Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Graduate Studies, Jack N. Averitt College of

Spring 2012

# Perceptions of the Influence of Teacher of the Year Awards upon Teachers' Personal, School, and Professional Morale

Sherri Baker Butler

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd

PERCEPTIONS OF THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

UPON TEACHERS' PERSONAL, SCHOOL, AND PROFESSIONAL MORALE

by

SHERRI BAKER BUTLER

(Under the Direction of Delores D. Liston)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate k-12 teachers' perceptions of the influence of Teacher of the Year (TOTY) awards upon teachers' personal, school, and professional morale, as defined by Mackenzie (2007a). The sample was comprised of the 198 respondents to the researcher's online Teacher Recognition Schemes survey during July-August 2011. The study utilized a mixed methods approach that included collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative research data. Statistical significance was noted in the following areas: TOTY recipients perceived significantly greater influences of the award upon both personal and professional morale than did their non-recipient colleagues. Further, TOTY and non-TOTY survey respondents alike who had pursued other career paths perceived significantly less influence of the award upon personal morale. Otherwise, the various collected demographic information, including the grade level at which a respondent taught and number of years as a teacher, did not appear to have had a significant impact on perceptions, regardless of TOTY award status. This study provided information and an inventory of suggestions that could be beneficial to administrators in charge of Teacher of the Year programs in k-12 settings. Implications for future research, practices and strategies are also discussed.

INDEX WORDS: Teacher of the year, Teacher morale, Workplace recognition

PERCEPTIONS OF THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

UPON TEACHERS' PERSONAL, SCHOOL, AND PROFESSIONAL MORALE

by

SHERRI BAKER BUTLER


ABJ, University of Georgia, 1988

MMC, University of Georgia, 1990

M.Ed., University of Georgia, 1993

Ed.S., Brenau University, 2004


A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree


DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

STATESBORO, GEORGIA

2012

PERCEPTIONS OF THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

UPON TEACHERS' PERSONAL, SCHOOL, AND PROFESSIONAL MORALE

by

SHERRI BAKER BUTLER

| | |
|---|---|
| Major Professor: | Delores D. Liston |
| Committee: | Hsu-Lien Lu |
| | Yasar Bodur |
| | Beverly Graham |

Electronic Version Approved:
May 2012

DEDICATION

To my sweet George –

*Voglio che tu sia felice*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the following people for their kind words of encouragement and support over the past four years:

The wonderful group of professionals from Georgia Southern University who guided me along this journey, especially my graduate committee. My chair, Dr. Delores Liston, is the teacher I hope to become one day. She knows just when and how hard to push her students to challenge them and make them grow, without making them want to walk away in despair. I appreciate her wisdom, and I admire her strength. Dr. Yasur Bodur has asked tough questions when necessary, but always in a spirit of gentle guidance to correct my course. Dr. Hsu-Lien Lu has been a quiet guiding force, and I am grateful to her for her many valuable suggestions. Dr. Beverly Graham, thank you for your candor and wise advice – I won't forget it.

Dr. Noella Mackenzie of Charles Sturt University, Albury, New South Wales, Australia, whose study I found in the early days of my work. Dr. Mackenzie's research became my inspiration and validation. I appreciate her kind words of support, and I am grateful to her for graciously sharing material with me.

A very special thank you to the teachers who participated in the Teacher Recognition Schemes Survey. You folks are the true rock stars of the world!

Dr. Kim Love-Myers and Shiyao Wang of the University of Georgia Department of Statistics – mega thanks to you both for your help with my research data, and for having the patience of a saint with all my questions!

My colleagues on the "Six Red Team," who graciously allowed me to vent about the seemingly impossible workloads and deadlines of the doctoral program while also teaching full-time;

My Grace Episcopal family, who understood that my absence was only temporary and always offered positive thoughts and prayers;

My dear friends, Beverly, Barbara, Phyliss, and Ann – thank you for believing in me and for letting me know that you would still be there after all this time;

My "Rice Buddy," Rhonda Amerson – I cannot imagine going through this program without a friend like you. Just seeing your name on Caller ID was enough to bring me a smile and remind me that I was never alone;

My mother, Norma Baker, whose love and support has guided me for 46 years;

And to my dear sweet George – you should receive an honorary doctorate for your part. We entered into this project together, and now we are "D.O.N.E." Time to celebrate!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

**Chapter I**

**Introduction**

Part of the human condition is the need to feel appreciated. This is especially true at work. While the personal satisfaction of knowing that a job has been well done might be enough reward for some people, for many others public accolades are desirable and arguably even necessary. Yet the uncertain and frequently unsettling economics of the past decade has prompted many business owners in the private sector to scale back on performance bonuses, pay raises, and benefits. Even the annual holiday party and company picnic have not escaped the proverbial budget axe; champagne toasts have been replaced by punch, high-end electronic gadgets by baseball hats, T-shirts, and coffee mugs with the corporate logo. In light of decreased financial or material rewards, other less expensive but meaningful forms of acknowledging employee contributions have assumed a heightened importance.

In education, the good old days never included champagne and flat-screen televisions. Already austere budgets have had to become even more so, as diminished tax revenues have left huge gaps in funding. Yet rewarding teacher contributions is perhaps more important than ever, particularly at a time when both paychecks and morale have taken huge hits. The appropriateness and effectiveness of recognition are far more important than their price tag. Schools utilize a vast array of recognition schemes in an effort to say, "Good job!" This study raises the question: Just how effective are popular teacher recognition schemes used in today's schools?

**Purpose of Study**

Across the nation, there are a variety of formal teacher recognition schemes that seek to reward excellence in the classroom. These range from awards given by corporations such as Disney and Wal-Mart and foundations such as Milken, to Teacher of the Year honors originating at the

school building level, on up to National Teacher of the Year. Until now, the effectiveness of such awards programs has received little attention from researchers. This study sought to uncover teacher perceptions of the effect of Teacher of the Year awards on teacher morale.

The overarching research question was as follows:

How do teachers perceive Teacher of the Year awards in terms of their influence upon the three domains of teacher morale?

Specifically, the researcher sought to answer to the following questions:

$R_1$: Do teachers' perceptions differ based on whether they are recipients of this award?

$R_2$: Among recipients, do perceptions differ based on years of experience, level taught, and career path?

$R_3$: Among non-recipients, do perceptions differ based on years of experience, level taught, and career path?

$R_4$: How do both groups perceive the overall effectiveness of Teacher of the Year in terms of its appropriateness as a teacher recognition scheme?

The researcher's hope is to open the door to candid dialogue about the "the proper care and feeding of teachers."

**Significance of Study**

To be a teacher, I think, is to be brave (Block, 2008, p. 417).

The teaching profession in the United States is under attack like never before. Federal legislations such as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 continue to place incredible pressure upon teachers to ensure that all of their students "meet expectations" on standardized tests, which in turn reduces the entire school year to an approximately 140-minute exam per content area.

The cliché "teaching to the test" is the prevailing reality, as many school systems strip teachers of their classroom autonomy and mandate scripted lessons designed to ensure success on the high-stakes tests. The fear of not making "Adequate Yearly Progress," or AYP, hangs over educators' heads like a storm cloud; and if poor student performance lands a school on the dreaded "Needs Improvement" list, the result is an avalanche of increased paperwork, scrutiny, and negative public perception. Race to the Top (R2T), introduced by the Obama administration in 2009, continues much of the mandates of NCLB but attaches a new set of requirements which are linked to funding (United States Department of Education, n.d.) Add to that the "Great Recession of 2007-2009," the longest economic decline that the nation has experienced since the end of World War II (Izzo, 2010). The ensuing financial woes led 26 states to lay off employees, 22 using furloughs, and 12 cutting salaries (Maynard, 2010). In Georgia, teachers appear to have fared worse than their counterparts across the nation; only four of the state's 180 school districts have managed to trim their budgets without directly impacting educators (Jones, 2009). Although the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), the adjudicator of when recessions begin and end, declared the recession officially ended in August 2009 (NBER, 2010), the economy continues to struggle toward recovery, and school systems prevail upon teachers to "do more with less."

Fortunately for our nation's students, intelligent, capable, and enthusiastic individuals continue to enter the profession each year, despite the aforementioned challenges. For many teachers, the joy that comes from making a difference in a student's life makes the effort worthwhile (Nieto, 2003). Unfortunately, pursuing a career in education for altruistic aims generally equates to foregoing a degree of economic security. Certainly beginning teachers are well aware before entering the classroom that they will become neither rich nor famous; however, they may not fully understand just how much of a financial sacrifice they will be compelled to make. In a

comparison of median starting salaries for four-year degrees, petroleum engineering topped the list at $93,000, while teaching's $35,000 did not even crack the top 100. Even more discouraging is the mid-career median pay comparisons: $157,000 for engineers to $54,900 for teachers (www.payscale.com, 2010). The reality is educators entering the field today will earn salaries that struggle just to keep up with inflation (nea.org, 2010). The gap extends to bonuses and recognition for outstanding performance; in the private sector, four-figure (and up) holiday and performance bonuses are commonplace, even among lower-level workers, while many teachers only dream of such recognition.

Teachers do earn a dubious "bonus" -- the disdain of much of society; unfortunately, the old saw, "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach" is alive and well in the 21st Century. Public opinion polls indicate that less than half of the American public is satisfied with k-12 public education and that most respondents place the blame on teachers (Jones, 2009); Bracey (2008) suggests that teachers have been made scapegoats for the nation's various woes since the 1983 release of *A Nation at Risk*. Unfortunately, nearly 30 years later, there seems to be little relief in sight. In open-ended surveys, hiring "higher-quality, better educated, and more involved and caring teachers" is the most frequently offered suggestion for improvement (Jones, 2009). Many teachers question their personal commitment to what basically amounts to a low-status, dead-end job. Although teachers consider themselves professionals, they do not receive the same level of respect, rewards, or recognition as workers in other professions (Blackwell, Futrell, & Imig, 2003; Cheers, 2001). Concerted efforts to recast themselves as highly trained professionals have been largely unsuccessful (Helterbran, 2008).

Berliner (1986) suggested that teachers' demonstration of practical knowledge results in their being viewed as less-highly educated as "experts" in other professions. Compounding that, as

Helterbran (2008) wryly noted, "Because almost everyone has experienced some degree of formal education, many believe themselves to be experts on teaching and the learning process" (p. 123). Mackenzie (2007a) pointed to the fact that a large percentage of teachers are female as a possible explanation for some people's lack of respect for the profession. Additionally, the teaching profession has lost its appeal to young people in the wake of decreasing respect and increasing academic and emotional demands (Sciafani, 2010).

Certainly the topic of teacher salaries is a sore point; as Eggers, Moulthrop, and Calegari (2005) noted, "We expect teachers to attain advanced degrees, navigate an endless stream of restrictions and requirements, and provide for the future and safety of our children, and for it all, to be paid less than longshoremen or bus drivers" (p. 4). Understandably, the profession's diminishing extrinsic as well as intrinsic rewards might lead many current and pre-service teachers to rethink their career path. Both high teacher turnover rates as well as the retention of unmotivated teachers biding their time until retirement ultimately have an adverse effect upon students. When teacher morale in a given school is high, student morale and achievement increases; the opposite is also true (Young, 1998). In a sense, what begins as teachers' problems quickly becomes society's problem. For the foreseeable future, NCLB and R2T are not likely to disappear, nor will salaries return to some semblance of normalcy and respectability.

Ironically, many critics of public education seek to transform schools by applying business models and methods; in fact, some district superintendents are referred to as the "CEO" (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005). If schools are to be treated as businesses, teachers should be compensated, in salary, perquisites, and bonuses, in a fashion comparable to their counterparts in the private sector. However, given the likelihood of that occurring being essentially nil, especially during these lean economic times, it is incumbent upon school administrators to examine teacher

recognition schemes currently in play and assess their efficacy. In teaching, as in any other profession, employee morale has far-reaching implications; further, a significant factor in morale is recognition. This is not to suggest that recognition is an acceptable substitute for fair compensation. Yet studies indicate that a happy workplace is a productive workplace, and workers who feel that their hard work has not escaped notice are generally happy (Hoy & Miskel, 1987; Appelbaum & Kamal, 2000).

In education, a variety of creative forms of recognition exist. Building level awards, in particular, can be potent as relatively inexpensive means of honoring educators for job performance. Depending upon the individual school, casual recognition typically ranges from blue jeans passes and duty-free lunches to coupons redeemable for a half day off work. However, practices such as these tend to be utilized more as "morale boosters" than as actual acknowledgement of teaching excellence. More formal Teacher of the Year awards generally originate at the building level with the potential to be recognized ultimately as National Teacher of the Year. Although the process varies across the nation and, frequently, within each state, Teacher of the Year is the most recognized award bestowed upon educators to acknowledge their excellence and dedication in the classroom. The honoree is typically selected by peers, although in many schools the selection is made by administration alone, or some combination of peers, students, parents, and administrators. Sometimes shortened to TOY or TOTY, Teacher of the Year is a deceptively simple moniker for a process that is far more complex than perhaps many educators realize. No doubt there are teachers in every school who actively campaign for the designation, or at least secretly hope and drop not-so-subtle hints that they "wouldn't mind" receiving the honor. Certainly just as many teachers never give TOTY a thought, until nomination time rolls around once again. Although recognition in the higher echelons is accompanied by a plethora of high-end prizes, including paid sabbaticals usually

found only in higher education, winning at the building level tends to result in more modest prizes. Perhaps the honoree will receive flowers or a plaque, or will have his or her photo in the local newspaper and school annual. Additionally, the ability to add TOTY honors to one's resume presumably gives clout to this award.

The plusses notwithstanding, one might ask of the TOTY process: In its present incarnation, is the TOTY award program an appropriate recognition of outstanding teaching? Are there unintended consequences, such as an increased workload for recipients or jealousy and resentment from coworkers? Can this teacher recognition scheme be improved upon? The researcher's observation has been that many teachers do not want the award; colleagues proclaim, "If you vote for me, I'll never forgive you" and "Thanks, but no thanks – it's too much work!" Why does an "award" trigger such reactions from mature adults?

## Personal Justification

The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated.
- William James

My interest in this topic stems from my conviction that teachers need affirmation almost as much as their students do. I have never received Teacher of the Year honors and am not sure if I should feel slighted or relieved.  However, I do understand the reasons people are drawn to teaching; the reasons they want to, or actually do, leave teaching; and the reasons some people avoid the profession altogether. I came to teaching as a second career after an economic downturn eliminated positions in my first choice, public relations. Quite frankly, one reason I was not interested in teaching as an undergraduate student was my observations of friends and roommates who were teachers; they seemed, as a group, defeated, miserable, and tired. I could not imagine voluntarily signing up for such a career! Perhaps that image remained all too clear to me, because I

struggled through three dismal years in the classroom before I departed with no plans to return. However, nearly 12 years ago I was led to give teaching one more try, this time with more gratifying results. My personal experience has led me to believe that many excellent or potentially excellent teachers can be encouraged to enter into, and remain in, the classroom if their innate needs are met. Nevertheless, I am seeing more and more teachers, both "newbies" and veterans, becoming increasingly distressed and discouraged by the current onslaught of top-down mandates, increased scrutiny, and slashed paychecks. Even those teachers fortunate enough to work in a positive, supportive setting are not immune. A close friend completing her fourth year of teaching recently noted that she earns less money now than she did her first year, despite completing her master's degree a few months ago. Occasionally she wonders aloud about returning to her previous career in business, not because she misses it – she does not – but because she worries about the economic and emotional drain teaching has been upon her family. "I love my job now, and these children, but I love my own family more" (G. Stone *, personal communication, January 18, 2011). My colleague is a fine teacher – smart and funny, hardworking and dependable, passionate about teaching and learning, firm yet compassionate. She is but one example of the many teachers within my own small circle who wonders how she will ever be able to "hang in there" for 20 or 30 years. If teacher satisfaction and fulfillment does not attract widespread public attention and sympathy, then perhaps the fate of students will. Indeed, students, and society at large, are the ultimate losers when caring, qualified teachers decide they have had enough. To be clear, I am not suggesting that teachers are so thin-skinned as to need constant reassurance, nor do I propose that seeing their names in the

---

*Pseudonyms are used to protect privacy

newspaper will make all the other sacrifices worthwhile. However, I believe in the power of getting the little details right. If that means tweaking or overhauling teacher recognition schemes such as Teacher of the Year, then we can do that, budget woes or not. If it gives teachers the proverbial "wind at their back," then we must do it.

## Definition of Key Terms

Important terms that shaped the research included the following:

*Teacher Recognition Scheme*. Teacher Recognition Scheme is commonly used to describe a formal plan or program of action to be followed in recognizing teaching excellence (Mackenzie, 2007b; Dinham & Scott, 2002).

*Morale*. Morale is defined as "a construct that describes the relative mental/emotional valence of positive or negative energy of an individual or of a group of individuals (as in a school staff). It is the result of the perceptions and interpretations of contextually influenced experiences" (Meyer, Macmillan, and Northfield, 2009, p.173).

Mackenzie describes three levels of morale common to teachers: personal morale, school morale, and professional morale. She defines each of these as follows:

*Personal morale*. Personal morale is derived from an individual teacher's personal circumstances, including  health, family situation, and financial stability. Mackenzie suggests that individual teachers exercise a large degree of control over this level, which is largely influenced by private, personal factors.

*School morale*. School morale is derived from the daily experiences of teachers in their schools and local communities. An individual teacher may have a moderate level of influence on this level.

*Professional morale*. Professional morale is derived from the status of teaching as a profession. An individual teacher may feel she has little to no influence on this level (Mackenzie, 2007a).

Mackenzie contends that all three levels of morale overlap to some degree. For example, personal morale and school morale each impact the other. While professional morale may affect both personal and school morale, the impact on teachers' daily lives is not as great. Mackenzie has coined the term "teacher morale" to describe the resulting new level: Personal morale + School morale + Professional morale = *Teacher morale* (Mackenzie, 2007a, p. 101).

The above definition of teacher morale was created using an interpretive/constructivist approach, thus making it appropriate to the present study.

*Career path*. For the purposes of this study, and for simplicity and clarity, the researcher will use the phrase "career path" when considering whether an individual has worked solely as a teacher or if she or he previously worked in another field. "CP0" indicates that an individual has never worked outside of education, while "CP1" indicates that an individual has pursued careers outside of education.

## Summary

Recognition of one's efforts, particularly in the workforce, is central to the human experience. While it does not pay the bills, it serves the arguably more important role of validating one's contributions and may provide the encouragement needed to move ahead during difficult times. By most accounts, the past few years certainly have qualified as difficult, on a variety of levels and without regard for career choice. The researcher suggests that the impact has been particularly hard-felt in the field of education. In the face of diminishing financial prospects, receiving sincere, well-deserved praise can go a long way toward assuaging disgruntled feelings and

lifting spirits. By the same token, recognition that lacks sincerity and thoughtfulness can have a damaging effect. To that end, the researcher sought to uncover educator perceptions regarding the efficacy of Teacher of the Year programs currently utilized in schools across the nation.

In Chapter Two, the researcher lays the theoretical groundwork for the current study, highlights the latest in teacher morale studies, and explores the psychological roots of recognition, particularly in the workplace. An overview of employee awards in both the private and public sectors follows, with a more in-depth look at teacher recognition schemes and their ramifications. In Chapter Three, the researcher describes the mixed methods research project, in which she utilized an online survey (containing both quantitative and qualitative questions) in an attempt to answer the previously-described research questions. Chapter Four provides a look at the actual results of both quantitative and qualitative survey questions. Finally, Chapter Five summarizes the study, draws conclusions about its findings, and discusses implications, including possible avenues for future studies.

**Chapter II**

**WHAT EVERYONE WANTS – AND NEEDS**

**Perception is Reality: A Theoretical Framework**

What a man sees depends both upon what he looks at and also upon what his previous visual-conceptual experience has taught him to see (Kuhn, 1962/1996, p. 113).

Constructivism, and in particular social constructivism, provided the theoretical framework for this study. *Constructivism is an epistemological perspective which suggests that individuals create their own understandings, based upon the interaction of what they already know and believe, with whatever new experiences or ideas they encounter (Richardson, 1997). Its roots are frequently traced to Ancient Greece, where the philosopher Heraclitus is credited with observing, "Everything flows; nothing stands still" and "You could not step twice into the same river; for other waters are ever flowing on to you" (Heraclitus, n.d.). The researcher interprets this as meaning that one's understanding of the world is not firmly fixed but is in continual flux in response to life's unfolding episodes. A stronger link is found in the work of early 18$^{th}$ Century Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico, whose belief that *verum esse ipsum factum,* or "the true itself is made," stands in direct contrast to the popular Cartesian contention that truth may only be verified through observation. Although Vico remained relatively unknown during his lifetime, his philosophy has surged in popularity during the past one and a half centuries as some theorists began to challenge Descartes (Costello, 2008).

---

* Crotty (2003) distinguishes between constructivism, or "the meaning-making activity of the individual mind" and constructionism, which he categorizes as "the collective generation [and transmission] of meaning" (p. 58). Other theorists (Timmer, 2010; Raskin, 2002) use these terms interchangeably, and the researcher does so here.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Constructivist themes emerged in the work of noted Swiss child psychologist Jean Piaget, who portrayed children as highly motivated learners who construct knowledge by actively engaging with their physical and social environment (Ormrod, 2008). In his seminal work, *The Origins of Intelligence in Children* (1952), Piaget proposed that cognitive development in children moves through four stages: Sensorimotor, in which behaviors and perceptions form the basis for cognition; Preoperational, in which language and symbolic thought emerge; Concrete Operational, in which lower-level logical reasoning begins to occur; and Formal Operational, in which the abstract, contrary-to-fact, and hypothetical begins to be possible. Although some contemporary theorists suggest that the characterization of cognitive development as a series of stages is somewhat flawed (Ormrod, 2008), Piaget's contributions to the field have led to his being heralded as "the great pioneer of the constructivist theory of knowing" (von Glasersfeld, 1990, p.19).

While concurring that knowledge is constructed by individuals, Russian child psychologist and Piaget contemporary Lev Vygotsky argued that children's cognitive awareness does not develop independently; rather, it arises from interaction with adults, who teach them the meanings and values which society assigns to objects and events. Children are not passive learners, however; Vygotsky contended that, as a child matures, she works with her social environment to co-construct meaning. In *Mind in Society*, he writes,

> Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals (1978, p. 57).

Vygotsky further contended that this reliance upon social relationships was, in fact, genetically dictated (1978). His theories lay the groundwork for what has become known as social constructivism, and his influence is evident in the work of contemporary social scientists such as Andre Kukla (2000), Bruno Latour (1987), Sal Restivo (1991), David Bloor (1976/1991), and others.

Another major contributor to Constructivist theory is American psychologist Jerome Bruner, who cites both Piaget and Vygotsky as influences. Bruner suggests that learners create knowledge by categorizing everything that is perceived. He is perhaps best known for coining the term *scaffolding* to describe this process. Bruner also suggests that one's intuitive skills are an important but under-emphasized part of the learning process (Bruner, 1960).

Chief among criticisms leveled against social constructivism is its highly relativistic nature. Because the concept of truth is socially constructed – and thus, socially relative -- what is to be regarded as "true" in one social milieu might be regarded as being "false" in another. Yet, each society is convinced that its beliefs are correct; thus, social constructivism could be both true and false simultaneously. As a result, comparing and judging competing worldviews becomes impossible (Goldman, 2006). Further, researchers utilizing social constructivism as a theoretical framework must acknowledge that their findings inherently are open to questioning (Clark, 1999). Crotty (2003) counters these criticisms, suggesting, "Once this standpoint [that social constructivism is relativistic] is embraced, we will … hold our understandings much more lightly and tentatively and far less dogmatically, see them as historically and culturally effected interpretations rather than eternal truths of some kind" (p.64). Clark (1999) contends that constructivist researchers may still make worthwhile contributions to their respective fields, even though their findings are inevitably challenged by further interpretations.

The aim of this study was to investigate faculty perceptions of the impact the Teacher of the

Year award has upon the faculty climate. Because the researcher anticipated that each participant's

unique prior experiences and world view would inform his or her responses, social constructivism

was a fitting conceptual framework for this study. Throughout her teaching career, the researcher

has informally observed that her colleagues were divided in their opinions of TOTY; while many

desired the honor and took the voting process seriously, still others failed to cast a ballot or joked

about voting for a particularly unpopular coworker known to spend class text-messaging his

girlfriend. The researcher believes that each of her colleagues' attitudes toward TOTY stemmed

from previous award situations, whether in the current school setting or some other workplace

environment. Crotty (2003) writes that, while many people profess believing that "each one's way

of making sense of the world is as valid and worthy of respect as any other" (p. 58), they

nevertheless "tend to take 'the sense we make of things' to be 'the way things are'" (p. 59). The

researcher has observed this to be true in a variety of settings, including at school. Whether reacting

to a parent conference, an administrator's email, or a coworker's comment, each participant in the

event is convinced that her interpretation is the correct one. As it pertains to the current study, social

constructivism honors each respondent's contributions while offering a possible explanation as to

how persons working together on a daily basis can have different interpretations of what has

happened.

### Teacher Morale

A variety of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors impacts teacher morale. Perrachione,

Peterson, and Rosser (2008) identified personal efficacy, the emotional experience of working with

students, and job satisfaction (intrinsic factors) and salary and work load (extrinsic factors) as key

components affecting overall teacher morale. Examination of the literature reveals an increased

focus upon teacher morale over the past decade, in studies representing a variety of arenas: teacher shortages (Corwin, 2001); workplace conditions (Bivona, 2002); teacher efficacy (Edwards et al., 2002); motivation and performance awards (Kelley et al., 2002); loss of classroom autonomy (Fink, 2003); job satisfaction (Klassen and Andersen, 2009); and others. The prevailing theme in these studies is the marked decline of teacher morale.

Mackenzie (2007a) noted a 30-year drop in morale along with a corresponding decline in public attitudes towards education. Among possible explanations for this loss of public favor is Crowther's (2003) contention that the shift in educational focus to administration, policy-making, and curriculum in the 1990s reduced the relevance of actual classroom teachers; as long as sound policy decisions were made at the top, then practically anyone could carry them out in the classroom. Relatedly, Berliner (1986) suggested that teachers' practical knowledge actually worked against them in terms of being viewed as highly-educated, highly-skilled professionals deserving of high pay.

Around the same time, a shift from the appeal of altruistic jobs to more economically secure careers reflected poorly upon those who chose to pursue a career in education (Eggers, Moulthrop, & Calegari, 2005; Scott, 2001). A 1998 study suggested that status and power were linked directly to economics, and since "children have no economic or political power" (SEETRC, p. 3), teachers, by extension, have neither. In a similar vein, education's focus upon children feeds the perception that teaching is tantamount to childcare and thus, anyone can do it (Johnson, 2000). Hoyle (2001) argued that, because most people have had repeated, lengthy exposure to teachers, the resulting loss of what he terms "professional mystique" (p. 141) is partly to blame for a lack of respect for educators; in other words, the old expression, "Familiarity breeds contempt" is at play here. Helterbran (2008) reported similar findings.

More recently, highly-publicized federal programs such as the previously-mentioned NCLB and R2T have resulted in a heightened public perception that teachers cannot, or will not, do their jobs properly. The emphasis these programs have placed upon standardized test results has led to high profile cheating scandals, in which teachers and administrators have been accused of surreptitiously changing students' standardized test answers in order to improve the school's chances of making AYP. In Georgia, two of the largest school districts – Fulton County in the metro Atlanta area and Dougherty County in the southwest region – have been rocked by widespread charges of cheating that have resulted in the suspension or firing of hundreds of teachers and administrators. At the very least, the reputations of those with even tenuous links to the accused have been tarnished, in some cases reaching all the way up to the system superintendent (Badertscher, 2011). Frustrated educators see their profession's image continue to crumble as these stories persist in dominating newspaper, TV, radio, and internet news.

A problem with the potential for far-reaching implications, low morale may manifest itself in various ways, including the increased use of sick leave, the initiation of a search for other employment, and the development of a negative or cynical attitude (Mackenzie, 2007a). Young (1998) found that teacher morale is directly related to student morale; when teachers feel good about themselves and their careers, students also experience positive feelings and high achievement. Conversely, in settings where teacher morale is depressed, student achievement and attitude experience a marked decline (Young, 1998).

**The Psychology of Recognition**

Psychologists, authors, and pop psychology have long focused upon the human need to feel appreciated. Below is a brief look at some key developments in laying the psychological groundwork, along with recent contributions to the conversation.

**Operant Conditioning**

In his first book, *The Behavior of Organisms*, renowned behavioral psychologist B.F. Skinner (1938) outlined his theory of operant conditioning, which suggests all human behavior is motivated by external stimuli. Learning – conditioning, in scientific terms – occurs when a subject "operates" or performs actions in response to those stimuli, in an attempt to change his or her environment. Operant psychology is based on the idea that an action taken by a person or an animal often has consequences that occur naturally in the environment. Recounting his famous experiments of rats racing through mazes in order to receive an award or avoid punishment, Skinner posited that humans likewise respond to the expectation of awards and punishments by modifying their behavior accordingly (Skinner, 1938).

**Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

In 1943, psychologist Abraham Maslow first presented his famous pyramid-shaped "Hierarchy of Needs." Maslow suggested that all humans experience five ascending levels of needs: physiological – breathing, eating/drinking, and sleeping; safety – physical and psychological; love and belonging – friends, family, and sexual intimacy; esteem – confidence, achievement, and respect of others; and self-actualization – morality, creativity, and acceptance. According to the theory, a person's needs at each level of the pyramid must be met before movement to the next level can occur. Maslow (1943) characterized the first three levels as basic needs and suggested that esteem and self-actualization, although highly desirable, might never be realized. These latter two levels are closely related with morale, whose relationship with workplace dynamics will be explored later in this chapter.

**Social Comparison Theory**

Dating back to his undergraduate days, Leon Festinger's research explored the dynamics of an individual's relationship with a larger group of contemporaries (Suls & Wheeler, 2000). Festinger's Theory of Informal Social Communication (1950) specifically dealt with group members' need to reach consensus in matters of personal opinion, in order to achieve validation. Four years later, his Theory of Social Comparison posited that people are inherently disposed to evaluate their own thoughts, actions, talents, and abilities by comparing them to those of their peers. Further, people possess innate drives both for reaching high achievements and for avoiding unfavorable comparisons to others. Finally, the strength of one's ties to the group correlates to the need to be like the group (Festinger, 1954).

More recent studies by Gibbons & Buunk (1999) have supported the notion that people evaluate their opinions and abilities for the purpose of self-appraisal, self-improvement, and self-enhancement. Additionally, while research has evolved to include both upward and downward comparisons (Tesser, 1988; Aspinwall & Taylor, 1993; Wills, 1981), until recently the focus has been on the comparers, rather than on the target of such comparisons (Henagan, 2010). While some award winners may experience pride and satisfaction, they may simultaneously experience guilt or discomfort out of concern for their peers' feelings. Henagan coined the term comparison target discomfort, or CTD, to describe the "uncomfortable state resulting from being the target of upward comparisons that are perceived to pose a threat to those making the comparisons" (2010, p. 61). Henagan concludes that the potential for CTD among award winners, along with the perceived threat to self-esteem among those who are not recognized, should "be an eye-opener for managers who are publicly acknowledging employee achievements" (p. 64).

**Dale Carnegie**

The human need to be recognized is also represented in popular culture, primarily in the form of numerous self-help books; the most recent data indicate that $9 million worth of self-help books were sold in one year (Larosa, 2006). One book that has enjoyed enormous staying power is Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936), which has sold more than 15 million copies (Larosa, 2006) and remains a best-seller today. Carnegie observed that

> There is one longing almost as deep, almost as imperious, as the desire for food or sleep which is seldom gratified. It is what Freud calls 'the desire to be great.' It is what Dewey calls the 'desire to be important'…The desire for a feeling of importance is one of the chief distinguishing differences between mankind and the animals (Carnegie, 1936, p.31).

## Summary

The work of renowned psychologists B.F. Skinner, Abraham Maslow, and Leon Festinger, along with lesser-known researchers and pop culture icon Dale Carnegie, clearly points to an innate need for recognition and approval. Below is a brief recap of the work of each, as it pertains to this study.

- Skinner's Theory of Operant Conditioning contends that all human actions are motivated by outside stimuli.

- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs maintains that humans have an inherent desire to achieve and to experience the respect of others.

- Festinger's Social Comparison Theory suggests that humans judge or rate themselves by how they "stack up" against others; further, they are programmed to desire to be "better" than those with whom they are being compared.

- Ironically, Henagan's Comparison Target Discomfort Theory posits that humans feel guilty when they are perceived as "better" than those with whom they are being compared.

- Carnegie gained fame and fortune by writing and speaking about humankind's desire to be important.

Invariably, people want and desire appreciation, respect, and admiration; further, they tend to modify their actions in order to achieve them. Although teaching is frequently viewed as an altruistic profession or calling, even those educators who downplay their needs are not exempt from having them. This actuality is important to remember as the current study moves forward.

## Recognition in the workplace

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 58% of the world's population spend one-third of their adult life at work (WHO, 1995). Considering the demonstrated need of human beings for praise and recognition, it therefore stands to reason that much of this affirmation should come from the workplace. Current practices of recognizing and rewarding employee performance remain rooted in early 20th Century behaviorism (Strickler, 2006). The following section explores theories and research studies which specifically address the psychological aspects of recognition at work.

### Motivation-Hygiene Theory

Inspired by Maslow's work, Frederick Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory posited that workers are not merely content with satisfying their lower-order or basic needs; rather, they actively seek out higher-level fulfillment such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and advancement. Herzberg further proposed that the presence of one set of factors leads to worker satisfaction, while another and separate set of job characteristics leads to worker dissatisfaction. Removing the

negative factors does not necessarily mean workers will be happy, and removing the positive factors does not automatically result in workers being unhappy. Because the two represent independent phenomena, Herzberg's work is frequently referred to as the two-factor theory (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959).

Motivation-Hygiene Theory assumes a greater importance when considering the work of Carpentier-Roy (Brun & Dugas, 2008, trans.), which suggested that the workplace has become the new focal point for socialization and bonding, and Brun (Brun & Dugas, 2008), which pointed to work as key in the quest for identity and self-fulfillment. Bourcier & Palobart's (1997) research indicated that one's career ranks second only to family in terms of life priorities (in Brun & Dugas, 2008, trans.). Albert Bandura, the cognitive psychologist whose early work focused upon behaviorism, contended, "Behavior is not created and executed purposelessly. People strive to exercise behavioral control to secure valued outcomes and to prevent or escape undesired ones"(Bandura, 1997, p.27). The chief desired outcome at work is recognition, followed by promotions and raises (Bandura, 1986; Stajkovic & Luthans, 2000). Studies support the notion that recognition is important, whether it comes from the boss or from coworkers, and that it is directly tied to employee's mental and physical well-being.

**Employer recognition**

Throughout the last half-century, numerous studies have identified employer recognition of employee contributions as a vital component of motivation and job satisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959; McGregor, 1960; Vroom, 1964; Porter & Lawler, 1968). In an International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR) survey of workers across Canada and the U.S., 92% of participants indicated that employee recognition increases job commitment and satisfaction levels. Similarly, a study of managers revealed that 90% of

respondents felt recognition increased employee retention rates (Saunderson, 2004). Conversely, two separate 1998 studies (Sethi & Pinzon and Dutton) identified lack of employee recognition as a "major, recurring source of employee turnover" (Dutton, 1998, p. 54). Not only do employers risk losing innovative thinkers when they fail to meet their need; they also run the risk of extreme reactions such as sabotage and espionage from particularly disgruntled former workers (Dutton, 1998).

**Money isn't everything**. Motivational speaker, business consultant, and best-selling author Bob Nelson frequently observes, "People may take a job for more money, but they often leave it for more recognition"(Nelson, n.d.). Huberman, Loch, & Onculer (2004) found that workers value status more than money; even those awards which do not include monetary gifts bring recipients increased status at work and in the community. Nelson (2002) reported that nearly 73% of managers saw improvements in worker performance when nonmonetary recognition was used.

Giving workers the proverbial pat on the back also yields rewards for employers. Hoy & Miskel (1987) concluded that work satisfaction has a direct impact upon the overall efficiency of an organization. Appelbaum & Shapiro (1991) suggested that small businesses (those employing fewer than 100 workers) unable to offer the same level of compensation as their larger competitors might focus instead on alternative, non-monetary methods. A study by Appelbaum & Kamal (2000) found that small firms can increase productivity as well as their attractiveness to existing and potential employees via job enrichment, employee recognition, internal pay equity, and skilled managers.

**Coworker recognition**

Being noticed and appreciated by coworkers is important to many employees. Appelbaum and Kamal (2000) noted, "Employees, like all individuals, need some acknowledgement of their accomplishments…there is a vast amount of evidence suggesting that validation of task

accomplishment by peers is a strong predictor of employee satisfaction" (p. 736). Earlier work by Brun (1999, as cited in Brun & Dugas, 2008) pointed to the need of workers to be recognized by clients and coworkers, in addition to supervisors, regardless of job type or level. Additionally, Brun and Dugas (2008) suggested that workers value recognition by peers, who are in the best position to judge their day-to-day performance, over recognition by supervisors.

**Health Matters**. Several studies indicate a link between recognition and physical and/or mental health. Good mental and physical health has rewards for employees and their employers alike. As McConnell (1997) observed,

> Recognition is often perceived as a costly, non-essential practice that generates no significant benefit to organizations…But, by recognizing employees' accomplishments, many psychological and motivational needs are met, resulting in enhanced performance. Elaborate and costly systems are not required for these simple acts of recognition to be implemented (p. 90).

Abualrub & Al-Zaru (2008) revealed that nurses receiving high levels of recognition for their job performance had low levels of stress and high levels of intention to remain at work; conversely, those who did not receive high levels of recognition felt more stress and were less inclined to intend to remain at work. Brun & Dugas (2008) similarly identified the lack of meaningful recognition as the second-greatest risk factor of psychological distress among employees. Bellingrath, Rohleder, & Kudielka (2010) found that overcommitted but otherwise healthy teachers with high effort-reward imbalances (ERIs) exhibited increased pro-inflammatory immune activity and decreased functioning of the immune system.

**Summary**

People want and need recognition; people spend a great portion of their lives at work. Thus, that people want and need recognition at work is a logical assumption. Below is a brief review of workplace affirmation psychology.

- Inspired by Maslow's work, Herzberg suggested that humans are particularly drawn to attain the esteem level on the Hierarchy of Needs. Further, Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory suggests that employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction are controlled by two separate, distinct set of factors, and the addition or removal of one set does not necessarily impact the other.

- Bandura maintained that all behavior has a purpose; further, in the workplace, the primary purpose of behavior is to achieve first recognition, then promotions, and finally salary increases.

- Contemporary research indicates that the workplace has become the nucleus for human socializing and bonding. Further, career ranked second only to family when individuals identified their life priorities.

- Employer recognition of employee contributions increases motivation, commitment, satisfaction, and retention. Conversely, a lack of recognition resulted in a decrease of the above.

- Employer recognition tends to outrank salary in worker satisfaction surveys.

- Being appreciated by coworkers is another important source of validation for employees.

- Research has established a direct link between workplace recognition (from both employers and coworkers) and employees' mental and physical health.

The current study will synthesize these findings while examining the efficacy of current teacher recognition schemes.

## Performance Awards: An Overview

One would be "hard pressed to find any area of society in which awards are not used" (Frey, 2006, p. 377). Medals, decorations, prizes, titles, orders, and other forms of recognition awarded by governments, businesses, academia, athletics, and the arts are commonplace in societies all around the globe (Frey, 2006). The proliferation of prizes in American culture has not escaped the notice of sociologist Joel Best, who explores the phenomenon in his book *Everyone's a Winner: Life in Our Congratulatory Culture* (2011). From bumper stickers touting a child's honor roll status to the awarding of certificates to every participant in a contest, Best cautions that an over-abundance of honors and awards tends to render them meaningless. He notes that the practice of handing out seemingly endless numbers of awards

> …flies in the face of traditional sociological theories that assume that status, esteem, honor, and prestige are scarce commodities, for which there is stiff competition that results in a few winners and lots of losers. In contrast, contemporary society seems filled with lots of status – and we're continually manufacturing more. Lots of people are encouraged to think of themselves as winners – at school, at work, and at play (Best, 2011, p.142).

Quantity does not equal quality; furthermore, awards must be perceived as valuable by the recipients. As McConnell contended, "Recognition must be carried out in such a way that it is administered in order to reward employee achievements that are indicative of commitment to the organization and are tied to specific accomplishments" (1997, p. 83). Geller (1997) suggested that many managers in private sector and government jobs alike need to learn *how* to give recognition. Nelson & Spitzer (2007) concurred, warning that employers run the risk of disappointing and

demotivating workers if an award is off-base. Finally, Messmer (2001) warned that managers should never reward workers for merely doing their job – that is expected.

Because schools are increasing compared to businesses in public discourse, the researcher will look briefly at business awards before exploring teaching awards in greater depth.

**Business awards**

Businesses of all sizes recognize outstanding employee performance, whether for landing a multi-million-dollar account or showing up on time every day for twenty years. Guidelines may be clear or implied. The dollar value of the award typically depends upon the size of the business. Awards run the gamut from cash bonuses, company stock, automobiles, all-expenses-paid vacations, and access to certain privileged areas (preferred parking, executive lounge, box seats at sporting events) at the higher end, to trophies, plaques, and designation as Employee of the Week/Month/Year. Alternative, less expensive ideas which have grown in popularity include giving employees gold-plated quarters or tokens inscribed with the words "thank you," as well as internet postings on the company's "applause" bulletin board (Nelson & Spitzer, 2007). The awarding of hand-written letters from the company president, opera tickets or ski lift tickets, or stuffed animals is being well-received at many businesses (Messmer, 2001).

**Teaching awards**

The literature on teaching awards is rather sparse; much of it is expository, rather than based on experimentally designed research (Carusetta, 2001, p. 31). Further, the preponderance of research is focused upon higher education. The process, purpose, and prize associated with recognition in academia differ not only from the non-teaching sector but also within the education field itself. Typically, teaching awards fall into one of two categories: Those involving "blind nomination," meaning nominees take no action and are often surprised at winning, and those

involving active participation from the teacher (Dinham & Scott, 2002). In addition to honoring and recognizing outstanding teachers, awards also are intended to provide role models for novice teachers, identify experts in content areas and then utilize their expertise (Dinham & Scott, 2002). Similar to business awards, the monetary value (if any) of the prize varies greatly, depending on the institution making the award.

**Higher Education.** Awarding teachers has traditionally been a murky process. Sullivan notes, "An irony of Academe is that we make professional judgments about teachers without direct knowledge of their teaching" (1995, p. 61). Mayrl contends that "due to the fact it cannot be effectively evaluated, it cannot be effectively rewarded" (1984, p.9). Yet in the U.S., nearly 70% of liberal arts and two-year colleges, and 96% of research universities, have award programs that honor outstanding teaching (Carusetta, 2001). Furthermore, at colleges and universities, teacher awards are tied to student evaluations and linked to tenure. The process can be daunting – nomination is followed by completion of lengthy documentation and interview processes – but the payoff may be tenure, four- or five-figure cash prizes, sabbatical time awarded, and of course, good public relations (Maryl, 1984; Sullivan, 1995; Kreber, 2001; Chism, 2006). Additionally, numerous regional, state/provincial, and national awards exist, such as the 3M Teaching Award (Kreber, 2001).

Adding another wrinkle to the equation is the ongoing tension between teaching and research at the university level (Kreber, 2001; Chism, 2006; Brawer, Steinert, St.-Cyr, Watters, & Wood-Dauphinee, 2006). It is generally understood that teaching is emphasized more heavily at institutions which focus upon undergraduates, while research reigns at institutions where graduate training is emphasized (Maryl, 1984; Kerr, 1995). Pierre van den Berghe famously opined that "Teaching is a necessary evil," with researching and writing providing the only means of escaping

"academic Alaska" (Maryl, 1984, p. 5). Receiving a teaching award at a research institution has been likened to receiving "the kiss of death" (Chism, 2006, p. 589). Rewards for good teaching are limited; punishment for poor teaching is rare; yet rewards for research and publications – and punishments for failure to achieve these – are common (Kerr, 1995). Sautter, Gagnon, & Mohr (2001) note that the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) sponsors the only national program to recognize college and university professors for their teaching ability.

    **K-12 Education**. At the elementary and secondary levels, teaching is usually awarded in-house, although businesses and philanthropic foundations also offer awards for excellence.

    *Business- and foundation-sponsored awards.* Below is a brief look at a sampling of the numerous teaching awards in the United States which are sponsored by corporations and/or foundations.

    **ING Unsung Heroes**. Established in 1995, this program awards $2,000 grants to K-12 educators utilizing new teaching methods and techniques that improve learning. One hundred finalists – and at least one from each of the 50 states -- are chosen annually to share the award with his or her school. From the 100, the top three are selected for the following additional awards: $25,000 for first place; $10,000 for second place; and $5,000 for third place. The top winners are selected by ING's Educators Advisory Board, consisting of six distinguished educators from across the United States. Based in Amsterdam, ING Group offers banking, investments, life insurance and retirement services to over 85 million private, corporate and institutional clients in more than 40 countries (ING.com, n.d.).

    **Milken Educator Awards**. Coined the "Oscars of Teaching" by *Teacher Magazine*, the Milken Educator Awards were begun in 1987 by education reformer Lowell Milken to "celebrate, elevate, and activate exemplary K-12 educators" (MFF.org, n.d.). In nearly 25 years, Milkens have

awarded more than $60 million in individual, unrestricted $25,000 awards to some 2,500 educators nationwide. While there is no formal nomination or application process, the Milkens target early- to mid-career teachers. An independent committee from each participating state recommends candidates, with the Milken Family Foundation making the final selections (MFF.org, n.d.).

*USA Today* **All-Star Teachers**. Each October, the newspaper honors 20 exceptional teachers nationwide. In addition to a trophy and $2,500 cash award -- $500 for the teacher, with the remainder going to the school to be used as designated by the teacher -- recipients have their photographs published and accomplishments noted in *USA TODAY* (USATODAY.com, n.d.).

**Wal-mart Foundation Awards**.  Established in 1999, nominations for this award program are open to any K-12 teacher nationwide. Individual awards begin at $1,000, with the potential for $10,000 in school grants for state winners and an additional $25,000 in school grants for national winners (Wal-mart Foundation, n.d.).

**Wal-mart Teacher Rewards**. According to the National School Supply and Equipment Association (NSSEA), teachers spent an average $356 out of their own pockets for classroom supplies during the 2009-2010 academic year (NSSEA, 2010). With this in mind, Wal-mart randomly selects 10 teachers from participating schools to receive a $100 Teacher Reward card each to purchase classroom supplies from a Walmart store, Sam's Club or online at walmart.com or samsclub.com (Wal-mart Foundation, n.d.).

**ASCD Outstanding Young Educator Award**. Established in 2002, ASCD's Outstanding Young Educator Award (OYEA) Program recognizes teachers and administrators under the age of 40 whose "creative and innovative accomplishments within the classroom, school, district, state, or region have had a significant impact on student performance and achievement over time and provide an ongoing model of excellence in encouraging all learners to succeed" (ASCD.org, n.d.).

Each winner receives $10,000. Formerly known as the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, ASCD is a non-profit educational leadership organization dedicated to advancing best practices and policies for the success of each learner. ASCD has 160,000 members in 148 countries worldwide (ASCD.org, n.d.).

**The National Teachers Hall of Fame**. Since 1989, the National Teachers Hall of Fame (NTHF) has honored five teachers annually who have demonstrated commitment and dedication to teaching. Inductees receive a $1,000 stipend, $1,000 in materials for their school, and a $1,000 scholarship for a student in the inductee's school district who plans to pursue a degree in education. Candidates may be nominated by anyone but must be certified classroom teachers (active or retired) with at least 20 years experience teaching in grades preK-12 (NTHF.org, n.d.).

**The Disney American Teacher Awards**.  The American Teacher Awards promote national teacher recognition and respect for the teaching profession by selecting and showcasing exemplary elementary and secondary school teachers whose classes and students represent the diversity of the American public and private school systems (Disney.go.com, n.d.).

*In-house awards: State Teacher of the Year*. Each state has a teacher of the year (TOTY) program. State teachers can nominate themselves or be nominated by parents and students. Each state's program is different, in terms of nomination, selection, and rewards. Those who are named State Teacher of the Year are also considered for the National Teacher of the Year Award. Procedures for selecting TOTY vary from state to state; Tennessee's Department of Education (DOE), for instance, establishes the selection criteria for TOTY from building level on up to system/district and then state (www.tn.gov/education, n.d.). Georgia, on the other hand, allows local school districts to determine how they select and honor TOTY at building and district level; the uniform selection process does not begin until one reaches the statewide level (www.doe.k12.ga.us,

n.d.). School systems also may use their discretion to offer prizes ranging from modest trophies to generous cash awards.

　According to Susan Ely, Recognitions Manager at the Georgia Department of Education (GDOE), sponsors of the Georgia TOTY contest vary somewhat from year to year. In 2010, United Healthcare was the title sponsor. Other major corporate backers included Georgia Natural Gas, Georgia Power, AirTran Airways, SMART Technologies, Apple, Inc., Blue Bell Creameries, The Coca-Cola Company, and Chick-fil-A. Georgia TOTY teach two days during the school week and spend the rest of the time traveling around the state and nation as an ambassador for education; GDOE pays for substitute teachers, and TOTY are reimbursed for travel-related expenses. More importantly, school systems are required to continue pay and benefits during the award year and to guarantee a teaching position (although not necessarily the original post) when the TOTY returns to the classroom. Prizes for the 2010 GTOTY included a SMART Board; $2,500 from the Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE); $2,500 from the Georgia Association of Educators (GAE); an iTouch phone; an iPod; Nintendo Wii Game System; two roundtrip tickets from AirTran Airways; an ice cream party for the TOTY's school; $250 in school supplies; and a plaque (S. Ely, personal communication, July 16, 2010).

　*In-house awards: National Teacher of the Year.* The nonpartisan, nonprofit Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) established the National TOTY award in 1952. The award is cosponsored by CCSSO and Netherlands-based ING, the world's largest financial institution; additional sponsors in 2010 included Target Stores, University of Phoenix Online, and People-to-People Student Ambassadors. In addition to State TOTY, top teachers from Washington, D.C., American Somoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S.Virgin Islands, and Department of Defense overseas schools compete for the honor. As with the State TOTY, the National TOTY is granted a

year-long sabbatical from teaching duties while traveling the nation and the world as an education ambassador (www.ccsso.org, n.d.).

**Positive outcomes of recognizing teaching excellence.** In a 2006 study of medical college faculty, 45% of teaching award recipients reported being inspired by the award to improve their teaching; furthermore, 91% of award winners valued the designation (Brawer, Steinert, St.-Cyr, Watters, & Wood-Dauphinee, 2006). In an investigation of the experiences of National Teaching Fellowship winners (Frame, Johnson, & Rosie, 2006), honorees cited such benefits as increased self-confidence, promotions within their institutions, cash prizes available for research, and establishment of career contacts overseas. Mackenzie (2007b) also noted that recipients of teaching awards felt empowered after winning and reported increased invitations to address audiences and participate in decision-making processes. Comments from recipients included "For the first time, I have been asked my opinion" and "(It has) opened doors like you wouldn't believe. I've been offered all sorts of lecturing opportunities" (p.197). In a separate study, recipients specifically mentioned the role of the award in helping prevent burnout (Carusetta, 2001). Participants in Dinham & Scott's 2002 study of award-winning teachers cited feelings of pride, fulfillment, and personal affirmation; others indicated that the award confirmed their career choice and led them to be more reflective in their practice. Even teachers required to complete portfolios as part of the nomination process felt that the work was demanding but worth the investment of time and energy.

**Negative Outcomes of Recognizing Teaching Excellence.** The research thus far seems to reveal a generally more negative than positive view of awards, in both teaching and non-teaching professions. Strickler (2006) cautioned against the use of internal competition, such as sales contests or quests for promotions or larger pieces of the budgetary pie, arguing that the practice causes more harm than good:

Proponents…like to argue that 'in the real world' it is acceptable, but…when people are forced to compete, the attention of those involved in the competition is focused on finding the best way to win the competition – which in the real world is a strong disincentive to cooperate with co-workers. Competitors' behaviors often include withholding information from fellow competitors, hoarding resources, and even cheating…Intrinsic motivation is destroyed when work is reduced to a mere economic transaction (p. 27).

An interesting dynamic is created when past award winners perceive that the latest honorees have not yet "paid their dues." Past winners want to ensure that the newest winners do not diminish the value of their own recognition and that they are at least as worthy of recognition as they were (Ford & Newstrom, 1999). Alternately, in many workplaces a prevailing attitude of "It's his turn this year" leads to disenchantment and accusations of tokenism (Carusetta, 2001; Warren & Plumb, 1999; Schwartz, 1992).

Jealous or resentful coworkers emerged as a major concern in several studies. Mackenzie (2007b) observed, "For every (worker) who receives an award, there will be many more who will not" (p. 198). In a study of award-winning real estate agents, Henagan (2010) found that top performers experienced CTD, or guilt, at having been recognized and expected their coworkers to react with negativity or jealousy. Geller (1997) argued the traditional approach of "praise publicly, reprimand privately" is misguided; both criticism and praise should be private, or employers run the risk of embarrassing some employees and creating ill will among others (p. 42). Several studies (Mackenzie, 2007b; Carusetta, 2001; Warren & Plumb, 1999; Schwartz, 1992)) revealed award winners who met with openly hostile or aloof coworkers upon receiving recognition – more than half, in the case of Mackenzie's study. Similarly, Brawer et al (2006) uncovered the perception that department chairs assigned more prestige to teaching awards than did the actual recipients.

Many non-recipients complained of being uninformed – whether intentionally or not - regarding the selection process (Dinham & Scott, 2002; Chism, 2006; Kreber, 2001; Carusetta, 2001). Some viewed the awards as "a cheap way of scoring political points" (Mackenzie, 2007b, p. 198) or as "an exercise in public relations" (Schwartz, 1992, p. 33); even honorees admitted to being "cynical" (Mackenzie, 2007b, p. 198) about the creation of, and criteria for, the awards. Ironically, many recipients felt that winning teaching awards actually hurt their careers, citing less time for research which could lead to promotion (Frame, Johnson, & Rosie, 2006).

The fewer people who receive an award, the more highly it is regarded; the higher the quality of an award, the more it is esteemed by the winner, his or her friends, and society in general (Frey, 2006). Dinham and Scott (2002) maintained that teaching awards are less prestigious in the U.S. than in Australia due to the sheer number of awards meted out each year. Frase (2001) reported that teachers respond more to intrinsic rewards than to extrinsic awards, then offered the seemingly contradictory observation that teachers who accepted offers of professional travel and training, instead of cash awards, were deemed more capable than their cash-collecting counterparts.

Finally, several award winners experienced increased workloads; reaction to this additional work ranged from feeling important and influential to simply feeling overwhelmed by added responsibilities (Dinham & Scott, 2002; Frame, Johnson, & Rosie, 2006; Mackenzie, 2007b; Warren & Plumb, 1999). After winning TOTY at his school, L. Davenport[*] (personal communication, June 9, 2010) intentionally did not follow directions on the district TOTY application because he did not want to take on the tasks associated with the award. Often these increased workloads were accompanied by health problems. One teacher who was recognized

*pseudonym

as TOTY at two different schools wondered if the added stress contributed to a near-fatal heart attack:

…there was so much work involved with both of the "honors"…I remember being given a 10-page questionnaire to be completed the day I learned I was TOTY. That meant staying at school until 7:30 that night. I was doing so much that year that it was a real pain…One of my TOTY duties was to purchase and assemble gift baskets for the Teachers of the Month (TOTM) the following year. I made my last basket for the new TOTY the week preceding the heart attack! This was in addition to being involved in so many projects…I did feel honored by the TOTY yet I was relieved when my year was over (V. Flowers[*], personal communication, June 8, 2010).

In summary, the literature over Teacher of the Year is quite sparse; most studies, articles, and books are limited to higher education and are concerned with whether teaching awards have a negative impact upon achieving tenure at research institutions. This study will fill the gap that exists in k-12 public education.

*pseudonym

## Chapter III

## TURNING TO TEACHERS

"Those who hope to understand teaching must turn at some point to teachers themselves" (Schubert & Ayers, 1992, p.v.).

This chapter describes the methodology which the researcher utilized for the study. In addition to restating the purpose of the study, it elaborates upon the research question, research design, the research instrument, data collection methods, and the method of data analysis. The chapter concludes with a descriptive analysis of the study's participants.

**Purpose of Study**

The researcher sought to explore the perceived efficacy of teacher recognition schemes in k-12 educational settings. More specifically, the researcher investigated teacher perceptions of the influence of Teacher of the Year (TOTY) awards upon teacher morale. The study sought to obtain the insight of both TOTY recipients and non-recipients. The results from the study will allow the researcher and school leaders to make inferences concerning the effectiveness of building-level recognition. The study's findings may lead administrators to modify existing, or initiate new, recognition programs with the goal of boosting teacher morale.

**Research Questions**

The overarching research question was as follows:

How do teachers perceive Teacher of the Year awards in terms of their influence upon the three domains of teacher morale as defined by Mackenzie (2007a)?

Specific research questions included the following:

$R_1$: Do teachers' perceptions differ based on whether they are recipients of this award?

$R_2$: Among recipients, do perceptions differ based on years of experience, level taught,

and career path?

R₃: Among non-recipients, do perceptions differ based on years of experience, level

taught, and career path?

R ₄: How do both groups perceive the overall effectiveness of Teacher of the Year in

terms of its appropriateness as a teacher recognition scheme?

**Research Design**

The researcher employed a mixed-methods design involving the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) defined mixed methodology as "a type of research design in which qualitative and quantitative approaches are used in types of questions, research methods, data collection and analysis procedures, and/or inferences" (p. 711). The study met Tashakkori and Teddlie's criteria for mixed-methodology through its use of the "Teacher Recognition Schemes" survey as the research instrument. The survey incorporated both a series of quantitative questions using the Likert Scale (Strongly Agree = 5, Strongly Disagree = 1) as well as several open-ended qualitative questions requiring respondents to elaborate upon their responses by providing examples as well as offering additional  insights and opinions.

While critics of mixed methods research argue that it privileges the quantitative over the qualitative (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Howe, 2004),  others (Creswell & Clark, 2010) counter this criticism by suggesting that mixed methodology actually offsets the weaknesses inherent in quantitative or qualitative research when either is used alone.

 **Research Instrument**

The Teacher Recognition Schemes Survey (see Appendix A) was informed by Mackenzie's studies on teacher awards (2007b) and teacher morale (2007a). The researcher utilized a research question/survey question alignment chart to ensure that all four specific research questions were

addressed by the survey (see Appendix B). Created using the Internet-based SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com), the survey opened with the appropriate informed consent verbiage required by Georgia Southern's Institutional Review Board. Next, Mackenzie's definitions of personal, school, and professional morale (2007a) were outlined for participants. Next were five demographic questions, designed for the purpose of aiding the researcher in further disaggregating the data into years of experience, grade level taught, and career teachers versus second-career teachers. The survey then employed skip logic to redirect TOTY recipients and non-recipients to individualized pages. With the exception of the first two questions for each group, all survey questions were identical and were grouped in clusters pertaining to personal morale, school morale, and professional morale. Both TOTY recipients and non-recipients were asked to complete 30 questions – two unique to their TOTY status; 16 closed-ended (quantitative) questions utilizing the Likert Scale; and seven open-ended (qualitative) questions soliciting further details from respondents.

**Participant Selection**

The researcher surveyed 198 k-12 teachers, 77 of whom turned out to be TOTY recipients, with the remaining 121 respondents identifying as non-recipients. The researcher utilized snowball sampling to reach as many teachers in the United States as possible within the predetermined time window. Also known as chain or network sampling, this strategy is frequently considered the most popular form of purposeful sampling. Researchers identify a few key participants who readily meet the established criteria for study participation, then ask these participants to refer them to others who would also qualify and might be willing to participate (Merriam, 2009). Information about the survey, along with an invitation to participate (See Appendix C), was disseminated via the following:

- **Educator-focused electronic mailing lists.** An electronic mailing list, or listserv, is "a special type of email address that remails all incoming mail to a list of subscribers to the mailing list" (Levine & Young, 2010, p. 380). Specific listservs used by the researcher included the following:

    o   American Education Research Association's Teaching and Teacher Education List (AERA-K)

    o   Education Discussion and Networking (EDNET)

    o   Effective School Practices (EFFSCHPRAC)

    o   Dead Teachers' Society, a forum for general education-themed discussions (DTS-L)

    o   SCHOOL-L, a discussion forum geared toward primary and secondary schools

    These listservs were chosen due to their prominence, widespread appeal among educators, and willingness to support research.

- **Social Networking Sites.** Social networking sites are "websites where people can create online profiles, photo albums and blogs, and can link to their friends' pages" (Levine & Young, 2010, p. 383). Users also may join common-interest user groups, organized by workplace, school or college, or other characteristics. The researcher used Facebook, a social networking website that has more than 600 million active users (Quantcast.com, 2011), including nearly 42% of the U.S. population (Wells, 2010). The researcher asked "Facebook friends" to help raise awareness of her survey by posting a brief blurb and the link to her Google Sites page. Also, "Facebook Friends" who teach were invited to take the survey.

- **Online chat rooms/bulletin boards**. A chat room is an online venue for a community of users with common interests to communicate in real time; bulletin boards, by contrast, allow users to post messages but are not interactive (www.pcmag.com, n.d.). The researcher utilized

http://forums.atozteacherstuff.com,and http://groups.google.com/k12.chat.teacher/topics, both of

which have chat rooms as well as bulletin boards and permit the posting of links.

- **Personal network**. The researcher drew upon personal and professional contacts not already

  covered by the above, using private email, phone calls, and conversation to encourage teacher

  participation and disseminate the information to as many people as possible.

**Data Collection**

After gaining permission from the dissertation committee and the Georgia Southern

Institutional Review Board (Appendix D), the researcher conducted a five-day pilot study with

retired teacher friends in order to determine and correct any problems with the existing survey. A

pilot study is an initial run-through, on a small scale, of the procedures to be used in an

investigation. Problems in procedures or questions may be corrected prior to the major study,

ultimately saving time for the researcher (Lancaster, Dodd, & Williamson, 2004). Eight retired

teachers participated in the pilot study during July 2011. In addition to minor grammatical errors,

the researcher was notified of problems with the survey's "skip logic," which was designed to

redirect respondents to a particular page depending upon whether she or he had won TOTY. After

modifications were made, the researcher opened the survey window for a period of one month. This

time period was chosen in order to allow the "snowball effect" time to occur. Next, she utilized

listservs, Facebook, chat rooms/bulletin boards, and her personal network by posting introductory

survey information and directing participants to her survey link on www.surveymonkey.com.

*Advantages.* Online surveys from websites are fast and inexpensive to create. Further,

because they may be completed at the respondent's convenience, they generally have a higher rate

of response than traditional paper-and-pencil surveys (Roos, 2011; Yun & Trumbo, 2000).

Additional advantages of using online surveys include the immediacy of feedback; researchers do

not have to await the return of survey responses via traditional mail service (Anderson & Kanuka, 2007).

*Disadvantages.* A potential problem for researchers who elect to use online surveys is survey fraud, in which respondents manipulate the data so as to invalidate it (Roos, 2011; Anderson & Kanuka, 2007). For example, a respondent may have claimed to have received TOTY honors when she, in fact, did not. Although there is no guarantee that respondents were honest, the researcher in this study hoped to improve the number of valid responses by using education listservs and targeting educators via social media. Additional areas of concern included survey security (Anderson & Kanuka, 2007). The researcher addressed this concern by password-protecting the survey results. Finally, procrastination in responding presents a third obstacle (Anderson & Kanuka, 2007). The researcher addressed this potential problem by sending weekly reminders to the listservs, Facebook, chat rooms/bulletin boards, and personal connections. By the end of the survey window, 247 teachers had responded to the Teacher Recognition Schemes Survey.

**Analysis**

Data generated by the survey was analyzed to gain understanding of teacher perceptions of the influence of Teacher of the Year awards on teacher morale. In order to answer the research question, the researcher compared TOTY recipients' responses to the online survey to non-recipients' responses, in the following manner:

1) For the Likert Scale (quantitative) questions, the researcher assigned numerical values to the answer choices; for example, "Strongly Agree" was scored as a 5, and "Strongly Disagree" was scored as a 1. The scores for each question in each of the three domains were tabulated. Independent t-tests were performed for survey questions related to Research Questions 1 and 4. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed for survey questions related to Research Questions 2

and 3. Post hoc comparisons were performed where significant F ratios were found. Statistical tests were performed on each subscale (personal, school, and professional morale) in addition to overall survey results.

2) In addition to the scales created from the questions regarding morale, there are three variables recording demographic information, and a fourth variable recording whether the individual has received a TOTY award. While TRS Survey Question #1, Grade Level Taught, provided categories K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 as response options, some respondents indicated that their schools encompassed different grading configurations – e.g., K-6, 3-5, 7-9, and so on. Accordingly, the variable Grade Level was changed slightly for analysis to include a new category, "Mixed," where Mixed means a teacher indicated working in a setting other than those originally available for selection. Thus, for the purpose of analysis, the categories K-5, 6-8, 9-12, or Mixed were utilized. Years Taught is a categorical variable as originally asked in the survey, indicating whether a teacher has worked in education for 0-3 years, 4-10 years, 11-20 years, 21-30 years, or 31+ years. Career Path is a categorical variable that is 1 if the individual has previously worked in an alternate career field, and 0 otherwise. Within the narrative, the abbreviations "CP1" and "CP0" are used for simplification. Finally, the variable TOTY Award is 1 if the individual has won a TOTY Award, and 0 if he or she has not. However, to avoid confusion, the designation "NTOTY" is used within the narrative to denote non-recipients.

The researcher utilized peer review, or the engaging of others knowledgeable with the matter, to review the statistical data, to ensure validity and reliability (Merriam, 2009). For the quantitative data, the researcher enlisted the assistance of two staff members from the University of Georgia's Statistical Consulting Center.

3) For the open-ended (qualitative) questions, the researcher read responses and utilized deductive coding for common themes. Under this approach, the researcher sought to match responses with Mackenzie's three domains of teacher morale, i.e., personal, school, and professional morale. The goal was to determine TOTY recipients' and non-recipients' perceptions of existing award schemes and to uncover their suggestions for improvement. Findings have been presented in narrative and chart form. Again, the researcher utilized peer review to ensure validity and reliability (Merriam, 2009). For the qualitative data, the researcher enlisted the services of a teaching acquaintance who holds an Ed.D. in Curriculum Studies from Liberty University.

**Study Participants**

The pilot study, which remained active for five consecutive days, yielded eight responses. The main study, which remained active for 30 consecutive days, resulted in 239 additional responses. After removing individuals from the data who did not appear to have finished the survey (that is, any individuals who merely logged on to the website, or who only supplied demographic information without answering the morale perception questions), 198 individuals remained in the data set. Of these, all 198 individuals answered all demographic questions, 197 individuals answered both personal morale questions, 194 individuals answered five or all six of the school morale questions, all 198 individuals answered four or all five of the professional morale questions, and 193 individuals answered all of the overall perception questions. Table 1 shows the individuals who remained in the analysis for each question.

Table 1

*Number of Questions Answered by TRS Survey Respondents*

| All Demographic Questions Answered | Both Morale Questions Answered | Five or All Six School Morale Questions Answered | All Professional Morale Questions Answered | All Teacher Morale (Overall Morale) Questions Answered |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| **198** | 197 | 194 | 198 | 193 |

## Summary of Demographic Variables and TOTY Award

This next section reports the frequencies of various demographic variables, including whether TOTY had been awarded. This formation reflects all responses to survey questions 1-4 and Question 6 and is presented in the order in which it appeared on the TRS. Question 5 invited respondents to provide contact information if they were willing to provide clarification or additional information and is not included here.

Table 2 gives the distribution of grade level taught among respondents. Some respondents indicated that they taught in schools which served students ranging from k-12 in the same building; others indicated that their schools encompassed grades k-6 or 7-9, groupings which were not offered on the survey. These responses were thus categorized as "mixed" settings; only 6.06% worked in mixed grade-level environments.

Table 2

*Frequency Distribution of Grade Level*

| Grade Level | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| K-5 | 93 | 46.97% |
| 6-8 | 59 | 29.80% |
| 9-12 | 34 | 17.17% |
| Mixed | 12 | 6.06% |

Table 3 gives the distribution of years taught among the respondents. The most frequent response came from mid-career teachers; approximately 31% indicated that they had served in the classroom between 11-20 years at the time of the survey.

Table 3

*Frequency Distribution of Years Taught*

| Years Taught | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| 0-3 | 8 | 4.04% |
| 4-10 | 55 | 27.78% |
| 11-20 | 62 | 31.31% |
| 21-30 | 51 | 25.76% |
| 30+ | 22 | 11.11% |

Table 4 gives the distribution of career path among the respondents (whether the respondents had previously worked in another field besides teaching). Of these respondents, slightly more than 43% reported that they had worked in another field.

Table 4

*Frequency Distribution of Career Path*

| Career Path | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 112 | 56.57% |
| 1 | 86 | 43.43% |

Table 5 provides a glance at previous career choices of teachers responding to the survey.
Broad categories used to group responses were obtained from the Georgia Department of Labor
(www.dol.state.ga.us, n.d.). Of the 86 participants (43.43%) who had worked in other fields, the
majority came from business and administrative fields.

Table 5

*Previous Careers of Survey Respondents*

| Career Field | TOTY Recipients | Non-TOTY Recipients | Response Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Business/Financial | 13 | 20 | 33 |
| Arts, design, entertainment, sports, media | 3 | 9 | 12 |
| Life, physical, social science occupations | 5 | 9 | 14 |
| Healthcare practitioner/techs | 1 | 8 | 9 |
| Office Management/Administrative Support | 7 | 26 | 33 |
| Protective Services | | 8 | 8 |
| Construction/Extractions | 2 | 6 | 8 |
| Sales | 1 | 12 | 13 |
| Food Service | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| Personal care/services | | 2 | 2 |
| Manufacturing | | 3 | 3 |
| Total* | 36 | 108 | 144 |

*The actual number of survey respondents indicating that they had worked in other careers was 86. Some respondents listed more than one other career path.

Table 6 reveals that nearly 65% of survey respondents had been recognized as TOTY *and*
had never pursued careers outside teaching; 35% of respondents had won TOTY *and* were second-

career teachers. By contrast, slightly more than half (51.24%) of respondents had never won TOTY

nor had they worked outside of teaching, while nearly 49% had pursued other careers but had never

been named TOTY.

Table 6

*Frequency Distribution of Career Path by TOTY Award*

| Career Path[*] | TOTYAward[**] | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **0** | **1** | **Total** |
| **0** | 62 | 50 | 112 |
| | 51.24% | 64.94% | |
| **1** | 59 | 27 | 86 |
| | 48.76% | 35.06% | |
| **Total** | 121 | 77 | 198 |

[*] For Career Path, 0 = no other career; 1 = other careers pursued in addition to teaching.
**For TOTY Award, 0 = non-recipient; 1 = recipient.

Finally, Table 7 reports summary statistics for questions Q33 and Q34, which were asked

only to non-TOTY award recipients. These two questions invited respondents to evaluate whether

they found validation of their work in ways other than winning TOTY and whether not winning left

NTOTY with self-doubt, respectively. Responses were tested to determine if there was any

significant effect of Grade Level, Years Taught, or Career Path variables on the responses. Scales

have not been reversed or changed in any way. No significant differences were found.

Table 7

*Summary Statistics for Non-TOTY Award Winner Questions*

| Variable | N | Mean | Std Dev |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Q33** (validation) | 120 | 1.35 | 0.4962 |
| **Q34** (self-doubt) | 121 | 3.73 | 1.0724 |

**Delimitations**

The researcher chose to restrict the current study to teachers in k-12 education. Research surrounding teacher recognition schemes is somewhat limited overall, and the focus of the majority of studies tends to be higher-level education. The current study thus fills a noticeable gap in the research.

**Limitations**

This study had the following limitations:

1) The study utilized snowball sampling. Relying upon the proverbial "word of mouth" to spread the survey did bring in 247 responses over 35 days (five for the pilot study and 30 for the main study), of which 198 were suitable for inclusion. However, because snowball sampling does not involve random selection, it is impossible to determine the possible sampling error and make generalizations from the sample to the population. As such, snowball samples should not be considered to be representative of the population being studied (Creswell, 2008).

2) There is the possibility that some respondents did not understand Mackenzie's (2007b) definitions of personal, school, professional, and teacher morale, although these definitions were provided at the beginning of the survey. The researcher arrives at this conclusion after reading some elaboration responses to particular domain questions. For example, when asked to expand upon their views on school morale, one respondent wrote, "Every school must have a TOTY; I don't believe there is an impact on the morale of the school. It is like having school rules -- you have TOTY." Another offered, "I don't know that my being honored affected anyone else." Although comments such as these occurred infrequently, the researcher acknowledges that they could indicate a lack of understanding of Mackenzie's definitions.

3) In spite of careful editing and the use of a pilot study to determine survey errors, one key question in the Teacher Recognition Schemes Survey had to be discounted. The response choices for Question 26, which stated, "Overall, I feel the TOTY experience was a positive one for myself," were misaligned. Rather than following the order "Strongly agree-agree-don't know-disagree-strongly disagree," the choices were ordered "Don't know-agree-strongly disagree-disagree-strongly agree." The researcher and her team of peer reviewers and statisticians made the call to exclude responses to this question, since it could not be determined if respondents read the choices as they actually appeared or if they assumed the choices were in the same order as all other questions. Statistical overview concluded that enough evidence existed to satisfactorily answer Question 26's premise without actually using Question 26.

## Summary

The study of teacher perceptions of the influence of Teacher of the Year awards upon teacher morale has relevance on many levels. First, the study will begin to fill the gaps in research surrounding teacher recognition in k-12 education; heretofore, the bulk of research has been aimed at higher education. Second, the timeliness of the topic – that is, checking the metaphorical temperature of the teaching profession during this prolonged multi-symptom illness known officially as a down economy and unfriendly political climate – will perhaps yield responses both informative and instructive. Finally, with a nod towards current trends in communication, the study will perhaps reach a wider audience; not only does the researcher believe this will make the study more meaningful, but she believes it will also help start an important conversation that has been on hold too long.

CHAPTER IV

PERCEPTIONS REVEALED:  REPORT OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

A perfect storm has been brewing in k-12 education over the past decade, one which serves to marginalize teachers and minimize their effectiveness. Even as federal and state mandates have tightened their grips upon local school systems, the sluggish economy of the past five years has led to layoffs and deep budget cuts for those who remain on the job. Juggling unrealistic government demands regarding student achievement, teaching larger and/or more classes due to workforce reduction, and bringing home smaller paychecks than they did just a few years ago -- educators truly are being asked to "do more with less." At the same time, politicians and mass media seeking to place the blame for a variety of society's problems repeatedly have pointed the finger at teachers. As a result, few incentives exist to enter or remain in the field. With little relief in sight, administrators and boards of education need to discover a way to keep teacher morale high with rapidly dwindling economic means. One such method commonly used throughout k-12 education is the Teacher of the Year award.

The purpose of this study was to determine how the Teacher of the Year (TOTY) award teacher recognition scheme was perceived by teachers in K-12 educational settings. In particular, the researcher sought to determine how teachers, both TOTY winners and non-winners, perceived the award's influence in the areas of personal morale, school morale, professional morale, and overall perception. Because other factors may have influenced these perceptions, the analysis took account of demographic factors including years of experience, level taught, and career path. The current study was also conducted to help illuminate attitudes and feelings towards the process of awarding TOTY and provide suggestions for improving, replacing, or adding to the current awards process.

The following overarching question was addressed in this study: How do teachers perceive Teacher of the Year awards in terms of their influence upon the three domains of teacher morale?

Delving further, the researcher sought to answer the following questions:

$R_1$: Do teachers' perceptions differ based on whether they are recipients of this award?

$R_2$: Among recipients, do perceptions differ based on years of experience, level taught, and career path?

$R_3$: Among non-recipients, do perceptions differ based on years of experience, level taught, and career path?

$R_4$: How do both groups perceive the overall effectiveness of Teacher of the Year in terms of its appropriateness as a teacher recognition scheme?

The purpose of this chapter is to examine responses to the Teacher Recognition Schemes Survey and utilize the resulting data to answer the study's research questions.

## Explanation of Data Analysis and Organization

In order to analyze quantitative data obtained from the TRS Survey, the researcher created four scales for each respondent: the Personal total, the School total, the Professional total, and the Overall total. First, the scales on all questions (with the exception of the $5^{th}$ and $6^{th}$ school morale questions) were "reversed," meaning an answer previously coded as "1" became a "5," "2" became a "4," etc., in order for high scores to represent answers demonstrating a high perceived level of morale related to TOTY. Next, the two personal morale question responses were averaged, the six school morale question responses were averaged, and the five professional morale question responses were averaged to create the Personal, School, and Professional totals. The first Overall perception question was not asked in Likert-scale form, but asked the respondent to indicate which of six groups of stakeholders expect a higher level of performance from TOTY award recipients, or

whether there were no increased expectations. One point was recorded for each group the survey-taker felt had increased expectations, and minus 1 point was recorded for those who felt there were no increased expectations. A score of "0" was not used, as this might suggest that the respondent had simply skipped this particular question. The resulting score was averaged with two five-point Likert scale Overall perception questions, which are each on a scale from 1 to 5 where a "1" indicates low perceived morale associated with TOTY and a "5" indicates high perceived morale associated with TOTY, and the Overall total, which is on a scale from 0.33 to 5.33 where a lower number indicates a more negative Overall perception of TOTY and a higher number indicates a more positive Overall perception of TOTY. Where summary statistics are provided, the information includes the number of individuals with data (N), the average observation (Mean), and the standard deviation (Std Dev, a measure of variability among respondents).

## Data Analysis Related to Domains of Teacher Morale

Responses to quantitative and qualitative questions are grouped according to the three domains of Mackenzie's Teacher Morale, i.e. Personal, School, and Professional Morale. The designation Teacher Morale points to the overall perception referenced in $R_4$.

### Personal Morale

Mackenzie's (2007a) definition of personal morale considers an individual teacher's personal circumstances, including health, family situation, and financial stability. The Teacher Recognition Schemes Survey contained three questions specifically addressing Personal Morale, two of which were quantitative: Question 3 asked respondents to evaluate whether receiving TOTY had a positive impact upon personal morale; and Question 5 inquired as to whether teachers derived personal satisfaction from the honor. Tables 8 and 9, respectively, reveal the summary statistics for

survey questions pertaining to personal morale, as well as results of independent samples t-tests, which compared TOTY to NTOTY responses.

Table 8

*Summary Statistics for Personal Morale Questions for TOTY & NTOTY Award Winners*

| | | TOTY | | | NTOTY | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variable** | **N** | **Mean** | **Std Dev** | **N** | **Mean** | **Std Dev** |
| **Q3** (Personal morale) | **77** | 4.21 | 0.8787 | 121 | 3.87 | 0.8261 |
| **Q5** (Personal satisfaction) | **76** | 4.21 | 0.7360 | 121 | 3.96 | 0.8602 |

Table 9

*Independent Samples t-test of TOTY v. NTOTY: Personal Morale*

| Domain of Morale | TOTY Means and SD Comparisons | | NTOTY Means and SD Comparisons | | Equality of Means | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD | df | t | P-value |
| Personal | 4.37 | .8375 | 4.0435 | .8284 | 195 | -2.84 | .0050 |

Note: A P-value <0.05 is deemed statistically significant.

Although differences in responses were not dramatic, they were statistically significant: TOTY recipients were more likely to perceive the Teacher of the Year award as having a positive impact upon teachers' Personal Morale. This finding is not surprising; one would expect the satisfaction derived from being recognized in the workplace to spill over into one's personal life. This is likely to be especially true for teachers, who frequently sacrifice both family time and personal finances for their work (Nagel, 2010). Many teachers experience the reality of spending hours on weeknights and weekends preparing lessons and grading assignments. Being

acknowledged by peers and/or supervisors would tend to make those sacrifices feel more worthwhile. TOTY recipients would have first-hand experience of these feelings and would not have to rely upon supposition of how they might feel in such a situation.

**An honor every teacher dreams of receiving.** Question 4 of the TRS invited respondents to elaborate upon their perceptions of the impact of TOTY awards upon personal morale. Although TOTY recipients were more enthusiastic in their evaluation of the award's impact, NTOTY responses were generally positive, as well. Comments are designated as TOTY for recipients, NTOTY for non-recipients, CP0 for no other career path, and CP1 for career experience separate from teaching. Below is a sampling:

Positive reinforcement is good for teachers, too. (TOTY, CP1)

With laws, budget cuts, and politics, it is hard for educators to maintain personal morale. Because educators are rarely praised for their efforts, being named TOTY encourages and validates that person. (NTOTY, CP0)

Every teacher dreams about becoming "the teacher of the year" at least once. (NTOTY, CP1)

Recipients and non-recipients of TOTY awards alike frequently used the words "honored" and "encouraged" to describe the impact of recognition upon personal morale. Recipients frequently observed that winning "boosted my confidence," "validated the time I've invested," and "reaffirmed my career choice." Worth noting is the fact that, while the question asked about Teacher of the Year specifically, respondents frequently observed that *any* recognition of their hard work was appreciated. The researcher suggests this means that teachers are not necessarily as invested in their

schools' current recognition schemes, as they simply desire acknowledgement of some sort for their efforts.

**School Morale**

School Morale, as defined by Mackenzie (2007a), is formed from the daily experiences of teachers in their schools and local communities. Questions in this vein comprised the largest portion of the Teacher Recognition Schemes Survey; there were six quantitative and three qualitative follow-ups. Quantitative Question 6 inquired about the positive impact of TOTY upon School Morale; Question 8 asked respondents about changes in coworker relationships, while Question 10 asked about changes in daily roles for TOTY winners. Question 12 sought perceptions of TOTY's being awarded based solely on merit; Question 13 inquired about resentment of those who won; and Question 14 asked if teachers "took turns" with the award. Tables 10 and 11, respectively, provide summary statistics for school morale questions and portray the results of independent samples t-tests comparing TOTY with NTOTY perceptions of the award's impact upon School Morale.

Table 10

*Summary Statistics for School Morale Questions for TOTY & NTOTY Award Winners*

| | | TOTY | | | NTOTY | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variable** | **N** | **Mean** | **Std Dev** | **N** | **Mean** | **Std Dev** |
| **Q6** (School morale) | **77** | 3.64 | 1.0248 | 120 | 3.44 | 1.0436 |
| **Q8** (Coworker relations) | **75** | 2.89 | 1.0600 | 120 | 2.88 | 0.9399 |
| **Q10** (Change in daily roles) | **77** | 2.73 | 1.1313 | 119 | 2.74 | 1.0039 |
| **Q12** (Based on merit) | **73** | 2.51 | 1.1319 | 119 | 1.98 | 0.9112 |
| **Q13** (Coworker resentment) | **74** | 2.99 | 0.9999 | 117 | 3.03 | 1.0822 |
| **Q14** (Taking turns) | **75** | 2.89 | 1.1806 | 118 | 2.71 | 1.0549 |

Table 11

*Independent Samples t-tests of TOTY v. NTOTY: School Morale*

| Domain of Morale | TOTY Means and SD Comparisons | | NTOTY Means and SD Comparisons | | Equality of Means | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD | df | t | P-value |
| **School** | 3.0756 | .6723 | 2.8922 | .5788 | 192 | -1.85 | .0662 |

Note: A P-value <0.05 is deemed statistically significant.

Interestingly, no significant difference existed between TOTY and NTOTY perception of the award's positive impact upon School Morale. While one might expect TOTY recipients to experience higher perceptions in this domain as well, a possible explanation might be that many survey respondents did not fully understand the meaning of School Morale. Although provided with Mackenzie's (2007a) definition, comments from TOTY and NTOTY alike led the researcher to surmise that many respondents interpreted School Morale as belonging to the entire faculty, as opposed to one person. Alternately, the results could indicate that TOTY and NTOTY share a certain level of antipathy toward the awards system. Lack of statistical significance notwithstanding, the quantitative data indicated that some questions struck a nerve with teachers. The notion of TOTY being based solely on merit, for instance, drew a 2.51 and a 1.98 mean score among TOTY and NTOTY, respectively, and a combined mean score of 2.18 (see Table 10, Question 12). Clearly, an award intended to recognize meritorious service is perceived as falling short of the mark. Similar inquiries about taking turns receiving the award also revealed negative perceptions (see Table 10, Question 14); mean scores of 2.89 and 2.71 among TOTY and NTOTY,

respectively, and a combined mean score of 2.78 further reveals that Teacher of the Year awards are perhaps perceived to be best at rewarding cronyism.

**Mixed Signals.** The responses to the qualitative follow-up questions for this morale domain also revealed mixed feelings about TOTY. Qualitative Question 7 asked respondents to elaborate upon TOTY's impact on winners' school morale. Questions 9 and 11 encouraged respondents to explain how coworker relationships and daily roles, respectively, might change as a result of winning TOTY. Several respondents noted that TOTY was a "pat on the back" that was especially meaningful since it was awarded by peers. Yet there was a recurring portrait of an awards system corrupted by jealousy, pettiness, and dissatisfaction. Sample responses to each of these questions are examined below and are again identified as TOTY, NTOTY, CP0, or CP1; additionally, they are grouped into positive or negative perceptions. Where applicable, responses which exhibit some degree of both positive and negative perceptions are labeled "mixed." When the researcher is unable to discern either positive or negative perceptions, responses are labeled "neutral."

Here is a brief sampling of responses to Question 7, regarding the impact of TOTY upon school morale:

*TOTY Positive Perceptions*

As a TOTY, I feel more positive about my work when I think others recognize my efforts. (TOTY, CP0)

It's nice to know that someone respects you as a peer, leader, and good teacher. Just knowing that you are appreciated makes coming to work a lot more enjoyable. (TOTY, CP1)

*TOTY Negative Perceptions*

I think once you've received the award, you don't feel much need to receive it again. If you haven't, it seems disheartening to compete in something that is determined by vote. There may be a fantastic teacher down the hall, but I don't really know him/her. (TOTY, CP0)

When the process is well run and has meaning – it is an honor. Recently, here in Plantville* and Plant County*, it seems that people take turns or discuss at grade levels who they want to nominate. (TOTY, CP0)

*NTOTY Positive Perceptions*

If a person feels valued and respected, he/she will feel energized and happy about what he/she does. (NTOTY, CP0)

Feeling as if your peers appreciate and admire your work can make you feel better about your work environment. (NTOTY, CP1)

*NTOTY Negative Perceptions*

I've heard a number of past TOTYs complain about the extra paperwork and responsibilities, but I've never heard one say that anything positive came from being TOTY. (NTOTY, CP1)

Those who pour their heart and soul into their assignment may sometimes feel it was not worth the effort when they do not win TOTY. I have known some who have made a joke out of the program and are not willing to participate in the voting. Most teachers do not really know the "real stuff" that goes on in another's classroom. (NTOTY, CP0)

---

* pseudonym

*NTOTY Mixed Perceptions*

It makes the individual feel that they are truly making a difference and it is noticed. To have

that kind of recognition in the workplace directly affects your attitude toward your career. It

does come with its added pressure to be the model teacher. (NTOTY, CP1)

I think TOTY winners may feel individual morale increase…however, from my experience,

if a teacher is unhappy at a school, winning TOTY does not change that. (NTOTY, CP0)

*Overall Response Distribution*

Table 12 provides the breakdown of responses to Question 7:

Table 12

*Perceptions of the Impact of Receiving TOTY Upon School Morale*

| Respondents | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Mixed | NR[+] | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TOTY- CP0 | 13 | 7 | 3 | 7 | 21 | 51 |
| TOTY – CP1 | 11 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 25 |
| NTOTY – CP0 | 15 | 5 | 12 | 7 | 23 | 62 |
| NTOTY – CP1 | 20 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 19 | 59 |

[+]NR = No Response
[*]For Career Path, 0 = no other career; 1 = other careers pursued in addition to teaching.
**For TOTY Award, 0 = non-recipient; 1 = recipient.

What the researcher found to be most noteworthy about teacher perceptions regarding

TOTY's impact upon School Morale is the sheer number of teachers who chose not to elaborate

upon their views – again, perhaps due to a general misunderstanding of the concept. TOTY with

previous career experience (44%) were the most positive in their assessments of the award's impact

upon school morale. Somewhat surprisingly, the group with the second-highest percentage of

positive perceptions was NTOTY with previous career experience, at 34%. These findings

potentially could speak to a favorable comparison with the recognition schemes offered by previous

employers. The researcher explored the  possibility is that the NTOTY were still relatively new to

teaching and had not become jaded; however, a check of NTOTY/CP1 revealed only three who had taught for three years or less.

Qualitative Question 9 asked survey respondents to elaborate upon any changes in coworker relationships, due to either a colleague's winning Teacher of the Year honors or receiving the award personally. Below are sample remarks:

*TOTY Positive Perceptions*

My peers were very gracious and supportive. Our relationships did not change. (TOTY, CP0)

Most of the people who get this award, in my experience, already have strong and respectful relationships with their coworkers. (TOTY, CP0)

Having achieved TOTY, more colleagues listen to you bring up a problem which needs solving, or a creative solution to a previous problem. In short, they respect your opinion more. (TOTY, CP1)

*TOTY Negative Perceptions*

A few were less friendly because they had not yet received the honor and felt like it made them look less successful. (TOTY, CP0)

Perhaps some are wondering why, despite their hard work, they are not recognized in this way. (TOTY, CP0)

*TOTY Mixed Perceptions*

Some people support you and others look for your flaws and point them out. (TOTY, CP0)

While there is a lot of positive morale that is established from this honor, there is also a heightened feeling of inadvertent pressure from everyone during the named TOTY year, and afterwards. (TOTY, CP0)

I really don't know. It was more positive in Page County[*] over 20 years ago. I did not notice resentment, but positive support. In Plant County[*] and Plantville[*], it seems like a yearly chore that has no meaning. When I first came to Plantville[*], my new principal had bragged so much about me, that I really never felt accepted and probably was resented. (TOTY, CP0)

*NTOTY Positive Perceptions*

I observed a recent school-wide Teacher of the Year become less stand-offish apparently as a result of being named TOTY. (CP1)

I believe that educators work so hard in their individual classrooms that they often don't see the efforts of others, so it instills a deeper respect for the work that person does. (CP0)

*NTOTY Negative Perceptions*

Some are embarrassed and withdrawn when the subject comes up; others want to be last word in all decisions. (CP0)

Sometimes it causes hard feelings between faculty members, especially if the selection process is tainted. (CP1)

*NTOTY Mixed Perceptions*

This may happen for some people, but I honestly cannot even remember who the TOTY was at my school last year. When we hear who the TOTY is, we usually know all their friends got together and voted. I have never changed my views of an individual based on TOTY awards. (CP0)

There seems to either be congratulatory or sour grapes responses from peers. (CP0)

*[*]pseudonym

*Overall Response Distribution*

Table 13 breaks down the responses to Question 9:

Table 13

*Perceptions of the Impact of Receiving TOTY Upon Coworker Relationships*

| Respondents | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Mixed | NR[+] | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **TOTY- CP0** | 5 | 15 | 5 | 11 | 13 | 49 |
| **TOTY – CP1** | 4 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 26 |
| **NTOTY – CP0** | 3 | 15 | 15 | 5 | 24 | 62 |
| **NTOTY – CP1** | 6 | 19 | 10 | 5 | 18 | 58 |

[+]No Response
*For Career Path, 0 = no other career; 1 = other careers pursued in addition to teaching.
**For TOTY Award, 0 = non-recipient; 1 = recipient.

Although "No Response" led across all four groups of respondents, the fact that negative

and neutral responses either tied or surpassed positive comments upon the TOTY Award's

perceived impact upon coworker relations does not bode favorably for the program. TOTY

recipients frequently perceived that their coworkers were jealous of their recognition; by the same

token, NTOTY often perceived an entitlement mentality taking hold of their colleagues.

Qualitative Question 11 encouraged elaboration regarding perceptions of changes in daily

roles of TOTY recipients. Below are some sample comments:

*TOTY Positive Perceptions*

They become the "go to" person when visitors come to observe, etc. (CP0)

I got more opportunities to be a teacher leader as a result of my receiving the district TOTY.

(CP1)

*TOTY Negative Perceptions*

You have to leave the classroom to do all the requirements for the award. It takes you out of the place where you are excelling. (CP0)

I was assigned several new committees after becoming TOTY in a short period of time. I finally went to the principal and said, "You've assigned me eight committees. Pick three." (CP1)

There is a lot of paperwork involved. You have to write many papers and this takes up a lot of your time. It puts a tremendous amount of stress on you. You have onsite visits from many others from around the state as well as in your county. (CP0)

*TOTY Mixed Perceptions*

Seems I was added to extra committees. This in turn made others feel differently about you. Some with respect and some not so much. (CP1)

In Page County[*] we were awarded a step increase and honored at a banquet. In Plant County[*] and Plantville[*], I'm not sure what resulted. In Page, the TOTY serves on a committee that meets periodically with the Superintendant to relay information. (CP0)

Some take the award as a vote of confidence; others take it as an opportunity to slack off. (CP0)

*TOTY Neutral Perceptions*

There was no change in my role. Once the award evening was over, there was no other honor or mention of it in my district except my name on a plaque, and I had to give a short speech at the next year's ceremony. (CP1)

[*] pseudonym

I didn't feel that receiving the award changed my daily role. I would hope that those

receiving it would already be giving their school all of their potential already. (CP1)

*Non-TOTY Positive Perceptions*

My observations find TOTY participating more in school wide events and being more

supportive of administration goals and ideas. (CP0)

More mentorship roles. (CP0)

Usually they are named "department chairs," "lead teachers," titles that come with more

responsibilities. (CP1)

*Non-TOTY Negative Perceptions*

Our TOTY has to attend monthly county meetings and type up information. She actually did

not want to win because of the extra work. (CP0)

Administration appears to favor those honorees. (CP0)

While being recognized, that puts the teacher on a whole new level. At our school, they then

become a part of the Leadership Team for the school and attend monthly meetings with the

superintendent. Lots more meetings and paperwork. They have even been asked to do

Professional Development and write grants due to their successes in the classroom. (CP1)

*Non-TOTY Neutral Perceptions*

It appears that the recipients may be given additional roles in the school but it could be that

the teachers had these roles previously and it led to their award – I am not certain. (CP1)

From my observation, being named Teacher of the Year did not change the role of the

honoree at the school other than having their name and picture on the wall. (CP0)

Most continue to do the same job as before. (CP0).

*Overall Response Distribution*

Table 14 shows the breakdown for Question 11, as follows:

Table 14

*Perceptions of Daily Role Changes Among TOTY Recipients*

| Respondents | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Mixed | NR | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **TOTY- CP0** | 12 | 15 | 6 | 1 | 17 | 51 |
| **TOTY – CP1** | 5 | 7 | 6 | 0 | 7 | 25 |
| **NTOTY – CP0** | 7 | 18 | 9 | 3 | 25 | 62 |
| **NTOTY – CP1** | 6 | 18 | 13 | 3 | 20 | 60 |

+ No response
*For Career Path, 0 = no other career; 1 = other careers pursued in addition to teaching.
**For TOTY Award, 0 = non-recipient; 1 = recipient.

Perhaps the results of this one question in particular should catch the attention of those in charge of Teacher of the Year programs for their school systems. A glance at Table 14 reveals higher combined rates of neutral and negative perceptions than positive ones across all four subgroups in the survey. A common thread running through TOTY responses was increased workload and responsibilities. While some teachers perceive that as recognition of their capabilities and are thus flattered, the prevailing reaction was a feeling of being punished for doing a good job. NTOTY responses tended to echo that sense of the award's inadvertently punishing recipients. However, NTOTY responses also indicated feelings that award recipients enjoyed preferential treatment by, and undue influence upon, administrators. All in all, the qualitative data bore out the dissatisfaction with TOTY programs indicated in the quantitative data, particularly in Questions 12-14.

**Professional Morale**

Mackenzie (2007a) described Professional Morale as being influenced by the status of teaching as a profession. Perhaps more than the other two areas of morale, Professional Morale is influenced by outside forces, such as media portrayal and public opinion of teachers and the teaching profession. The Teacher Recognition Schemes Survey included five quantitative questions and one follow-up qualitative question in this domain. Question 15 inquired about the perception of Teacher of the Year awards upon one's Professional Morale; Question 16 was the qualitative follow-up. Question 17 asked whether teachers placed professional importance upon winning such awards. Question 18 sought perceptions regarding a potential career backlash resulting from *not* winning TOTY. Question 19 asked whether future employers were impressed when job candidates could boast TOTY honors on their resumes, and Question 20 sought perceptions of community reaction to TOTY honors. Tables 15 and 16, respectively, provide summary statistics and the independent t-tests results for the quantitative questions in this domain.

Table 15

*Summary Statistics for Professional Morale Questions for TOTY & NTOTY Award Winners*

| | TOTY | | | NTOTY | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variable** | **N** | **Mean** | **Std Dev** | **N** | **Mean** | **Std Dev** |
| **Q17** (Professional importance) | **74** | 3.36 | 0.9733 | 119 | 3.03 | 1.0289 |
| **Q18** (Negative impact of not winning) | **77** | 2.30 | 0.9328 | 120 | 2.03 | 0.9118 |
| **Q19** (Impress future employers) | **76** | 2.76 | 0.8306 | 120 | 2.78 | 0.7355 |
| **Q20** (Increased community respect) | **77** | 3.60 | 0.9495 | 120 | 3.51 | 1.0125 |

Table 16

*Independent Samples t-tests of TOTY v. NTOTY: Professional Morale*

| Domain of Morale | TOTY Means and SD Comparisons | | NTOTY Means and SD Comparisons | | Equality of Means | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD | df | t | P-value |
| **Professional** | 3.1348 | .6416 | 2.9137 | .6498 | 196 | -2.47 | .0143 |

Note: A P-value of <0.05 is deemed significant.

As with Personal Morale, there was statistical significance in the difference of perceptions held by TOTY and NTOTY; TOTY recipients were more likely to perceive the Teacher of the Year award as having a positive impact upon teachers' Professional Morale. Again, one would expect this finding; the professional advantages that accompany such recognition are best-known by those who have experienced them firsthand. Depending on one's school system, being named TOTY might result in financial reward, the assignment of new positions and responsibilities, and increased respect and credibility. At the very least, being able to list TOTY among one's accomplishments on his or her resume could be expected to benefit one's career, regardless of the circumstances surrounding the selection and award process.

Qualitative Question 16 asked respondents to elaborate upon the impact of TOTY awards upon professional morale. Both non-recipients as well as TOTY recipients frequently used the phrases "Looks good on the resume" and "feeling of pride." Some noted that the award increased their sense of job security as well as opportunities to expand their career. Below are specific comments made by both groups.

*TOTY Positive Perceptions*

I feel it has a positive impact on professional morale in the sense that all your hard work getting to this point is recognized and appreciated. (CP1)

No matter what the process, it is positive to be recognized as a good teacher, recognized by one's peers. (CP0)

*TOTY Negative Perceptions*

It is sort of like a pay raise in business. But no pay raise. Ha ha. (CP0)

*TOTY Neutral Perceptions*

I'm not sure that TOTY is really talked about outside the school setting. It wasn't really something I discussed with other professionals, and didn't hold that much importance in my life. (CP0)

*TOTY Mixed Perceptions*

While I suffered some "punishment" by others who resented my receiving the honor, it did provide a great deal of personal satisfaction. When I had seen others selected for TOTY, it made me feel proud of the profession and happy for the recipients. (CP1)

*Non-TOTY Positive Perceptions*

It is easy for an educator to lose morale with the difficulties they face today, so recognition as a TOTY is a professional boost for an educator. (CP0)

Everyone likes to get a pat on the back whatever the reason, and that results in higher self-esteem and more effort. (CP0)

*Non-TOTY Negative Perceptions*

I would hope they know it's political and not real. (CP0)

*Overall Response Distribution*

Table 17 illustrates the overall responses to Question 16.

Table 17

*Impact of TOTY Upon Professional Morale*

| Respondents | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Mixed | NR[+] | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **TOTY- CP0** | 28 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 18 | 51 |
| **TOTY – CP1** | 14 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 26 |
| **NTOTY – CP0** | 22 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 31 | 62 |
| **NTOTY – CP1** | 28 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 15 | 59 |

+ No response
*For Career Path, 0 = no other career; 1 = other careers pursued in addition to teaching.
**For TOTY Award, 0 = non-recipient; 1 = recipient.

Statistical analysis indicated a significant difference in perceptions of TOTY awards upon Professional Morale. In spite of that, one should note the possible discrepancy between the quantitative and qualitative responses of NTOTY. At first glance, NTOTY respondents were more than four times as likely to have positive perceptions as negative ones of the award's impact. However, fully half of the NTOTY/CP0 group, and nearly half of the NTOTY/CP1 group, did not respond to the question. The researcher surmises this may have been a result of "survey fatigue," or perhaps a lack of connection with the award's professional ramifications.

**Teacher Morale**

Overall or Teacher Morale is the sum of teachers' personal, school, and professional morale (Mackenzie, 2007a). The study sought to determine how both TOTY recipients as well as non-recipients perceived the overall effectiveness of Teacher of the Year in terms of its appropriateness as a teacher recognition scheme; relatedly, it sought to determine TOTY's impact upon Teacher Morale ($R_4$). The Teacher Recognition Schemes Survey contained six questions – three quantitative and three qualitative -- related specifically to overall Teacher Morale. Question 21 asked if TOTY

recipients experienced increased expectations, while Question 22 invited elaboration. Question 23

solicited opinions on the overall effectiveness of TOTY in boosting teacher morale. Questions 24

and 25, respectively, asked respondents to suggest changes to the existing TOTY program and to

offer alternative forms of recognition. Finally, Question 26 sought views of the overall TOTY

experience for those who won it. Tables 18 and 19, respectively, present summary statistics for

teacher morale questions as well as the results of statistical analysis for the quantitative questions.

Table 18

*Summary Statistics for Teacher Morale Questions for TOTY & NTOTY Award Winners*

|  | | TOTY | | | NTOTY | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variable** | **N** | **Mean** | **Std Dev** | **N** | **Mean** | **Std Dev** |
| **Q21 (Increased expectations)** | **77** | 2.38 | 2.3510 | 121 | 2.35 | 2.1514 |
| **Q23 (Overall morale boost)** | **75** | 3.41 | 0.9739 | 119 | 2.98 | 1.0734 |
| **Q26 (Overall experience)** | **76** | 3.97 | 0.9930 | 120 | 3.74 | 0.7390 |

Table 19

*Independent Samples t-tests of TOTY v. NTOTY: Teacher Morale*

| Domain of Morale | Means and SD Comparisons | | Means and SD Comparisons | | Equality of Means | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | df | t | P-value |
| | **M** | **SD** | **M** | **SD** | | | |
| **Teacher (overall)** | 3.5066 | 1.2426 | 3.1998 | 1.1324 | 191 | -1.66 | .0992 |

Note: A P-value of <0.05 is deemed significant.

Statistical analysis did not reveal any significant difference between TOTY and NTOTY

perceptions of Teacher Morale. However, returning to Table 18, the data for Question 21 bears

some discussion. Question 21 dealt with the perception of increased expectations for TOTY

winners. The means were as follows: TOTY, 2.38; NTOTY, 2.35; and combined 2.36. In other

words, teachers tended to feel that there were no increased expectations, in terms of job performance, on the part of the community, parents, students, administrators, other teachers, or themselves, for TOTY recipients due to their receiving the honor. However, this information does not mesh with the qualitative comments.

Question 22 invited respondents to elaborate upon their perception of increased expectations from TOTY recipients. For this question, "positive" is understood to indicate that respondents experienced increased expectations, while "negative" indicates respondents did not experience increased expectations.

*TOTY Positive Perceptions (Increased Expectations)*

After I won teacher of the year, I had several colleagues come up to me and tell me that they'd specifically requested the counselor to put their children in my class for the following year. That's a lot of pressure to know that if you mess up, it'll be your colleagues hearing about it and possibly complaining to your supervisor. (CP0)

Everyone now expects the BEST all the time…pretty unattainable notoriety placed on TOTYs. (CP0)

I think TOTYs already have high expectations of themselves and their students, which is probably one of the reasons they are selected. (CP1)

*TOTY Negative Perceptions (No Increase in Expectations)*

In my district, I don't think there were increased expectations because the community wasn't that involved, colleagues and administrators already know the TOY's abilities and don't expect more. (CP1)

Being named TOTY did not make me feel that there was an increase of pressure for me to perform at a different level. In my experience, it was an honor to be recognized. My administrators did not act as though they expected more of me because of this honor. (CP0)

*TOTY Mixed Perceptions*

I'm not sure that I fully believe administration or anyone else expects more from TOTY. I felt that I should continue to do well and push myself to do better so that I would not disappoint anyone. I felt that if I didn't, administration may question why my peers voted for me. (CP1)

*Non-TOTY Positive Perceptions (Increased Expectations)*

I do think people outside the school community take it to mean more than it does. (CP1)

I think there is a mindset that if you are TOTY, then you must be a superior teacher so you have more expectations. These are self-generated and perhaps peer and administratively generated. (CP0)

*Non-TOTY Negative Perceptions (No Increase in Expectations)*

In short, I believe it is dependent upon their ability to say NO to extra work assignments. In our school there are individuals who volunteer to take on additional work because they derive a certain satisfaction from feeling needed or feeling important for their additional contribution. (CP1)

I don't believe expectations are increased. (CP0)

*Non-TOTY Mixed Perceptions*

I think the expectations do increase a bit, but not significantly more than the very high expectations that all teachers are held to. (CP0)

There could be an increased sense of expectations if you have truly earned the recognition,

or this recognition could be in response to already producing these results. (CP0)

*Overall Response Distribution*

Table 20 provides an overall look at responses to Question 22.

Table 20

*Perceptions of Increased Expectations Upon Receiving TOTY*

| Respondents | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Mixed | NR+ | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TOTY- CP0 | 11 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 20 | 50 |
| TOTY – CP1 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 11 | 26 |
| NTOTY – CP0 | 14 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 62 |
| NTOTY – CP1 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 11 | 34 |

+ No response
*For Career Path, 0 = no other career; 1 = other careers pursued in addition to teaching.
**For TOTY Award, 0 = non-recipient; 1 = recipient.

While statistically, both TOTY and NTOTY appear to perceive no increase in expectations

for TOTY recipients' job performance, the sampling of comments above reveal a different picture.

As more than one respondent noted, already high expectations for teachers get raised even higher

after the honor is bestowed; an almost impossible standard is set. Once more, a picture seems to be

painted of TOTY's being more of a punishment than an award.

**Seeking a Better Way**

Question 24 asked TOTY recipients and non-recipients, respectively, to identify areas of the

TOTY program which were ripe for improvement. While this question was optional, the majority of

respondents chose to answer it. Table 21 provides an overview of the most common responses:

Table 21

*Suggestions for Improvements to Current TOTY Award Programs*[***]

| Overall Theme of Response | TOTY-CP0 | TOTY-CP1 | NTOTY-CP0 | NTOTY-CP1 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Implement specific selection criteria | 15 | 9 | 13 | 12 | 49 |
| Student input allowed | 9 | 3 | 6 | 10 | 28 |
| Selection by administration | 6 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 21 |
| Parent input allowed | 4 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 14 |
| Don't know | 2 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 15 |
| Eliminate TOTY altogether | 0 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 8 |
| Standardized test scores included | 1 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 14 |
| Selection by teachers | 6 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 16 |
| Honor multiple TOTY | 3 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 12 |
| Classroom observations | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 8 |
| Monitor past student success | 0 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 14 |
| Third party vote count | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| Selection by ad hoc committee | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Unfamiliar with current process | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 6 |
| Standardized test scores not included | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| Extra time with parents and students | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| Statewide consistency | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 6 |
| Conduct vote in private | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| **Total** | **65** | **34** | **82** | **88** | **269** |

*For Career Path, 0 = no other career; 1 = other careers pursued in addition to teaching.
**For TOTY Award, 0 = non-recipient; 1 = recipient.
[***]
    Some respondents offered more than one suggested change.

While 46 of 198 respondents, or 23%, specifically remarked that there was no need for change to Teacher of the Year, there was no shortage of suggestions for improving the award. TOTY and NTOTY were almost evenly divided (11-10) in their belief that some degree of student input should be considered in choosing TOTY, as students would be more familiar with an individual teacher's effectiveness than a colleague who rarely, if ever, observes that teacher's class. Twelve respondents, seven of whom were TOTY recipients, contended that teachers alone should

make the TOTY selection; some offered the opinion that administrator selection would lead to accusations of favoritism.

The two camps were more divided on other issues. Non-recipients outnumbered recipients 10-4 on allowing parent contribution to the TOTY selection process. An equal number of respondents believed changes should be made to TOTY, although they could not articulate what those changes should be; non-TOTY recipients comprised 11 of this group. Thirteen respondents, 12 of whom were non-TOTY recipients, wanted to consider standardized test scores for a particular teacher's students when making the selection.

**Alternative Methods of Recognition**

Question 25 asked respondents to suggest alternatives to teacher recognition schemes currently utilized by their schools. Table 22 lists the most common suggestions from survey respondents.

Table 22

*Alternative Recognition Schemes*

| Suggested Alternative | TOTY-CP0 | TOTY-CP1 | NTOTY-CP0 | NTOTY-CP1 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Weekly or monthly recognition at faculty meetings, in school newsletter, on "Recognition Walls," and on school website | 14 | 4 | 19 | 12 | 49 |
| Being thanked (verbally or in writing) by an administrator | 7 | 4 | 14 | 6 | 31 |
| Monetary compensation (pay raises; bonuses; stipends for supplies, activities, or projects) | 8 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 20 |
| Recognition by professional organizations and community agencies, rather than by the school | 3 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 12 |
| "Free Time" – e.g., extra personal day; ability to leave campus for lunch or errands; ability to leave campus early "just because" | 1 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 8 |
| "Perks" such as preferential parking, blue jeans passes, etc. | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 6 |
| Recognition for specific areas of achievement (e.g., technology integration, real-world experiences, extra-curricular assistance, etc.) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| Comp time for extra-curricular activities (e.g., tutoring, sponsoring clubs, attending PTA, etc.) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| Additional planning period | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Freedom from duties | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| **Total** | 36 | 19 | 44 | 40 | 139 |

Note: Some respondents offered more than one suggestion.
*For Career Path, 0 = no other career; 1 = other careers pursued in addition to teaching.
**For TOTY Award, 0 = non-recipient; 1 = recipient.

Below is a sampling of remarks made by study respondents. Their ideas for recognition reflect a wide range of expectations.

I would simply like for (administration) to treat me as a professional as they would members of any other profession – doctors, attorneys, engineers, etc. (TOTY, CP1)

POSITIVE media coverage. (TOTY, CP1)

Maybe honor Teacher of the Month and this way more teachers could be in the spotlight. There is no one teacher than can possibly outshine everyone else. In other words, I do not believe one person and only one person (per year) can be that far superior to all others. (NTOTY, CP1)

Look at the way other employees in other areas are recognized for the work they do. (NTOTY, CP0)

Verbal praise always works well and costs nothing. (NTOTY, CP0)

Survey respondents offered numerous suggestions for alternatives to Teacher of the Year, including substituting Teacher of the Week or Teacher of the Month, in order to acknowledge a greater number of faculty members. Overwhelmingly, teachers indicated that they would be satisfied with sincere, frequent, verbal or written expressions of appreciation from administrators who noticed their hard work. Monetary awards, in the form of pay increases, bonuses, and stipends for projects and classroom supplies, were frequently suggested, albeit with the tacit knowledge that these were not likely to happen. Perhaps teachers' practical sides motivated them to suggest no-cost recognitions, such as extra planning periods, release from duty, occasional off-campus lunches, and comp time for after-hours meetings and events.

Finally, Quantitative Question 26 asked both groups about their perceptions of the *overall* TOTY experience. Only 12 of 77 TOTY, or 16%, indicated "Agree" or "Strongly Agree," while a surprising 81% did not respond at all. For NTOTY, however, 83 of 177, or nearly 47%, indicated

"Agree" or "Strongly Agree." The researcher suggests this may indicate the proverbial "grass is greener" situation; winning and serving as TOTY apparently is not as rewarding as it may seem.

**Emerging themes**

A review of the qualitative responses for each domain revealed several themes. These are outlined below, with a sampling of responses for each.

1. *Teachers Perceive TOTY Selection to be a Murky, Mysterious Process.*

Overwhelmingly, survey respondents unhappy with the TOTY program pointed to a lack of clearly-defined criteria for determining their school's Teacher of the Year. While one might predict that NTOTY respondents were in the majority in desiring change, TOTY honorees outnumbered their non-recipient counterparts 23-11 in calling for specific selection guidelines. As one former TOTY remarked, "Although I 'won,' I'm still not exactly sure what the selection process is." In those instances in which teachers were aware of the selection process, respondents pointed to inconsistencies within their own state and, in many cases, within their own school district. Below is a sampling of responses from the 28 teachers who cited a need for TOTY selection criteria:

There need to be state-wide guidelines. Even within counties, the selection process differs from school-to-school. (TOTY, CP1)

It should be based on merit, by observation and data documentation. A fellow teacher does not know everything going on in every classroom when there are over 80 teachers in one school. (NTOTY, CP1)

The researcher suggests that *any* award which lacks clear, consistent guidelines for the selection process will always be regarded as suspect and second-rate. In this age of micro-management of seemingly all areas of education, recognizing talent and dedicated service seems to

be the only omission. Fortunately, establishing common and equitable Teacher of the Year criteria –

and implementing them – does not require a new line on a school system's budget.

2. *Teachers Perceive TOTY as a Popularity Contest.*

The predominant image of Teacher of the Year programs, as portrayed by both TOTY and

NTOTY, was that of a popularity contest which breeds discontent among coworkers; in fact, the

phrase "popularity contest" was used eight times by the former and 20 times by the latter in

qualitative elaborations. Below is a sampling of the comments:

> Colleagues voting for one another often leads to a popularity contest reminiscent of voting
>
> for the Prom Queen and King in high school… the most deserving teachers, the ones who
>
> work their tails off every day and have the results to prove it, are often overlooked.
>
> (NTOTY, CP0)
>
> Some people think that TOTY is a popularity contest and do not care for the person who is
>
> honored. Jealousy is as much alive in adults as it is in our kids. (NTOTY, CP0)

As a possible solution to the "prom king and queen" element, several respondents advocated

changes such as selection exclusively at the hands of administrators or teachers; twenty-one

respondents deemed that administrators alone should have the responsibility of choosing TOTY. A

common observation among those making this suggestion was the fact that administrators typically

are much more aware of what is going on in classrooms throughout the building, while most

teachers do not have many opportunities to observe their colleagues in action. Some respondents

contended that administrator selection would eliminate any question of a "popularity vote." Others

recognized this solution's potential for discord, as it might lead to claims of favoritism or prejudice

on the part of administrators. While it is not the researcher's intent to rewrite policy single-

handedly, she suggests that administration's role in the process be minimal and clearly defined, out of fairness to both teachers *and* to them.

3. *Teachers are Dissatisfied with Administration's Role in the Process.*

Both TOTY and NTOTY reported displeasure with the manner in which administrators manage the TOTY selection process. Respondents portrayed a disorganized, almost nonchalant attitude toward the award on the part of some administrators. More than a few teachers characterized the TOTY awards process at their schools as being almost an afterthought on the part of administration:

> It should be a meaningful, thought-out process…Now it's "Quick, write down someone on the slip of paper – we're voting for Teacher of the Year today." (TOTY, CP0)

> It usually is a last minute directive from administration to "hurry and vote for TOTY" at a staff meeting. Or a request by email during a busy time of the year. At my last school only a small percentage actually voted. (NTOTY, CP0)

> The lack of administrator support and enthusiasm was especially evident in one school

where a former TOTY learned of her honor in the hallway, from an administrator who happened to be passing through. Some teachers made claims of favoritism on the part of principals, hinting or bluntly stating that administrators frequently tampered with the vote in order to ensure that their teacher of choice won. A sentiment common to many teachers was their preference that no recognition take place at all, if the award was not going to be implemented fairly or endorsed whole-heartedly by administration.

*4. Teachers Frequently Perceive TOTY to be a Punishment.*

When is an award actually a punishment in disguise? When it is called the "Teacher of the Year" award, according to many survey respondents. A recurring theme, from both TOTY and non-TOTY recipients alike, was the inevitable extra work load for award winners:

> Even though it is an honor, there is so much work involved for the nominee that is also can be viewed as a punishment. (NTOTY, CP0)

> I was too worried about being visited and having a packet of paperwork to enjoy the experience of TOTY. There were no real "perks" that came with the title, only extra work. (TOTY, CP1)

Both TOTY recipients and non-recipients complained that honorees were assigned to multiple committees, had a revolving door of visitors seeking to observe their teaching, and were pressured by principals to compete for district-level TOTY. This next level of competition frequently involved unannounced group observations, the writing of several essays, and the completion of lengthy, detailed forms – typically during the hectic first few weeks of a new academic year. The reward for this recognition: Heightened stress levels and the resentment of coworkers who felt that *they* should have won.

## Data Analysis Related to Demographics

Utilizing the information obtained from survey questions 1-4 and 6, along with quantitative data represented by Table 8, the researcher next endeavored to answer research questions 1-4. This required additional statistical analyses, the results of which are portrayed and interpreted below.

**Comparing Perceptions: TOTY v. NTOTY**

The Teacher Recognitions Scheme Survey revealed that 77 of the 198 teacher respondents (approximately 39%) who comprised the final study sample had received Teacher of the Year Awards at some point in their careers. In order to compare the responses of recipients of Teacher of the Year awards with those teachers who had not, independent samples t-tests were conducted.

Survey data indicated a significant effect of whether or not the respondents had received TOTY recognition. Those respondents who had been honored as TOTY perceived the award as having a greater influence upon Personal and Professional Morale than those who had never won. Again, these findings are consistent with what one might reasonably expect of award winners, as they have had firsthand experience of both the personal and professional benefits of winning. While some NTOTY respondents acknowledged the award's potential impact, the researcher suggests that others tended to downplay the desirability of an honor they had never attained. There was no statistical significance regarding TOTY and NTOTY recipients' perception of School Morale. The researcher suggests this may be due to survey respondents' lack of understanding of the term, in spite of being provided with Mackenzie's (2007a) definition. Comments such as "I don't see why my winning would impact the rest of the school's morale" lend credence to this suggestion.

**Level, Experience, and Career: Intra-Group Comparisons**

Next, the researcher sought to uncover differences in perceptions within the TOTY group, and also within the NTOTY group, that could be explained by differences in grade level taught, years in the classroom, and career path. In order to answer these next two questions, the researcher utilized one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The ANOVA compares the means of the response across the levels of the categorical predictor variable. If the differences are large enough compared

to the variability of the responses within each level of the categorical predictor variable, then the difference is considered statistically significant. The determination of statistical significance for ANOVA is based on a calculated F-statistic, which results in a *P-value*. The P-value for the analysis can be defined as the probability that a population with no differences among the demographic categories would produce differences as large as or larger than the differences found in the chosen random sample. If that probability is very small, typically less than 0.05 (5%), then one can determine that it is not likely that the sample came from a population with no differences between the demographic categories, and is therefore likely that there are differences between the demographic categories in the population (Coladarci, Cobb, Minium, and Clarke, 2007).

Four separate one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were run on both grade level taught and number of years taught, in order to compare responses across the domains of personal, school, and professional morale. Had significant F-ratios been found, post-hoc tests would have been conducted; however, this proved to be unnecessary. Table 23 shows one-way ANOVA results for the variable grade level taught, for TOTY recipients.

Table 23

*One-way ANOVA for TOTY: Grade Level Taught*

| Grade Level Taught | Personal Morale | | School Morale | | Professional Morale | | Teacher Morale | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | Std Dev | Mean | Std Dev | Mean | Std Dev | Mean | Std Dev |
| K-5 | 4.28 | 0.57 | 3.00 | 0.47 | 3.07 | 0.46 | 3.41 | 0.93 |
| 6-8 | 4.08 | 0.80 | 2.70 | 0.53 | 3.03 | 0.63 | 3.09 | 1.18 |
| 9-12 | 4.44 | 0.58 | 3.30 | 0.45 | 2.80 | 0.33 | 3.41 | 0.95 |
| Mixed | 3.90 | 1.24 | 2.93 | 1.11 | 2.84 | 0.91 | 2.73 | 1.36 |

| Personal | Source | DF | SS | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Model | 3 | 1.53 | 0.51 | 1.03 | 0.3847 |
| | Error | 72 | 35.60 | 0.49 | | |
| | Corrected Total | 75 | 37.13 | | | |

| School | Source | DF | SS | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Model | 3 | 2.51 | 0.84 | 2.84 | 0.0440 |
| | Error | 70 | 20.65 | 0.30 | | |
| | Corrected Total | 73 | 23.17 | | | |

| Professional | Source | DF | SS | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Model | 3 | 0.70 | 0.23 | 0.79 | 0.5029 |
| | Error | 73 | 21.44 | 0.29 | | |
| | Corrected Total | 76 | 22.14 | | | |

| Teacher | Source | DF | SS | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Model | 3 | 3.15 | 1.05 | 0.96 | 0.4145 |
| | Error | 71 | 77.30 | 1.09 | | |
| | Corrected Total | 74 | 80.44 | | | |

Table 23 reveals that, among TOTY recipients, the grade level at which a teacher taught did not have a significant impact upon his or her perception of the influence of TOTY upon personal, school, professional, or teacher morale.  The researcher had anticipated that these demographic factors would make a difference in how teachers perceived the teaching award program. Perhaps due to a stereotyped notion of elementary teachers as young, naïve, and more likely to place importance on awards, she expected more enthusiasm about Teacher of the Year among newer, elementary or middle school teachers whose only career experience was in teaching. Conversely, she anticipated that teachers who were more experienced, taught high school, had worked in other careers, or some combination of all of these, would be less likely to place a lot of faith in Teacher of the Year programs. However, these preconceived notions did not match the research data. The researcher suggests that individual school climate, including leadership attitude towards TOTY, may account for the reported results.

Table 24 provides the one-way ANOVA results for NTOTY, for the variable grade level taught.

Table 24

*One-way ANOVA for NTOTY: Grade Level Taught*

| Grade Level Taught | Personal Morale | | School Morale | | Professional Morale | | Teacher Morale | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | Std Dev | Mean | Std Dev | Mean | Std Dev | Mean | Std Dev |
| K-5 | 3.96 | 0.73 | 2.73 | 0.54 | 2.81 | 0.60 | 3.03 | 1.05 |
| 6-8 | 3.84 | 0.69 | 2.79 | 0.48 | 2.87 | 0.55 | 3.07 | 0.88 |
| 9-12 | 3.88 | 0.77 | 2.92 | 0.48 | 2.83 | 0.54 | 3.12 | 0.95 |
| Mixed | 4.00 | 0.76 | 2.95 | 0.47 | 2.46 | 0.50 | 2.38 | 1.08 |

| Personal | Source | DF | SS | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Model | 3 | 0.39 | 0.13 | 0.24 | 0.867 |
| | Error | 117 | 62.45 | 0.53 | | |
| | Corrected Total | 120 | 62.84 | | | |

| School | Source | DF | SS | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Model | 3 | 1.00 | 0.33 | 1.04 | 0.3780 |
| | Error | 117 | 37.66 | 0.32 | | |
| | Corrected Total | 120 | 38.66 | | | |

| Professional | Source | DF | SS | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Model | 3 | 0.82 | 0.27 | 1.07 | 0.3633 |
| | Error | 116 | 29.56 | 0.25 | | |
| | Corrected Total | 119 | 30.38 | | | |

| Teacher | Source | DF | SS | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Model | 3 | 3.19 | 1.06 | 1.10 | 0.3543 |
| | Error | 114 | 110.87 | 0.97 | | |
| | Corrected Total | 117 | 114.06 | | | |

Table 24 reveals that, among NTOTY recipients as well, the grade level at which a teacher taught did not have a significant impact upon his or her perception of the influence of TOTY upon personal, school, professional, or teacher morale.  Again, the researcher had anticipated that these demographic factors would make a difference in how teachers perceived the teaching award program, in that she expected elementary teachers to place more importance upon TOTY awards than their middle and high school counterparts. However, these preconceived notions did not match the research data. Again, the researcher suggests that individual school climate, including leadership attitude towards TOTY, may account for the reported results.

Next, one-way ANOVAS were run for the variable years taught. Table 25 provides the results for TOTY.

Table 25

*One-way ANOVA for TOTY: Years Taught*

| Years Taught | Personal Morale | | School Morale | | Professional Morale | | Teacher Morale | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | Std Dev | Mean | Std Dev | Mean | Std Dev | Mean | Std Dev |
| 0-3 | 4.00 | - | 2.83 | - | 3.40 | - | 3.33 | - |
| 4-10 | 4.35 | 0.66 | 2.97 | 0.66 | 3.02 | 0.54 | 3.31 | 0.96 |
| 11-20 | 4.12 | 0.79 | 2.97 | 0.60 | 3.05 | 0.61 | 3.51 | 1.08 |
| 21-30 | 4.30 | 0.72 | 2.98 | 0.49 | 3.04 | 0.54 | 3.29 | 1.01 |
| 31+ | 4.12 | 0.58 | 2.81 | 0.58 | 2.84 | 0.40 | 2.58 | 1.02 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Personal | Source | DF | SS | MS | F | P | | |
| | Model | 4 | 0.84 | 0.21 | 0.41 | 0.8006 | | |
| | Error | 71 | 36.29 | 0.51 | | | | |
| | Corrected Total | 75 | 37.13 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| School | Source | DF | SS | MS | F | P | | |
| | Model | 4 | 0.29 | 0.07 | 0.22 | 0.9284 | | |
| | Error | 69 | 22.88 | 0.33 | | | | |
| | Corrected Total | 73 | 23.17 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Professional | Source | DF | SS | MS | F | P | | |
| | Model | 4 | 0.61 | 0.15 | 0.51 | 0.7280 | | |
| | Error | 72 | 21.53 | 0.30 | | | | |
| | Corrected Total | 76 | 22.14 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Teacher | Source | DF | SS | MS | F | P | | |
| | Model | 4 | 6.87 | 1.72 | 1.63 | 0.1754 | | |
| | Error | 70 | 73.58 | 1.05 | | | | |
| | Corrected Total | 74 | 80.44 | | | | | |

Table 25 indicates that the number of years taught did not significantly change TOTY

recipients' perception of the impact of TOTY upon personal, school, professional, or teacher

morale. The researcher had anticipated that newer teachers would have greater perceptions of the

impact of Teacher of the Year across all domains, while veteran teachers would be more skeptical about the value of the award. The actual findings, that length of time as a teacher did not significantly change perception of TOTY's impact, could be a reflection of the emphasis or value placed upon TOTY at a given school; certainly the award is more highly valued in some school settings than in others.

Finally, Table 26 provides one-way ANOVA results for NTOTY for the variable years taught.

Table 26

*One-way ANOVA for NTOTY: Years Taught*

| Years Worked | Personal Morale | | School Morale | | Professional Morale | | Teacher Morale | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | Std Dev | Mean | Std Dev | Mean | Std Dev | Mean | Std Dev |
| 0-3 | 3.93 | 0.53 | 2.88 | 0.23 | 2.89 | 0.25 | 3.19 | 0.47 |
| 4-10 | 3.85 | 0.88 | 2.84 | 0.52 | 2.82 | 0.53 | 3.10 | 0.88 |
| 11-20 | 3.99 | 0.65 | 2.87 | 0.49 | 2.90 | 0.61 | 3.12 | 1.00 |
| 21-30 | 3.91 | 0.69 | 2.66 | 0.61 | 2.73 | 0.66 | 2.81 | 1.23 |
| 31+ | 3.89 | 0.49 | 2.72 | 0.26 | 2.60 | 0.39 | 2.74 | 0.95 |

| Personal | Source | DF | SS | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Model | 4 | 0.34 | 0.09 | 0.16 | 0.9583 |
| | Error | 116 | 62.49 | 0.54 | | |
| | Corrected Total | 120 | 62.84 | | | |

| School | Source | DF | SS | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Model | 4 | 0.92 | 0.23 | 0.71 | 0.5875 |
| | Error | 116 | 37.74 | 0.33 | | |
| | Corrected Total | 120 | 38.66 | | | |

| Professional | Source | DF | SS | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Model | 4 | 0.81 | 0.20 | 0.79 | 0.5336 |
| | Error | 115 | 29.57 | 0.26 | | |
| | Corrected Total | 119 | 30.38 | | | |

| Teacher | Source | DF | SS | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Model | 4 | 2.70 | 0.68 | 0.69 | 0.6037 |
| | Error | 113 | 111.36 | 0.99 | | |
| | Corrected Total | 117 | 114.06 | | | |

Table 26 indicates that the number of years taught did not significantly change NTOTY recipients' perception of the impact of TOTY upon personal, school, professional, or teacher morale. Once again, the researcher had anticipated that newer teachers would have greater perceptions of the impact of Teacher of the Year across all domains, while veteran teachers would be more skeptical about the value of the award. As with TOTY recipients, the researcher surmises that the actual findings -- that length of time as a teacher did not significantly change perception of TOTY's impact-- could be a reflection of the emphasis or value placed upon TOTY at a given school.

**Career Path**

To recap earlier results: Of the 198 respondents to the Teacher Recognition Schemes Survey, 112 (56.57%) had never worked outside of teaching. Of the 86 participants (43.43%) who had worked in other fields, the majority came from business and administrative fields. The researcher sought to learn whether having a previous career – denoted earlier as CP1 – or having never worked outside of education – denoted as CP0 -- significantly influenced one's perception of the overall effectiveness of Teacher of the Year awards. Independent samples t-tests were necessary to answer these questions; the results of these t-tests are relayed in Table 27.

Table 27

*Independent Samples t-test: CP1 versus CP0*

| Domain of Morale | CP1 Means and SD Comparisons | | CP0 Means and SD Comparisons | | Equality of Means | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD | df | t | P-value |
| Personal | 4.0710 | .9019 | 4.2495 | .7927 | 195 | 2.06 | .0403 |
| School | 2.9179 | .5972 | 2.9945 | .6323 | 192 | 1.10 | .2736 |
| Professional | 2.9563 | .7015 | 3.0370 | .6174 | 196 | 1.34 | .1820 |
| Teacher (overall) | 3.2785 | 1.2576 | 3.3518 | 1.1249 | 191 | .84 | .4044 |

*For Career Path, 0 = no other career; 1 = other careers pursued in addition to teaching.

Data analysis revealed that Career Path had a significant impact on how survey respondents perceived the effectiveness of teacher recognition schemes. Those who had worked outside of teaching perceived that TOTY exerted less influence upon Personal Morale than their career teacher colleagues. This was true regardless if a teacher had won TOTY or not. As a second-career teacher, the researcher draws upon personal experience in suggesting that CP1 teachers realize that teaching awards do not compare favorably with employee recognition schemes in other professions. Doubtless, employee performance awards in other careers also inspire feelings of jealousy and resentment; yet second-career teachers more than CP0 educators realize the difference in what is at stake. Getting named to a few committees and being required to complete an application for the next level of competition is not just a different ballgame from securing a five-figure bonus or all-expenses paid overseas vacation; it is not even in the same league. Recognizing this, CP1 teachers place less importance upon being named Teacher of the Year – thus the lower perception rating of its impact upon Personal Morale.

**Data Summary Related to Research**

The Teacher Recognition Schemes Survey yielded the following information, as relates to the study's four specific research questions:

*R₁: Do teachers' perceptions differ based on whether they are recipients of this award?*

The survey revealed that 77 of the 198 teacher respondents (approximately 39%) who comprised the final study sample had received Teacher of the Year Awards at some point in their careers. Survey data indicated a significant effect of whether or not the respondents had received TOTY recognition. Those respondents who had been honored as TOTY had a higher average Personal Morale as well as Professional Morale total score than those who had not won TOTY. There was no statistical significance regarding TOTY and non-TOTY recipients' perception of School Morale. The researcher offers the following possible explanations for these results. First, one would expect that those who had received an award to speak more highly of it and to have an increased perception of its positive attributes than those who had not been so honored. By the same token, one might predict that those who had not received a coveted award would downplay its impact. Second, the lack of statistical significance regarding School Morale could be due to a misunderstanding of the term. Although the researcher provided respondents with the same definition of School Morale (Mackenzie, 2007a) which guided her study, comments made by numerous respondents seemed to indicate that they thought of School Morale as belonging to the entire faculty and not just one person. In spite of this possible misunderstanding, however, the researcher does not believe that the data has been compromised.

*R₂: Among recipients, do perceptions differ based on years of experience, level taught, and career path?*

Analysis of various collected demographic information, including grade level taught and years of teaching experience, does ***not*** indicate a significant impact upon perceptions of TOTY awards among TOTY recipients. The researcher had anticipated finding significant differences in the perceptions held by new and veteran teachers, as well elementary and high school teachers. Based on her personal experiences and perceptions, she expected newer, elementary teachers to be more invested in TOTY and thus attribute winning the award to increased morale in all domains; this proved not to be the case. However, statistically significant results were found when comparing TOTY recipients whose career path included professions other than teaching with those who had always taught. The former, referred to as CP1, were less likely to perceive TOTY's having an impact upon Personal Morale than were the latter group, referred to as CP0. The researcher suggests those who had experience in other careers were familiar with other methods of recognizing employee achievements and contributions; presumably those other recognition schemes were perceived to be more appropriate and/or more rewarding than Teacher of the Year.

$R_3$: *Among non-recipients, do perceptions differ based on years of experience, level taught, and career path?*

Likewise, analysis of demographic information, including grade level taught and years of teaching experience, does not indicate a significant impact upon perceptions of TOTY awards among non-TOTY recipients. Again, the researcher anticipated that less experienced, elementary level teachers would perceive TOTY's having a greater influence upon all domains of Teacher Morale. Perhaps this expectation was due to the researcher's having known or worked with many young, recent college graduates at the elementary level who are seemingly boundless in their energy, enthusiasm, and optimism. Perhaps this is merely a stereotypical image; at any rate, the data did not support the researcher's suppositions. Yet the predictor Career Path again produced

statistically significant differences in responses for CP1 and CP0; once more, those who had worked in other careers were less likely to perceive that TOTY had an impact on Personal Morale than those who had always been teachers. By way of possible explanation, the researcher again points to less favorable comparisons between non-teaching and teaching recognition schemes. Perhaps second-career teachers had a broader understanding of the types of awards available in other professions, while those who had always taught were unfamiliar with other methods of recognizing good work.

$R_4$: *How do both groups perceive the overall effectiveness of Teacher of the Year in terms of its appropriateness as a teacher recognition scheme?*

After close examination of both the quantitative and qualitative data generated by this study, the researcher concludes that TOTY and NTOTY alike have mixed feelings about this particular recognition scheme. In many ways, analysis of the survey data resembled a study in contradictions; both TOTY and NTOTY appear to covet an award that they view with some measure of contempt.

Throughout the survey's elaboration questions, both groups specifically cited instances of jealousy, resentment, and, in some cases, passive-aggressive hostility on the part of non-recipient colleagues.  TOTY and NTOTY alike noted the added responsibilities that accompanied the award, including multiple committee assignments and lengthy application processes to advance to the next award level. Although such new responsibilities could be perceived as a compliment or acknowledgement of one's ability to perform them, the overall tenor of both groups' responses indicated that they were, in actuality, viewed as somewhat of a burden.

Respondents from both groups volunteered that the award was "an honor" that "everyone dreams of." TOTY recipients reportedly were "pleased" at being recognized for their hard work and dedication; however, they also remarked that the award is not based solely on merit, but rather is a

popularity contest in which recipients take turns. Lastly, while one might expect NTOTY to favor abandoning the program – and indeed, seven out of eight proposing elimination were NTOTY – the general tenor of TOTY responses were notable for a lack of enthusiasm for the award. While only one TOTY questioned the purpose of the award and suggested that it be discontinued, the researcher detected an absence of strong praise for the award and/or the overall process.

## CHAPTER V

## CONSTRUCTING MEANING:

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter summarizes the research findings of this mixed methods study; draws conclusions about its findings; takes note of study limitations; and discusses implications, including possible avenues for future studies.

**Review of Study:**

The researcher provided a brief overview of the current climate of k-12 education in the United States. Government-mandated programs and political rhetoric casting teachers as scapegoats for all of education's real and perceived shortcomings have fueled increased public scrutiny and criticism of the teaching profession (Bracey, 2008; Jones, 2009; Blackwell, Futrell, & Imig, 2003; Cheers, 2001). The simultaneous economic decline of the past several years has led to dramatic cuts in the education budget, with resulting lay-offs and furlough days making an already economically uninviting career that much more unappealing(Jones, 2009; Izzo, 2010; Maynard, 2010; www.payscale.com, 2010; www.nea.org, 2010). The researcher questioned whether current teacher recognition schemes such as Teacher of the Year (TOTY) were effective in boosting teacher morale, particularly during the harsh political and economic climate surrounding the profession. The researcher drew upon the work of Mackenzie (2007b) in constructing the present study. In particular, Mackenzie's definition of teacher morale and its components of personal, school, and professional morale (2007a), guided this study. The researcher contended that positive teacher morale is necessary for effective teaching and suggested that positive morale could be achieved inexpensively through effective TOTY programs (Young, 1998; Mackenzie, 2007a).

Next, the researcher laid the groundwork for the social constructivist theoretical framework informing the study.  This epistemological perspective suggests that individuals create their own understandings, based upon the interaction of what they already know and believe, with whatever new experiences or ideas they encounter.  Social constructivism provided a suitable lens for assessing Teacher of the Year awards, in that the efficacy of such awards is a matter of personal perception shaped by teachers' previous life experiences (Richardson, 1997).  In formulating her research questions, the researcher drew inspiration from her own history as a second career teacher with three years' experience teaching high school and 13 years of teaching middle school, in two vastly different school systems.  Further, while earning a degree in k-5 education, she worked for two years with elementary teachers from a broad geographic as well as socioeconomic background. Spending a good deal of time with teachers of varying career paths, teaching career length, and grade level experience, the researcher observed  that she and her fellow educators had arrived at their various opinions and beliefs through a combination of previous learning and current experiences.  She also noted that she and her fellow teachers were all certain that their personal viewpoints on a given situation were correct. This led to the development of the four major questions driving the current study, which considered varying perceptions based upon receipt of TOTY, grade level taught, years experience, and career path.

 Social constructivism played an even larger role in assessing survey results.  Both quantitative and qualitative responses in the current study revealed a wide range of perceptions of TOTY's impact upon teacher morale, all of which could be traced to respondents' previous experiences with their own schools' TOTY program.  Indeed, the researcher suggests that it would have been impossible for survey respondents to separate their past experiences with any sort of awards program from their perception of Teacher of the Year. People construct meaning based on

experience and perception, and no two people have exactly the same experiences – or perception of those experiences.  That being said, the researcher wondered if people from similar backgrounds might have similar perceptions; such proved to be the case rather infrequently.

The current study provided affirmation of three key points made in the literature review. First, the omnipresent human need for recognition (Carnegie, 1936; Skinner, 1938; Maslow, 1943) was acknowledged. Because the workplace has become the new focal point for socialization and bonding (Carpentier-Roy, in Brun & Dugas, 2008, trans.), the researcher paid special attention to occupational recognition, in its various guises. The literature revealed the importance of having one's workplace contributions acknowledged (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959; McGregor, 1960; Vroom, 1964; Porter & Lawler, 1968), especially by coworkers (Appelbaum and Kamal, 2000; Brun and Dugas, 2008). The current study confirmed that teachers value the acknowledgement of both administrators and fellow educators; two-thirds of survey respondents' suggestions for alternatives to TOTY involved appreciation for, and recognition of, a job well-done.

Second, the literature indicated that monetary rewards are generally appreciated, yet the most important aspect of employee recognition is that it be appropriate, timely, and sincere (Huberman, Loch, & Onculer, 2004; Nelson, 2002). The current study seemingly bore this out; only 7.6% of respondents cited monetary recognition when asked to suggest alternatives to TOTY. While reporting this, the researcher offers this caveat: the fact that monetary recognition was not cited by more respondents might reflect a certain level of practicality on the part of teachers already stung by layoffs, furloughs, and pay cuts.

Third, the psychological need to favorably rate oneself when compared to others (Festinger,1953) and the seemingly conflicting concept of Comparison Target Discomfort Theory, in which one feels guilty when that rating is indeed favorable (Hennagan, 2010) may be insightful

when reviewing teacher recognition schemes. Survey respondents cited specific incidences of non-TOTY coworkers feeling inadequate by comparison to their TOTY colleagues, particularly when they had taught for several years without winning TOTY. Comparison Target Discomfort was evident in at least some TOTY recipients, who expressed appreciation for their award while noting that, "Others in the building were just as deserving."

Finally, the pluses and minuses of employee recognition in k-12 educational settings – chiefly Teacher of the Year awards – were discussed at length. The current study also reflected a wide range of attitudes, both positive and negative, regarding TOTY programs.

Analysis of the data revealed statistical significance in three areas: TOTY recipients perceived significantly greater influences of the award upon both personal and professional morale than did their non-recipient colleagues., and TOTY and NTOTY survey respondents alike who had pursued other career paths perceived significantly less influence of the award upon personal morale. Otherwise, the various collected demographic information did not appear to have had a significant impact on perceptions. This was the case regardless if a respondent were a TOTY award recipient.

Next, qualitative responses which provided elaboration to key survey questions were grouped according to Personal, School, Professional, and overall Teacher Morale. Generally comments echoed attitudes revealed in the quantitative portion of the survey. Questions inviting respondents to propose changes to current TOTY programs and suggest alternate recognition schemes for teaching excellence seemingly resonated with study participants. A call for clear, consistent selection criteria was the predominant suggestion. Other frequently cited ideas for improving the awards program included relegating the selection process to administration; permitting student and parent input; allowing teachers only to vote for TOTY; and consideration of standardized test scores. TOTY recipients and non-recipients alike, when afforded the opportunity

to comment upon the awards, dismissed the current system as a "popularity contest" that served as both distraction and divide among school faculty. When asked to propose an alternate recognition scheme, survey respondents weighed in with several ideas that, interestingly, involved low or no cost. Overwhelmingly, respondents indicated that sincere, frequent administrator acknowledgement of their efforts would satisfy their needs. In a similar vein, honoring multiple teachers or recognizing teachers on a more frequent basis -- such as Teacher of the Week/Month -- was a common theme. Yet another popular, inexpensive recommendation involved free time, in the form of freedom from duties. However, monetary awards, such as pay raises, bonuses, and stipends for projects and supplies, were also highly regarded by survey participants.

**Conclusions**

Respondents to the Teacher Recognition Schemes Survey indicated that the awards system, in its current incarnation, yields a mixed bag of results. For some, especially those who have received TOTY honors at least once in their career, the award improved their Personal and Professional morale, two key components of overall teacher morale.  Respondents whose career path included other professions besides teaching had a less favorable perception of TOTY awards' impact upon personal morale. Nearly half of TOTY recipients responding to the survey, or 43.43%, had a teaching-only career path.

Teachers, like other professionals, desire and value recognition of their contributions in the workplace. However, they do not want "bogus" awards, nor do they approve of poorly designed and implemented awards programs that create a climate of resentment and jealousy. The prototype of "pay raise, except there's no pay raise," merely extra work, is dispiriting as well as disingenuous. If the current models of teacher recognition are to continue, teachers want clearly defined selection criteria. They expect fairness and consistency, not just within their own buildings, but throughout

their school districts and states. As Geller (1997) and Nelson and Spitzer (2007) pointed out, the wrong recognition is worse than no recognition. Having a great teacher recognition plan in place certainly will not result in a huge rush to enroll in teacher prep classes; having an ineffective plan certainly will not stop a slow hemorrhaging of dedicated teachers from the field. To put a new spin on the old adage, "Work smarter, not harder," administrators should "Recognize smarter."

**Implications**

The following implications may be made from the present study:

1) When compared with private sector employee recognition, TOTY falls short of making employees feel truly honored. Survey data revealed that teachers who had worked in other careers before entering the classroom had a lesser opinion of TOTY's impact upon personal morale. The researcher suggests this finding may indicate that "CP1" teachers – those with varied career paths – found teacher recognition schemes to be lacking when compared to employee recognition in their former careers. Certainly, as discussed earlier, teacher recognition schemes lack the budgets of their private sector counterparts; yet the researcher believes the problem goes beyond the monetary capabilities of employers to honor excellence. While comparable "Employee of the Month" (or Year) programs might cause some resentment in private sector settings, they usually do not entail a laundry list of tasks to complete to achieve the next level. Numerous survey respondents, both TOTY and non-TOTY recipients, noted that the award is "a lot of work." The researcher contends that any employee recognition that punishes the recipient by requiring extra work is, quite simply, flawed. Revising current teacher recognition schemes to eliminate these additional requirements would involve time and a willingness to rethink the status quo, but it need not involve spending a great deal of (if any) money.

2) The prevailing view among survey respondents seemed to be that TOTYs are selected on the basis of many criteria, with merit being the exception. Respondents perceived a variety of reasons for TOTY selection, including the approach of retirement; sympathy due to family or health issues; appreciation for sacrifices made on behalf of the faculty; and the recipient's popularity. Ironically, TOTY clearly precipitates feelings of jealousy and resentment among faculty members; even while acknowledging the program's flaws, teachers still want to win. Both the "sympathy vote" and the "popularity contest" aspects could be eliminated by determining and publishing a specific set of criteria by which to judge all TOTY applicants.

3) While financial rewards would be appreciated, especially since the onset of budget cuts and furlough days, the majority of survey respondents suggested that they would be most happy to receive sincere verbal and/or written praise from their administrators for specific accomplishments. Others emphasized the need to be treated with dignity; as one former TOTY wrote, "I would simply like for (administrators) to treat me as a professional, as they would members of any other profession – doctors, attorneys, engineers, etc." As with the previous implications, and as duly noted by several survey respondents, correcting this issue would cost administrators nothing.

4) Unfortunately, when provided the opportunity to suggest alternative methods of honoring excellent teachers, the majority of respondents offered mere variations to the current program. In particular, teachers whose career path did not involve professions other than teaching did not demonstrate a wide range of vision for alternative recognition. Among responses illustrating this point were suggestions to give teachers "caught doing good" stickers or to provide them with "blue jeans passes." While these suggestions are inexpensive and may be successful in boosting teacher morale, the researcher suggests that teachers seeking to be viewed as professionals might set their sights higher. Monetary rewards may not be feasible for the foreseeable future, but teachers will not

receive better recognition schemes unless they ask for them. To paraphrase a popular motivational poster often seen around schools, teachers will be denied 100% of the requests that they do not make.

5) Perhaps most importantly, the often contradictory nature of study participants' responses needs to be acknowledged and examined. In spite of protestations that "We're not doing this for the recognition" and "Teachers are too busy to worry about awards," the truth is that teachers, first and foremost, are human beings with very real human needs for recognition and praise. Perhaps many teachers are reluctant to acknowledge this need, and indeed, many may not even recognize this need within themselves. However, administrators would be well-advised to pay heed to the work of Festinger, Henagan, and others, and perhaps take a long, hard look at the way their schools take care of their most valuable resources – teachers.

## Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher makes the following recommendations for future research:

1) The current study was limited to k-12 teachers in public and private education. The researcher chose to exclude administrators; because many of them have also served as teachers, their perceptions of Teacher of the Year programs would undoubtedly be shaped by their own classroom experiences. Thus, those administrators whose TOTY experiences (as either recipients or non-recipients) were positive might be expected to have a more positive view of the program within their own buildings. Conversely, these administrators might have a more negative perception of the current TOTY programs in their current schools, if their TOTY experiences as a teacher were largely negative. The researcher proposes that future studies surrounding perceptions of the efficacy of teacher recognition schemes may seek to include administrators or focus solely upon

administrators' perceptions, particularly those who were recognized as TOTY at some point in their careers.

2) A more widespread sampling of teachers across the nation would offer a more comprehensive picture of Teacher of the Year programs currently in place. A study of this scale perhaps would provide an opportunity to examine regional approaches to TOTY. Such a study could provide greater knowledge of what works and what does not, in terms of recognizing teaching excellence. However, a study of this magnitude would require access to contact information that might not be easily obtained; while numerous professional organizations maintain listservs, mailing addresses, and telephone data bases on their members, they are frequently reluctant to make those available, even for research purposes.

**Final Thoughts**

In any profession, recognizing hard work, dedication, and excellence is a necessary component in meeting the emotional and psychological needs of employees. While the means employers choose for this recognition range from the simple to the elaborate, two elements remain consistent. First, the recognition must be given sincerely. Second, the perceptions of its efficacy vary, depending on whom is asked. School administrators would be well served to keep these elements in mind when considering their own Teacher of the Year programs. As one Teacher Recognition Schemes Survey respondent opined, "A district that cares about its students should care about its teachers enough to recognize excellence" (NTOTY, CP1). The researcher agrees but suggests the addition of the word "wisely," for the current study reconfirms the importance of "getting it right." Teachers deserve an awards process that honors their professionalism and commands the community's respect. Unfortunately, the status quo does not appear to do this.

**References**

Abualrub, R., & Al-Zaru, I. (2008). Job stress, recognition, job performance and intention to stay at work among Jordanian hospital nurses. *Journal of Nursing Management, 16*, pp. 227-236.

Anderson, T., & Kanuka, H. (2007). Ethical issues in qualitative e-learning research.

*International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 6*(2), pp. 1-14.

Appelbaum, S., & Kamal, R. (2000). An analysis of the utilization and effectiveness of non-financial incentives in small business. *Journal of Management Development*, *19*(9), pp. 733–763.

Appelbaum, S., & Shapiro, B. (1991). Pay for performance: Implementation of individual and group plans. *Journal of Management Development, 10*(7), pp. 81-87.

ASCD. Retrieved February 20, 2011 from http://www.ascd.org/programs/Outstanding-Young-Educator-Award/OYEA-Information.aspx

Aspinwall, L., & Taylor, S. (1993). The effects of social comparison direction, threat, and self-esteem on affect, self-evaluation, and expected success. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 64*, pp. 708-72.

Badertscher, N. (2011, July 20). Dougherty next focus in CRCT cheating probe. *Atlanta Journal Constitution.* Retrieved September 4, 2011 from http://www.ajc.com/news/dougherty-next-focus-in-1028561.html

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: Worth Publishers.

Bellingrath, S., Rohleder, N. & Kudielka, B.M.. (2010). Healthy working school teachers with high effort-reward-imbalance and overcommitment show increased pro-inflammatory immune activity and a dampened innate immune defense. *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity, (24)* 8, pp. 1332-9.

Berliner, D. (1986). In pursuit of the expert pedagogue. *Educational Researcher, 15*(7), pp. 5-13.

Best, J. (2011). *Everyone's a winner: Life in our congratulatory culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bivona, K. (2002). *Teacher morale: The impact of teaching experience, workplace conditions, and workload.* ERIC Document Reproduction Service no. ED467760.

Blackwell, P., Futrell, M., & Imig, D. (2003). Burnt water paradoxes of schools of education. *Phi Delta Kappan, 84*(5), pp. 356-361.

Block, A. (2008). Why should I be a teacher? *Journal of Teacher Education, 59*(5), pp. 416-427.

Bloor, D. (1976/1991). *Knowledge and social imagery*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bracey, G. (2008). Disastrous legacy: Aftermath of *A Nation at Risk. Dissent, 55*(4), pp. 80-83.

Brawer, J., Steinert, Y., St.-Cyr, J., Watters, K., & Wood-Dauphinee, S. (2006). The significance and impact of a faculty teaching award: Disparate perceptions of department chairs and award recipients. *Medical Teacher, 28*(7), pp. 614-617.

Brun, J., & Dugas, N. (2008). An analysis of employee recognition: Perspectives on human resources practices. *The International Journal of Human Resources Management, 19*(4), pp. 716-730.

Bruner, J. (1960). *The process of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Carnegie, D. (1936). *How to win friends and influence people*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Carusetta, E. (2001). Evaluating teaching through teaching awards. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 88*, pp. 31-40.

Cheers, S. (2001). Issues of professionalism, quality, and professionalisation. *Primary Educator, 7*(4), pp. 15-17.

Chism, N. (2006). Teaching awards: What do they award? *The Journal of Higher Education, 77*(4), pp. 589-617.

Clark, L. (1999). Learning from the field: The journey from post-positivist to constructivist methods. Paper presented to the International Communication Association, San Francisco.

Coladarci, T., Cobb, C., Minium, E., & Clarke, R. (2007). *Fundamentals of statistical reasoning in education.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Corwin, J. (2001). Survey points to…the importance of teacher morale in combating teacher shortage. *Baylor Business Review*, *19*(1), p. 18.

Costello, T. (2008). *Giambattista Vico*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Retrieved online 17 November 2010 from http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/vico/

Council of Chief State School Officers. (n.d.) National teacher of the year program. Retrieved from http://www.ccsso.org

Creswell, J. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Creswell, J., & Clark, V. (2010). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Crowther, F. (2003). Teaching, a profession whose time has come. In F. Crowther (Ed.) *Teachers as leaders in a knowledge society*, College Year Book 2003, Australian College of Educators, ACT, Australia, pp. 1-8.

Crotty, M. (2003). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.).(2003). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2005). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1-32). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Dinham, S., & Scott, C. (2002, December). *Awards for teaching excellence: Intentions and realities.* Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Brisbane, AU. Retrieved from http://works.bepress.com/stephen_dinham/37

Dutton, G. (1998). Nurturing employees and the bottom line. *HR Focus*, *74*(9), pp. 1-3.

Edwards, J., Green, K., and Lyons, C. (2002). Personal empowerment, efficacy, and environmental characteristics. *Journal of Educational Administration, 40*(1), pp. 67–86.

Eggers, D., Moulthrop, D.,& Calegari, N. (2006). *Teachers have it easy: The big sacrifices and small salaries of America's teachers*. New York: The New Press.

Esterberg, K. (2002). *Qualitative methods in social research*. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Festinger, L. (1950). lnformal social communication. *Psychological Review*, *57*, pp. 271–282.

Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations, 7*, pp.117-140.

Fink, D. (2003) The law of unintended consequences: The real cost of top down reform. *Journal of Educational Reform,* 4**,** pp. 105–128.

Ford, R., & Newstrom, J. (1999). Dues-paying: Managing the costs of recognition. *Business Horizons, 42*(4), pp.14-20.

Frame, P., Johnson, M., & Rosie, A.(2006). Reward or award? Reflections on the initial experiences of winners of a national teaching fellowship. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 43*(4), pp. 409-419.

Frase, L. (2001).Effects of teacher rewards on recognition and job enrichment. *Journal of Educational Research, 83*(1), pp. 52-57.

Frey, B. (2006). Giving and receiving awards. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 1*(4), pp. 377-388.

Geller, E. (1997). Behavior-based recognition and celebration. *Professional Safety, 42*(10), pp. 40-44.

Georgia Department of Education. (n.d.). Criteria for teacher of the year. Retrieved June 22, 2010 from http://www.doe.k12.ga.us

Georgia Department of Labor. (n.d.). Job openings in Georgia. Retrieved December 29, 2011 from http://www.dol.state.ga.us/js/job_info_system.htm

Gibbons, F., & Buunk, B. (1999). Individual differences in social comparison: Development of a scale of social comparison orientation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76*, pp. 129-142.

Goldman, A. (2006). Social epistemology. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* Retrieved November 20, 2010 from http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology-social/

Governor's Office of Student Achievement. (2010). Georgia's educational scoreboard. Retrieved July 1, 2010 from http://www.gaosa.org

Gubrium, J., & Holstein, J. (2001). *Handbook of interview research: Context and method.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Helterbran, V. (2008). Professionalism: Teachers taking the reins. *The Clearing House, 81*(3), pp. 123-127.

Henagan, S. (2010). The perils of workplace recognition: Antecedents to discomfort associated with being the target of upward comparisons. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 32*, pp. 57-68.

Heraclitus. (n.d.). BrainyQuote.com. Retrieved November 19, 2010, from BrainyQuote.com Web site: http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/h/heraclitus143092.html

Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B.(1959). *The motivation to work*. New York: John Wiley.

Howe, K. R. (2004) A critique of experimentalism. *Qualitative Inquiry, 10*(1), pp. 42-61.

Hoy, W., & Miskel, C. (1987). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice.* New York: Random House.

Hoyle, E. (2001). Teaching: Prestige, status and esteem. *Educational Management & Administration, 29*(2). London: SAGE Publications.

Hoyle, J., Bjork, L, Collier, V., & Glass, T. (2005). *The superintendent as CEO: Standards-based performance.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Huberman, B., Loch, C.H., & Onculer, A. (2004). Status as a valued source. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 67*, pp. 103-114.

ING Unsung Heroes. Retrieved March 22, 2011 from http://ing.us/about-ing/citizenship/childrens-education/ing-unsung-heroes

Izzo, P. (2010). Recession over in June 2009. Real Time Economics: Economic Insight and

    Analysis from the Wall Street Journal. 20 September, 2010. Retrieved online 12 February

    2011 from http://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2010/09/20/nber-recession-ended-in-june-2009/

Johnson, S. (2000). Can professional certification for teachers re-shape teaching as a career?

    *Unicorn,* Journal of the Australian College of Education, *26*(1), pp. 21-31.

Jones, J. (2009, August 25). Public says better teachers are key to improved education.   Retrieved

    from http://www.gallup.com/poll/122504

Kelley, C., Heneman, H. and Milanowski, A. (2002). Teacher motivation and school based

    performance awards. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 38*(3), pp. 372–401.

Kerr, S. (1995). An academy classic: On the folly of rewarding A, while hoping for B. *Academy of*

    *Management Executive, 9*(1), pp. 7-14.

King, M. and Bruner, G. (2000). Social desirability bias: A neglected aspect of validity testing.

    *Psychology and Marketing*, *17*(2): pp. 79–103.

Klassen, R., & Anderson, C. (2009). How times change: Teachers' job satisfaction and

    dissatisfaction in England in 1962 and 2007. *British Educational Research Journal, 35,* pp.

    745-759.

Kreber, C. (2001). Observations, reflections, ad speculations: What we have learned about the

    scholarship of teaching and where it might lead. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning,*

    *86*, pp. 99-103.

Kuhn, T. (1962/1996). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kukla, A. (2000). *Social constructivism and the philosophy of science.* London: Routledge.

Lancaster, G., Dodd, S., & Williamson, P. (2004). Design and analysis of pilot studies: Recommendations for good practice. *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice, 10*(2), pp. 307-12.

Larosa, J. (2006, September 21). Self-improvement market in U.S. worth $9.6 billion. *Press Release Newswire.* Retrieved from

http://www.prwebdirect.com/releases/2006/9/prweb440011.php

Latour, B. (1987). *Science in action: How to follow scientists and engineers through society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Levine, J., & Young, M. (2010). *Internet for dummies.* Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley Publishing Company.

Mackenzie, N. (2007a). Teacher morale: More complex than we think? *The Australian Educational Researcher, 34*(1), pp. 89-104.

Mackenzie, N. (2007b). Teaching excellence awards: An apple for the teacher? *Australian Journal of Education, 51*(2), pp.190-204.

Maslow, A. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50*(4), pp. 370-96.

Maynard, M. (2010). State budget cuts: Across the board, and at cross-purposes. Stateline.org. Retrieved from http://www.stateline.org/live/details/story?contentId=493525

Mayrl, W. (1984). Some sociological aspects of the recognition and rewarding of teaching. *Teaching Sociology, 12*(1), pp. 3-13.

McConnell, C. (1997). Employee recognition: A little oil on the troubled waters of change. *Healthcare Supervisor, 15*(4), pp. 83-90.

McGregor, D. (1960). *The human side of enterprise*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Meloy, J. (2002). *Writing the qualitative dissertation: Understanding by doing*. Mahweh, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Mertens, D. (1998). *Research methods in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Messmer, M. (2001). *Motivating employees for dummies*. Hoboken: Wiley Publishing for Dummies.

Meyer, M., Macmillan, R., & Northfield, S. (2009). Principal succession and its impact on teacher morale. *International Journal for Leadership in education, 12*(2), pp. 171-185.

Milken Family Foundation. (n.d.) Milken educator awards. Retrieved February 7, 2011 from http://www.mff.org/mea/

Nagel, D. (2010). Teachers spend $1.3 billion out of pocket on classroom materials. *THE Journal*, 7/8/10 retrieved February 10, 2012 from http://thejournal.com/articles/2010/07/08/teachers-spend-1.3-billion-out-of-pocket-on-classroom-materials.aspx

National Education Association (NEA).(2008). Inflation continues to outpace teacher salary growth. Retrieved from http://www.nea.org/home/29399.htm

National Bureau of Economic Research. Report of the Business Cycle Dating Committee. Retrieved February 12, 2011 from http://www.nber.org/cycles/sept2010.html

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The Malcolm Balridge National Quality Award. Retrieved February 20, 2011 from http://www.nist.gov/baldrige

National School Supply and Equipment Association. (2010). *2010 retail market awareness study*. Retrieved May 19, 2011 from http://www.nssea.org/iweb/Purchase/ProductDetail.aspx?Product_code=RMAS-E

National Teachers Hall of Fame. (n.d.). Teacher recognition. Retrieved February 7, 2011 from

    http://www.nthf.org/teacher.htm

Nelson, R. (2002). The rewards of recognition. *Leader to Leader*, 23, pp. 16-19.

Nelson, B., & Spitzer, D. (2007). *The 1001 rewards & recognition fieldbook: The complete guide.*

    New York: Workman Publishing Company.

Nieto, S. (2003). *What keeps teachers going?* New York: Teachers College Press.

No Child Left Behhind. (2001). U. S. Department of Education. Retrieved June 22, 2010 from

    http://www2.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml

Ormrod, J. (2008). *Human learning*. Pearson Education: Upper Saddle River, NJ.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods ( 3rd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA:

    Sage Publications.

Payscale.com. (n.d.)Best undergrad college degrees by salary. Retrieved February 12, 2011 from

    http://www.payscale.com/best-colleges/degrees.asp

PCMagazine.com. (n.d.) Chat rooms. Retrieved December 28, 2011 from

    http://www.pcmag.com/encyclopedia_term/0,2542,t=chat+room&i=39614,00.asp

Perrachione, B., Peterson, G., & Rosser, V. (2008). Why do they stay? Elementary teachers'

    perceptions of job satisfaction and retention. *Professional Educator, 32*(2), pp. 25-41.

Piaget, J. (1952). The origins of intelligence in children (M. Cook, Trans.). New York: W.W.

    Norton.

Porter, L., & Lawler, E. (1968). *Managerial attitudes and performance.* Homewood: Irwin.

Quantcast.com. (2011). *Facebook.com: Quantcast audience profile*. Retrieved May 15, 2011 from

    www.quantcast.com/facebook.com.

Race to the Top. (n.d.) U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved June 22, 2010 from

http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/landing.jhtml

Raskin, J. D. (2002). Constructivism in psychology: Personal construct psychology, radical

constructivism, and social constructionism. In J. D. Raskin & S. K. Bridges (Eds.), *Studies*

*in meaning: Exploring constructivist psychology*, pp. 1-25. New York: Pace University

Press.

Restivo, S. (1991). *The sociological worldview*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Reynolds, S., Sharp, A., & Anderson, K. (2009). Online surveys: Response timeliness & issues of

design. Conference proceedings, Melbourne, Australia & New Zealand Marketing

Academy, Retrieved 21 November 2010 from

www.duplication.net.au/ANZMAC09/papers/ANZMAC2009-520.pdf

Richardson, V. (Ed.) (1997). *Constructivist teacher education: Building a world of new*

*understandings.* London: Falmer.

Roos, D. (2011). Online surveys advantages and disadvantages. Retrieved February 21, 2011 from

http://communication.howstuffworks.com/how-online-surveys-work2.htm

Saunderson, R. (2004). Survey findings of the effectiveness of employee recognition in the public

sector. *Public Personnel Management, 33*(3), pp. 255-275.

Sautter, E., Gagnon, G., & Mohr, J. (2007). Educators who have made a difference for their

students: Observations and reflections of three nationally recognized marketing professors.

*Journal of Marketing Education, 29*(1), pp. 85-90.

Schubert, W., & Ayers, W. (Eds.) (1992). *Teacher lore: Learning from our own experience*.  New

York: Longman.

Schwartz, C. (1992). Is good teaching rewarded at Berkeley? *College Teaching, 40*(1), pp. 33-36.

Sciafani, S. (2010). Teacher compensation around the globe. *Phi Delta Kappan, 91*(8), pp. 38-43.

Scott, C. (2001). Just smiley stamps? *Directions in Education*, Australian Council for Educational

   Administration**,** *10*(9), p. 1.

Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee (SEETRC), (1998). *A class*

   *act: Inquiry into the status of the teaching profession*. Commonwealth of Australia.

Sethi, D., & Pinzon, B. (1998). A seven-step strategy to help retain your company's high-impact

   performers. *Human Resource Planning, 21*(4), p. 16.

Skinner, B. (1938). *The behavior of organisms*: *An experimental analysis.* New York: D.

   Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1938.

Stajkovic, A., & Luthans, F. (2001). Differential effects of incentive motivators on work

   performance. *Academy of Management Journal, 4*(3), pp. 580-590.

Stake, R. (2000). Case studies. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*

   (2$^{nd}$ ed.) (pp.435-454). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Strickler, J. (2006). What really motivates people? *Journal for Quality Participation, 29*(1), pp.

   26-28.

 Sullivan, T. (1995). Teaching evaluation by peers. *Teaching Sociology, 23*(1), pp. 61-63.

Suls, J., & Wheeler, L. (Eds.) (2000). *Handbook of Social Comparison: Theory and Research (The*

   *Springer Series in Social Clinical Psychology).* New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum

   Publishers.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative*

   *approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (Eds.). (2003). *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral*

   *research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Tennessee Department of Education.(n.d.) Teacher of the year criteria. Retrieved from

      http://www.tennessee.gov/education

Tesser, A. (1988). Toward a self-evaluation maintenance model of social behavior. In L. Berkowitz

      (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology*, *Vol 21*, pp. 181-227. New York:

      Academic Press.

Timmer, N. (2010). *Do you feel it too?: The post-postmodern syndrome in American fiction at the*

      *turn of the millennium*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Ur Rehman, S., Khan, M., & Afzal, H. (2010). An investigative relationship between efforts-

      rewards model and job stress in private educational institutions: A validation study.

      *International Journal of Business and Management, 5*(3), pp. 42-51.

USA Today. (n.d.) All-USA academic and teacher teams. Retrieved February 7, 2011 from

      http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/allstars/front.htm

Vroom, V.H. (1964). *Work and motivation*. New York: Wiley.

von Glasersfeld, E. (1990). An exposition of constructivism: Why some like it radical. In R.B.

      Davis, C.A. Maher and N. Noddings (Eds.). *Constructivist views on the teaching and*

      *learning of mathematics* (pp 19-29). Reston, Virginia: National Council of Teachers of

      Mathematics.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wal-Mart Foundation. (n.d.) Community giving: Education. Retrieved February 7, 2011 from

      http://walmartstores.com/CommunityGiving/236.aspx

Walt Disney Company. (n.d.)  Corporate citizenship. Retrieved February 7, 2011 from

      http://corporate.disney.go.com/citizenship/community.html

Warren, R., & Plumb, E. (1999). Survey of distinguished teacher award schemes in higher education. *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 23*(2), pp. 245-255.

Webb, R., & Vulliamy, G. (2004). Pressures, rewards and teacher retention: A comparative study of primary teaching in England and Finland. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 48*(2), pp. 169-188.

Wells, R. (2010). 41.6% of the U.S. population has a Facebook account. *Social Media Today.* Retrieved January 6, 2011 from http: //www.socialmediatoday.com/roywells1/158020/416-us-population-has-facebook-account.

Wills, T. (1981). Downward comparison principles in social psychology. *Psychological Bulletin, 90*, pp. 245–271.

World Health Organization. (1994). Global strategy on occupational health for all: The way to health at work. Presented at WHO Collaborating Centres in Occupational Health, October 11-14, Beijing. Retrieved February 7, 2011 from http://www.who.int/occupational_health/globstrategy/en/index2.html

Young, D. (1998). Teacher morale and efficacy in rural Western Australia. Paper presented to the Australian Association for Research in Education, 1998, Annual Conference, Adelaide.

Yun, G., & Trumbo, C. (2000). Comparative response to a survey executed by post, e-mail, & web form. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 6*(1).

APPENDIX A –
TEACHER RECOGNITION SCHEMES SURVEY

## Teacher Recognition Schemes

### 1. Informed Consent

I am a doctoral student conducting dissertation research under the direction of Dr. Delores Liston in the Department of Curriculum Studies at Georgia Southern University. I invite you to participate in a research study entitled "Perceptions of the Influence of Teacher of the Year Awards upon Teachers' Personal, School, and Professional Morale." The purpose of this research is to uncover teacher perceptions of the effect of Teacher of the Year awards on teacher morale.

Participation in this research will include completion of a 30-question online survey. The questions are constructed as follows: five demographic questions; two questions regarding your TOTY status; 16 Likert Scale questions; and seven text boxes in which you will be asked to elaborate upon your response to certain questions. The survey is not expected to take longer than 15-20 minutes of your time. Further, if you would like to provide further information to the researcher, you are encouraged, but not obligated to, provide your name and contact information for a future brief follow-up interview.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and you may withdraw your participation at any time. There is no penalty for deciding not to participate. You do not have to answer any question which you do not wish to answer. No monetary compensation will be provided for your participation. Due to the nature of the research topic, you may experience minor discomfort such as embarrassment, frustration, or anger. However, there is no risk beyond that associated with daily living. You may receive future personal and professional benefits related to teacher recognition as a result of this study's findings. Society may also benefit from this research, in that study results may lead to improved teacher morale, and consequently higher teacher quality and retention, by providing more effective and appropriate teacher recognition schemes.

No individually identifying information about you, or provided by you during the research, will be shared with others. All data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet and maintained by the researcher for a minimum of three years after the completion of the study, in case they are needed to publish or present data. All data retrieved online will be password protected.

You have the right to ask questions and have those questions answered. If you do have questions about this study, please contact the researcher named below or the researcher's faculty advisor, whose contact information is located at the end of the informed consent. For questions concerning your rights as a research participant, contact Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at 912.478.0843. Please print a copy of this consent form to keep for your records. This project has been reviewed and approved by the GSU Institutional Review Board under tracking number H11466.

Title of Project:
Perceptions of the Influence of Teacher of the Year Awards upon Teachers' Personal, School, and Professional Morale

Principal Investigator: Sherri B. Butler
485 Creekview Drive, Hoschton, GA 30548
Ph: 706.255.7771
Email: cococanuck14@yahoo.com

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Delores D. Liston
Ph: 912.478.1551
Email: listond@georgiasouthern.edu

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.

Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that:
*You have read the above information
*You voluntarily agree to participate
* You are at least 18 years of age

If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by clicking on the "disagree" button.

## Teacher Recognition Schemes

* Agree
* Disagree

## 2. Introduction

Thank you for participating in this survey regarding teacher recognition awards in k-12 education.

For the purpose of this survey, the following definitions* are used:

Personal morale - one's mental condition with respect to happiness and confidence, as affected by such personal circumstances as health, family situation, and financial stability.

School morale - one's mental condition with respect to happiness and confidence, as affected by daily experiences of teachers in their schools and local communities.

Professional morale - one's mental condition with respect to happiness and confidence, as affected by the status of teaching as a profession.

*Mackenzie (2007a)

## 3. Demographic Information

Please tell us a little bit about yourself.

**\*1. In which k-12 setting do you currently work/teach? (Check all that apply):**

- [ ] K-5
- [ ] 6-8
- [ ] 9-12

**\*2. How long have you worked in the education field?**

- ( ) 3 years or less
- ( ) 4-10 years
- ( ) 11-20 years
- ( ) 21-30 years
- ( ) 31+ years

**3. Have you worked in any other field besides education?**

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

**4. If you answered "Yes" to Question 3 above, please indicate what other careers you have pursued and approximately how long you worked in each field.**

[ text box ]

**5. If you would be willing to provide further information or insight into your views, please indicate so here and include your contact information AND the best time to reach you. All information will be kept confidential.**

[ text box ]

**\*6. Have you ever been recognized as Teacher of the Year (TOTY)?**

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

## 4. Recipients of TOTY

Please answer questions on this page only if you HAVE received Teacher of the Year honors at any time in your k-12 teaching career.

### 1. I have received building level TOTY honors (Check all that apply)

☐ At least once in my career

☐ More than once in my career

☐ At the school where I presently teach

☐ At a previous school

Other (please specify)

### 2. In addition to building level recognition, I have also been awarded TOTY at the following levels (Check all that apply):

☐ District

☐ State

☐ National

☐ Not applicable

Other (please specify)

### 3. Being recognized as TOTY has a positive impact upon the honoree's personal morale.

◯ Strongly agree

◯ Agree

◯ Don't know

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly disagree

Other (please specify)

### 4. Please elaborate upon your response to the previous question.

**5. Teachers derive personal satisfaction from being named TOTY.**

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Don't know

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

Other (please specify)

**6. Being recognized as TOTY has a positive impact upon the honoree' school morale.**

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Don't know

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

Other (please specify)

**7. Please elaborate upon your response to the previous question.**

**8. Recipients of TOTY awards experience a change in their relationships with coworkers.**

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Don't know

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

Other (please specify)

**9. Please elaborate upon your response to the previous question.**

**10. TOTY recipients experience a change in daily roles at work as a result of winning the award.**

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

Other (please specify)

**11. Please elaborate upon your response to the previous question.**

**12. TOTY selection is solely based on merit.**

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

Other (please specify)

**13. TOTY awards create resentment among faculty members.**

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

Other (please specify)

**14. When choosing TOTY, faculty members "take turns" voting for each other.**

◯ Strongly agree

◯ Agree

◯ Don't know

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly disagree

Other (please specify)

**15. Being recognized as TOTY has a positive impact upon the honoree's professional morale.**

◯ Strongly agree

◯ Agree

◯ Don't know

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly disagree

**16. Please elaborate upon your response to the previous question.**

**17. Teachers place professional importance upon receiving Teacher of the Year (TOTY) awards.**

◯ Strongly agree

◯ Agree

◯ Don't know

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly disagree

Other (please specify)

**18. Not being named TOTY has a negative impact upon a teacher's career.**

◯ Strongly Agree

◯ Agree

◯ Don't Know

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly Disagree

Other (please specify)

**19. Future employers are impressed when job candidates have earned TOTY honors.**

◯ Strongly Agree

◯ Agree

◯ Don't Know

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly Disagree

Other (please specify)

**20. TOTY awards increase community respect for teachers as professionals.**

◯ Strongly Agree

◯ Agree

◯ Don't know

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly Disagree

**21. In general, those named as TOTY face increased expectations in terms of their work performance from (Check all that apply)**

☐ Administration

☐ Colleagues

☐ Community

☐ Parents

☐ Students

☐ Themselves

☐ They do not experience increased expectations

Other (please specify)

**22. Please elaborate upon your response to the previous question.**

**23. Overall, the TOTY award process is effective in boosting teacher morale.**

◯ Strongly agree

◯ Agree

◯ Don't know

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly disagree

Other (please specify)

*24. What changes, if any, do you think should be made to the current TOTY selection process?

*25. Other than TOTY, what are appropriate methods for recognizing excellence in teaching?

**26. Overall, I feel the TOTY experience was a positive one for myself.**

◯ Don't Know

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly agree

Other (please specify)

## 5. Nonrecipients of TOTY

Please answer questions on this page only if you have NEVER received Teacher of the Year honors at any time in your k-12 teaching career.

### 1. I find validation of my work in ways other than receiving TOTY honors.

◯ Strongly agree

◯ Agree

◯ Don't know

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly disagree

Other (please specify)

[                    ]

### 2. Not being named TOTY instills self-doubt in teachers.

◯ Strongly agree

◯ Agree

◯ Don't Know

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly disagree

Other (please specify)

[                    ]

### 3. Being recognized as TOTY has a positive impact upon the honoree's personal morale.

◯ Strongly agree

◯ Agree

◯ Don't know

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly disagree

### 4. Please elaborate upon your response to the previous question.

[                    ]

**5. Teachers derive personal satisfaction from being named TOTY.**

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

Other (please specify)

**6. Being recognized as TOTY has a positive impact upon the honoree's school morale.**

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

**7. Please elaborate upon your response to the previous question.**

**8. Recipients of TOTY awards experience a change in their relationships with coworkers.**

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

**9. Please elaborate upon your response to the previous question.**

**10. TOTY recipients experience a change in daily roles at work as a result of winning the award.**

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

Other (please specify)

**11. Please elaborate upon your response to the previous question.**

**12. TOTY selection is solely based on merit.**

◯ Strongly agree

◯ Agree

◯ Don't know

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly disagree

Other (please specify)

**13. TOTY awards create resentment among faculty members.**

◯ Strongly agree

◯ Agree

◯ Don't know

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly disagree

Other (please specify)

**14. When choosing TOTY, faculty members "take turns" voting for each other.**

◯ Strongly agree

◯ Agree

◯ Don't know

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly disagree

Other (please specify)

**15. Being recognized as TOTY has a positive impact upon the honoree's professional morale.**

◯ Strongly agree

◯ Agree

◯ Don't know

◯ Disagree

◯ Strongly disagree

**16. Please elaborate upon your response to the previous question.**

**17. Teachers place professional importance upon receiving TOTY honors.**

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Don't know

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

Other (please specify)

**18. Not being named TOTY has a negative impact upon a teacher's career.**

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Don't Know

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

Other (please specify)

**19. Future employers are impressed when job candidates have earned TOTY honors.**

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Don't Know

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

Other (please specify)

**20. TOTY awards increase community respect for teachers as professionals.**

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Don't know

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

**21. In general, those named as TOTY face increased expectations in terms of their work performance from (Check all that apply)**

- ☐ Administration
- ☐ Colleagues
- ☐ Community
- ☐ Parents
- ☐ Students
- ☐ Themselves
- ☐ They do not experience increased expectations

Other (please specify)

[ ]

**22. Please elaborate upon your response to the previous question.**

[ ]

**23. Overall, the TOTY award process is effective in boosting teacher morale.**

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

Other (please specify)

[ ]

**\*24. What changes, if any, do you think should be made to the current TOTY selection process?**

[ ]

**\*25. Other than TOTY, what are appropriate methods for recognizing excellence in teaching?**

[ ]

**26. Overall, the TOTY experience is a positive one for recipients.**

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

## 6. Thank You!

We appreciate your taking time to respond to this survey.

# APPENDIX B
## RESEARCH QUESTION/SURVEY QUESTION ALIGNMENT CHART

Overarching research question:

**ORQ** -How do teachers perceive Teacher of the Year awards in terms of their influence upon the three domains of teacher morale* as defined by Mackenzie (2007a)?
*Teacher morale = personal + school + professional morale

Specific questions:

- **R1** -Do teachers' perceptions differ based on whether they are recipients of this award?
- **R2** -Among **recipients**, do perceptions differ based on years of experience, level taught, and career path?
- **R3** -Among **non-recipients**, do perceptions differ based on years of experience, level taught, and career path?
- **R4** -How do both groups perceive the overall effectiveness of Teacher of the Year in terms of its appropriateness as a teacher recognition scheme?

Demographics:

| SQ: | RQ: | Quan. Analysis | Qual. Analysis |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q1 – grade level | R2, R3 | One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD test | |
| Q2 – Years experience | R2, R3 | One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD test | |
| Q3 – Other careers? | R2, R3 | One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD test | |
| Q4 -- Elaborate | R2, R3 | | Coding for common themes; peer review |
| Q5 – Invite to provide further info | R1, R2, R3 | N/A | N/A |
| Q6 – TOTY before? | R1 | Independent samples t-test | |

Main Survey:

| SQ: | RQ: | Morale: | Supporting Literature: | Quan. Analysis | Qual. Analysis |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q7 – # awards, bldg level | R2 | N/A | N/A | One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD Test | |
| Q8 – Higher level | R1, R2 | N/A | Mackenzie (2007b); Dinham & Scott (2002) | R1 – Independent samples t-test<br><br>R2 - One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD Test | |
| Q9, Q35– Impact personal morale? | R1, R2, R3 | Personal | Mackenzie (2007a); Brun & Dugas (2008); Maslow (1943); Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman (1959); McConnell (1997); Abualrub & Al-Zaru (2008); Bellingrath, Rohleder, & Kudielka (2010) | R1 – Independent samples t-test<br><br>R2 & R3 - One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD Test | |
| Q10, Q36 - Elaborate | R1, R2, R3 | Personal | Mackenzie (2007a); Brun & Dugas (2008); Maslow (1943); Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman (1959); McConnell (1997); Abualrub & Al-Zaru (2008); Bellingrath, Rohleder, & Kudielka (2010) | | Deductive coding for common themes; peer review |
| Q11, Q37 – Pers.sat? | R1, R2, R3 | Personal | Brawer et al. (2006); Dinham & Scott (2002);Mackenzie(2007b); Frame, Johnson, & Rosie (2006 | R1 – Independent samples t-test<br><br>R2 & R3 - One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD Test | |
| Q12, Q38– Impact school morale? | R1, R2, R3 | School | Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman (1959); McGregor (1960); Vroom (1964); Porter & Lawler (1968); Saunderson (2004); Huberman, Loch, & Oncular (2004); Hoy & Miskel (1987); Bandura (1986); | R1 – Independent samples t-test<br><br>R2 & R3 - One-way ANOVA; | |

| | | | | Stajkovic & Luthans (2000) | Tukey's HSD Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q13, Q39 - Elaborate | R1, R2, R3 | School | Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman (1959); McGregor (1960); Vroom (1964); Porter & Lawler (1968); Saunderson (2004); Huberman, Loch, & Oncular (2004); Hoy & Miskel (1987); Bandura (1986); Stajkovic & Luthans (2000) | | Deductive coding for common themes; peer review |
| Q14, Q40 – Relations w/ coworkers? | R1, R2, R3 | School | Mackenzie (2007b); Strickler (2006); Henagan (2010); Brawer et al. (2006); Appelbaum & Kamal (2000); Brun & Dugas (2008) | R1 – Independent samples t-test<br><br>R2 & R3 - One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD Test | |
| Q15, Q41 - Elaborate | R1, R2, R3 | School | Mackenzie (2007b) | | Deductive coding for common themes; peer review |
| Q16, Q42 – Daily roles change? | R1, R2, R3 | School | Mackenzie (2007b) | R1 – Independent samples t-test<br><br>R2 & R3 - One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD Test | |
| Q17, Q43 - Elaborate | R1, R2, R3 | School | Mackenzie (2007b) | | Deductive coding for common themes; peer review |
| Q18, Q44 – Based on merit? | R1, R2, R3 | School | Mackenzie (2007b); Dinham & Scott (2002);  Ford & Newstrom (1999); Carusetta (2001); Warren & Plumb (1999); Schwartz (1992) | R1 – Independent samples t-test<br><br>R2 & R3 - One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD Test | |

| Q19, Q45 – Coworkers resent? | R1, R2, R3 | School | Mackenzie (2007b); Carusetta (2001); Warren & Plumb (1999); Schwartz (1992); Geller (1997); Henagan (2010) | R1 – Independent samples t-test<br><br>R2 & R3 - One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q20, Q46 – Take turns? | R1, R2, R3 | School | Mackenzie (2007b); Dinham & Scott (2002);  Ford & Newstrom (1999); Carusetta (2001); Warren & Plumb (1999); Schwartz (1992) Geller (1997); Henagan (2010) | R1 – Independent samples t-test<br><br>R2 & R3 - One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD Test | |
| Q21, Q47 – Pos. impact, prof. morale? | R1, R2, R3 | Professional | Brawer et al. (2006); Mackenzie (2007b); Dinham & Scott (2002) | R1 – Independent samples t-test<br><br>R2 & R3 - One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD Test | |
| Q22, Q48 - Elaborate | R1, R2, R3 | Professional | Brawer et al. (2006); Mackenzie (2007b); Dinham & Scott (2002) | | Deductive coding for common themes; peer review |
| Q23, Q49 – Prof. importance | R1, R2, R3 | Professional | Frame, Johnson, & Rosie (2006); Frey (2006); Frase (2001); Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman (1959); McGregor (1960); Vroom (1964); Porter & Lawler (1968) | R1 – Independent samples t-test<br><br>R2 & R3 - One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD Test | |
| Q24, Q50 – Not winning = neg. impact? | R1, R2, R3 | Professional | Brun & Dugas (2008); Strickler (2006); Sethi & Pinzon (1998); Dutton (1998) | R1 – Independent samples t-test<br><br>R2 & R3 - One-way ANOVA; | |

| | | | | Tukey's HSD Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q25, Q51 – Impress future employers? | R1, R2, R3 | Profession al | Brun & Dugas (2008); Strickler (2006); Nelson (2000) | R1 – Independent samples t-test R2 & R3 - One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD Test | |
| Q26, Q52 – Community respect increased? | R1, R2, R3 | Profession al | Brun & Dugas (2008); Strickler (2006); Nelson (2000) | R1 – Independent samples t-test R2 & R3 - One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD Test | |
| Q27, Q53 – increased expectations? | R1, R2, R3, R4 | Overall | Bandura (1986); Stajkovic & Luthans (2000); Mackenzie (2007b); Dinham & Scott (2002) | R1 & R4 – Independent samples t-test R2 & R3 - One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD Test | |
| Q28, Q54 - Elaborate | R1, R2, R3, R4 | Overall | Bandura (1986); Stajkovic & Luthans (2000); Mackenzie (2007b); Dinham & Scott (2002) | | Deductive coding for common themes; peer review |
| Q29, Q55 – Overall morale boost? | R1, R2, R3, R4 | Overall | Mackenzie (2007a); Brun & Dugas (2008); Maslow (1943); Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman (1959); McConnell (1997); Abualrub & Al-Zaru (2008); Bellingrath, Rohleder, & Kudielka (2010); McGregor (1960); Vroom (1964); Porter & Lawler (1968); Saunderson (2004); Huberman, Loch, & Oncular (2004); Hoy & Miskel (1987); Bandura (1986); Stajkovic & Luthans (2000); Brawer et al. (2006); Mackenzie | R1 & R4 – Independent samples t-test R2 & R3 - One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD Test | |

| | | | (2007b); Dinham & Scott (2002) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q30, Q56– Changes to process? | R1, R2, R3, R4 | Overall | Mackenzie (2007b); Dinham & Scott (2002); Nelson (2000); Strickler (2006); Ford & Newstrom (1999); Carusetta (2001); Warren & Plumb (1999); Schwartz (1992); Geller (1997); Henagan (2010) | | Deductive coding for common themes; peer review |
| Q31, Q57 – Other methods? | R1, R2, R3, R4 | Overall | Nelson (2002); Geller (1997); Huberman, Loch, & Oncular (2004) | | Deductive coding for common themes; peer review |
| Q32, Q58 – Overall experience? | R1, R2, R3, R4 | Overall | Best (2011); Mackenzie (2007b); Dinham & Scott (2002); Hoy & Miskel (1987); Brawer et al. (2006); Frame, Johnson, & Rosie (2006); Carusetta (2001); Mackenzie (2007a); Brun & Dugas (2008); Maslow (1943); Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman (1959); McConnell (1997); Abualrub & Al-Zaru (2008); Bellingrath, Rohleder, & Kudielka (2010); McGregor (1960); Vroom (1964); Porter & Lawler (1968); Saunderson (2004); Huberman, Loch, & Oncular (2004); Bandura (1986); Stajkovic & Luthans (2000); | R1 & R4 – Independent samples t-test<br><br>R2 & R3 - One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD Test | |
| Q33 – Validation other than TOTY | R1, R2 | Personal | Mackenzie (2007b); Dinham & Scott (2002); Bandura (1986) | R1– Independent samples t-test<br><br>R2 - One-way ANOVA; Tukey's HSD Test | |
| Q34 – Self-doubt? | R1, R2 | Personal | Mackenzie (2007b); Dinham & Scott (2002); Bandura (1986) | R1– Independent samples t-test<br><br>R2 - One-way ANOVA; Tukey's | |

| | | | | HSD Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

APPENDIX C

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN TEACHER RECOGNITION SCHEMES SURVEY

Hello, all -

I am a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University and am researching teacher perceptions of Teacher of the Year programs. If you are currently teaching in grades k-12, please take a few minutes to participate in my doctoral research. I would appreciate your sharing this link with others as well. Study closes on August 15, 2011. Participation is voluntary and confidential. Thank you!

Sherri Butler
Cococanuck14@yahoo.com

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/723F9R7

APPENDIX D

IRB RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

---

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:** Sherri Butler
Delores Liston
Department of Curriculum, Foundations, and Reading

**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)

**Initial Approval Date:** July 5, 2011
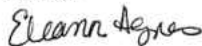
**Expiration Date:** December 30, 2011

**Subject:** Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

---

After a review of your proposed research project numbered **H11466** and titled **"Perceptions of the Influence of Teacher of the Year Awards Upon Teachers' Personal, School, and Professional Morale ,"** 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. You are authorized to enroll up to a maximum of **100** subjects.

*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 proposed research.*

If at the end of this approval period there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period. Total project approval on this application may not exceed 36 months. If additional time is required, a new application may be submitted for continuing work. 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,

*Eleann Agres*

Eleanor Haynes
Compliance Officer

Georgia Southern University
Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs

**Institutional Review Board (IRB)**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Phone: 912-478-5465 | | Veazy Hall 2021 |
| | | P. O. Box 8005 |
| Fax: 912-478-0719 | IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu | Statesboro, GA 30460-8005 |

**To:** Sherri Butler
Dr. Delores Liston

**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:** 12/07/11

**Expiration
Date:** 12/31/12

**Subject:** Status of Research Study Modification Request - Exempt

After a review of your Research Study Modification Request on research project numbered **H11466** and titled **"Perceptions of the Influence of Teacher of the Year Awards upon Teachers' Personal ,School , and Professional Morale,"** it appears that your research modification does not change the conditions of your previous exemption. The research involves activities that do not require approval by the Institutional Review Board according to federal guidelines.

Modification Description: Extended for an additional year and added 100 participants to the project.

*Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that your research is exempt from IRB approval.* You may proceed with the proposed research.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Haynes
Compliance Officer