers will feel more empowered if they have strong skills and abilities (Short, 1998). According to Berry et al.

(2010a), "Both individual and collective teacher leadership self-efficacy have been linked with successful school improvement and reform efforts, by creating a critical mass of empowered experts within the building" (p.20). Results from the Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ) indicated that educators in a large urban district in North Carolina agree that encouraging self-efficacy is important to creating empowered experts which they indicated as a key factor to improving student achievement (Berry et al., 2010a).

Autonomy.

Autonomy, another dimension of teacher empowerment, autonomy refers to teachers believing that they have control over certain aspects of their work; autonomy is directly related to decision making (Short, 1994; Whitaker & Moses, 1990). It involves having the freedom to make decisions (Short, 1994; Whitaker & Moses, 1990). Autonomy allows for growth and renewal which is essential to success (Whitaker & Moses, 1990). White (1992) finds that autonomy creates a greater interest in teaching, increases collaboration, and increases self-esteem. Leaders must create environments where autonomy can occur (Short, 1994; Whitaker & Moses, 1990). According to Berry et al. (2010b), teachers that are provided autonomy in decision making tend to become more effective teachers; this is supported by the results from the CTQ's survey of a large urban district in North Carolina; these results indicated empowerment as a key factor in improving student achievement.

Impact.

The final dimension of teacher empowerment is impact. Impact refers to the teacher's need to have an influence on the teaching and learning process (Short, 1994; Whitaker & Moses, 1990). Teachers need to know that they are of value to the organization (Short, 1994; Whitaker & Moses, 1990). Teachers want to be told that they are positively affecting the teaching and

learning process (Short, 1994; Whitaker & Moses, 1990). According to Davidson and Dell

(2003), teachers must believe their ideas will be put into practice. The findings from the study of

10,544 classroom teachers in Ohio, which defined and measured the dimensions of teacher

empowerment indicated that because teachers felt they were not allowed to make a real impact,

their feeling of empowerment was rated as neutral (Klecker & Loadman, 1998a). According to

the results from the Teacher Working Conditions Survey which has been administered in at least

five states over the past 8 years, teachers have a major impact on student learning; therefore, it is

important that they are involved in the teaching and learning process (Berry et al., 2007; Hirsch

et al., 2006a, 2006b; SECTQ, 2004).

Instruments used in the Study of Teacher Empowerment

There are some instruments that have been developed to measure teacher empowerment. In a

study of 2,741 teachers in 86 New Jersey middle schools, Sweetland and Hoy (2000) measured

teacher empowerment. Sweetland and Hoy said, "Our operational definition of teacher

empowerment was based on the extent to which teachers said they were involved in decisions

important to them" (p.716). The literature was used to choose sixteen decision areas (Sweetland

& Hoy, 2000). "Teachers were asked how much they desired participation in these areas and

how much they actually participated (along a 4-point scale ranging from none to substantial)"

(Sweetland & Hoy, 2000, p.716). "The greater the extent to which teachers participated in

decisions they desired, the greater the index of empowerment was determined to be. The alpha

coefficient of reliability for the empowerment index in the current set of schools was .92"

(Sweetland & Hoy, 2000, p.717). Moore and Esselman (1992) conducted another study to

measure teacher empowerment; they used a questionnaire to collect the teacher data. There were

1,802 teachers in the Kansas City study. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) used The Organizational

Conditions and School Leadership Survey to survey 2,465 teachers in a large Canadian school district and measure leadership/empowerment.

One instrument used in a number of studies is The School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES). SPES measures six dimensions of teacher empowerment (Short and Rinehart, 1992). Short and Rinehart (1992) conducted three studies to develop The SPES. "Participants in Study 1 were the total population of teacher leaders participating in the Reading Recovery Program throughout the U.S. and in several countries. A total population of 79 teacher leaders responded, representing 33 Reading Recovery sites" (Short & Rinehart, 1992, p. 953); 4 experts on school empowerment were also included in the study. The teacher leaders were asked to list what in their school made them feel empowered. The researchers assembled a list of 110 items. "Of these items, 75 were judged by the authors to represent empowerment components from past research on the empowerment construct" (Short & Rinehart, 1992, pp.953-954). The 75 identified items were then judged by the panel of 4 experts to determine how well the items indicated empowerment (Short & Rinehart, 1992). The experts used a 5-point scale with 5 meaning highly representative and 1 meaning highly unrepresentative (Short & Rinehart, 1992). The final questionnaire included "only items with rating differences of no more than one digit across all judges" (Short & Rinehart, 1992, p. 954). "Using this criterion, experts agreed on 68 of the 75 items (92%)" (Short & Rinehart, 1992, p.954). Study 2 included 211 secondary teachers. The teachers were from three schools located in the south, southwest, and midwest. The teachers were administered the instrument created in Study 1. The participants in Study 2 responded to the 68 items using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1strongly disagree-5 strongly agree). The responses from the 211 teachers were analyzed. "Factor analysis revealed six dimensions of empowerment. The labels for the six dimensions along with the corresponding percentages of

total variance accounted for by each of the six dimensions were (a) decision making (19.6%), (b) Professional Growth (4.7%), (c) Status (3.0%), (d) Self-Efficacy (2.8%), (e) Autonomy (2.2%) and (f) Impact (2.0%)" (Short & Rinehart, 1992, p.956). The final study included teachers from three schools in three states. Two of the schools were participating in a national project to empower teachers and one of the schools was not. "These schools were selected in order to provide the contrast necessary to test discriminate validity of the 68-item instrument used in Study 2" (Short & Rinehart, 1992, p.956). "The Cronbach's coefficient alpha reliabilities for the subscales and total scale as reported by Short and Rinehart (1992b) (N = 211 high school teachers) were as follows: decision making, .89; professional growth, .83; status, .86; self-efficacy, .84; autonomy, .81; impact, .82; total scale, .94" (Klecker & Loadman, 1998b, p. 947).

Student Achievement

Student achievement is difficult to define, but in the 21st century, it is done with test scores. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires schools and school systems to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Each state, school system and school is responsible for student success. The states are required by NCLB to set high standards to measure student achievement; this is achieved through the testing program (Georgia Department of Education [GaDOE], 2011).

To make AYP, a school must meet standards in three areas: Test Participation (Math and Reading/English Language Arts), Academic Performance (Math, Reading/ English Language Arts) and a Second Indicator. The school must achieve a 95% test participation rate, and it must meet or exceed the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) or show progress on a Second Indicator (GaDOE, 2011).

The Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) and the Enhanced Georgia High School Graduation Test (EGHSGT) are used to assess how well students in Georgia have acquired the

skills in the curriculum, Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). This information is used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of individual students as well as the school, the school system, and ultimately the state. Students in grades one through eight take the CRCT in reading, English/language arts, and math. Students in grades three through eight also complete the CRCT in science and social studies. Students in grades nine through twelve take the EGHSGT in English/language arts, math science, and social studies; this test is administered in the 11th grade (GaDOE, 2011).

In Georgia, middle schools, grades six through eight are all AYP grades. In order to make AYP, a middle school must meet the 95% participation rate and meet or exceed the AMO for all grades levels or show progress in the Second Indicator; for the 2010-2011 year the second indicator was attendance. The AMO for the 2010-2011 school year was 73.3% for reading/English language arts and 67.6% for math (GaDOE, 2010).

Student achievement is the ultimate goal of educators (Martin et al., 2001). Unfortunately many schools and school districts are not achieving the ultimate goal. Low performing schools are an issue across the country; therefore, a focus has been placed on improving student achievement. Many school districts are involved in restructuring initiatives; the districts are instituting school improvement plans and/or school improvement models (Frye et al., 1999; Klecker & Loadman, 1998a; Martin et al., 2001). Most of the initiatives have teacher empowerment as a component (Frye et al., 1999; Klecker & Loadman, 1998a; Rinehart & Short, 1994; Short & Johnson, 1994; Short & Rinehart, 1993). Two examples of the restructuring models that are being instituted in many districts across the country are the Student Achievement Model and the Accelerated School Project. Both of these models have teacher empowerment as

a major component. These models are used in hopes of increasing student achievement (Frye et al., 1999; Martin et al., 2001).

Since student achievement is the goal and teacher empowerment is a key component in many of the school improvement models/plans, it is important to know if teacher empowerment affects student achievement (Martin et al., 2001). In the 2006 report, *Teacher Working Conditions Are Student Learning Conditions* teachers in several states identified teacher empowerment as the most important component to improve student achievement.

Teacher Empowerment and Student Achievement

The goal of most restructuring initiatives is to increase student achievement. Many initiatives are using teacher empowerment to help attain this goal (Sterbinsky, Ross, & Redfield, 2006). Beginning in 2002, the Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ) began conducting research on working conditions. The initial research was conducted in North Carolina; it began because of the efforts of the former governor, Governor Easley. Governor Easley listened to the teachers and decided to attempt to improve the working conditions in the state (Hirsch et al., 2006a). Although the idea began in North Carolina at least five additional states/districts have also conducted similar research. The North Carolina studies included over 150,000 educators from across the state; these educators completed voluntary surveys on working conditions. The surveys asked questions about five domains (professional development, empowerment, leadership, facilities and resources, and time). The study also correlated the five domains and student achievement. The findings from the studies indicated teachers consider time and empowerment to be the most vital domains to improving student achievement; the survey has been completed five times (2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010). The results indicated time and empowerment as the critical domains (Hirsch et al., 2006a). The results also found a significant

correlation between teacher empowerment and student achievement at all levels (high, middle, and elementary).

South Carolina was the next state to administer the Teacher Working Conditions Survey. The survey was given to over 15,200 educators from across the state (SECTQ, 2004). The study like the ones in North Carolina also correlated the domains and student achievement. The findings concurred with the ones in North Carolina; teachers chose time and empowerment as the most critical domains to improving student achievement (SECTQ, 2004). The findings also indicated that empowerment is a significant predictor of schools making AYP at all levels.

Clark County School District in Nevada also administered the Teacher Working Conditions Survey. Over 8,500 educators in Clark County, Nevada completed the survey. Some of the findings from Clark County, Nevada concur with the findings from North Carolina and South Carolina; teachers indicated time and empowerment as the crucial domains to improving student achievement. The teachers in Clark County more than the teachers in other states believed empowerment to be essential in the achievement of their students. Although the findings indicated that teachers identified empowerment as the most important domain to improving student achievement, the results from the actual achievement data did not concur. The findings indicated a negative correlation between teacher empowerment and student achievement. "When the individual questions in the empowerment domain were loaded separately, only the questions about teachers being viewed as education experts has a positive effect (Hirsch et al., 2006b, p. 7). One reason given for the negative correlation could be the lack of experience of the teachers in Clark County, Nevada. They may not have been ready to accept the level of responsibility of some of the empowerment concepts on the survey; additional research is suggested (Hirsch et al., 2006b).

Kansas was another state that administered the Teacher Working Condition survey; over 16,600 educators completed the survey. Some of these results also concur with the results from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Clark County, Nevada; teachers indicated time and teacher empowerment as the most critical domains to improving student achievement (Hirsch et al., 2008). This report did not compare domains and student achievement data (Hirsch et al., 2008).

Another state to administer the Teacher Working Conditions Survey was Arizona. The survey was administered to over 32,000 educators. One of the findings concurs with the findings from North Carolina, South Carolina, Clark County, Nevada, and Kansas; teachers identified teacher empowerment and time as the critical domains to improving student achievement (Berry et al., 2007). The results from the achievement data were inconclusive; there were mixed results for the three levels. Positive and significant correlations were only found at the elementary level. The middle school level appeared to have a negative correlation; it was not significant, so it was inconclusive. The high school level appeared to have a positive correlation, but it also was not significant; therefore, inconclusive; additional research is suggested (Berry et al., 2007).

The state of Mississippi administered the Teacher Working Conditions Survey; over 25,000 educators across the state completed the survey. The findings concur with the findings from Arizona; there were no significant correlations between teacher empowerment and student achievement; therefore, the findings were inconclusive and additional research was suggested (Berry et al., 2008).

In addition to the working conditions' research other studies investigated the use of comprehensive reform models/restructuring models. Davidson and Dell (2003) conducted a study on a restructuring model; the study analyzed the effects of the Accelerated Schools Project, a model that involved unity, teacher empowerment, and building individual strengths of teachers.

The study was conducted in three rural southeastern schools; the participants included eight teachers and the principal from each of the three schools (twenty-seven participants). Participants were involved in a formal interview; they were asked about their roles prior to implementing the Accelerated Schools Project and how their leadership skills were developed. Achievement data was also gathered. The study compared the School Performance Score (base line data) from the previous year to the School Performance Score from the study year. In order to reach the state School Performance Score, each school had a growth target. The findings indicated that each one of the schools exceeded the growth target. They also indicated that when teachers are involved in decision making, researching; inquiring, mentoring and developing curriculum student achievement improved (Davidson & Dell, 2003).

Another study explored the use of a restructuring model, the Student Achievement Model, a model that encourages teacher involvement in problem solving and allows time for teachers to collaborate and create innovative solutions. This study involved sixty-three elementary schools and eight secondary schools; the researchers collected student performance data, observational data, anecdotal notes and survey data to determine if the project had an effect on student achievement (Frye et al., 1999). Findings from this study also indicated an increase in student achievement (Frye et al., 1999).

Zhang, Fashola, Shkolnik, and Boyle (2006), conducted a study; a subsample of schools collected by the National Longitudinal Evaluation of Comprehensive School Reform (NLECSR) was used for the study. A comprehensive school reform model is a whole school reform; all students are involved and it is funded by the federal government. The study included 115 schools using a comprehensive school reform model; the 115 schools were paired with a school that was not using a comprehensive school reform model; the pairs were demographically equal.

The results from the study indicated that both the scores from the schools using a comprehensive school reform model and the scores from the schools not using a comprehensive school reform model increased. It was unclear if the increase was related to the use of the comprehensive school reform model.

Good, Legg Burross, and McCaslin (2005) also conducted a study on a comprehensive school reform model; the study included twenty-four schools that used a comprehensive school reform model and twenty-four paired schools (demographically equal) that did not use a comprehensive school reform model; the findings concur with findings from Zhang et al., 2006; the scores from both the schools using a comprehensive school reform model and the schools not using a comprehensive school reform model increased, again it was not clear whether or not the components of the comprehensive school reform models affected scores.

The schools in the final few studies were not involved in a restructuring initiative, but are all measuring teacher empowerment and its effect on student achievement. Results from a study of 2,741 teachers in 86 middle schools in New Jersey indicated that empowerment is related to improving school effectiveness. Schools with higher levels of empowerment perceive themselves as providing quality instruction. The results from the achievement test coincided with the assumption of the staff; teacher empowerment did seem to make a positive difference in the schools. There was a correlation between teacher empowerment and student achievement (Sweetland & Hoy, 2000).

Moore and Esselman (1992) conducted another study to determine the relationship between efficacy, teacher empowerment, and school climate; a questionnaire on efficacy, empowerment, and instructional climate was used to collect teacher data. Achievement data was also collected (Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, ITBS). There were 1,802 teachers in the Kansas City study. The

results indicated increasing decision making and encouraging collegiality should improve work conditions and self-esteem, but may not provide achievement improvements for all grade levels and in all content areas.

There were similar results in another study by Martin et al. (2001); the study examined perceptions of empowerment and student achievement. The results indicated that teacher empowerment and accountability for student outcome is vital to a positive school climate, but there does not appear to be a correlation between empowerment and increased student achievement (Martin et al., 2001).

Summary

The literature indicates that educational systems are having problems attaining their primary goal, student achievement (Berry et al., 2007; Hirsch et al., 2006a, 2006b; SECTQ, 2004). It is essential that educators create effective schools, and school leaders have a major part of the responsibility in structuring schools to include teachers in ways that empower them to serve as teacher leaders (Leech & Fulton, 2008). Although teachers are the most equipped to improve student achievement, they have not always been involved in the process (Hirsch et al, 2006a; 2006b). However, educational systems are abandoning the old bureaucratic systems. They have come to the realization that making decisions at the top and handing them down to be implemented is not producing the desired results (Leech & Fulton, 2008; Hirsch et al, 2006a; 2006b).

Teacher leadership occurs when administrators use distributive/participatory leadership (Hulpia et al., 2009; Hulpia et al., 2010). This type of leadership ensures that teachers, the people most equipped to make decisions about teaching and learning, are allowed to be an integral part of the decision making process (Hulpia et al., 2009; Hulpia et al., 2010).

Administrators have to create an atmosphere that encourages teachers to want to participate in the distributive/participatory leadership process. Administrators must assemble a cohesive team (Hulpia et al., 2009; Hulpia et al., 2010).

Teacher empowerment refers to allowing teachers to be genuinely involved in the decision making process. Teachers will be provided the opportunity to participate in professional learning; they will be confident about their abilities (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2005). They will be experts in their field; therefore, they will have an impact on the organization (Davidson & Dell, 2003; Martin et al., 2001; Short & Johnson, 1994). It is really important that teachers are prepared for their new roles. They must feel comfortable participating in the decision making process. They will participate in collaboration and have opportunities to decide what will happen in their class as well as their school (Hulpia et al., 2009; Hulpia et al., 2010). They will solve problems using their own creativity and ingenuity (Davidson & Dell, 2003; Martin et al., 2001; Short & Johnson, 1994). The rigid schedules will have to be adjusted, so that the teachers have ample time to collaborate. They will no longer work in isolation; opportunities will be provided to encourage and share information with colleagues (Hulpia et al., 2009; Hulpia et al., 2010). Teachers will be respected and supported by their colleagues. Administrators will have to release control, so that true empowerment can happen (Hulpia et al., 2009; Hulpia et al., 2010). Teachers have to become partners, but the change may not come easy for some of them (Hulpia et al., 2009; Hulpia et al., 2010). Teachers and administrators will have to work together for the change to occur (Hulpia et al., 2009; Hulpia et al., 2010). There is literature on teacher empowerment, but many of the studies have not found a relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement. The literature does discuss many benefits of incorporating teacher empowerment. The research suggests that teacher empowerment leads to

improved satisfaction, improved self-esteem, improved ability, improved creativity, and

innovation, so it could be inferred that these things will lead to improved student achievement

and improved student achievement is the goal (Davidson & Dell, 2003; Hirsch et al., 2006a,

2006b; Martin et al., 2001; Short & Johnson, 1994).

Chapter III

Methodology

One of the leadership approaches to school improvement is teacher leadership which implies that teachers are empowered to participate in ongoing renewal of schools. Results from a study of 1,210 teacher leaders from across the nation indicated that schools with the greatest student achievement gains are staffed with empowered teachers, teachers who are seen as the expert and allowed autonomy (Berry et al., 2010a, 2010b). The Centers for Teaching Quality created the Teacher Working Conditions Survey. This survey examines several areas important to teachers; the areas include time, professional development, leadership, empowerment, and facilities and resources (Berry et al., 2007; Berry et al., 2008; Hirsch et al., 2006a, 2006b; SECTQ, 2004).

The Teacher Working Conditions Survey has been administered in at least five states (Berry et al., 2007; Berry et al., 2008; Hirsch et al., 2006a, 2006b; SECTQ, 2004). The states are using the data from these surveys to restructure and/or institute restructuring plans (Hirsch et al., 2006a). Teachers are critical to improving student achievement, so it is important to determine what affects teaching quality (Hirsch et al., 2006a). According to Hirsch et al. (2006a, 2006b); SECTQ (2004), teacher working conditions impact student achievement. In the five states, teachers indicated empowerment as a critical area to improving student achievement (Berry et al., 2007; Berry et al., 2008; Hirsch et al., 2006a, 2006b; SECTQ, 2004).

Although the results from some studies are inconclusive concerning the affect of teacher empowerment on student achievement, many schools/school systems do have empowerment as a key component of their restructuring plans (Berry et al., 2007; Hirsch et al., 2006a; 2006b). Since there seems to be a continued focus on the use of teacher empowerment as a key component in school improvement, it is imperative to determine if teacher empowerment has a relationship to

student achievement (Berry et al., 2007; Hirsch et al., 2006a, 2006b; SECTQ, 2004). The

purpose of this study is to determine if there is a relationship between teacher empowerment and

student achievement.

Research Questions

The overarching question was: What is the relationship between teacher empowerment and

student achievement: To guide the study, the researcher responded to the following subquestion:

To what extent are middle school teachers empowered as measured by the six subscales of the

School Participant Empowerment Scale: decision making, professional growth, status, self-

efficacy, autonomy, and impact?

Research Procedures

Design of the Study

The researcher used a quantitative design to examine the relationship between teacher

empowerment and student achievement. A quantitative design examines results "based upon

manipulating independent variables and then comparing the levels of the independent variable by

examining the related dependent variables" (Smith, 2003, p.5). A correlation study, a type of

quantitative design, seeks to determine a relationship among variables (Smith, 2003). A variable

is a quantitative expression (Smith, 2003). In a correlation the variables are related; each score

from one variable is linked with the score of the second variable (Smith, 2003). The correlation

between teacher empowerment and student achievement was computed. The independent

variable in the study was the level of teacher empowerment as determined by the School

Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) and the dependent variable in the study was the teacher's

mean score from the 2010-2011 Criterion Referenced Competency Test scores.

Population

The population of the study was all middle school teachers in Georgia, 24,426. For the

purposes of the study, middle school teachers are defined as teachers in grades 6-8. In Georgia

there are 429 public middle schools. Teachers in public middle schools are responsible for

delivering instruction in core and elective subjects. Core subjects include math,

English/language arts, science, and social studies. Elective subjects include, but are not limited

to physical education, art, music, band, chorus technology, family and consumer science,

computer literacy, and business education.

In this study, the researcher collected a purposive sample from the public middle school

teachers in a Georgia district. It is difficult to obtain test scores of individual teachers; one

district has agreed to allow the research to be conducted; therefore, the study was conducted in

one of the largest districts in Georgia. The researcher sent a letter to the nine middle school

principals in the district asking for permission to conduct the research. Five of the nine

principals responded to the letter. To ensure that all of the principals received the letters, the

researcher contacted the four principals by phone who did not respond to the letter. They

declined the invitation to participate in the study. The sample included teachers from five of the

nine middle schools in the district; teachers without Criterion Referenced Competency Test

scores to use as the measure of student achievement were excluded from the sample. These five

middle schools represent the greater population of the county. There are approximately 243

middle school teachers in Squire County (pseudonym).

There are similar demographics among the five middle schools (The Governor's Office of

Student Achievement [GOSA], 2011). All of the middle schools in this study have two

dominant subgroups, black and white (GOSA, 2011). None of the schools in the study have a

Native American subgroup (GOSA, 2011). Schools B, D, and E have over 75% in the black

subgroup and less than 20% in the white subgroup (GOSA, 2011). The Hispanic, Asian, and

multiracial subgroups contain less that 5% in each (GOSA, 2011). Schools A and C have over

50% in the white subgroup and less than 40% in the black subgroup (GOSA, 2011). The

Hispanic, Asian, and multiracial subgroups contain 5% or less in each (GOSA, 2011).

Instrumentation

The School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) was administered to 135 middle school

teachers. The SPES was developed by Short and Rinehart (1992). The researcher obtained

permission to use the scale by contacting the authors through email and requesting permission to

use the instrument. The researcher received written permission (Short & Rinehart, 1992). The

SPES is an instrument that measures teacher empowerment on six dimensions: decision making;

professional growth; status; self-efficacy; autonomy; impact; it uses a 5-point Likert-type rating

scale (1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree); it includes 38 items (Klecker & Loadman,

1998b; Martin et al., 2001; Rinehart & Short, 1994; Short & Rinehart, 1992).

"Test reliability refers to how consistent test scores are" (Smith, 2003, p.315). A test is

considered reliable if a person retakes the test and the second score is similar to the first test

score. The reliability is calculated by finding the Pearson correlation between the two sets of

scores (Smith, 2003). The Pearson correlation ranges from -1 to 1, so a good test-retest

reliability would be a value greater than .80 (Smith, 2003). "The Cronbach's coefficient alpha

reliabilities for the subscales and total scale as reported by Short and Rinehart (1992b) (N = 211

high school teachers) were as follows: decision making, .89; professional growth, .83; status, .86;

self-efficacy, .84; autonomy, .81; impact, .82; total scale, .94" (Klecker & Loadman, 1998b, p.

947).

The 2010-2011 Criterion Referenced Competency Test Scores were used to measure student achievement. Students with scores of at least 800 on the CRCT have met minimum competency.

Data Collection

The researcher went though the Squire County (pseudonym) IRB process and the Georgia Southern University IRB process. Once the county and the university granted permission, the researcher sent a letter to the five middle school principals. The researcher also requested an appropriate time to administer the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES). The researcher coded each SPES to link the teacher's scale score from the SPES to the teacher's student achievement data. The researcher assigned a letter (each of the five schools were assigned a letter) and number to each teacher. The teacher's name and the code were entered into an Excel file. The researcher delivered, administered, and collected the SPES; there was a cover letter, explaining the collection process and an informed consent form with each SPES.

Each teacher's mean score on the 2010-2011 Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) was used as the indicator of student achievement. The scores were obtained from the Squire County Board of Education (pseudonym) guidance department. Once the SPES were completed, the teacher's name and code were entered into an Excel file and the file was delivered to the Squire County Board of Education (pseudonym). The guidance department entered each teacher's mean score from the 2010-2011 CRCT scores into the Excel file.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement. Therefore, to answer the overarching research question, the researcher administered The School Participate Empowerment Scale (SPES) to the middle school teachers in five middle schools in Georgia, 135. The results from the administration of

the SPES were analyzed and a scale score was computed. To compute each teacher's scale score, the researcher entered each teacher's response from each of the items from the SPES into an Excel file then the Excel file was uploaded into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A scale score was computed. The Squire County Guidance Department compiled each teacher's mean 2010-2011 Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) score and put the CRCT scores into an Excel file. Finally, the researcher combined the SPES scores and the CRCT scores into an Excel file. The Excel file was uploaded into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement was computed though the use of a Pearson correlation (r). Both variables are score data; score data is computed using a Pearson correlation (Smith, 2003). The independent variable is the level of teacher empowerment which was measured using the SPES and the dependent variable was each teacher's mean score on the 2010-2011 CRCT. A significant correlation between teacher empowerment and student achievement means teacher empowerment influences student achievement.

   To answer the subquestion, the researcher, analyzed the results from the administration of the School Participate Empowerment Scale. A scale score for each of the six dimensions of the SPES was computed for each teacher. To compute the scale score for each of the six dimensions, the researcher entered each teacher's response from each of the items from each dimension into an Excel sheet and the Excel sheet was uploaded into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A scale score was computed for each of the six dimensions. The six dimensions of the SPES are: decision making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact.

Summary

This study examined the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement. The study was conducted in five middle schools in one of the largest counties in Georgia. The five middle schools have 135 teachers. The sample included all teachers in the five middle schools. The School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) was administered to the teachers; this determined the level of teacher empowerment. Each teacher's mean score from the 2010-2011 Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) was the measure of student achievement. Results of the data analysis are presented in the following chapter.

Finally, the preceding chapter presented the design and methodology in detail. It also specifically described the methods for selecting the population, sample and the instrument for the study. Results of the data analysis are presented in the following chapter.

Chapter IV

Report of Data and Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement. This chapter includes a description of the instrumentation, data collection procedures, participants, and data analysis and findings. The findings are structured based on the overarching research question: What is the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement. The following subquestion also guided the study and will be discussed in full: To what extent are middle school teachers empowered as measured by the six subscales of the School Participant Empowerment Scale; decision making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy and impact?

Instrumentation

The participants were administered the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES); this scale measures teacher empowerment on six dimensions: decision making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy and impact (Martin et al., 2001). The scale uses a 5-point Likert-type rating scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree); it includes 38 items (Martin et al., 2001). Ratings for strongly disagree were in the range between 1.00-1.99. Ratings for disagree were in the range between 2.00-2.99. Ratings for neutral were in the range between 3.00-3.99. Ratings for agree were in the range between 4.00-4.99. Finally, ratings for strongly agree were in the range between 5.00-5.99

The 2010-2011 Criterion Referenced Competency Test Scores (CRCT) were used to measure student achievement. Students with scores of at least 800 on the CRCT have met minimum competency.

Data Collection

The researcher delivered, administered, and collected the School Participant Empowerment

Scales (SPES) to five middle schools during a faculty meeting. There were 135 SPES

administered. Each teacher's mean score from the 2010-2011 Criterion Referenced Competency

Test (CRCT) were obtained from the Squire County Board of Education (pseudonym) guidance

department; the SPES and the scores from the CRCT were coded to ensure confidentiality.

Respondents

The sample included teachers from five of the nine middle schools in one of the largest

districts in Georgia. The five middle schools represented the greater population of the district.

There were 135 School Participant Empowerment Scales (SPES) distributed and 115 were

completed, a return rate of 85.2 percent. The teachers that completed the SPES taught various

subjects: math, ELA, science, social studies, physical education, band, chorus, business

education, and art. All items on the 115 SPES collected were completed. The 20 SPES that

were not included in the data either were completed and the participant did not have test scores

or the teacher chose not to complete the SPES.

Data Analysis and Findings

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze the data,

scale scores from the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) and the mean scores from

the 2010-2011 Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT). The results from the SPES and

the scores from the CRCT were compiled in an excel file. To determine the relationship between

teacher empowerment and student achievement a Pearson correlation was computed; both

variables are score data; one variable is the score from the SPES and the other variable is the

mean score from the CRCT; score data is computed using a Pearson correlation (Smith, 2003).

A Pearson correlation was also computed on each of the six dimensions of teacher

empowerment: decision making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and

impact (Klecker & Loadman, 1998b; Martin et al., 2001; Rinehart & Short, 1994; Short &

Rinehart, 1992). Finally, the mean and standard deviation was calculated for teacher

empowerment and each one of the subscales. The means ranged from 2.42 (decision making) to

4.16 (self-efficacy), see Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of the Means of the Subscales of the SPES

Subscale	Means
1. Decision Making	2.42
2. Professional growth	3.91
3. Status	3.84
4. Self-efficacy	4.16
5. Autonomy	2.78
6. Impact	3.99

Research Question

What is the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement? A Pearson

product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between teacher

empowerment and student achievement. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is

reported with values between -1.0 and +1.0. The closer the Pearson's r is to 1 (absolute value);

the stronger the relationship; this indicates that one variable is strongly correlated with the

changes in the second variable. When the Pearson's r is close to 0; it means that the change in

one variable is not correlated with the change in the second variable. The alpha level of .05 was

used to determine the significance for all statistical relationships. There was no correlation

between teacher empowerment and student achievement [r = .098, n= 115, p = .298], see Table

2. The mean for teacher empowerment was 3.54.

Table 2

Correlation of CRCT Scores and Teacher Empowerment

	1	2
1. CRCT	---	
2. Teacher Empowerment Scores	.098	---

Note. n= 115.
     * p< .05.

Subquestion

To what extent are middle school teachers empowered by the six subscales of the School

Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES)? A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was

computed to assess the relationship between student achievement and each of the six subscales of

the SPES: decision making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy and impact.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship

between student achievement (Criterion Referenced Competency Test scores) and decision

making, one of the six subscales of the SPES. There was no correlation between student

achievement and decision making [r = .035, n = 115, p = .707], see Table 3. The mean for

decision making was 2.42.

Table 3

Correlation of CRCT Scores and Decision Making

	1	2
1. CRCT	---	
2. Decision Making	.035	---

Note. n= 115.
    * p< .05.

Another Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the

relationship between student achievement and professional growth, another subscale of the

SPES. The results indicated there was no correlation between student achievement and

professional growth [$r = .148$, $n = 115$, $p = .114$], see Table 4. The mean for professional growth

was 3.91.

Table 4

Correlation of CRCT Scores and Professional Growth

	1	2
1. CRCT	---	
2. Professional Growth	.148	---

Note. n= 115.
    * p< .05.

Next, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the

relationship between student achievement and status. There was a slight positive correlation.

The correlation between student achievement and status was statistically significant [$r = .185$, n

$=115$, $p = .048$], see Table 5. The mean for status was 3.84.

Table 5

Correlation of CRCT Scores and Status

	1	2
1. CRCT	---	
2. Status	.185*	---

Note. n= 115.
   * p< .05.

   The next subscale of the School Participant Empowerment Scale was self-efficacy; a Pearson

product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between student

achievement and self-efficacy; there was no correlation [r = -0.49, n= 115, p = .602], see Table 6.

The mean for self-efficacy was 4.16.

Table 6

Correlation of CRCT Scores and Self-Efficacy

	1	2
1. CRCT	---	
2. Self-efficacy	.049	---

Note. n= 115.
   * p< .05.

   Autonomy is another subscale of the School Participant Empowerment Scale. A Pearson

product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between student

achievement and autonomy. There was no correlation between student achievement and

autonomy [r = .039, n= 115, p = .678], see Table 7. The mean for autonomy was 2.78.

Table 7

Correlation of CRCT Scores and Autonomy

	1	2
1. CRCT	---	
2. Autonomy	.039	---

Note. n= 115.
* p< .05.

Finally, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the

relationship between student achievement and impact. There was no correlation between student

achievement and impact [r = .070, n = 115, p = .460], see Table 8. The mean for impact was

3.99.

Table 8

Correlation of CRCT Scores and Impact

	1	2
1. CRCT	---	
2. Impact	.070	---

Note. n= 115.
* p< .05.

Summary

Analysis of the collected data was used to determine if there is a relationship between teacher

empowerment and student achievement. A Pearson correlation was computed to determine if

there is a relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement. A Pearson

correlation was also computed to determine if there is a relationship between student

achievement and each of the six subscales of the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES): decision making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact.

Analysis revealed there was no correlation between teacher empowerment and student achievement. The analysis also revealed one statically significant slight positive correlation between student achievement and status. Findings indicated the remaining five subscales: decision making, professional growth, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact had no correlation. The means ranged from 2.42 (decision making) to 4.16 (self-efficacy). Chapter V will present in detail the summary, conclusions, and implications of this study.

Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions, and Implications

Chapter V includes an overview of the study and a summary of the findings to previously conducted research. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement. Conclusions, implications, and recommendations of the results from the study are discussed.

Overview of the Study

Over the past two decades, teachers have been held accountable for higher student achievement. There is concern because students are not achieving; therefore, many schools and school systems have to restructure to ensure that the main goal, student achievement is met. Although the idea of empowerment was widely used in many organizations in the 80's, the idea of teacher empowerment became a phenomenon in the 90's (Rinehart & Short, 1994; Short & Rinehart, 1993). Many states are joining the ranks of other businesses and using teacher empowerment as a key component in restructuring schools and school systems (Hirsch et al., 2006a).

Beginning 2002, the former governor of North Carolina made an intensive effort to improve teacher working conditions; he enlisted the help of the Center for Teaching Quality (Hirsch et al., 2006a). A teacher working conditions survey was created and distributed (Hirsch et al., 2006a). The North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey included questions on time, professional development, leadership, empowerment, and facilities and resources (Hirsch et al., 2006a). The North Carolina Teacher working Conditions Survey has also been replicated in at least four other states (Hirsch et al., 2006a). These surveys have been administered to thousands of educators across the country (Hirsch et al., 2006a; Hirsch & Church, 2009a 2009b). The

results from these surveys indicate teacher empowerment as an important condition for student achievement (Hirsch et al., 2006a).

Participants in this study were administered the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES). This scale measures the level of empowerment. The SPES has six dimensions: decision making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact. The SPES has 38 items. It uses a 5-point, Likert-type scale (1 =strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Analysis of Research Findings

The overarching research question focused on determining if there is a relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement. The findings indicate there is no correlation between teacher empowerment and student achievement [r = .098, n= 115, p = .298]. The subquestion focused on determining the relationship between each of the subscales from the School Participant Empowerment Scale (decision making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact) and student achievement. Findings indicate, one of the subscales, status had a statistically significant slight positive correlation with student achievement [r = .185, n =115, p = .048]. The remaining five subscales from the School Participant Empowerment Scale: decision making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact were not correlated with student achievement. The means and standard deviation were also calculated. The means were as follow: School Participant Empowerment Scale [3.54], decision making [2.42], professional growth [3.91], status [3.84], self-efficacy [4.16], autonomy [2.78] and impact [3.99].

Discussion of Research Findings

In the present study only one of the six dimensions of teacher empowerment was found to have a statistically significant correlation with student achievement; status (teachers being

recognized as experts) had a slight positive correlation with student achievement. Hirsch et al. (2006b) also found that teachers being recognized as an expert had a positive effect on student achievement. The results from the previous study like the results from the present study found that status had a positive effect on student achievement once the questions about teachers being viewed as education experts were loaded separately (Hirsch et al., 2006b).

There was no correlation between teacher empowerment and student achievement; also, there was no correlation between decision making and student achievement or autonomy and student achievement; the results indicated that teachers believe they are not involved in decision making, mean of 2.42 or given autonomy, 2.78. The results from an earlier study where a correlation was found between decision making and student achievement support the results from the present study. The teachers in the earlier study were very involved in decision making and there was a correlation with improved student achievement (Davidson & Dell, 2003; Jinkins, 2001). Results from several studies indicate that teachers must be involved in the decision making process for them to feel empowered (Davidson & Dell, 2003; Levin, 1991; Short, 1994; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000; Whitaker &Moses, 1990). The results from the earlier studies support the results from the present study; the teachers in the present study indicated that they believe they were not involved in decision making and they also indicated that they believe they were not given autonomy to make decision; therefore, they did not feel empowered.

The findings also indicate there was no correlation with professional growth and student achievement. The mean for professional growth was 3.91. The teachers were neutral about whether they are receiving the opportunity for adequate professional learning. According to Berry et al. (2010a), American students don't perform as well as their counterparts because

American teachers are not provided adequate opportunities to collaborate with peers. The results also indicate that teachers joined local networks to exchange ideas with others.

There was no correlation between self-efficacy and student achievement. The mean was 4.16. These results indicate that the teachers believe they have the necessary skills to do the job. According to SECTQ (2004), teachers feel more empowered when they have the skills to do the job. In the present study; although, the teachers believe they have the skill to perform the job the overall empowerment scores remained in the neutral range.

Impact also had no correlation with student achievement. The mean was 3.99. The results indicate that many of the teachers were in the neutral range about whether or not they were making an impact on the teaching and learning process. Results from a study indicate that because teachers did not feel they were allowed to make a real impact they rated their feeling of empowerment as neutral (Klecker & Loadman, 1998a). These results are similar to the results from the present study.

Finally, the overall rating of the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) was neutral, mean of 3.54. The teachers indicated that they were equipped to perform the job (self-efficacy mean of 4.16), they had neutral feelings about the support they received for professional growth, mean of 3.91, they did not feel they were involved in decision making, mean of 2.42; and they also did not feel they were given autonomy, mean of 2.78. Klecker & Loadman (1998a) had similar results; in a study of 10,544 classroom teachers in Ohio, the findings indicated that the teachers felt they were recognized in their schools, they were equipped to differentiate for the student, and there was support for professional growth, but they did not feel they were involved in decision making and the overall score of the scale fell into the neutral range (Klecker &

Loadman, 1998a). Davidson & Dell (2003); Sweetland & Hoy (2000) support the results from the present study. To feel more empowered, teachers must be involved in decision making.

Much of the research on leadership encourages administrators to use a distributed leadership style (Brennikmeyer & Spillane, 2008; Gracezewski et al., 2009; Hallinger, 2003; 2005; Kurtz, 2009). Research indicates a distributed approach enhances the potential for student success in schools, so the school leader should consider involving teachers in the decision making process. The teachers from the present study did not feel that they were involved in the decision making process and they did not feel they were given autonomy; therefore, the empowerment scores were low.

<div align="center">**Conclusions**</div>

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement. The results indicate there was no correlation between teacher empowerment and student achievement and only a slight correlation between status, a dimension of teacher empowerment, and student achievement. Status refers to teachers being recognized as educational experts (Short, 1994).

After careful analysis of the results and a review of the literature, it is concluded that the lack of a correlation is related to the low mean score for the decision making and autonomy subscales of the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES). Prior studies indicated that for teachers to feel empowered, they must be involved in the decision making process and given autonomy to make decisions (Davidson & Dell, 2003; Levin, 1991; Short, 1994; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000; Whitaker &Moses, 1990). Results from these studies also indicated that when teachers were empowered; there was a correlation between teacher empowerment and student achievement (Davidson & Dell, 2003; Levin, 1991; Short, 1994; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000; Whitaker &Moses,

1990). Based on the low mean score for decision making, 2.45 and autonomy, 2.78, it is concluded that the teachers in the present study believe they were not involved in decision making; they also did not feel they were given autonomy.

Teachers in the study were only somewhat empowered; the scores for the School Participant Empowerment Scale fell in the neutral range. There were low mean scores for the subscales of decision making and autonomy.   The Criterion Referenced Competency Scores, mean of 808, also were just mediocre. It is concluded if the teachers felt more empowered, there may have been an increase in test scores or vice versa.

Since there is a significant positive correlation between status and student achievement, it is concluded that there should be a focus on recognizing teacher's for their expertise. According to Hirsch et al., (2006b), teachers being recognized as educational experts had a positive effect to student achievement.

Finally, the areas of the scale, decision making and autonomy that directly involved administrators giving up some of their power had very low means. The areas of the scale, self-efficacy and status that related to how teachers felt about their ability to perform their job had the two highest means.

Implications

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement. There is research that identifies teacher empowerment as an important component to teachers, but there is limited research that identifies a direct correlation; the researcher aimed to add to the body of literature on teacher empowerment and student achievement.

An implication from this study is that empowerment may not be a necessary component of restructuring.

Another implication from this study is that administrators need to work on status, recognizing teachers as experts. The master teachers/programs need to be recognized and/or encouraged. Administrators should consider having a strong recognition/reward system in place.

A final implication from this study is that school leaders should consider strategies that would provide teachers more autonomy. They should also explore the use of distributed leadership practices.

<div align="center">**Recommendations for Further Research**</div>

Teacher empowerment has become a key component in many schools and school systems restructuring plans/school improvement plans. It is important that future research be conducted to determine how the use of teacher empowerment is affecting the overall goals of schools. The following recommendations for future research should be considered:

1. Expand this study to include elementary and high school teachers. The study could be made a regression study that includes other variables that affect student achievement.

2. Expand the study to include demographic data. It would be beneficial to see if teachers at elementary or high felt more empowered than middle school teachers. Also, it would be interesting to find out if teachers with more experience felt more empowered than new teachers or if teachers with higher degrees felt more empowered.

3. Expand the study and analyze the data by teacher content area. It would be interesting to see if science teachers were more empowered than math teachers etc.

4. Expand so that study is conducted in different settings: rural, suburban, and urban settings.

Dissemination

The results of this study will be distributed throughout the participating school district. Copies of the study will be available in the library of Georgia Southern University and will be available electronically through the doctoral dissertations website, so that anyone who wants to access it may do so.

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Appendix A

Survey Instrument

School Participant Empowerment Scale
(Developed by Paula M. Short and James S. Rinehart)

Please rate the following statements in terms of how well they describe how you feel.

Rate each statement on the following scale:

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I am given the responsibility to monitor programs.	①	②	③	④	⑤
2. I function in a professional environment.	①	②	③	④	⑤
3. I believe that I have earned respect.	①	②	③	④	⑤
4. I believe that I am helping kids become independent learners.	①	②	③	④	⑤
5. I have control over daily schedules.	①	②	③	④	⑤
6. I believe that I have the ability to get things done.	①	②	③	④	⑤
7. I make decisions about the implementation of new programs in the school	①	②	③	④	⑤
8. I am treated as a professional.	①	②	③	④	⑤
9. I believe that I am very effective.	①	②	③	④	⑤
10. I believe that I am empowering students.	①	②	③	④	⑤
11. I am able to teach as I choose.	①	②	③	④	⑤
12. I participate in staff development.	①	②	③	④	⑤
13. I make decisions about the selection of other teachers for my school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
14. I have the opportunity for professional growth.	①	②	③	④	⑤
15. I have the respect of my colleagues.	①	②	③	④	⑤
16. I feel that I am involved in an important program for children.	①	②	③	④	⑤
17. I have the freedom to make decisions on what is taught.	①	②	③	④	⑤
18. I believe that I am having an impact.	①	②	③	④	⑤
19. I am involved in school budget decisions.	①	②	③	④	⑤
20. I work at a school where kids come first	①	②	③	④	⑤
21. I have the support and respect of my colleagues.	①	②	③	④	⑤
22. I see students learn.	①	②	③	④	⑤
23. I make decisions about curriculum.	①	②	③	④	⑤
24. I am a decision maker.	①	②	③	④	⑤
25. I am given the opportunity to teach other teachers.	①	②	③	④	⑤
26. I am given the opportunity to continue learning.	①	②	③	④	⑤
27. I have a strong knowledge base in the areas in which I teach.	①	②	③	④	⑤
28. I believe that I have the opportunity to grow by working daily with students.	①	②	③	④	⑤
29. I perceive that I have the opportunity to influence others.	①	②	③	④	⑤
30. I can determine my own schedule.	①	②	③	④	⑤
31. I have the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers in my school.	①	②	③	④	⑤
32. I perceive that I make a difference.	①	②	③	④	⑤
33. Principals, other teachers, and school personnel solicit my advice.	①	②	③	④	⑤

34. I believe that I am good at what I do. ① ② ③④⑤
35. I can plan my own schedule. ① ② ③④⑤
36. I perceive that I have an impact on other teachers and students. ① ② ③④⑤
37. My advice is solicited by others. ① ②③ ④⑤
38. I have an opportunity to teach other teachers about innovative ideas. ①② ③④⑤

Appendix B

CRCT Scores and SPES Scores

CRCT Scores	SPES Scores
826	121
800	148
845	159
827	158
791	127
804	115
807	139
797	139
826	121
814	140
824	124
820	149
804	155
820	159
800	129
803	142
815	126
801	93
805	126
819	149
820	138
795	129
795	130
826	92
843	117
798	125
789	98
783	142
823	131
789	157
810	126
805	127
819	116
778	73
797	118

805	127
805	154
826	159
841	170
806	132
815	112
818	112
814	132
816	144
790	156
842	148
839	128
829	144
825	144
796	119
835	173
804	146
795	151
791	139
795	153
797	137
795	98
791	137
821	131
803	129
799	123
790	120
789	107
806	91
806	156
794	156
825	126
792	134
832	118
836	119
787	133
830	153
808	138
805	98
805	126
789	132
817	116
793	130

821	123
827	114
795	112
797	160
795	154
789	129
799	122
789	143
797	126
795	111
796	157
783	160
815	130
796	144
783	118
829	177
800	130
818	130
802	142
824	115
839	138
834	145
793	125
817	148
795	129
823	131
803	141
820	123
803	156
797	136
797	128
820	169
819	142
797	164
795	146
795	163
830	160

Appendix C

IRB Approval

Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs	
Institutional Review Board (IRB)	
Phone: 912-478-0843	Veazey Hall 2021 P.O. Box 8005
Fax: 912-478-0719 IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Valerie Squire-Kelly
         Dr. Barbara Mallory

cc: Charles E. Patterson
         Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate College

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
         Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
         (IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: 02/13/12

Initial
Approval
Date: 06/01/11

Expiration
Date: 06/30/12

Subject: Status of Extension Request for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your Extension Request for research project numbered **H11430** and titled **"The Relationship Between Teacher Empowerment and Student Achievement,"** it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your extension.

If you wish to continue the project after 3 years you must reapply to the IRB as a new project. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator prior to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Haynes

Eleanor Haynes
Compliance Officer