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Teachers' Perceptions of Empowerment in Their Work Environments as Measured by the  
Psychological Empowerment Instrument

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A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

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by

Corey Gardenhour

August 2008

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Keywords: Teacher Empowerment, Transformational Leadership, Teacher Effectiveness

## ABSTRACT

### Teachers' Perceptions of Empowerment in Their Work Environments as Measured by the Psychological Empowerment Instrument

by

Corey Gardenhour

The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher perceptions of their empowerment. Six school systems in the Northeast Tennessee region were used in the study. Of the 600 teachers who were surveyed, 312 responded (52%). The Psychological Empowerment Instrument was used to survey the sample.

Research supported the notion that teacher empowerment could be influenced by organizational structure, relationships, communication, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, motivation, job satisfaction, and transformational leadership. Teacher empowerment also involved servant leadership.

One research question guided the study. From this question, 12 null hypotheses were generated. Means were compared for the 4 dimensions of the PEI (Meaning, Competence, Impact and Self-Determination). The grouping variables were years of experience, gender, and level of education. ANOVAs and independent samples *t* tests were computed to evaluate the data.

The results of ANOVA and Independent Samples *t* tests were that there were significant differences in the 4 dimensions with teacher years of experience but not with gender or

level of education. Findings suggested that seasoned teachers often showed a higher level of empowerment than beginning teachers. The findings also suggested that gender and level of education did little to influence teacher empowerment in their schools. From the results of the study, conclusions and recommendations for future research were formulated. It was suggested that teachers be involved in a mentoring program. It was also suggested that administrators determine teacher empowerment through faculty assessments and follow up with professional development to ensure the continued empowerment of their staff.

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my supportive family, but especially to my loving wife, Dianna, my beautiful daughter, Eliza, my Mother and Father, Craig and Cheryl, my Grandparents, John, Betty, Gerald, and Lola, my Brother and Sister, Chris and Mandi, and their families, and my best friend Rob. I thank them for all of their love and support.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Empowerment is the ability to enact, equip, or enable positive personal and professional change (Frendendall & Robbins, 1995). Researchers in the areas of cognitive psychology and social science discovered that human motivation can be influenced by the work environment (Short, 1994). Numerous studies investigated work relationships to see what behaviors produce equality, choice, autonomy, and productive change (Hepple, 2001). Although some researchers found specific isolated work behaviors could not influence empowerment, other researchers found that successful organizations have specific characteristics that govern employee behavior and practice (Bartle, Couchonnal, Canda, & Staker, 2002; Carson, Carson, Roe, Birkenmeier, & Phillips, 1999). The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher perceptions of their empowerment. Specifically, the researcher studied relationships between teachers and their work environment.

Empowerment was defined by Frendendall and Robbins (1995) as the ability to enact, equip, or enable positive personal and professional change. The degree or effect of this response to empowerment has eluded researchers in the past because it is virtually impossible to predict human behavior (Yee, 2004). Kassing (2006) addressed the notion that employee empowerment was often conditional and was based on perceived employee treatment. In probing deeper into the study of workplace behaviors and motivation, researchers found a large number of factors face workers today. Holden, Barker, Meenaghan, and Rosenberg (1999) found empowerment to be a result of the perception of the worker. Although disparities exist, they identified areas for greater

research into how employers can empower and motivate professionals to increase productivity and revenue. Researchers such as Holloway and Wolleat (1994) identified several ways for corporations and schools to increase professional productivity. Schools focused on student achievement while corporations focused on increased profit margins. They found that successful organizations implemented a team approach in their organizational structure. Holloway and Wolleat also explained that organizations monitor needs of teams in order to gain new perspectives on the relative health of the organization. Organizations often monitor employer sensitivity, power structures, flexible scheduling, open communication, conflict resolution, conforming to mission and vision statements, fair work practices, quality policies and procedures, mobility, and role efficacy (Holden, Anastas, & Meenaghan, 2005). Researchers also pointed to outside influences dictating success in the educational settings. Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, & Checkoway (1992) found that individual productivity was a process that was built on community involvement. In their study, which investigated psychological empowerment, the researchers found individual empowerment could be predicted by involvement in community organizations such as civic organizations and local clubs. The number of outside organizations and the number of activities were especially important (Zimmerman et al.).

Leadership has also been a way for organizations to transform their empowerment structure. Effective leadership, almost always, is practiced at the core of effective organizations. Effective leadership is defined by mutual respect and encouragement for worker autonomy. School leaders must recognize teachers as individuals who have moral, ethical, emotional, social, and societal influences that govern their behavior in

schools (Harvey, 2001). Frendenall and Robbins (1995) found that the understanding of teachers as individuals often fostered reciprocal relations with their principals.

Wong (1998) linked transformational leadership to teacher empowerment because of a closely related emphasis on employee job satisfaction. Wilpert (1995) found that transformational leadership was attributed to the power of transformed people through their self-actualizing experiences with their employer. These experiences established and promoted the power structure of the workplace while scaffolding emotional support for employees. Sagie (1996) explained that the goal of transformational leaders was to promote the school mission in the workplace while internally changing the individual employee's value system. Through this change in values, employees made a choice to follow the leader based on shared values or to follow the leader because of personal characteristics or charisma.

Teacher empowerment varies greatly from empowerment related to common business practice because teachers are an educated and professional group having a greater influence over their environment. Results in schools are usually measured by students' academic performance. Enderlin-Lampe (2002) found teacher efficacy was solely dependent on the ability to have direct contact and influence over the change process. This was crucial to the teaching profession because success was influenced by the ability of teachers to present quality material, assess current educational levels, and devise and implement new and innovative strategies, all in a time sensitive manner. Similarly, Klecker and Loadman (1998) found increased student achievement when teachers were involved in the planning and execution of key aspects of the organizational structure. This resulted because the direct input could change educational practice

immediately. Teachers are unique because their empowerment is often dependent on the ability to effectively meet the demands of various stakeholders such as parent groups, community groups, national organizations, governmental entities, local educational administration, and the greater educational community at large (Cherniss, 1997). Teachers need empowering work environments lead by transformational leaders who challenge them professionally.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Because of the differing opinions of researchers on teacher empowerment, the researcher in this study felt that the perceptions of teachers and their empowerment needed to be examined. The instrument in this study has been used in at least 50 empowerment studies in the workplace but has not been used with K-12 teachers. The information from this study could offer a fresh perspective in the ongoing debate over the effect of teacher empowerment in the workplace. The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher empowerment as measured by the four dimensions of the PEI and the three demographic variables.

#### *Research Question*

Through quantitative analysis of the Psychological Empowerment Instrument (PEI) administered to 312 K-12 teachers from six area school systems in the Upper East Tennessee area, the researcher in this study investigated teachers' perceptions of their empowerment. The following research question guided this study:

1. Is there a difference in teachers' mean scores for the four dimensions of the PEI (Meaning, Competence, Self-determination, and Impact) for years of experience, gender, and level of education?

### *Significance of the Study*

Teacher empowerment has not been studied to the extent that employee empowerment has been studied in business. Therefore, the researcher in this study chose to question teachers using an instrument that could help identify the level of teacher empowerment in several areas. The four areas of teacher empowerment, as identified in the PEI, were meaning, self-determination, competence, and impact. This study was conducted to understand the needs of teachers and to understand teacher empowerment. This study was designed to add to the body of research in the area of teacher empowerment and was designed to offer new perspectives on the relationships between teacher empowerment and gender, years of experience, and level of education

### *Limitations and Delimitations*

Some limitations for the study were teachers received the survey by school email addresses and may have been reluctant to answer the questions because they directly relate to their job satisfaction in their current employment. Also, this study was limited to six school districts in Northeast Tennessee and may not be generalized to other K-12 settings.

### *Definition of Terms*

The following terms are defined for use in this research study.

*Empowerment.* Empowerment is the ability to enact, equip, or enable positive personal and professional change (Frendendall & Robbins, 1995).



*Transformational Leadership.* Transformational leadership is an active leadership style that produces powerful changed people through their self actualizing experiences with their employer (Wilpert, 1995).

*Organizational Structure.* Organizational structure denotes specific, regulated behavioral confines for which employees must adhere (Tseng et al., 2002).

### *Overview of the Study*

This quantitative study is presented in five related chapters. Chapter 1 consists of an introduction to teacher empowerment, a statement of the problem, the significance of the study, one research question, the limitations and delimitations of the study, the definition of terms, and the overview of the study. Chapter 2 is a review of related literature that approached topics such as teacher empowerment, transformational leadership and job satisfaction. Chapter 3 is a description of the methods and procedures used in the study. Chapter 4 is a description and presentation of the data related to the research questions. Chapter 5 is a summary of findings for the study, recommendations for practice, and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For the purpose of this study, several areas of teacher empowerment were identified. Organizational empowerment, emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, transformational leadership, servant leadership, and teacher empowerment were addressed.

#### *Organizational Structure and Empowerment*

Concepts of employee empowerment have changed over the last several years. Employers in both the public and private sector have constantly looked for ways to engage employees by morally appealing to them (Harvey, 2001). The moral structure changed because employers looked at employees both as individuals and as a part of a team (Bergmann & De Meuse, 1996). The structure of the team can be difficult for workers because their role in a given task or assignment was lost in the interpersonal dynamics of the team itself. These interpersonal dynamics must be addressed so that the team and individuals can flexibly engage themselves in an assigned project (Griffith, 1999). Any time and energy given to tasks other than what was assigned could compromise the mission of the organization. Therefore, organizational structure and employee empowerment must work together. The responsibility of any organization has always been to have employees work for a common purpose within specific organized behavioral confines (Coleman, 1999). Employees who were subjected to specific, regulated behavioral confines were linked to positive social change. Specific rules were helpful to employees because they could solve conflict while being protected by common

rules (Tseng et al., 2002). This suggests that employee empowerment was a result of the organizational structure that was directly guided by an individual or a team.

Gamble and Kelliher (1999) found that short defined meetings increased the empowerment of job performance because employees had a sense of accomplishment and could listen and comprehend more complex material and return to work more quickly to continue work on assigned tasks. Daily and Bishop (2003) found that if an organization improved its knowledge about the personalities and work habits of its employees, it created better teams who responded to challenges that impacted production. This could be as simple as conducting personality inventories and pairing individuals who either had the same characteristics or, in some cases, differing characteristics. Matching this with task assignments could offer the best interpersonal fit scenario for a project (Daily & Bishop). By focusing on the importance of the employee's emotional needs, bridges of trust were built between employees and their supervisor. These bridges not only aided the individual but also aided the organization (Fredendall & Robbins, 1995). Bridges of trust promoted "positive developmental changes" that brought about increased awareness of the need for productive work relationships. Empowered relationships built through positive experiences were shared between employees and direct management (Leffert et al., 1998, p. 211).

### *Relationships and Empowerment*

Frendendall and Robbins (1995) stated that the idea of empowered relationships in the workplace was attributed to the total quality management movement. The movement assumed that workers wanted to create positive relationships with employers so the organization could successfully achieve its goals. Connor (1997) pointed out that

this may not always be the case. He contended that total quality management assumed that workers possessed an innate desire to move the company forward when many workers did not seek close empowered relationships with their employer (Connor). Conversely, research supported the idea that intrinsic motivation for relationship was built through past work successes (Thomas, 1997). Tate and Copas (2003) found that employees needed to be taught how to interrelate and communicate with their peers in order to achieve strong interpersonal relationships. Santiago (2005) found that the mission and vision of a company can be taught and ingrained into the daily life of any worker, but the actual values and experiences of each employee contributed to the total relationship that individuals had with their employer.

#### *Communication and Empowerment*

Part of a healthy organizational relationship is the communication structure that the company espouses. Communication provides a way to evoke behavioral change between workers and the organization (Eisenson, Auer, & Irwin, 1963). Communication is the avenue that leaders use to manifest change (Axley, 1996). Open communication often gives value to individuals so they feel empowered in their organizational relationship (Haskins, 1996). Face-to-face communication can build a sense of community, destroy barriers for change, and provide interpersonal support (Aigner, Raymond, & Smidt, 2002).

Computing a meta-analysis of employee relationships, Gayle and Preiss (2002) found that employees who communicated well had better relationships and produced resolutions to their own problems more quickly than those who did not communicate well. Communication needed to be valued at all levels of the organization in order for

the whole body to move in one accord (Panko, 1992). Employee empowerment came from leveled commitment to organizational communication and interpersonal support (Itzhaky & York, 2002). The reason that communication was important to employees and employers was that it was the proof that there is a “secure participation” between employer and employee (Johnson, Donohue, Atkin, & Johnson, 1995). Kalbfleisch (1993) found that effective organizational communication lengthened and intensified employee relationships.

Effective organizational communication can also lead to the empowerment of employees. The coupling of empowerment and communication can lead to the idea of the “corporate memory” because workers are able to diversify, increase the complexity of their communication, and develop interdependence on each other (Downing, 2004). Their use of workplace jargon helped to distinguish rank, demonstrated experience level, and revealed information about the quality of worker relationships (Schrodt, 2002). Listening was also an important part of communication. It has been linked to empowerment in specific job tasks. Hass and Arnold (1995) found that by listening workers effectively differentiated between job tasks that were distracting or unimportant and were able to better increase their overall job performance.

#### *Conflict Resolution and Empowerment*

Daly and Wiemann (1994) found that effective communication has aided organizations in the resolution of work related conflict. Conflict resolution was one of the major barriers in employee empowerment and success. The success or failure of the organization often depended upon the manager who intervened at appropriate times so that the work was not impeded (Sampson, 1998). If the leadership worked to improve the

development of conflict and monitored the outcomes of conflicts between the workers, the conflict was very predictable (Schneider, 2000). Meiners and Miller (2004) found the leadership style and the ability of the leader to intervene at the right time was crucial. Additionally, the setting of boundaries and the implementation of negotiation techniques was imperative so workers could compare how they reacted to situations related to the common standard set by the company, giving workers the skills to address, solve, and reduce conflict in the workplace (Meiners & Miller). The evolution of a values system such as the changing values as needed to move the organization forward had great impact on the ability of the corporation to organize formally and informally because the values helped the organization define in real terms how employees were to conduct themselves. The determination of values also aided in discipline and grievance procedures (Schehr & Milovanovic, 1999). Many organizations deal with employees who do not know how to use values to solve problems. These organizations often have employees who replace their adherence to values with blame. The issuance of blame did not suffice as a means of solving problems in the workplace because it did not solve conflict or uphold the value systems of corporations (Morill, Zald, & Rao, 2003).

Weber and Khandemian (1997) found that a policy of regulation and constant evaluation of the process for reporting and solving personal issues was essential to the cooperation and empowerment of employees. Leaders had to ensure that employees knew how to solve conflict in an organized, disciplined fashion, but what they chose to teach their employees depended on whether the employees felt that justice was served in their particular conflict. Meindl (1989) found that the determination of fairness was

important to workers because the issues of equity, level, and position were called into question.

Pillai, Scandura, and Williams (1999) found that employees may become disenfranchised if they were not supported in their quest to fairly solve their own problems. Although employees felt that justice was not been served at times, leaders chose to have them work as a part of a group because the resulting interdependence could increase productivity and aid employees in evaluating their conflict and its resolution (Jehn, 1995).

Conflict could be positive for workers because it reaffirmed team goals while offering a way for employees to express their individualism in the work process (Jehn, 1997). Schneider (2000) found that conflict and its resolution was a way for employees to express individualism. He found that skilled managers needed to have plans in place to lead employees through training and model exercises, such as role play, so that employees could see successful outcomes resulting from appropriate employee conflict. McNary (2003) explained that if supervisors enacted a philosophy of two-way cooperation employees were often more satisfied with the result of the conflict. They reduced the amount of residual conflict. Conflict resolution practices reconfigured the title and intent of management because leaders could move from managerial roles to the role of a facilitator. This change offered teams someone who was not threatening as a supervisor but someone who evaluated and supported the efforts of employees in job assignments (Pulhamus, 1991).

### *Emotional Intelligence and Empowerment*

Many employers have changed their management style by being sensitive to the individual needs of their workers. One way this has been done was to look at employees holistically and to support their individual needs and wants (Jenkins, 2003). Employers have not always supported the emotional needs of employees. Schlinger (2003) explained that too often early psychologists had defined intelligence as the capacity for knowledge rather than a combined group of intelligences that when put together can represent the multifaceted ability of a given human mind. Additionally, leaders transformed their personal beliefs, values, and standards to increase the effectiveness of their leadership (Levinson, 1999). Cherniss (2002) found that when a leader identified areas where emotions were transformed and regulated, employees felt supported and empowered. Support and empowerment came in the form of empathy for the employee, integrity, and constancy and compassion for their individual situation (Stefano & Wasylyshyn, 2005). Petrides and Furnham (2000) offered that knowing employee patterned reactions to specific stimuli that were created in the workplace may help a manager make decisions about how to approach given subjects with an employee. The awareness of emotional intelligence in the workplace was linked to increased self-awareness, performance, and motivation and greatly reduced gender specific responses or work related issues (Petrides & Furnham). The increased sensitivity to the emotional side of management often meant that leaders increased their knowledge of emotional intelligence and the emotional intelligence of the employee (Mayer, Perkins, Caruso, & Salovey, 2001). Novick (1998) attributed the resiliency of humans to face the challenges



of their workplace to their emotional responses that are made in the face of general rules of existing management.

According to Shepard, Fasko, and Osborne (1999), there were five different principles of emotional intelligence. Increase of knowledge, strategic processing of executive control, motivation, development of individualism, processing of situational context were areas where employees can evaluate their own emotional intelligence (1999). In evaluating personal emotional intelligence, workers could not mutually exclude themselves from their goals and aspirations. This was often the push to achieve role efficacy (Gardner, 2002). Sternberg (1997) explained that in workplaces where employees were nurtured in their emotional intelligence and were taught how to implement it as a part of their lifelong learning, employees were likely to uphold values that were mutually supported by the organization and themselves. Many organizations chose to use group exercises to model and support emotional intelligence by helping workers identify other employees who shared common values and allowed them to converse about common issues that effect the whole organization (Sternberg). Barsade (2002) offered that the group exercised a forum for employee interaction and mutual support. Ridgell and Lounsbury (2004) agreed that the leadership team and the employees used groups and forums to validate individual and group emotional intelligence.

#### *Motivation and Job Satisfaction*

Neff (2002) wrote that workers were motivated by leaders who empowered them to take ownership over certain aspects of a given organization. Motivation and empowerment worked in unison because leaders must motivate their employees in order

to fully empower them. Creech (1995) explained that motivation has been defined as “that which gives impetus to our behavior by arousing, sustaining, and directing it toward the attainment of goals.” (p. 27) He further found that although many theories about motivation suggested that motivation was an external force given only by the employer, research suggested that it was made both of the intrinsic motivation of the individual and the external force of the employer (Creech). Wright (2001) wrote that the coupling of both external and internal motivation was attributed to true motivation. Burton, Lee, and Holtom (2002) stated that employee motivation affected many different aspects of the work environment of the employee. These researchers further noted that employee absenteeism, family factors, and organizational commitment were ways employers measured whether employees were motivated and committed to the organization. The degree to which employees were committed to the organization directly correlated to their morale (Burton et al.). Mcknight, Ahmad, and Schneider (2000) reported that the way employees felt about their job directly affected their willingness to consistently and accurately perform their job duties.

### *Transformational Leadership*

Transformational leadership has been a major part of the foundations of empowerment structures. Although there has been little research in this area, new leadership paradigms lead to new research that investigated the role of transformational leaders in the empowerment of employees.

Wilpert (1995) found that transformational leadership could be attributed to the power of changed people through their self actualizing experiences with their employer. These experiences established and promoted the power structure of the workplace while

scaffolding emotional support for employees. The goal of transformational leaders was to promote the change process in the workplace while internally changing the individual employee through value systems (Sagie, 1996). Burns (1972) found that no ordered change could happen without leadership. He further wrote that transformational leadership needed to be creative and democratic (Burns). The focus of transformational leadership also is changing the employee by example. Transformational leaders want to change employee thoughts and actions to better serve the organization. Through the change in values, each employee made a choice to follow the leader based on shared values or follow the leader because of who the leader was personally. Kolb (1995) found this to be the case when she studied the congruence between the need for workers to have structure and the ability for them to change their work habits. She found that workers were more likely to accept change when they had organizational structure, when they had a strong interpersonal leadership, and when they could make accurate predictions about their work environment (Kolb). Her research was supported by Tirozzi (2001) who found that leadership in the workplace could only be transformational when well-qualified, disciplined individuals supported beliefs and set actions of the organization.

Although many researchers discovered the link between strong leadership and employee effectiveness, Tierney and Foster (1991) wrote that there have been pervasive notions of the role of management and administration. They further explained that employees had the notion that leaders have the sole responsibility to run the day-to-day operations of the organization rather than making goal oriented decisions (Tierney & Foster). Wong (1998) wrote that leadership and employee effectiveness is a moral question to be answered by each individual because the actions of individual workers

were based on a moral structure. When workers made themselves morally available, workers acknowledged their role in the greater cause of the organization (Wong). Gibson, Tesone, and Buchalski (2000) further explained that this cause was bolstered by employees recognizing the role identity of individuals and by implementing programs where other employees are mentored and specifically trained in the moral structure that was espoused by the organization. Burns (1978) wrote that “intellectual leadership brings in the role of conscious purpose drawn from values.” (p.4) Glasman and Heck (1992) found that leadership and employee effectiveness was due to the relationship between authority and the way leaders met expectations. The authority was dependent on the expectations the workers had for the leader to fulfill organizational goals and respond to employee needs (1992).

The expectancy of employees hinged on factors such as time structures for when to solve problems, past experiences with other leaders, and how they handled situations (Kenney, Blascovich, & Shaver, 1994). In some form, to respond to the expectancy leaders who claimed to be transformational leaders gave more power to employees so that the expectancy of leadership was shared. This gave employees more ownership over their situation in the organization (Nupponen, 2006). Tierney (1991) reminded us that there are negative implications for organizations that became too democratic. He explained that postmodern thought pointed to reformation of individuals without sacrificing or compromising the mission or vision of the organization (Tierney).

Many transformational leaders adhered to the mission and vision of the organization in order to make strong, lasting change that empowered individuals. The

clear adherence to the mission and vision often supplied needed structure and supported the promotion of new areas (Bogler & Nir, 2001).

In sharing the vision, leaders also acknowledged the personal power of each employee. Employees then transformed the mission by being powerful in their own specific roles. Dumas and Sandowsky (1998) called for leaders to be role models when supporting the vision and mission of the organization. They found that leaders who were charismatic had greater success in educating employees on the accomplishment of goals and objectives. Similarly, Hard (2006) found that having charisma as a leader indirectly communicated high expectations that could support the mission of the organization. Buchen (1998) supported leading by being a role model. He explained that leaders need to be a servant first while training individuals to adhere to the mission. Buchen found that leaders who were self-sacrificing in practice while training individual had greater success in fulfilling their common mission. Burns (2000) suggested that organizations frequently forgot to indulge in leadership studies as a separate entity and asserted that these studies should coexist with skills training. He also explained that the absence of leadership studies negatively influenced goal attainment. Burns further explained that articulated studies that focused on leadership aided the organization creation and fulfillment of a learning induced environment where employees could take personal risks (Burns). Issac, Zerbe, and Pitt (2001) agreed with Burns and found that clearly articulated goals and beliefs as a part of the organizational vision not only increased the comfort in taking risks but also created an environment where performance and employee motivation were enhanced. Deblois (2000) paired motivation with the relevance of set beliefs in the organization. He reminded us that the work of leading with a mission and

vision was complicated. Keeping the goals relevant to the employees created need for open communication and refinement in a process that was on-going. Deblois further discussed the difference between appearance and reality when dealing with organizational changes. His research pointed to the reality that the community as a whole had to treat the goals as living documents that could change based on immediate and long-term needs, whether social or organizational (Deblois). However, Fredricks (1998) found that relevance in the mission frequently could be compromised and misled by personal ambition, and that leaders needed to be aware of subtle changes in the vision so that integrity was maintained. Although transformational leaders had personal objectives, they held true to the mission and vision statements.

Transformational leaders had important characteristics that set them apart from other leaders. Researchers such as Kim (2002) found transformational leaders to have common purpose, strategic planning capabilities, servant leadership, and a lasting legacy from which their employees referenced their personal career journeys. Transformational leaders fostered a sense of common purpose by conducting direct interventions and needs assessments with employees. These assessments, according to Rost and Barker (2000), helped the organization define in general terms the direct relationship between resource allocation and the mission. Rost and Barker also explained that when resources, both human and capital, were allocated, it sent a direct message to employees that a concerted effort was being made to further the organization. Common purpose among employees was influenced by whether the leader focused on leadership rather than the specific role of the employee. In an environment where there was mutual respect and workers are treated professionally, Boatwright and Forrest (2000) found workers saw commonalities

among their work behaviors and the behaviors that were expected of them by their employer, thus creating a common purpose. Burns (1978) found that leaders and followers raised each other to increased levels of motivation and morality by sharing a common purpose. Wielkiewicz, Prom, and Loos (2005) found that common purpose was achieved through attention to workplace attitudes. They explained that attitudes were changed by timely interpersonal interaction where the leader focused on the employee's attitude and its effect on the workplace environment (Wielkiewicz et al.).

Conversely, Orr (2006) wrote that innovation in the workplace was the only way to promote common purpose because employees held the idea that what they were doing is of the utmost importance for their employer and their customers. Contrary to Orr, Ferch and Mitchell (2001) found common purpose to be dependent on the amount of disequilibrium that was caused when the change process cycle was occurring. Combs (2002) reported that common purpose was a far more complex issue. She wrote that workplace diversity was not determined by race or gender but by the tolerance that employees had for each other in their work roles. Combs further explained that common purpose was determined by the leader's ability to recognize work related diversity and his or her ability to value and strategically plan for each employee's contribution to the organization. Common purpose was a key factor in the multi-faceted role of a transformational leader (Combs).

According to Finley (1998), strategic planning was a foundational trait of transformational leadership. Strategic planning takes into account proper policy and procedure, the confrontation of equilibrium, and guided focus on the entrepreneurship of the organization. While there has been a focus on policy and procedure, Thompson

(2000) found strategic planning to include the leader's personal leadership style and their ability to foresee the success of certain functions of the organization in terms of his or her leadership. Thompson reported strategic planning had to include the values and goals of the employees and other stakeholders.

### *Servant Leadership*

Servant leadership has also been a hallmark of transformational leadership.

Greenleaf (1970) first coined the term servant leadership in an essay when he stated:

"The servant-leader *is* servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is *leader* first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions... The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature."(p.1)

Greenleaf (1999) later discovered that people make meaning based on what they think is relevant to them. This set the groundwork for study in to servant leadership. Servant leaders, according to Greenleaf, had to understand that part of their leadership would be connecting to the needs of people in a relevant way. Steiner and Gaskin (1998) reported that servant leadership has been an attitude that every transformational leader embraced. They wrote that servant leaders trained themselves to recognize and execute change by being involved in the change process. They explained that servant leaders touched the lives of those who worked for them while carrying out the mission of the organization (Steiner & Gaskin). Bower (1997) agreed that those who followed a transformational leader did so because they were personally touched in some way by the character of the leader. She later reported that attributes such as trustworthiness, integrity, and honesty were likely to be found in servant leaders (1997). According to



Tate and Copas (2003), servant leaders faced the challenge of too much employee interaction because their progress was stifled by too many opinions and feelings. Although Tate and Copas stated that there could be too much interaction, Hibert (2000) noted that listening was the start of the transformation process and a quality that built trust among employees and the leader. In making trust a part of the equation, Donahue (2003) found leaders to have enormous responsibility in governing personal behavior so that the role of a servant was not compromised. The professional behavior of servant leaders was studied by Herman and Marlowe (2005). They asserted that servant leaders needed to remember to allow their workers to grow while they were being led because often the leaders in their hands-on approach took too much control of given tasks. They also reported that servant leaders held professional boundaries in place so they did not compromise worker autonomy.

Blunt (2003) reported on the important practice of reflection in servant leadership. He stated that the practice of servant leadership caused leaders to constantly reflect on their craft. He further reported that reflection offered ways for the leaders to evaluate their motivations for serving others. Kezar (2002) found servant leaders regardless of gender felt oppressed. Kezar reported that servant leaders were more likely to have more stress, were more likely have burn out, and were more likely to have role confusion due to the vast number of responsibilities for which they were committed. Her research presented the idea that servant leaders devoted their whole being to their work to make the model effective. The model of servant leader involved self-sacrifice, determination, impeccable character, and a willing spirit to be truly transformational (Kezar).

Schnake, Cochran, and Dumler (1995) wrote that transformational leaders and servant leaders often leave a legacy for others to follow. Leaders started their legacy the day they began work in an organization. Leaders who transformed their legacy usually become a part of the history of the organization. To do this, there was to be a generation of work related stories that were carried by the members of the organization. Sosik (2000) explained that the organizational stories were constructive, developmental, or charismatic in nature. He further wrote that the meaning and interpretive elements were held by individuals and were based on experiences the workers had with the leader (Sosik). These experiences pervaded all circumstances that may fall on the workers. Leonard and Leonard (1999) reported that the legacy of a leader could withstand termination of employment. They further reported that the legacy of leadership was purely personal so it became a part of an oral tradition that could not easily be forgotten. Gibson, Hannon, and Blackwell (1998) found leadership legacy to be based on the charisma of the leader and his or her ability to empathetically relate to their employees. They also found that the amount of personal information that was known by the leader about the employees had a direct correlation with the longevity of the leader's legacy.

#### *Teacher Empowerment*

Teacher empowerment was defined by Short (1994) as “a process whereby school participants develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems.” (p.56) Short further explained that teacher empowerment was dependent on six dimensions. The dimensions were collective decision making, professional growth, status, self efficacy, autonomy, and impact.

## *Dimensions of Teacher Empowerment*

### *Decision Making*

The dimension of decision making was marked by teacher input into the process of the everyday changes that took place in a school. The decision-making process involved collaborative communication, problem solving sessions, and goal setting (Boland-Prom & Anderson, 2005). Enderlin-Lampe (1997) found that teachers who were involved in the decision-making processes often found self-efficacy in their job role. When teachers were a part of the decision-making process, they found greater appreciation to those who were leading them (Enderlin-Lampe). Shepard (1995) stressed that teachers who made critical decisions about their professional work environments were able to transfer the cognitive process to their students. This made both teachers and their students better problem solvers (Shepard).

### *Professional Growth*

Robertson and Tang (1995) reported that empowerment for teachers often depended on their commitment to professional growth. An increased commitment to professional growth often made teachers feel that the work they did had personal meaning. They explained that making a difference and having fulfillment in the area of teaching could be directly correlated to the amount of time spent in close contact with students (Robertson & Tang). By monitoring the personal growth of students, teachers often gained unique perspectives on student achievement based on student inquiry.

### *Status*

Teacher status is often determined by their effectiveness in the classroom. Teachers have an innate want to be valued for the job they perform by their administrator,

their students, and the parents of their students (Schneider, 2000). In order for schools to give the proper teacher status, there needs to be clear expectations how to achieve positive status in the school community. Schools can have mechanisms in place for parents and students to report on teacher effectiveness. Administrators must give teachers timely and meaningful feedback as well so that any teacher can achieve positive results (Young & Hite, 1994). The celebration of teachers with positive academic or social results can greatly improve empowerment.

### *Self-Efficacy*

Teachers felt empowered when they found self-efficacy in their work role. This meant that they were able to find satisfaction and fulfillment in their contribution to the education of their students (Short & Greer, 1994). The self-efficacy theory was developed by Bandura. Bandura (1977) found self-efficacy to involve outcome expectancy and personal fulfillment. Short (1994) found that self-efficacy for teachers was their confidence or perception in their ability or skills to teach students.

With so many expectations for performance of assigned tasks, teachers have found it difficult to feel fulfilled in their work role (Enderlin-Lampe, 2003). Many schools have found ways to improve self-efficacy. Schools have implemented democratic styles of leadership where teachers can be a part of the decision-making process (McArthur, 2002). To do this, school systems have had to decentralize and move resources to individual schools to support teacher decisions through site based management. This act of confidence in the ability and skill of teachers to make decisions increased teacher empowerment because teachers perceived that the administration valued their opinions about how the school should operate (Short & Johnson, 1994).

### *Autonomy*

Scales-Trent (1999) defined autonomy as “moral authenticity, integrity, or self identity.” (p. 15) Autonomy for teachers depends on their ability to be trusted with the operation of their classroom and school. Ludwig and Taymans (2005) found that teacher autonomy depended largely on the willingness of school administrators to share the power of decision making with teachers. They further noted that teachers who shared power and responsibility often created better learning environments for children. This was due to their satisfaction with their role in the school (Ludwig & Taymans). Rodgers and Long (2002) explained that increasing teacher autonomy increased the leadership potential of teachers. They found that if teachers could collectively work on projects, the collective intelligence increased the effectiveness of the decisions. They noted that teachers who had more autonomy were less likely to engage in inappropriate behavior because they had vested interest in the success of the school. McNary (2003) found that teachers who did not have autonomy felt oppressed because they felt their opinion was not valued. The lack of administrative support for autonomy often leads to the disempowerment of teachers.

### *Impact*

In order to be empowered, teachers had to feel they were making a significant impact on their work environment. Ayres and Klonsky (2006) stated that schools were part of the fabric of the community and were the common ground for the community to reach children. They reported that public school teachers made a difference because, in a large part, they help the community grow in a positive direction. Brown (2003), in his research on student development, stated “Teachers must make sure that the concepts

being studied and the knowledge and skills required to deal successfully with them are compatible with students' levels of intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development” (p. 61). In making the learning compatible with their style and orientation, teachers create the best possible learning environment for the students. This environment, according to Greenleaf (2003), was ruled by the stable emotional influence of teachers. This made teachers very important to the maturation process. The more students were socially and emotionally stable, the more teachers were able to perform their duties effectively. Hargreaves (1998) found that teachers changed their practice just because they had emotional ties with children. He wrote that teachers had the ability to change the course of student lives by taking a personal interest in their success. He further found that the connection between teachers and students was unique and that it was one that offered lasting emotions for both (Hargreaves, 1998). Hargreaves and Fink (2000) also reported that the bond of teachers and students added depth and understanding to classroom management. They found that teachers and students could change the classroom environment by working together to establish a respectful atmosphere. This mutual respect greatly reduced the stress on students as well as teachers (Hargreaves & Fink). Hargreaves (2001) found that teachers had to find emotional connections to learning so that students could access their thoughts and feeling about what they were presently learning. He explained that teachers finding emotional connections to learning would ultimately raise student achievement and teacher empowerment (Hargreaves, 2001).

### *NCLB and Teacher Empowerment*

The one factor that is currently impacting teacher empowerment is the accountability reform under NCLB (No Child Left Behind). The increased accountability has changed the demands on teachers. Everett, Tichenor, and Heins (2003) asserted that teachers were unique in the amount of pressure they had in their work environment from administrators who were concerned with academic achievement. This pressure also came from parents who had unrealistic goals for the success of their children or who were apathetic and children who were on different levels of social, emotional, academic, and socioeconomic planes. These factors directly affected their ability to feel they are making a difference in the job teachers perform each day. More teachers than ever are leaving the profession to seek higher paying jobs with far less stress and bureaucratic overtones (Everett et al.). Many school systems are experiencing a teacher shortage. This alarming characteristic prompted various educational and governmental entities to probe deeper into why teachers left the profession and what they could do to increase retention and job satisfaction (Lambert, 2006). Young, Vance, and Ensher (2003) explained that the influence of high stakes testing and increased accountability discouraged many young college graduates from choosing teaching as a career. They further explained that the federal government increased accountability with no funding to back the change (Young et al.).

State and local governments have different interpretations of how to conduct public education at the state and local level resulting in differing implementations of educational laws, policies, and practices under NCLB. This created a great divide in educational administration, philosophy, and pedagogy (Haskins, 1996). This fact may

contribute to the problem of attracting and retaining young teachers to the teaching profession once they experience this in a real school setting. School systems need to train their administrators to understand the personal and professional stressors that impact teachers. More importantly, the effect of competent teachers leaving the profession has created a greater gap in the quality of education that is being provided to the youth of America (Hard, 2006).

Several researchers have studied the demands that are placed on teachers under NCLB. Also, Palmer (2003) indicated that many teachers made professional choices to give in to the demands of high stakes testing rather than teaching children values. He also noted that teachers had to make choices that compromised their creativity, educational values, and personal contribution to the educational process for meeting demands of administration (Palmer). Hammerness (2006) agreed that teachers were faced with too many challenges to meet career demands. She explained that the choice to remain a teacher was becoming more complex because individuals often had to sacrifice pedagogical beliefs, which translated to decreased job satisfaction (Hammerness). Darling- Hammond (2007) explained that decreased job satisfaction could come from teachers not being properly prepared in postsecondary education to meet the challenges of the working world. She offered that schools would have to recognize this and provide professional development to counter the initial shock that was commonly felt by beginning teachers (Darling- Hammond). Darling-Hammond and Berry (2006) reported that much of the dissatisfaction from teachers came from the increased job responsibility and lack of proper state and federal funding under NCLB to support public education initiatives. This lack of support has negatively impacted the empowerment of teachers



because teachers have seen the inequity in resource allocation for education (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

### *Why Teacher Empowerment?*

Teachers play a great role in the preservation of society as a whole (Perkins, 1995). Zhang, Wehmeyer, and Chen (2005) found that teachers were important because of both the social and moral influence they provided for students. They explained that teachers had influence over the development of children much like a second parent. They noted that teachers also were a determining factor in the way children perceived, confronted and solved complex problems. This made teachers an indispensable part of child development (Zhang et al.). Greenman and Dieckmann (2004) determined that teachers were a critical part of the cultural change of their communities. They further explained that teachers needed to be empowered so that they could provide the highest quality education for students possible. They found, that if teachers were empowered, they could positively change the culture (Greenman & Dieckmann).

### *Summary*

Chapter 2 was a review of related literature. A review of literature was completed on empowerment related to organizational structure, emotional intelligence, conflict resolution transformational leadership, servant leadership, and teacher empowerment. The researcher in this study has learned ways to improve the working environments for teachers and to guide educational administrators in the improvement of empowering teachers within their buildings. Chapter 3 contains a description of the methodology for the study, Chapter 4 describes the data analysis for the study, and Chapter 5 is a summary of findings, implications, and recommendations for future study.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate perceptions of teacher empowerment in public schools in Northeast Tennessee. The data were collected using the survey to measure teacher empowerment (see Appendix A). Teachers were surveyed on the four dimensions of self-orientation of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (Spreitzer, 2001).

While a number of research studies pointed to increased achievement for teachers who were empowered in their particular work environment, a great number of questions remain regarding where school systems need to focus their effort to improve working conditions and productivity among teachers. The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of teachers with their own empowerment. The dependent variables and independent variables were linked to the PEI and the empowerment self-orientations in general. This chapter included the research design, the population and sample, the instrumentation, the procedures, the data analysis, and a summary of the chapter.

#### *Research Design*

This study was designed to use descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data that were collected. A quantitative research design was followed to find the association between the dependent and independent variables. In the choice to use a quantitative research design, the researcher chose to compare the mean scores of the groups to determine if a difference existed between demographic variables within the four dimensions of the PEI.

### *Population and Sampling Procedures*

The population for the study was six public K-12 school systems in Northeast Tennessee. City and county school systems were chosen for this study to gain a better perspective of teacher empowerment throughout the region.

A random sample was selected from the population. For each school system, 100 participants were chosen. 50 teachers were selected from grades K-8 and 50 were selected from grades 9-12 to ensure representative sample of K-12 teachers. The teachers were randomly sampled using the system's email in each school system. Permission was obtained from the director of schools (see Appendix B) to have access to the email addresses of the teachers who were selected to be a part of the study. The researcher also made contact with each school system's IT department to ensure their school system could accept the electronic survey in the form of an email and that it would not be blocked by the specific system software that was used to protect against spam. The IT department helped by sending email addresses of the teachers to the researcher and the researcher chose names randomly. An agreement was made with each school system that the email would be forwarded to the participants on three different dates 1 week apart. Approval was also gained from the East Tennessee State University's Institutional Review Board, the chair for this study, and the research committee to ensure the anonymity of its participants.

### *Instrumentation and Data Collection*

The instrument for data collection was the PEI developed by Spreitzer (see Appendix A). The instrument was designed to collect quantitative data about teacher empowerment. There was a seven-point Likert scale associated with the instrument. The

individual points of the scale were Very Strongly Agree, Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, and Very Strongly Disagree. Numerical codes were attached to the varying degrees of the scale for statistical analysis. The researcher chose this instrument because it could effectively answer the research question. The research questions focused on four dimensions. The dimensions were Meaning, Competence, Self-determination, and Impact. Three questions were formulated for each dimension totaling 12 questions for the instrument. The instrument has been proven to be highly valid and reliable (Spreitzer, 1995, 1996). Three demographic variables were used for the study: Educational level (bachelor's, master's, and doctorate levels), Years of experience (0-10 years, 10-20 years, and 20-30 years, 31 or greater years), and gender (male and female). The instrument was distributed to 600 teachers online. All teachers given the survey had access to email.

### *Research Question and Related Hypothesis*

The following research question guided this study.

Research Question: Is there a difference differences in the mean scores of teachers in for the four dimensions of the PEI (Meaning, Competence, Self-determination, and Impact) for years of experience, gender, and level of education?

Multiple null hypotheses were generated for the research question.

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in teachers' mean scores for the Meaning dimension of the PEI among years of experience groups (0-10 years of experience, 11-20 years of experience, 21-30 years of experience, and 30 years of experience or greater).

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in teachers' mean scores in the Meaning dimension of the PEI between male and female teachers.

Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant difference teachers' mean scores for the Meaning dimension of the PEI among the three educational level groups (bachelor's, master's, and doctorate).

Ho<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant in teachers' mean scores for the Competence dimension of the PEI among years of experience groups (0-10 years of experience, 11-20 years of experience, 21-30 years of experience, and 31 years of experience or greater).

Ho<sub>5</sub>: There is no significant difference in teachers' mean scores in the Competence dimension of the PEI between male and female teachers.

Ho<sub>6</sub>: There is no significant difference teachers' mean scores for the Competence dimension of the PEI among the three educational level groups (bachelor's, master's, and doctorate).

Ho<sub>7</sub>: There is no significant difference in teachers' mean scores for the Self-Determination dimension of the PEI among years of experience groups (0-10 years of experience, 11-20 years of experience, 21-30 years of experience, and 31 years of experience or greater).

Ho<sub>8</sub>: There is no significant difference in teachers' mean scores in the Self-Determination dimension of the PEI between male and female teachers.

Ho<sub>9</sub>: There is no significant difference teachers' mean scores for the Self-Determination dimension of the PEI among the three educational level groups (bachelor's, master's, and doctorate).

Ho<sub>10</sub>: There is no significant difference in teachers' mean scores for the Impact dimension of the PEI among years of experience groups (0-10 years of experience, 11-20 years of experience, 21-30 years of experience, and 31 years of experience or greater).

Ho<sub>11</sub>: There is no significant difference in teachers' mean scores in the Impact dimension of the PEI between male and female teachers.

Ho<sub>12</sub>: There is no significant difference teachers' mean scores for the Impact dimension of the PEI among the three educational level groups (bachelor's, master's, and doctorate).

### *Statistical Tests and Data Analysis*

The online survey company configured the information into a Microsoft Excel format that was loaded into the statistics management software. The Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. The names of individuals and school systems were not disclosed. The research question was analyzed using ANOVA and Independent Samples *t* tests for those paired with the grouping variable of gender to see if there were any association in teacher characteristics and the various self-orientations. Ho<sub>1</sub>, Ho<sub>3</sub>, Ho<sub>4</sub>, Ho<sub>6</sub>, Ho<sub>7</sub>, Ho<sub>9</sub>, Ho<sub>10</sub>, and Ho<sub>12</sub> were analyzed using an ANOVA. Ho<sub>2</sub>, Ho<sub>5</sub>, Ho<sub>8</sub>, and Ho<sub>11</sub> were analyzed using an independent samples *t* test.

### *Summary*

Chapter 3 was a description of the methodology for this study. Chapter 3 included research design, population and sampling procedures, instrumentation and data collection, research question and related hypotheses, statistical tests, and data analysis. The population included 600 K-12 teachers. Teachers completed the PEI instrument online. The results were tabulated and analyzed statistically using SPSS. The results of the statistical data analysis are discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 included implications, conclusions, and recommendations for future study.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to find out how teachers perceived empowerment in their work environment. The Psychological Empowerment Instrument (PEI) was distributed to teachers in six school systems in the northeastern region of Tennessee. It yielded 312 usable surveys (52% return rate). There were several demographics that were worth noting. Predominately females responded to the survey (76.8 %). When looking at teachers and their years of teaching experience, the teachers with the least number of years teaching experience had the highest response rate. About 116 teachers with 0-10 years of experience responded to the survey with the next highest number belonging to teachers with 11-20 years of experience (91 respondents). The local population served was also investigated. Teachers responded that they served children in rural populations (42.9%). Although many different size schools were surveyed, the largest response came from schools with 251-500 students (33%). A majority of teachers held a master's degree (61%). The two highest percentages of respondents came from K-5 schools (36%) and 9-12 schools (42%). ANOVA and independent samples *t* tests were used to analyze the 12 null hypotheses.

#### *Analysis for Null Hypothesis 1*

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the Meaning dimension of the PEI and the years of experience of teachers. The independent variable, years of experience, included four levels: 0-10 years of experience, 11-20 years of experience, 21-30 years of experience, and 31 or greater years of experience. The dependent variable was the mean score of the Meaning dimension of the

PEI. The ANOVA was significant,  $F(4, 301) = 3.96, p=.01$ . The null hypothesis was rejected. The strength of the relationship between years of experience groups and the meaning variable of the PEI, as assessed by  $\eta^2$ , was small (.04).

Because the overall  $F$  test was significant, post hoc multiple comparisons were conducted to evaluate the difference in the four groups. A Tukey procedure was selected for the multiple comparisons because equal variances were assumed. Only 2 years of experience groups, the 11-20 and the 21-30, were found to have significant differences. The 95% confidence intervals for the pairwise differences, as well as, the means and standard deviations for the 4 years of experience groups are reported in Table 1. Figure 1 shows the distribution for the four groups.

Table 1

*Means and Standard Deviations with 95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences of the Meaning Dimension of the PEI by Years of Experience*

Years	N	M	SD	11-20	21-30	31>
0-10	114	3.71	1.66	-.76 to .40	-.00 to 1.25	-.41 to 1.27
11-20	90	3.89	1.65		.14 to 1.46*	-.25 to 1.47
21-30	70	3.09	1.44			-1.08 to .70
31>	31	3.28	1.62			

\* *Significant at the .05 level*



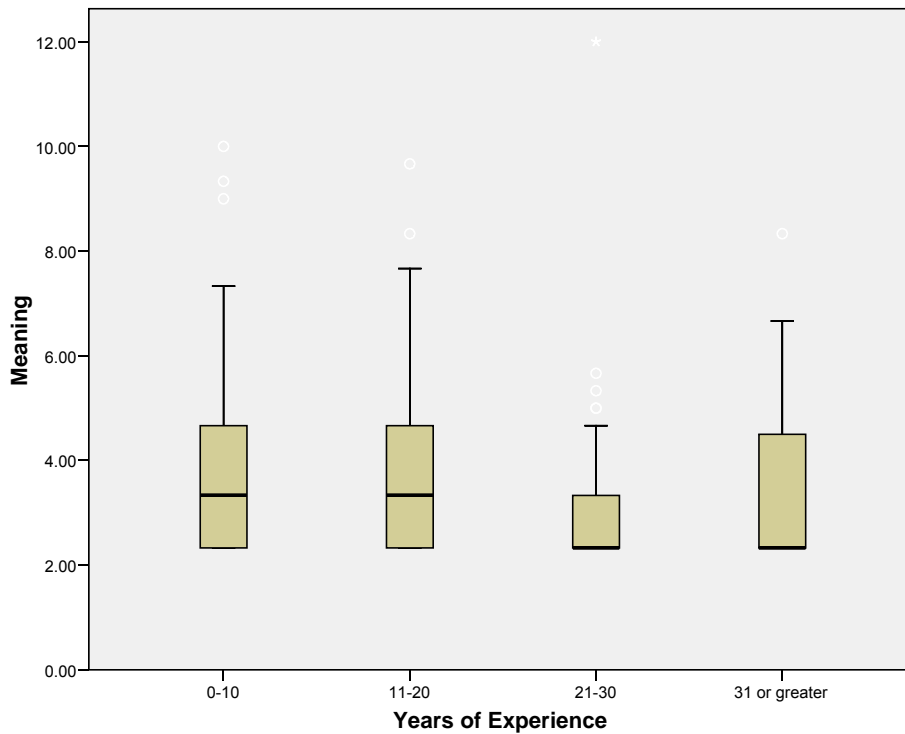


Figure 1. Meaning Dimension of the PEI and Years of Experience

*Analysis for Null Hypothesis 2*

An independent samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate whether the mean score on the Meaning dimension for teachers differed for males and females. The Meaning dimension on the PEI was the dependent variable and gender was the independent variable. The test was not significant,  $t(304) = .68, p = .50$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The  $\eta^2$  index was  $< .01$ . This indicated a very small effect size. Female teachers ( $M = 3.55, SD = 1.63$ ) found about the same meaning in their teaching as male teachers ( $M = 3.69, SD = 1.60$ ). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in the means was  $-.28$  to  $.58$ . Figure 2 shows the difference for the two groups.

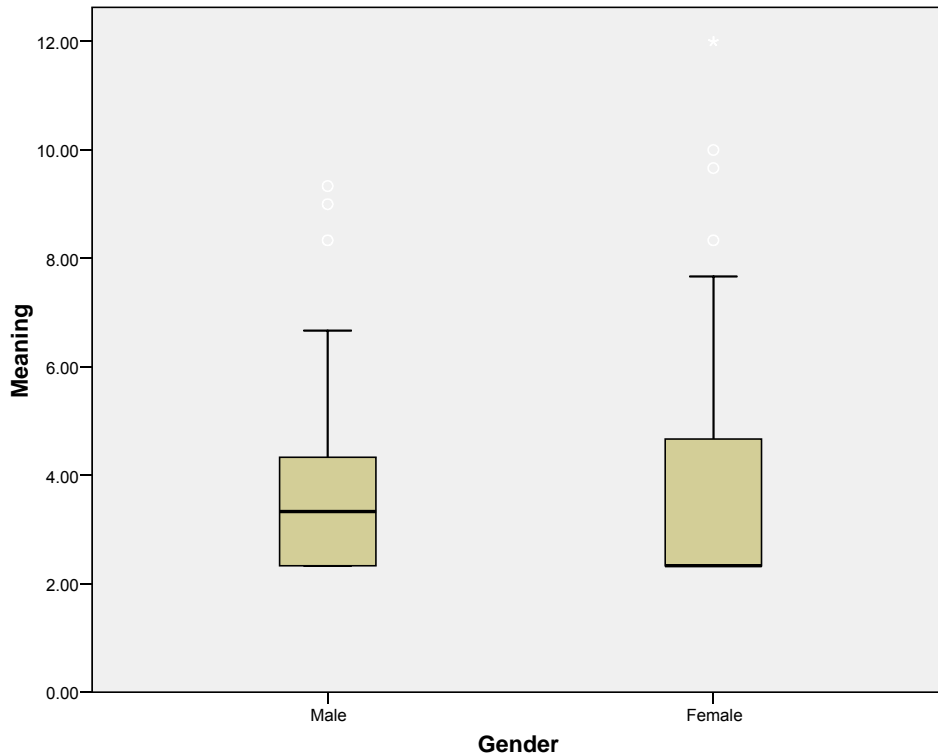


Figure 2. Meaning Dimension of the PEI and Gender

*Analysis for Null Hypothesis 3*

A one way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the Meaning dimension of the PEI and level of education. The independent variable, level of education, included: bachelor's, master's, and Ed.S./doctorate. The dependent variable the Meaning dimension of the PEI. The ANOVA was not significant,  $F(2, 302) = 1.44, p = .24$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between level of education and the Meaning dimension, as assessed by  $\eta^2$ , was large (.09). The results indicated that meaning was not significantly affected by level of education. The means and standard deviations were reported in Table 2. Figure 3 shows the difference for the three groups.

Table 2

*Means and Standard Deviations with 95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences of the Meaning Dimension of the PEI by Level of Education*

Education	N	M	SD	Masters	Ed.S./Doctorate
Bachelor's	100	3.51	1.37	-.53 to .42	-1.67 to .28
Master's	187	3.56	1.66		-1.58 to .30
Ed.S/Doctorate	18	3.58	4.20		

\* Significant at .05 level

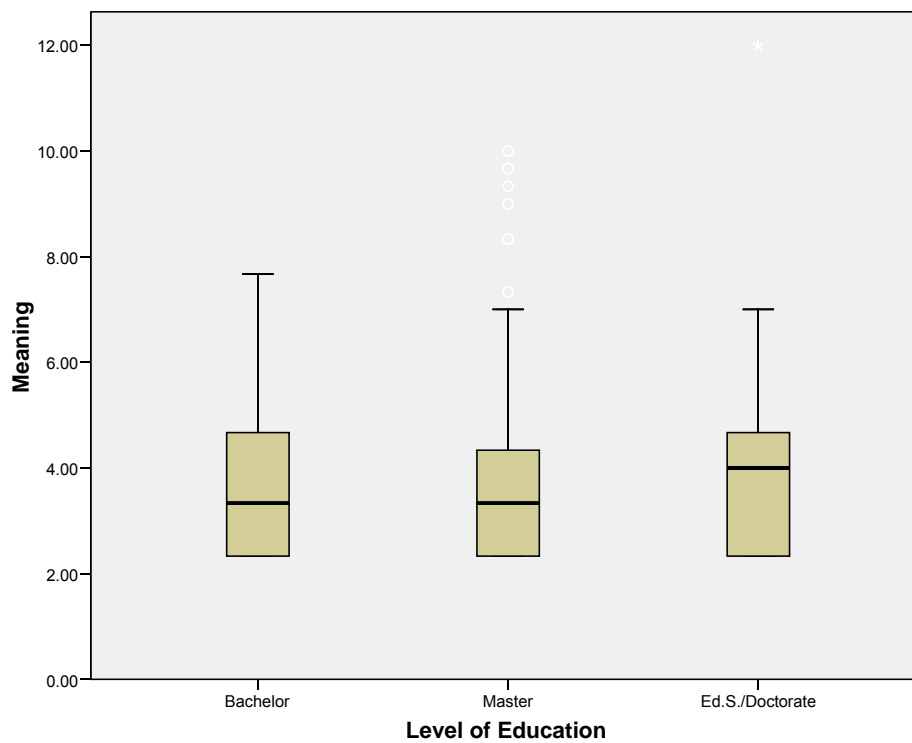


Figure 3. Meaning Dimension of the PEI and Level of Education

*Analysis for Null Hypothesis 4*

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the Competence dimension of the PEI and the years of experience of teachers. The independent variable, years of experience, included four levels: 0-10 years of

experience, 11-20 years of experience, 21-30 years of experience, and 31 or greater years of experience. The dependent variable was the mean score of the Competence dimension of the PEI. The ANOVA was significant,  $F(3, 302) = 5.57, p = .01$ . The null hypothesis was rejected. The strength of the relationship between years of experience groups and the mean score of the PEI, as assessed by  $\eta^2$ , was small (.05).

Because the overall  $F$  test was significant, post hoc multiple comparisons were conducted to evaluate the difference in the four groups. A Tukey procedure was selected for the multiple comparisons because equal variances were assumed. The 0-10 years of experience group when compared with the 21-30 years of experience group was found to have significant differences. The 21-30 years of experience group when compared with the 31 or greater years of experience group also was found to have significant differences. The 95% confidence intervals for the pairwise differences, as well as, the means and standard deviations for the 4 years of experience groups are reported in Table 3. Figure 4 shows the distribution for the four groups.

Table 3

*Means and Standard Deviations with 95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences of the Competence Dimension of the PEI by Years of Experience*

Years	N	M	SD	11-20	21-30	31>
0-10	113	4.00	1.30	-.00 to .85	.15 to 1.07*	.09 to 1.30*
11-20	91	3.59	1.06		-.29 to .67	-.35 to .90
21-30	70	3.40	1.08			-.56 to .73
31>	32	3.31	1.20			

*\*Significant at the .05 level*

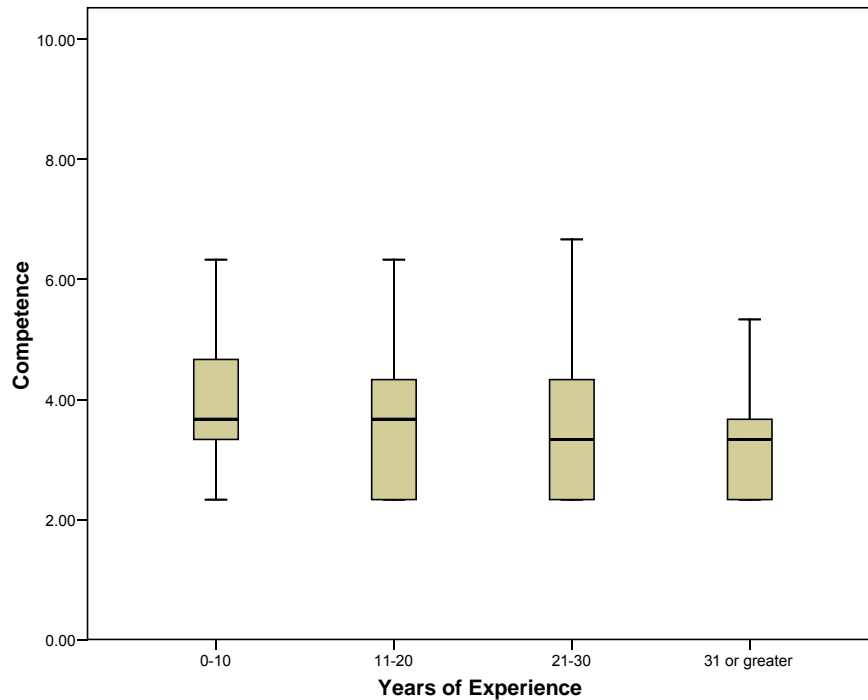


Figure 4. Competence Dimension of the PEI and Years of Experience

*Analysis for Null Hypothesis 5*

An independent samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate whether the mean score of the Competence dimension for teachers differed for males and females. The Competence dimension on the PEI was the dependent variable and gender was the independent variable. The test was not significant,  $t(306) = 1.68, p = .10$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The  $\eta^2$  index was (.01). This indicated a small effect size. Female teachers ( $M = 3.61, SD = 1.15$ ) found about the same level of competence in their teaching as the male teachers ( $M = 3.88, SD = 1.35$ ). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in the means was -.05 to .59. Figure 5 shows the difference for the two groups.

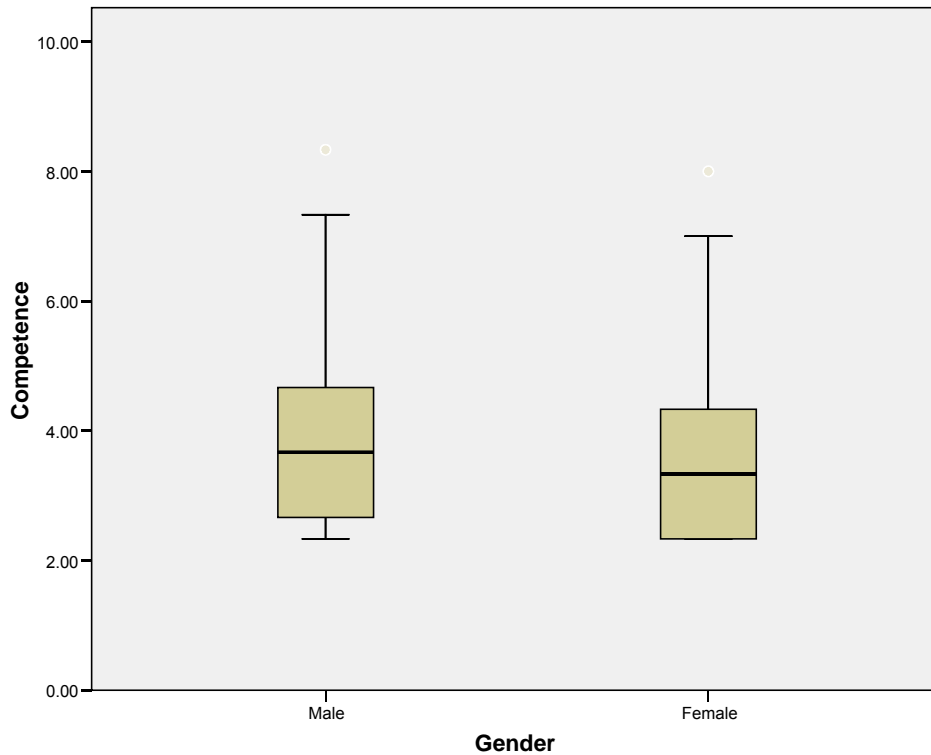


Figure 5. Competence Dimension of the PEI and Gender

*Analysis for Null Hypothesis 6*

A one way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the Competence dimension of the PEI and level of education. The independent variable, level of education, included: bachelors, masters, and Ed.S./doctorate. The dependent variable the Competence dimension of the PEI. The ANOVA was not significant,  $F(2, 303) = .07, p = .20$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between level of education and Competence, as assessed by  $\eta^2$ , was small (.01). The results indicated that competence was not significantly related to level of education. The means and standard deviations were reported in Table 4. Figure 6 shows the difference for the three groups.

Table 4

*Means and Standard Deviations with 95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences of the Competence Dimension of the PEI by Level of Education*

Education	N	M	SD	Masters	Ed.S./Doctorate
Bachelors	99	3.64	1.19	-.34 to .36	-1.24 to .21
Masters	189	3.63	1.20		-1.23 to .17
Ed.S/Doctorate	18	4.16	1.30		

*\*Significant at the .05 level*

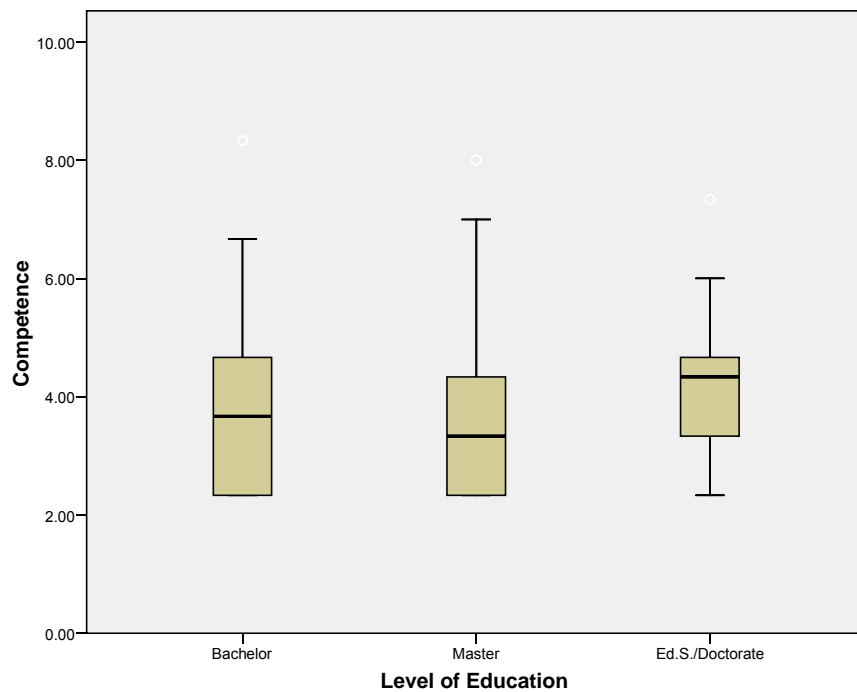


Figure 6. Competence Dimension of the PEI and Level of Education

*Analysis for Null Hypothesis 7*

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the Self Determination dimension of the PEI and the years of experience of teachers. The independent variable, years of experience, included four levels: 0-10 years of experience, 11-20 years of experience, 21-30 years of experience, and 31 or greater

years of experience. The dependent variable was the Self Determination dimension of the PEI. The ANOVA was significant,  $F(3, 304) = 2.66, p=.05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The strength of the relationship between years of experience groups and the meaning variable of the PEI, as assessed by  $\eta^2$ , was small (.03).

Because the overall  $F$  test was significant, post hoc multiple comparisons were conducted to evaluate the difference in the four groups. A Tukey procedure was selected for the multiple comparisons because equal variances were assumed. The 11-20 years of experience group when coupled with the 21-30 years of experience group, was significant. The 95% confidence intervals for the pairwise differences as well as the means and standard deviations for the four years of experience groups are reported in Table 5. Figure 7 shows the distribution for the four groups.

Table 5

*Means and Standard Deviations with 95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences of the Self-Determination Dimension of the PEI by Years of Experience*

Years	N	M	SD	11-20	21-30	31>
0-10	114	5.70	2.44	-1.36 to .49	-.86 to 1.12	-.30 to 2.32
11-20	91	6.14	2.46		-.47 to 1.61*	.10 to 2.80
21-30	71	5.56	2.64			-.52 to 2.27
31>	32	4.69	2.86			

*\*Significant at the .05 level*



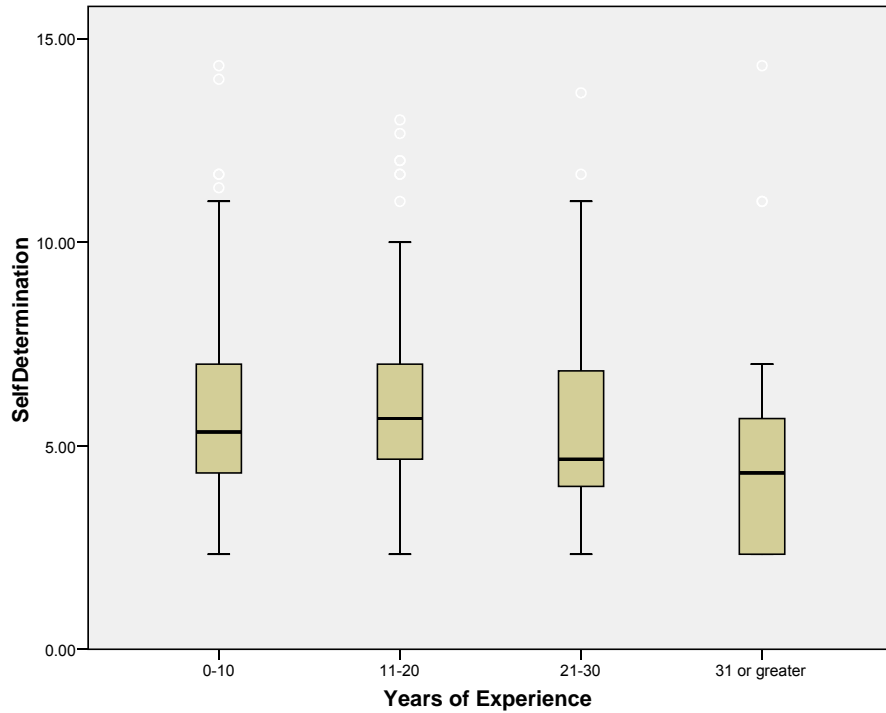


Figure 7. Self-Determination Dimension of the PEI and Years of Experience

*Analysis for Null Hypothesis 8*

An independent samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate whether the mean score for Self Determination for teachers differed between males and females. The Self Determination dimension on the PEI was the dependent variable and gender was the independent variable. The test was not significant,  $t(306) = -1.77, p = .08$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The  $\eta^2$  index was (.01). This indicated a small effect size. Female teachers ( $M = 5.85, SD = 2.62$ ) found about the same self-determination in their teaching as the male teachers ( $M = 5.24, SD = 2.38$ ). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in the means was -1.29 to .07. Figure 8 shows the difference for the two groups.

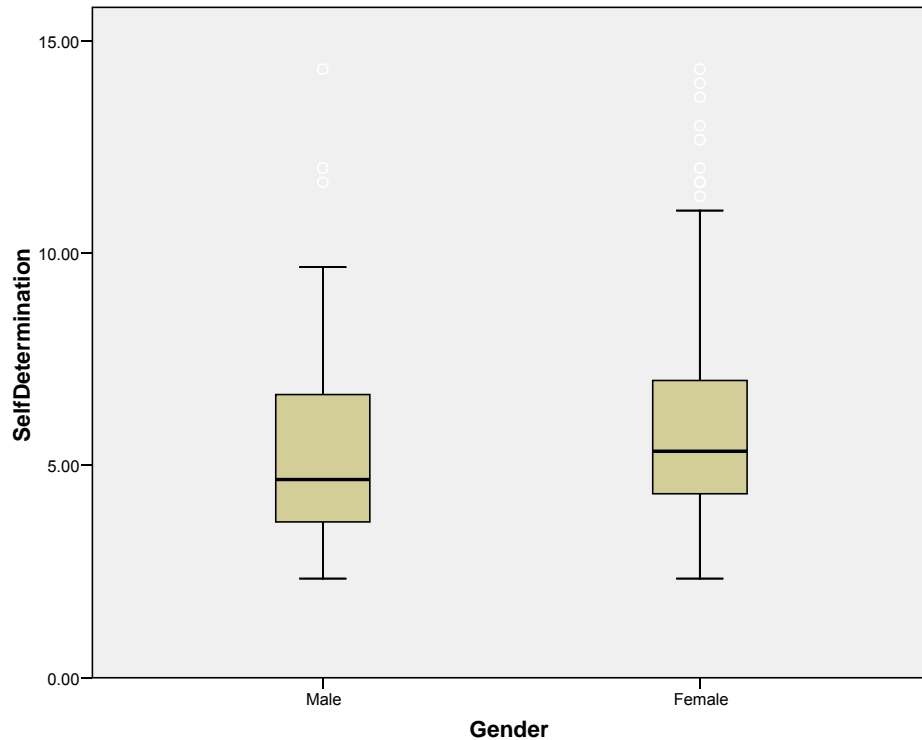


Figure 8. Self Determination Dimension of the PEI and Gender

*Analysis for Null Hypothesis 9*

A one way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the Self Determination dimension and level of education. The independent variable, level of education, included: bachelors, masters, and Ed.S./doctorate. The dependent variable was the Self Determination dimension of the PEI. The ANOVA was not significant,  $F(2, 305) = 1.83, p = .16$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The strength of the relationship between level of education and Self Determination, as assessed by  $\eta^2$ , was small (.01). The results indicated that self-determination was not significantly influenced by level of education. The means and standard deviations were reported in Table 6.

Table 6

*Means and Standard Deviations with 95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences of the Self-Determination Dimension of the PEI by Level of Education*

Education	N	M	SD	Masters	Ed.S./Doctorate
Bachelors	100	5.63	2.51	-.97 to .53	-.58 to 2.52
Masters	190	5.85	2.68		-.31 to 2.68
Ed.S/Doctorate	18	4.67	1.49		

*\*Significant at the .05 level*

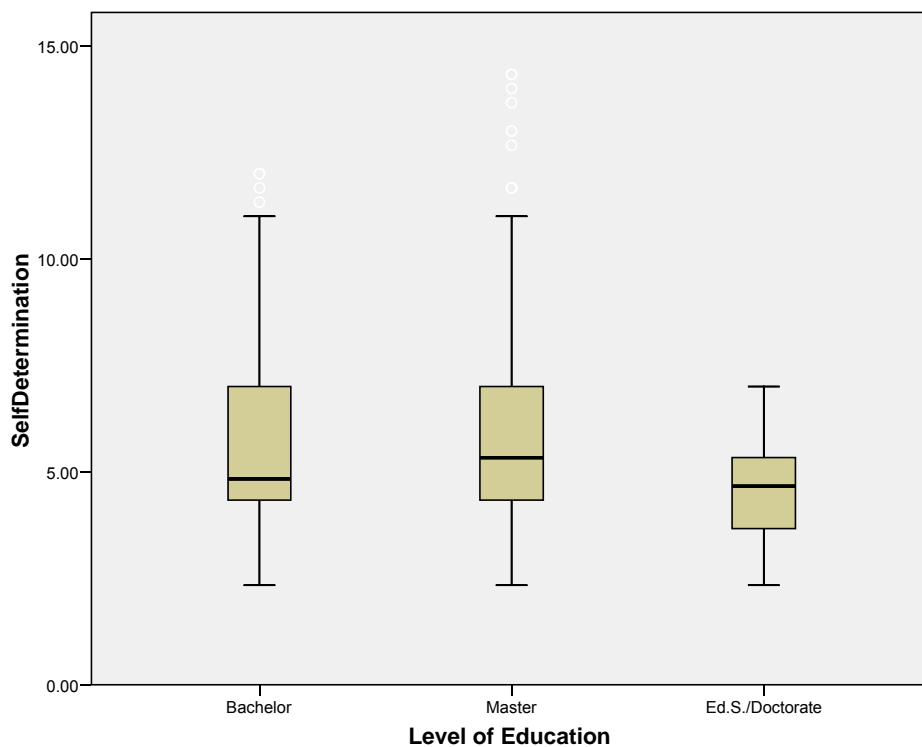


Figure 9. Level of Education and Self-Determination Variable

*Analysis for Null Hypothesis 10*

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the Impact dimension of the PEI and the years of experience of teachers. The independent variable, years of experience, included four levels: 0-10 years of experience,

11-20 years of experience, 21-30 years of experience, and 31 or greater years of experience. The dependent variable was the Impact variable of the PEI. The ANOVA was significant,  $F(3,303) = 3.12, p=.03$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The strength of the relationship between years of experience groups and the Impact dimension of the PEI, as assessed by  $\eta^2$ , was small (.03).

Because the overall  $F$  test was significant, post hoc multiple comparisons were conducted to evaluate the difference in the four groups. A Tukey procedure was selected for the multiple comparisons because equal variances were assumed. A significant difference was found between the 0-10 years of experience group and the 31 or greater years of experience group. The 95% confidence intervals for the pairwise differences as well as the means and standard deviations for the 4 years of experience groups are reported in Table 7. Figure 10 shows the distribution for the four groups.

Table 7

*Means and Standard Deviations with 95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences of the Impact Dimension of the PEI by Years of Experience*

Years	N	M	SD	11-20	21-30	31>
0-10	115	7.04	2.87	-.50 to 1.55	-.16 to 2.04	.05 to 2.95*
11-20	90	6.51	2.61		-.74 to 1.57	-.52 to 2.47
21-30	70	6.10	2.83			-.99 to 2.11
31>	32	5.54	3.11			

*\*Significant at the .05 level*

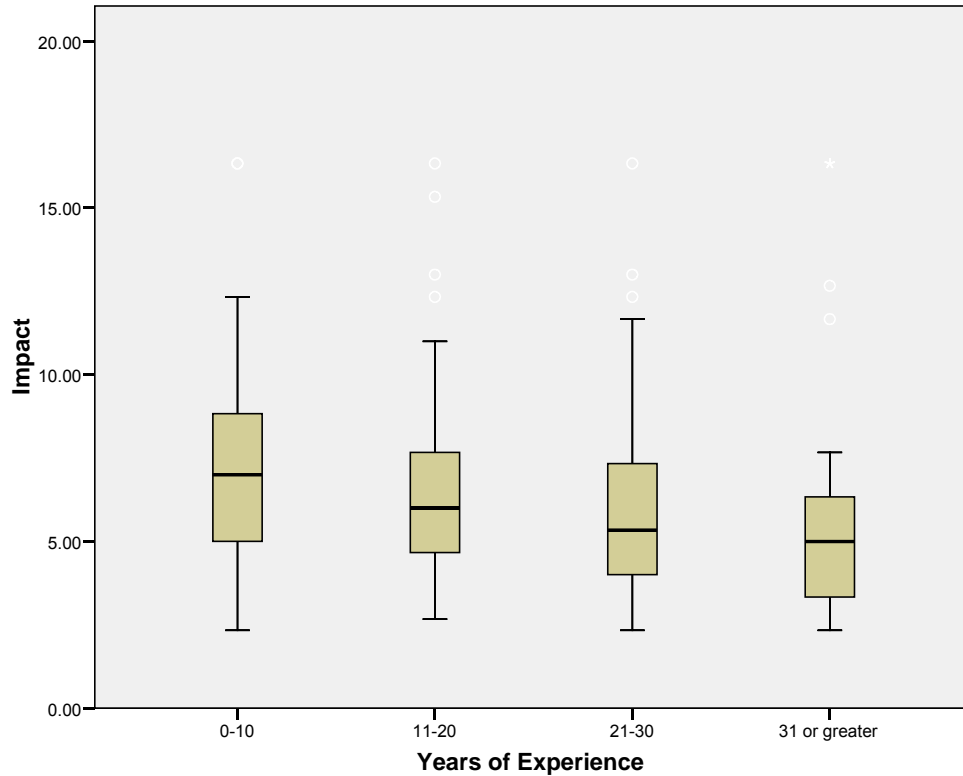


Figure 10. Impact Dimension of the PEI and Years of Experience

*Analysis for Null Hypothesis 11*

An independent samples *t* test was conducted to evaluate whether the mean score for the Impact dimension for teachers differed for males and females. The Impact dimension on the PEI was the dependent variable and gender was the independent variable. The test was not significant,  $t(304) = .52, p = .61$ . The  $\eta^2$  index was  $<.01$ . This indicated a very small effect size. Female teachers ( $M = 6.56, SD = 2.77$ ) found about the same impact in their teaching as the male teachers ( $M = 6.36, SD = 3.09$ ). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in the means was  $-.20$  to  $.38$ . Figure 11 shows the difference for the two groups.

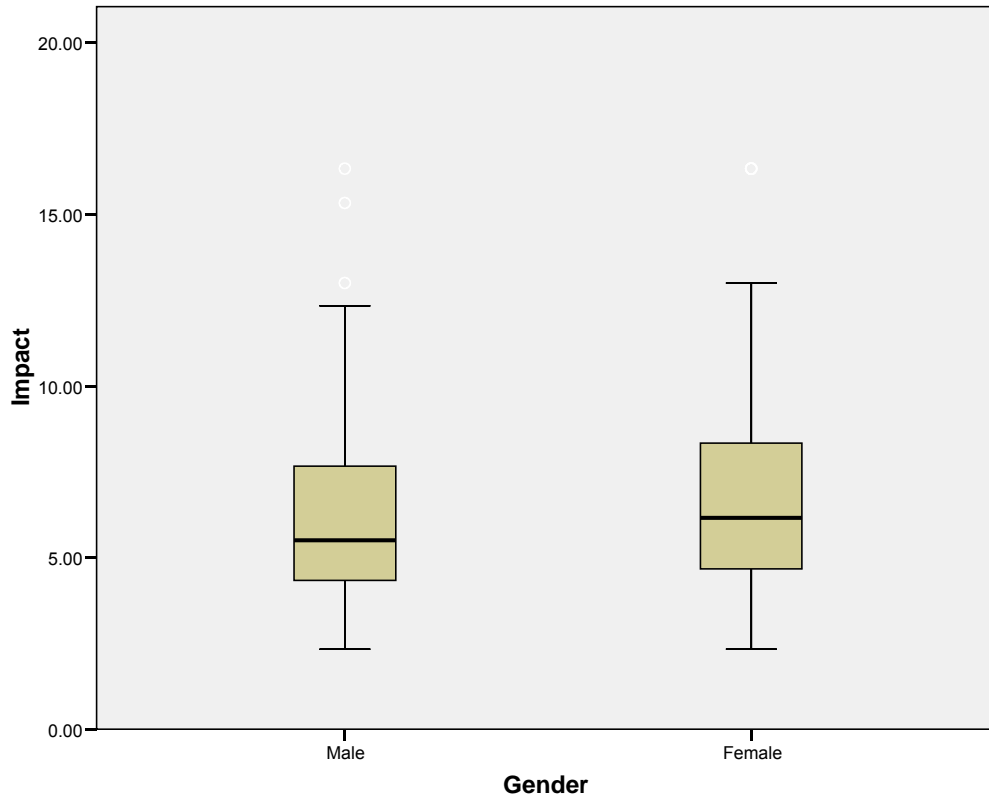


Figure 11. Impact Dimension of the PEI and Gender

*Analysis for Null Hypothesis 12*

A one way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the Impact dimension and level of education. The independent variable, level of education, included: bachelors, masters, and Ed.S./doctorate. The dependent variable the Impact dimension of the PEI. The ANOVA was not significant,  $F(2, 303) = 1.64, p = .20$ . The strength of the relationship between level of education and meaning, as assessed by  $\eta^2$ , was small (.01). The results indicated that Impact was not significantly influenced by level of education. The means and standard deviations were reported in Table 8.

Table 8

*Means and Standard Deviations with 95% Confidence Intervals of Pairwise Differences of the Impact Dimension of the PEI by Level of Education*

Education	N	M	SD	Masters	Ed.S./Doctorate
Bachelors	101	6.82	2.95	-.44 to 1.21	-.46 to 2.96
Masters	187	6.44	2.75		-.78 to 2.52
Ed.S/Doctorate	18	5.57	3.18		

*\*Significant at the .05 level*

### *Summary*

Chapter 4 was an analysis of the data related to this research study. Chapter 5 covers conclusions about this research study, implications for the educational community, and recommendations for future study.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to find if there were significant differences in teachers' perceptions of their empowerment with the four dimensions of the PEI (Appendix A) (Meaning, Impact, Self-determination, Competence). Three grouping variables were used for the analyses. Years of experience, level of education, and gender were used in comparison with the dimensions of the PEI to form mean scores, which were analyzed for statistical significance. ANOVA and independent samples *t* tests were used to analyze mean scores. Six school systems in Northeast Tennessee were selected for inclusion in the study. Out of the 600 teachers who were sent surveys, 312 responded (52%). One research question guided the study. Based on the overall research question, 12 null hypotheses were generated. Chapter 5 presents the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

#### *Summary of Findings*

Teachers were randomly selected by their school system network administrators to participate in the study. The survey was administered by email during February of 2008. Three attempts were made to gain responses from the sample in 3 different weeks. The responses from the 12 questions were tabulated and prepared for statistical analyses. The statistical analyses yielded results for each dimension of the PEI.

The Meaning dimension of the PEI measured teachers' perceptions of the meaning they perceived they had in their work. This meaning was a part of their overall perceived empowerment. The findings indicated that teachers of varying years of experience tended to find meaning in their work environments. Teachers having meaning



in their work environment meant that they found relevance. This relevance was important because teachers tied what they were doing at work into their lives outside of work. This was supported by Greenleaf (1999) who found that meaning was dependent on the relevance people had with their work. Meaning could answer the question of teachers' work "making sense" to them. Teacher responses indicated that meaning can be achieved and can increase empowerment no matter how much time you have invested in your career, what gender you were, or how much education you had. This study found no statistically significant difference found between male and female teachers and their meaning suggested that all teachers could find meaning in their work and that gender did not play a part in the relevance they found. This could be because school districts have to provide gender equity training to all staff members as a federal requirement. It also could be because there is no specific gender training when learning about the curriculum. Because curriculum is the number one topic of discussion in many school districts, teachers focus more on curriculum rather than on gender specific needs as educators.

Teachers also tend to focus on the needs of their students. Hargreaves (2000) stated that teachers had to be emotionally attached to their work to do their job of increasing student achievement. Education is also much different from many professions. It has more gender equity than most professions. Level of education did not make a difference in whether teachers found meaning in their work. Because classroom instruction can be performed by bachelor as well as doctoral level teachers, there is equity among teachers in this way.

This study did not test the effectiveness of teachers and the meaning they found in their teaching, so a comparison could not be drawn in this way. Level of education did

not make a significant difference in teacher meaning. It could suggest that meaning could be based on the experience of the individual or the quality of the teaching program they attended. Although there could be many reasons for why meaning is important to teachers, it is clear that meaning plays a significant role in teacher empowerment.

Teachers agreed that competence was important to their workplace empowerment, and they reported in this study that level of education and gender were factors that did not significantly change their perception about teaching. This notion was supported by Short (1994), when she wrote that teachers gained self-efficacy when their perception of their job related skills matched their perception of their competence. In this study, significance was found in years of experience groups, suggesting that teachers acquired confidence in their teaching ability as they gained experience. Teachers often do not have control over their own professional development.

Loughran (2007) reported that administrative expectations for teachers often set the competence level teachers needed to achieve. This present study's findings revealed no significant difference in competence for males and females. Male and female teachers often have the same professional opportunities. Teachers are largely prepared for their professional careers by a similar curriculum suggested that competence could be more related to individuals in their work role. Hargreaves (1989) explained that although many of the mandates for teachers to perform in the classroom were unreasonable and unfunded, teachers performed competently as long as they were valued in their work role and were in an environment where they could grow professionally.

This study also found that level of education did not make a difference in teacher perceptions of their competence. This could be because teachers with a bachelor's degree

do not have the ability to know how much better they would perform if they had a higher level of education. Teachers may feel they are doing a great job based on their education. This could validate the use of performance evaluations to help teachers grow professionally. With specific criteria that are germane to all professional teachers, administrators can assure that teachers grow professionally at any level of education. Teacher perceptions of their competence were directly related to their empowerment (Mcgaha & Lynn, 2000).

The Self-Determination dimension of the PEI measured the perceived self-determination teachers had in their workplace. The Self-Determination dimension of the PEI can be coupled with motivation. This study produced significant findings with regard to years of experience groups. One fact that is worth noting was teachers with 31 or greater years of experience reported that they had more self determination than beginning teachers. The findings of this research study were congruent with Creech (1995). Creech wrote that the determination of employees to change their work environment often led to increased motivation which carried them through their career. Nuppeonen (2006) described self-determination in terms of ownership. He stated that employees who found motivation for completing work tasks often had ownership in their work environments. Teachers responded that they were self-determined in their job placement regardless of gender or level of education. Self-determination is innately individual. The fact that males and females did not have a significant difference in the Self-Determination dimension is not surprising. Males and females may have equal chances to be self-determined. While it was not surprising that there was not a difference in males and females, the fact that there was not a difference in level of education was

surprising. Because it generally takes self determination and a long term financial commitment to complete more education, it was surprising that this was not significant.

The Impact dimension of the PEI measured teachers' perception of the impact they had on their work environment. Impact is the difference that teachers make for their students. This study found that years of experience made a significant difference on teachers' perception of their impact. This may mean that the career of a teacher and what a teacher means to students over a long period of time is important to public education. This study found that younger teachers did not have as much perceived impact as older teachers. While young teachers often are credited with new innovative ideas, if professional development is current and meaningful, teachers of all levels of experience can succeed and impact students. Although this analysis did not yield any significant differences for gender and level of education, teachers generally reported that impact was important to their empowerment. Greenleaf (2003) wrote that the impact teachers had on students offered a stabilizing force for students. One key factor for the equity of teacher impact is that it is monitored closely by teacher data. Administrators are required to collect data to satisfy NCLB mandates. Administrators have the ability to give teachers feedback about their impact on students. Many schools also have informal assessments that help drive instruction. Hargreaves (2001) reported that as the impact of teachers increased, student achievement increased.

#### *Findings Related to PEI*

Although there are several differences in the original PEI and the modified version that was used in this study there are a few similarities in the results. The same four dimensions (Meaning, Competence, Impact, and Self-Determination) were used in

this study that was used in the original PEI. Spreitzer (1995) explained that intrapersonal empowerment was a combination of the same four dimensions. The findings suggested that level of education did not significantly change the empowerment of an employee. The same was found for teachers in the present study. However, gender had a different result. The present study did not find gender to be significant in any comparison with the four dimensions of the PEI. The original study found significant differences in empowerment and gender.

The PEI in this study yielded consistent results that years of experience did have statistically significant results for all four dimensions. This seems to indicate that given high quality professional development, teachers can perform effectively over a long period of time. There were not significant results found for gender and level of education. The four dimensions of the PEI (Meaning, Competence, Impact, and Self Determination) revealed several insights into teacher empowerment.

### *Conclusions*

Based on the data analysis for this study, the meaning teachers derive from their work, the relative impact teachers have on their students and colleagues, the self determination teachers have to complete the tasks, and the competence they have to do their job all factor into their perception of empowerment. Based on the findings of this study, these conclusions were drawn:

1. There appears to be a statistically significant relationship between meaning, competence, impact, and self-determination and years of teaching experience.

2. There was no statistically significant relationship between the gender of teachers and the meaning, competence, self-determination, or impact a teacher finds in their work environment.
3. There was not a significant relationship between teachers' level of education and the meaning, competence, impact, and self-determination teachers had for their job.

The focus of this study was to measure teacher perceptions of their empowerment. The results suggest a significant relationship between teacher years of experience and empowerment. If empowerment is related to years of teaching experience, questions regarding the nature of empowerment and its usefulness as a tool for improving school outcomes for students must be considered. Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) found that student achievement could be attributed to the personal empowerment of the teacher. Palmer (2003) reported that teachers often possessed qualities that promoted student achievement. Palmer further noted that the ability of a teacher to individualize instruction made school meaningful for all students. This individualized attention to the needs of students often related to the empowerment of the teacher (Palmer). Student achievement is influenced by the personal empowerment of teachers (Hard, 2006).

There is a good amount of work regarding the nature of teacher empowerment. Much of this work emphasized the importance of effective communication as an element in the professional growth of teachers. Blasé and Blasé (2000) discovered teachers needed to be viewed as a “teacher rather than a technician” (p. 1). They found that teachers could be more successful if they were given the opportunity to ask questions without a defensive reaction from their administrator. They wrote that administration

needed to give control to teachers because they were very knowledgeable about the problems of the school and many times knew how to fix what was wrong with the school. The teachers' ability to fix these problems could be attributed to their teaching experience (Blasé & Blasé, 2000). Earlier Blasé and Blasé (1998) found that teachers needed to be in a continuous process of learning. They explained learning started with a conversation within the school. Blasé and Blasé (1998) wrote that teachers were empowered when they had the ability to be coached by their peers. Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) echoed Blasé and Blasé. They wrote that teachers were empowered when they were able to have time to reflect on their practice of teaching. Blasé and Blasé (1998) raised the question whether teachers could improve their capacity to reflect over their career. The answer to this question could be explained with the emphasis of the administrator. They explained that educational administrators often emphasize the wrong solution for teachers. Administrators, according to Blasé and Blasé (2000), many times focused on fixing student achievement with reforms rather than engaging in dialog with teachers. They found a flaw with the logic that now seems to be espoused by proponents of NCLB that fixing teachers should fix schools. They found that through dialog and reflection, teachers were more likely to buy in and make long-term change that ultimately created the student achievement gains that were desired (Blasé & Blasé, 2000). Hargreaves (1997) explained that administrators needed to focus on the whole teacher. He wrote that teachers needed to be valued, supported, understood, and challenged. Blasé and Blasé (1998) reported that changes toward this type of behavior among administrators would bring positive results in the classroom. Lambert (1998) added that dialog built the capacity for leadership among teachers. She explained that this leadership could only

happen if teachers were given the opportunity to lead within the school. She wrote that teacher empowerment depended on the ability of teachers to discuss issues and the flexibility of the administrator to follow through with the decision of the teachers. Blasé and Blasé (1994) explained this relationship:

Education takes place in the classroom and that the only real educational reform would take place in the classroom. Therefore, the classroom expert, the teacher, would be the best person to determine what this restructuring should look like and how it should be implemented (p. 1)

In order for teachers to be empowered, they must have the ability to communicate so they can grow professionally and create positive growth in their students. Teachers must be able to discuss their work in order to become a community of learners (Blasé & Blasé, 1994).

#### *Recommendations for Future Research*

It is important to the success of teachers and their schools that empowerment be studied further. In order to accomplish this task, teachers and other educational professionals need to conduct further research into teacher empowerment. The following are recommendations for future research:

1. Qualitative studies should be performed to investigate the level of empowerment among teachers.
2. A study should be conducted to investigate the relationship between teacher empowerment and professional development.
3. Studies should be performed to establish relationships between teacher empowerment and student performance. If teacher empowerment is found to be a positive influence on student achievement, then additional qualitative and quantitative studies should explore possible factors that relate to the development



of teacher empowerment. This study suggests that teacher empowerment is influenced by teacher experience. What else can serve to enhance teacher empowerment? Some possibilities presented in discussion earlier in this chapter include:

1. The relationships between teacher and administrators within schools and school districts. Are there interactions based upon mutual respect and support?
2. The qualities of communication within schools. Are there discussion and dialogue practices that can influence empowerment?
3. Does the quality of professional development provided to teachers enhance feelings of empowerment?

#### *Recommendations for Practice*

This study provided insight into the relationship between teachers and their perceptions of empowerment. The goal of increasing teacher empowerment is to give teachers better working environments and to help them increase student achievement.

The following are recommendations for practice:

1. School systems should administer empowerment surveys to determine the level of empowerment among their teachers. Based on the data collected by the surveys, administrators need to develop a needs assessment for empowerment.
2. School systems should implement a mentoring program for teachers with less than 10 years of experience. The mentors need to be teachers who are specifically trained to be mentors and who are experienced teachers.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A

*Psychological Empowerment Instrument*

**Demographic Information**

1. Gender:            Male                            Female
2. Level of Education:
- A. Bachelor            B. Master            C. Ed.S/Doctorate
3. Years of Experience:  
(Open Response)
4. Size of School:
- A. 1-250            B. 251-500            C. 501-750            D. 751-1000            E. 1000 or larger
5. Community Population Served
- A. Rural                            B. Suburban            C. Urban

**Empowerment Questions**

Listed below are a number of self-orientations that people may have with regard to their work role. Using the following scale, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree that each one describes your self-orientation.

- A. Very Strongly Disagree  
E. Agree  
B. Strongly Disagree  
D. Neutral  
F. Strongly Agree  
C. Disagree  
G. Very Strongly Agree

- \_\_\_ I am confident about my ability to do my job.  
\_\_\_ The work that I do is important to me.  
\_\_\_ I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job.  
\_\_\_ My impact on what happens in my department/grade level is large.  
\_\_\_ My job activities are personally meaningful to me.  
\_\_\_ I have a great deal of control over what happens in my school.  
\_\_\_ I can decide on my own how to go about doing my own work.

- \_\_\_\_\_ I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have mastered the skills necessary for my job.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The work I do is meaningful to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have significant influence over what happens in my department/grade level.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my work activities.

Items which can be dropped for a 12-item scale with three items per dimension. The 12-item version has been found to be highly reliable and valid. The validation of the instrument is described in Spreitzer (1995; 1996). The instrument has been used successfully in more than 50 different studies in contexts ranging from nurses to low wage service workers to manufacturing workers. The validity of the instrument is proven. Test-retest reliability has been shown to be strong and validity estimates for the dimensions are typically around .80. More information on the empowerment profiles for different contexts and norm data for the empowerment dimensions can be found in Spreitzer and Quinn (2001).



## APPENDIX B

### *Letter to Participants*

February 4, 2008

Dear Participant:

My name is Corey Gardenhour, and I am a graduate student at East Tennessee State University. I am working on my Doctoral degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. In order to finish my studies, I need to complete a research project. The name of my research study is Teacher Perceptions of Empowerment Related to Work Environments, Educational Levels and Experience.

The purpose of this study is to survey teachers about their empowerment. I would like to give a brief survey questionnaire to a randomly selected group of teachers in your system. It should only take about two minutes to complete. You will be asked questions about how empowered you feel in your current position. Since this project deals with empowerment, it might cause some minor stress. However, you may also feel better after you have had the opportunity to express yourselves about empowerment. This study may provide benefit by providing more information about how the administration of your school system can better serve your needs.

This method is completely anonymous and confidential. In other words, there will be no way to connect your name with your responses. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the ETSU IRB (for non-medical research) and personnel particular to this research (Dr. Jim Lampley, chair of this study) have access to the study records.

If you do not want to fill out the survey, it will not affect you in any way. There are no alternative procedures except to choose not to participate in the study.

Participation in this research experiment is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. You can quit at any time. If you quit or refuse to participate, the benefits or treatment to which you are otherwise entitled will not be affected. The survey link is listed at the bottom of this email for you to complete if you want to participate. Click on the link. Please take the survey and click the submit button afterwards.

If you have any research-related questions or problems, you may contact me at 423-384-6651 I am working on this project under the supervision of Dr. Jim Lampley. You may reach him/her at 423-439-7619. Also, the chairperson of the Institutional Review Board at East Tennessee State University is available at (423) 439-6055 if you have questions about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone independent of the research team or you can't reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423/439-6055 or 423/439/6002.

Please Click on this link to take the survey. Remember to Click the Submit Button after you finish.

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=O\\_2feEzsmanuzRctpeFY54MA\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=O_2feEzsmanuzRctpeFY54MA_3d_3d)

Sincerely,

Corey Gardenhour

VITA

COREY GARDENHOUR

Personal Data: Born: October 22, 1975  
Place of Birth: Waynesboro, PA  
Marital Status: Married

Career: Elizabethton City Schools  
Director of Data Services, 2008- Present  
Elizabethton City Schools  
Principal, 2006-2008  
Kingsport City Schools  
Classroom Teacher, 1999-2006  
Johnson City Schools  
Classroom Teacher, 1998-1999

Education: Milligan College, B.S., 1998  
Milligan College, M.ed., 1999  
Lincoln Memorial University, Ed.S., 2005  
East Tennessee State University, Ed.D, 2008

Honors and Awards: Paul A. Clark Award 1999